
UNIT 13 ORGANISATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND CRAFTS PRODUCTION, REGIONAL PROFILES OF AGRARIAN SOCIETY, NATURE OF STRATIFICATION: SOUTH INDIA

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13.1 INTRODUCTION

The early medieval economy was in many major ways different from early historical period. The change is attributed to the decline of trade and commercial economy and absence of monetary transactions in the wake of the decline in trade. The change led to an agrarian organisation based on a Land Grant system (grants to brahmanas and religious institutions as also secular grants to royal administrative functionaries), which is often believed to have brought into existence a feudal society and polity. Although the theory of feudalism itself has been borrowed from the medieval agrarian organisation of Western Europe, important differences from the west European model have been recognised and this has resulted in the characterisation of the Indian agrarian organisation as Indian feudalism. The theory of Indian feudalism has, however, been constantly under debate and such a characterisation of the early medieval economy for the whole of India has also been questioned due to the absence of serfdom and the nature of intermediaries, both religious and secular, as also regional

variations in agrarian structures (For feudalism debate see Unit 10 of the present Block). In order to understand the nature of the agrarian economy of the early medieval period, one has to study the Land Grant system during the Gupta (4th- 6th centuries AD) and post- Gupta periods (7th-13th centuries AD), when the Land Grant system became a sub-continental phenomenon and when many of the regions, especially the regions peripheral to the Ganges valley began to emerge as distinct political and cultural regions. While the Land Grant system spread with an amazing uniformity in all the regions, there were significant variations in the ways in which agrarian expansion and integration of the regions were achieved from the 7th to the 13th centuries AD.

13.2 SOUTH INDIA: THE REGION

South India here refers to the region south of the Vindhyas covering the areas where the Dravidian languages are spoken and excludes the northern most region which is now part of Maharashtra, i.e, not the whole of peninsular India. The geography of this region makes an interesting study with two major divisions i.e., the Deccan plateau and the plains. The Deccan plateau is now represented by northern and southern Karnataka and parts of Andhra region i.e., Telengana and Rayalasima marking the eastern edges of the plateau and the coastal plains of Andhra, watered by the Godavari and Krishna valleys (deltas), where the agrarian tracts are concentrated from early times. Agrarian expansion, i.e., extension of agricultural activities was an ongoing process and starting from the fertile river valleys moved into frontier zones – forest and hilly tracts – of pastoral and hunting-gathering economies. In the Deccan and Andhra regions the delta areas of the Godavari and Krishna show evidence of early agricultural settlements and the larger Deccan plateau is marked by smaller agricultural pockets in the valleys of the middle and upper reaches of the Godavari and Krishna valleys and the tributaries (Tungabhadra and Malaprabha, etc.) and the upper reaches of the Kaveri in southern Deccan or Karnataka.

Of the south Indian regions the Tamil region, which has been the focus of major studies on agrarian organisation and the state, provides the most impressive evidence of this development. Although the Deccan and Andhra regions, on which much less work has been done, have equally important evidence on the institutional processes of agrarian organisation and production, the nature of the pre- *Brahmadeya* (revenue free land grants given to the Brahmins) agricultural organisation is little known, except in the form of primitive agriculture or subsistence level settlements in the river valleys and pastoral and hunting-gathering settlements in the frontier regions like forests and hills. The Andhra Delta also has *Brahmadeyas* but the early Copper Plate (4th-6th centuries) records of grants are short and give no details. Later ones give more information. In Andhra (delta) the *Brahmadeyas* of the 6th to 8th centuries have not been studied so far with a view to discussing their role in agrarian integration. No organised peasant micro regions (like the *nadus*) of the kind that existed in the Tamil country are known. The Tamil plains are more continuous, with conspicuous agrarian tracts in the major river valleys like the Kaveri (middle and lower reaches), Vaigai and Tamraparni valleys and minor river valleys like the Palar and Pennaiyar, even from the early historical period (3rd century BC–3rd century AD), which later came to be re-structured into the new agrarian order through institutions like the *Brahmadeya* and the temple. Tamil Nadu also has a rich corpus of early Tamil literature (the Sangam classics of the early centuries of the Christian era), which provides evidence of the *marutam* (plains) as distinguished from the *mullai* (forest) and *kurinci* (hilly) as eco-zones with different economic activities such as agricultural,

pastoral and hunting-gathering respectively. It is the expansion of agricultural activities within the *marutam* region and beyond into the other eco-zones that marks the opening up of agrarian tracts and their integration through the Brahmanical institutions from the 6th century AD. It may be assumed that a similar process of the opening up of agrarian tracts occurred also in the Andhra and Karnataka regions, starting from the fertile river valleys and beyond into the forest and hilly areas. Hence the early *Brahmadeya* and temple settlements emerged in the coastal region of Andhra plains (lower Godavari and Krishna valleys and the deltaic region) from the 4th to the 10th centuries AD and the drier regions of Telengana and Rayalasima came to be integrated into the new agrarian order from the 11th to 14th centuries. In Karnataka the upper and middle reaches of Krishna (Tungabhadra and Malaprabha) and Kaveri with their tributaries with narrower plains were colonised early i.e., from the 4th to 9th centuries and then followed the expansion of the new agrarian order into the frontier zones.

The beginnings of this process may be placed in the period from the 4th to the 6th centuries AD in the Deccan and Andhra regions, where the Brahmana-Kshatriya allies in power viz., the newly founded Brahmanical dynasties like the Vakataka (4th-6th c. AD), Kadambas (4th-7th c. AD), Western Gangas (4th-10th c. AD) and Vishnukundis (c. 475-615 AD) introduced the *Brahmadeya* and the temple as agrarian institutions of expansion and integration. The early Pallavas (4th-6th c. AD) before they moved from the Andhra region into the Tamil country were also participants in this process. From the 7th to the 9th centuries under the Chalukyas of Badami and the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta agrarian resource bases were created in the upper Godavari and Malaprabha-Tungabhadra i.e. tributaries of the Krishna. Under their subordinates and minor ruling families the southern Deccan (Karnataka) came to be integrated into an agrarian base in the upper Kaveri valley. Later the Western Chalukyas and Hoysalas continued this process from the 10th to the 13th centuries AD, thus bringing into existence the various politico-cultural regions of South India with vast agrarian resource bases.

13.3 SYSTEM OF LAND GRANTS: THE *BRAHMADEYAS* AND AGRARIAN EXPANSION

The grant of a *Brahmadeya* (and *Agrahara*) was considered as the supreme dana and was sought to be protected by specific injunctions and imprecations against those who tampered with it or destroyed it in any way. Following the *Dharma Sastric* injunctions the ruling families made grants of land to the Brahmanas, on occasions like victory in war or for special astronomic phenomena like eclipses, in areas of agricultural potential with existing settlements or in new areas extending agricultural operations. On such occasions the Brahmanas were given *pariharas* or exemptions from various obligations including revenue payment to the king and given management rights over land and cultivation process. Exemptions meant generally non-intrusion by royal or government functionaries and troops into such areas, while sometimes a specific amount of revenue was levied annually or for all times. Deforestation and extension of cultivation in hitherto uncultivated land and settling actual tillers/agricultural workers in effect meant that the agrarian base was extended and king's authority established for the first time, where it did not exist earlier. Hence the *Brahmadeya*'s politico-economic role in agrarian expansion was significant.

A *Brahmadeya* was not exclusively populated by Brahmanas, but was often inhabited by non-Brahmana cultivators or service personnel working for the village as a whole

and for the land controlling Brahmanas. Hence a kind of landlord-tenant or service relationship evolved in newly established *Brahmadeyas*. There are also instances of pre-existing pastoral-cum-agricultural settlements which were clubbed together and granted as *Brahmadeyas*, wherein the lordship and management rights were given to the grantees. The temple, which either came up along with the *Brahmadeyas* or independently in such settlements was equally significant in the agrarian integration, yet the temple assumed greater importance as the integrative institution from the 10th century AD in gradual phases in all the south Indian regions. Grants of land and other items to the temple were also administered by locally influential land controlling groups like the Brahmanas and also dominant agricultural groups other than the Brahmanas.

Land grants could be either made to a single brahmana (*ekabhoga-Brahmadeya*) or to a group of brahmanas (*gana-bhoga*) or for the maintenance of a brahmanical educational institution (*Vidyasthana* and *Ghatika*). With each of the *Brahmadeya* and temple settlements an irrigation system was invariably established either in the form of tanks (*tataka* and *eri*), canals or wells. (e.g. as in the Pallava-Pandya regions). Many of these projects were initiated by the rulers but managed by the local bodies especially the *Sabhas* or assemblies of the *Brahmadeyas* or the Mahajanas. Elaborate arrangements were made by these assemblies for the upkeep of the irrigation works, including maintenance, repair, attention to silting and control of water supply through cesses and specifying committees (*variyams*) as in the *Brahmadeyas* of the Tamil region, for their supervision and administration. Thus effective management was the key to the difference between the farming societies of the early historical and early medieval periods.

13.4 THE TAMIL REGION: THE PALLAVAS (TONDAI NADU – NORTHERN TAMIL NADU): 6th TO 9th CENTURIES AD

In the Tamil region the history of this development extends from the 6th to the 13th centuries, which may be further divided into two phases, first from the 6th to the 9th centuries AD and the second from the 10th to the 13th centuries AD. Eventually it led to the creation of different levels of complex land rights, superior and subordinate, and to a stratified society based on economic status and more significantly on the varna ideology creating caste distinctions with increasing occupational diversification and the temple becoming the reference point for all such distinctions in status, particularly ritual status.

The early Pallava grants in Prakrit and Sanskrit (4th to 6th centuries AD) refer to villages in the Krishna and Guntur districts, and further south in the Nellore district. Here the *Brahmadeya* seems to make its first appearance till the establishment of Pallava territorial authority over the northern region of Tamil country, with Kancipuram as their centre of power. Henceforth the bilingual copper plates in Sanskrit and Tamil record grants of *Brahmadeya* land in new areas as well as pre-existing, cultivated areas in the Palar-Cheyyar valley and further south into the Pennaiyar and Kaveri regions. These records are remarkable documents for reconstructing the development of agricultural economy and agrarian organisation in different phases. The *Brahmadeyas* and temples may be seen as harbingers of advanced farming methods such as irrigation technology and seasonal cultivation process. This is clearly established by the Pallava-Pandya records, when they are considered in the context of their geographical and ecological setting. They are also

useful as records providing the most detailed references to the nature of the organisation, both agriculture and craft production, which was generally complementary and supplementary to agricultural activities.

The Brahmanas were organisers and managers of production in the *Brahmadeyas* and the Velalas or land owning (controlling) peasants in the non-*Brahmadeya* (Ur) settlements, where the focus of activities was the brahmanical temple. In the *Brahmadeya*, the Brahmanas, due to their specialised knowledge of astronomy, would have introduced an element of predictability in yields, on the basis of seasonal sowing, cropping patterns, as well as effective management of water resources. Hence in the records of this period, demarcation of boundaries, establishment of “ownership” or enjoyment rights, nature and category of land and the number of crops to be raised become important details.

The *Brahmadeyas* in most cases meant the giving away of rights, economic and administrative, to the donees. Instances are not wanting to show that they were not completely exempt from revenue payments to the king. The real advantages lay in integrating older subsistence level settlements and non- *Brahmadeya* villages (Ur) into the new agrarian system, and also bringing virgin land under cultivation, both waste and forest land and making them surplus oriented. There are also examples of several pre- existing settlements being clubbed together into a new *Brahmadeya* or integrated into it (e.g. Udayendiram Plates and Pattalmangalam Plates of Nandivarman II- 8th century AD). The tax exemptions given to the *Brahmadeyas* do not obviously apply to such villages thus brought into the system, unless otherwise specified.

The circulation of resources was through the *nadu* or *kurram*, which were existing and entrenched peasant regions, duly made into revenue units by the early medieval states – Pallava (6th-9th c. AD), Pandya (7th-10th and 13-16th c. AD) and Chola (9th-13th c. AD). The circulation of resources was also effected through the temple. The older subsistence level settlements were part of the *nadus* and quite a few of them were integrated into the new agrarian order through *Brahmadeyas*. Their extent cannot be precisely determined. Regular revenues reached the royal *bhandaras* (treasury) through such circulation. Yet, at the local level, the chief beneficiaries of the redistribution process were the locally powerful elite, temples and brahmanas, apart from temple functionaries and tenants. The co-ordination of the production and distribution processes were in the hands of the *sabha* (brahmana assembly) and *Ur* (non- brahmana /Velala assembly), the latter often working in close collaboration or cooperation with the brahmana *sabha* or under their guidance and often as *nattar* or as members of the *nadu* assembly, whose role in the organisation and production of agricultural resources was significant, particularly with regard to the common agrarian problems like irrigation and mobilisation of labour and means of production and redistribution. The *Brahmadeya* was administered independently of the *nadu* and hence the *Ur* is less conspicuous in the epigraphic records while the *nadu* and *Brahmadeya* are prominent.

In the *Brahmadeyas* and temple centres, land relations thus came to be organised around these two institutions, with three categories of landowners- the brahmana, the velala and the temple (administered by the brahmana and Velala)- emerging as the local elite. All the occupational groups were placed in a ritual hierarchy around the temple within the *varna* framework, depending on the nature of their profession and relationship with the temple as service groups.

Cesses appear to have been generally levied in kind and this ties in with the low level of monetisation in this period. There were cesses on the manufacture of salt, on looms, on markets, oil mills, etc. Not only goods but services too seem to have been provided to the donees as indicated by the cesses on potters, weavers, blacksmiths and others. There is some degree of controversy about whether the *Brahmadeyas* were actually freed from complete taxation. For example the Pullur plates refer to '*pannirattai-k-karaiyirameyam*' which has been translated as 'non-payment of taxes for 12 years'. In other words such grants were meant to develop agriculture and extend cultivation initially and were brought under taxation after some years.

13.4.1 The Nature of the *Brahmadeya* Grant: The *Pariharas* or Immunities

It would be useful to set out the earliest references to immunities based on the *Dharmasastric* injunctions, the *pariharas* usually numbering 18. This would give us an idea of how the management of cultivation and production of allied crafts as well as non- agricultural activities, were placed under the new land controlling grantees. It would also show how some kind of a dependency between the land controllers and landless cultivators and craftsmen was built up within the village due to the village craftsmen being paid in the form of land produce or assigned land in lieu of such payment. The Pallava Copper Plate grants of the 4th-6th centuries AD inscribed in Prakrit and Sanskrit refer to such *Brahmadeyas* in the Guntur, Krishna and Nellore districts. The 18 *pariharas* or immunities are not listed in all the grants but the implication was that wherever such taxes or cesses existed; they need not thereafter be paid to the king or his representative but to the grantees to whom services also had to be provided. (i.e. all immunities -sarva *pariharehi pariharata pariharapita*).

The <i>Pariharas</i> or Immunities	
<i>Alonakhadakam</i>	Free from salt manufacture, a royal privilege or monopoly
<i>Aratthasamvinayika</i>	Free from administrative control
<i>Aparamparabalivadam</i>	Free from supply of bullocks to the royal officials
<i>Abhadapapesam</i>	Free from entry of soldiers for tax collection
<i>Akuracholakavinasikhatayavasamvasa</i>	Free from supply of boiled rice, pot, cot and dwelling
<i>Aburadadhigahanam</i>	Free from sweet and sour milk
<i>Akaravetthikomjallam</i>	Free from tax, forced labour and supply of sour gruel
<i>Atanakattagahapam</i>	Free from taking of grass and wood
<i>Aharitakasakapuphagahanam</i>	Free from vegetables and flowers

Donees were also given the services of labourers receiving half the produce. It is interesting to know that most of the grants of the 6th to 9th centuries period were made also on the request of a *Vijnapti* (one who made a representation to the king), invariably a local chief or by a royal functionary and executed by an *Anjapti* (again a local chief or functionary), pointing to the fact that the reorganisation of agricultural production and control was widespread and adopted even in the tracts of minor chiefs who accepted the overlordship of the new dynasties.

The land grants of the 4th-6th centuries AD in Prakrit and Sanskrit, provide details of the *pariharas*, which were evidently based on the *Dharmasastric* rules. Often a whole village including garden land was granted and the royal *sasana* (order) was addressed to *gramabhojaka*, *grameyakan*, *adhikrita* (officers), *sarvadyaksha* of district (?) (overseers), *ayuktakas*, *naiyogikas* and *rajavallabhas vallabhas* of districts, *sasana samcharin* (official messengers), *govallavas*, *aranadkhato* (foresters) and others in service. Villages were converted into a *Brahmadeya* (e.g. *Vesanta*) with 18 *pariharas* with the exception *devabhogahala* (land of the temple). Thus when a village was granted, all lands with the exception of *devabhogahala* (land enjoyed by existing temples) were given. The term *vasad-bhogyamaryada* points to 'enjoyment by residents (only) or tenants' occupancy rights, which were assured. Taxes payable by *loha-charmakara* (metal workers and leather workers), *apana-patta-kara* (shop keeping cloth dealers), *pravaranchara* (licensed spies or those going about in loose masks or garments), *rajjupratihara* (rope jugglers), *apana ajivika nahala* – taxes payable by barbarians and outcastes, *mukha dharakas* (mask actors or self-mortifying devotees), *kupa darsakas* (water diviners), *tantravaya* (water diviners? Is it *tantuvaya*?=weaver), *dyuta* (gambler), *napita* (barber) and on *vivaha* (marriage), taxes and tithes payable by artisans enjoying privileges of *sarva parihara* would also indicate the nature and growing number of crafts and professions in a settlement. In fact these immunities would also indicate the kinds of crafts that were carried on in the village and how they were part of a large number of service groups inhabiting the village with dependent relationship with the grantees who had superior rights in land. Their remuneration was often in the form of the assignment of land or its produce within the village, which consisted of separate living quarters for them. The later grants either refer to the *pariharas* in general or mention increased number of taxes and cesses depending upon the increasing complexity of the productive process and of the administrative organisation of a growing state. It also points to agrarian expansion and an extending resource base of the ruling dynasties. This is the case with most grants from the 9th century AD. (late Pallava and Chola periods).

In the bilingual (Sanskrit and Tamil) land grants of the 6th -9th centuries AD boundaries are defined and the nature of land described such as *nir-nilam* (wet land), *pun-cey* (dry land), *kanru-mey pal* (pasture), *kadu* (forest), *pidilikai* (land on which sanctuary stood?), *kidangu* (ditches), wells (*keni*), *manai* (house site), *manai-p-padappu* (house garden) and all lands "where the iguana runs and tortoise crawls". For example the Pallankoyil grant of land to Vajranandi, a Jaina teacher, in Sramanasrama or Amanserkkai, a Palliccandam (grant to a Jaina institution), with similar rights and privileges records that the existing tenants were removed (*kudi-nikki*) and the rights of king and his authority removed (*kovum-poriyum marri*). The term *kudi-nikki* translated as removal of existing tenants has been a matter of debate as it is also taken to mean that the existing *kudi* (meaning cultivating villagers) the grant did not include the *kudi* or occupants/cultivators of the land or that the rights to change the occupants or retain them on the land were clearly mentioned. It does not necessarily mean eviction at will.

Brahmadeya lands are often seen to be held in shares by the grantees. For example, the Kuram Plates assigns land to the temple priests and for worship, repairs, water and fire for the temple, recitation of (*Maha*) *Bharata* as *devabhogam*. The rest of the 20 parts in the village was constituted into a *Brahmadeya* for 20 *chaturvedins*. Crafts like oil pressing (*sekku*), loom/weaving (*tari*) and *kulam* (*bazaar*), smithy (*kattikanam*)—on blacksmiths? are mentioned, while *Uratchi* (share of the *Ur*)

may refer to a levy for the Ur's administration. Rights over the Perumbidugu channel from the Palaru river were also given for water resources.

The Udayendiram plates of Nandivarman II (AD 752) records a grant made on the request of the Vijnapti, Pucan, a chief, according to which two villages (Kumaramanagala and Vellattur) in Paschimasraya nadu of Paduvur *Kottam* (Mel-Adayaru *nadu*) were combined and converted into a *Brahmadeya* with all immunities with the name Udayachandra Mangalam (Udayendiram in Gudiyyattam *taluk.* of North Arcot district). The Vijnapti is a petitioner, often a chief or an officer, seeking permission from the king to make a grant. The term *paradatta* or *paradatti* thus points to a grant by others and not directly by the king. With two *jalayantras* (water levers) for irrigation in *Korragrama*, the 108 brahmana grantees had 133 shares of land.

The Kasakkudi (near Karaikkal adjoining Tanjavur district) Copper Plate –753 AD – Ekadharamangalam (Kodukolli village?) was addressed to the *nattar* of *Urrukkattu-k-Kottam* (*Undivana kosthtaka*), the already entrenched peasant organisation. The grant was made in the presence of *Nilakkalattar* (local authorities?), *adhikarikal* (officers?) and *Vayiketparu* (secretaries?), excluding previous grants made to temples, brahmanas and the houses of *ryots*? The land measure is here called *patti* or *pattikai*. The use of water channels from the rivers Vegavati, Seyyaru and the tank of Tiralaya (Tiraiyaneri?) and specification of the kind of land such as *Nir-nilam* (wet land), *pun-cey* (dry land), *manippadaippu*, etc. points to the facilities provided. The donee and his descendants were given the right to build houses and halls of burnt tiles. This grant is one of the most significant as it provides evidence of a larger number of taxes or cesses. Tax exemptions included *sekku*, *tari*, *ulliya-k-kuli* (hire of well diggers), *brahmanarasakkanam* (share of brahmanas and the king or tax of one kanam on profits of the brahmanas or tax payable by them), *sengodi-k-kanam* (share of Sengodi, a plant), *kallal-kanam* (on ficus tree), *kusakkanam* (on potters), *kanittukkanam?*, *katirakkanam* (share of corn ears), *arikori* (on sifting paddy), *ney-vilai* (on selling ghee), *puttaka vialai* (price of cloth or fees levied on sellers of cloth or on tents), *pattigaikkanam* (share of the cloth or toll at a ferry or on ferrymen), *iramaleyan-nayatikalum-tutuvaram*, *kanikarttikalum*, *pannuppaledupparum*, *putukkutikai-k-kurratuveyiyum*, *pullumiramayiyum* (tax on hunters, messengers, dancing girls, elephant stalls, horse stables, grass?), *nalla-a* (good cow), *nallerudu* (good bull), *nadu vagai* (share of the nadu the larger revenue or administrative unit), *patankariyum kaiyalum* (share of cotton threads?), *nedumbarai* (on drummers of the village), *panampakkum* (on palmyra molasses), *karanadandam* (fine to accountant or fine imposed on offenders by 'inferior court'), *adhikaranadandanam* (fine on offenders by chief court), *pattur sarru* (on toddy yielding trees of Pattur or proclamation by beating of tom-tom in the surrounding villages), *ulavai-palli-vattu* (tax in kind from the servants of the temple or from hamlet or tax on site for the Jaina temple), *kuvalaneduvaru* (on planting water lilies), *kuvalekkanam* (share of water lilies), *kal-kotturamai* (the 4th part of trunks of old trees, which are given, including areca palms and coconut trees or tax on digging channels). Such details often occur increasingly in the bilingual copper plates (Sanskrit and Tamil).

The Pullur (North Arcot district) grant (AD 764) combined four villages (Nelli, Pullur and Kudiyur in Kil Venadu and Takkaru in Manalaikula *nadu*) all in Palakunra *Kottam* and named it Nayadharamangalam, as a *Brahmadeya* grant to 108 Bappa Bhattarakas. Being addressed to the *nattar* it specifically mentions the removal of all authority by placing it beyond the jurisdiction of the nadu kappan, *viyavan*

(headman) with all *pariharas*. Some of the new terms are *Koyil-vasal sekku* (tax on oil mill at the temple site?), *ettakkanam* (on water lever), *sadippon* (in gold payable on burial jars) and some seem to refer to various allied economic activities.

The Tandantottam (Tanjavur district) Copper Plate (AD 789) refers to a grant of land to the west of Tandantottam in Ten-karai-Naraiyur *nadu* in Chola *nadu* as *Brahmadeya* called Dayamukhamangalam to 308 learned brahmanas from the Telugu country, who had studied the three *Vedas* and *Smritis*. The shares are specified, the largest being 12. Addressed to the *nattar* of Tenkarai- Naraiyur *nadu* the grant gives exclusive rights to the grantees over water channels. New terms like *tattukkayam* (on goldsmiths); *Ilamputci* (on professional toddy drawers), *Idaipputci* (on cattle breeders or shepherds); *taragu* (brokerage); *tirumugakkanam* (fee for remunerating the person bringing orders from the king); *uppukkoceigai* (royalty? for manufacturing salt), *vatti nali* (on baskets of grain brought to the market), *kadaiyadaikkyum* (on areca nuts for sale in shops); *puda nli nali* would show the virtual exercise of control over the new settlement by the grantees.

The Pattattalmangalam (Tanjavur district) Copper Plate of AD 792 created a new *Brahmadeya* out of the 40 *veli* of land that existed around a village in Arvala-k-kurram in Chola *nadu*. To this two more pieces were also added and integrated into a new village called Pattattalmangalam and granted it to 16 brahmanas. Addressed to *nattar* of Tenkarai Arvala-k-kurram (Naraiyur *nadu*?), it mentions amenities, apart from the usual ones, like *manai*, *manai padappum*, *kottagaram*, *uvar*, *ur-palum*, *kadu*, *odai*, and *parambu*, etc., the rights of king and his authorities over the village were removed, while the *kudi-nikki* meaning previous occupants (*kudi-nikki*) also seem to have been removed. New terms—*manru padu*, *uratci*, *nadu kaval*, *udupokku* (tax in the form of mixture of grain or a fee for settlement of disputes or most probably rights for passage through an area.), *ner-vayam* (for use of water) again point to an increasing number of privileges or tax exemptions to the brahmana donees.

The Velurpalaiyam (North Arcot district) Copper Plate of AD 852 (Nandivarman III) records the grant of *utpuravu Deavadana* (all cultivable land fit to be taxed) for services connected with worship of Siva at Titukkattuppalli. It was addressed to the temple assembly – *paradai*? (parishad- council) and the immunities included the *nadatci*, *uratci*, (share of the *nadu* and *Ur*), *puravupon* (on land), *tari-k-kurai* (on weavers one standard measure of cloth per loom), *nadu-kaval* (policing the *nadu*), *kallanakkanam* (on marriage), *paraikkanam* (on quarries/stone used by washermen in public tanks), *pattinaseri* (dues by fishermen payable to the king) and other privileges.

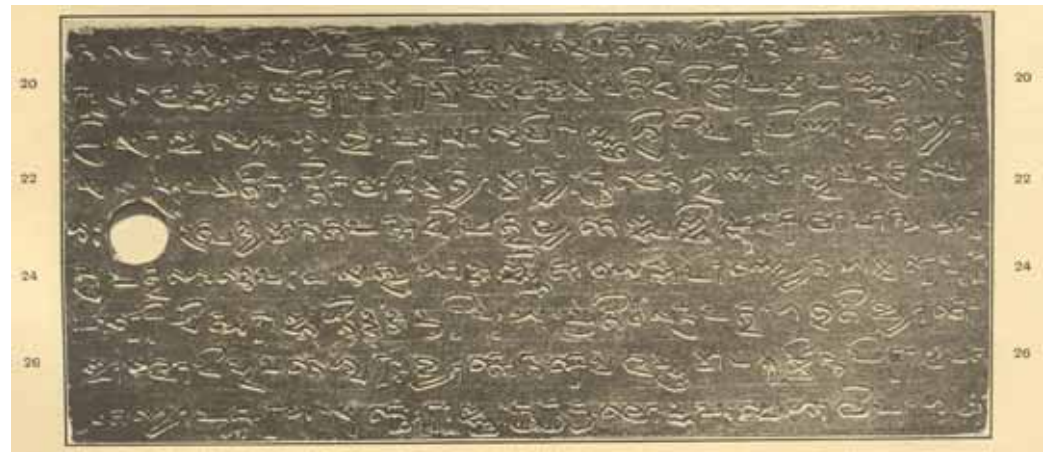
The Bahur (Pondicherry) Copper Plate of Nripatungavarman (late 9th century AD) founded the Vidyasthana of Vagur combining three villages [Chettuppakkam, Vilangattankaduvanur (Kaduvanur 5 miles west of Bahur), Iraippunaiccheri, all in Vagur *nadu* and addressed it to the *nattar* of Kilveli–Vagur *nadu* a subdivision of Aruva *Nadu*. Dispossessing former tenants and excluding ancient charities and *Brahmadeyas*, all other *nir-nilam*, *pun-cey*, *ur*, *ur-irukkai*, *manai*, *manai padappu*, *kulam*, *kottagaram* (storehouse), *meyi-pulam* (pasture), ditches, wells, etc. were given.

The references to *vetti*, *vedinai* and *eccoru* – forced labour and other burdens suggest a near total dependence of the service groups and small peasants and landless workers. The redistribution of land among tenant cultivators and marking of



Translation: (Line 1.) Hail! Prosperity!

- (Verse 1.) Let Madhu's destroyer (Vishnu) grant you prosperity, the lotus-eyed one, whose lotus-feet are rubbed by the diadems of the gods (bowing to him), the unborn one, (who became) the means of the destruction of demons that terrified the whole world!
- (Verse 2.) In the eye of the sleeping husband of Sri (Vishnu) was produced the luminary (i.e. the Sun?), (which is) the means of duration, destruction, and production. From his (Vishnu's) naval arose a lotus-flower the germ of all. From this (flower) the self-born one (Brahma) was produced.
- (Verse 3.) From this four-mounted lord of the world, Angiras was born, (and) from the latter, Brihaspati, the minister of Sakra (Indra), the splitter of (the demon) Vala.
- (Verse 4.) From him was born Samyu; from him, he who was named Bharadvaja; from him, the great archer Drona, whose valour equalled that of Sakra in battle.
- (Verse 5.) From this Drona was produced, it is said, by a protion of Pinakin (Siva) the long-armed Asvatthaman, who was skilled in all fights.
- (Verse 6.) From this Asvatthaman was born a king named **Pallava**, who ruled the kings residing in the nine continents, together with the ploughmen.
- (Verse 7.) From his family arose a group (of kings) commencing with **Vimala** and **Konkanika**, which was bowed to by the wives of enemies; which imposed commands even on other rulers of men; which was much beloved ; (and) which continually shouted 'victory.'
- (Verse 8 f.) Then, after **Vimala**, etc., having enjoyed by their own valour the earth girt by the four oceans, had gone to heaven on aerial cars, there was the long-armed (king) **Dantivarman**, who resembled Purandara (Indra), showed firm devotion to Mura's foe (Vishnu), (and) was bowed to by the diadems of the rulers of the earth.



- (Verse 20.) Therefore the (sur) name Nilailangi (i.e. 'The support of the world') (was as) suitable to this ruler of men as (unto) a god, or because (his real) name (Martanda, i.e. the sun) was quite manifest (to all)
- (Verses 21-23) This promoter of the family of **Kuru** gave to a seat of learning (*vidyasthana*) three-villages in his own province (*rashtra*) which, at (his) request, (he had) received, provided with an executor (*ajanpti*), from that lord **Nripatunga**, viz. the village of Chettuppakkam, rich in fruit, then another village whose name (consisted of) a word ending in an *r* and beginning with *Vidyavilanga* (and) thirdly the very prosperous (village of) Iraippunaichcheri.
- (Verses 24-26) Just as the god Dhurjati (Siva) carried on the single lock of (his) hair the approaching Mandakini (Ganga), agitated by the velocity of waves, thus the deep river of learning, filled with troops (of scholars) from the four directions, stayed after it had filled the seat of the residents of the village of **Vagur**. Therefore they call this seat of scholars a seat of learning
- (Verses 26 f.) This ruler of land thinks highly of himself after he has given to those (scholars) the (three) villags, provided with an executor, their limits having been circumambulated by an elephant, accompanied by all immunities, (and) protected by freedom from taxes.

E. Hultzsch, 'Bahur Plates of Nripatungavarman', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII (1925-26), New Delhi, p.12-14.

boundaries are implied in the terms like *Karai-idudal*, *Ericceruvu* and *Eripatti*, *Erikkadi*. *Payal nilam*, *payaleruvaram*, *adainilam* as also the transfer of the king's share of the produce (*Sarruvvari*) and *panam pagu* (on palmyra palms and toddy yielding ones), *Kadaiadaikkay* (levy on areca nuts) and on cotton, medicinal plants and flowers. Irrigation was a major concern of both the grantor and the grantees as indicated by such detailed references to weirs and sluices (*kalingu* and *tumbu*), mentioning head sluices like *vay*, *vayttalai*, *talaivay* and *mugavay*.

These agriculturists or peasants (*Kudi* or *Kudimakkal*) lived in small houses with mud walls and thatched roofs. The term *Agambadi udaiyans*, mentioned in the Uttaramerur inscription of Dantivarman (late 9th century AD), may indicate a higher level of peasants who seem to have been smaller landowners, also serving the major groups like the Brahmanas and Velalas of the *Brahmadeya* and non-*Brahmadeya* villages.

The Village crafts groups included spinners, weavers, potters, cattle breeders, goldsmiths, carpenters, artisans, owners of oil presses, middle-men and whole sale merchants. (*Aruvai vanigar* of Srikantapuram). Separate areas (*ceris*) existed for most of these peasants and craftsmen in the rural areas while in bigger towns and cities like Kanchipuram traders and merchants also had their quarters e.g., the residents of. *Videlvidugu-Kudiraicceriyar* (traders in horse? or king's horsemen/cavalry?).

In a sense the theory of self-sufficiency or closed village economy arises out of these land grants of the pre-7th century period as well as the period from the 7th to 9th centuries AD. However, expansion of the agrarian order was continuous and the regional variations and pre-existing agricultural settlements and regions (entrenched peasant organisations as in the Tamil country) required new ways of organising the *Brahmadeyas* and temple centres by retaining the existing structures and integrating them into the new agrarian order. This is precisely what happened in the Tamil region, where peasant settlements and pastoral settlements had emerged in river valley and beyond, even in the early historical period and the early medieval inscriptions referring conspicuously to peasant micro-regions (*nadus* or *kurrams*). [The *nadu* or *Kurrams* were self evolved regions, in which members of kinship groups (clan) lived together and organised themselves as a peasant group and/or region.]

13.4.2 *Brahmadeya* Expansion in *Nadu/Kurram* and *Kottam*

In northern Tamil region the *kottam*, a pastoral-cum-agricultural region, is conspicuous and existed apparently from the early historical period, but was organised into a unit of revenue under the Pallavas and Cholas. Agrarian expansion within the *kottam* took place both due to the establishment of *Brahmadeyas* and to the creation of new *nadus* with separate irrigation works under the Cholas. Hence the Tamil region comes up with interesting evidence of the re-organisation of agriculture and craft production with the phased opening of the river valleys and beyond. This development is remarkably well marked in this region and its pattern can be mapped through the geographical and ecological contexts in which the *Brahmadeyas* and temples emerged.

The *nadu* or *kurram* represented a group of villages/clan settlements, which had evolved spontaneously in the rich alluvial river valleys, with no artificial boundaries, based on kinship ties and kin labour and communal control over land, with a capacity

for expansion due to demographic expansion as well as extension of cultivation. *Nadu* is known as a generic term for any settled region (e.g. *malai nadu* or settled hilly tract), but became a potential unit of agrarian and revenue organisation. Thus *nadus/kurrams* came to be integrated into the new agrarian order when the early medieval ruling families introduced the *Brahmadeya* and the temple as integrative forces. *Brahmdeyas* were placed out of the *nadu* jurisdiction and the non-*Brahmadeya* villages (*Ur*) remained within the *nadu* as *vellan-vagai* (taxable), the *nattar* (of the *Nadu*) accepting the royal order creating the *Brahmadeya* and providing the necessary facilities to the new land controlling Brahmanas. In other words the *nattar* and *urar* cooperated in the process of agrarian expansion and integration. This has been interpreted as representing a Brahmana-dominant Velala alliance by the followers of the segmentary/peasant state and society theory, as the *nadu*, the peasant region is believed to be an autonomous peasant region (segment) and hence the alliance resulted in the crystallisation of a peasant state and society. This view questions the validity of the feudalism theory for the south Indian state and society, although the land grant system provides evidence of the emergence of intermediaries, both religious and secular, between the king and the cultivator and suggests exploitative relations between a land controlling class and labouring class of peasants.

13.5 THE TAMIL REGION: THE PANDYAS (SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF TAMIL NADU) – 6th-10th CENTURIES AD

In the Pandya region i.e., the southern districts of Tamil Nadu, the restoration of earlier *Brahmadeyas* (Velvikkudi and Dalavaypuram plates) is recorded suggesting their existence even from the early historical period. Yet, what was actually being done was the institutionalisation of the *Brahmadeya* as the integrating force. Brahmanas were non-producing class with managerial functions. Temples were also non-producing institution with lands redistributed among peasants and others for cultivation. This was more intensive in the Tamraparni valley than in the Vaigai valley, the two major river valleys of this region. [By institutionalisation of *brahmadeyas* as an *integrating force* we mean an institution through which the peasants of different settlements (which were at the subsistence level of production) were brought into a system of surplus oriented production.] The land grants introduced non-producing, intermediary land owners/controllers, whom the surplus reached.

Through the ability of the Brahmanas, the Velalas of *Urs* or *Nattar* and the Velalas of *Nadus*, in the organisation of advanced agriculture leading to a substantial surplus in production, the kings were actually augmenting the spheres of advanced agriculture in their kingdom. The brahmana and the Velala mode of agrarian organisation integrated the rural society through its social division of labour and allied relations of production. The land grants to temples as *Deavadana* (*Kudi ninga Deavadana* – without removing the earlier settlers and *Deavadana-Brahmadeya*) also introduced similar relations of production and redistribution. The change characteristics of the period were in the organisation and management of production, but not in the technology as such. Each technique was put to a wider utilisation through institutional and organisational support and the capacity for mobilisation of labour.

The creation of *Brahmadeya* villages was mostly in the areas of clan settlements. Often the founding of the *Brahmadeya* not only involved the superimposition of certain superior rights over the earlier communal ownership of land, the

expansion of the *Brahmadeya* system of agrarian organisation into such areas caused the dissolution of primitive agriculture on the one hand and the transformation of the clan settlement on the other. It may not always have been a peaceful extension and hence the reference to the need for clear documents of ownership in the Velvikkudi grant, which was claimed to have been appropriated by the Sudras, a clan leader (*kilavan*) converting a portion of an early grant (*ekabhoga Brahmadeya*) into a sudra settlement. The non-brahmana resistance to the expansion of *Brahmadeya* system would have been countered by the status of the brahmanas as a class with superior managerial ability, calendrical wisdom and the technical knowledge of advanced agriculture. The ultimate security of *Brahmadeya* lay in warrior (*ksatriya*) power. There is a concentration of *Brahmadeyas* in the fertile nadus and kurrams of the fertile wet lands of the modern districts of Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram (two thirds) in the nadus strung on the banks of the Tamraparni. (*valanadus* like Parantaka *valanadu*, Amitaguna *valanadu*, Valuti *valanadu* and Kuda *nadu*). The distribution pattern shows a proliferation in the regions of a relatively uniform rainfall, drainage, soil structure alluvial or mixed soil of high fertility- red soil), temperature and vegetation, such as the Ghatana branch of Tamraparni, the Vaippar and Arjuna *nadi* with their tributaries, the tributaries of the Gundar, the two branches of the Virisuli and in Venadu on the banks of Periyar. The expansion of small agrarian localities – *Ur* or *kuti* – and larger ones – *nadu* or *kurram* units with groups of such settlement was helped by the *Brahmadeya* system. Named after first (core) village or after the source of irrigation (Vaigai *valanadu*, Magalur Kulakkil, etc.), it was the capacity of irrigation source that determined the range of expansion in each settlement and each *nadu*. The Valanadu was a royal creation unlike the *nadu*. Altogether 40 *nadus*, 11 *valanadus*, 6 *kurrams*, 3 *kulakkil* and one *muttam* have been located in ecological zones of paddy cultivation.

13.5.1 Land Rights

The *Brahmadeya*, *Deavadana* and *Palliccandam* (grant to Jain religious institutions) represent the superimposition of superior rights in land and institutional ownership with a corporate body of landholders. As organisers of agriculture and not cultivators themselves, they got the land cultivated either by original agrarian communities (or earlier settlers) or by settling new kudi or occupants. Alienation of land by gift of a share or shares (*panku/pangu*) or by purchase was possible, while leasing of land to tenants introduced further intermediary strata between the owner and cultivator. Transfer of superior rights over land in a *Brahmadeya* was made by way of *pratigraha* – gift of the share (*panku*), *stridhana* or dowry, etc. It did not mean absolute ownership but the tendency was towards making the share and thereby the land inheritable. In the few individual transactions known, there is no reference to the transfer of *miyatci* (superior rights). In the case of the *Brahmadeya* all transactions of *panku* were exclusively among the qualified brahmanas. The hierarchy/stratification is indicated by the following rights. The king (*konmai*) as theoretical sovereign of all land created the *miyatci* (superior rights of organising and controlling production) to the donees who either enjoyed the *karanmai* (supervising rights) or gave them away to others i.e., tenants who got the land cultivated by the *Kuti* (*Kutimai*). *Karanmai* could be alienated by redistribution of land. The *Kil pati karanmai* – the lower half of the *karanmai* and *melpati-miyatci* (higher share) may refer to smaller and bigger share of tenants (*karalar*). The

original *karanmai utaiyar* were sometimes deprived of their rights through transfer of such rights. Service tenure was referred to as *Virutti* for the *pani makkal* in the service of the temple. Craftsmen like the carpenter; potter and weaver also received land for their service and were among the *Kutis*. The *Sabha* and other corporate bodies like *Ur* could sell, gift or purchase land. All these made the delineation of the land and boundaries (*vayalum karaiyum*) necessary. Thus the *miyatci* (superior rights) holders (donees) leased land to *Karalar* (cultivating rights) who undertook to employ the tillers and a relation based on agricultural production and the sharing of the produce got established. Through the redistribution of land endowments, the temple gave rise to various intermediaries between the organisers of agriculture and the actual tillers, i.e., structured social relations based on land rights *Miyatci*, *karanmai* and *Kutimai* (occupants or those who actually till the land). Terms and suffixes like *Araiya* (local rulers?), *kilar* (land owners) or *kilavar* (village headmen?), *sabhaiyar* (member of *sabha*) and *Urar* (members of the *Ur*) indicate the major landholding groups. There were Brahmanas also among the *araiya*, *kilar* and *Urar*. The land holding brahmanas emerged as the most significant among the power groups and in the nexus of social relations both individually and collectively as custodians of *Devadanas*. As for the artisans, craftsmen and tillers, it was hardly caste but their rights over land which determined their social status and power.

The various artisans and craftsmen besides other functionaries like washermen (*vannattar*), *kollar* (blacksmiths) were allocated subordinate land- rights, mainly *Kutimai* by the *Sabha* so as to ensure their services to the temple as well as the settlement of the *Brahmadeya* and *Devadana* villages. Some of the more important crafts groups like the weaver (*saliya* and *Kaikkola*), carpenter (*taccar*) and mason (*acariyan*) and even the potter (*kusavan*) were also such *kudi* or occupants of land. The *Vettikuti* (*tevar-vettikuti* and *tali vettikuti*) seem to represent not those who provide free labour, but a pastoral people in charge of supply of ghee, etc. to the temple and seem to have shared *karnamai* rights. The tillers were attached to the land as a servile group. They were also sometimes transferred along with land. *Virakituvan* and *irankolli* are some of the menial services referred to in inscriptions.

Thus land rights were structured as follows: *Konmai*, *Miyatci* of *Nattanmai* (corporate *nadu*), *Uranmai* (corporate *Ur*), *Brahmadeya-kilamai* (*kilamai* = rights/ownership), the *Karanmai* of tenants and the *Kutimai* of service groups and tillers. The agrarian system, which evolved in the *Brahmadeya-Devadana* villages was adopted gradually by the non-*Brahmadeya* villages. This was consequent on the various transactional relations the non-*Brahmadeya* villages maintained with the temple i.e. extension of *Brahmadeya* mode of land relations into a non-*Brahmadeya* village (*vide Dalapatisamudram* and *Eruvadi* inscriptions). The structuring of land rights was also similar. Communal ownership continued and their dissolution was an ongoing process. The growing significance of land rights and their hereditary nature gave way to the crystallisation of various social groups into endogamous caste groups (artisans and craftsmen). Caste became tied up with hereditary functions, the cult of *Bhakti* and temple promoting a ritual hierarchy. The royal craftsmen had a better position as holders of land as royal tenure? Often their lineage was legitimised with *Puranic* links. Ideology thus played a significant role in the socio-economic organisation of the agrarian society.

Boundary specifications became essential as also classification and measurement of land due to reclamation of forest and waste land and the emergence of smaller holdings (individual) against communal control. Renewal of old charters was necessitated by lack of specification essential for settling problems of enjoyment, inheritance, etc. e.g. *Karnamai* rights became inheritable according to patriarchal system, the laying of boundary becoming a ritual—a female elephant (*karani-bhramana*) going around the land granted with libation of water, witnessed by the landholders of the locality. The shareholders right over his share was perpetual and he could sell, mortgage or gift it as he pleased. Fragmentation of land was an ongoing process.

Livestock was another resource of the temple. Cows and goats (sheep), which were gifted were entrusted to the *Vettikutis* (*Idaiyar* and *Ayar* = pastoralists). Sometimes a *pataittalaivan* (chief of the pastoral group in some villages?) was given charge of such endowments.

Gold was another potential resource of the temple. Gold deposited with the temple was also redistributed. The gold in the form of *Kalanju* and *Kasu* was given in exchange for land. Other forms of money like the *Palam kasu* (old *kasu*), Krishna *kasu*, *Ilakkasu* and *dinara* were given as gifts to be reinvested or redistributed. Gold endowments were redistributed mostly among the *sabhaiyar*. The interest (*palisai* or *poli*) received by the temple was mostly in terms of paddy and ghee. Interest rates varied, the standard rate per *kasu* being two *kalam* of paddy per year. Measures also varied. The role of money was marginal. Money was used only in land transactions and payments of royal dues. *Pon*, *tulaippon* are known in Pallava records (a later Pallava currency?). The *Kava (i?)tiyar* (accountant) seems to be an functionary to keep the accounts of the temple? Other commodities were exchanged mutually in given weights and/or measures. Weights and measures depended on the kind of article exchanged or used. *Kalam* and *Nali* were the most widely used grain measures. Land measured by rod (*kol*) specified for the purpose. *Veli* was the standard unit. *Makani* and *ma* were also units of land based on the sowing capacity of land (land measure—*padakaram* of land was yet another land measure) Generally two harvests (*irupu*) depending on seasonal rainfall were made.

The kinds of land included *puravu* (cultivable), *nancei* (wet land) and *punnei* (dry land) and *manai* and *illa vilakam* (house site). Agrarian tracts were described as *tati*, *Nir nilam*, *kalani* and *vayal*, while *tottam* meant garden land. Waste land was referred to as *Mutu nilam* or *pal-nilam*. *Parutti nilam* referred to land for cotton cultivation.

The circulation of agricultural resources was complex i.e., from the tillers to *Karalar*, major share to holders of *Kani* rights (*kani-utaiyar*) who in turn shared it with the temple and the *sabha* or the *Ur*. (*kanikkatan*). *Katamai* was the tax due from the intermediaries to the state or institutions to which the land was granted. The term *irai*=tax was a non-specific term. The lumpsum—as *Irai-kaval* or *irai dravyam*—along with the price of land was accepted from the purchaser by the *sabha* or *Ur*. Often it included all kinds of dues, even *Vetti* and *Vetinai*—free labour and burden?

The pattern of the sharing of the chief resource which determined the structure of social relations had its bearing on the distribution of other resources also. A lion's share of the pulses, spices and condiments also reached the land holders just as paddy) and was redistributed to the functionaries and others attached to the temple.

Virutti referred to the land tenure through redistribution of the *Deavadana* among various people attached to the temple- carpenter, *kanakkappantaram* (accountants), *uvaccar* (the drummer), the temple manager (*srikaryam arayvan*), potter, and menial servants. The temple as consumer of luxury items and aromatics, etc. also attracted trading groups, both from within the region and from outside, thus encouraging movement of traders and inter-regional exchange as well as long distance trade from the 10th century onwards.

The general economic pattern of the period represents a combination of primitive agriculture (slash and burn) of the elevated places and hill slopes, animal husbandry of the pastures and advanced farming of the irrigated plains and crafts/industries of agrarian settlements. While advanced paddy cultivation was the dominant mode of production with a complex division of labour and structured social relations, tied through non- economic bonds of a temple society, arts, crafts and labour were mostly obligatory and their payments was largely in kind. Trade was confined to non- local goods of daily consumption with an increasing capacity to bring in greater diversity in market organisation (*nagaram*) and long distance trade from about the 10th century AD (See Unit on Exchange networks and Merchant Linkages and Urbanisation of the present Block)

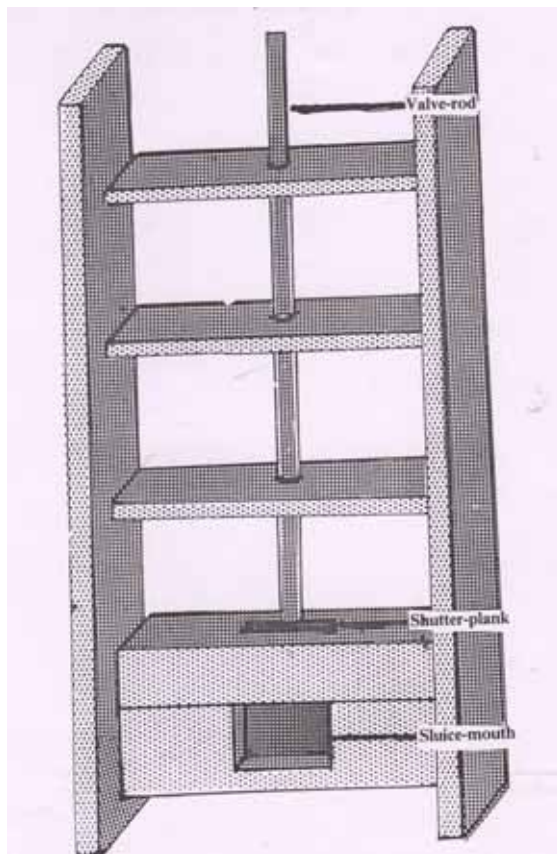
13.5.2 Irrigation – 6th to 10th Centuries AD

Both perennial and inundation techniques were followed in the Pallava and Pandya regions. Canals were dug from rivers and streams. (*vide* the Vaigai bed inscription of Centan Arikesari (Madurai district) –7th century.) Major irrigation works were carried out by kings and chiefs (e.g. Iruppaikkuti Kilavan, a chief who got several *eris* (reservoirs/tanks) dug in this region. The local chieftains who enriched their localities with such projects were granted higher political status. Both the Pallava and Pandya regions are often called tank districts as they depended almost entirely on such reservoirs and monsoon rains feeding them. River fed *eris* are also known. Building and renovation of bunds (*matai*) and sluices (*tumpu* and *kumili*) and *kal* (channel) would point to irrigation as the major concern of the agrarian regions and *Brahmadeyas* of these regions. A network of *vaykkals* leading from the village tanks (*Ur kulam* or *eri*) irrigated the lands. The Nattuppermkal- big channel of the *nadu* refers to the canals which supplied water to the whole *nadu* and was evidently under the *nattar* control. Wells were also attached to fields for supplementing irrigation from tanks. The manual works of irrigation in the fields were done by a servile group.

On the upkeep and maintenance of tanks more details are found in the Pallava inscriptions and the actual remains of many of these tanks in both regions and their renovation during British colonial rule are recorded in the district gazetteers and manuals. No special committees like the *Kalinku variyam* or *eri variyam* of the Pallava inscriptions are known in the Pandya region. Attention to de-silting and maintenance also included provision for boats to be used while de-silting the entire lake or reservoir from its centre to the periphery. Such provisions are also recorded in the late Pallava inscriptions (Kaverippakkam–North Arcot district). Interesting evidence has been found to show that between Tamil region and Sri Lanka there was irrigation technology transfer, and the Sri Lankan irrigation system showing considerable advance even from the early centuries of the Christian era.

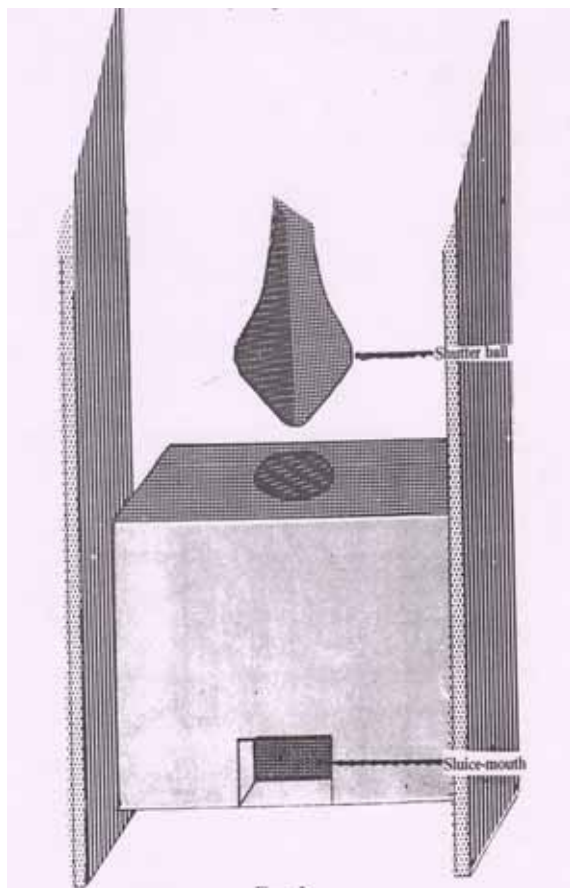
The Sluice System

A number of granite sluices (*karttumpu*) with inscriptions in the Pandya region were mostly left unnoticed and hence not recorded (e.g., the Tumpu inscription of Periya Minakshipuram—constructed by a *tattan*). The Tumpu was single valve system without any devices for mechanical advantage. The sluices consisted of two granite pillars installed in the tank on either side of the sluice mouth. Pillar heights varied as required by the depth of the tanks. The pillars are connected by cross-slabs through the centre of which a rod was inserted from above upto the sluice-mouth. The edge of the rod was flat covering the whole of the sluice mouth and could act as shutter of the sluice mouth. One could swim across to the pillars and rest on the cross-slabs to operate the shutter by lifting the rod.



Tumpu (Sluice) System: Gurukkal, Rajan (1986)

Organisation of Agricultural
and Crafts Production,
Regional Profiles of Agrarian
Society, Nature of
Stratification: South India



Kumili (Sluice-pit) System: Gurukkal, Rajan (1986)

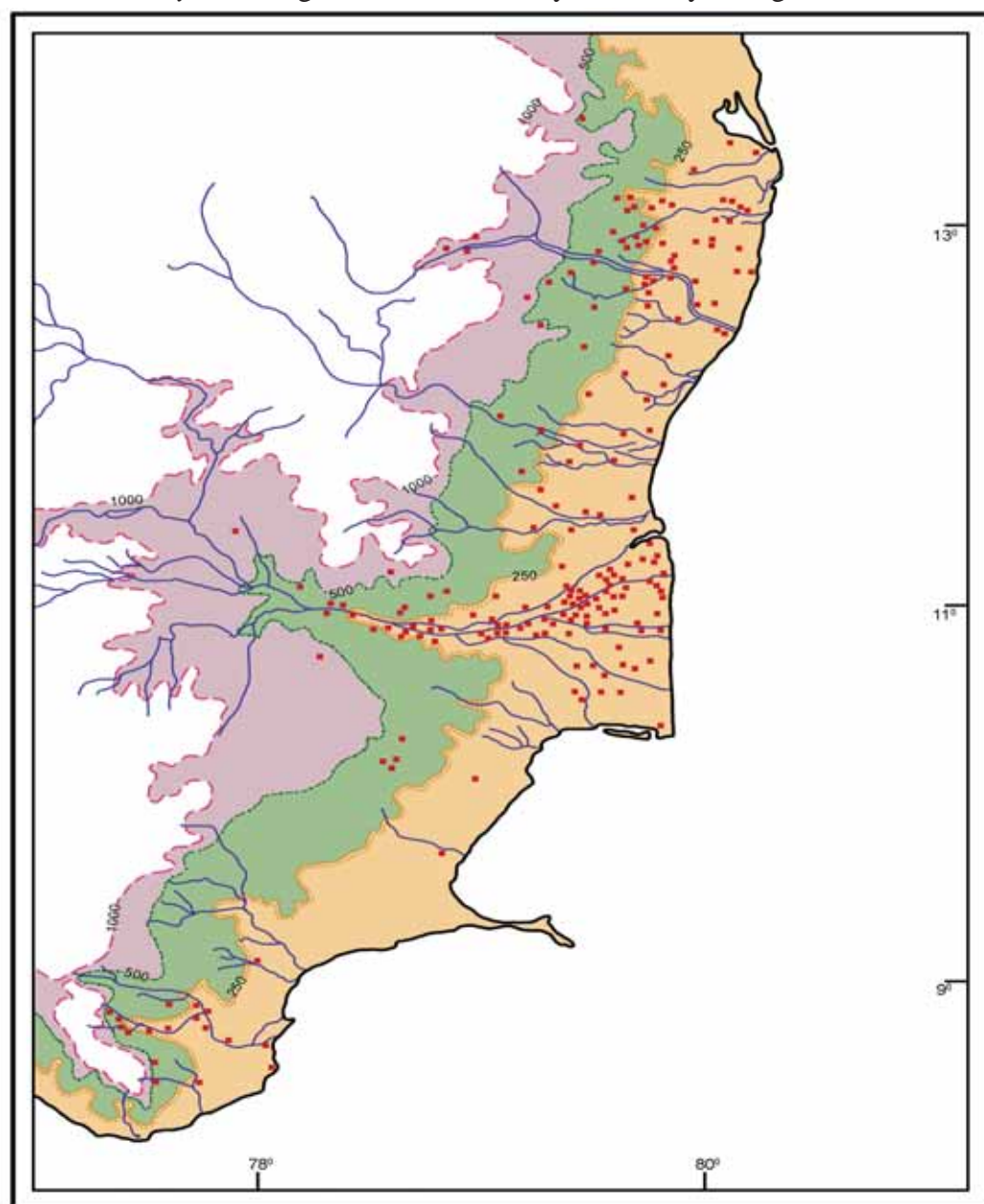
In the *Kumili* system, the edge of the shutter rod which was more or less global, closed the opening in to a stone pit. The nature of the valve was different, as, here, the water flows from above and in the former from the side. The water is led to a well called *etirakkinaru* built up outside the tank. Unlike ordinary wells its construction was upwards from the ground level. It has openings at the base level to different channels running to various directions. The flow worked on gravitational force. The wells had *piccotah* systems. Major irrigation projects were carried out in the 7th-8th centuries AD. (chiselled stone used for the construction of the sluice at Pullan *eri* – Ramanathapuram inscription). Irrigation was under the collective management of corporate bodies like the *nadu*, *sabha* and *ur* and also under the control of local chiefs.

13.6 THE AGRARIAN ORDER AND REVENUE ORGANISATION – 9th-13th CENTURIES AD

The pattern of agrarian order further got restructured in the 9-13th centuries with more direct state interventions in the regions.

13.6.1 Tamil Nadu: The Cholas

Under the Cholas, the agrarian order came to be further restructured due to the state directly entering the localities and regions for a land survey and assessment together with new and larger revenue units formed out of the existing peasant regions and *Brahmadeyas*. The *nadu* continued to organise and control agricultural production and redistribution in non- *Brahmadeya* villages. However, the creation of the *Valanadu* (groups of *nadus* for revenue administration) and the enhancement of the position of the major *Brahmadeyas* into separate revenue units (*tan-kuru* or *taniyur*) with control over several non- *Brahmadeya* villages with temples, around the *Brahmadeya*, meant greater intrusion of royal authority through such institutions



Brahmadeya Distribution in Tamilnadu C.A.D. 1300

Stein, Burton, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, OUP, Delhi 1980, between pages 150-51. See largest concentrations of *Brahmadeyas* below the 250 metre isohyets.

into the regions for the mobilisation of agrarian resources. With the proliferation of the *nagaram* as the market centre for each *nadu*, corporate merchant organisations also played an important role in the local production and redistribution processes.

It would appear that communal ownership in *Ur* continued although by the end of the Chola period land rights became more complex and stratification of land rights became regular in the non-*Brahmadeya* villages too (*Ur*). In non-*Brahmadeya* villages landholding was generally common but towards the close of the period individual landownership became prevalent in these villages also. In *Brahmadeya* villages landholders and cultivators formed two distinct classes whereas in non-*Brahmadeya* villages, the landholders were themselves cultivators. Individual ownership or shares continued in *Brahmadeya* villages with a majority of Brahmanas being the owners. Secular grants to royal functionaries also increased and villages placed under such functionaries to whom the revenues were assigned as *jivitam*.

Sale and gift of land (*nancei* and *puncei*) to the temple by *kani*- holders (*udaiyar*) and by *Ur* became more frequent (Isanaikkurai village). There are records of sale of shares (*pangu*) to the Jambukesvaram temple by 16 *kani* holders (in Karisattangurai—in fact the whole village was transferred to the temple) and in Rajarajakkurrangudi purchase by 39 persons from two brothers – *kani* holders – gifted to the Jambukesvara temple and sale to the Jambukesvaram temple by an individual (Sembiyan Kurrur), who purchased land from the four *kilavar* and their brothers (33 *veli*- covering the entire village as *Deavadana* village). Land transfers were carried out by individuals either as pieces of land or entire villages. Such transfers occurred occasionally by the *Ur* as a whole as a communal landholding. In the later period of Chola rule land transfers by individuals became prevalent in the non-*Brahmadeya* villages also. Interestingly, such transfers meant the rights to produce and revenue and the seller or grantor remained the *karanmai* holder i.e., cultivation rights and also *kutimai* (occupancy). What was being transferred was the major share of the produce (*kanikkatan*) and/or *kadamai* (land tax – *puravu vari*) payable to the king. In some cases the dues from land were paid by the cultivators to the donee and the tax to the state (*puravu-vari*). Many land transfers between individuals and temples began to occur. It is suggested by Noboru Karashima that such transfers led to *kani* holders becoming tenants and losing influence. It is also interpreted by James Heitzman to mean that in Chola period only revenues assigned and not transfer of ownership with no economic loss to donor. In fact the donor's status as the cultivator – proprietor – was confirmed. *Katamai* had by now become a tax universally applicable to the whole of the Chola region i.e., the Tamil region, with the Cholas organising a separate department of revenue administration called the *Puravu Vari Tinaikkalam* and royal functionaries like the *Nadu vagai seigira adhikari* for reorganising the *nadu* and *valanadu* revenue units.

Kani rights now meant rights inherited (*ennudaiya*) over lands, the right of possession, which was being transferred by the seller or donor (equivalent to the later *miras* rights). *Kani* in other words became hereditary rights over any asset (including the right of service in temples) and when applied to land it may mean right of possession.

The *kani* right holder enjoyed a privileged life in the village based on possession of land. The *kani* right in this wider meaning (that owning some *nencei* is the core of the *kani* right) could have been exercised only when the unity of the community was unchallenged. Otherwise it might have meant merely the right to possession of certain plots of land in the village. The emergence of a number of big landholders by the late

Chola period is indicated by titles such as *udaiyan*, *kilavan*, *alvan*, or *araiyan* (also officials). Economic development in the lower Kaveri valley during the middle Chola period (11th century AD), resulted mainly from the distribution of wealth acquired through wars and the increase of productivity of land by development of an irrigation system and the increase of land grants to officials in the middle Chola period. This is indicated by the appearance of military holdings—*irasakulavar*, *padaipparru*. Leasing out of land benefited more of non-brahmana and other frontier people. New land owners and large holdings characterised the new agrarian order in the lower Kaveri valley.

Under the Cholas the irrigation system of the Kaveri valley, which depended mostly on the mud embankments and breaching for canals supplying the *nadus* through a network of canals and channels criss-crossing the *nadus*, was promoted by the *nadu*, chiefs and the ruling families, just as much as the new *nadus* with large tanks/reservoirs that were created by royalty and organised and maintained by the local assemblies like the Sabha and *Ur* in the northern parts of Tamil Nadu. The mud embankment and canal system was also introduced into newly conquered areas as in the Tamraparni-Ghatana valleys, where the existing nadus were expanded and new *Brahmadeyas* created. The Land Survey and Assessment of the periods of Rajaraja I and Kulottunga I (985-1014 and 1070-1118) with the *nadu vagai seigira adhikari* (officers classifying and demarcating nadus and reorganising them into *valanadus*) were major initiatives for the increase in agricultural production as well as revenue organisation—a project which covered the whole of the Tamil region by the end of the 11th century AD. In fact the new agrarian order and integration which began under the Pallavas and Pandyas were finally led to their optimal development by the 11th century together with the proliferation of local and regional markets, which by the end of the 11th century led to the emergence of trading networks and commercial activities including specialisation of crafts and markets and long distance trade. (See Unit 15 of the present Block)

13.6.2 Kerala

Traditionally the number of Brahmana settlements in Kerala is believed to be 32. Curiously, no single *Brahmadeya* has a royal charter and hence it would seem that they were founded by migratory Brahmanas. They spread, establishing fresh settlements, by fusing together elements of established ones and by amalgamating two or more settlements to form a bigger one. Between the rivers Parumpula and Karumanpula are located 9 such settlements; between Karumanpula and Curni—13; and between Curni and Kanya Kumari—10. Perumcellur, Isanamangalam, Mulikkalam, and Tiruvalla are some important ones. They are found in clusters in the Pampa valley, Periyar valley in their more fertile zones. Due to rapid increase in agricultural production and extension, subsidiary settlements or upagramas came to be attached to the main Brahmana settlement (The Tiruvarruvay Copper Plate of Sthanu Ravi (AD 861) . However, the term *Brahmadeya* hardly occurs with reference to these Brahmana settlements, which are invariably associated with temples.

The term *Urar* and others like the *tali*, *tali-adhikarikal*, *taliyar*, *sabhai*, *sabhaiyar*, etc. refer to the Brahmanas who controlled the temple and the settlement. The *Urar* of Tiruvarruvay, *Netumparam tali* and *Pudukkode* are also referred to as *Patinettu nattar*, *painarumar* and *erupatteluvar*, etc. evidently the number of people. The *Paratai*, *Mulaparatai*, the council administering the temple; *Potuval*, *ahappotuval*,

variyaar and purappotuval, etc. refer to the service personnel of the temple. The variyam or committee of the type that occurs in the Tamil region is absent in Kerala.

The emergence of the temple as the new ideological instrument by about the 8th century AD, marks the genesis of an agrarian society headed by the Brahmanas and centered around the temple Endowments of vast landed estates to the temple (Tiruvalla Copper Plate and the thousands of para (a measure) of paddy from them are on record. Grants to the sala (educational institution) attached to the temple are also known, which were managed by the temple corporations. A large part of the fertile lands between Karumanpula and Curniyar (river Periyar) was under the control of the temple corporations of 11 temples including Paravur, Irnjalakkuda, etc. Most of the fertile agrarian tracts of contemporary Kerala belonged to the brahmanas as proprietors of the temple.

The localisation of agrarian activities under the institutional supervision of the temple resulted in the establishment of an elaborate agrarian order and an unprecedented expansion of agriculture. The temple could organise the society for various activities of better production through irrigation projects and large-scale land improvement schemes. Small-scale reclamation and cultivating processes (including manuring, etc.) were carried out by the *Karalar* as part of their tenancy obligations. Fertile uplands (hills) were brought under cultivation. As the head of the *nadu*, the *Naduvالي* – made grants of land giving complete ownership to temples. Terms like *Cerikkal* refer to crown lands, *Devasvam* or *Kilitu* were lands to temples, which enjoyed the *karanmai* rights (as in the Tamil region) and 18 different taxes due from the village were also assigned to temples as in the case of the village of Katuvur assigned to the Tiruvalla temple. The temple corporation received *Rakshabhoga* in the form of paddy (in measures called *kalam* and rice (*para* or *nali*) and ghee (*itankali*). The annual dues to the temple were known as *Attaikkol*. The protection temples was entrusted to the 300, 500, 700 etc. (groups of men—armed?) who were given land as *nilal*, *kaval* (protection) as *kilittukkanam* – meaning subordinate rights in land. Lands given as *Attipperu* (income from land), *panayam* (mortgage), etc. gave the temple different levels of rights like those of the owner of all revenues, protector, and temporary revenue ownership with *karanmai* rights. An elaborate system of distribution and redistribution developed. For the organisation of economic activities, lands were entrusted to various *ganas* (groups) of the temple. The temple lands were redistributed to *Karalar* (those who got them cultivated—tenants) and then to *kutikal* (actual occupants/tillers). The temples leased out lands to *karalar* who were made responsible for providing the requirements of the special temple rituals for which the endowments were made. *Karalar* had the rights to cultivate, and the *kutis*, such as tillers, artisans and craftsmen, the occupation rights. For various services to the temple (e.g. to the kalavaniyar potter) – service tenures – *virutti* and *jivitam* were given. *Virutti* was an allotment with hereditary rights and *jivitam* was for life. The *Uranmai* was retained by the temple corporation thus creating superior and subordinate rights. The hierarchy in the descending order represented *Uranmai*, *karanmai* and *kutimai*. A three tier structure of rights evolved i.e., *Koyinmai*, *Uranmai* and *Karanmai* and the fourth i.e., *kutimai* often had no permanent rights over land.

Gold was another resource deposited with the temple and was often exchanged for land, loaned on mortgage, etc. The gold lending economic activity of the temple brought interest in paddy. However there was no monetisation, despite the fact that references to *kalanju*, *kasu* (old) and *dinara* (Arab) are made in the form of gifts.

All artisans and craftsmen or professional castes settled in temple-centered villages, economically dependent, based on ties from the lowly to the higher groups i.e., the temple and village proprietors. This has been understood as representing a relatively self-sufficient local unit and the prevalence of service tenure, an established inter-commodity exchange ratio and insufficiency of coinage are believed to be the features of a closed economy.

13.6.3 Karnataka: The Chalukyas of Badami and the Rashtrakutas

In Karnataka under the Chalukyas of Badami (6th-8th c. AD) and the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed (Manyakheta) (8th-10th c. AD), the land grant system introduced a similar organisation of agricultural villages with the Brahmanas as the major landowning group, controlling the cultivation process in the *Agraharas* or *Bramapuris* (*Brahmadeyas* are not as prominently mentioned in the inscriptions as *Agraharas*) and also in the pre-existing settlements which were brought under the overarching influence of the *Agrahara* or *Brahmapuri*. Here the presence of the non-Brahmana land controlling groups is indicated by the term *Okkalu* referring to the agriculturists who like the Velalas of Tamil region were both land controllers and tenant cultivators, under the reorganised agrarian order. They functioned along with the Brahmanas in most centres. In the place of the *Sabha* or organisation of Brahmana assembly, the term *Mahajanas* indicates the big men and their assembly in both the *Agrahara* and non-*Agrahara* villages. Yet for this region there is need for intensive research as has been done for the Tamil region on the production processes and the nature of stratification of land rights. It is however possible to infer that the *Agrahara* and the temple under the leading landowning Brahmanas and *Okkalu* had similar organisational control over production, mobilisation and redistribution of resources, both agricultural and non-agricultural resources.

In Karnataka under the Western (later) Chalukyas of Kalyani (10th to the 12th centuries AD) the grants to Brahmanas were often called *Agrahara*, *Mahagrahara*, (while *Brahmapuri* referred to the whole settlement or centre), where the Brahmanas lived. The *Agraharas* had several *keris* e.g., *Kukkanur Agrahara* had 48 *keris* or colonies, pointing to the separate living quarters of the inhabitants. The grantees evidently had no right to alienate land or living streets. The village usually had an inhabitable area, temple, shops and commercial establishments, craft centres, charitable houses, warehouses, godowns and sheds, vacant sites, tanks or ponds, wet lands, gardens and forests, hay-stack and a fortification in some cases. Quarters of barbers, washermen were separated and located in the outskirts. Craft groups and trading communities (e.g. oil mongers of Lokkigundi) occupied a single row in which their places of business and residence were situated together.

The records mentioning the King's consent in giving away land or a whole village as grant to brahmanas (e.g. the village of Degamve gifted by the queen of a Kadamba king of Goa, in the presence of Mahajanas, Brahmanas or neighbours as the corporate bodies) theoretically acknowledge the king's right of absolute ownership (also rights over most of the escheat property for public use). Exemptions and conferment of privileges or rights to the donees are also similar to the grants made throughout the early medieval period. Reference is also made to the State revenue registers for land transfers, purchase, sale and taxes.

The Mahajanas conducted the survey and measurement of land and were entrusted with the management of customs and tolls donated to temples, receiving deposits of

gift money and utilising the interests earned for purposes specified by investors. They were also in charge of tanks—construction, repair and maintenance. They were generally trustees, witnesses to gifts, to exemptions from payment of taxes and tolls and gave permission for levy of taxes and settled disputes, etc.

Other local elite were the king's functionaries and the village elite like the brahmanas, Gaudas and *jiyas*. Apart from the Mahajanas, who were the most important local big men in charge of temple grants, the sthanikas, who seem to be royal functionaries, were also entrusted with the proper functioning of the temple's administration.

Land Tenure

Land was assigned for special services such as construction of tanks, clearing of forests and formation of new lands or repairs to temples (*Nettaru-Kodige*) for acts of bravery shown in rescuing cattle or women; boundary disputes, etc. *Deavadana* or *datti* – for worship in the temple; *Umbali*, another tenure, was meant for various public offices, either as revenue assignments or enjoyment of yields with claims to ownership. Many a Brahmanas and other religious or secular purposes was made entirely free from taxes (*sarva manya*) or partially free (*ardha manya*). Others such as *Kutumba Vritti* – for maintaining one's family. *Sarana vritti* – for feeding religious devotees; *Bittu vatta* – for some special service including maintenance of tanks—public works. Service tenure also included, apart from temple service, also others like military service, *Bilu vritti*—gift to the defeated king; *Kumara vritti*—to a minor prince. *Prati vritti*—a share of land obtained in exchange? *Dingariga vritti* a unique tenure translated as servant's income or livelihood ? like *nattrau kodige*?; *Anuga jivita vritti*—gift based on love affection or *olume* made to members of the royal family.

It has been suggested that there were three types of ownership—1. Complete ownership in common, 2. Part-rotation and part-common ownership, and 3. Part severalty and part-common ownership. Community control was complete and the individual entitled only to a share. Community retained the right of periodical redistribution, under which land was allotted by dividing the lands into blocks or *tattus*, with common tenure or control being retained only in so far as the periodical redistribution was concerned. Common ownership over pasture-land only. The rest was held individually according to some agreement made forever. The rights implied in common ownership extended to alienation, pre-exemption and denial of admission to strangers. In the third category, each household had its allotted share without any common control or regulation. This is said to be an ideal example of corporate life, in which the main object was to ensure that the shareholders should construct tanks and channels by themselves in their respective villages and live in peace. There were identifiable boundary marks to prevent mistake or frauds. Separation, alteration and exchange of shares were prohibited. Even in *Agraharas* evidence of common ownership has been identified. (Hirenallur—AD 1215). Common ownership meant that the rights of alienation, transfer of cultivation, sale, mortgage, gift, remission of taxes (brahmanas?) were held in common and apart from maintenance and repair and joint sale was meant for the prevention of sale to strangers. The period of tenure is defined as *sarvabhyantarasiddhi*, *achandrarkataram* (perpetual) or *ekabhoga* (single time harvest; sometimes it is also used to refer to the enjoyment rights of one person – thus *ekabhoga brahmadeya*), *tribhoga* (three times harvest) and for 21 generations.

Temple lands were leased out to tenants classified into *uttama*, *madhyama* and *kanishta*, implying a classification among the types of land and the tenants undertaking cultivation themselves. The lease amount was fixed in certain cases (*Kattuguttage* – fixed lease amount) including garden products. *Siddhaya* or minor cesses had to be paid. However, references to tenants freed from forced labour – *bitti solla* and house taxes would point to the prevalence of forced labour. Most of them were tied down to their respective blocks and the tenants had to cooperate in building tanks, temple etc. A share of produce was payable to the land owner apart from the government's share.

There was no uniformity in the size of landholdings and hence it is difficult to study the nature of holdings. Small holdings were common, as for example one *mattar* or 2 *mattars* of wet or dry land (*kodagi* land), while 16 *mattar* is a rare holding. Fragmentation evidently became more common in the latter part of the early medieval period.

Irrigation was a major concern in all regions and in Karnataka the irrigation projects were under the collective care of the local big men (Mahajanana) and references to *kere*, *samudra*, *eri*, *katte*, *kola*, *kuttai*, *kumte*, *sarovara*, *tirtha*, *tataka*, point to the types of reservoirs constructed. The sluice system was common as terms like *Tubu* – sluice, *kodi* – weir, *agali* – iron rod or *nirottu* for controlling water supply, *hatta* or *kaluve* into which water was led from the tank through *kodi*, would show.

13.6.4 Andhra Region: The Eastern Chalukyas

Agrarian expansion in Andhra began early in the 4th-6th centuries AD. In the initial phase, a greater part of land in coastal Andhra, particularly the deltaic region, was brought under cultivation due to high soil fertility (alluvial) and adequate rainfall. Hence the dense settlement pattern through out coastal Andhra. The early grants of *Agraharas* in the Andhra region numbering about 27 and belonging to the 4th-6th centuries are concentrated in the Krishna, Guntur and Godavari districts (coastal Andhra).

It is of interest that the names of the tributaries of the Godavari, the largest perennial river, are derived from those of the Vedic–brahmana or rishis or sages or gotra lineages such as Gautama, Vasishta, Vaisvamitra, Vanadevi, Bharadvaja, Atreyi and Jamadagni. Next in importance is the Krishna with its tributaries–Vamsadhara and Nagawati (the Vengi region (modern Andhra)).

Agrahara, a technical term, applied to an endowment of villages which were in the exclusive and undisturbed enjoyment of a brahmana or a group of Brahmana beneficiaries. Exempted from all taxes (*sarva kara parihara*), the grants were given immunities with revenue and administrative rights as also a strong restriction against official interference. The *Visaya* and *rashtra* are regions in which the grant village is usually located. Although in the later bilingual Pallava copper plates the Sanskrit portion has *Visaya* or *rastra* (e.g. *Adayaru rastra* in the Udayendiram plates) in the place of the Tamil region called *nadu*, the Andhra region does not seem to have had such well entrenched peasant regions, which organised production. The inhabitants of the gift village were to obey the grantees.

From the 7th to 13th centuries AD the Eastern Chalukya grants numbering 53, of which 34 have been identified (17 in Krishna district, 7 in Guntur district, 4 each in East Godavari, and Prakasam districts, one in Srikakulam and one in Visakhapatnam) mark a further expansion and reorganisation of the agrarian order. Early Eastern Chalukyas like Kubja

Visnuvardhana encouraged Brahmanas to settle in the frontier areas e.g. between Kalinga and Andhra (Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam) as buffer villages

The comparative absence of settlements in Rayalasima and Telengana, despite frequent westward shifts in the political boundaries of the dynasties like the Eastern Chalukyas may be attributed to their geographic and climatic differences. Both Telengana (Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Medak, Warangal, Hyderabad, Mehbubnagar, Nalgonda and Khammam districts) and Rayalasima (Kurnool, Anantapur, Cuddapah, and Chittoor) are on the plateau. These are two major physiographic zones—The Ghats and Plateaus (Eastern Ghats)—marked by a series of eroded surfaces of rocky region, with an average of 85 cm rainfall, the rainfall decreasing from northeast to southwest, Rayalasima, being a rain shadow area. The soils are red, black, laterite, and alluvial with black cotton soils mostly in Telengana and some in Rayalasima and the alluvial only in a small portion of the plateau. The forests (moist deciduous of the plateau along the north eastern border of the region and dry deciduous forests in areas of low rainfall) with limited forest area in coastal area were gradually brought into the new agrarian system, either by deforestation or more often by foresters being brought into temple society as economic groups supplying various items of consumption by royalty and the temple and also other plains people.

In Andhra the association of *Agrahara* and *Brahmadeya* with temple is initially not well established as in other parts of south India i.e., till the 10th century AD. They are not temple-centered as in Kerala or Tamil region. However, they had Ghatika as centres of education.

According to the *Yasastilaka (Campu)* of Somadeva – AD 959 – a minister is alleged to be demanding unpaid labour at the time of sowing, collection of dues while the corn ear is still unripe and that there was unbridled movement of troops at the harvesting season. This would probably indicate the prevalence of forced labour and the intrusion of troops, from which exemptions are given to the Brahman settlements. There is evidence of the transfer of share croppers and labourers along with land (Hirehadagalli plates – Bellary district), a practice which continued in the later periods also.

Within Andhra, regional variables are critical. Interior Telengana and Rayalasima continued with their pastoral life styles for a long time. Eras of copious epigraphic documentation correspond to momentous changes in the political economy of South India. The colonisation of interior Andhra was likewise a long term process. Expanding agrarian frontier and the demand for military labour in later periods resulted in physical mobility. Considerable labour resources came in with migrants, who, in return, were granted privileges like village headmen e.g., the Reddis in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Two important features of Telengana (Kakatiya period 11th-14th centuries) and Rayalasima (Vijayanagara period, 14th-17th centuries) were tank irrigation and temples, which were not functionally equivalent or homologous. Under the Kakatiyas, political and military connections provided the route to wealth and power, which were achieved through a web of economic interests. Land provided entry into a privileged nexus of surplus extraction. Land under *Racadinamau*, *raja-palu* (share) defined royal prerogative in making *Agrahara* gifts, *raca sunkamu*, etc. *Vritti* grants were made to religious institutions and specialists and *jivitamu* to warriors. Differing rights existed between nobles and officers, although land (proprietaryship) was alienable.

Expansion of agriculture through reclamation of forest land and waste land as well as Population pressure occurred more regularly after the 10th century AD. Grants in Telengana prior to 11th century were fewer than under the Kakatiyas. By 13th century, apart from royalty, the *astadasapraja* or 18 communities (a conventional number found all over south India in epigraphic references to the agricultural and allied communities) were also making grants. New villages with temples and tanks emerged. The *Sarvabhyantarasiddhi* included many rights and privileges, the most significant being rights over irrigation works like tanks (large number in the Warangal and Karimnagar districts). Under Sarvamanya, the donee or donees were entitled to the enjoyment of income from all taxes and other rights as fines and fees of various kinds – *nidhi*, *nidana*, *sulka*, *danda*, *dhana*, *upabhogya* and as *tribhogyabhyantara siddhi*. They also had control over other crafts production like oil crushing (*ganuga*—oil crushing machine), *karamba* – waste land?

The creation of villages progressed on a larger scale mostly in new areas and land grants to brahmanas and temples (*Devadana* and *Agrahara* and *Mahagrahara*), around which new settlements seem to have come into existence. In the *Agraharas* shares of land assigned to brahmanas and the donees were not to leave the place nor sell. More villages from forest lands were brought under the new order during the times of Prataparudra II-1290-1323. The new settlements were given special incentives, like remission of taxes. The Brahmanas of one *Agrahara* (*Mantrakuta*) could hold lands in other villages. (Prataparudra's period). For temple service, land as *Vritti* – *deva brahmana vritti* – or service tenure, was allotted as in other Brahmana and temple centres.

In Telengana (and Rayalsima, the last region to be brought into the new agrarian order but in the period after the 13th century AD) tank irrigation was the major source. Tank construction was one of the *saptasantanas*. The rich invested their surplus in temples and tanks. Tanks often became private property. The whole of Telengana was covered with planned irrigation facilities—e.g., Chaunda Samudra and The Pakhal lake. Royalty, feudatories and other rich families of merchants constructed tanks (dams, sluices, etc.) Tanks were *nadimatrikas* (river fed) and *Devamatrikas* (rain fed), the former mainly in river valleys and latter in monsoon dependent areas. Natural streams called Vagus were also channelised for irrigation. The later *dasabandha manya* – for tank maintenance may well have originated in the Kakatiya period. Tank owners derived substantial income from the use of water by peasants. Different kinds of water lifts (like *ratana* – water pulley) were taxed. Canals and streams were under the communal control of villagers. Except the canals which flowed through the *Agraharas* and other tax free areas, the rest of the canals fetched income to the state. The nayakas, who were royal officials with estates to govern seem to have benefited by their control over such projects. Differential rates of payments from different sections of the community would show the inequality of the system. Water cess was collected mostly as rent by the intermediaries.

Double cropping (system of double cropping – in *Kartika* and *Vaishkha*) or sometimes three crops are recorded in the inscriptions. Types of land such as Marturu—wet land; *mutlu* – dry land; land measures like *nivartanas* for wet land and *khandis* for dry land. are referred to. Putti was a measure both for land and grain. *Nivartana* was an age old measure of land in the Deccan and Andhra regions, which continued to be in vogue till the late medieval times. One *nivartana* was between 2 ½ and 4 ½ acres. Beddachenu- stony land; *recadi* – black soil; *tomtabhumi* – garden; *nir nela* – wet land; *veli bhumi* – dry land are some of the soil and land types known from the inscriptions.

Paddy was not only a major consumer crop but also a medium of exchange and trade article. Varieties of rice (e.g. best – *rajanalu*), Jowar and bajra were also cultivated, apart from cotton and sugarcane. Cotton production and trade in cotton became a leading craft and commercially viable product by the 12th-13th centuries AD practically all over South India. Oil seeds were also cultivated and the *Teliki vevuru*, a community of oil mongers (guild) were among the organised craft groups of this period.

A complex system of tax appropriation emerged. The terms used are often confusing, but it is clear that taxes on agriculture were numerous. (like the *Siddhaya*, *ari* and *Koru*; *Kanika* and *katanamu*; at the time of harvesting; *Vennupennu*; *Pullari* – grazing tax. *Sulkam*, *Koluchu* and *ammadikalupannu*, paid in grain. Tax on water – *nirohari*, *nohari* and *nir mudi*, *ratanavamu*, *ettubhandamu*, *tumunayamu*, *sunkamu*, etc.) The *panchamakula* or agricultural labourers would seem to have been the actual payers of all taxes and dues. The system of taxation was not uniform and varied according to caste pointing to the servile condition of actual cultivators.

The several communities of cultivators or those engaged in agricultural operations including crafts for agriculture (*astadasapraja*) mentioned in the inscriptions and literary works like the *Kridabhiramamu*, *Sakalaniti Sammatamu* – on *dharma*, and *Velugoti varivamsavali*, etc. were headed by the Reddis, Gavundas and *Karanams* who kept the records of the village lands in the Andhra region. The merchants emerged as an economically independent and powerful force by the early 11th century. *Komatis* and *salevaru* and others made gifts in the form of money – *cinnas*, *madras*, etc.

Crafts Groups

Among the crafts groups were metal workers (*panchalohadhipatulu*); *bangaramu* (gold), *vendi* (silver), *raci* (copper), *tagaramu* (tin), and *sisamu* (lead).); the *Salivaru* – weavers; *vaddavaru* – stone cutters; *kase* – masons; *vadrunki* – carpenter; and *kammailu* (blacksmiths) *kummarilu* (potter), *musara varu* (manufacturers of small crucibles) and *teliki varu* (oil crushers) are prominently mentioned. By 12th century AD most crafts groups were socially and economically stabilised in Telengana. Not all artisan classes were present in every village. Their grants were in the form of a share of the income from the sale of their items of manufacture. Most of these crafts were in the form of manufacturing agricultural implements and water devices, carts and boats, etc. They were all remunerated for their services in the form of land which they usually cultivated themselves. (For details of crafts and commerce see Unit 15)

13.7 SUMMARY

The period is marked by the decline in trade and commercial activities resulting in heavy reliance on agrarian sector. In the period from the 9th to 13th centuries agriculture continued to be the mainstay of the economy. This led to the widespread expansion of the land grant economy, particularly the *agraharas*. Another related feature of the economy of this period, though highly debated, was the emergence of feudal economy. To its positive side *Brahmadeyas* were instrumental in agricultural expansion to a large extent. However, there also emerged ‘superimposition of superior rights in land’. The major beneficiaries were none other than the Brahmanas who emerged as major landowning groups in the region.

13.8 GLOSSARY

Campu	: A literary style that mixes verses with prose.
Escheat	: King's right/claim over the property/possessions of the deceased officers.
Communal Ownership	: Lands owned in common by peasant community, of which some were brought under the control of the <i>brahmadeya</i> donees and some gradually were brought under <i>Urar</i> and <i>Nattar</i> .

13.9 EXERCISES

- 1) To what extent *agrahara* and *Brahmadeya* grants helped in the agrarian expansion in South India?
 - 2) Explain *pariharas*. Analyse the *pariharas* in the context of the *Brahmadeya* grants.
 - 3) Examine the pattern of tank irrigation in the Pallava-Pandya regions.
 - 4) Critically analyse the nature of land rights under the Cholas.
 - 5) Give a brief account of the nature of land tenures under the Chalukyas.
 - 6) Analyse the pattern of agrarian expansion in the Andhra region during the early medieval period.
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