

# The State and the Subordinate Peasants in Karnataka (AD 1300 to 1565)

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## Introduction

During the period between fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Karnataka was ruled by kingdoms such as the Hoysala and Vijayanagara. This was a period that witnessed major political developments, including the decline of the Hoysalas and the rise of the Vijayanagara kingdom. These dynasties introduced measures to protect the interests of the agricultural communities, particularly the dominant peasantry. For example, the state allowed some tax concessions to the peasants so that they were able to pay the taxes.<sup>1</sup> The state also allowed land ownership rights to the members of the peasant families so that they were able to pay their dues to the state treasury, even though it does not mean that there was an ideal social order where most of the occupational groups benefited from the state policy. A few peasant groups affected by the state policies resorted to migration. We term them as subordinate peasants. They were those who worked on a small piece of land with the assistance of the family labour, hired labour and serfs. This category also included the landless labourers who depended on the dominant peasantry for their sustenance.<sup>2</sup>

The small tenants obtained land on lease from the dominant peasantry. The latter, such as the brahmanas, temples, mutts, *gavundas* or *gaudas* enjoyed land ownership rights, tax concessions and bargaining power as they formed their institutions and associations such as *agraharas* and *hadinentu samaya*. The subordinate peasants, on the other hand, could not benefit from the state's policies. By study of the nature of the state, agrarian relations and peasant migration, one is able to analyse the nature of peasant unrest in Karnataka. In the European context, it has been suggested that there were 'divisions and inequalities as part of the dynamics governing the relationships within the peasant class',<sup>3</sup> thereby showing that the peasant community was not a homogeneous group. It implies that one can broadly categorise the peasants into dominant and subordinate groups.

The relationship between dominant and subordinate groups can be illustrated as below:

. . . these movements may best be considered within the structured relations of domination and subordination. . . . In other words, the existence of a class of small agricultural producers has historically been predicated on the presence of other classes who are dependent on the former for their basic means of

subsistence. Consequently, peasants have always been inextricably enmeshed in a network of social relations with other classes.<sup>4</sup>

The present work concentrates on the class of small agriculturists who were exploited by the dominant peasantry and the state officials.

### Nature of the State

To understand the tribulations encountered by the subordinate peasants, it is essential to discuss the nature of the state. A few scholars have attempted to discuss the nature of the Hoysala state. William Coelho refers to the king assisted by a council of ministers and officials such as the *mahasamanta*, *samanta*, *dannayakas*, *heggades* and *gavundas*, thereby showing the presence of a political and military hierarchy.<sup>5</sup> Kesavan Veluthat suggests that *gavundas* acted as state agents, implying that the state obtained the support of the *gavundas* in administration including the collection of taxes.<sup>6</sup> His study is useful in analysing the difference between the dominant and subordinate peasantry. It is also apparent that such distinction prevailed not only under the Hoysalas but also in Vijayanagara. A study argues that the Hoysala state represented feudalism even though there is reference to a prosperous trade and urbanisation.<sup>7</sup> Another work argues that the *nadus* assisted the state in enhancing its authority.<sup>8</sup> J.D.M. Derrett argues that the Hoysalas can be compared with the constitutional monarchy of England, implying that the king was the source of state power, but his power was limited by the presence of the council of ministers, landlords and other subordinates who could question his leadership.<sup>9</sup> Derrett, through this statement, implies that the king could not become an absolute authority due to the presence of ministers and the *nadu* officials who could change their allegiance at any moment based on contemporary political developments. Lack of absolute state authority would imply that under the Hoysalas there was limited exploitation of the subordinate peasants.

Scholars such as B.A. Saletore, Burton Stein and Noboru Karashima have attempted to discuss the nature of the Vijayanagara state. Saletore believed that Vijayanagara was a centralised state, which could employ a large number of officials to collect taxes. He also argued that the taxation rate was reasonable, and did not exert inordinate stress on the peasants.<sup>10</sup> His argument is applicable in the case of the dominant peasants. However, the peasants who were at the bottom of the agrarian structure suffered from heavy taxation and forced labour.

Burton Stein questioned the centralisation model. He employed the segmentary state theory to discuss the nature of the Vijayanagara state. Even though he assumed the prevalence of the centre, he harped on the autonomous *nadus* and other segments such as the *brahmadeya*, *nagaram* and temples, thereby differentiating between ritual hegemony (king) and real hegemony (*nadus*).<sup>11</sup>

According to Stein, there were a few differences between the Chola and the Vijayanagara periods. During this time, *nayakas* replaced *nadus*. The Hoysala and Vijayanagara kings depended on governors, military commanders and chieftains. However, when compared with the Hoysalas, the major change that emerged in the Vijayanagara period relates to the rise of the *amaranayakas* who assisted the state in expanding the empire.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, there was a transition from *nayakas* to *amaranayakas* as *nayakas* existed even before the Vijayanagara. *Nayakas* with *amaram* tenure was a feature of the Vijayanagara period, not found in pre-Vijayanagara times.

The Vijayanagara state, for Stein, represented the continuity of the ritual and real sovereignties. He discussed the submission of tributes by the *nayakas* to the king on auspicious occasions such as *Mahanavami* festival. However, he refused to accept the argument that Vijayanagara was a feudal state as the *nayakas* were not landed intermediaries unlike the European feudal organisation.<sup>13</sup>

Noboru Karashima studied the political condition in South India, particularly Tamil Nadu. He was able to find evidence regarding the measures implemented by the state to centralise its authority. He could identify 500 *nayakas* in Tamil Nadu and he suggested that there were 1,000 *nayakas* in the Vijayanagara empire.<sup>14</sup> The existence of large numbers of *nayakas* gives us an idea of the extent of state power. Karashima also suggests that the king centralised power by controlling the *nayakas* who were periodically transferred from one province to the other. However, he accepts that after 1565, *amaranayakas* emerged as the feudal authorities, thereby weakening the state authority.<sup>15</sup>

While accepting the position of Karashima, one may also suggest that feudalisation of state authority might have emerged even before 1565, particularly after the death of Krishnadevaraya. The confusion regarding succession to the throne of the kingdom provided an opportunity to the *amaranayakas* to enhance their authority and exploit the peasant community.<sup>16</sup> The *adikaris* or the *nayakas* oppressed the people through repressive taxation, resulting in peasant revolts in Tamil Nadu. In actuality, people belonging to the *valangai* (right hand) and *idangai* (left hand) castes revolted against oppression by the ruling class as there was a considerable increase in the revenue demand. This event took place in the year 1429.<sup>17</sup>

K.S. Shivanna was able to find developments such as serfdom and exploitation of the peasants in the Vijayanagara period. He suggests, consequently, that there was an emergence of the feudal set-up under the Vijayanagara rule.<sup>18</sup> D.C. Sircar has argued that Vijayanagara represented some features of feudalism.<sup>19</sup> Carla Sinopoli attempted to analyse the different state models and mentions the futility of employing one state model to describe the divergent phases of Vijayanagara history. The main reason for this conclusion is the 'divergent sources of power and

authority within the imperial systems'.<sup>20</sup> It would be erroneous to consider Vijayanagara as comprising a monolithic structure as it was ruled by four different dynasties, representing various regions of South India. The *nayaka* system emerged by the end of the fifteenth century and it was strengthened in the early decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

Scholars such as D.C. Sircar and K.S. Shivanna were influenced by the information provided by the foreign travellers such as Domingo Paes and Fernao Nuniz who refer to the relationship between the king and the *nayakas*. Nuniz, for example, refers to *nayakas* who paid dues to the state.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the *nayakas* were also compelled to supply the army when the king was involved in warfare with his enemies. Consequently, the *nayakas* were allowed to maintain their army. Even though the state allowed some autonomy to the *nayakas*, one cannot underestimate the ability of the kings to centralise authority. However, it is not possible to consider Vijayanagara as a classic centralised state. Consequently, one needs to understand the difference between the metropolis, core and periphery of Vijayanagara, which controlled a large territory of South India.<sup>23</sup>

The nature of the state had an impact on peasant conditions and the social order. The landed intermediaries devised measures to exploit the peasants. It is true that the kings took corrective measures to alleviate peasant distress in the Telugu, Tamil and Kannada regions. However, one cannot deny the peasant distress caused due to the actions of feudal and non-feudal authorities.

### Agrarian Relations

The landowners under the Hoysalas were the king, ministers, the rich peasants including the *nadu* officials, and the small peasants. The state distributed land among the religious beneficiaries and the secular authorities even though one also finds small landowners.<sup>24</sup> The dominant peasantry was able to exploit the subordinate peasants due to the additional powers they obtained from the king. The latter would interfere only in the case of complaints from the peasants. In the Hoysala period, there was a practice of transferring farmers along with the land, as mentioned in an inscription belonging to AD 1320.<sup>25</sup> The implication is that the subordinate agrarian class was attached to land. The landlord needed the support of the workers to cultivate large estates.

In the case of Vijayanagara, Burton Stein has discussed the existence of a land tenure system comprising the *bandharavada* (royal treasury), *manya* (land grants) and *amaranayankara*, and he has analysed their complex meanings and connotations. A major portion of the land, according to Stein, belonged to the *nayakas* as they were given the responsibility of managing a huge territory and sending tribute to the state.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the crown possessed property which could be used to give land grants to the brahmanas and other beneficiaries. The land grants given to the

temples and brahmanas were called *manya*, as a few lands given to them were exempt from taxation.<sup>27</sup> Donation of a huge area to the *agraharas* and the temples allowed them to emerge as landed magnates.<sup>28</sup> They formed their own associations that acted as a pressure group on state policies. Those who lacked such pressure groups could not protect their interest.

One finds the rich peasants at the top of the hierarchy of the agrarian structure. There were large and small landowners. Some of the peasants formed their own organisations such as the *okkalu* and *samaya*.<sup>29</sup> In one case, brahmana tenants formed themselves into *okkalu*.<sup>30</sup> One may consider the *Vokkaligas* as the Kannada equivalents of the *Vellalas* of Tamil Nadu.<sup>31</sup> In some cases, organisations such as *hadinentu samaya* were also given the right to collect taxes on behalf of the state. Despite this, the state always monitored the pattern of tax collection with the assistance of state officials and leaders of the peasant organisations.

The brahmanas and the dominant peasantry benefited from the state policy of giving tax concessions. The brahmanas and the temples gave their land to temporary tenants for cultivation. Sources such as inscriptions refer to tenants who had to pay an amount to the landlord. The lowest section among the peasants had to bear the burden of payment of taxes. In some cases, they could not pay the taxes and they migrated in search of better prospects.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, it was the subordinate peasants who suffered the most due to demand for enhanced tax payment and other developments such as a major war. The present work does not suggest that peasant discontent was a widespread crisis during the study period. However, it is also important to understand the condition of the subordinate peasants who suffered from heavy taxation and forced labour.

K.S. Shivanna discusses the land ownership pattern and land tenure. He refers to landowners such as the crown, brahmanas, temples, *mutts* and *nayakas*.<sup>33</sup> He believes that the land tenure system encouraged feudal exploitation of the cultivating class. Landowners such as brahmanas, temples and *nayakas* belonged to the non-agrarian class.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, they needed the service of agrarian classes such as hired labourers, small cultivators and serfs.<sup>35</sup> The brahmanas and the temples obtained land grants from the king, and they were answerable to him and not to the cultivators. Apparently, the non-agrarian class could control the agrarian community, leading to the emergence of feudalism at least in respect of land administration.<sup>36</sup>

In addition, one also finds reference to service tenure. In this system, land was granted to officials for the service that they rendered to the state.<sup>37</sup> Another category of service tenure related to the land given to people such as barbers, washermen and other non-agricultural producers who provided continuous service to the people in the locality.<sup>38</sup> They also obtained land grants, even though these varied in terms of size and class when compared with those of the brahmanas and the *nayakas*.

One may refer to the *nayakas* who obtained land under the land tenure

system called *amaranayankara* or *nayaka-tana*, thereby allowing the *nayakas* to control the territories and maintain a military force. The latter could be supplied to the king when he fought wars with his enemies. The *nayakas* also had to pay to the king an annual contribution. For example, the Portuguese traveller Fernao Nuniz mentions that the *amaranayaka* named Lepapayque who controlled Vimgapor or Bankapur had an income of 3,00,000 *pardaos* (gold coins of Vijayanagara), and he maintained an army consisting of 10,000 foot soldiers and 800 horses. His annual share of contribution to the king was 80,000 *pardaos*.<sup>39</sup> This is a substantial amount by any standards. As the *amaranayakas* had to give a considerable amount to the state, they forced the peasants to pay a sizeable amount as tax to the *nayakas*. The dominant peasants who acted as middlemen between the peasants and the *amaranayakas* could use force to exploit the subordinate peasantry. One also needs to note that the state maintained a direct relationship with the dominant peasantry while the subordinate peasants' voice was not heard in the metropolis. In this situation, the subordinate peasants had to devise strategies to avoid their exploitation. Landless peasants, tenants-at-will, sharecroppers, sub-tenants and serfs were the subordinate peasants who had to bear the burden of production and tax payment. Dominant peasants, who formed their own organisations, could not be evicted from land. The subordinate peasants, who were not organised, could be evicted from land. Changes in the tax demand could affect this category of peasantry.

There was a practice of the landlord giving land on lease to tenants. For example, *geni* was a practice where, in return for the land leased, the tenant had to pay a fixed rent to the landlord as per the contract signed between the landlord and the tenant.<sup>40</sup> Some tenants had a temporary status, implying that they could be evicted by the landlord on any pretext. However, we also find permanent tenants who could not be evicted. For example, in south coastal Karnataka one can find two types of *genis*: *mula geni* and *chala geni*.<sup>41</sup> *Mula geni* was permanent in character and the tenant had to pay a fixed share of the produce to the land owner. *Chala geni*, on the other hand, was more exploitative as this system was temporary in character. Further, the landlord could demand an enhanced amount of tax from the tenant.<sup>42</sup>

Another practice of leasing was called *vara*, and it refers to the sharing of the produce after the harvest.<sup>43</sup> This system benefited the tenant, as the latter had to give a part of the produce to the landlord and there was no fixed amount specified. There was the practice of farming out the land, as found in *guttige*, *siddhaya* and *gadi*. *Guttige* was a contract where the leaseholder paid a share of the produce to the owner of the land.<sup>44</sup> *Siddhaya* refers to the payment of a fixed amount of revenue to the landlord. *Gadi* refers to the payment of a share of the produce by the cultivator to the landlord.<sup>45</sup> The tenant could cultivate land by using the family labour, or he had to obtain the services of hired labourers and slaves. There is also a reference to *kaddaya*<sup>46</sup> and *bitti* or forced labour.<sup>47</sup> It was possible for the

landlords or the tenants to compel the subordinate peasants to work on their land for meagre wages or payment in kind.

The above study reveals that even though the king demonstrated a willingness to protect the interests of the dominant and subordinate peasants, he was not able to prevent the feudal authorities and other landed intermediaries from exploiting the subject peasantry, thereby leading to peasant discontentment. The *gaudas* and *nayakas*, who possessed varied powers in different regions, subjected the peasants to oppression.

### Society as Reflected in the Bhakti Literature

In the medieval period, there was a social movement in the form of the Bhakti movement as represented by the virashaivism and the *dasa* literature. The Bhakti philosophers such as Basavanna demanded equality between brahmanas and the sudras and the rich and the poor.<sup>48</sup> The peasants like other poor people, demanded justice from exploitation. The *dasa* literature also discusses the plight of the poor people. These works show the division between the privileged and underprivileged classes. It is true that these works do not specifically discuss the condition of the subordinate peasants. However, they give the indication regarding the problems of the poorer sections in the society.<sup>49</sup> The Bhakti literature discussed the difference between the rich and the poor. Purandaradasa, a Vaishnava saint who belonged to the Vijayanagara period suggests that people should not worry and surrender to god.<sup>50</sup> Kanakadasa praised *ragi* as the food of the poor people. It is suggested that: 'While royalty, wealthy merchants and weavers could afford high quality rice, poor people could afford to eat only the staple grain known as *ragi*?<sup>51</sup> The subordinate peasants and agrarian workers, comprising the *holeyas*, who belonged to the lowest category of the social structure, could not consume high quality rice, which only the rich peasants and merchants could consume.<sup>52</sup>

### Impact of Taxation System on the Subordinate Peasants

Scholars discussed the taxation rate under the Hoysalas and Vijayanagara. The Vijayanagara followed the revenue system found in the Hoysalas as we find reference to the taxes such as *siddhaya*, *bitti*, *purbaya*, *apurbaya*, *anyaya*, etc. *Siddhaya* was the fixed revenue demand by the state. In the Hoysala period, the *siddhaya* formed 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the produce.<sup>53</sup> Even though it appears as a reasonable demand, there were additional taxes imposed by the state on the peasants. *Purbaya* was the tax previously imposed, showing that the Hoysalas continued the taxes collected by the Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas of Kalyana. However, *apurbaya* are those taxes that were not previously collected. *Anyaya* refers to the tax collected on illegal or criminal activities. There is also reference to *hala*, a tax imposed on peasants.<sup>54</sup>

The state and the *nadu* officials were responsible for the collection of the tax. During the times of crisis, the tax demand increased. The Hoysalas

had to face invasion from the North and they found the need to interfere in South Indian politics. In this situation, the feudal lords and chieftains increased the demand for tax from the peasants.<sup>55</sup> It has been suggested that additional taxes benefited the feudal agencies and not the state in the case of the Hoysalas.<sup>56</sup> One can also suggest that it did not benefit the subordinate peasants who had to suffer from enhanced tax demands from the state.

Derrett has identified ten groups of taxes. However, there were fluctuations in the type of taxes imposed on the subjects. Variation in the taxes, naturally affected the dominant and subordinate peasants.<sup>57</sup> According to William Coelho, the ruling class of the Hoysala state comprised the king, *mahasamants*, *samantas*, *dannayakas*, *heggades* and *gaudas*.<sup>58</sup> The latter were responsible for the administration of agriculture. It is apparent that the large numbers of feudal authorities exercised authority over the subjects. Coelho also says that the Hoysala state imposed taxes on the peasants such as land tax, fodder for elephant and horses, forced labour, plough tax, etc. The *nadu* officials were mentioned as using forced labour to exploit the peasants.<sup>59</sup> By the Vijayanagara period, there were clear indications of forced labour. People of the villages had to supply grass to the royal horses and according to an inscription belonging to AD 1447, people were exempted from other taxes due to this service performed by them.<sup>60</sup>

K.G. Vasanthamadhava discusses peasant distress. He perceives two agrarian categories, namely, landed gentry and the landless workers. He mentions a few Vijayanagara inscriptions, which give information regarding the problems faced by the agrarian workers such as the *holeyas*, hired laborers and others who actually worked on the land.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, we have the landowners such as brahmanas, officials, feudal lords and merchants who did not actually cultivate and depended on the working class for the production of agrarian commodities.

We also find some instances of the tenants opposing the policy of the landowners. For example, in AD 1391 the subordinate peasants or the tenants revolted against the landowner Narasimha Bhatta who approached the pontiff of Shringeri *mutt* for settling of this dispute. The tenants carried the food belonging to Narasimha Bhatta and refused to obey his orders. However, due to intervention by the authorities of Shringeri *mutt*, the dispute was settled.<sup>62</sup> An inscription of AD 1418 mentions that the king Harihara established an *agrahara* named Hariharapura and he decided to distribute the tenants between his own land and the land of the *agrahara* to enable the *mahajans* to get the land cultivated. It was also done with the view to prevent future conflict between the government tenants and those of the *agrahara*. However, it is mentioned that the king and the *nadu* officials should not harass the tenants for any loss.<sup>63</sup> It shows that the tenants suffered from the hands of the king and the *nadu* officials.

In another incident which took place in AD 1425, the land of the priests or the *purohitas* was attacked and captured by the tenants. The dispute was



settled by the governor of Barakuru *rajya*. In another incident, the tenants of the Shringeri *mutt* refused to pay rent to the landlord. The emperor had to intervene in this dispute. He instructed the tenants to follow the orders of their master.<sup>64</sup> The study reveals that the dominant peasantry opposed the state policies while the subordinate peasants opposed the policies of the landlords. The state officials interfered in these disputes and attempted to solve them. Perhaps, the lack of united effort by the dominant and subordinate peasants to oppose the state policies was responsible for the absence of a major peasant movement in Karnataka.

Vasanthamadhava refers to a few instances of peasant reaction to their condition. For example, in 1465, the landowners opposed the policy of the governor of Barkur, Pandarideva, who demanded enhanced revenue from the peasants. The aggrieved landowners refused to pay taxes. The Vijayanagara government sent another official to intervene and settle the revenue dispute in this region.<sup>65</sup> However, one need not consider this event as representing a movement of subordinate peasants. It was a movement led by the dominant peasantry and consequently the state respected their voice. This study also reveals that there were a few instances of the peasant resistance against the ruling class.

According to Nuniz, the Vijayanagara peasant paid a major amount of the produce to the state.<sup>66</sup> This would imply the prevalence of a highly exploitative state. Venkataramanayya suggests that Vijayanagara was an exploitative state, which represented feudalism.<sup>67</sup> Another study endorses the argument of Venkataramanayya as it argues that the peasants were in trouble due to the practice of Vijayanagara to delegate the tax collection activity to the tax farmers.<sup>68</sup> Even though we may not completely agree with the argument of Venkataramanayya, it is not possible to deny the peasant distress. This is also proved by a Vijayanagara inscription which suggests that the state and the *gaudas* (the dominant peasants) should not oppress the tenants (the subordinate peasants).<sup>69</sup>

Mark Wilks argues that the Vijayanagara state collected 20 per cent of the produce from the peasants.<sup>70</sup> However, Saletore suggests that the Vijayanagara state collected different taxes in different regions depending on factors such as soil fertility and the area of cultivation.<sup>71</sup> Shivanna argues that there was the collection of one-fourth of produce as tax apart from other dues.<sup>72</sup> One can suggest that a substantial amount was collected as tax by the state. Further, the subordinate peasants had to render forced labour to the state and the land owners.<sup>73</sup>

G.S. Dikshit refers to the oppressive taxation. In one case, he noticed the prevalence of thirty-three types of taxes. Among them, thirty-two taxes were imposed by the temple and the same was collected from the peasants. He also suggests that due to oppressive taxation peasants migrated to regions where there was a lenient tax policy. Such instances were reported mostly from Tamil Nadu. The officials were responsible for oppressive

taxation and peasant migration.<sup>74</sup> Heavy and coercive taxation were noticed under Devaraya II and in the territory of Adiyappa-Nayakar, the *nayaka* under Krishnadeva Raya.<sup>75</sup>

The state encouraged the cultivation of virgin land. Such developments allowed the state to enhance its revenue. However, there was a practice of gradual increase in the taxes of such land. A Hoysala inscription belonging to the thirteenth century allotted twelve *okkalu* or tenants to cultivate a piece of land. It was exempted from taxation for thirteen years. After the completion of thirteen years, for a period of three years, the peasants had to pay thirty-seven *gadyanas*. However, after three years, they were asked to pay fifty-four *gadyanas*. The state, in this case, followed the contract system where the peasants had to pay fixed revenue and the same was periodically revised. When one peasant was not able to pay the tax, the remaining peasants were asked to form a body to pay the tax.<sup>76</sup> Another Hoysala inscription belonging to AD 1343 mentions forcible seizure and slaves.<sup>77</sup>

The above study shows that the agrarian crisis was due to the enhanced demand for taxes by the central as well as the local authorities. Increased feudalisation with the rise of the *amaranayankara* system provided an opportunity to the dominant peasant groups to exploit the subordinate peasants. In some cases, the latter opposed their exploitation and demanded a solution to their problems.

### Peasant Migration

In a poem written by Kanakadasa, a Bhakti poet of the sixteenth century, one finds a reference to migration during the period of crisis. He says:<sup>78</sup>

One can do penance deserting one's parents  
 One can give up friends and relatives!  
 If the Ruler is angry, one can leave the country!  
 But one cannot give up chanting your name, O Lord!

The idea of king's anger is present in this work related to Bhakti literature. Faced with the king's (or authority's) anger, people would migrate to a neighbouring region.

Peasant migration found in Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Karnataka represents the peasants' discontent regarding their exploitation by the feudal authorities. Various factors contributed to peasant migration. First, cultivable land was available in plenty. Second, the peasant community migrated in search of better prospects where there was a lenient tax policy. However, the state policy was to expand agricultural production and ensure continuous supply of food crops to the subjects at a reasonable price. In addition, the state could enhance its revenue by encouraging agricultural production.

An inscription of the Hoysala king Narasimha refers to the peasant unrest.<sup>79</sup> According to this inscription, the *mahajanas* comprising the *nattu*

*gavunda* and *pergadis*, the state officials, issued a charter. It refers to the new immigrants, thereby showing that some peasant categories were compelled to migrate. While migrating to the *nadu*, the immigrants accepted the condition of staying in the region in the long term. However, they had broken the promise and left the *nadu*. In such a situation, the dominant peasant categories such as *nattu gavundas*,<sup>80</sup> *pergadis*<sup>81</sup> and *ur gavunda*<sup>82</sup> needed to approach the peasants who committed the sin of leaving the village. The charter invokes the religious injunctions to punish the criminals who had dared to leave the village. This is an interesting situation. The charter mentions that the *gavundas* who violate this charter commit the sin of killing cows between Ganges and Kaveri. The *mahajanas*, who were generally brahmanas, had to use the religious injunction to compel the *gavundas* to prevent peasant migration.

An inscription belonging to AD 1327 mentions that all the peasants should have possession of the land. However, while leaving the village or migrating to some other place they should hand over the right to another person in the village. It also mentions the regulation that the property of the elder brother belongs to the younger brother and vice versa.<sup>83</sup>

The implication of this statement is that peasant migration was a reality in Karnataka. Second, when a person left the village, his brother who possessed rights over the land had to pay tax to the state. One should not construe that the state was lenient towards the peasants by allowing members of the family to take over the land. It was an effective method of obtaining taxes from the peasants in this region. It appears that Vijayanagara followed the Hoysala policy of retaining the peasant groups in the kingdom.

The argument that peasant migration was prevalent not only in the peripheries such as Tamil Nadu but also in the core regions is proved by the study of Shivanna regarding agrarian relations in Karnataka under the Vijayanagara rule.<sup>84</sup> However, a study has argued that the phenomenon of peasant migration was found only in the Tamil region and not in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the core territories of the Vijayanagara empire.<sup>85</sup> Contrary to this argument, various other scholars such as Dikshit, Shivanna and Vasanthamadhava exhibit the prevalence of peasant migration in Karnataka and Andhra.<sup>86</sup> Venkataratnam also found some evidence regarding peasant migration due to the taxation policy of the *nayakas*.<sup>87</sup> Appadorai suggests that desertion by the peasants was one reason for the tax concession offered by the ruling class.<sup>88</sup> Irfan Habib has attempted to reconstruct the agrarian structure under Vijayanagara. He cites various instances where there was peasant exploitation. For instance, he refers to the inscription belonging to AD 1408 which mentions that the landlords should prevent peasant migration and compel them to pay taxes. The richer peasant and non-peasant groups could emerge as the landlords, thereby affecting the poor cultivators.<sup>89</sup>

A Vijayanagara inscription belonging to AD 1408 gives interesting details regarding the peasant condition. The inscription belongs to the Kollegala *taluk*.<sup>90</sup> As it gives elaborate details regarding peasant migration, it deserves closer attention. It mentions the members of *hadinentusamaya*, an organisation with a corporate character comprising traders, artisans and others. This organisation prepared a *kattale* or a system for the farmers of the *nadu*. It is mentioned that the *hadinentusamaya* is aware of the problems faced by the peasants. It provides tax relief to the farmers. When the peasants suffer from lower yield, they are given tax relief. However, the members of the *samaya* have always remitted the tax to the king's palace. The villagers had to pay taxes on fodder, grain, bullocks and ghee and additional taxes. The members of the *samaya* have paid taxes even when the peasants could not contribute. It appears that tax was collected from the community and not the individual. Consequently, the community as a whole has paid *siddhaya* and fines to the king. However, according to the *kattale*, the chieftains should not impose additional fines and other taxes on the peasants. There was a practice of collecting fines such as *tappu*, *tagadi*, *danda* and *undige*.<sup>91</sup> Among them, the term *danda* means coercion and forceful collection of taxes in kind and cash. *Undige* was an additional tax, which the tax collectors could impose on the peasants and other taxpayers.<sup>92</sup>

The *kattale* also mentions that the farmers born in the village and those who had migrated to the village need not pay *undige*. It is apparent that some farmers left the village. The *okkalu* or the peasant group is not responsible for bringing them back. This responsibility lies with the leaders of the settlement. However, the *samaya* was responsible to bring the resident farmers back and to pay taxes to the state.<sup>93</sup> The document shows that some farmers left the village. Second, the peasants who could not pay tax were compelled to leave the village. Third, the *samaya* realised the importance of compelling the peasants to stay within the village.

Another Vijayanagara inscription mentions the taxes on new cultivators setting up in the villages. There were also taxes on cultivators who decided to leave the place.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, it proves the migration of the peasants in Karnataka. In some cases, the chiefs who hold important positions may take *hons* or money from the peasants, who may express their discontent through migration. In this situation, when the *okkalu* or farmer flees, it is the duty of the chiefs to compensate loss to the state. In some cases, the peasants leave without the coercion by the chiefs of the *gavudas*. In this situation, the *nadu* leaders have to bear the loss and pay *siddhaya* (fixed tax) to the state. This tax comprised the farmer's share.<sup>95</sup>

The implication is that the farmer's loss had to be compensated by their chiefs. There was an incentive for the chiefs to retain farmers in their territory or the *nadu* as the farmer's absence would affect the state. It is interesting to note that the state did not take initiative to provide relief to the peasants or their leaders by giving tax concessions. The loss incurred

by peasant migration had to be borne by the *samaya*, which comprised the *gavudas*, merchants and artisans.

The inscription also contains interesting information regarding the succession of the property. It mentions that if the *okkalu* dies, his property goes to either the elder or the younger brother. The members of the family could inherit the property. The younger brother could take the property of the elder one and vice versa. However, those who took this property had to take the responsibility of payment of taxes. In the end, the inscription mentions that it upholds the traditional rights of the *nada prabhus*.<sup>96</sup> The main reason for this liberal rule concerning inheritance seems to be to ensure tax collection by the state. By transferring the land rights to the family members, the state could ensure incessant tax revenue.

In 1527 the peasants of Dummi village decided to leave the village as the officer of the governor Ramanna Nayaka demanded enhanced tax payment from them. Ramanna Nayaka assured the peasants that he would not exploit the peasants.<sup>97</sup> According to a 1528 inscription, the local lord Adiyappa Nayaka, a feudatory of Krishnadeva Raya, prepared the regulations to be followed by the cultivators to improve cultivation. However, the king heard that the peasants were likely to violate this regulation. To compensate for this, the king bestowed on Adiyappa Nayaka the right to collect taxes such as *kanike*,<sup>98</sup> *muluvana* and tax on sugar.<sup>99</sup> This is an instance of the king supporting the feudatory against the peasants who were punished with additional taxes.

In 1528, the Vijayanagara governor caused distress to the people of the village of Niruvara (Nilavara) and to expiate the sin the governor granted  $7\frac{1}{2}$  *kati gadyanas* to the goddess Durgadevi.<sup>100</sup> The nature of the trouble caused to the people of the village is not known. But such actions by the Vijayanagara governor would have affected the peasants. The event did not lead to peasant migration as the state realised the mistake and corrected the same. However, uncontrolled distress caused to the people of the village would have encouraged the peasant migration.

A Vijayanagara inscription of AD 1533 belonging to Adoni *taluk* of Bellary district mentions that peasants suffered due to exploitation by the authorities and they decided to migrate from Kavatala-sime to Masavaya-sime. However, the official in charge assured the peasants to protect their interest and they were requested to return to Kavatala-sime.<sup>101</sup> The inscription shows that the peasants even in the core region suffered from the burden of taxes.

Another Vijayanagara inscription is a replica of the erstwhile mentioned inscription belonging to Kollegala dated AD 1408.<sup>102</sup> It refers to the rule of Achyutaraya. This record is dated AD 1534.<sup>103</sup> However, interestingly, it is a copy of the inscription of AD 1408. What was the need for a reissue of the inscription? It appears that the *samaya* faced the problem of the peasant migration. The provision of the *kattale* was informed to the members of the *samaya*. The state was not prepared to bear the loss of income. It gave

enormous authority to the local organisations. In return, the latter had to supply the tax-income in the absence of the peasant tax-income. It is apparent that the state transferred the tax burden from one category of peasants to the other such as the *gavudas*. The *samaya* attempted to coerce the *gavudas* to restrict peasant migration. It is true that the inscription does not mention the method of discouraging peasant migration. However, it is clear that it indirectly encouraged the village chiefs to use force to compel the peasants to stay in their villages. Consequently, one can suggest that what was relevant in 1408 was equally applicable in 1534.

In the sixteenth century, Vijayanagara was involved in a protracted struggle with the enemies such as the Deccan Sultanates. Consequently, the state needed an enormous amount of financial resources to manage its administration. It has been suggested that in the period between 1536 and 1542, there was a political crisis in Vijayanagara, due to the conflict between the king Achyutaraya and an influential official Ramaraya, who had the blessings of Krishnadeva Raya.<sup>104</sup> Ramaraya obtained victory in this political conflict, but by this period, political instability would have affected economic stability, thus affecting the subordinate peasants.

A 1549 inscription refers to the rules of wetland cultivation, which the local and immigrant peasants had to follow.<sup>105</sup> There is a reference to the resident cultivators and cultivators of the neighbourhood. The outside cultivators had to follow the rules of wetland cultivation specified in this charter. In addition, the officials such as *parupatyagara*, *gauda* and *senabova* issued this rule. They have the responsibility to implement the provisions of this charter. The implication is that the state discouraged the migration of peasants from one place to the other. The Vijayanagara kings depended on their subordinates, the Keladi Nayakas, for administering the Tulu region. An inscription belonging to AD 1562 mentions the grant of Barakuru and Mangaluru *rajyas* as *amara maganis* to Sadashiva Nayaka by Ramaraja.<sup>106</sup>

The above study shows that in the sixteenth century there were references to the incidence of peasant migration due to their exploitation by the *amaranayakas* and other intermediaries. Feudalisation of the administrative system was one reason responsible for the incidence of large numbers of peasant migration in the sixteenth century. At the same time, the *amaranayakas*, governors and the emperor initiated measures and assured the peasants that they would not be exploited. In this connection, one can also state that the brahmanas, as the state agents, attempted to encourage the peasants to obey the state. However, in some extraordinary situations such as over-taxation, the peasants could employ migration as the weapon to avoid, temporarily though, exploitation by the ruling class.

### Conclusion

This study has shown that the subordinate peasants, compared to the dominant peasantry, lacked the bargaining power and consequently

suffered due to their exploitation by the *amaranayakas* and other landed intermediaries. The Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara imposed an assortment of taxes on the peasants. However, compared to the Vijayanagara period, Hoysalas followed a lenient taxation policy, even though there are some instances of peasant distress even under them. In the sixteenth century, the pressure on the peasants increased leading to their distress and migration. The dominant peasants maintained a close relationship with the state. The subordinate peasants, on the other hand, could not maintain this relationship. It is true that the kings attempted to alleviate the peasant distress. However, it does not imply the existence of an ideal state. The prevalence of the dominant peasants did not help the cause of the subordinate category in the agrarian structure. Peasant distress in Karnataka, as in Tamil Nadu and Andhra, was a reality, even though we do not suggest that there was a widespread agrarian crisis. At the same time, one can suggest that the pressure on the peasants increased after the death of Krishnadevaraya as the number of peasant migration substantially increased during this period, despite the officials providing temporary relief to the aggrieved agrarian class. The peasants reacted to this crisis through migration, a phenomenon recorded throughout the history of India.

### Notes and References

- 1 For example, a Hoysala inscription mentions that the state would not tax the peasants. It also assures inheritance of the property by the peasant family members without interference from the state. B.L. Rice (ed.), *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VI: Inscriptions in the Kadur District*, Bangalore: Archaeological Survey of Mysore, 1901, Chikmagalur, no. 105.
- 2 Irfan Habib, 'The Peasant in Indian History', in Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *Land System and Rural Society in Early India*, New Delhi, 2004, p. 205 particularly for the definition of the peasants and the relationship between the exploiters and the exploited. That the 'peasant' is not a homogenous category is brought out by Miriam Muller, 'A divided class?: Peasants and peasant communities in later medieval England', *Past and Present*, 2007 Supplement (Volume 2), pp. 115–131. Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj has recently discussed the question of class consciousness among the medieval peasants. See his work, 'Peasant-State Relation in Late Medieval North India (Mewat): A Study in Class Consciousness and Class Conflict', *The Medieval History Journal*, 20,1 (2017): 148–91.
- 3 Miriam Muller, 'A divided class? Peasants and peasant communities', p. 117.
- 4 Ravi Anand Palat, 'Popular Revolts and the State in Medieval South India: A Study of the Vijayanagara Empire (1360–1565)', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol 142, No 1, p. 129.
- 5 William Coelho, *The Hoysala Vamsa*, Bombay: Indian Historical Research Institute, 1950, p. 253.
- 6 Kesavan Veluthat, *Early Medieval in South India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 325–31.
- 7 Sanmathi Kumar B., 'Feudalism under the Hoysalas: A Socio-Economic Study (AD 970–1342)', Unpublished PhD thesis, Mangalore University 2009. However, one should be cautious while using the theory of feudalism with reference to the medieval period of Karnataka history. It is important to note that the Hoysala

- period represented trade in the ports such as Mangalore and Barakuru. Many traders from Kerala migrated and settled in the Hoysala territory, thereby showing the attempt of the Hoysalas to exploit the trade opportunities available in the Indian Ocean. Daud Ali, 'Between Market and Court: The Careers of Two Courtier-Merchants in the Twelfth-Century Deccan' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, 1, 2010, 185–211; Hanuma Nayaka, 'Malayali Merchants in Medieval Karnataka' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 60, 1999, pp. 1144–1151.
- 8 Barkur Udaya, 'Nadus as the State agent in early medieval Karnataka during the Hoysala rule' *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Vol. 72 (Part I), 2011, pp. 276–285.
  - 9 J.D.M. Derrett, *The Hoysalas: A Medieval Indian Royal Family*, Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 177. A similar view is expressed by M.V. Krishnarao, 'Public administration under the Hoysalas', *Karnataka Darshana*, edited by R.S. Hukkerikar, Bombay, 1955, pp. 46–47.
  - 10 B.A. Saletore. *Social and Political Life of Vijayanagara, Volume 1*. Madras, 1934, p. 192. Also see Srinivasa Ritti, 'Political History of Karnataka', in H.M. Nayak and B.R. Gopal (eds), *South Indian Studies*, Mysore: Geetha Book House, 1986.
  - 11 Burton Stein, 'The Segmentary State: Interim Reflections', in Herman Kulke (ed), *State in India 1000–1700*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 134–61.
  - 12 Burton Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in South India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994; Burton Stein, *The New Cambridge History of India: Vijayanagara*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. However, Burton Stein's segmentary theory has been questioned by other scholars. See Kesavan Veluthat, *Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Orient Longman, 1993.
  - 13 Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India*, pp. 390 and 374.
  - 14 Noboru Karashima, *A Concise History of South India: Issues and Interpretations*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, Third Impression, 2018, p. 198.
  - 15 Karashima, *A Concise History of South India*, p. 198. The study of Vasanth Shetty, in the context of South Kanara suggests that the state adopted the policy of transfer of governors to control them. Vasanth Shetty, 'Barakuru: (A Metropolitan City of Antiquity) – Its History and Culture', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Mysore, 1984, p. 259.
  - 16 See Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire (Vijaya Nagar) A Contribution to the History of India*, London: Sonnenschein & Co, 1900, p. 159.
  - 17 Karashima, *A Concise History of South India*, p. 200.
  - 18 K.S. Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka (1336–1761)*, Mysore: Manasagangothri, 1983, p. 42.
  - 19 D.C. Sircar, *Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as Revealed by Epigraphical Record*, Lucknow, 1969; A.V. Venkataratnam accepts this position based on the study of *amaranayaka* system. See his work, *Vijayanagara Samrajyadalli Shthaliya Sarkara* (Kannada), Mysore: University of Mysore, 1974, p. 14.
  - 20 Carla Sinopoli, *The Political Economy of Craft Production: Crafting Empire in South India, c. 1350–1650*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 117.
  - 21 Y. Subbarayalu, 'An overview of Vijayanagara historiography', in Mohanakrishna Rai (ed), *Vijayanagara Charitre Baravanige: Maru Odu*, Hampi, Kannada University, 2019, p. 9.
  - 22 He says that they collected 120,00,000 pagodas and paid 60,00,000 pagodas to the king every year. Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 373.
  - 23 Romila Thapar attempted such an analysis in the case of the Mauryans. See *Mauryas Revisited*, Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi, 1993. However, we do not intend to



- develop a similar thesis regarding the Vijayanagara empire as such an exercise is outside the agenda of this article.
- 24 Derrett, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
  - 25 B.L. Rice, *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VII, Part I, Inscriptions in the Shimoga District*, Bangalore, 1902, Shimoga, no. 69.
  - 26 Burton Stein, 'Vijayanagara c. 1350–1564', in Tapanray Chaudhury and Irfan Habib (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. I*, p. 111; Stein, *The New Cambridge History of India: Vijayanagara*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
  - 27 Stein, 'Vijayanagara c. 1350–1564', p. 112.
  - 28 Regarding *agraharas* in Karnataka see, S.L. Shantakumari, *Agraharas in Karnataka 400–1300*, Delhi, 1986.
  - 29 K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, Dharawar: Karnataka University, 1970, p. 286.
  - 30 K.V. Subrahmanya Aiyer (ed). *South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. VII*, Mysore, 1986, no. 288.
  - 31 However, Y. Subbarayalu argues that *okkalu* also comprised the landless peasant cultivators and those who possessed small pieces of land, see, his article 'Forms of labour in ancient and medieval south India (up to the thirteenth century)' *Studies in People's History*, 1:2(2014), p. 157. It shows that *okkalu* was a larger agrarian body comprising divergent categories of peasants and agrarian workers. Even though this study pertains to the pre-fourteenth century period, the pattern of landlord-tenant relationship is relevant to the study of the same in Karnataka during the period fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.
  - 32 For example an inscription belonging to the reign of Achyutadeva Raya (1533 A.D.) mentions the migration of the peasants from Kavutala sime in Andhra Pradesh to Manuve in Raichur in Karnataka. The reason for migration is stated as exploitation of the subordinate peasants called *gaudu-prajes* by the palace officials. See Madhav N. Katti and N. Nanjundaswamy, 'No. 6 – A Note on Kavutalam Inscription of Achyutaraya, Saka 1454', in K.V. Ramesh (ed), *Epigraphia Indica vol. XLII*, New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 1992, pp. 55–56.
  - 33 Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka (1336–1761)*, Mysore: Manasagangothri, 1983, p. xiii.
  - 34 *Ibid.*
  - 35 *Bitti* was a form of forced labour imposed on the subordinate peasants who had to work in the land of their lords and the state owned property. Refer, K.S. Shivanna, *op. cit.*, p. 21. There is also reference to the transfer of serfs along with land. They were called *holeyalu* (worker on land) and *hennalu* (female servant) who were transferred along with the land transaction from one owner to the other, thereby showing the attachment of serfs with land. B.Vasanth Shetty, 'Barakuru', p. 359. In a place called Tondanur, there was a practice of carrying temple servants to work on a private land. See B.L. Rice (ed), *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. VI, p. ixix.
  - 36 Shivanna, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
  - 37 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
  - 38 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
  - 39 Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 387.
  - 40 For example, an inscription refers to the collection of sixteen *mudes* of rice as the *geni* (rent) from a tenant. The landlord in this case was a Jaina temple. *SII*, VII, no. 371.
  - 41 N. Shyam Bhat, *South Kanara (1799–1860) A Study in Colonial Administration and Regional Response*, New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1998, p. 204.

- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Shivanna, *The Agrarian System of Karnataka*, p. 49.
- 44 Ibid., p. 48.
- 45 Shivanna, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–51; Also refer H.M. Nagaraju, *Devaraya II and His Times (History of Vijayanagara)*, Mysore: University of Mysore, 1991, p. 92.
- 46 It refers to forced labour. See B.R. Gopal and Shrinivas Ritti, *Inscriptions of the Rulers of the Sangama Dynasty (1336 A.D. to 1485 A.D.)*, p. 892.
- 47 Shivanna, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 48 K. Iswaran, 'Bhakti Tradition and Modernization: The Case of Lingayatism', in Jayant Lele (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Bhakti Movements*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981, p. 77.
- 49 For a study of Virashaiva movement and *dasa* literature and reference to the poor see, R.Y. Dharwadkar, 'Medieval Kannada Literature (12th Century to 18th Century)', pp. 115–130, in *Karnataka Darshana*, edited by R.S. Hukkerikar, Bombay, 1955. A famous quote from Basavanna's *vachanas* (devotional poems) regarding the poor is: 'The rich will make temples for Āiva. What shall I a poor man do?' See, A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Āiva*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, p. 19. For a study of Purandaradasa and social relevance of his songs refer, M.K.V. Narayan, *Lyrical Musings on Indic Culture: A Sociological Study of Songs of Sant Purandara Dasa*, New Delhi: Needworthy Publications, 2010. Also see M.M. Kalburgi, *Kannada Shasana Sahitya* (in Kannada), Mysore: Chetana Book House, 2011.
- 50 M. Sivaramakrishna and Sumita Roy (eds), *Poet Saints of India*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1998, p. 176.
- 51 William J. Jackson, *Vijayanagara Voices: Exploring South Indian History and Hindu Literature*, London: Routledge, 2016, p. 165.
- 52 K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, p. 286. Saletore considers the *holeyas* as the slaves who were saleable and they were exploited by their masters. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire, vol. II*, Madras, 1934 (A.D. 1346–A.D. 1646), p. 116. K.V. Ramesh refers to *kil-okkalu*, the servants, who worked on the land of the *okkalu*, thereby indicating that the *okkalu* obtained the service of their subordinates in agricultural production. It also indicates the prevalence of subinfeudation. See K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, p. 286.
- 53 J.D.M. Derrett, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
- 54 Derrett, *The Hoysalas*, p. 202. It has been suggested that compared to the Rashtrakutas who collected twenty percent of the produce as tax, the Vijayanagara tax rate was higher. One may assume that the Vijayanagara peasants to pay a tax more than twenty percent of the produce, A.P. Karmakar, 'Administrative machinery in medieval Karnataka (third to seventeenth century A.D.)', *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society*, Vol. 31 (1939–40), p. 450.
- 55 Derrett, *The Hoysalas*, p. 202.
- 56 Ibid., p. 201.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Among these *Mahasamantas* and *samantas* represent feudatory titles. See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India', in Hermann Kulke (ed.), *The State in India 1000–1700*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 230.
- 59 William Coelho, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
- 60 B.L. Rice, *Epigraphia Carnatica, vol. XII, Inscriptions in the Tumkur District*, Bangalore, 1904, no. 52.
- 61 K.G. Vasanthamadhava, *Western Karnataka – Its Agrarian Relations 1500–1800 A.D.* New Delhi: Navrang, 1991, p. 110.

- 62 Ibid., p. 114.
- 63 *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. XII (New Series), no. 34, pp. 630–631.
- 64 Vasanthamadhava, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
- 65 Ibid, p. 112; Also see K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, p. 181; It has been suggested that the term *holeya* is derived from the term *hola* or field. See, H.M. Nagaraju, *op. cit.*, p. 141. In the same year, the *hanjamanas* who owned land could not pay tax to the state and they surrendered the harvest to the state. It shows that when the landlords failed to pay the tax, they had to compensate the loss to the state. See Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, p. 181.
- 66 Sewell, *Forgotten Empire*, p. 379. Nuniz states: 'all the land belongs to the King, and from his hand the captains hold it. They make it over to the husbandmen who pay nine-tenths to their lord; and they have no land of their own for the kingdom belongs entirely to the King.' Sewell supports Nuniz when he says, 'ryots of South India were grievously oppressed by the nobles when subject to Hindu government' p. 379 fn 2. Nuniz also states 'For this reason the common people suffer much hardship, those who hold the lands being so tyrannical.' Vasundhara Filliozat (ed.), *Vijayanagar as seen by Domingo Paes and Fernao Nuniz (16th Century Portuguese Chroniclers) and others*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, First Revised Edition, 1999, p. 223.
- 67 N. Venkataramanayya, *Studies in the History of Third Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, Madras, 1935.
- 68 Kambhampati Satyanarayana, 'Taxation under the Rayas of Vijayanagara', pp. 169–178, in R. Subrahmanyam and V.V. Krishna Sastry, *Dr. N. Venkataramanayya Commemoration Volume*, Hyderabad, 1986. Also see M. Bosu Babu, *Material Background to the Vijayanagara Empire*, Guntur, 2018, p. 285; Appadorai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000–1500 A.D.)*, University of Madras, 1936, p. 692.
- 69 *Mysore Archaeological Report for the Period of 1932*, Bangalore, 1935, p. 212. The details provided in the brackets are those of the author.
- 70 Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India, in an attempt to trace the History of Mysore*, London, 1810, p. 154.
- 71 B.A. Saletore. *Social and Political Life of Vijayanagara, Volume 1*, Madras, 1934, p. 192.
- 72 Shivanna, *op. cit.*, p. 68. However, it has been suggested that the agriculturist, who obtained the land on lease had to pay two-third of the share to the owner. See, A.P. Karmakar, 'Economic Condition in Medieval Karnataka', *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society*, p. 166, retrieved from <http://www.southasiarchive.com/Content/sarf.120045/230902/004>.
- 73 Shivanna, *op. cit.*, p. 9. According to Subbarayalu, forced labour was a part of the rent paid by the cultivator to the land lord. Subbarayalu, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
- 74 G.S. Dikshit, 'Economic Conditions in the time of Krishnadevaraya', in D.P. Karmakar (ed), *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume*, Dharwar, 1936, p. 228.
- 75 *Subject Index to the Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy from 1887 to 1936*, New Delhi, 1988, pp. 50 and 52.
- 76 B.R. Gopal, M. Hanumanta Rao and S.V.S. Bhattacharya (eds), *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. III, (New Series), Mysore: Institute of Kannada Studies, University of Mysore, 1974, no. 74.
- 77 *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. VI, Chikmagalur no. 105.
- 78 V.K. Subramanian, *Sacred Songs of India*, Vol. 3, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1999, p. 129.
- 79 B.R. Gopal, M. Hanumanta Rao and S.V.S. Bhattacharya (eds), *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. IV, (New Series), Mysore: Institute of Kannada Studies, University of Mysore, 1975, Kollegala, no. 41.

- 80 They were the leaders of the *nadu*.
- 81 *Pergadis* were the *heggade* or the leader of the village.
- 82 They were the leaders of the *ur* or the settlement.
- 83 B.R. Gopal, M. Hanumanta Rao and S.V.S. Bhattacharya (eds), *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VII*, (New Series), Mysore: Institute of Kannada Studies, University of Mysore, 1979, Maddur no. 121.
- 84 Shivanna, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 85 Ravi Anand Palat, 'Popular Revolts and the State in Medieval South India: A Study of the Vijayanagara Empire (1360-1565)', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol 142, No 1, pp 128-144.
- 86 Also see, K. Jayasree, *Agrarian Economy in Andhra under Vijayanagar*, New Delhi, Navrang, 1991.
- 87 A.V. Venkataratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 88 Appadorai, *op. cit.*, p. 688.
- 89 Irfan Habib, 'Structure of the Agrarian Economy', in Irfan Habib (ed.), *Economic History of Medieval India 1200-1500*, Delhi: Longman and Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2011, p. 200.
- 90 B.R. Gopal, M. Hanumanta Rao and S.V.S. Bhattacharya (eds), *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. IV*, (New Series), Kollegala, no. 56.
- 91 *Undige* was related to customs house. See H.H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms and of useful words occurring in official documents relating to the administration of the government of British India*, London, 1855, p. 533.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. IV*, (New Series), Kollegala, no. 56.
- 94 B.R. Gopal and Hanumanta Rao (eds), *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VIII*, (New Series), Mysore: Institute of Kannada Studies, University of Mysore, 1984, Arakalagudu no. 12. Similar situation is found in many parts of the Vijayanagara Empire. See, Appadorai, *op. cit.*, p. 697.
- 95 *Ibid.*
- 96 *Ibid.*
- 97 A.V. Venkataratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 98 According to Subbarayalu, *kanike* represented coercive method of collection of surplus produce from the peasants with the assistance of the local elites who were forced to give gift to the king on special occasions. It has been suggested that the collection of *kanike* a coercive tax unit, compelled some peasants to leave their villages. See Y. Subbarayalu, 'An overview of Vijayanagara historiography', in Mohanakrishna Rai (ed), *Vijayanagara Charitre Baravanige: Maru Odu*, p. 8.
- 99 B.L. Rice, *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. XI, Inscriptions in Chitaldroog District*, Bangalore: Archaeological Survey of Mysore, 1903, Davanagere, no. 6.
- 100 Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, p. 221.
- 101 *South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. IX, Part II*, no. 554.
- 102 *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. IV*, (New Series), Kollegala, no. 56.
- 103 *Ibid.*, Kollegala, no. 41.
- 104 Burton Stein, 'The Economic Function of a Medieval South Indian Temple', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Feb. 1960), p. 170.
- 105 B.R. Gopal, M. Hanumanta Rao and S.V.S. Bhattacharya (eds), *Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. IV*, (New Series), Chamarajanagara, no. 161.
- 106 K.V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara*, p. 227.