INTRODUCTION

AND

SOURCES
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While quoting one of the school boy rhymes 'Geography is about maps, History is about chaps', Sabyasachi Bhattacharya ¹ was underlining a very important point that no longer can history and geography be understood as two separate disciplines and entities. Historians have today come to willingly accept the inter-disciplinary approach for achieving a broader and total view of historical reality though some would argue, that this need not necessarily be the most objective. Hitherto, in these exercises into inter-disciplinarity, the relationship of history and geography has, at best, been one of a ritual introductory necessity rather than of being central to the historical analysis. A major departure in this regard has been the valuable contribution of scholars like Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloc who, as major initiators of this trend in the historiography of the 'Annales' school, laboured consciously to make historical geography as central to their analysis of bringing about total history in the context of rural France.² However, as rightly pointed out by Baker, history is still given to play a superior role in this interpretation because it is endowed with the ability to synthesize³ and explain historical patterns, processes and structures of the human interactions with physical space.

From our point of view the interpretative direction given by the 'Annales'¹ school has become the motive for us to take up a regional study for historical analysis because it is in this arena alone that the right balance between the role played by physical space and human time in understanding the past can best be highlighted. This has necessarily entailed a moving away from the stage of a study of the rise and fall of

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historical empires in broad scales of time to the smaller localities of village settlements which, over lesser time spans, saw the rise and fall of rural elites in terms of their relationships to each other as also with their subordinate co-habitants. It would have been simple enough for us to narrate the local events in a linear fashion and end up with multiple strands of political histories each relevant in its own right. However, instead, we found it challenging to take up the historical aspect of highlighting social change in a spatial context which was rural but always in interaction with the larger geopolitical dimensions of its existence. Therefore, in the following pages of this thesis we endeavour to place the complex texture of social stratification as continually changing in time against the backdrop of a physical space that was also dynamic and changing because of its interaction with the former. It is the inseparability of these two variables — time space — of historical analysis that hinges on all our discussions in the following chapters of this thesis.

Historical research undertaken by us in the present study essentially aims at an analysis of stratified social relationships as arising out of the interaction between the material and the cultural variables located within specific parameters of time (1000 A.D. - 1200 A.D.) and space (South Western Deccan). Our choice of the study of society has been prompted by the fact that social groups and their relationships are the ultimate expression of an interplay of the structural phenomena (social, economic, political and ideological) of any given culture and these afford us with an effective perspective to analyze several issues crucial to our comprehension of historical reality. We have found in this context that the early medieval period (of which our period of study forms a crucial part) affords us a potential ground to realize our aim since it has been identified in Indian history as an important phase of transition from the ancient to
the medieval, with fundamental changes having occurred in the social, economic, political and ideological arenas during this period.\footnote{In such a study an analysis of the relationship of the changing social structure to its physiographic setting is fundamental to our comprehension of the larger issues at stake, namely, the historical processes of State formation. Such a realization is an outcome of our understanding that it is basically the interaction of society with its natural surroundings that chiefly motivates the development of the economy in the first place, resulting in the specific formation of the socio-economic and cultural setup in a particular way for any given human settlement. Importantly, we have attempted to show that while changes in social structure are fundamentally related to the changes in land relations at the economic base we cannot, at the same time, establish that the social and economic change was totally independent of the dominant ideology and the nature of polity of the time. We argue in this context that the economic base itself was relational to change due to the social and political forces under operation which were expressed through the formation of kin groups, marital relationships established within them, wars fought by them, forms of legitimation adopted by them and so on. All these helped in unleashing forces of a religious and political dimension which, in turn, had a very significant impact on defining the nature of socio-economic change.}

We have further observed in this regard that the above phenomena have to be posited against the backdrop of a rural spatial setting. The primary and crucial stages in the growth and spread of settlements, both horizontally and vertically, at times led to either, the formation of an important node in the cluster of settlements
surrounding it or, more often, signified a specific stage in the growth of rural settlement hierarchy. This has significant implications for our comprehension of historical change during the period of transition which is under scrutiny. Such a study would entail an analysis of not just the nature of social relationships established at the level of intra and inter settlement patterns, but more importantly, the variability of the concomitant social formations at every stage of the growth in settlement structures sub-regionwise. Thus, an examination of rural social relationships would enable us to strike at the very roots of historical change, and enable a comprehensive understanding of historical reality at the micro level. This has encouraged us to demarcate new regional and social boundaries of research particularly in relation to the study of state and society which defy any universalization of specific structural formations.

Hitherto, the major focus of historical analysis has been either, the northern part of India constituting the Gangetic basin as the core or, the extreme South constituting the Kaveri basin as the core.\(^5\) This approach largely keeps in tune with the general trend of a greater emphasis invariably being laid on writing the history of "nuclear" areas.\(^6\) Historiographical attention on the Deccan in a similar way has been dependent largely upon the degree of eminence that each of the physiographical entities that were part of it have achieved, corresponding to specific periods of historical time. Thus, north western Deccan and eastern Deccan, during the early historical period, have attracted the attention of scholars owing to the large scale socio-economic development under the rule of the Satavahanas and the Ikshvakus. Similarly, the Vengi region, with its core in the deltaic zone of Coastal Andhra had been a considerable area of attraction due to its fertility and thus, during the early medieval period it had emerged
as a region of strategic and economic importance to become a widely contested area in history. Therefore, this part of the eastern Deccan came into historiographical prominence for the early medieval period too.

The south western region of the Deccan, which does not fall under the category of a 'nuclear' area has not attracted much historical scholarship in terms of the identification of its elements and nature of change for the early medieval period. This part of the Deccan which is substantially covered by the Raichur Doab, was an actively contested area under the Vijayanagara rulers but even this extremely fertile and strategic zone has, in a large measure, stood neglected in the historical scholarship of the early medieval period. When it did figure in the conventional historical literature as part of the Karnataka State or, at times on history of the state of Andhra Pradesh, it was largely projected either, as a warring zone or, was subsumed under the general descriptions of issues focussed elsewhere. Thus, the writing of chronologies, genealogies, political history and also, the social and economic aspects of it, have been worked upon from the inscriptive sources of this region from a descriptive point of view. However, information on how different social groups were integrated into the administration and the complex fabric of the socio-economic life has been left out or have been treated only marginally. For instance, when G.R. Kuppuswamy, while writing the economic history of the entire state of present day Karnataka for the early medieval period, opines that "some of the geographically unprotected but fertile regions such as Raichur district were more vulnerable to attacks and were often drenched in blood as a result of the violent rivalry between the empires", he is focussing primarily on the how this economically viable zone was mainly the focus of military activity. On the other
hand, cognizance has been taken of by various scholars on describing, to a certain extent, the temples located here.

This neglect has prompted us to take up the south western Deccan as our specific area of study as much remains to be done on identifying crucial elements of historical change in this region. Also, as mentioned above, if importance has to be given to historical geography in our analysis the choice of the south western Deccan as the specific area of historical analysis during the early medieval period stands justified because of its unique geographical situation and ecological features. This poses a requisite challenge for historians who wish to highlight geographical specificity in time. By taking up this study of an area, at a period of time when it had not emerged into prominence in terms of either, the rise of a large empire or, in terms of the attainment of a high degree of socio-economic development and advancement, we are doing away with the general trend of writing history which normally tends to focus upon 'nuclear' and by extension much researched areas of historical study during periods which usually coincide with the rule of great empires. In particular, the rise in importance of the Raichur Doab during the Vijayanagara period adds particular relevance to the present study. This is so because, since our focus is on the early medieval period prior to Vijayanagar rule, we can examine various ingredients of the historical processes that provided the crucial background for the rise and development of this area to become a viable zone of contestation and political focus during later medieval times. Further, this was not unrelated to the economic changes in the Raichur Doab during the early medieval period which was closely dependant on the spread of rural settlements located here prior to the period of Vijayanagara rule. Its location
strategically between two major rivers, namely the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, has been studied by us in relation to its contiguous areas as part of the region defined by us as south western Deccan in order to compare and highlight the economic potential of this particular sub-region vis-a-vis the other two.

In doing so we wish to emphasize a significant historiographical departure. Surely, the present micro level study is a regional history and if we must accept the well formulated consensus amongst scholars that "regions are — products of history", it is best that we identify and recognize the most meaningful territorial entities for historical analysis. The way we have proposed to do this in the following pages of this thesis is to identify regions as closely as possible to their technical geographical character, not simply in terms of their homogeneity but, also in terms of their heterogeneity since the former is never absolute. Secondly, we have made a conscious attempt at underlining the features of historical continuity from one phase of the region's development to another so that here again, there is no erroneous impression left that regions are static in time. The boundaries of a region, are thus not rigid and may shift from time to time. However, if we are able to grapple with its historical specificity in terms of an appropriate level of spatial and political, economic and cultural homogeneity, this would enable us to move away from a parochialization and regionalization of history, and then the historian's construction of 'regions' is a positive endeavour. It allows a healthy possibility of exploring the historical interplay between economic, social, political and cultural factors at the micro level. By not adhering to a single administrative boundary giving preference to one region over the other, by not accepting a given ethnic criteria for defining our region of study and by not highlighting
the political boundaries of one particular political dynasty of the past as the boundaries of our research subject, we hope to have been able to give direction and move away from such negative phenomena as 'regionalism' and 'communalism' that are used to define regions.

Our area of study (Map I) in terms of its present day administrative boundaries of modern India's linguistic states constitutes the eastern part of the Dharwar district, the southern parts of the Bijapur and Gulbarga districts and the entire Raichur district located in the Karnataka State and the western part of the Mahaboobnagar and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh. To overcome the rigid linguistic boundaries of consideration we have further attempted to classify our area of study into three subregions (Map II) which correspond largely to the local topographical variations. On this basis we have been able to identify potential zones of fertile tracts of early settlements at the micro level of space. 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 historical prominence as temple sites much earlier to our period of study, i.e., during the sixth century itself. This stands in contrast to the settlements of sub-region B which constitutes largely the Raichur Doab, including the eastern part of Dharwar district, most of which have their origins during our period of study. With a large number of inscriptions and temple sites concentrated here, we have taken up this area for special focus and discussion in our analysis as it affords us with an immense potential to comprehend various dimensions of rural social formations located within specific parameters of time (1000 A.D. - 1200 A.D.). Further, recent spurt of micro level studies conducted with a non Marxist approach for various regions of
MAP I

INDEX

AREA OF STUDY

BAY OF BENGAL

GUJARAT

MAHARASHTRA

ORISSA

ANDHRA PRADESH

KARNATAKA

TAMILNADU

ARABIAN SEA

INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Style</th>
<th>Legend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>AREA OF STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashed</td>
<td>BOUNDARY OF MODERN STATES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>RIVER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AREA OF STUDY
India have shown how positive processes of state formation took place during the early medieval period to give rise to the multiple regional identities that India is composed of today. Importantly, these writings have put forth the paradigm of looking at the nature of state formation in the regions in terms of an integration of local bases of power which led to the emergence of overarching state systems. This moves away from the view that the rise of regional kingdoms in the early medieval period should only be understood in terms of decentralization of a pan-Indian polity and therefore, state apparatus being imposed from above. It is in the light of the former view that we wish to align ourselves in conducting this regional study of state formation as representing a stratified social set up which was very much dependant on the spread of rural settlements. The ultimate aim in this thesis is to analyze the extent to which one can identify the factors that gave birth to a certain kind of social stratification and the reasons for the spread and development of rural settlements. The answer to both these agendas would enable us to define the particular nature of the growth of a regional identity in all its amplifications.

In order to tackle the complexities of social stratification and rural settlements in the context of our study, we have mainly relied upon the inscriptional sources of the period belonging to and issued by such dynasties as the Chalukyas of Kalyani, the Kalachuris of Kalyani, the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra and innumerable local ruling families who ruled different parts of the south-western Deccan between the period 1000 A.D. - 1200 A.D. A majority of the inscriptional data available to us for our area of study is in the Kannada language and characters which have been edited and some of them have been translated. Apart
from the Kannada inscriptions we have also used inscriptions in this thesis belonging to the Telugu and Sanskrit languages. We wish to underline in this regard that we have had to go beyond the published material and access the transcripts of insciptional sources available at the Department of Epigraphy, Archaeological Survey India, Mysore and the State Department of Archaeology and Museums, Hyderabad. Particularly those belonging to the Raichur district have not been published in the same organized manner as those belonging to the Dharwar and Bijapur districts of Karnataka. Similarly, the materials for the early medieval period in the western part of the Kurnool district and Gadwal taluq in the Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh were found to be extremely scanty. It was difficult to locate any inscriptions in the Raichur taluq.

A majority of the inscriptions examined by us have, however, been collected from the major epigraphic journals/annual reports: (i) Annual Reports on South Indian Epigraphy (ii) Epigraphia Indica, (iii) Epigraphia Andhrica (iv) South Indian Inscriptions (Bombay - Karnataka series) (v) Indian Antiquary (vi) Hyderabad Archaeological Series (vii) A.P. Government Archaeological Series (viii) Karnataka Inscriptions (ix) Journal of Karnataka Historical Research Society (x) Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society (xi) Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain (xii) Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society (xiii) A Corpus of Inscriptions in the Kannada Districts of Hyderabad State, (xiv) Copper Plate Inscriptions of A.P. State Museums. These inscriptions have been collected and edited since the year 1894 by eminent epigraphists like J.F. Fleet, Lionel D. Barnett, R.G. Bhandarkar, S.K. Dikshit, G.S. Gai, P.B. Desai, R.S. Panchamukhi, N. Lakshminarayana Rao and Krishna Sastri. As aids to further understanding the particular meaning of terms, D.C. Sircar's monumental work, Epigraphical Glossary (Delhi, 1966) and K. Ishwara Dutt's Inscriptional Glossary
of Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, 1967) have been drawn upon. In particular, to aid our translations of the Kannada terms in the inscriptive sources of our study, we have made use of Kittel's Kannada - English Dictionary (London, 1894). We have made use of these sources in particular to understand the literal meanings of various terms mentioned in the above inscriptions. Literary sources have only been marginally used mainly to draw upon the legal rules pertaining to property relations.

The inscriptive sources of the early medieval period are nothing but legal documents recording the dominant economic activity of the period, namely, the land transactions. In the process we get to know about various social groups through the functions they performed and the rural settlements in the context of how and where these grants were made. We are well aware that the inscriptive sources available to us do not give any direct information regarding such issues as the nature of subjection of certain social groups we wish to enquire into. Further, not all aspects of social stratification or rural settlements are available in these sources in an explicit manner. This warrants, on our part, a critical and thorough analysis of the data available so as to delve into the implicit context of the source as a whole. We have further been cautioned in this regard that "inscriptions by their very nature tend to cause the historian to lay disproportionate stress on the institutions which house them namely the temples". In fact, it would be a truism to state that any historical fact whether literary or, epigraphic including archaeological, cannot totally escape from some element of subjectivity. In our opinion, it is the approach or, the methodology adopted by the researcher that conditions the interpretation of the source and not vice-versa. We have found in the process of our study that the availability of a large majority of the data
in the temple institutions itself is a significant pointer to the importance attached to the
temple at a time when the temple building activity and the temple as an ideological
institution was just gaining a concrete shape. Its popularity, at least among the
dominant strata of the social groups, for various reasons described in the text cannot
be sidelined as of no consequence to the larger issues at stake. But, this does not in
any way mean that the entire economic and social activity during this period was
temple-centric. That there did exist a productive social base outside the temple
institutions which can be culled out through the projection of the dominant economic
activity itself in the context of various grants made to the temple. For example, in the
case of a majority of commodities granted one can clearly gauge the crucial
involvement of social groups who have not been mentioned in the inscription but who
were clearly involved in the actual production of the commodities thus mentioned.
Further, occasional mention of certain names of subject peasantry, or, the pastoral and
hunting groups provide significant clues to comprehend several issues not directly
related to the temple institutions from the inscriptive sources located in temples. It
has been aptly and pertinent stated with regard to the nature of source material
available for the early medieval period in India that a "document of the kind of the
Fournier Register, on the basis of which Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie reconstructed the
fascinating profile of peripheral village society in medieval France, is simply unavailable
for a researcher on early medieval India". In the face of these serious limitations, one
is left with no choice but to make use of the inscriptive data in the best possible way
to get across the historical reality during the early medieval period. It may also be
stated at this juncture that these inscriptive sources are far more pervasive than
individual historical chronicles and biographies. This is so mainly because of their
distribution at various places. Often, their location in very small temples located in hitherto unknown village settlements sheds considerable light on the history of these small localities. Also, given the lack of historical literature for India as a whole, the inscriptions provide some of the rare data on linear historical events which would otherwise not be available for historical enquiry at all.

We have proposed to carry out our analysis of the insciptional data at three levels. As a part of the first level of the data analysis we have taken up the following tasks.

Ia: First of all, in order to cull out the requisite information from the inscriptions, we have charted out what the inscriptions directly tell us on the basis of the main themes of analysis relating to the social, the economic, the spatial and the ideological. This information has been plotted out in charts accompanying the four chapters on these themes. The charts on social groups (I A B C) entitled 'Social Context' mainly depicts various terms used in the insciptional sources to describe them in the context of their political, economic and religious functioning. As such we have divided them on the basis of their roles as the main ruler, local potentate, state functionary, brahmana, mahajana, cultural groups in the temple and peasants. These are the column headings given for this particular chart. Further, their mention in the capacity of donors and donees which forms a crucial clue to comprehend the economic, political and ideological power of these social groups has also been taken into account and marked out in the chart. To comprehend the economic aspect (II A B C) entitled 'Economic Context' of our study we made charts on the basis of the context in which the grants were made which includes the information in the various columns in this
chart on the nature of grants made and various immunities attached to the grants. Coupled with this basic information, reference to revenue terms and taxes and the irrigation works have been taken note of. We have depicted all these against the columns on donor and donee so as to comprehend the status and the nature of the social groups in the larger economic setting.

Thirdly, to comprehend the physical space (III A B C) entitled 'Spatial Context' we have charted out the names of places and the categories which these belong to, indicated through the suffixes attached to them, such as palli, vada, ur, grama and so on. Along with this information delineated in the columns of this chart through appropriate symbols, the contextual references of the space, whether rural or, urban, and the special status some of these were accorded, such as agrahara, marked by the existence of temples in them, have been marked out in the chart so as to get a comprehensive understanding of the nature of space. Finally, the charts on ideology (IV A B C) entitled 'Ideological Context' have taken into account various aspects of the role of the temple and religious activity during this period. Importantly, we have attempted in these charts to list the patrons corresponding to the objects of their patronage such as the temples/deities, Vedic learning, priests and sects. Coupled with this information the specific purposes of the patronage extended to such aspects as the repairs and the construction of temple institutions, rituals and festivals performed in the temples and the names of various cultural groups involved in the services of the temple have been mentioned. Further, we have made use of common symbols (given at the end of each chart in the form of a Key) of various types to represent the data on hand so that the dominant trends of our analysis are indicated through a perusal of
information across the different charts. We wish to underscore in this regard that having divided our study into various themes and categories, we do not however, propose to study these issues in compartments, independent of each other. All the above aspects have been integrated and correlated with each other in order to get a comprehensive picture of various dimensions in the textual analysis.

Ib: For the management of the inscriptional data thus chartered out we have made use of the computer. We have chalked a programme to enter all the above-mentioned direct data available from inscriptions into the computer. This has been then sorted out on the date and sub-regional basis to get a pattern of sequential analysis of the issues, both in terms of chronology and regional specificity.

II: At the second level our endeavours in depicting the inscriptional data in the form of various charts has been a natural corollary to our wider intention of comprehending the heterogeneity embedded in the inscriptional source as a whole. Thus we have basically attempted here to break the totality of the epigraphic source into various fragments of information with the hope that it would enable us to look even at the minutest details available in the sources. This is against the background of the first level of analysis which was divided into four categories of information such as the social, the economic, the spatial and the ideological. To further comprehend variations within each of the columns in these categories, we have divided it into several more pieces of information. This has been done because inscriptions do not give a uniform pattern of supplying information. Thus for example, to understand various aspects of social stratification on dominant groups, the different designations and the names of the
individual persons/groups of persons that denotes either their political, economic or social status have been used for classification. On this basis we have been able to olassify the data on social groups into those belonging to the apex of the political structure such as the main ruling family chiefs designated mostly as through such terms *maharajādhiraja*, who are then followed by the local potentates or, the supra local ruling groups designated through such terms as the *mahamandalesvaras* who are then followed by a variety of local level functionaries known through such terms as *gavundas, heggade, pergade* and so on. Similarly, social groups mentioned in the context of their religious dominance have been comprehended separately under the category of the *mahājana*, various *non-Brahmanical* religious heads and so on. On similar lines, the direct information available for the individual/groups of artisans and the merchants groups who represent a socio-economic category, has been taken into account separately. Peasant groups represented through their corporate organizations have again been separated from other social groups. Finally the socio-cultural groups operating in the service of the temples have also been taken into account separately.

The data available for the *economic structure* for the period under study has been broken up into various pieces of information available for the nature of the grants made such as those of the land, villages, commodities cash, gold, revenue and so on. Information available on the nature of soils, irrigation system and the immunities attached to the grants have been picked up simultaneously as depicting different strands of the nature of economy during the period of study. Next, we have to comprehended the nature of space/settlement unit in as small a unit as possible. We have thus divided the nomenclature available for settlements into various categories of
suffixes such as the *palli, vada, Or, grama, pura, pattana* and so on which has enabled us to graphically present the variety of ways through which physical space was conceived of during the period under study. Similarly, information available on the ideological dimension of the period has been classified into headings largely depending on the context in which it was mentioned. To list the various parts of the information available on ideology the names of various deities housed in the temple, local sects and priests, vedic learning and rituals performed in the temples, social groups involved in temple functionary have all been minutely charted out. Through such a categorization we have attempted to comprehend the specific nature of information available to us which is strongly suggestive of the complex nature of the data on hand.

Thus with the help of various designation and titles mentioned in the context of the social groups, we have been able to comprehend the basic levels of hierarchy present in them. Similarly, the specific nature of the grants made, depict the nature of the economic structure. On the other hand, various names of the places attached with a variety of suffixes highlight the multiple nature of settlement structures present in the area of our study. Similarly, one has been able to gauge in clear contours the heterogeneous belief systems present at this time with the help of the specific names of Gods, sects and priests that emerge at this level of data analysis. In particular the changing nature of all these aspects has been observed by us by positing them in chronological parameters. We wish to clarify at this juncture that we do not however, intend to take up the study of above elements as rigid entities totally divorced from each other. Importantly, we propose to comprehend these in close relation to each piece of information located within each broad category, which is then crucially linked up to the context in which all the above data finds mentioned. Thus, the fragments of
inscriptional data when tied up to each other and viewed in relation to their contextual mention, form the totality of the source and thus becomes crucial in reconstructing the specificities in historical formation.

III: As a part of the third level of data analysis we have therefore attempted an analysis of various terms culled out from the inscriptions under study and charted out as mentioned above at the first and second level of analysis. This has been done by correlating the direct information given to us through the inscriptions and understanding the contextual meaning of the various social groups and settlements. This had necessarily to be done in the light of what other scholars have written on the meaning of various terms as often, there are no single and absolute clearly acceptable meanings agreeable to everybody. This has further led on to arriving at certain conclusions over various issues of our study which differ in many ways from what earlier historians have written about the aspects taken up for study in this thesis. These conclusions have been elaborately presented at the end - Recaptulation and Conclusions so as to make a significant contribution to the existing state of knowledge on the subject.

First and foremost, to embark on this task we have, in Chapter I: Historiographical Context, ventured to point out the existing lacunae and question some of the existing methodological biases. A large part of this chapter deals with outlining the historiographical positions taken by earlier scholars. We have chosen to discuss these under four themes: society, economy, rural space or village communities and ideology. While attempting to test the specific data of the region under study with
generalizations made by R.S. Sharma on the nature of the land grant economy, we propose to emphasize upon the study of the stratified society of the early medieval period, not merely in terms of descriptions of various social groups as determined by their economic status in the rural milieu of the period. But more importantly, we wish to align ourselves with the micro level studies conducted within a non-Marxist approach for various regions of India which have emphasized upon positive process of state formation during the early medieval period. It is pertinent to underscore at this juncture that this view describes society in terms of an integration of local bases of power into overarching state systems. It is against the background of these views delineated in this chapter that we wish to conduct this study as representing a stratified social set up of the rural settlements located at the level of a specific micro region within a small chronological parameter of 1000 A.D. to 1200 A.D. We have accepted in this regard to term this period as being part of what today scholars have defined as the early medieval period.

In Chapter II: Geo-Political Context we intend to elaborate upon the impact of the geographical configuration of our area of study which can be seen most conspicuously in the nature of the political power structure that evolved at this time. The rulers of the main ruling dynasties while basing themselves outside the area delineated for study, tried to control the fertile tracts between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. It is chiefly in these 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 south-western Deccan emerge as a zone for the legitimation of political power. It is in relation to these processes of state control exercised over the local bases of power
that we shall try to correlate and integrate our analysis which primarily hinges on the theoretical stand taken by us that the social groups and their relationship to rural space was defined, to a large extent, by the existing geographical configurations. This chapter thus highlights the political levels of power structure which we intend to show was a necessary background for a study of several crucial issues regarding the social relations in the rural space. We highlight this against the background of recent writing on state-formation for the early medieval period.

Having outlined the regional dimension of local state formation in relation to our specific micro level space located within specific parameters of time (1000 A.D. - 1200 A.D.) we next proceed to discuss the main body of the thesis in terms of how, given the intersection of time and space outlined in Chapter II, the specific forms of socio-economic and cultural formations emerge. All these aspects have been linked up by us to the pan-Indian cultural matrix as the formation of the region was not taking place in total isolation to the general trends in the socio-economic and cultural changes of the early medieval period on the Indian sub-continent as a whole.

We have, in Chapter III: Social Context, proceeded to comprehend the nature of social stratification as constituting relations of dominance and subordination which, we argue, are expressed in different forms and at various levels of social change. Thus it is our intention to show how at the politico-economic level we have the emergence of several dominant social groups at the local and supra local level of state power expressed through various designations and titles conferred on them. We shall further highlight in this context that 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 over their respective bases of power as owners of land and its resources. Finally, we converge to discuss that the consequent social power held by these groups is indicated to us through the mention of family names in the context of their description. On the basis of their description we intend to highlight the existence of several layers of relationships of domination and subordination existing within rural, local and supra local society. It is simultaneously our aim to focus on change particularly around the turn of the 12th century A.D. wherein several new terms of political ranking begin to emerge. This, we argue, is also indicative of the fact that more and more new social groups were being conferred political ranks as the expansion and consolidation of the state structure was taking place. Our next major theme of analysis in this chapter is to discuss how at the politico-religious levels of dominance we have such groups as the *brahmaṇa* and the *mahājana*, and several individual *non-brahmana* ideologues who attained their economic power as a result of the state initiative in its attempt at legitimization by giving these groups land grants. It is chiefly in the context of the management of landed property by the above described dominant groups that we get to know about the existence of the subject groups whose mention in the sources is extremely limited and we next intend to discuss how their existence can be made on the basis of allusions made to them in the context of references to the land tenurial patterns or, the tax terms. Finally, in this chapter it is our intention to focus at the economic level, particularly from the beginning of the 12th century A.D., when a wide variety of social groups are mentioned in the inscriptions as participating in various types of economic activities. We describe these groups in relation to their activities in the agrarian,
artisanal and the non-agrarian or mercantile arenas. Far from being homogenous, these social groups were highly stratified giving rise to complex social relations of interdependence between various groups as also within the dominant ones themselves.

Our next focus of attention is analyzing the details of the Economic Context in Chapter IV. The chronological dimensions of social change when comprehended in relation to the spatial parameters of their location get crystallized in the form of economic change which is marked by a predominance of agrarian activity for a greater part of the 11th century A.D. Its gradual infiltration into an urban like economy by the turn of the 12th century A.D. can be clearly gauged through the change in the nature of grants made by various social groups. In the 11th century A.D. there is a predominant tendency to grant in lands which is slowly replaced, by the beginning of the 12th century A.D., with a majority of grants being made in commodities, cash and revenue. Social and economic change thus envisaged had wider implications for the growth in the rural settlement structures both in terms of their horizontal spread (broadening the productive sphere depending upon the fertility of soil and development and investment in irrigation) and vertical rise (socio-economic advancement from rural to urban) in their hierarchy,

In this chapter we also discuss the various ramifications of the land revenue structure and how investment of various types grants led to the growth and importance of the agrahara settlements and the temple institution. We have also proposed to underscore in this regard the variety of ways in which land tenurial patterns emerge and the significant changes that these undergo as a result of the initiative taken
by various dominant social groups in making grants to religious institutions, namely, the temples. In the process, significant care was taken by these groups in improving the agrarian production by introducing various irrigation structures and employing labour which we also propose to take up for analysis. Further, the implications it had, in terms of a spurt in the non-agrarian activity, such as the artisanal and mercantile production, form an integral part of our discussion on the economic structure of our study.

In Chapter IV: on the Spatial Context we propose to give all details on the various types of place names and highlight their meaning in the context of the views of other scholars on the subject. A comprehension of the hierarchical nature of the settlement patterns can however be obtained by analyzing them in the context of the suffixes attached to individual settlements (palli, vada, Or, grama, pattana) coupled with the contextual references made to them in terms of the socio-economic activity operating around them. We also intend in this context to comprehend the nature of the settlement space in relation to its physical location, wherein various terms such as giri (mountain), kallu (stone), gere (tank) and so on suffixed to some of these settlements signify the nature of their locales and further go to testify the complex nature of the settlement patterns during the period of study. In fact, the changing and the dynamic scenario of space has been focussed upon in this study. In this regard, our search for the questions on how certain categories of settlements emerged into prominence at a particular point in time leading to the formation of important nodes in the hierarchical pattern, is the central most strand of analysis.

To elaborate upon this phenomenon further one has to go beyond the
spatial limits and search for the factors of change in the socio-political processes leading to the formation of local and supra local power structures which, we argue, were identified chiefly by the spatial context in which they were located. This we highlight, required among other things, improvement in the economic base by bringing more and more area into the vortex of the State structure at various levels through the improvement of techniques of crop production by augmenting the availability of water supply through the construction of tanks and so on. It also simultaneously by needed legitimation of the politicio-economic urges of local elites which began to be expressed through the creation of agrahara and temple establishments. We discuss these points towards the end of chapter V. In essence, the emergence of certain settlements with a potential for the growth in the agrarian base from a physical into ideological space marked a crucial stage in the evolution of not just the settlement hierarchy, but importantly, it signified a socio-economic advancement of society achieved through the interaction of a host of historical factors. In such a transformation the role played by the temple institution as a tool of legitimation and integration in the hands of various social groups representing different levels of state structure was of particular significance. We turn to examine these two points in the last chapter.

Chapter VI is on the Ideological Context wherein we intend to explain how the political, economic and social spheres of activity conglomerate on the religious space represented by the temple institution. During the period of study the temple emerged as an important mechanism of redistribution of resources on the one hand, and on the other, into an overlord having the services of several social groups at its disposal. Importantly, the ideological attributes of the temple institution had wider
implications in shaping the socio-political relations which we attempt to especially focus upon on this chapter. In this regard on the one hand, the temple helped in legitimizing the political power and status of various groups patronizing it and on the other, it helped in the spread of the state system to local levels through appropriation of the local cults and the consequent absorption of the local 'tribal' groups into its vortex at various levels. We intend to elaborate some of these issues as can be seen in the expansion of the settlements to new areas coupled with the rise in the number of temple institutions. Herein lies the importance of the role of temple as a mediator between the religious and secular space of the productive areas. Without large scale surplus production the temple would not have been able to rise in the first place. It is in these processes of mediation and integration that the temple became a popular platform for the fusion of local belief systems represented by various sects of Purānic Hinduism. In the present area of study we highlight the particular sects of Saivism that grew in popularity during this period. It has been noted by us that Vaisnavism and Jainism to a lesser extent were also patronized. However, the most popular and powerful ideological forces in this period and area of study was Kālāmukha Saivism. In particular the latter find predominant mention in the inscriptional sources of our study wherein the ever increasing number and variety of deities coupled with various names of priests emerge as representing multiple belief systems of the local populace. That these had wider implications in terms of acculturating the new social groups into the mainstream of Brahmanism when their belief systems were integrated into the temple centred Bhakti movement by various levels of state structure form crucial manifestations of ideological dimensions of the period under consideration. The dominant ideology of the Brahmanism projected by the chiefs of the main ruling family in their attempts at
legitimation also thrived and this has been discussed by us towards the end of this chapter. Importantly, the connecting threads of cultural integration between the dominant ideology operating at a pan Indian level and the local belief systems, at the regional level operating in a similar vein co-existed together. Sometimes exhibiting certain contradictions which were resolved only through the exertion of power.

The socio-economic processes of change when viewed from a regional perspective were intertwined into the complex processes of state formation which initiated several changes at the local level enabling an integration of various ideological forces which, in turn, combined to transform the socio-economic and cultural set up of early medieval south-western Deccan. We end the thesis with Recapitulation and Conclusions in which the major contributions of the present work have been highlighted. We have also suggested the possibility that for a study located in pre-modern India, the material and ideological forces have to be studies in relation to each other so as to theoretically see the inseparability of the secular and the religious. It shall not be out of place to state at the outset that this thesis hopes to present a fresh perspective on how the study of small regions in all their complexity can be done. The major conclusions are followed by a list of all the sources consulted by us while writing this thesis in the form of a consolidated Bibliography. This thesis is also accompanied by 4 sets of charts and 5 maps to help illustrate better the textual and spatial material incorporated by us in understanding Rural Settlements and Stratification in South Western Deccan - 1000 A.D. - 1200 A.D.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid., p. 4; p. 7.

4. That there has been transition from an ancient period marked by crucial changes in the socio-economic and political ideological setup during the early medieval period (normally associated with the period between 5th - 13th centuries A.D.) has been well attested to in various historical works written with specific focus on this period of Indian history. Works in this direction have particularly been initiated by the Marxist historians who have studied these changes under the rubric of 'Indian Feudalism' as propounded by the pioneering work of R.S. Sharma's *Indian Feudalism* (A.D. 300 - 1200), Macmillan, Delhi, 1980. Without going into the historical debate surrounding the above characterization at this stage, we wish to emphasize on the notion of historical change initiated by these scholars for defining the early medieval period.

5. The historiographical bias for the early medieval period can be understood not just in relation to the availability of the large corpus of epigraphical data in the nuclear areas or river basins, but importantly, that this data has been edited and published in a systematic way in various journals and which had a considerable role to play in attracting a majority of scholars, including foreign scholars, to write on these regions.

6. B. Subbarao, *Personality of India: Pre and Proto Historic Foundation of India and Pakistan*, Baroda, 1958, pp. 85-140. In this work, the author introduces us to the concept of historical geography wherein different regions of India are divided into these categories of nuclear areas (with vast tracts of fertile land and therefore, possess the ability to support large empires), which are followed by the areas of relative isolation (regions of communications and migrations) and the areas of isolation (the blind alleys of civilization in India) which were supposed to have been inhabited by the tribal populace and therefore, remained backward. The above formulations based on geographical determinism do not, however, stand tenable for our research. Our intention was mainly to highlight the concept of nuclearity introduced by the author in comprehending the relationship of
geography to historical developments.

   Dharwar, 1975, p.9


9. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, OUP, Delhi, 1994,
   pp.34-35.

10. To understand some of these we have taken special help from: Mr. Subrahmaniam (known popularly as Mysore Pandit), eminent epigraphist and also Dr. P.V.P. Sastry, Deputy Director (retired), Archaeology and Museums, Hyderabad.

11. When we enquired about the lack of information on Raichur taluq of the Raichur district during the early medieval period, Dr. K.V.Ramesh, former Director, Office of Epigraphy, Mysore expressed the possibility of it being a less settled area during this period as it was infested with thick jungles on the one hand, and on the other, according to him, the constant wars fought in this area might have rendered any survival of the epigraphical evidence extremely difficult. On the other hand, the authorities at the office of Archeology and Museums at Hyderabad have expressed their inability to explicate the reasons for the less availability of the inscriptive data on Gadwal taluq and certain parts of Kurnool district relevant to our study during the early medieval period and have been extremely cooperative in extending whatever help they could in gaining access to the transcripts available with them. It is interesting to note that in these areas, inscriptive data for the Vijayanagara period is available in plenty.

12. To comprehend the historical significance of most of these terms, we have however, depended upon the secondary sources pertaining to our area of study.


15. R.S. Sharma has drawn our attention in this regard to the non-availability of archaeological evidence for rural sites during the early medieval period, which according to him, are attributable in a large measure to the neglect of archaeologists who have hitherto concentrated mainly on the urban sites of early India. See his *Urban Decay in India*, Delhi, 1987 p.3.