



ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIETY UNDER THE VAIDUMBA CHIEFS OF SOUTH INDIA

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Abstract:

The Vaidumba chiefs were one of the prominent chiefs of South India connected with Anantapur, Chittoor and Kadapa districts of Andhra Pradesh and Dharmapuri district of Tamilnadu. They flourished between the 8th century A.D. and 14th centuries A.D. They were the most prominent chiefs among the Western Chālukyan subordinates. Their original home was Vaidumbavrōlu in Chittoor district. After occupying Rēnāḍu-7000, Vaidumbās changed their capital from Vaidumbavrōlu to Chippili in Chittoor district and subsequently to Pōṭṭapi in Kadapa district. Sixty stone records of these chiefs have come to light so far. Majority of them engraved on hero-stones (*vīrakkal* in Tamil and *vīragallu* in Kannada). The Vaidumba chiefs were warlike chiefs, frequently engaged in wars with their contemporary rulers such as Lōṅkulās, Rēnāṭi Chōlās, Bānās and Nōḷam-bās. Despite of the constant wars against their neighbors, the Vaidumbās had taken keen interest to provide general facilities to their subjects.

The present paper deals with the administration and society under the Vaidumba chiefs of South India. During the past few decades, research on history of South Indian kingdoms has been oriented towards the study of major dynasties. These studies did not enumerate the subordinate chiefs, who supported the major dynasties. These local chiefs had shown not only direct involvement in the local administration but also strived for the development activities in all aspects. Hence, the study of local chiefs (Vaidumbās, Bānās and Nōḷambās) attains importance. Among these local chiefs Vaidumbās were one of the important feudatory dynasties of South India. Sixty stone records of Vaidumba chiefs have come to light so far. Majority of them engraved on hero-stones, except one copper plate record of Bhuvanatrīnētra mahārāja dated c. 969 A.D. is available. All these are brief and gave the names of warriors, who died in cattle-raids or battles which do not yield much information on political and cultural history of that period.

It is evident that there was a three-tier administration represented by these ranks with the king at the top. The king was the head of the state, the fountain of honor and leader of the armed forces. All power was vested in king. The Vaidumba king was referred to as *Kalukaḍapuradīśvara*, *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*, *anēkasamara-saṃghaṭṭanōpālabdhamānavijayalakshmi*, etc.

Gaṇḍatrīnētra had the title *māripīḍugu* which is identical with one held by the Rēnāṭi Chōlās. So, it is probable that the Vaidumba chief was responsible for bringing an end to Rēnāṭi Chōlā rule and thus earned the title. Not only the chiefs but also the warriors had several titles. *Kaligala Khēchara*, *Ghanambaina pōtu gaṇḍara*, and *Ahavapadakuṇthru* are also some of the titles of these chiefs. The record from Rēḍḍivāripalli in Rayachoti taluk of Kadapa district¹ records, the death of a warrior of Gaṇḍatrīnētra-Vīra mahārāja, named Mallikarjuna who seems to possess several titles as mentioned above. He died after capturing the armies of the enemy. *Ahavapadakuṇthru* seems to be the honor conferred to him. The Ālētipalle inscription refers to the death of a warrior named Ranabhaṅgi who died in battle at Tiruvala. His titles such as *Ranavijiadhraran*, *Ranabharan*, *Kalivadesingam*, *Ruvuddrapratapan*, *Varaharupan*, etc., indicate that he was a renowned warrior and participated in several battles on behalf of his king. Power succession although patrimonial in general during that period the Vaidumbās did not follow the existing custom. The geneology of Vaidumbās did not come out in a clear manner from the records. The king attended the royal court regularly except when he was away in any expedition, and the administration was carried out with the help of ministers of various portfolios. *Yuvarāja*, *Padevala*, *Pratīhāri*, *Saṇdhivigraha* and *Sēnāpati* were the chief officers of the rulers.



The existence of the office of *Yuvarāja* is indirectly known the tax *dōgarājapannu*² may be interpreted as the tax levied in order to maintain the office of the *Yuvarāja*. The king it seems nominates his heir as *Yuvarāja* and collects some tax from the subjects for securing the future king. The post of *Yuvarāja* or *kumāra* or *rājaputra* among the other dignitaries is frequently noticed in the copper plate characters of other parts of the country also. The officer *Paḍēvala* means commander of the army. *Paḍēvalapannu* seems to be the tax intended for maintaining this officer. *Pratīhāri* or doorkeeper, similar to body guard to the king. *Paḍiyaripannu* was collecting for maintaining this official. *Sāndhivighraha* was an official of defense. *Sāndhivighrapannu* was the tax intended to meet the expenses of foreign relations, peace and war. The *Sāndhi* and *vighraha* specify the two important functions of maintaining peace and war respectively. This is perhaps, the essential levy proposed to meet the defense expenditure. *Sēnāpati* was another high ranking officer under the Vaidumba chiefs. Vīramahārāja, son of Kaḷigatrinētra is described as *Sēnāpati* from the records of Puḷḷagaṇṭivāripalle (Peddatippasamudram) in Madanapalle taluk of Chittoor district and Vaṇḍādi on Rayachoti taluk of Kadapa district. The Vaidumba chiefs entrusted the administration of smaller administrative divisions under their territory to several chiefs and officers. They got *jāgirs* for their services. It is known as *nāyaṁkara* system. The term *nāyaka* is derived from the Sanskrit word *nāyaka* meaning a head or a chieftain. In Kannada and Tamil inscriptions the word occurs to indicate the chief of a territory and his office of holding personal chief are called *nāyakatana* in Kannada and *nāyakattanam* in Tamil records and the same office is represented by the word *nāyaṁkara* in Telugu inscriptions. It was implemented by Rēnāti Chōḷās but popularized during the period of Western Chāḷukyaś of Kalyani.

The Vaidumba chiefs also had several subordinate chiefs. Some of the chiefs were mentioned in the records of Vaidumbās. An inscription from Bōdinayanipalli³ refers to the Punyakumāra-arasa was ruling Mangal-12 under Vaidumba mahārāja who was identified as Gaṇḍatrinētra, the lord of Pulvāri-(Pulchāri). Another record from Kapalle⁴ refers to the reign of Palle-arasa over the nadu i.e. Pulināḍu, Satearasa of the Vaidumba family ruled over Kapalle. Pōrighatesure, son of Suraparase of the Vaidumba-*kula* governing over Muttukūru, lost his life in a cattle-raid, when he fought to secure victory to the ruling king. Rāmānāyanikōṭa record describes that Manujatrinētra who was the younger brother of Vīramahārāja associated with his brother in administration as a joint ruler, was not independent.⁵ Gaṇḍamutrāju and Elukalavilmere were the chiefs of the Mudivēḍu region. An inscription from Tsadumu⁶ refers to that the village Sadumu was ruled by a chief Lōṅkulāditya while the Vaidumba Vīra mahārāja ruled over Rēnāḍu. Another inscription from Basinikōṇḍa⁷ mentioned that during the reign of Gaṇḍatrinētra, Sūramāaveli was ruling Baluchchōrani. By all these records, it is clear that the Vaidumba chiefs associated either with their family or their own kith and kin. These feudatories may not be same rank because the first ruler governs *nāḍu* (*vishaya*) large territory; the *nāyaka* or head governs a minor territorial division and third governs over a village.

In Āndhradēśa, the earliest mention of the territorial appellation, *nāḍu* is known in 6th century A.D. from the Kadapa records refers to Rēnāḍu.⁸ But it is only from 9th century A.D., that this term was widely used as a territorial suffix. *Nāḍu* denoted both the big and small divisions e.g. Rēnāḍu, Pālanāḍu and Pākanāḍu. For the convenience of administration the region i.e. *nāḍu* (Rēnāḍu) was divided into provinces may be *maṇḍalās*. Each province had twelve villages. Ex: Kadapa-12 and Mangala-12.⁹ The village headman i.e. *raṭṭōḍi* or *raṭṭaguḍi* was appointed by the king to look after the village affairs. He collected taxes from the villages and sent to the king's treasury. He also acts as local *sēnāpati*. So, it is clear that there was a three-tier administration represented by these ranks. In the early medieval period the terms *raṭṭaḍi* appear to the mean *grāmani* of the villages. So, it is clear that they were not mere agriculturists, but semi officials approved by the rulers as heads of the civic bodies.

The Kalakada epigraph testifies the *raṭṭaḍi* and *raṭṭōḍi* indicated certain official designations with a slight distinction in position. According to Parabrahma Sastry, in course of time these posts were combined into a single one and all the terms *raṭṭakuḍu*, *raṭṭaḍi*, *raṭṭōḍi* and *raḍḍi*, etc. belonged to one series and *gaonkut*, *gamuṇḍa*, and *gauḍa*, etc. were grouped to another series, which denoted the village headmen. In the opinion of H. Krishna Sastri *raṭṭaguḍi* or *raṭṭakuḍi* signifies an office or dignity. The term *raṭṭaguḍi* is the corrupt form of the Sanskrit *rāshtrakūta* usually occurs in the royal characters as *rāshtrakūta*, *pramukhan*, *kutumbins*, *samahuya*, *ittham*, and *ajnapayati*. Here *rāshtrakūta* is interpreted as head of the



civic body and *kutumbins* its members who are also called as *kāpūs*. Various forms of this word such as *raṭṭallu*, *raṭṭōḍi*, etc., are found in early Telugu inscriptions. The exact nature of the office or dignity signified by the term is not clear. In its earliest form, i.e. *raṭṭakuḍi* or *raṭṭaguḍi*, the name seems to be made up of two words *raṭṭa* and *kuḍi*, the latter term conveying the meaning habitation or settlement. *Raṭṭakuḍi* may be tentatively rendered as settler in the country (*raṭṭa*) or cultivator as suggested by H.K. Sastry.¹⁰ The Telugu Chōḷa record mentioned that *raṭṭagullu* is common to all names indicating that it refers to the office of the *raṭṭaguḍi* or the head-man of the village.¹¹ *Raṭṭōḍi* or *raṭṭaguḍi* also granted *dēvadānās* to *brāhmins*. We do not have evidence about civil and military functions of these chiefs.

There are many sources of revenue. Taxes were collected and utilized through a village headman *grāmani* (*raṭṭōḍi* or *raṭṭaguḍi* or *grāmakūṭa*) as per the requirements. The delegation of power to collect taxes was not uniform in all villages. Land tax one of the primary sources of income to the government. It is known as *siddhaya*. It was collected in a form of grain (*koluchupannu*). It was generally levied on grass yielding land. A record of Gaṇḍatrinētra mentioned about two taxes i.e. *biraḍuāyambu* and *vishaya-suṅka* (tax from the district)¹² in connection with a grant made in memory of a hero named as Chāntamana. The tax *biraḍuāyambu*, a cluster of taxes collected in various localities of the kingdom, may be considered as local tax (house tax). The expression *āyam* seems to indicate that this word stands for a classified list of taxes. But, unfortunately, the details were not mentioned in records. The *vishaya-suṅka*, a tax on goods transported from one place to another within a district was collected by the authorities of *vishaya* (district). The term *vishaya* first noticed in the records of the Vishnukūṇḍis from the 5th century A.D. onwards and has continued till the end of Kākatīya rule. So, it is clear that the trade and commerce were carried out during the reign of Vaidumbās also. It is an interesting instance of the grant of exemption from taxes on the *kāmpūs* (farmers).

The Kalakada epigraph refers to the coronation of Vaidumba prince Bhuvanatrinētra Irugēya mahārāja on the occasion of his coronation he asked the *raṭṭadis* or *raṭṭōḍis* of the village Vēnāḍu to pay only four major taxes. They are: 1. *Dōgaracha-pannu*¹³ 2. *Padēvala-pannu*, 3. *Padiyēri-pannu* and 4. *Saṇdhivigrahi-pannu*. All the remaining minor taxes were exempted by the king. These specified taxes were to be credited to the village account. It is important to note that the exemption was granted in respect of *chirudēral*,¹⁴ not in respect of major taxes. The term *chirudēral* (small) mentioned in Tamil inscription, is no doubt *chiru-tirai* or *chirrayam* conveying the same idea. The word *tirai* means tribute may mean in the context of the present record taxes. Therefore, the term clearly refers to the cluster of local taxes which can be of any significance only to the local administrative body. The exemption granted in respect of these small taxes was obviously in his nature of a sacrifice by the king befitting the grant on occasion of his coronation. The farmers who had to pay these taxes were given this coronation. The farmers who had to pay these taxes were given this privilege of exemption.

The Vaidumba chiefs granted lands to Brāhmins. An inscription of Irugēya mahārāja from Animēla, Kamalapuram taluk of Kadapa district dated c. 970 A.D. refers to a grant of one hundred and fifty *mārtūrs* of land in Animēla as *ekōdhistabhukta dakshina* to a Brāhmin named Sūriya-krama vēdi for the merit of his father Bē (jayi) ta mahārāja.¹⁵ The grant makes no mention of any tax exemption. In some cases even on the lands granted to the Brāhmins not only *siddhaya* or fixed tax, some other minor levies were also imposed, probably in smaller rates than in the case of other lands. Such minor levies like rice, ghee and salt are in vogue in some other parts of the country also. But these minor levies seem to be paid to the local chief of few villages or a single village.

The word *pannu* obviously connected to *pannasa* or *pannaya* is used in the later inscriptions. This term often occurs in the early Kannada and Telugu inscriptions in connection with land gifts. It is a gift of fifty *nivartanas* or *mārtūrs* of land. *Pannasa* as a specific monetary tax is mentioned in one of the Daksharamam inscriptions of the time of Kulōṭṭuṅga Chlōḍa I where it is specified to be half of the original rate. Most of the records of the *pannasa* land gifts in the Kadapa region clearly state that amount to be paid as *siddhaya*, in *drammas* or *gadyanas*. But, before 9th century A.D. the grants do not contain such specification. It is only in some of the Kālīṅga grants we notice the amounts in *pannasa* to be paid as tax. One of the clusters of taxes coming under *chiru-dēral* is named as *tirul-dēśa*. It was suggested that *tirul-dēśa* a variant of *tivul-dēśa* is a cess connected with Tamils.¹⁶



The use of the word *vāram* in a Tamil inscription of Kulōṭṭuṅga Chlōḍa I from Kalakada,¹⁷ apparently is interesting as it throws light on the sharing of the produce by the tenants and the proprietors. It also records the grant of Murukkeṭṭam, Kuḍieṭṭam and Tirukkalatt-eri by Vaidumba Māraśan Tidalīśan as *dēvadāna* to the deity Pallīśvaram-Udaiyamādēva at Karkaḍai (identified modern Kalakada) in Kilai-mārayapadi-kōṇḍasōla-maṇḍalam stipulates that one seventh of the share of the produce should be paid to the government. It is probable assumed that the chief retained the proprietor. The deity, along with the land was given to Chāmuṇḍabhattachan as *kāni*. Therefore, Chāmuṇḍabhattachan became the proprietor of land on behalf of the temple with the responsibility of administering the six-seventh of shares of produce with respect to the requirements of the deity, and the cultivating tenants themselves. In regard to recognition of the gift villages, it may be pointed out that village names ending in *eṭṭam* such as Ninreṭṭam, mentioned in an inscription at Pallikōṇḍa in the Guḍiyattam taluk may be cited besides Guḍiyattam itself and Talaiyattam in the same taluk of the North Arcot which is adjacent to the Chittoor taluk of the Cittoor district. But whether the gift village Kuḍiyattam can be identified with Guḍiyattam, which is a hundred miles away from the south of the spot of the record, is suspicious. The villages Murukkēṭṭam and Tirukkalatt-eri were not identified. The villages with names ending in *ēri* such as Ichchanēri, Ayyanēri, Damanēri, etc., are quite common in the neighbouring taluk of Vāyalpād. Rāyanārāyanapuṭṭēri is mentioned in an inscription dated 1232 A.D. from Rayachoti in the Kadapa district as a village given as tiruvidaiyattam by Rayadeva mahārāja, a later chief of the Vaidumba family.¹⁸ The amount of fines for certain offences are specified, so that the *raṭṭōdi* or the *raṭṭadi* may not collect undue excess amount. These specified fines are to be credited to the village account. According to Kalakada record, there was a revision of the rates to some taxes; the *grāmani* was entrusted to collect the same. In addition to this there were fixed annual cash payments, tributes, cesses for the use of water from tanks, canals owned by the state, as well as taxes on all kinds of agricultural and dairy produce.

According to Irfan Habib, the agricultural community of the medieval period may be divided into three classes. Those who owned large areas of cultivable and uncultivable land, large number of cattle, agricultural implements and who employed share –croppers and wage earners for cultivation are generally called as landlords. Others include large estate holders like high civil and military officers and *agrahāra brāhmanās*. These lands owners personally never cultivated the land, but engaged *ardhasiri* (share-croppers). Small farmers are those who have small plots of cultivable and uncultivable land. These small farmers tilled the soil by themselves and engaged daily wage earners. It can be said that these small farmers were engaged as share croppers by the big land lords, temple and *agrahāra brāhmanās*. He also opines that a person having a cultivable land and possessing two bullocks and a plough might be called as a small farmer.¹⁹ It may be said that most agricultural population of this period, generally known as *kampulu*, belong to this class.

Landless labour was wage-earners who had no land of their own and worked only seasonal. During other times they engaged themselves in other activities. It may be said that they constituted the poorest section of the population. Generally, they preferred to live in villages with a large number of tanks where there were plenty of agricultural opportunities. Some of the landless people were engaged as shepherd and cow-herds. These herdsmen were generally drawn from tribal communities. In 8th and 9th centuries the *Kurubās*, the pastoral community, moved into eastward region of Kadapa and Chittoor. Similarly, the *Boyās* (the hunter-gatherers) settled pastoralists and became a component in the service structure of a village. The *Gollās*, *Kurubas* and *Boyās* were caravan traders. The social structure of pastoral communities is rarely mentioned in the records of Vaidumba chiefs.

Through epigraphs, it is known that Vaidumbās exercised the powers of modern police as well as judiciary from *Samaya Dharma* perspective. The main duty of a ruler is to defend the people from intruders on one hand and see the persons follow or obey their own social values or principles on the other. Belief in god and sin molded the morale of the early Indian society. In Indian society, the village *sabha* is an official court of justice. It was an effective popular court in ancient and medieval India. It is a sub-committee convened by the village headman for the purpose of trying to settle the dispute appealed by an aggrieved party looking for injustice caused to him. The village headman by virtue of his being a spokesperson of the king had to see that the villagers do not suffer for lack of justice. The village *sabha* was an effective court in ancient and medieval India. The members of the *sabha* were only temporarily convened by the village headman.



Most of the disputes relating to properties, partitions, debts, land leases, wells, tanks, thefts, marriages, adultery, group feuds and several other issues are settled in the village itself either by the village headman. The village *sabha* will not try the cases of serious nature where the punishment may be even decapitation of the guilty. Such cases were automatically sent to the king's court. The king encouraged the village courts convened by the village headman, who was a representative of the king as well as the villagers. It helped quick and fair disposal of many cases.²⁰ Buddhist *Jātakās* and the Hindu *Dharmaśāstrās* refer to certain crimes and punishments. In the cases of adultery, the *Jātakās* state that the woman is punishable with death, imprisonment or injury. It is further stated that punishments are of several kinds, viz, fines, imprisonment, mutilation, banishment, death, lashes with cudgel or barbed whip, smiting with spear, *sulāropana* (i.e. *korata veyuta* in Telugu) and implementation with axe. The Kalakada and Koravi epigraphs contain specific instructions used by the rulers in favour of the elders, whose decisions are not questionable. The offender may be punished with confiscation of his property or banishing him from a town or a corporeal punishment. On the other, if an individual was awarded with under punishment by the president of the executive body, actuated by personal feelings, the king had to withdraw his resolutions and do justice to the affected. If there were internal disputes, the king had to decide and set right the affairs. The Kalakada record of Bhuvanatrīnētra mentions that apprehending adultery red-handed, if a man kills the woman and man (involved), no punishment is to be imposed (on him); but if, without killing (both the persons), he punishes (only) the woman by cutting her nose or by merely distressing her, they (i.e. the *kampūs* of Vēnāḍu) should levy a fine of sixty four *gadyās* (from the culprit). This is permanent. This instance affords an interesting case where the contemporary sense of social justice is revealed. While the act of killing a woman and the man involved in adultery is appreciated, the killing of the woman only is considered to be a crime.

The guilt of both the parties is obviously admitted and hence, the punishment is requisite to be uniform and not one side. Further, the right of punishing the person who undertakes to punish only the woman is given to the *kampūs* i.e. the agriculturists who were the beneficiaries of the exemption granted by the king on the occasion of his coronation. Another record from the same place belonged to the Vaidumba king Irugēyamahārāja of the 10th century A.D. and the Kōravi epigraph of the Mudigōṇḍa Chālukya chief Niravadya dated to 934 A.D., contained specific instructions issued by the rulers in favour of the elders of the guilds and village bodies regarding punishments stating whatever they decide stands good and it is not questionable.²¹ The Kōravi record mentioned few crimes and fines thereon, twenty five *dramas* for the offence of cutting the nose, beating, theft and adultery probably for woman offenders and in the case of male offenders, they have to be deprived of their livelihood; one hundred and twenty five *dramas* for beating to death; sixty *dramas* for beating without causing death. In both the cases the kings, as it seems, revised and fixed the rates of punishment for the specified offences, leaving others unrecorded perhaps permitting for the local *nāyaka* or *grāmani* to follow the prevailing practice. Some of the fines collected on account of the ten crimes are to be paid to the king or his representatives like the *māṇḍalika* or the donees of the *agrahārās* as we understand from the term as *daṇḍadasaparadha* specified in the gift-deeds. The cutting off the nose of an adulterous and death to an adulterer is punishment prescribed in an inscription from Kogali in the Bellary district, dated 992 A.D. in the reign of Chālukya Ahavamalla. It is noteworthy that this punishment for adultery imposed on either sex conforms to that prescribed for the offence in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya.²² The punishments thus vary from region to region according to the custom. In the Vēlpucherla record²³ of the Rēnāti Chōḷa period 8th and 9th centuries, we observe an officer called *taradla-kālu* which means officer who is entrusted with the duty of punishing the guilty by striking with the cudgel (*taratu*) and also likely with the cane, and rope or whip. It was a custom in those days to punish the offenders with lashes using a whip. He seems to be an employee of the village headman, who in those days was holding the duty of maintaining law and order in the village, with magisterial powers to punish the culprits. In early Sanskrit inscriptions also we notice an officer designated as *daṇḍapāsika* for similar duty of punishing the criminals. *Tāraḍla-kālu* is perhaps one of the personal attached to the village headman to assist him in executing the judicial part of his duty. But, the Vaidumba records did not mention about the punishments using a whip in the villages. It is only in the capital towns the kings adopted the method of punishing the political criminals with imprisonment. In most of the civil cases the offenders were inflicted with monetary or corporeal punishments with quick disposals.



The fundamental caste system of Hindu society was preserved during that period. It played a significant role in legitimizing the authority of local chiefs as well as kings. Ancient society was composed of the *varnās* or classes based on the nature of duties assigned to the people. Thus, the four classes of society, namely, the *brāhmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *sūdra* were assigned duties and respective roles in the community. The *brāhmins* were respected and continued to hold high position in the society during this period. They played a significant role in legitimizing the authority of the local chiefs as well as kings. He is the repository of *Vēdic* learning, custodian of ritualistic culture, priest in the temple, minister and general at the court, and landlord to the villagers. Enough data is not available in this region, ruling chiefs acquired *kshatriya* status and the *brāhmins* played an important role in maintaining the *varna* based society i.e. *brāhmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *sūdra*. They adhered to the duties assigned to them by the *Dharmaśāstrās*. Generally, *brāhmins*, who lived in *agrahārās*, exempted from paying taxes and the *agrahāra* became a symbol of knowledge and education. *Brahmadēya* could be either a piece of land or an entire village, or the donated either to a single *brāhmana* or a group of *brāhmanās*. A record at Animela in Kamalapuram taluk of Kadapa district records that Irugēyamahārāja of the Vaidumbā family made a grant of one hundred and fifty *martūrs* of land around Animela as *ekōdhishta-bhukta dakshina* to a *brāhmin* named as Sūryakramavēdi for the merit of his father Be (jayi)ta mahārāja.²⁴ Similarly, the record at Kolavalli in Kamalapuram taluk of Kadapa district²⁵ refers to a gift given to a *brāhmin* for which some witnesses are mentioned. Some of their names are Karatidla Sambhaya (---) Vechikala Dānaya rōṭṭōdi and (y) Avula Vinayama rāṭṭōdi. Unfortunately, the *brahmadēya* lands were not mentioned in the records of Vaidumbā chiefs.

The term *kshatriya* denoting the ruling class, was appropriated by different communities who were able to assume power over the land. The ruling classes mainly came from the *sūdra varna*. They were native ruling families acquired the *kshatriya* status and political supremacy. The *vaishyās* were generally referred to in inscriptions as *settīs*. Their main occupation was to carry out trade and commerce. But, the epigraphical records of Vaidumbā chiefs did not give any information about *vaishyās* trade and commerce. The tax *vishaya-sunka* collected on transported goods during reign of Vaidumbās may be considered to an indirect referred to *vaishyās*. Agriculture appears to have been the chief profession of *sūdrās*. Most of the sub-castes of the *sūdrās* particularly originated according to profession. Potters, barbers, washer men, basket-makers, smiths, shepherds, and fishermen are the example. A majority of this caste joined in the army, exhibited bravery and rose to the position of a subordinate chief.

There are numerous epigraphical references of *reḍḍis* or *raḍḍis* as agriculturists, businessmen and administrative officials. It was variously referred to in inscriptions as *raṭṭadi*, *raṭṭōdi*, *raṭṭagallu*, etc. *Raṭṭakuḍi* or *raṭṭaguḍi* seems to have been made up of two words *raṭṭa* and *kuḍi*. *Kuḍi* means a habitation or settlement. *Raṭṭakuḍi* may be tentatively considered as a settler in a country or a cultivator.²⁶ These evidences show that the term *reḍḍi* denotes some status in the administration.²⁷ The Kalakada record refers to the Vaidumbā prince Irugēyamahārāja of 10th century A.D. addressing the *kāpūs* (tenants or farmers) of Vēnāḍu in a general sense, which was named as *raṭṭadis* and *raṭṭōdis*. So, there was no difference between the *kāpūs* and *rēḍḍis* at the beginning.

Vaidumbā chiefs developed matrimonial relations with Chōlās. The Anbil plates of Sūndara Chōla refer to the prince's mother i.e. the queen of Ariṇjaya, as born of the Vaidumbā family. It may therefore, be surmised that Viman-Kuṇḍavviyār of the lithic records was the daughter of Vaidumbā Bhimaraja, the queen of Ariṇjaya (956-973 A.D.) and the mother of Sūndara Chōla Parāntaka II (956-973 A.D.). It was evident after this Kuṇḍavai was her grandfather i.e. the daughter of her son Sūndara Chōla and sister of the great Rājārāja I was named.²⁸

To sum up, the epigraphical evidences help us to know the administration and society under the Vaidumbā chiefs of South India. Very often these chiefs were always engaged in waging wars against their neighbours, but they provided general facilities to their subjects. There was a three-tier administration represented by these ranks with the king at the top. The chief first ruled over *nāḍu*, the subordinate official ruled over a minor territorial division (province) and the *grāmani* ruled over a village. Several taxes were collected from the people. Usually, the village headman collected taxes. The delegation of power to collect taxes by *grāmani* was not uniform in all villages. Caste system played a significant role in



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legitimizing the authority of local chiefs as well as kings. The four classes of society, namely, the *brāhmaṇa*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *sūdra* were assigned duties and respective roles in the community. The Vaidumbā chiefs developed matrimonial relations with Chōlās. *Rēḍḍis* and *kāpūs* are two different castes as per synchronic social structure of Andhra Pradesh. But inscriptional evidences equate *rēḍḍis* with *kāpūs*. This may be a reason to have a historical continuum; *kāpūs* marrying *rēḍḍis*, is found only in Chittoor district.

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