

## Prologue

Tribal Names occurring in our records make it clear that they represented a heterogeneous stock of people in Indian society and that ethnic or geographical factors predominated. The locality or country was generally known by the plural of the tribal name. The original name of the tribe whether ethnic or territorial may be hypothetical since it is difficult to determine exactly whether the place gave the name to the tribe or the tribe to the place. We find many examples where the tribes gave their names to the places after they were known by some ethnic or tribal appellations. For example, we know that Videhā obtained its name from the settlement of the Videgha tribe who were lead by their king Māthava when they pushed forward to the east from the Sarasvatī<sup>1</sup> and that Pāñcāla denoted the country or kingdom which the Kṣatriya tribe Pāñcāla occupied.<sup>2</sup> With a definite territory of their own, they lost their tribal character and assumed the functions of the ruler. The names of the janapadas thus given continued even if the tribe migrated somewhere else; rather it gave the names to the janapadas wherever it settled. Thus we know the divisions of the Mālavas, Yaudheyas, the Kurus and the Madras.

These tribes went through various vicissitudes due to the growth of big imperial states viz. of the Mauryas and the Guptas, and foreigns invasions from the north-west. They had replaced old Vedic tribes in many places and flourished during the period from 6th century B.C. to A.D. 4th-5th century. Though Altekar<sup>3</sup> has pointed out that they flourished only in north-western and north-eastern zone and conspicuously absented themselves in the south, we find the evidence of self-governing people, though scanty, in South India as well. The Rock Edict XIII refers to some territories