RECAPITULATION

AND

CONCLUSION
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Our aim in the present thesis has been primarily to focus upon the interaction of the material forces with the political and the ideological structures in determining the status of various social groups in a hierarchical order during early medieval period (A.D. 1000 - A.D. 1200) located in the context of a specific spatial parameter (south western Deccan). This has helped us in comprehending not just the nature of social stratification located in the rural settlements of the period, but importantly, it has enabled us to demarcate new regional and social boundaries of research, particularly in relation to the study of local state formation and the evolution of a regional cultural matrix. Viewed from a regional dimension of change, these defy any universalization of specific structural formations and thus, have enabled us to arrive at certain crucial conclusions over various issues related to the specificity of historical change which differ in a large measure from what earlier studies have hitherto had to say on the subject.

We have been able to draw our conclusions on the basis of the study having been based largely on the epigraphical sources collected from various journals and periodicals. We wish to underscore in this regard that we have had to make use of the unpublished inscriptional data stored in the forms of transcripts so as to arrive at an indepth picture of various aspects of historical formations which have been divided under various headings listed below.
In the Historiographical Context (Chapter-I) of our study we have made an attempt to highlight various lacunae involved in the interpretations of social structures of the period and region under consideration. In this context we have primarily focused our attention on a thematic analysis of various issues (society, economy, rural space and ideology) which we have taken up in the course of our research. We have essentially attempted in this chapter to see how these have been handled by different schools of historical scholarship which have been classified by us under three major headings depending upon the method of approach adopted by them. Thus, under the first category of historical works we have those written in the conventional approach of historical study which gave primacy to facts based on pure observations and guided by the epistemological moorings of positivism. Secondly, those written under the Marxist method of historical analysis have been taken into account and thirdly, we have focussed on the recent spurt of historical works written with an approach using an inter-disciplinary method but outside the Marxist framework of analysis. In this context we have observed that serious attempts for the study of society during the early medieval period in India were first made by the conventional category of historians. In these works the caste/varna division was accepted as the only determinant for understanding the division of the social classes for early India. This unconsciously implied that a static order of society based on textual delineations of the social structure was accepted as the social reality for all regions and periods of history by these scholars. The Marxist
scholars, on the other hand, have introduced the class dimension of the varna system and have put forth the paradigm of studying the varna order in terms of abstractions of actual relations of production. Any deviation from the varna theory in reality has been looked at by these scholars, from the point of view of breakdown of the traditional system, particularly for the early medieval period. The new historical scholarship, writing from a regional perspective, in particular the writings of B.D. Chattopadhyaya, have brought into focus the untenability of the application of Dharmasastra categories of social division to comprehend the regional level social formations which, according to the author, are normally described through the economic categories of their existence. Such a realization has marked a significant shift in the earlier historical perceptions of social structure which enables us to come out of the framework of using universal categories to comprehend social formations at specific regional level and thereby come closer to the understanding of historical reality.

At the economic level, the conventional historical scholarship has given an impression of the unchanging nature of the agrarian structure of early India which has been studied totally divorced from the descriptions of corporate institutions and the urban phenomenon. On the other hand, over emphasis laid by the Marxist scholars on studying the change in agrarian structures which have resulted, according to these scholars, from a decline in an earlier urban phenomenon, have generated the impression that the early medieval economy needs to be looked at in terms of its rural character perse. Further, the
importance that these scholars have attached to foreign trade in bringing about the ruralization in economy has led to the external stimulus being given undue credence. Against this background studies conducted by third category of scholars become significant in overcoming the above lacunae in the sense that these have helped us in viewing the economic change during the early medieval period in terms of both the agrarian and the urban phenomenon. Importantly, the latter has been effectively linked upto the former in defining the totality of economic change at a micro-level for various regions of India, during the early medieval period.

The study of the rural set up of early India has undergone similar changes in the interpretative contexts of its analysis. Among these studies the conventional historical works have played a crucial role in essentializing the image of the village in early India through the use of the concept of 'village community'. In such interpretations the unchanging harmonious social structure and the local autonomy were highlighted as important features of village life which was further considered totally closed from outside influence. On the other hand, the Marxist scholars have viewed the transition in the economic structure from the ancient to the medieval as fundamental to comprehend the rural set up of the early medieval period. The rural phenomenon during this period has been understood essentially in terms of the formation of new agrarian relations, in which the land lords figured as the exploiters and the peasants as the exploited. It is against the background of the
basic conflict between these two classes that these scholars have argued about the adverse impact of the growing ruralization and self-sufficiency of Indian village communities during the early medieval period. On the other hand, in the works of the non-Marxist scholars writing for various regions of India, the significance of comprehending the rural milieu of the early medieval period in terms of understanding the entire settlement pattern in relationship to the changing social, economic, political, ideological and spatial dimension has been brought to the forefront. This has enabled us to view the village as a node in the development and expansion of rural space and other settlement patterns from one stage to the other rather than understanding it merely in terms of its autonomy or self-sufficiency. Finally, in the last part of this chapter we focussed on the ideological dimensions of the early medieval set up, and historical perceptions of it. The conventional writings on the subject, we suggested, had simply emphasized on describing the religious beliefs and preachings with a moral purpose. This view is presented as though it was unrelated to the social, economic and political context. The Marxists, on the other hand, have viewed ideology as a part of the superstructure emerging as a product of its economic base. However, by giving primacy to the material factors these scholars have tended to underplay the role played by ideology in bringing about the changes at the base of society though they have contributed considerably to our understanding of the inter-relationship between the social, economic and ideological forces. In the works of B.D. Chattopadhyaya and H.Kulke one, however, observed that ideology is looked upon as an integrative force playing
a crucial role of change in the socio-economic set up of any given region. Thus, a recognition in the integrative potential of the ideological forces in bringing about economic change has marked a significant shift in the earlier held historical perceptions. This further enabled us to suggest that views on the role of religion in society, in the context of issues raised by the non-Marxist studies that were primarily conducted on a regional level, enhance our understanding of the specificities of complex social relationships. This chapter on the Historiographical Context thus provided us with an informed background of the scholarly interventions on the four broad themes of our analysis particularly in the relation to how they have hitherto been analyzed.

In the second chapter (Geo-Political Context) of our study we had delineated the geographical and political background for the subsequent analysis of the social structure. We had particularly discussed and highlighted the relationship between the geographical configuration of south western Deccan and the nature of political power structure as it emerged in the context of our study. To comprehend various aspects of these relationships in the specific context of their physiographic location, we had further divided our area, which corresponds to the region lying between the Krishna and Tungabhadra, into three sub-regions of study depending upon the local topographical variations. Such a division, coupled with a corresponding survey of the distribution pattern of inscriptive data of our area of research, has enabled us to arrive at certain crucial conclusions regarding the nature of
historical geography and its importance for analyzing regional history. Importantly, it has helped us in identifying potential zones of fertile tracts of the early settlements on a sub-regional level. In this context we have observed that settlement sites such as Badami, Pattadakal and Aihole of sub-region A and Alampur of sub-region C had emerged into prominence as temple sites much earlier, i.e., during the early Chalukyan period itself. This stands in contrast to the settlements of sub-region B, most of which had their origins during our period of study. With a large number of inscriptions and temple sites concentrated here for this period, we identified this area as the ‘nuclear’ area of our analysis as it afforded us with an immense potential to comprehend various structural forces at work. This also helped us explain how these factors gave an impetus in shaping the rural social formations in the newly emerging settlements of this tract. We then compared and contrasted these changes between the various sub-regions. We have further observed in this regard that the impact of the geographical configuration of the area under study can be seen considerably and most conspicuously seen in the nature of political power structure that evolved at this time.

We have, in this context, the Chalukyas of Kalyani as the most powerful main ruling dynasty for a major part of the period under (A.D. 973 - 1200) who were followed by the Kalachuris of Kalyana, Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra. Each of these ruled different parts of what we have described as south western Deccan and many of them naturally had

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control of territories outside this region as well. We have observed in this context that while basing themselves in the north of the river Krishna or, to the south of the river Tungabhadra, these rulers tried to wrest the control of the fertile tracts between rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. In the process they were involved in constant wars among themselves and with other powerful rulers too. In this context we have been able to surmise upon the fact that these urges of the rulers to gain vast stretches of fertile tracts must be linked up chiefly to the geographical configuration of the core areas controlled by the above mentioned dynasties which were either, mountainous or, plateau areas devoid of vast tracts of fertile land to enable a constant flow of agrarian surplus. On the other hand, the Raichur Doab being a fertile region, was frequently the bone of contention between the plateau kingdoms north of river Krishna and coastal kingdoms of south eastern India and they naturally had the desire to control the entire water way. It is chiefly in the processes of political control which the chiefs of the main ruling family tried to establish over their area of conquest that one can see the region, particularly sub-region B, of our study emerge as a zone of legitimation of political power. We have further been able to note in this context that nature of the political power structure exercised during the early medieval period has been for a long time conceptualized either in terms of centralized (in conventional historical writing) or, decentralized (the Marxist historical writing) notions of polity. It is only in the recent writings, particularly those of H. Kulke and B.D. Chattopadhyaya, that a positive process of state formation during this period has been shown for various regions in India. Importantly, they have put forth
the paradigm of looking at the nature of State formation in terms of integration of local bases of power into an overarching State system. It is in the light of these latter views that we have understood the above stated conquering dynasties as having established their rule in their areas of conquest in the first place through the encapsulation of locally entrenched powerful social groups. The local chiefs were integrated into the State structure by conferring upon them various titles of political status. We have pertinently observed in this regard that the emergence of a number of locally powerful ruling lineages on to the political scene coincided squarely with the period of the consolidation of Chalukyan rule in the context of sub-region B in particular. The vertical spread of such a state society has been clearly discerned by us through an analysis of the stratified social relations both at the local and the supra-local levels of their functioning which we have taken up for discussion in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter III (Social Context) of our thesis thus eventually focusses upon the changing nature of the hierarchical social relations established both at the dominant and the subordinate levels of the political, religious and economic contexts of our study. We have been able to arrive at certain crucial conclusions in this regard through the study of various terms used to describe these groups in the inscriptional sources. The mention of dominant social groups in the rural set up of the period has been made mainly as reflected through their political ranks in such terms as gavundas, pergade, heggade and so on. That these groups were not just political groups imposed
from above is underlined by the fact that they had also emerged as donors of various measurements of land in the respective local areas of their dominance. Thus, while the designations held by each of these groups indicate for us the political dimension of the nature of stratification, their capacity to make grants is indicative of the economic hold that these groups had to entrench their essential power as owners of land and its resources. Thus, the consequent social power held by the groups is indicated to us through the mention of family names emphasizing their hereditary and lineages ties in the context of description. We have further observed at this juncture that the socio-political relations of these groups at the local level of power did not remain static in nature. This is indicated to us by the fact that some members of these social groups were able to rise to the level of supra-local chiefs from their local roots of power. Thus, for example one of the early members of the family of Kadambas of Karadikal who has been referred to as a manneya, i.e., having politico-economic control over a group of villages in A.D. 1066, the same person in referred to as a mahamandalesvara, ruling over a larger territorial unit such as nadu ten years later in a record of A.D. 1077. Manneya, as is well-known, was a smaller office and the rise of this chief to the position of a mahamandalesvara was a clear indication of the rise in his status. We have discussed other similar examples in the chieftaincies of the Sindas, Haihayas and so on. It is interesting to note at this juncture that these supra-local chiefs, termed as mahamandalesvaras and mahasamntadhipatis began to figure actively in the inscriptive sources of our
study only from the middle of the 11th century. A.D. These chiefs held a position subordinate to the main rulers by owing allegiance to one or the other powerful dynasty and their rise to supra-local power from a local base clearly indicated for us that conferring titles on various locally prominent families by the chiefs of the main ruling family was a way through which they could be brought into the political hierarchy of the State.

In this chapter, we further discussed several references which alluded to the local potentates or, *mahamandalesvaras* trying to attain independent status of power at the regional level by claiming the status of the *maharajadhiraja*. Among these, the most prominent during this period are the Kalachuryas of Kalyani, Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra and the Yadavas of Devagiri who had been able to attain sovereignty towards the end of the 12th century A.D. It was however, pertinently noted by us, that these rulers did not have their origins in the area of our study. The apex of political power structure in these hierarchical political relations was thus represented by the chiefs of the main ruling family bearing the titles of *maharajadhiraja*, *Chakravarti* and so on.

We have seen in this regard that these groups, having their political hold over wider spatial parameters, had established varying degrees of subordinate relationships with the local and the supra-local levels of power. It was pertinently underscored by us in this context that the exercise of dominance in the area of conquest by the main ruling family depended upon several factors such as their ability to pool resources (military and economic), striking marital relations with
the supra-local chiefs, conferring titles or ranks on the locally entrenched powerful groups, employing members of their family as local chiefs and so on. All these we conclude had been crucial for the rise and consolidation of a regional state structure.

We move on in this chapter to discuss how the exigencies of the consolidation of politico-economic set up by various levels of state power, helped in generating an important community in the rural social sphere, namely, the brahmanas. Suffixes such as Chattopadhyaya, Bhattopadhyaya, Bhatta attached to the names of some of these brahmanas, particularly in the first half of the 11th century A.D., clearly indicated for us that these groups were brought from outside and settled in the rural space of the area under study. They were given grants of villages by the chiefs of the main ruling family to help them in a variety of ways in exercising their dominance at the political level. It also helped in increasing the agrarian base at the economic level and at the ideological level helped in providing legitimation. Consequently, we discussed that these brahmanas, also referred to as mahajanas, emerged as powerful land owning elites in the agrahara villages and were mentioned in the inscriptions, as donees, donors, witnesses, sellers, buyers of land and as protectors of grants. By the latter half of the 11th century A.D. We noted that the mention of the mahajanas as donees begins to be slowly out numbered by the mention individual non-Brahmana religious personages who had emerged as the most powerful section of the society owing to their proximity to the temple institution. The temples had,
during this period, emerged as the most crucial agent of legitimation in the hands of political groups. These new ideologues, designated as the *sthanapatis* and *mahasthanapatis* of these temples, we discussed, began to be closely involved in the maintenance, functioning and governance of the temples and thus, we further argued, that they began to emerge as major centers of political and economic power. This in turn, meant that these trustees of the temple grants became the singular most important socially powerful group by the beginning of the 12th century A.D.

Hierarchical social relations of the period, however, get heightened in the context of references made to various social groups who emerge in their economic capacity of functioning which we discussed next in this chapter. Among these, we first discussed the mention of such collective groups as the 60 *okkalu, ugraya, mel-sasivvaru* and so on who had figured as actually participating in various agricultural activities. Through the contextual references made to these groups we have been able to surmise upon their status as of peasant cultivators who enjoyed some sort of usufructuary rights over their area of cultivation. We have also been able to surmise in this regard, on the existence of certain servile sections of society who, however, are mentioned in the original sources in an extremely limited manner. Prominent among such references to the servile groups is the mention of the *bhrtya-dasivargga* (man and woman servants) who were said to be transferred along with the grants of land made to a temple. Along with this, significant allusions made to the existence of some
sort of forced labour through the use of the term *bitti* and these examples enabled us to conclude upon the existence of different types of servile groups catering to the services of dominant social strata. In particular, we have been able to conclude on a firmer basis on the subject status of the individual artisans who were mentioned as stone cutters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths and so on and whose services were crucial for the construction and maintenance of the temple institution. By using the term ‘subject’ essentially to indicate the dependent status of a person to which he was relegated by virtue of the restrictions imposed on him owing to his socio-economic condition, we have applied it only in relation to a certain category of artisans who functioned outside the guild organization and figured as dependent on the lords/mercantile groups for their existence. Importantly, on the basis of the relations of socio-economic interdependence established between these professional groups with their patrons (temple institution emerges as a major patron of a variety of these services in the context of our study), we had ventured to comprehend them in terms of *jajmani* relationships. In this regard we next discussed how almost a similar type of existence prevailed for a variety of cultural professional groups employed in the services of the temple institution and who were remunerated through various measurements of maintenance grants made through the temple establishment to which they were attached. The nature of grant made to these groups, we argued, attests to the presence of a distinct hierarchy among these groups.
Finally, we analyzed the hierarchical nature of relationships present among the artisanal groups who have been discussed in the inscriptions mainly through the mention of guild formations on the one hand, and on the other, through the contextual references made to some of the individual artisans who figure as enjoying an independent economic status. It is, however, only towards the beginning of the 12th century A.D. that we find various artisanal guilds emerging on a considerable scale and with increased prosperity. More importantly, we noted that guild formations figure prolifically in the context of the mercantile organizations in a variety of ways such as the nakaramu, nanadesi, tabuliga - 1000, Ayyavole - 500 and so on. On the basis of the nature of their references we have been able to conclude upon the fact that in the context of our study, the nakaramu emerge as representing the local market networks with agrarian moorings, and the others, figure more as supra-local trading units with wider networks of mercantile activity. Significantly, the fact that the trading groups during the period of study emerged out of a land owning stratum is firmly established through the nature of grants made by them in the context of their emergence as leasors of lands and importantly, through their close association with the families of the gavundas and, in certain exceptional cases, with those of the mahajanas.

A major conclusion that we arrived at in this chapter was to find the mention of various groups in the inscriptive sources invariably through the politico-economic status that they enjoyed in the functioning and governance of
society. This, we underline, did not in any way mean that their varna status was totally side lined. That varna was an implicit well recognized way of defining social status was most explicitly stated in the inscriptional sources by the importance given to the brahmanas on the one hand, and on the other, the urges of some of the local lineage groups to establish ksatrya status and the occasional mention of the candala as the menial category of society. At the same time, we argued that only taking into account the varna schema embedded in the Dharmasstra texts as a criteria for defining social stratification expressed in the formation of distinct peasant groups at the rural level, would preclude us from looking at the problem of regional specificity in social formations marked by the emergence of distinct socio-economic and lineage groups with firmly entrenched local affiliations. This is basically the reason why we have eventually attempted an analysis of various social groups as they are defined in their specific context of the prevalent economic structure. This is most clearly found in the data explicitly mentioned in the inscriptions rather than the varna terminology which is only occasionally used in them.

The next chapter of our thesis moved on to focus on the Economic Context (Chapter IV) in which the above discussed social groups interacted. In the inscriptional sources pertaining to our study, the economic transactions that have been referred to were inextricably related to various types of grants made to religious beneficiaries. In this context we have observed that there was a gradual shift in the predominance of grants of land made in the
beginning of our study to those of grants of various commodities and coins which began to be made by the latter half of 12th century A.D. Such a change in the economic structure, from a predominantly agrarian one to an economy based on commercial activity forms the basis for comprehending the changing social relations of the period under study. We have been able to arrive at a few major observations in this regard which are as follows.

Since it is the nature of rights held in land and their transformation affected through their grants to various beneficiaries that acted as the prime forces in the change of the economic scenario, we have initiated our discussion in this chapter with the question of land rights. We have been able to notice in this context that two principal categories of land holdings, namely beneficial and the non-beneficial emerge during the period of study. While the former were held by the brahmanas and temples, the latter were held by the rich peasant communities. It would be pertinent to state here that in the context of our study, among the recipients of beneficial tenures, it was the brahmanical temples that out number individual brahmana donees. This begins to happen particularly from the second quarter of the 11th century A.D. Grants to made to the religious donees were sometimes attached with extensive immunities conferring different kinds of economic, political and even juridical rights which tended to bestow almost total proprietary rights over the lands granted. In most of the cases, however, we noted that there immunities granted were limited to only revenue exemptions and, in some cases, the beneficial land holdings were even required
to pay a small amount of revenue to the state. That the non-beneficial holdings were subjected to normal governmental assessment is well attested in the inscriptive sources of our period. We have, in this context, mention of such revenue terms as *siddhaya, aruvana, pannaya, banniga-dere, biravana, manneya-dere, umbali* and so on which we discussed in detail as they were prominently mentioned in the records under study.

Further, we elaborated on the fact that there existed private ownership of landed property during the period under study which we found was well documented in the inscriptive sources. First, the main rulers and their family members emerge as holders of extensive rights over lands and villages under their direct control. Secondly, the local potentates such as the *mahamandalesvaras* emerge as the next important social stratum in terms of holding large measurements of landed property. A third strata of the land owning group that emerges throughout the period of study were the of local functionaries and it is characteristic of grants made by this group that they make them to the temple institution almost always in terms of lands and gardens. It was pertinent to underscore in this regard that the rights of sale, gift, enjoyment generally included among the vestiges of private ownership of property, were seen well exercised by various landowning groups. We have, in this context, references specifying the purpose for which the grants were made throughout the period of our study. This was particularly relevant to analyze the implications of the grants being made from the middle of the 12th century. AD.
In contrast to the non-beneficial tenures and the their individual character of landholdings we observed that the lands in the brahmadeyas were held in common and collective grants by the brahmana groups to the temples begins to increase by the end of the 11th century A.D. Thus, we argued that as a result of this trend, overtime, the resources of the brahmadeyas tended to move slowly to the local deities housed in the temple and this process occurred through the alienation of shares by individual brahmanas by granting them to the temple institution. We even have numerous instances of lands being sold by the mahajanas for purposes of making grants.

We came to the conclusion that one of the major implications of the land grants made throughout the period by various social groups was the enormous growth in the economic power of the temple institution which gradually began to play the role of the State in assigning collection of taxes and revenues and getting lands cultivated. It was also observed by us that primarily, the control and usage of labour for the effective use of lands for cultivation and other productive purposes, became a crucial factor in the exercise of dominance by the different types of landowners. In the absence of any direct reference made to the groups actually involved in the productive processes, we have been able to conclude upon their existence and their status in the context of the way agricultural production was carried out, from the analysis of the grant of privileges to the beneficiaries and from an analysis of the tax terms mentioned in the inscriptiveal sources. On this basis we have been able to allude to the
existence of a class of tenants, contract producers, hired labourers and those attached to the grants of lands made to the temples. Apart from the use of various kinds of labour and its management for increasing the productivity, the landlords, we have further observed, took important economic measures to improve irrigation techniques resulting in increasing construction of tanks. They also took keen interest to identify the types of soils and which crops could be effectively grown on them. These points are all mentioned while making the grants. The consequent growth in crop-production is clearly attested to and there is increasing mention to a variety of crops which give us an interesting picture of the changing agrarian scenario.

All these changing aspects in production relations and an improvement in agricultural techniques led to a production of surplus and its concentration in the hands of landowning sections. The next set of observations we made in this chapter was with regard to the results of increased agrarian production. A important tendency grew in which various social groups began to invest in trade and commercial activity. This, in turn, brought about a significant change in the socio-economic set up of the region under study. These processes began to gain a greater momentum from the middle of the 12th century. A.D. We noted a trend in the emergence of individual merchants and the consequent rise of mercantile bodies from among the landowning sections. This was clearly discernable from the beginning of the 12th century. A.D. which also saw a spurt in the mention of various commercial taxes and levies granted
to various temple institutions by the functionaries administering them. Significantly, increasing references were made to the grant of gold coins expressed through the terms *gadyana, pana etc.* in the inscriptions of the latter part of the 11th century A.D. and throughout the 12th A.D. This led us to conclude that there was a clear emergence of a monetized market economy, wherein even the revenue over land began to be charged in terms of *gadyanas or* coins. In this context we made significant note of an increasing reference to the minting establishments. Through a close analysis of the mercantile activity in the context of our study, we argued that the emerging economic scene betrayed signs of a limited nature of the urban phenomenon in the sense that the trading activity of the period was still in an incipient stage with the agrarian features juxtaposed closely with the commercial transactions. In such a situation one has attempted to characterize the commercial spurt in the area under study in terms of a stage in rural-urban continuum. We have pertinently underscored in this regard that with the gradual shift in the economic activity marked by a limited commercial growth, the temple emerges as a major consumer of various articles of merchandise. Coupled with this the temple also began to play the role of an employer for various artisanal and professional services performed in the temple precincts. Thus we conclude that the temple becomes the focal point for agrarian, commercial and artisanal production with social groups involved in various economic activities, all trying to seek validation by participating in the gift giving and temple management functions. We further concluded that the temple emerged as a centre of a complex of nucleated settlements. A comprehensive
understanding of all phenomena revolving around the temple was, however, next placed in its spatial dimension and then, in its ideological context. We focus on these aspects in our next two chapters namely, chapters V and VI of the thesis.

In Chapter V (Spatial Context) from the inscriptional sources of our study we have taken up the descriptions of various types of settlements that were mentioned. It has been noted by us that while at times, some of these settlements themselves form objects of grants, they were mostly described to us either, in the form of boundaries to land grants or, as the location for the grants of lands and other commodities made. We detailed in this chapter types of nomenclature used to describe the physical space during the period under study. In this exercise ur, grama, pura and pattana had figured prominently and were invariably mentioned as located in the context of the nadu, which has been explained by us as the broadest settlement unit. It was further elaborated that while the larger number representing nadus indicated a higher level in the settlement structure, the smaller number attached to them such as Mulugunda-12, Kisukad - 70, Bagadaga - 70, Kukkanuru - 30, Toragare - 60 and so on represented an intermediate stage of evolution of these settlement clusters. This, we argued, was a transition in the broad settlement area from a local to supra-local level and ultimately, leading to the formation of a region mostly expressed through such terms as Kuntala desa.
A major part of this chapter, however, was focussed upon a comprehension of the hierarchical nature of the settlement pattern been obtained by us through an analysis of the suffixes attached to individual settlements, coupled with the contextual references made to these in terms of the socio-economic activity operating in them. We noted that suffixes such as *palli, vada, ur, grama,* and *pattana* figure prominently in the context of settlement names. *Palli* we described, has been equated to mean a pastoral or tribal settlement, *vada* to mean an enclosure of a village *ur,* defined in the sense of planting new places and *grama,* equated to mean a village settlement perse, defined as referring to a consolidated agricultural community, distinguished from other types of settlement patterns. We argued that while all these terms could be used to define a broadly rural spatial structure the term *pattana* was the singular most important term used to describe a market place or, a prosperous city. Apart from a discussion of these suffixes attached to the spatial terminology which largely indicated for us the settlement character, we have also pertinently observed in this context that the usage of certain suffixes which primarily connoted the physical features of the locality or, the area to which they are attached. Thus, for instance, *gunda* in Nirugunda, *gere* in Purigere, *giri* as in Etigiri, *kallu* as in Koppakallu, *gola* as in Bennigola and so on were important place names defining the ecological context in which they were located. The terms *giri* and *konda* have been equated to mean a hill or
mountain, *kere* to mean a tank and *kallu*, denoting a stone was simply indicative of a stony or rocky nature of the place.

Thus, on the basis of a variety of contexts in which the settlements were mentioned in the inscriptions of our study, we have been able to surmise upon the fact that the normal rural or urban settlement is much too complex to be encapsulated by generic terms like *grama* or *pattana*. In such a situation we have observed that while the lines of demarcation between all these settlements cannot always be drawn with unequivocal sharpness, these could, however, suggest to us in broad terms, the potentiality of a settlement to evolve certain typical characteristics at a given point of time which did not remain static and definite. We have argued to show that they underwent significant changes in the nature of their organization through the influence of a host of factors. An analysis of the contextual references made to various settlements in the inscriptive sources has enabled us to conclude upon the fact that it is the *ur* and the *grama* suffixed settlements that stand out particularly in their richness and their complex settlement structure. Secondly, we have also been able to observe in this regard that a large majority of the settlements mentioned in the sources were rural in character and that only some of these gradually head towards an urban like environment by the latter part of the 12th century A.D. when they begin to be characterized as *pattanas*. It has further been noted by us that even the nature of rural space was changing over time. This, we noted, was possible to argue on the basis of an increase in the mention
of the names of various types of rural settlements which was strongly suggestive of a significant expansion, on the one hand, of the agrarian base. On the other, the fact that some of these were able to emerge to the forefront as important centres of temple settlements underlined the point that there was a significant improvement and increase in the agrarian production which enabled them to maintain various religious establishments on a considerable scale.

These changes have been explained by us as largely an outcome of the urges exhibited by rulers at various levels, who in exercise of their socio-political authority, tried to carve for themselves their spheres of politico-economic influence both at the local and supra-local levels of state power. Therefore, we have been able to argue in this regard that there was a prolific emergence of a particular settlement unit into an agrahara, rajadhani, nelevidu, bhatta-grama, mahagrama and so on in the fertile tracts of the area under study. The location of temple centres, depended in a large measure on the political initiative in this direction which often tended to coincide with the rise in the family of the ruling chiefs extending patronage to it. It is in these processes of political control that one has been able to crucially relate the emergence of some gramas as nodes in a cluster of rural settlements surrounding them such as Kukkanur - 30, Mulugunda - 12 and so on which again get interlocked with each other to form of supra-local territorial units such as the nadus marked, at every stage, by various levels of political authority. In this regard we have been able to surmise upon an exercise of basically three levels of political power over
the settlement structure under consideration. In this pattern the *gavundas* mark the primary stage of political authority, followed by the *manneyar* (ruling over several villages) at the secondary level and at the apex of the power structure emerged figure the main ruling family chiefs, who in the initial stages of our study (11th century A.D.) tried to appoint certain powerful chiefs from among their kith and kin.

By the turn of the 12th century A.D. we, however, see a distinct change in the exercise of political authority in the local bases of power, wherein the *manneya* now emerge as the supra-local chiefs and the *gavundas* still figure as an important socio-economic and political force to be reckoned with at the primary level of political power in rural settlements. A perceptible change can, however, be seen in the mention of several newly emerging functionaries with high sounding and compound titles who can be located between the supra-local and the local authorities as the representatives of the former. On the basis of the contextual references to the exercise of actual political authority held by these chiefs we have been able to surmise upon the fact that there was considerable amount of adjustment made between the supra-local and the local authority in sharing the political power over the rural space. In such a set up it was definitely the latter who had an edge over the former owing chiefly to their hereditary claims of economic power rooted at the local power structure. We thus conclude that in the light of the high degree of interaction that existed between various settlements established at the political, economic and social
levels of integration, represented by the *agraharas* and the temple settlements, comprehensions of the rural settlements of this period as insulated and closed from the outside world have no historical basis whatsoever. Therefore, the transformation of the physical space into a viable productive zone and its subsequent growth into an ideological space marked a crucial phase in the evolution of settlements structure during the early medieval period. It is in this wider context of spatial changes that we have attempted to comprehend the growth in certain pockets of commercial centres amidst the widespread prevalence of rural settlements as products of essentially the proliferation and expansion of agrarian settlements which was taking place on a considerable scale throughout the period of our study. This was marked by a simultaneous increase in the grants of land and villages on a significant scale to the temple institutions. We finally focus on all dimensions of this aspect in chapter VI of the thesis.

In Chapter VI (Ideological Context), we have essentially focussed upon the fact that to analyze the significant implications of the enormous growth in the socio-economic and political power in the temple during this period, one needs to take into consideration the crucial role of the ideological moorings conserved in them. This, we argue, is needed because they, in turn, had far reaching effects on the socio-economic change that marked the area of our study during the early medieval period. In the process of such a study we have been able to comprehend various significant issues related to the
legitimizing and the acculturating role of the temple institution at various levels of state and social structure. The interrelated aspects of such an analysis have also included a comprehensive understanding of the complex dimensions of ideological manifestations operating at such diverse levels as the religious, social, political and economic phenomena expressed, on the one hand, in the form of Puranic compilations, juxtaposed with Vedic rituals and varna ideology and, on the other, through the descriptions of genealogies embodied in the Prasastis of dominant social groups coupled with the imprecatory verses that provide another crucial dimension of the ideological process during this period.

As such, our study touched upon all the above-stated phenomena and this has enabled us to arrive at certain significant inferences in the context of the legitimizing role played by the temple institutions vis-a-vis their patrons who represented the hierarchical relations of the politico-economic structure of the period. First of all, we have observed in this context that the early medieval period was marked by a growth on the one hand, of an intense emotional bhakti to Siva or Visnu and on the other, of an outspoken hatred for the Buddhists and Jains. Particularly, the dominance exercised by the Saivite sectarian ideology of Kalamukha-Pasupata variety, through its organized monastic establishments attached to the temple institutions, can be considered to demonstrate, on a substantive basis, the operation of the actual socio-political processes. These, in turn, helped in the crystallization of several more varieties of Saivite ideology and also some forms of Saktism, Tantricism and so on which actually represented an absorption of local belief systems in the context of our study. We
have seen in this regard that the growth in the political hold of the local chiefs was marked by a proliferation of temple centres as well. As a crucial implication of this symbiotic phenomenon, we have been able to surmise upon the fact that the establishment of the temples was eventually a conscious effort initiated, in the first place, by various levels of ruling chiefs to provide an ideological dimension to their politico-spatial expansion and thus seek legitimation for the exercise of their politico-economic dominance over the local population. On the other hand, patronage extended to various Saivite institutions by different socio-economic groups such as the agriculturists, traders and the mercantile groups can be seen on an increasing pace around the beginning of the 12th century A.D. wherein the increase in the variety of the names of deities corresponded squarely with names of the social groups that installed them or patronized them. All these descriptions where clearly indicative of a significant expansion in the social base of temple patronage, which we argue, had crucial implications in the acculturating process operating on a simultaneous basis through the appropriation of the local cults and the consequent absorption of the local tribal groups at various levels of the social structure.

We have been able to identify these processes at three levels. Firstly, at the socio-religious level we saw such a process operating in the integration of the Kalamukha priests with their tribal ideological moorings into the vortex of the temple establishment wherein the tribal deities and the ideology that they represented had attained an institutional basis which began to gain
social recognition on a large scale by the middle of the 12th century A.D.. Further, at the political level we have been able to identify the processes of acculturation operating in the crystallization of various local lineages of power at the supra-local level of the state structure. This is revealed in the use of various totemic symbols on the one hand, and on the other hand, by them actively participating in the construction of temples. This normally coincided with the attainment of considerable political eminence by these locally entrenched ruling lineages. This has been considered by us as significant tendencies in a pattern of acculturation resulting largely out of the integrative mechanisms adopted by the dominant state system, represented by powers who came from outside, as did most of the main ruling families. At the other end of the social structure, we have reference to several pastoral/hunting groups who begin to emerge as patrons to certain temple institutions and thus represent yet another level of absorption of social groups into the politico-ideological mainstream. We have pertinently noted at this juncture that in the context of our study, we do not come across, on any considerable scale, the rise of local state structure to a regional level as has been witnessed in the case of Orissa during the early medieval period. On the other hand, the processes of local state formation in the context of study was only demonstrated in the rise of local chieftaincies from a local to supra-local level. It is in the hands of these rulers that the temple institutions emerge actively as tools of legitimation and integration. Another important conclusion we arrived at was that the chiefs of the main ruling family figure as
actively patronizing the Vedic belief system by indulging in elaborate Vedic sacrifices and creating *agraharas* and also extending support to the Vedic learning in the temple institutions. Thus, the support extended to these diverse belief systems, we have observed, enabled these rulers to claim a superior status in the eyes of the common people. We also noted that members of the main ruling families also patronized local beliefs of the areas under their control as their own. These two processes of integration can thus be considered to represent two sides of the same coin wherein a common platform for the fusion into a dominant ideology was being simultaneously created to evolve into a regional cultural matrix which operated at various levels of society. The *Prasasti* of the ruling groups and the imprecatory verses in the inscriptive sources, were the more authoritative mediums of expressing this application and operation of the dominant ideology over a pervasive and syncretic belief system.

On the basis of above discussions in each of the chapters of the thesis we have been able to arrive at the following conclusions on the nature of the socio-economic and politico-ideological structure of early medieval south western Deccan enabling us to complete this micro-level study on social stratification and rural settlements.

**We have** seen in our discussion that the period under study witnessed a highly stratified social structure at various levels of its socio-economic formation. We have attempted in an overall sense to draw attention to
the interpretative perspective that the nature of the polity and the dominant ideology of the time interacted with the social and economic system of the period in bringing about the particular character of social stratification. As has been already pointed out in the beginning of our discussions that the social groups involved in the administration of the period, had earlier been viewed either, in terms of belonging to a centralized bureaucratic structure by the conventional historians or, in terms of being feudatories in a decentralized polity trying to entrench themselves in the rural space by the Marxist scholars. We have, on the other hand, argued with the help of our study, that it were primarily the dominant social groups, located chiefly at the local and supra-local levels, that formed an integral part of the political power structure of the area under study. The land lords at the local level were able to exercise a great control over the population of their localities by virtue of their ownership of land and their subsequent involvement in the local political structure. It was these social groups who entrenched themselves in terms of the local and supra-local landed elite and who formed an integrated state structure of the period. This was done, mainly through the conferment of titles and ranks upon them by the main ruling family who needed a viable base at the local levels to maintain their political authority.

Towards the beginning of the 12th century A.D. we have found that more and more new terms emerge to describe the dominant social groups in the process of our study. This would then imply that new bases of power were
brought into the vortex of state structure by the main ruling family. Simultaneous
to this phenomena was the expansion in the economic and spatial milieu of the
social structure through the grants of land and villages by various levels of state
power. Apart from helping in the agrarian expansion and the strengthening of
the State system at the local levels, the religious beneficiaries of various grants,
also helped in the crucial process of acculturation. Thus, the enormous growth
in the Brahmanical temples as land lords significantly coincided in the context of
our study with the spread of the *bhakti* cults. Their success was much
dependent on the institutional base provided by the temple. The proliferation of
the local forms of *bhakti* ideology also had the support of the local bases of
power on an extensive scale and those of the main ruling family chiefs to a
limited extent. While we have argued that the latter were, unabashed patrons of
Vedic learning and religion. Changes in the social structure was primarily related
to the broader changes in the land relations, but at the same time, we cannot
conclude that the change was totally independent of the dominant ideology and
the political system of the time. Thus, it is the relationship between the
ideological and the material factors which enabled us to explain the totality of
societal organization and change. We wish to further state that in our efforts at
the identification of the elements responsible for social change and social
stratification, in the context of our study, we have been able to arrive at certain
crucial conclusions over various issues involved in the nature of state formation
and the shaping of the socio-cultural matrix at a regional level.
In this regard can conclude, first and foremost, that there was the crystallization of the elements of localism dominating the scene at various levels of the socio-economic and politico-ideological structures. We have observed in this context that despite the knowledge and experience in the varna based division of society as is represented through the significant mention of the brahmana varna followed by an occasional reference made to the ksatriyas Vaisyas and candala, the accent is, however, on the description of various social groups in terms of the familial affiliations they claimed, or, with the occupational status represented by them. We have in this context reference to such terms as the heggade, gavunda, manneya and so on who represent a nexus of the dominant politico-economic interests and the reference to various agriculturist/cultivating groups is made through the use of such terms as the okkala, ugura, mel-sasivvarua and so on and these social groups, with this particular terminology, can be only be identified on a regional basis. Similar is the case with the various artisanal groups such as the kammata, akkavole and the mercantile groups such as the nakara, tambuliga setti and so on who represented local artisanal and mercantile interests. It is these hard core categories of social divisions, rooted in the socio-economic ethos of their specific physical setting that provide us with effective clues to comprehend the hierarchical nature of regional social formations as they actually operated. Any attempts at comprehending these groups in only terms of the universal and bibliocentric categories of the varna divisions, which were based on an all India
level, would preclude us from comprehending the actual nature of their stratification. This, we argue, can be understood effectively through the references made to them in the context of their descriptions in the inscriptional sources which was very rarely done through the use of varna categories especially when local landowning peasant groups were being described. Thus, we conclude in this regard that, "normative values have to be juxtaposed with social reality". It is only then that the contribution of each aspect, i.e., caste (varna) and class will enhance the study of "alternative traditions" and provide us with a clearer image of what we regard as "established traditions". It is essentially being emphasized here that though varna may not have been an explicit category of description in the original sources, it cannot be ignored. At the same time, power and class cannot be undermined in assessing the nature of social stratification. We have further been able to conclude that the processes of local State formation were effectively demonstrated in the rise of local chieftaincies from a local to a supra local level as a result of their interaction with the dominant State system. Closely intertwined in these processes was the introduction of small scale irrigation systems by these elites which helped in the expansion of the productive base at the rural level and also the rise of various spatial units into clusters of settlements at the local and supra-local levels. All these were significant pointers to the efforts made by the local State system to improve and expand their politico-economic urges to gain an effective control over their localities.
Importantly, the elements of localism can be most effectively demonstrated in the processes of acculturation that operated at various levels of socio-political structure. We have been able to depict, in this context, that there were significant movements from the local levels which got precipitated in the formation of local lineages at the political level and in the absorption of various pastoral/hunting groups at the other end of social structure. Kalamukha priests representing various forms of local belief systems provide an excellent example of integrative processes operating at the local levels of State formation. In fact, the success of Saivism as the most popular form of ideological manifestation in the context of our study depended, to a large measure, on its ability to adapt itself to various local situations that cropped up in the positive expansion of the settlement patterns that matched with a corresponding increase of deities in the form of God Siva. However, it is in the context of the construction of temple institutions which acted as the mediating space in such an integration that we have been able to discern the operation of local State formation on a substantial level. We have observed in this regard that our area of study essentially witnessed the spurt in minor temples which prolifically dotted the map of the expanding agrarian base which was a product chiefly of local initiative. Forms of legitimation adopted by various rulers (including main rulers) have been understood by us as peculiar to the area of our study wherein the growth in the agrarian settlements and socio-economic power was still in an incipient stage marked by the strong influence of outside political powers such as the
Chalukyas of Kalyani, Kalachuris, Yadavas of Devagiri, Hoysalas and so on. We wish to reiterate here what we had stated in an earlier chapter that it is chiefly in the efforts made by these rulers to carve for themselves productive zones of surplus appropriation in the area under study, particularly in sub-region B which was marked by riverine fertile tracts that this emerges as a zone of legitimation. It is not surprising therefore, that this sub-region also sees the rise of several locally entrenched families at various local and supra-local levels. It was eventually these chiefs who participated in the temple building activity and the extensive patronage networks. We also conclude that the ever changing pattern of various dimensions of the regional culture cannot be studied totally independent of the changes at the pan-Indian level. We have seen that the formation of the region was a result of the fusion of both the internal and external stimuli of change represented by the urges to the claim to brahmana status by the Kalamukha priests as has been noted in the suffixes of their names such as Pandita, Acharya and so on. As the supra local, the occasional attempts at claiming ksatriya status and the patronage extended to Vedic learning in the temple institutions by the main ruling family chiefs are all manifestations of such a cultural fusion in which regional elements begin to take shape through local assimilation as well as through the adoption of trans-regional idioms.³

Our major contributions in terms of historical research have been basically at two levels----empirical and theoretical. At the empirical level we
have been able to expand the data base of our knowledge by using hitherto unresearched material. These sources have been critically analyzed and presented through well-formulated charts. At the theoretical level we have been able to view the social change as emerging out of an interaction of a host of historical processes that cannot be viewed as independent of each other as determinants of any historical change.

The empirical contribution of this study are new in the way. They have been presented and in the extent to which the minutest details have been highlighted. Some of the earlier published epigraphs had been used for reconstructing a political history of this region as part of the larger territorial entities or in the form of political dynastic history. Our study has shown that even the most conventional understanding of history in terms of political history should be done to highlight the political exigencies and imperatives at the local level. It is the rural elite emerging from small localities primarily as owners of land that ultimately forge ties with supra-local and regional levels of power to give a particular character to State formation. Similarly, in conventional historiography large temples have been studied in all their grandeur detailing the magnificence of their architectural members. In contrast to this our study has contributed to an understanding that the temple has to be seen as much a part of the economic and social history as it has been of the religious and artistic history of early medieval times. This could once again only be done by moving away
from major temple sites and looking at even the small localities where temples were located to ultimately view them in relationship with each other.

Most of our endeavours in writing this regional study were possible because we methodologically chose to divide the whole into three sub-regions for enhancing the empirical specificity. This we suggest in a major contribution of our study because when linked to our seminal understanding of the importance of historical geography, it enabled us to present elements of both homogeneity and heterogeneity for almost all aspects of social, economic, spatial and ideological analysis. Thus, while staying close to the descriptive dimensions at the beginning of each chapter we found difference of terminology and nomenclature, and more pertinently, of quality and size confronting us. We have been able to present these variations, at a glance in the charts accompanying each chapter. Though, we must admit, that we set out do to this exercise to look for uniform variables within sub-regions and across sub-regions.

Our efforts at theoretically enriching the debates in historical scholarship, first and foremost, hinge on our contribution of looking closely at part of the a period of transition commonly known as the early medieval. Undoubtedly, the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. witnessed changes which we consciously chose to focus on as important markers of this transition. Thus throughout each chapter we contrast the 11th century conditions from the 12th century ones to comprehend this specificity. Change in time was most clearly visible on the surface manifestations of economic and political activity. Thus,
we have argued how the totally agrarian milieu of the 11th century gave way to an urban Hike environment in the 12th century, and on the political front, this saw the assertion of local chieftaincies and powerful landed and commercial elites who entrenched their hold over localities with greater certainty in the 12th century. Though social and ideological change is less crystallized in perceiving it, nonetheless our method of viewing this from the perspective of changes in settlement hierarchy enabled us to conclude on a qualitative change from the 11th to 12th centuries in these two aspects of historical transition as well. It would be pertinent to state here that while Vijayanagara rule over this area of study has been much researched, our contribution to highlighting the above-mentioned changes in pre-Vijayanagara times would positively contribute to enhancing the historical discussions of transition from early medieval to medieval.

This leads us on to the final point we wish to make. It is well recognized that India is a country where multiple layers of regional identity are preserved and conserved. However, it is often enoveously projected that these identities only emerged out of conflict and thereby, have to be maintained as such by highlighting their unique qualities, generating at times, on the negative sides, elements of parochialism and isolationism. Our study has theoretically argued that regions gain their particular identity as much due to conflict, as they do because of interchange of ideas and integration of values. Whereas, the former was necessary to define the acquisitors of power at the rural levels in
terms of stratified relations of dominance and sub-ordination, the latter enabled a cohesiveness to develop linking up the south western Deccan effectively to the Indian civilizational ethos. Secondly, pre-modern India is most frequently projected as being overtly spiritual and therefore, unable to define space for the operation of the political and economic spheres of activity. Theoretically, we have vindicated this stand to argue vehemently that the ideological and material forces in pre-modern India were so inter twined that to separate the secular from the religious domains of activity would miss the complex texture of specific historical reality in the innumerable regions of India. Whereas, our study of a region is apparently an attempt to separate, our concern to highlight the positive forces of integration has been to consciously focus on the inseperability of the profane and the material pillars of India's total past.
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