

Gramapaddhati, a Medieval Text from South-western India¹

Nagendra Rao

***Abstract:** Gramapaddhati, a text of south-western India belonging to the medieval period, reveals the traditional history of the brahmanas of coastal Karnataka. The text can be considered as a caste purana, as it presents a history of people belonging to particular communities. While the text legitimises the social position of a few groups, it denigrates that of others. The text is useful in understanding the relationship between brahmanical and non-brahmanical groups of the region. In addition, the text gives information regarding internal migration of the brahmanas. The emergence of an agrarian society in the area is indicated here too.*

***Keywords:** Gramapaddhati, Caste purana, Brahmanas, Domination, Legitimacy*

The *Gramapaddhati*, a traditional chronicle comprising the history of the brahmana settlements in the Tulu region of south-western India, has various versions. It is a text in Kannada, a language belonging to the Dravidian group; but there are few Sanskrit versions too.² The script in the texts is

generally Kannada, although one finds the Tulu-Malayalam script too in a few cases. Similarities exist between manuscripts found in coastal Karnataka and Kerala.³ The text, an important source to reconstruct the social history of coastal Karnataka, contains useful information regarding brahmana families and their settlements and the intimate relationship between temporal and sacred domains. *Gramapaddhati* performs the function of a caste *purana* and, therefore, it exhibits the distinctive features of a caste *purana*.⁴ A critical study of the text, coupled with verification of statements found in it by way of fieldwork, helps in realising the validity of the text as a notable source to study the social history of coastal Karnataka or south-western India.

Historiography and Chronology

Historians of this region, perhaps influenced by the argument of colonial historians, have frequently reiterated the view that Indians did not possess considerable historical literature revealing a sense of history as past events and that could be used to reconstruct the history of the sub-continent or particular regions. Hence, one does not come across many works indicating the significance of the use of traditional literature such as *Gramapaddhati*. This text, supposedly belonging to the genre of *puranic* literature and

exhibiting its features, is considered by many western historians as consisting of more myth and less history.⁵ The lacuna in historiography that they have emphasised necessitates a test of the hypothesis that Indians lacked a sense of history; this can be done by a critical study of the text *Gramapaddhati*, as a scrutiny of this text reveals the real nature and purpose of its composition. Such an analysis helps the historian to place it in the proper historical and social context, two parameters of a text's relevance to contemporary society.

Some historians did of course note the usefulness of this text for reconstructing the social history of south-western India. Early scholars of the region such as Ganapati Rao Aigal⁶ and Sheenappa Heggade⁷ included the details of *Gramapaddhati* in their study relating to social life of the region, although they did not attempt a critical study of the text. This is one notable weakness of traditional historians' works highlighted by scholars trained in modern historical methodology.⁸ On the other hand, B.A. Saletore realised its value in the reconstruction of the social history of the region and attempted a pioneering study of this text⁹. He was the only historian among traditional scholars to study various versions of *Gramapaddhati*; he attempted a comparative study of the different versions, which then revealed significant details pertaining to the social history of the region.

B.A. Saletore adopted a novel method of studying the social history of the region based on the traditional chronicles like *Gramapaddhati* and *Sahyadri Khanda*¹⁰. He studied in detail the occurrences of Parasurama tradition in the different regions of India, and noticed the migration of the legend from Gujarat to other parts of the west coast – something that revealed the popularity of the myth in the regions dominated by brahmanas, particularly the western coast. That he also tried to establish the historicity of the contents of *Gramapaddhati* is clear from his assertion that “...the *Gramapaddhati* is a source which cannot be dismissed as an instance of Brahmanical fabrication”.¹¹ Thus, he recognised its importance for the reconstruction of the social history of south-western India, although he did not answer the question as to why certain events are considered more relevant than others by its brahmana authors.

B.A. Saletore, though he studied *Gramapaddhati* minutely, had a problem fixing the date of this text as he did not find uniformity in the details in all the versions; indeed, this was a major factor that had compelled other historians to ignore this text while writing the social history of the region. To take an instance of the contradictory nature of this text: in one version, Mayura Varma is introduced abruptly, while in others his parentage is given; again, while in some versions he is the son of Manivarma, in others

he is the son of Sushila and Hemangada, and in yet other versions, Hemangada is described as issueless.¹² Saletore further stated that *Gramapaddhati* contains certain statements that cannot be accepted. For instance, in one version, ministers who go in search of a ruler, are described to have proceeded to northern Varakula or Barakuru while, in reality, we do not discern northern and southern Barakuru in records. Further, *Gramapaddhati* was represented as part of *Skanda Purana*, one of the eighteen *mahapuranas*, an indication that myth and history got inextricably mixed in the text.¹³ This, according to Saletore, detracts its value as a piece of independent historical work.¹⁴ Nevertheless, this fact did not hinder him from using *Gramapaddhati* extensively in his history of ancient Karnataka.

Later scholars such as P.Gururaja Bhat,¹⁵ K.V.Ramesh¹⁶ and K.G. Vasanthamadhava¹⁷ also conceded the importance of studying this text in detail, though they did not actually do it possibly because of their focus on political and economic history of the region. Scholars have studied traditional chronicles in other parts of south India. For instance, in Kerala, M.G.S. Narayanan¹⁸ and Kesavan Veluthat have studied *Keralotpatti*,¹⁹ a text which belongs to the same genre as that of *Gramapaddhati*, despite apparent differences between the two.²⁰

It is not easy to fix precisely the date of *Gramapaddhati* because there have been constant additions and alterations in the text until very recently. B.A. Saletore argued that it belonged to 14th century CE,²¹ although some scholars claim that it was composed during the period of Mayura Varma who belonged to 4th century A.D. Based on the findings of Saletore, one may consider that it was a medieval text because it is more detailed concerning the medieval period rather than ancient times. We may note here that after 14th century CE, there was a proliferation of brahmana settlements in coastal Karnataka, evident from the reference to brahmana families in the Vijayanagara inscriptions, although a few such settlements might have survived from an earlier period.²² The Vijayanagara rulers gave large number of land grants to the brahmanas of the region and in return they were expected to legitimise the position of the rulers by performing sacrifices and offering prayers to gods to strengthen the power and health of the kings.²³

During the pre-Vijayanagara period, an important development was the establishment of eight Vaishnava *mathas* in south coastal Karnataka by Madhwacharya, who is supposed to have spread Vaishnava philosophy in the western coast.²⁴ It is possible that the phenomenon of the emergence of Vaishnava *mathas* and the proliferation of caste *puranas* such as *Gramapaddhati* are interrelated. Probably this explains the fact that

Gramapaddhati and its many versions are available in the *mathas* of southwestern India, although a few versions are available in the non-Vaishnava *mathas* as well, showing the influence that this text had on all the religious sects of the region. Nevertheless, there are evidences in the text to suggest that a few versions, found in the religious centres and brahmana families were copied, preserved, and updated during a later period. For instance, there is reference to a Hindi word in one version, obviously indicating the influence of north Indian culture, something that proves that this text was composed or copied during the 18th century CE, when there was a beginning of contact between the local population and people who spoke Hindi.²⁵ Hence, one may suggest that there were periodic additions, necessary to incorporate new details and changes to the status of brahmanas families, to the text.²⁶ In actuality, this is the principal reason for both subtle and major variations between diverse versions of *Gramapaddhati*, a fact that has been proven by a comparative study of the versions.

Nature of the text: a caste purana

Gramapaddhati does not belong to the class of *mahapuranas* like *Skanda Purana*. It belongs to the genre of local caste *puranas*, which were composed during medieval times to perpetuate the interest of certain caste

groups, a phenomenon found in the different parts of India as Veena Das's²⁷ study of caste *puranas* in Gujarat shows.

Caste *puranas* provide information, consisting of both myth and history, regarding particular castes. In the case of *Gramapaddhati*, an attempt was made to provide details of certain categories of brahmanas such as Shivalli brahmanas and Kota brahmanas, considered dominant groups of the region. Significantly, this text does not give details of Gowda Saraswat brahmanas, Karada brahmanas, and more prominently, Havyaka brahmanas, all considered as migrants to south-western India. The Shivalli and Kota brahmanas were migrants too, but they got indigenised after establishing themselves in the region very early, and reserving for themselves the exclusive use of the sanskritised Tulu language to distinguish themselves from other brahmanical and non-brahmanical groups. According to tradition, brahmanical communities such as Gowda Saraswat and Karada brahmanas migrated to this region from Goa and Maharashtra.²⁸ To perpetuate their position in the contemporaneous society, these immigrant communities were forced to compose their own distinct texts, which again belong to the category of caste *puranas*.

Different versions of *Gramapaddhati* are available, preserved in brahmana families, *mathas*, and temples. Most of them are palm leaf

manuscripts, and written in the Kannada script and language. Apart from *Gramapaddhati*, texts such as Sanskrit and Kannada versions of *Sahyadri Khanda* provide similar details.²⁹ However, there are many differences in content between the two *Sahyadri Khandas*. The Sanskrit *Sahyadri Khanda*³⁰ provides a few details pertaining to brahmana villages also found in *Gramapaddhati*, although there are certain differences in detail between the two.³¹ Many versions of the text found in religious institutions like Puttige *matha*, Udupi and Balekudru *matha* near Barkur proves that perhaps it obtained religious sanction and the support of sacred authority.³²

Analysis of the text

The present study is based on three versions of *Gramapaddhati*, which the author has been able to consult. One of them is a printed version, the source of the original manuscript of which is not acknowledged by the editor³³. This version, we label as GP1. A second version, which we label as GP2, is preserved in the University of Tubingen, found among the papers of the Basel missionaries who worked in the Tulu country.³⁴ A third version, which we label as GP3, a palm leaf manuscript, is available among the collections of the Department of Kannada, Mangalore University (No. 79).³⁵ As stated earlier, versions of this text are found in religious institutions like *mathas*. The authorities of Balekudru *matha*, for instance, informed this author that

they have a copy of *Gramapaddhati* which is now preserved in the palm leaf document museum at Dharmasthala.³⁶ B.A. Saletore used the Puttige version for his study of *Gramapaddhati* and, as the name suggests, he must have obtained it from the Puttige *matha*.³⁷ *Gramapaddhati* claims to be a part of *Sahyadri Khanda* that itself is considered a part of *Skanda Purana*, an indication of the attempt of the authors of the text to claim authenticity based on the *puranic* origins.³⁸

Generally, the text can be divided into two sections – religious and secular; the religious part discusses the myth of Parasurama whereas the secular part provides political and social details. The text is also broadly divisible into three parts.

The earlier part belongs to the realm of mythology, dealing with the creation of the region and its early settlement by Parasurama and the role of Shiva in the origin of kingship and state here. We find the narration of Parasurama creating land out of the sea in this part.³⁹ Subsequently, when brahmanas from other regions refuse to go to this newly created land on an occasion on the plea that this land is not peopled by brahmanas, Parasurama becomes angry and decides to create brahmanas himself by investing them with threads of jute and donating land to them.⁴⁰ In this context, it may be mentioned that myths are useful to reconstruct the history of a community or

a region, as demonstrated by Romila Thapar who has underlined the importance of the study of origin and myths to comprehend political and social configurations.⁴¹ Further on, in the same part, is the narration of the origin of state where monarchy is the form of government. The story is concerned with the birth of Trinetra Kadamba and it gives, during the narration of events, a list of different rulers who ruled the Parasurama *ksetra*. In the second part are details of the rule of kings, and some protests and even rebellions, the spatial and temporal coordinates of which cannot be precisely pinned down. This part gives details of the reigns of different kings like Mayura Varma, Chandrangada, and Lokaditya, and mentions rebellions by the original inhabitants under the leadership of the chandala⁴² chief Hubbasiga⁴³. It also mentions protests of the original brahmanas who were estranged by the decision of Mayura Varma to bring brahmanas from Ahicchatra.⁴⁴ Significantly, whereas the rebellions of the ‘holeyas’ are suppressed ruthlessly, brahmanical protests are met with compromise.

In this part there is at least one instance that suggests that the author of the text was certainly influenced by the system of inheritance prevalent in south-western India. The Kadamba king Mayura Varma, stated to be the son of the Kadamba princess Susila and the solar dynasty prince Hemangaraya, obviously traces his descent from his mother’s dynasty of the Kadambas.⁴⁵

Later on in the text, it is also stated that as this is how he came to throne, Mayura Varma ordered that the entire country should follow the matrilineal system (*dauhitra dharma*).⁴⁶

The third part of this work contains statements that may be tested against evidence from other documents. This part refers to brahmana settlements in thirty-two villages along with family names. It is possible to identify these villages where the brahmana families and their continuing traditions survive to this day.

Geographical details

There are certain geographical details in the three versions we have consulted; these details provide pertinent information regarding the geographical extent of the brahmana settlements in south-western India. GP1 states that Haiva is situated between Gangavali in the south, Sahya hills in the east, and the sea in the west. Toulava is stated to be situated between Gangavali in the north, river Nilesvara in the south, Sahya hills in the east, and the sea in the west. Kerala is stated to be situated between river Nilesvara in the north, Kanyakumari in the south, the sea in the west, and Sahya hills in the east. Geographically, *Gramapaddhati* can be located in the south Kanara region of south western India; the district comprised of thirty-two large settlements consisting of smaller villages. Different administrative

positions and bodies have been specified in the text. It would be interesting to know whether religious-administrative positions such as *annagramani* managed secular administration of the region too. It seems that many of these administrative bodies took active part in both religious and secular matters. A study of place names occurring in the texts would enable us to identify the antiquity of these places.

In the earlier part, which may be designated as the mythological section, there are references to a number of places and other geographical identities. GP1 mentions river Godavari, Ahicchatra, Sahya hills, Mahendra hill, Kanyakumari, Kerala, Varata, Marata, Konkana, Haiva, Toulava, river Gangavali, river Nilesvara, Naguru, Mattu, Kusasthali, Svasthi, Gokarna, Kota, Kandavara, and Shivalli. The places mentioned in GP2 are Ahikshetra, Shivalli, Kota, Tulu, Maleyala, Haviga, Jayantika, Barkur, and Nagara. GP3 refers to Gajapura, Koteshwara, Saligrama, Venupura, Vatapura, Shivabelli, Nittur, Talitode, Mangaluru, Barakuru, Kukke, and Machivuru.

The authors of the text were apparently influenced by the information available in the greater *puranas*, thus following the convention of mentioning the sacred *tirthas* or rivers visited by devotees. Another source of this section seems to be the actual knowledge of the people of the region concerning neighbouring regions such as Gokarna and Kerala. The details

indicate the importance given by the authors to the geographical knowledge of the people of the region who evidently interacted with people of neighbouring regions.

Brahmana settlements

In the traditions of Goa, South Kanara, and Kerala coasts⁴⁷, one finds information concerning the establishment of brahmana settlements with the blessings of the temporal and sacred authorities. Parasurama remains the principal sacred authority in these regions, though there are references to different temporal authorities too.

The latter part of the different texts of *Gramapaddhati* gives details regarding the thirty-two villages where the brahmanas settled and the boundaries of certain important villages like Kota and Shivalli. For instance, GP3 gives details regarding brahmana population in Shivalli and mentions its different localities. GP1 refers to Tareuru, Varkadi, Marane, Kolyanadu, Padi, Kudalu, Mogeailu, Mittanadu, Nirumarga, Simanturu, Tenekala, Sivabelli, Brahmapura, Niravara, Kuta, and Skandapura and these are categorised as western *gramas* or villages. The eastern villages are Shripadi, Odilu, Nala, Karanduru, Ujire, Kunyamarga, Kokkada, Raminja, Pude, Belapa, Airnadu, Idakedu, Kemminja, Padinja, Siriyadi, and Kudipadi.

In GP2, in the western villages section, Tareuru is referred as Karuru, Tenekala is called Kanakkala, Kolyanadu is referred as Kolavinadu, and Skandapura is referred as Skandavara. Instead of Moge bailu, GP2 mentions Mogralu. In the eastern villages section, GP2 refers to Kareya, Kavala, and Manikala which are not mentioned in GP1. However, GP2 refers to Karanduru as Karanjuru, Kunyamarga as Kunjimarga, Raminja as Ramanjuru, Belapa as Belavya, and Padinja as Palinja. GP3 mentions all the sixteen western villages mentioned in GP1, but instead of Moge bailu it refers to Moganadu. Kuta is referred as Gajapura and Skandapura is called Skandagrama. In the western villages section, it refers to Shripadi as Sirripadi.

The discrepancies are generally of two kinds. One relates to the identity of the villages mentioned. For instance, whereas the number sixteen is sacred, a few villages mentioned in one list are altogether absent in another. The identity is therefore completely different. Again, villages mentioned in different lists are the same although either they are spelt differently.

The details indicate that like in other parts of the western coast, in south-western India too brahmana settlements emerged gradually, as is mentioned in literature and inscriptions. The process of institution of brahmana settlements that began during the Kadamba period continued during the

Vijayanagara period too. The Vijayanagara kings, having their centres in Barkur and Mangalore, needed the cooperation of the brahmanas in administration and maintaining law and order.

Significance of the work

The history of a caste community is important to understand the social history of a region as a whole. In the context of south-western India, the history of the brahmana community enables the historian to understand the relationship between brahmanas and non-brahmanas, as also the approach of brahmanas towards non-brahmanas. This is true not only of south-western India, but also other regions of the subcontinent. A study of *Gramapaddhati*⁴⁸ is essential also to comprehend the complex nature of brahmana social organization in south India. This work demonstrates that not only there existed rigid divisions between different caste groups, but there prevailed watertight compartments within a single *varna* too. Stratification and complexity of social organization had become important features of medieval south Indian society.⁴⁹ This text refers to the prevalence of various categories among the brahmanas. However, not all the categories of brahmanas such as Havik brahmanas and Sthanikas are discussed in detail. This implies that greater importance was attached to only a few brahmanical communities such as the Shivalli and Kota brahmanas who

perhaps had emerged as dominant communities in society. This also demonstrates the unequal nature of relationship between different categories of brahmanas. In this context, it is important to mention that there was no intermarriage between the different brahmanical communities. Hence, *Gramapaddhati* is of significance to both historians and sociologists interested in the study of the structure of caste society.

The study of this text is significant from the point of view of historiography too. The assessment of colonial and many Indian historians trained by colonial historians is that India lacked a sense of history, a consciousness of past events.⁵⁰ However, many historians, both European and Indian, have debated this aspect. According to them, there are evidences to suggest that Indians too recorded past events in a significantly systematic manner that eluded earlier historians. Indeed, a study of local caste *puranas* such as *Gramapaddhati* and *Sahyadri Khanda* provides opportunity for historians to ascertain the historical consciousness of ancient Indians. It is true that it is not always possible to clearly specify the dates of these texts. However, different approaches such as linguistic, sociological, and anthropological analysis of these texts may certainly reveal significant information. This author took up the task of identification of different villages as specified in *Gramapaddhati* and could locate many brahmanical

villages and identify brahmanical family details mentioned in the different versions. This indicates that such traditional texts can be considered as significant sources to reconstruct the social history of a region.

Conclusion

A study of diverse versions of *Gramapaddhati* gives details regarding the brahmanical villages of south-western India. Historical consciousness of the region is overtly and covertly represented in *puranic* and *semi-puranic* form that provide contemporary details by way of myths and traditions. The text exhibits knowledge concerning neighbouring regions and chronology. The myth concerning Parasurama might affect the historical value of the text, but a deeper study allows historians to find the sense of history of the authors of the region. At the same time, one need not conclude that pre-modern Indians exhibited a sense of history as is comprehended today. One needs to differentiate between pre-modern historical sense and modern sense of history. It is important not to judge a pre-modern work according to parameters that are applied to a modern text. It is not impossible to cull useful information from such a text, though such details are not always very explicit. The various versions of *Gramapaddhati* comprise both similar and dissimilar details. The details regarding social groups indicate that the text belonged to the genre of caste *puranas* which were written with the purpose

of improving the social status of the brahmanas. The need to add additional brahmanical details led to changes in the different subsequent versions of *Gramapaddhati*. A critical study of such a text reveals its usefulness as a historical source to analyse issues such as stratification, migration, and legitimacy.

Notes and References:

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Kesavan Veluthat and the anonymous reviewer of this article for their valuable suggestions which I received while writing this paper.

² This author was able to find one version of *Gramapaddhati* in the house of Harikrishna Tantri, Udipi. This version is in Sanskrit language.

³ The above mentioned version is written in Tulu-Malayalam script.

⁴ For a definition of a caste *purana* see, Das, V., *Structure and Cognition*, Delhi, 1997.

⁵ Philips, C.H., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London, 1961, p. 4.

⁶ Aigal, G.A., *Dakshina Kannada Jilleya Pracina Itihasa*, (in Kannada), Mangalore, 1923.

⁷ Shetty, A.B. (ed.), *Sheenappa Heggade Samagra Sahitya*, (in Kannada), Udipi, 1991.

⁸ Veluthat, K. 'Tulu Studies: an Overview', *POLI Canara 200*, Mangalore, 2000.

⁹ Saletore, B.A., *Ancient Karnataka, History of Tuluvas*, Poona, Oriental Book Agency, 1936.

¹⁰ Saletore, *Ibid.* *Sahyadri Khanda* has become a major subject of analysis. See Thana, T.S.S., *Texts and Contexts in Southeast Asia: Proceedings of the Texts and Contexts in*

Southeast Asia Conference. Universities Historical Research Center, 2003; for a traditional view of this work, see Dhume, A.R.S., *The Cultural History of Goa from 1000 BC to 1352 AD.*, Panaji, 1986; for a critical study of the text refer to Kosambi, D.D., *Myth and Reality*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1962. It is interesting to note that *Sahyadri Khanda* is a text that is studied by both traditional and modern scholars belonging to different regions of western India including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Coastal Karnataka, and Kerala, thereby showing the relevance of this text to these regions. The study of Kosambi is interesting since it contradicts the suggestion of Moraes that brahmanas claimed descent from the north to obtain legitimacy. Kosambi has furnished evidences to suggest that brahmanas might have migrated from the north and settled in the coastal regions of the western coast. D.D. Kosambi, *Ibid.*, p. 167. In Meckenzi collection, one finds reference to the palm leaf manuscript *Tuluwanada Utpatti or the Account of Origin of the Tulu Country*. This text claims to be a part of the *Sahyadri Khanda* of *Skanda Purana*. See Wilson, H.H., *Mackenzie Collection*, Asiatic Society, 1828. For a detailed analysis of *Sahyadri Khanda* also refer to Levitt, L.H., 'The Sahyadri Khanda: Some Problems Concerning a Text – Critical Edition of a Puranic Text' and Levitt, S.K., 'The Sahyadri Khanda: Style and Context as Indices of Authorship in the Patityagramaniraya', in Singh, N. (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Hinduism*, New Delhi: Anmol, 1997.

¹¹ Saletore, B.A. *Op. Cit.*, p. 342.

¹² Saletore, B.A., *Ibid.*

¹³ The majority of local *puranas* claim association with one *mahapurana* or other.

Wilson, H.H., Mackenzie, C.M. Mackenzie Collection.

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- ¹⁴ Wilson, H.H., Mackenzie, C.M. Mackenzie Collection. p. 341-342.
- ¹⁵ Bhatt, P.G., *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture*, Kallianpur, 1975.
- ¹⁶ Ramesh, K.V., *A History of South Kanara*, Dharwad, 1970.
- ¹⁷ Vasanthamadhava, K.G., *Western Karnataka: Agrarian Relations*, New Delhi, 1991.
- ¹⁸ Narayanan, M.G.S., 'The State in the Era of Ceraman Perumals of Kerala', in Champakalakshmi, R., Veluthat, K., and Venugopalan, T.R.(eds). *State and Society in Pre-modern South India*, Thrissur, 2002.
- ¹⁹ Veluthat, K., *Brahmana Settlements in Kerala Historical Studies*, Calicut, 1978. Other scholars have also analyzed this text. See Gundert, H., *Keralotpatti*, Mangalore, 1886; Janaki, K.S.S. 'Parasurama', in Singh, N. *Encyclopaedia of Hinduism*, p. 1924; Fawcett, F., Florence, E., Fawcett, F. and Edgar, T., *Nambutiris: Notes on Some People of Malabar*, Asian Educational Services, 2001, p. 72.
- ²⁰ Veluthat, K., *Brahmana Settlements in Kerala Historical Studies*, Calicut, 1978.
- ²¹ Saletore, B.A. *Op. Cit.*
- ²² See *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. VI and Vol. IX, Part I and II, Mysore, 1985. However, the process of emergence of brahmana settlements might have started much earlier under the Kadambas of Banavasi. Mayura Varma, being a patron of the brahmanas, established agraharas in the kingdom. Moraes, G.M. *The Kadamba Kula*, Madras, 1990, p. 31.
- ²³ Chattopadhyaya, B.D. 'Political processes and the Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India' in Kulke, H (ed.), *State in India 1000-1700*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995.
- ²⁴ Madhwa Vijaya. Most works have referred to Madhwacharya as the founder of the eight *mathas* in Udupi, South Kanara. See Tattwananda, Swami, *Vaisnava Sects, Saiva*

Sects, Mother Worship. Firma KLM, 1984; *Asiatick Researches*, Calcutta, 1828, p. 102; *Mackenzie Collection*, p. 95; Fani, M, Shea, D and Troyer, A., *The Debistan*, London, 1843, p. 179.

²⁵ Inscriptions and literature provide information concerning the contact of the region with north India.

²⁶ This is found in the case of epic literature and ancient *puranas*. The usual practice seems to be to add considerable details of a particular community or a social group so as to legitimise their position.

²⁷ Das, V., *Op.Cit.*

²⁸ For the Gowda Saraswat migrations see Priolkar, A.K., *The Goa Inquisition*, New Delhi, 1961. Though one version of *Gramapaddhati* refers to a few Gowda Saraswat surnames, the details of this community are not as comprehensive as those regarding the Shivalli brahmanas. The reference to the Gowda Saraswat brahmanas in the text indicates the practice of updating followed by the brahmana authors.

²⁹ Bhanumati, Y.C. (ed.), *Sahyadri Khanda*, Mysore, 1984.

³⁰ da Cunha, C. (ed.), *Sahyadri Khanda-Skanda Puranantargata*, Bombay, 1877.

³¹ Rao, N. 'Sahyadri Khanda and Reconstruction of Social History of South Kanara', *Indica*, Vol. 36, No. 2, September 1999.

³² It is interesting to note that, among these two *mathas*, Puttige *matha* belongs to Vaishnava tradition initiated by Madhwacharya, whereas Balekudru *matha* belongs to Smarta tradition which follows the teachings of Shankaracharya.

³³ It was published by Holla Krishniah, Balanadu, in 1924.

³⁴ Prof. B.A. Vivek Rai, Department of Kannada, Mangalore University, obtained a copy of this version. I would like to thank him for providing me a copy of this text.

³⁵ This Department has collected other versions of *Gramapaddhati* in palm leaf. They are: 1. No. 44 in Nandinagari script, 'Gramapaddhatiya Kelavu Manetanagalu' (A Few Families of *Gramapaddhati*); 2. No. 78. *Gramapaddhati*; 3. No. 59., Vyasa et.al, *Sahyadri Khanda Mattu Itara Vishayagaḷu*. (Sahyādrī Khanda and other Aspects).

³⁶ I found a palm leaf manuscript copy of Sahyadri Khanda in Balekudru *matha*.

³⁷ Saletore, B.A., *Op. Cit.*, p. 324.

³⁸ Scholarly analysis of *Sahyadri Khanda* reveals the function of this text. According to Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, the text legitimized brahmanical indulgence in non-brahmanical occupations. This shows that the *Sahyadri Khanda* repeats the assertions found in the texts such as *Vaikhanasa Smarta Sutra* and *Apastamba Dharma Sutra*. See Chattopadhyaya, D., *Science and Society in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1978, pp. 217-218.

³⁹ Parasurama tradition is found not only in the Kanara coast but also in Gujarat, Goa, and Kerala, as this tradition is represented in historical and mythological literature of all these regions.

⁴⁰ This might indicate the attempt to brahmanise the region by introducing brahmanical practices found in north India. The Agasthya tradition, or the story of Agasthya crossing the Vindhya Mountains, provides significant clue to the brahmana migration to south India.

⁴¹ Thapar, Romila, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, 2004, 259 ff.

⁴² In the caste hierarchy, the chandalas belong to the lowest category in India.

⁴³ For traditions regarding Hubbasiga, see Bilimale, B, *Koragara Samskriti*, (in Kannada) Bangalore, 1993, pp. 29-33.

⁴⁴ Ahichhatra, a north India urban centre, was traditionally associated with brahmana settlements. Aihole in Karnataka is also called Ahicchatra or Aryapura. Champakalakshmi, R., *Trade, Ideology, and Urbanization in South India*, New Delhi, 1996. The reference to Ahicchatra represents abstract memory of the authors of this text, whose ancestors might have belonged to a northern region.

⁴⁵ Curiously, the Kadambas of Banavasi were ruled by Mayura Varma I, Maryura Varma II and Mayura Varma III. It is possible that the text in question referred to one of the later Mayura Varmas. One can assume that the authors of the text were actually aware of one of the Mayura Varmas and mentioned him in their work. Mayura Varmas, the Kadamba kings, encouraged the brahmana settlements, the agraharas. The Kadamba records refer to the chaos and lawlessness found due to problems such as succession conflict and deaths of rulers. Mayura Varma III is also referred to as Hemma. The text mentions the king Hemangada. Moraes, G.M. *The Kadamba Kula, Op. Cit.*, p. 131.

⁴⁶ GP 1, p. 22. *Dauhitra dharma* refers to the matrilineal system of inheritance which prevailed among non-brahmana castes of south-western India. Even those who were antagonistic to the Kadambas, namely, the Koragas, followed the same type of inheritance.

⁴⁷ Veluthat, K. *Brahmana Settlements in Kerala*, Calicut, 1978.

⁴⁸ Different versions of *Gramapaddhati* have been studied by B.A. Saletore. See his *Ancient Karnataka, Op. Cit.*

⁴⁹ Champakalakshmi, R. 'State and Society: South India Circa A.D. 400-1300' in Thapar, R. (ed.), *Recent Perspectives in Early Indian History*, Mumbai, 1995.

⁵⁰ For instance, Macdonnell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1900; Mill, J. *The History of British India*, Vol. I, New Delhi, Reprint, 1972; Philips, C.H. (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London, 1961.