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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The Journal is going strong. Looking from any angle- it is fine! Quality or Quantity – refereeing or ISSN number: everything is there!

But still we are ambitious. We would like our contributors to send abstracts of their research articles along with the key words in the beginning of their papers.

I would like to thank Prof. V. Balambal, Prof. A. Chandrasekharan, Prof. G. Chandhrika, Dr. S. Vasanthi and Dr. Chithra Madhavan for sparing their valuable time to referee our papers.

Coming back to the discussion of the Journal, this 20<sup>th</sup> issue is truly All-India in its composition. We have a good paper from Prof. S.N. Arya of Magadh University and another from Mumbai by Dr. Prabha Ravi Shankar of S.N.D.T. Women's University, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh scholars continue to show a lot of interest in our Journal. Kerala is joining in these days. Tamilnadu has to improve its contribution.

Most of the papers are well researched. We have encouraged not only younger scholars but also new scholars to contribute to this issue. Senior scholars like Dr. K.G. Vasantha Madhava of Karnataka continue to evince interest in publishing in our Journal.

We are requesting a few scholars to revise their papers and send it back to us for publishing in the 21<sup>st</sup> issue of the Journal.

Dr. S. Ananthakrishnan of A.M. Jain College, Chennai, has reviewed Madhuri's Sharma's brilliant work on "Western and Indigeneous Medicine". Mr. G. Balaji of The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation has reviewed Dr. Chithra Madhavan's "Sanskrit Education in Ancient and Medieval Tamilnadu" for this issue. We are grateful to them.

I would like to thank Dr. Nanditha Krishna, Mrs. Malathy Narasimhan, Mr. Narayan Onkar, Mrs. V. Santhanalakshmi and all other staff members of the Foundation who were associated with the publishing of this Journal.

**Dr. G. J. Sudhakar**



# **PRE-HISTORIC CULTURAL SEQUENCE IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

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## **Introduction**

“Pre-history deals with a vast, illimitable period stretching back to the dim past, during which time there was no writing of any kind” [H.D.Sankalia 1974]. The term pre-history was first used by Daniel Wilson in 1851. Like any other areas in India, research on Pre-history in Andhra Pradesh dates back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first discovery of pre-historic relics in the form of Paleoliths was made by C.A.E. Oldham in Rayachoti *Taluk* of Kadapa district in Andhra Pradesh as far back as 1864. Since, then a number of individual scholars and institutions have carried out investigations into the Stone Age cultures in different parts of Andhra Pradesh. The pre-historic period is mainly divided into two: Paleolithic culture and Mesolithic culture and the former further divided into Lower, Middle and Upper Paleolithic cultures. These two periods basically represent the hunting-gathering communities that fall within the time span of Middle Pleistocene to the Early Holocene. The artefactual assemblages of these cultures in Andhra Pradesh represent typo-

technologically a cross-cultural feature and show some affinities to those from other parts of India.

## **The area**

The district is bounded on the east by Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh and Chinglepet district of Tamilnadu, on the west by Kolar district of Karnataka, on the north to a greater extent by Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh and on the south by North Arcot and Dharmapuri districts of Tamilnadu.

It is roughly divided into two geographical regions, namely (1) the hills and uplands (2) the plains. The Eastern Ghats are the most extensive range of hills which enter the district in the Kuppam taluk, forming the southwestern corners.

There are no perennial rivers in the district. Some of the important minor rivers flowing in the district are the Papaghni *pincha*, Koudinya, Palar, Ponne, Arani, Suvarnamukhi, Bahuda, Kalyani and Kusathali. Apart from the above mentioned rivers, the Pedderu and Chinneru are the smaller rivers that flow in the district.

The plateau region of the district has an elevation ranging from 305 to 457 m. MSL. Most of the area is occupied by pre-Cambrian granites which are highly magmatized and do not possess any important mineral content economically workable. Cuddapah and Upper Gondwans occur as outliers at one or two places. More than three-fourths of the area is occupied by Archaeans which are the oldest rocks belonging to Dharwarian system with basic intrusions.



### **An outline of the pre-historic cultures in the region: Lower Paleolithic Culture [500,000-55,000 BP]**

The Lower Paleolithic in Andhra Pradesh belonged to pebble tool as well as Achulian techno-complex. The tools are both bifacial and unifacial. The tool assemblages include hand axes, cleavers, picks, polyhedrons, discoids, choppings tools, scrapers and flakes. The techniques employed for the manufacture of tools were block-on-block, stone-hammer and cylinder hammer. The latter was especially used for the finishing of tools by secondary retouch. There are numerous open air sites in primary and semi primary contexts. Quartzite is the major raw material used for tools although other materials like sandstone and even quartz are reported to have been used to a minor extent. A majority of the sites are found in the horizons associated with red soils, red loam and a few with black soils.

### **Middle Palaeolithi culture [55,000-30,000BP]**

The Middle Palaeolithic culture is dominated by flake tools. The tool assemblages are miniature hand axes, cleavers, scrapers, awls, borers, points, flakes and thus represent the techniques used for the manufacture of tools such as stone hammer, cylinder and levallois. The stone hammer technique is used for the initial dressing of cores; while the cylinder hammer technique is used to shape the tools by further working and secondary retouch. Levallois is a specialized technique employed whereby the core is worked and the flake struck off as such that core needs no further working. Quartzite was the most preferred raw material for the production of this industry and most was associated with red soils and red loam. Site dimensions indicate that human groups of this period consisted of few members of a small band to large groups occupying areas near water sources for short periods to prolonged occupations at some places where resource potentials

are found enough to sustain their economy for a considerable period of time. The nature of the tool kit at some of these sites indicate that these belong to all types of camps of economic activities like base camps, work camps and base-cum-work camps which can be distinguished based on the occurrence of tool types and the concentration of artifacts. The Middle Paleolithic culture in Andhra Pradesh is characterized by the occupation of varied ecosystems, such as upland plateaus, lowland plains and littoral ecosystem<sup>4</sup> represented as either surface scatters or river gravel sites.

### **Upper Palaeolithic culture [30,000-8,000 BP]**

In general this industry had two distinguished typological groups-blade tool industry and blade and burin industry. Blade tool industry consists of large to small-size blades, retouched blades, backed blades, flake blades, retouched flake-blades, different kinds of scrapers (concave, convex, side, notched mostly made on flakes on flake blades), borers, scrapers-cum-borers, points on flakes, burins on flakes, awls worked nodules, core rejuvenation flakes, irregular prismatic/fluted, amorphous cores and debitage. The raw material for the blade tool assemblages in different parts of Andhra Pradesh range from quartzite, chert, jasper, chalcedony and agate. Blade and burin industry consists of a variety of scrapers on blades (side, concave, convex, notched, and kneeled), flakes blades and flakes; horse-hoof scrapers on blade cores, bifacial, unifacial and shouldered points on flakes and blades, borers, awls, core rejuvenation flakes, typical prismatic blade core, irregular cores and debit age. The evidence recorded from primary sites in the Rallakalva (Vedullacheruvu- Nallagundlas) and Gunjana river systems (Peddarajupalli, Vodikalu and Bellu) is the best known of the blade and burin industries in Andhra Pradesh from the south east corner of Kadapa district. The majority of sites are associated with red soils followed by black soils. Quartzite is

the most preferred raw material followed by quartz and cryptocrystalline rocks like chert, chalcedony, jasper and agate. Upper Paleolithic sites in Andhra Pradesh have been recorded in the Telangana and Rayalaseema plateaus and in the hilly ranges, foothills and hinterland riverine ecosystems of the Eastern Ghats. They belong to both primary and secondary in nature.

### **Mesolithic culture [20,000-5,000 BP]**

The Mesolithic period is a transitional phase between the Palaeolithic period and Neolithic period, with hunting –gathering and foraging economy. It is characterized by Microlithic industry and tools measure between 1 cm.-5 cm and blade and bladlet tool technology. In Andhra Pradesh, the credit for the discovery of these sites goes to Robert Bruce Foote. The raw material used for microlithic tools are agate, chalcedony, chert, jasper and quartz of cryptocrystalline variety and this culture is associated with red ochre paintings. It is characterized by both geometric and non-geometric variety of tools and a ceramic in stage though a few sites are associated with elsewhere in India

In view of spatio-temporal context this cultural phase belongs to the hunting–gathering communities which date from the edge of Early Holocene to Middle Holocene.

The present paper is an analysis of the distribution of Paleolithic and Mesolithic sites in Chittoor district based on documented sources. They are located in various topographic locations attached to Suvarnamukhi and its streams. The surface artifactual scatters found at these sites are assigned to special stages in view of cultural progress. The Paleolithic Age in which man fashioned his tools by chopping hard stones of convenient size and shape, is represented by the highly developed Acheulian hand axes discovered at Ellampalle Gattu, Mekalavandiapalle, Piler, Sitarampeta

and Tirupati. Whereas the Mesolithic culture is essentially a continuation of the proceeding Upper Paleolithic by the tools made on quartzite discovered at Agraharam, Aravandlapalle, Chintaparti, Maratavadlapalle and Tirupati.

Investigations carried out by the individual scholars in the present region of discussion include Murty [1965, 1968, 1969], Banerjee [1967], Singh, Jaiswal and Sutaone [1968], Hanumantha Rao [1979] and Jayraj [1984]. Near about 80 Paleolithic and Mesolithic sites are located in the region in various geographical settings and some of the important sites are described below.

### **1. Anjanadri foothills**

The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic tool assemblages were found in the Southern foot-hill region at Anjanadri and Seshachalam hill zone. The Upper Paleolithic artifacts are found fashioned by pressure and percussion techniques on quartzite and belongs to various shades of colours i.e. light brown, ash colour, reddish brown, olive green and black. Hand axes, cleavers, scrapers, flakes, blades, cores, harpoons, spear heads and points are the main category. Microliths are in milk white colour. [N. S. Kumari, Paleolithic, and Mesolithic Cultures of Anjanadri Foot hills, Tirupati, M.Sc. Dissertation, Tirupati. 1986].

### **2. Battalavallam**

Dr. K.D. Banerjee and his team excavated a Stone Age site at Battalavallam in Satyavedu taluk. The excavation revealed a peneplain of completely laterized, impregnated with ferruginous solution, resulting in an extremely hard vesicular form. The surface of the laterite showed disconformity, over which lay a deposit of detrital laterite. The latter deposit contained tools of an earlier industry, presumably washed down along with the laterite, as also

of an industry belonging to the Middle and Late Stone Age horizons [IAR 1968-69, P.1.].

### **3. Gollapalli**

It is situated to the north-east of the village of Karakambadi, 10 km away from Renigunta. The site is close to the Seshachalam hills. Here Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic tool assemblages are discovered and all artifacts are made on quartzite. The tool assemblages comprised flakes, blades, cores, points, lunates and burins. The Microliths are non-geometric and non-pottery in nature.

### **4. Komatigunta**

The Stone-age site at Komatigunta is located about 3 km away from Sri Srikalahasti. The area in which the site is located has a tank known locally as Komatigunta. This site yielded both Lower Paleolithic [236 artifacts] and Middle Paleolithic tools. Hand axes, cleavers, choppers and chopping tools made on quartzite of various shades of colour such as brown, black and green. Some of the flakes indicate that they were removed from the cores by the Clactonian technique, and some flakes possessed the use of Levalloisian technique. The tool assemblage has been discovered from stratified context of five layers. Layer<sub>1</sub> is a natural soil (humus) 20 cm. thick consists of inorganic and organic materials which is brown in colour containing sandy particles of tiny size; layer<sub>2</sub> consists of the pebbly gravel with a thickness of 24 cm. and this layer of pebbles was formed due to the process of aggradations in the past; layer<sub>3</sub> consists of murum of 26 cm. thickness, composed of regular and irregular gravels of 1 to 3 cm. diameter which is a compact deposit due to the accumulation of brown silt. Layer<sub>4</sub> is represented by pebbly gravel differentiated from the formal layer by large and big sized pebbles. Pebbles

are irregular in shape with a thickness of 62 cm. This layer yielded a discoidal hand axe at a depth of 80.5 to 88.5 cm. Layer<sub>5</sub> is represented by disintegrated granite rock at a depth between 130-150 cm. below which is a bed rock. (R. Kusuma Kumari “Lower and Middle Paleolithic Assemblages from Komatigunta near Sri Kalahasti of Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh. M.sc dissertation, S.V University, Tirupati).

## **5. Kothapalem**

The lower and Middle Paleolithic site at Kothapalem is situated 5 km. south of Renigunta located on the side of the road leading towards Papanayadupeta and close to Veligonda hill ranges. The main water source being the naturally formed ponds and the artifactual scatters are found on the river terrace. Hand axes, cleavers, choppers, chopping tools, flakes, blades, borers and points include the major tools discovered, made mostly of quartzite and quartz.

## **6.Mittakandriga**

This place is situated 6 km north-east of Nayudupet on the Nayudupet-Tada bus route. Paleolithic and Mesolithic tools were found at four localities locus I (MTK-I) is situated on the southern side, while the locus-II (MTK-II) is found at the northern bank of the Mittakandriga reservoir. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> loci (MTK-III and (MTK-IV) are found on the southern and northern borders of a small pond which is located on the north-eastern side of Mittakandriga reservoir. The tool assemblage found at all the localities comprised of both cultures. The tools at MTK-I include flakes, scraper, biconcave scraper, concave scraper, side scraper, convex scraper, borer, notch, a broken blade, denticulate blade and burin. At MTK-II the tools consist of an ovate elongated bifacial hand axes, flakes concave scraper, borer, side scraper and blade. MTK-III comprises choppers, unifacial hand axes,

miniature hand axes, flakes, side flakes, and flakes with retouch, covergent scraper, chip, side scraper and straight scraper. MTK-IV is characterized by chopper, chopping tools and flakes. (IAR 1962-63, A Review)

## **7. Nalugukallamantapam**

This Paleolithic site is located in a half kilometer distance from Nalugukallamantapam 2.5 km to the west of the Kalahasti-Pichatur road. A small tank Vaddollacheruvu is located one kilometer north-east of the site close to Nagari hills. Quartzite is the chief raw material utilized for the manufacture of tools and the assemblage consists of hand axes, cleavers, choppers and chopping tools of the Lower Paleolithic period. The Middle Paleolithic tools comprised of flakes, cores, scrapers, borers, borer-cum-scraper and points and the Upper Paleolithic tool assemblages are blades and cores made through direct percussion method. Stratigraphically, this site shows five distinct layers from top to bottom: Layer 1 of inorganic and organic materials of 7cm. thick. The deposit is of black cotton soil of alluvial type with minute sand particles; Layer 2 contains small sand particles which 30cm. thick; Layer 3 is represented by the formation of murum which comprises river gravel mixed with red clay of ferruginous wash or cupric oxide dust. The gravels are of irregular size and shape of 135cm. thick. The top most parts of the layer comprises a mixture of fine and coarse type of murum which might have formed during a wet phase; Layer 4 is represented by fine pebbly gravel containing regular pebbles of fine variety which is 15cm. thick without tools and Layer 5 is characterized by disintegrated granite rock lying between 172-187cm. down below surface. It ranges from pale yellow to light yellowish white in colour. [D.Chanda Reddy, Lower, Middle and Upper Paleolithic Cultures of Nalugukallamantapam, A.P. M.Sc. Dissertation, S.V. University, Tirupati, 1978.]

## 8. Narlimanukandriga and Ramachandraraothota

The site at Narlimanukandriga is located 7.5 km. to the south-east of Srikalahasti town which is 36 km. to the north-east of Tirupati town. To the north and north-east of this site, there flows a small *nullah* known locally as Kannelakaluva, which is now dry. These two sites were considered as the factory sites as large quantity of artifacts in manufacturing stage were noticed. Quartzite is the chief raw material used at both sites. The artifacts include hand axes, cleavers, choppers, chopping tools and scrapers. The Middle Paleolithic tool types found are scrapers, points and borers and these sites are not far from the Rallakalava located by M.L.K.Murthy. The assemblage consists of blade and burin industry characterized by significantly retouched blades typical of Upper Paleolithic industry. But the burins are less in number. The site at Ramachandrarao Thota consists of a horizon of 5 Layers. Layer1 consists of humus with large amount of organic and inorganic materials. This Layer is of 15cm thick over which lie the brown silt. Layer2 is brown silt of 30cm thick. It is full of loose particles of sand and silt with large amount of sodium and potassium content without implements. Layer3 consists of murum 30cm thick containing loose particles of sand and soil with small pebbles of quartzite. A hand axe made on flake has been found, which may be attributed to the Middle Paleolithic period. Layer4 comprises large boulders and pebbles of quartzite in various shapes and size which is 60cm thick. This is also an implementiferous layer where a hand axe was found in situ. The hand axe is big and pear shaped one made on quartzite probably which belongs to the Lower Paleolithic period and Layer5 is the basal gravel consisting of the disintegrated granite of about 15cm thick.



## 9. Rallakalava

This site is situated 4 km north-west of Renigunta on the Kalahasti road, close to Veddulacheruvu. The tool assemblages of the Early and Middle Stone-Ages were found in the loose gravels as well as from well defined river sections and those of the late Stone-Age from the top of the river-terraces. The river section showed 3 cycles of depositions, such as; deposit of cemented pebbly gravel overlain by a thick deposit of red silt yielding rolled tools of the Early Stone-Age; deposit<sup>2</sup> loose pebbly gravel laid up against the earlier one and capped with yellow silt, yielding a mixed industry of the Early and Middle Stone-age and Deposit<sup>3</sup> of recent origin. Early stone-age tools were found made on quartzite, worked unifacially and bifacial included rastrocarnates, choppers, cleavers, scrapers and hand axes ranging from crude to very fine variety. The Middle Stone-Age assemblages were dominated by scrapers, made on the fine grained quartzite and used as the chief raw material. Late stone-age tools of non-geometric types made of crystal quartz were also found.) (IAR1963-64)

## 10. Renigunta

At Renigunta the Suvarnamukhi river section was investigated by M.L.K. Murthy (1966) and the stone-tool assemblage belongs to the Early stone-age industry, Middle stone-age industry, Upper Paleolithic; a blade and burin industry and non-geometric Mesolithic industry were found. The raw materials utilize different shades, milky quartz and crystal. The blade-flake industry occurs exclusively or mixed up with Microliths in a horizon of fine sandy gravel resting join a thick deposit of reddish brown silt. (An Encyclopedia of India Archaeology vo.II.)

## **11. Sambaiahpalem**

It is situated 7 km west of Srikalahasti town. The Lower Palaeolithic tools found at this site consist of hand axes, cleavers, choppers, chopping tools and worked nodules. The Middle Paleolithic tools are flakes, blades, cores, scrapers, points and borers. These tools are made on quartzite. Percussion and pressure techniques were employed in the manufacture of Upper Palaeolithic tools. The strata observed at Sambaiahpalem consist of 4 layers. Layer<sub>1</sub> consists of humus of recently formed red soil and brown silt of 12cm thick; Layer<sub>2</sub> is a small gravel deposit of 7cm.thick which might have formed in the process of aggradation as such small pebbles got deposited. They are loosely packed with silt in between them. The layer did not yield any implement; Layer<sub>3</sub> is a laterite deposit, 13-15cm. thickness. Particles are small, of irregular shape and brown in colour. Perhaps formed in the Early Pleistocene times and Layer<sub>4</sub> consists of bed rock without implements, 30-35cm.thick.

## **12. Suvarnamukhi**

It is a part of the river bed showing the occurrence of vast Paleolithic clusters. Hand axes, flakes, choppers, chopping tools of Lower Paleolithic; points, notches, chips, cores and scrapers of Middle Paleolithic and blades and notches of Upper Paleolithic cultures were noticed made on quartzite.

## **13. Sanambatl**

The Lower and Middle Paleolithic site Sanambatl is situated 16km south-west of Tirupathi town. The Lower Paleolithic tool

types are hand axes, cleavers, choppers, and chopping tools of Acheulian culture. On the basis of geographical evidence and sea-level changes in the peninsula, the Acheulian industry encompasses a period ranging from the Late Middle Pleistocene to Early Upper Pleistocene of 1.5 lakh years to 50,000 years B.P. The Middle Paleolithic tool types are flakes, cores, flakes-cores, scrapers, and points. The climate was slightly better than that of the Lower Paleolithic period. The stratigraphy consists of 3 layers; Layer 1 is the humus measuring 20cm thick; Layer 2 is a pebbly gravel measuring 10cm thick, without any artefacts followed by a layer 3 of disintegrated granite forming the bed rock up to unknown depth. The artefacts made on quartzite of various colours from light brown, dark brown were utilized for tools. (T. Eswar Prasad, Lower and Middle Palaeolithic cultures of Sanambatl in Chittoor district, A.P., M.Sc Dissertation, S.V. University, Tirupathi, 1984.)

#### **14. Tirupathi Airport Area**

Here four localities were noticed. Locality 1 consists of Lower Paleolithic tools like hand axes, cleavers, choppers, and chopping tools. Locality 2 consists of 127 Middle Paleolithic artefacts like scrapers, notches, borer, miniature hand axes, choppers and cleavers. Locality 3 consists of 47 Upper Paleolithic artifacts which include a variety of blades, scrapers, flakes and cores. Locality 4 is characterized by the occurrence of Mesolithic tools of flakes, blades, cores, scrapers, points and lunates.

#### **15. Tirupati-Tirumala**

This is a foot hill area found between Tirupati town-ship towards the Kalyani dam reservoir. It has been explored intensively and

a number of loci have been plotted. Some of them are Locus. Surrounding the Kendriya Sanskrit Vidhyapeet; Locus 2 Water store well area; Locus 3 is excavated area of some constructional work by S.V. University from these three different Loci, 115 Paleolithic specimens have been collected. All these specimens are heavy, very massive and hard to lift. They might have been used as Anvil stones. Quartzite and quartz are used as raw materials. (J.S. Jayaraj, Early hunter-gatherer adaptations in the Tirupati Valley, South India).

#### **16. Ubbaracheruvu**

This site belongs to the early and middle Stone Age. There are rock paintings near Ubbaracheruvu in Nagalapuram hills. The rock paintings rendered in white pigment, depicting the human figures in scenes of dancing and riding on horse-backs may belong to the Mesolithic period.

#### **17. Vedullacheruvu**

The Stone Age site near Vedullacheruvu is located north-east of Renigunta. The tool assemblages made on fine-grained quartzite, quartz and chert comprises blades, points, a few burins and lunates. This river yielded stratified deposits of early and middle Stone Age tools as well as Microliths. Thus, the discovery of this typical blade industry makes one of the important Stone Age sites in India, where a full sequence within the old stone-age may be obtained (IAR. 1964-65).

## **18. Vottimanugadda**

The Mesolithic site at Vottimanugadda is located on the western bank of the river Suvarnamukhi about 1.5km where the river Suvarnamukhi passes under the Madras-Mumbai railway bridge which is to the extreme east of Renigunta. This site measures about 100sq. mt. exclusively of Mesolithic artifacts.

## **Conclusion**

About 80 pre-historic sites were noticed in Chittoor district. It is known to be one of the richest regions for Stone-age sites with a variety of artifacts represented, discovered by a number of scholars from time and occurred in a multi-cultural context such as the Lower Paleolithic and Middle Paleolithic scatters at one place. Similarly, Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic cultures also occur together. Site dimensions indicate that human groups occupied small areas near water sources. It is interesting to note that most of the sites of all periods are associated with red soils. Quartzite and chert are associated with red soils. Quartzite and chert are used as raw materials for manufacture of these tools. Rock paintings found near Ubbaracheruvu in Nagalapuram hills belong to the Mesolithic period Sanambatla is the site only which encompasses a period ranging from Late Middle Pleistocene to Early Upper Pleistocene belonging to 1.5 lakh years to 50,000 years B. P. No skeletal remains have been reported so far from any of these sites. The distributions of pre-historic sites in Chittoor district are given in the table.

## APPENDIX

Site	Taluk	River/Hill	period
Agraharam			LP
Akkurti	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalava-R	LP
Ammacheruvu	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalava-R	LP
Anjanadri Seshachalam	Srikalahasti	Seshachalam-H L	P/MP/ UP/ MCS
Aravandlapalle			LP/MP/ MCS
Avulapalle			LP/MP
Bhahadur Venkatapuram	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalava-R	LP
Battavallam	Satyavedu		LP/MP/ UP
Bopataiahkonda		Hills lopes	
Chandragiri	Chandragiri	Suvarnamukhi-R	LP
Chillakuru	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi-R	LP/MP
Chinnamanupeta			LP/MP
Chintalapalayam	Srikalahasti		LP/MP

Chintaparti			LP
Chittathur	Srikalahasti	Kalangi-R	LP/MP
Diguvametta	Srikalahasti		LP
Doravarichatram	Saluripeta		
Ellampalli			LP/MP
Ellapalli	Chittoor	Bahuda& Pinch-R	
Empedu	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalava-R	MP
Gangalapudi		Yarlapudikalava-R	
Gollapalli	Chandragiri	Kalyani-S Seshachalam-H	MP
Gidimallam	Srikalahasti	Sitakaluva-S	LP
Guravarajupalli		Venkakalva-S	LP
Isakatagati	Srikalahasti		MP
Jangalapalli	Chittoor		
Jinkalamitta	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi-R	LP/ MP/UP
Jokandriga		Nagari Hills	LP

Srikalahasti	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi-R	MP
Kalampalli		Yarlapudi Kalava	UP
Kannambakkam	Srikalahasti		LP/MP
Komatigunta		Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Korlagunta	Chandragiri	Kalyani	UP/MP
Kothapalem	Chandragiri	Kalyani	UP/MP
Kothakandriga		Kalyani	LP/MP
Kupudu	Nagari		LP
Kurakalva	Chandragiri	Peddavagu	LP/MP
Lalapet	Venkatagiri	Peddavagu	LP
Madavapakkam	Srikalahasti		LP
Mallavaram	Chandragiri	Peddavagu	MP
Manchinnelagunta	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Manulapeta and Endrapalli		Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Maratavandlapalle			LP/MP
Marlapakacheruvu	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP



Mekalavanipalle			LP/MP
Mittakandriga	Srikalahasti	Mittakandriga	LP/ MP/ UP/ME
Mittamidi Kandriga	Srikalahasti	Sitakalva	LP
Moderimbedu	Srikalahasti		LP
Muddamudi	Srikalahasti	Yerlapudikalva	LP
Nallagundla			MP/UP
Nalugukalla mantapam		Kamellakalva	LP/MP/ UP
Narlimanukandriga	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP/ UP
Nayakkapalem	Nagari		LP
Obulayapalli	Srikalahasti	Yerlapudikalva	LP
Pallam	Srikalahasti	Yerlapudikalva	LP
Panguru	Srikalahasti	Yerlapudikalva	LP
Parlapalli	Thottambedu	Kothapalem Tank	UP/MP
Parthapalli	Thottambedu	Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP

Patagunta	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudi	LP
Payanuru	Palamaneru		LP
Pilleru			LP/MP
Ramachandra othota	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi	LP
Renigunta	Chandragiri	Duvvali	LP
Sambaiahpalem	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Sanambatta	Chandragiri	Peddavagu	LP/MP
Siddigunt		Yarlapudikalva	LP
Sirsanambedu	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalva	LP
Sitarampeta	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalva	LP/MP
Suritipalle			
Sivasankarapuram	Srikalahasti	Foot Hills	LP
Tikkalathuru		Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Timmayyagunta		Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Tirupati (Airport Area3 sites)	Chandragiri	Kalyani Reservoir Foot hills	LP

Thottambedu	Srikalahasti	Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP
Ubbaracheruvu		Nagalapuram Hills	LP/MP
Vaddivarikandriga	Srikalahasti	Rannellakalva	LP/UP
Venkakalva		Suvarnamukhi	LP
Varavakalva	Kothapalem	Kothapalem Tank	LP
Vaddullacheruvu			LP/MP/ UP/Mes
Vembakhandriga			LP
Vengalampalli	Srikalahasti	Yarlapudikalava	LP
Venkatapuram	Srikalahasti	Velikonda	MP
Voddollacheruvu	Chandragiri	Kalangi	MP/
Vottimanugadda		Suvarnamukhi	LP/MP/ UP/MC
Yarlapudi	Srikalahasti	Kannellakalva	LP

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## SEA-FARING ARYANS

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A careful and unbiased study of certain hymns of the *Rgveda* would make it clear that the Aryans were in touch with the sea in early Rgvedic India. This exercise has indeed pointed out the fallacies in the formulations of some scholars in which they lay down that the Aryans were in no way associated with the sea. While Vivien de Saint Martin totally denies the argument of Aryan knowledge of the sea, A. B. Keith finds no clear indication of Aryan contact with the ocean and sea navigation. Others like F. Max Muller think that the ocean was known to the Rigvedic people. The latter view seems to be reasonable for the river Sarasvati is stated to have reached the sea.

It is important to note that A. Zimmer who is inclined to restrict Aryan knowledge of the sea as far as possible does admit it in one passage of the *Rgveda*<sup>1</sup> and of course later. He suggests that 'samudra' is metaphorically used as of the two oceans<sup>2</sup>, the lower and the upper oceans<sup>3</sup>. In other passages he thinks that the 'samudra' denotes the river Indus when it receives all its Punjab tributaries<sup>4</sup>. Probably this was to circumscribe too narrowly the Vedic knowledge of the ocean which was well known to people who knew the Indus.

The term 'samudra', which literally means gathering of the waters and which make their last journey the major rivers are referred to in the textual data as many as fifty times<sup>5</sup>. The mention of the rivers flowing into the ocean vividly indicates high seas.

It, however, cannot be denied that in some expressions, the term 'samudra' also stands for vast mountainous lakes giving rise to streams and rivers<sup>6</sup>.

The Rgvedic people were not indifferent to trade, though they were living in a plural society, as both pastorals and agriculturists. The chief articles of trade were probably cloth, coverlets and skins. Trade was largely in the hands of *panis*, probably non-Aryans. It consisted chiefly of barter. The standard unit of value was the cow. But gold necklets (*niska*) were also used as a means of exchange. The *niska* was a piece of metal possessing a definite weight. It is likely that the *niska* might not have possessed all the marks of a regular coin. But it must have clearly prepared the way for the use of coined money. The references in the later Vedic texts to the *golden mana* by some scholars may be identified with the old Babylonian weight unit which may show that Vedic India had contacts with distant lands beyond the sea. Keith and Macdonell view that *mana* as a measure of weight was equivalent to *krsnala* or *raktika*, that is the berry of the Gunja (*abrus precatorious*). It occurs in the compounds in the later *Samhitas* and *Brahmans*<sup>7</sup>.

That some of the Rgvedic settlements were bordered on the sea is quite evinced from certain hymns of the *Rgveda*. The association of Varuna and the twin gods Asvins with the sea highlights the intimate connection of the Aryans with the latter<sup>8</sup>. Varuna and Vasistha are described as sailing in the mid-oceans in the same boat. Some ships are referred to in the *Rgveda* fitted with a hundred oars. Noticeably, such big ships cannot be considered to have been constructed for making fun or ordinary travelling. One can, however, safely conclude that these ships served the purpose of carrying goods for long trade.

Further prayers offered to get treasures of the oceans are very significant and meaningful. To earn the treasures of oceans may not only refer to pearls but also gains from high trade activities. Again the trade in sea could have resulted in accumulation of major wealth<sup>9</sup>. Facing high tidal waves lashing the coast leaves no doubt that the Aryans were very familiar with the oceans geographically and economically both. Sometimes, the Aryan adventures in the sea brought about great disaster affecting their lives. The afflicted people are referred to in the *Rgveda* to have been rescued by the mansion of Asvins<sup>10</sup>.

The sea-faring activities or marine navigation of the Aryans, which they seem to have taken as one of the chief professions may be represented in the story of Bhujyu, son of Tugra<sup>11</sup>. Bhujyu is mentioned to have undertaken a journey of three long days and nights in the ocean<sup>12</sup>. Very unfortunately, the ship, he was travelling in, was wrecked. But to his great fortune, he could reach the coast quite safely only by the grace of Asvins. The Asvins are said to have shipped Bhujya from mid sea to the coast. Then he was taken in a chariot to his distant home<sup>13</sup>.

Long journey in the sea, ships having a hundred oars—naturally big ships for big purposes, prayers for wealth through sea, facing high tidal waves lashing the coast and help to the afflicted people by the sea god Asvins and his mansion all make it convincingly clear that there was sea trade activity during the Rgvedic time and it had achieved a higher status during the later Vedic period.

Again prayers offered to the god Soma for the possession of the entire earth with all its four oceans clearly indicate lust of the worshipper for material gains. Material gains from the oceans could have had only through trade activities which are exposed here in an indirect way. The importance of sea or sea trade in the life of the Aryans was so relevant that they have associated

several divinities with the former. Varuna<sup>14</sup> and the twin gods Asvins<sup>15</sup> are considered as significantly associated with the sea. Varuna is said to arrive with water of the sea as fire arrives from the earth and as the winds arrive from the sky. The god Asvins are said to take care of the people in distress of the sea. Saving the life of Bhujyu in a ship-wreck-accident by Asvins may be cited as an appropriate example of their taking good care of people during a sea voyage. The third divinity to be associated with the sea relates to Maruts, the collective gods, who are said to cause rains by lifting vapour water from the sea. The god Agni is said to be in connection with marine fire and Indra with the digging of estuaries. But these two are occasionally associated with the sea. The reference to winds blowing in both the eastern and western<sup>16</sup> sea is very significant. R. N. Nandi<sup>17</sup> opines that the eastern sea probably in this case was the Arabian Sea off the coast of Sindh and Gujarat. Further, he says that the western sea on the other hand may refer to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. This may as well be suggestive of the south west monsoon which operates in both these tracts.

The substantial data, furnished by the bardic composers on sea crafts and sea faring activities of the Aryans may be observed in the evidence of marine crafts fitted with a large number of oars upto hundred (sataritrah), ropes and wheels for rolling up and loosening of sail or anchors<sup>18</sup>. There can hardly be any doubt about the coastal navigation of the Aryans. There is a frequent mention of sails which are compared to moving swans on their golden wings.

Much repeated statement of the western Vedists alludes to many of the earliest Indo-Aryans coming to India through Iran and Afganistan. R. N. Nandi states that one of the routes from Iran to India would surely be along the Persian Gulf coast and the Makran coast through to the mouth of the Indus and the Rann of Kutch<sup>19</sup>.



The two Dasa chiefs, Yadu and Turvas are also described in the *Rgveda* to arrive from a far away after having crossed the sea safely<sup>20</sup>. This far away country, says R. N. Nandi would be either South Central Asia or Iran<sup>21</sup>. The Iranian connection of the Yadu and Turvas appears to be more appropriate. They are said to have settled down on the bank of an unnamed river which was agricultural land. The settlement of Turvas would be somewhere around Harappa, if his own place Hariyupia could be identified with the former. When the Iranian chief Tirindir captured the wealth of the Yadu family, out of humiliation Yadu is said to have left Iran in search of a safer spot in neighboring south Asia. All these may have been an epic adaptation of the Yadu episode finding mention in the *Rgveda*.

Michel Vitzier<sup>22</sup> assigns the first *mandal* of the *Rgveda* bearing much information to sea and sea trade, to the period 1900–1750 BC. R. N. Nandi has also many arguments about considering some of the *mandalas* in about 2000 BC. One, however, needs to reconsider the traditional date of the *Rgveda* i.e. 1500 – 1000 B.C. in a very liberal and comprehensive approach, but copious references afore mentioned leave no doubt that the Vedic Aryans were not only familiar with the sea, but also were indulged in the sea trade activities on a huge scale.

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1. *Rgveda* (hereafter RV), VII, 95.2
2. *Ibid*, X.136.5, cf, *Atharva Veda*, XI. 5.6
3. RV, VII.6.7; X. 98.5
4. *Ibid*, 1.71.7; III.36.7; V.85.6
5. *Ibid*, III.36.6, VI.19.15, VIII.6.4
6. *Ibid*, IV.58.5
7. *Taittiriya Samhita*, IV.4.10.1, *Satpatha Brahmana*, V.4.3.24; *Taittiriya Brahmana*, 1.37.7, VII.6.2

8. RV, V.55.5, VI.58.3
9. *Ibid*, I.47.6, VII.6.7, IX.97.44
10. *Ibid*, VII.68.7
11. *Ibid*, I.112.6, 20; VI.62.6, VII.68.7, X.40.7
12. *Ibid*, I.116.4
13. *Ibid*, I.116.2
14. RV, VII.88.3
15. *Ibid*, I.116.5
16. RV, X.136.9
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## KANCHIPURAM IN SANGAM LITERATURE

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The features of Kanchi city have been mentioned in Sangam literature. Its poems bear witness to the creation of considerable secular art and architecture<sup>1</sup>. *Ettuthohai*, *Pathupattu*, *Silapathikaram* and *Manimekalai* describe the domestic buildings of Kanchi city in their poems which gives us a clear picture of the architecture of that period. The plan of the town was well laid. The town was, for a long time, a well-formed one. The above sources give us its state or lay-out during the early part of the Christian era.

The city was exceedingly picturesque; the roads were broad and planted with fine coconut avenues, and there were many *topes* or clusters of trees affording shelter to the weary pilgrims. It was interconnected by roads<sup>2</sup>.

In *Pattinapalai* a broad street is also called *avanam*. The streets were wide and stately for chariots to pass easily. The streets were very wide; however, they were damaged by the passage of chariots. This is beautifully mentioned in *Perumpanattrupadai* as given below.

றிண்டேர்குழித்தகுண்டுநெடுந்தெருவிற்

*Perumpanattrupadai* (397)

The main road was the royal highway, which probably crossed the town and connected it with other cities of the country. There was a busy market place in the centre and big houses lined the

market street on both sides<sup>3</sup>. P.K Achariya mentions it separately in his dictionary of Hindu architecture where he explains it as the public road, the broad street, a road which runs round a village or town also called *mangalaveethi* or *rathaveethi*<sup>4</sup>.

According to the Kanchipuranam, the city had many wells for curd, milk, ghee, honey, sugarcane, and also magic wells (wells that did not reflect the face or shadow). Totally, eleven types of wells were found in the great city of Kanchi. An ancient sesame oil *chekku* was also found in the city of Kanchi. In ancient times, Kanchi was a centre of the sesame oil business of that time<sup>5</sup>.

The residential quarters were divided into *sirukudi* and *perunkudi*<sup>6</sup>. The common people's quarters was called *sirukudi*. The wealthy people quarters was called *perukudi*. According to a Tamil work of about the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, called *the Perumpannatrupadai* the city of Kanchipuram had, at its centre, the Brahmin quarters, where neither dog nor fowl was allowed. Around these were located the street of the *Valaiyars* or fishermen and *Vanigars* or traders, for these two classes were the chief servers for temple-worship, the former being always the bearers of God's vehicles and drawers of cars, etc, and the latter supplying the articles required for God's worship.

Next to these came the *Cheris* or street of *Ulavars* or the *Mallas*, *Pallis* or cultivating *Sudras*, and of *Kalledu Magalir* or drawers of toddy. Close to the streets of the *Ulavars*, were the temple and the palace of King Antiraivan II. At some distance from this street and at an end of the city were the lodgings of the *Idayans* or cowherds and outside these again, and far removed, were located the *Paracheries*, with their huts<sup>7</sup>.

From the *Perumbanattrupadai*, we gather that the common man's residence consisted of a thatched hut, covered with woven grass or leaves and supported by poles. They were probably enclosed by mud walls and plastered. But the wealthy had multi storied mansions built of burnt bricks, the ceilings being covered with flat tiles and plastered. Within the houses there was a courtyard, surrounded by the walls, the verandahs of which would have opened into the interior rooms used for many purposes, like bed rooms, and kitchen, rooms for sport, store rooms and others. The big and spacious houses had many windows looking onto the street. The roof above the houses had a balcony. A rich city abounding in sky-kissing high mansions is mentioned in *Perumpanattupatai* as below:

**விண்பொரநிவந்தவேயாமாடத்**

*Perumpanattrupatai-348*

"The high mansions were built by architects well versed in their science" says *Nedunalvadai*, one of the Ten Idylls. They were white coloured with terraces and buttresses. The king's palace was at the centre of the city, guarded by soldiers. The roads on both sides were lined by white washed mansions, the upper windows of which opened onto them. Mansions were extensive buildings fitted with inner apartments and outer terraces. They were many storied buildings with attic rooms, terraces, arches, balconies, courtyards, *tiððai*, and high doors opening on the roof, jointed with beams. Apart from the mansions some public halls, water tanks and rows of trees useful for the rest of the public are mentioned in *Manimekalai* as given below.

**முதுமரஇடங்களும்துநீர்த்துறைகளும்  
பொதியிலும்மன்றமும்பொருந்துபநாடி  
காப்புஉடைமாநகர்க்காவலும்கண்ணி**

*Manimekalai-XIX-121-24*

Tamil literature gives us information about the different types of houses used by the people in the olden days and its gives various names such as *Nilaiamaadam*,<sup>8</sup> *Malaipuraimaadam*,<sup>9</sup> *Nedunilaimaadam*,<sup>10</sup> *Veyamaadam*,<sup>11</sup> *Mukilthoiyemaadam*,<sup>12</sup> *Mankulthoimaadam*<sup>13</sup>. The word *maadam* means storied building. The word *mukil* and *mankul* means cloud. *Nedunilaimaadam* means a very high building. The word *veyamaadam* means an open terrace of the upper storey. It is apparent that in ancient times, the people of Kanchi lived in many storied houses. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar mentions the *Nedunilaimaadam* in his book “Studies in Tamil Literature and History”.

Houses were further furnished with water fountains and pipes and in the hot weather rich people passed the summer by retiring to the cool rooms fitted with benches of costly stone. Some of these baths were artificial reservoirs of water which could be filled and emptied at the well. There were also artificial mounds of stone and sand where the rich people would spend some time. It has been beautifully described as below in *Silpathikaram*

பொதியிற்குன்றத்துக்கற்கால்கொண்டு

*Silpathikaram-XV-122*

Red bricks were used for constructing the houses. The word *suduman* means burnt brick. This is also mentioned in *Perumpanatrupadai* as below:

சுடுமணோங்கியநெடுநகர்வரைப்பி

*Perumpanatrupadai-405*

The street houses of Kanchipuram in ancient times were made mostly of white lime plaster. The row of white colour houses looked like the waves of the Palar River. Some storied buildings

also were made of white lime plaster. Storied buildings looked like a big mountain sheltered by the water of the Ganga River. The word *vinpalaru* means the river of Ganga<sup>14</sup>. The row houses which existed in ancient Kanchipuram have been beautifully described in *Kanchipuranam*

பாலியேமுத்லபலநதித்திவலைபாய்ந்தழகின்  
பாலவாயமானிகை அடித்தலத்தினைப்பாராப்  
பாலவெண்சுதைமாடமேற்சிகரமும்பனிவின்  
பாலியாற்றுநீர்த்திவலைகள்போர்ப்பவான்படமும்  
(*Kanchipuranam- II, 71*)

Gemstones was also beautifully described in *Kanchipuranam*

இருசுடர்ப்பெருஞ்சிலைகளின்இயன்றமாளிகைகள்  
உருகுவெங்கதிர்தடவரச்சூடுகனல்உமிழும்  
அருகுதண்கதிர்தடவரச்சூளிர் புனல்அளிக்கும்  
மருவினோர்குணம்பிடிபடல்வையகத்தியல்பே  
(*Kanchi puranam-II, 74*)

The word *irusuder* (இருசுடர்) means two kinds of gemstones like sun stone and moon stone. The sun stone and moon stone were used for building construction materials during ancient times in Kanchipuram. Sun stones produce heat during the solar eclipse. Moon stones produced a cooling effect during the lunar eclipse<sup>15</sup>.

Marble was commonly used for building construction for storied houses in ancient Kanchipuram. Marble keeps the surroundings cool.<sup>16</sup> In wealthy family houses, the top floor room was made of polished marble. It has been described in *Kanchipuranam*

பளிக்குமேல்நிலைத்தந்நல்லார்பணைமுலைமுங்கத  
(*Kanchi puranam-II, 81-1*)

Country wood, the tree which grew around one's home were cut and was used where necessary for beaming, columns, and for doors. Teak wood is described as

வெண்சோறுபுகர் அதைத்தேக்கின் அகல்இலைமாந்தும்  
*Agananuru-(107-10)*

Some specific colours were also used in the wall. Saffron, turmeric, *terminalia chebula* (kadukkai), vermilion, are also the natural dyes produced<sup>17</sup>.

பாசிலையழித்தபரா அரைப்பாதிரி  
வள்ளிதழ்மாமலர்வயிற்றிடைவகுத்தத  
னுள்ளகம்புரைமூட்டுறுபச்சைப்  
*(Perumpanattrupadai, 4-6)*

The word *pacchai* means green colour. The green colour dye was prepared in the inside of the *pathiri* flower.

கானக்குகுமிழின்கனிநிறங்கடுப்ப  
புகழ்வினைப்பொலிந்தபச்சை  
*(Sirupanatrupadai-225-6)*

Tamil literature also gives us an idea about the drainage system. The word *tumpu* means sluice outlet. The word *surunkai* means underground channel. The drainage pipes were very long and look like an elephant trunk. The way of the outlet water pipes were sometimes constructed with stone.

அருவிசொரிந்ததிரையின்துரந்து  
நெடுமால்சுருங்கைநடுவழிப்போந்து  
கடுமாகளிறு அணைத்துக்கைவிடுநீர்போலும்  
*Paripadal—105*



The above description gives us a lucid picture of the ancient city of Kanchipuram as it existed then. The great city of Kanchipuram had houses with lots of traditional motifs. All houses in Kanchipuram were suited to the tastes and requirements of the different classes of people. Typical houses were designed by the occupants according to their occupation which had real use in their work. From the various sources in the Sangam literature we can get a comparative idea of how the different class of people lived in the ancient city of Kanchipuram.

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## TRADE DURING THE SANGAM AGE AS DEPICTED IN SANGAM LITERATURE

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*In the history of the Tamils, the Sangam age is a mile stone. Sangam literature is a body of writings which reflects the of political, social and economic life of the people of that time. The period also witnessed the rise of political, social and economic institutions and wider expansion into other parts of the world for economic wellbeing and enterprises. The kings and chieftains referred to in Sangam literature, who ruled in their respective domains, patronised merchants and developed trade for their economic prosperity. There are ample evidences in Sangam literature on the vibrant commercial activities in terms of export, import, markets, port towns, transportation and other allied aspects connected to trade during the Sangam age.*

**Keywords:** Barter, Madurai, Marakkalam, Puhar, Sangam, Tamilaham, Umanar, Yavanas

### **Introduction**

In the history of the Tamils, the Sangam age is a milestone. The Sangam literature is a body of writings which reflects the conditions of the political, social and economic life of the people of that time. The period also witnessed the rise of political, social and economic institutions and wider expansion into other parts

of the world for economic wellbeing and enterprises. The kings and chieftains referred to in Sangam literature, who ruled in their respective domains had patronised merchants and developed trade for their economic prosperity. There are ample evidences in Sangam literature on the vibrant commercial activities in terms of export, import, markets, port towns, transportation and other allied aspects connected to trade during the Sangam age. An attempt has been made in this paper to throw more light on the trading activities of the Tamils during the Sangam age as depicted in literature.

Sangam is a Sanskrit word which means an 'association'. The Tamil Sangam was a body of Tamil scholars or poets, a literary academy, which was established by the Pandyan kings. It flourished at Madurai, on the banks of River Vaigai and earlier at other places (Sangam Polity, 1980: 3). A large number of Tamil poems said to have been composed by the members of that body of poets has come down to us and is collectively known as 'Sangam Literature'. The age in which these poets lived and wrote their literary works is called 'The Sangam Age' (*Ibid.*).

The historians of South India agree that the Sangam age is the period of a few centuries immediately preceding or succeeding the Christian era (Sastri, 1975: 115; Sangam Polity, 1980: 26, 351-352). The literature of this period is found grouped as eight anthologies and *pattupattu* (Ten Idylls).<sup>1</sup> The entire collection includes 2,279 poems of lengths varying from three lines to over eight hundred by 473 poets (including some women) besides 102 anonymous pieces.

During the Sangam age, the Tamilnadu was divided among the three 'Crowned Kings' of the Chera, Chola and Pandya lines and a number of minor chieftains, who according to the political conditions of the time either owned allegiance to or fought for

one or other of these monarchs, or else led an independent existence. Seven of these chieftains gained particular recognition from the poets for their liberal patronage of literature and the arts and are described as *vallas* (patrons) (Sastri, 1975: 117).

As the sea is surrounded on the three sides of the Tamilaham, the Tamils were able to enter into more vigorous commercial activities during the Sangam age (Venkatasamy, 1974: 32). The location of Tamilnadu in Peninsular India is nature's gift and enabled them to embark up on overseas contacts and reap rich benefits. For the convenience of discussion the paper is divided into inland trade, coastal trade, Asiatic trade and foreign trade. The Sangam literature throws a lot of light on this brisk inland and foreign trade which was well organised and are carried on throughout the period.

### **Inland trade**

Abundance of produce of all sorts of goods brought about a new class of people for buying and selling. They are called as 'merchants' and thrived in the society. They were involved in the movement of goods from production centres to markets especially the basic needs of the people (*Ibid.* 13). Internal trade was carried on by the local people. It was of two types, local and inland. Articles of daily use were carried to the local markets on carts and head loads. Articles were sold at doorsteps also. Most of the trade was carried on by barter (Sangam Polity, 1980: 243). Paddy constituted the most commonly accepted medium of exchange, especially in the more rural parts of the land. Well purified white salt was sold for paddy, which was sold by mentioning its price in terms of salt (*Pattinappalai*: 29-30; *Kurundogai*: 269). Honey and roots were exchanged for fish (liver oil) and arrack. Sugarcane and rice flakes were exchanged for venison and toddy (*Porunar Arrupadai*: 216-217). In the

Pandy land the prosperous housewife whose house was well stocked with white paddy who poured that grain into the basket of shepherdess who had brought venison (*Ibid.* 33). The house wife exchanged green grams for the thorny fish of the minstrel in which the wandering bard had brought the fish (*Aingururnuru*: 48). It is noteworthy that the system of purchasing food stuffs, especially vegetables from street hawkers by paying them in rice or in paddy still continues to a large extent in the rural areas. A different type of barter which can be called 'deferred exchange' was known as *kuri edirppai* which means taking a loan of a fixed quantity of a commodity to be repaid as the same quantity of the same commodity at a later date (*Purananuru*: 163). This practice mostly prevailed in the villages or rural areas (Venkatasamy, 1974: 13). In ancient times, the barter system was practiced not only in Tamilnadu but also in many parts of the world. In view of the wide prevalence of the system of barter, it may be supposed that coins were used for buying mostly costly items and for the buying of foreign goods.

Apart from the local trade, the people of the Sangam age carried their trading activities with the north of India both by land and sea routes (*Ibid.* 56). They had trade relations with Nellore, Kalingapattinam, Ujjain, Kasi, Pataliputra and Tamralapati (a port in Bengal). It is attested in the Sangam literature (*Natrinai* : 189.5; Venkatasamy, 1974: 38). From the earliest times, the pearl of the Pandyan kingdom has been a much desired article in the kingdoms of the Gangetic valley (Sangam Polity, 1980: 247-248). The *Arthasastra* of Kautilya mentions some commodities that were brought from the land of the Pandyas such as *Pandyakavataham* ( a kind of pearl) and *Maduram*, a kind of cotton fabric from Madurai<sup>2</sup>. A number of commodities such as conch shell, gems, diamonds, pearl and gold ornaments found their way to Pataliputra as referred in the *Arthasastra* (*Balasubramanian, 1994: 280-281*). Thus, there was a healthy

and prosperous commercial contact between Tamilaham and other centres of north India and the mercantile community reaped rich benefits through trade as attested to in the literature (Srinivasa Iyengar, 1929: 124-128).

### **Coastal trade**

From Tamilaham there were better trade links with all the major ports of the Indian Subcontinent. Generally natural products and a few produced goods were in great demand and carried from one port to another depending on the surplus. On the Peninsular coast, the ports of Puhar, Korkai, Vanchi, Musiri, Naura (Cannore) and Thondi (Ponnani) played a major role in the operation of coastal trade. *Periplus* talks about Cape Comorin, Kamara (Kaveripoompattinam) Poducca (Arikamedu) and Soapmata (Marakkanam) as the vibrant ports during the Sangam age (Sastri, 1939: 219-220). The pearls of the eastern coast reached Uraiyur in the interior. The articles of trade were dress materials, palm leaves, food grains, and gold ornaments (Jambulingam, 1991: 15). The ships from Tamilnadu carried the cargo to the ports of Nellore, Kalingapattanam, Tamralipti and disposed the merchandise (Venakatasamy, 1974: 38). They also reached the Ganges and traded with the ports of Varanasi (Kasi) and Pataliputra as attested to in the *Natrinai* (*Natrinai: 189.5*). The Tamil merchants traded with the kingdom of Kalinga and exported goods from Tamilaham and in return brought various commodities from there. The major item was cotton textiles and termed as textiles of Kalinga (*Kalingattu Thuni*) (Venkatasamy, 1974: 39-40). The next item was sandal stone.

Since ancient times there existed commercial contacts between the Telugu land and Tamil merchants. They traded with Amaravati, the centre of Buddhism. In the establishment of a *stupa* there, the Tamil merchants who traded with Amaravati gave financial

support. There is a reference about this in the inscription that was carved in a pillar (*Ibid.* 40). Now it is in the London Corporation Museum.

## **Sri Lanka**

From time immemorial there was trade contact between ancient Tamilaham and Sri Lanka because of the close proximity between them. The merchant association called as *Vanikachattu* had visited Anuradhapura, the then capital of Sri Lanka for trading purpose in the second century BCE as stated in an inscription (*Ibid.*). Though there is no reference about the Tamil merchant's trade with Sri Lanka in the Sangam literature but there is some information on Tamil traders in the Sri Lankan literature (*Ibid.* 41-42). There was horse trading between Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka (Sastri, 1939: 41). The products of Sri Lanka were purchased by the Romans in the ports of Tamilaham (Balasubramanian, 1994 : 284). Thus, there existed a lively trade contact between the two places.

## **Asiatic trade – trade with Southeast Asian Region**

In Asiatic waters, there was a lively commercial contact between Tamilaham and the Southeast Asian region. The Indonesian archipelago (East Indies) was the major centre of trade. The Tamil merchants called this group of islands as Java and reached it by crossing the Bay of Bengal (Venkatasamy, 1974: 42). It encompasses the modern islands of Sumatra, Kalimantan (Borneo), Celebs and other islands. It was the world reputed trade centre in those days because of its location between India and China. The best varieties of spices were available in these places. Apart from spices, there was a lively trade in sandal wood between Tamilaham and Java. Further, cloves, mace, camphor and coral were brought to Tamilnadu. At Java the Tamil traders purchased



silk from the Chinese merchants and sold it in the local markets (*Ibid.* 45). Trade with China was carried on through Java and reaped rich benefits. Spices, coral, pepper and cosmetics were the major items exported to China and in return they brought sugar, sugar candy, silk and other products (Srinivasa Iyengar, 1929: 101-102). The ships that sailed to Java from Tamilaham had a halt at Jaffna (Manipallavam) in Sri Lanka. After embarking necessities (food and water) the ships sailed for East Indies (Java) through Andaman and Nicobar (Nagavari – a place of uncivilised). Cotton textiles were the major items of export which were in great demand in Java. Besides textiles, occasionally sugar, sugar candy, rice and other items were exported. The eastern trade beyond Tamilaham with Burma, Malaya, Java, Sumatra and China was mostly in the hands of the Tamils (Sangam Polity, 1980: 249).

### **Trade with Arabia**

The fabulous richness of Tamilaham had attracted a large number of Arabian merchants. They mostly traded with the port city of Musiri in the Chera territory. They named their trading settlement at Musiri as '*Bandar*' means 'Bazaar' in Arabic. Pearls and costly ornaments were sold here and described in the *Padirruppattu* (Venkatasamy, 1974: 57). From the Chera land the Arabs carried bamboo saplings and planted them in their country. Pepper and other spices, costly diamonds, gems and cosmetics from the Chera territory were taken to the Red Sea ports and Alexandria in Egypt for selling to the Greeks and Romans (Srinivasa Iyengar, 1929: 98-100; Balasubramanian, 1994: 287).

For buying the products of Far Eastern countries by the western merchants Tamilaham acted as a transit point. The return cargo

from Arabia consisted of horses, dried fruits and almonds and fetched some demand in the Tamilaham (Venkatasamy, 1974: 58). Thus, there was a brisk and lively commercial contact between Tamilnadu and the Red sea regions during the Sangam age.

## Foreign trade

Tamilaham had carried on an extensive trade with foreign countries from very early times. The great secret of her foreign trade is her possession of certain commodities which have always been in great demand in foreign markets; pepper, ginger and rice among food products; sandalwood, almug among trees; cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and turmeric among stimulating spices; ivory and pearls for luxurious ornaments; gems, cotton fabrics for dress; monkeys, deer and peacocks among favourite domesticated animals and birds; cheetahs and tigers and elephants among wild animals (provided luxuriously soft fur and ivory) (Sangam Polity, 1980: 246-247). These articles had always been associated with Tamilaham and were in great demand in the crowded bazaars of foreign lands.

The most ancient trade contact which Tamilaham had was with the ancient land of the Hebrews as attested by Caldwell<sup>3</sup>. The description of articles show that there were lively contacts between them. The Tamil trade with Greece is amply borne out by the existence in Greek vocabulary of Tamil names of many objects; the Greeks have *oruza* for 'rice' from the Tamil *arisi*; the English 'ginger' is derived from the Latin *zingiber* which was derived from the *ziggiberis* which ultimately is traced to Tamil *injiver* and then Tamil *chiruttai* became 'cheetah' in English. Sandalwood was derived straight from '*sandana* or *sandu*' (Sangam Polity, 1980: 247). These evidences indicate a considerable antiquity for Tamilian foreign trade. The Greeks were called as *yavanas* (Chellam, 1985: 67). Even before the Christian era, the Tamils

were a seafaring people, built their own naval craft and ventured into the ocean with bravery. With the rise of the Hellenistic world the Indo-Yavana trade received momentum (*Ibid.*). Alexandria had emerged as the chief centre of east –west trade and a meeting place of the eastern and western cultures. When the Roman demand for luxuries increased the Indo-Yavana contact became very intense. Textiles, pearls, gold, incense, pepper and sandal found a swift movement towards the west. We find large hoards of Roman gold coins of the Augustan age in many parts of South India which is evidence of the brisk trade between Tamilaham and Rome resulting in the inflow of considerable amount of gold into Tamilaham. Sixty-eight types of Roman coins have been discovered in India. Out of them about fifty-seven types were found from south India alone (*Ibid.* 67). Pliny bitterly remarked that the empire paid nearly one and a half crore of rupees every year to meet the imports from Tamilaham (Sangam Polity, 1980: 248-249).

The direct trade route between Tamilaham and Arabia, Egypt and Rome had been well established by the time of *Periplus* (*Ibid.* 249). One of the most important articles which reached the west from India was cotton and perhaps silk. Both these products were worked up in the factories of Alexandria and sent in exchange for glass, metal ware and probably linen. The Red sea ports were the point up to which the Tamil vessels reached and Alexandria was the point up to which the Roman ships came for trading. The Tamil ports were reached only by Egyptian vessels in which Romans might have arrived (*Ibid.*).

Trade with Rome in the first century BC was so lucrative to the Tamils that the Pandya king sent two ‘embassies’ to Augustus (Rome 20 BCE.) with presents to attend his coronation. After that this trade became very active and extensive due to the success of these embassies. Between the days of the *Periplus Maris*

Erythraei (80 BC) and the days of Ptolemy, the Geographer (first half of the second century BC), trade increased very much (*Ibid.* 249). *Periplus* had given a graphic picture of all the ports with the hinterland from the Red Sea to the east coast of Tamilaham (Chellam, 1985: 68). *Periplus* refers to Tamilaham as 'Damirica' in his narration (Sangam Polity, 1980: 250).

Arikamedu, Puhar, Madurai, Karur, Perur, etc. had Roman colonies. The Yavanas i.e. the Romans (including the Greeks and the Egyptians) came and colonised certain parts of Tamilaham. We hear of the Yavana suburb in Puhar (*Ibid.* 251). They lived in considerable numbers on the west coast and they probably acted as agents for foreign trade. It seems that the foreign merchants maintained a force of cohorts (840 to 1200 men) at Musiri to protect their trade (*Ibid.* 251). There was a temple for Augustus at Musiri which was guarded by soldiers. The Yavanas who permanently settled in the Tamilaham entered into royal service and served as body guards, palace guards and guards in the military camps. They do not seem to have learned Tamil at all. They were brave and fierce-looking and being ignorant of the local tongue and having no local sympathies, constituted ideal gate-keepers (*Mullaipattu*: 59-66). Impressed by the stern discipline of the Roman soldiers, the Tamil kings employed them as guards of the fortress gates (Sangam Polity, 1980: 252).

### **Port towns**

During the Sangam age large scale oceanic trade was conducted with the help of port Towns on both sides of the Peninsular India. The Tamils took to the sea very naturally and had always a great reputation as seafarers. The literature of the Sangam age testifies to the extensive and lucrative foreign trade which Tamilaham had enjoyed. Kolathurai, Eyirpattinam or Sompattinam or Marakkanam, Arikamedu or Poducca, Puhar or

Kaveripoompattinam, Tondi, Marungai, Korkai and Cape Comorin were the major port towns on the eastern coast of Tamilaham used for export and import (*Ibid.* 250-251). Similarly, there were prosperous port towns on the western coast in the Arabian Sea. Ancient Tamilaham had Tulu land as its north western boundary and the ports of Mangalore and Naura were very famous. Further south, the Chera territory was gifted with Tondi, Mandai, Vaigarai, Melkandi and Musiri as port towns (Venkatasamy, 1974: 100-109). Through these ports, the direct and brisk trade between Rome and Tamilaham was carried out. In this, Musiri was as popular as Puhar on the eastern coast in the international trade, located at the confluence of the Periyar river. The major export of this port was 'pepper' and many western merchants came here to purchase (*Ibid.* 105). It was called as 'Muziris' by the Yavanas. With the discovery of monsoons in the 1st century A.D. Yavanas directly reached to the port of Musiri. They brought coral, glass, copper, tin, lead and in return took many Indian products. But the major item was pepper. As it was consumed in large quantities, it was called as 'Yavana Priya' (Venkatasamy, 1974: 107; *Agam*: 149: 8-11). As Musiri was a shallow water port, the big ships did not come near to the port and so the ships were anchored in mid sea and boats were used for the shipment of goods. Not only Greeks and Romans purchased pepper but also everyone in the world wanted this to add taste to their food. This illustrates the importance of pepper in the oceanic trade in the Sangam age. The world famous Musiri was destroyed in 1341 BC due to heavy rains and floods. After that Cochin had emerged an emporium for international trade (Venkatasamy, 1974: 108-109).

The harbour was 'Puhar' or 'Kayavoy'. The *Pattinapalai* gives a fairly detailed description of the harbour of Puhar and the activities there. The harbour was situated not necessarily on the

sea coast but quite possibly on the banks of the river in the estuary especially was a safe harbour even for the bigger ships. They could enter the harbour without removing the cargo or slacking sail; and yet be quite stable, steady and safe. Warehouses for storing the merchandise were built on the beach meant for export. Two kinds of goods (imports and exports) were found stocked in the quay. The chief ports had light houses called *Kalam Karai Vilangu Chudar* – ‘the bright light’ that beckons the ships (*Puram*: 30; Sangam Polity, 1980: 254).

### **Exports**

We get glimpses of foreign trade in the Sangam texts, which include a wide variety of consumer and luxury goods. The Tamils exported a fine variety of textiles, muslin cloth (Uraiyur), black pepper (from the Chera land), gems, diamonds and gold ornaments (from the Deccan and the Gangetic), sandal wood and *ahil* from the western mountains, the pearl of the southern sea, the coral of the western sea, food stuffs from the Kaveri delta, along with other spices like cloves, cardamom and peacock hair, rice, ivory, myrobalan, incense, living animals and birds (Jambulingam, 1991: 15-16; Sangam Polity, 1980: 255). Tamilaham was famous for her gold ornaments which she exported to the west (*Ibid.*). Pliny says that the Roman ladies exposed their charms much too immodestly by clothing themselves in the “webs of woven wind”, as he called the muslins imported from India (Sangam Polity, 1980: 255).

### **Imports**

Tamilaham imported from the Yavana land a wide range of goods which included wine, superior wine glass, gold coins, topaz, thin

clothing, linens, antimony, coral, crude glass, copper, tin, and lead (*Puram*,: 343; *Agam*: 118; Sangam Polity, 1980: 255). The Yavanas introduced many novel wares which soon became very fashionable here. A lamp shaped like a black swan (*Odimam*) was an article in great demand; the peculiarity of this type of lamp was the flame in it did not flicker but was a steady flame; and it was a novelty to the Tamils (*Perumban Arrupadai*: 316-318). Some of these lamps were like statues bearing in their folded palms the *tahali* or the can containing the oil to light the lamp (*Nedunalvadai*: 101-103). The abundance of Roman coins in various centres of Tamilaham speak of the extent of trade with foreign countries.

The direct and brisk trade between Rome and Tamilaham declined during the third century BC because of the growing anarchy in the Roman Empire (Sastri, 1955: 85). While the coins of the previous century are found in abundance in Tamilaham, coins belonging to the third century are rarely to be found. But the trade did not die out, for when Alaric, the Goth levied his war indemnity from Rome in 409 BC his terms included the delivery of 3000 pounds of pepper<sup>4</sup>.

## Markets

During the Sangam age, there were established markets or bazaars called *angadi* in the bigger towns, while elsewhere hawkers brought most of the goods to the doorsteps of the householder (Sangam Polity, 1980: 243). There were two kinds of markets i.e. bazaars in the leading cities like Puhar, Madurai and Kanchi (*Maduraikanchi*: 365; *Sangam Polity*, 1980: 244). *Nalangadi* the day bazaar (morning to evening) and *allangadi* or *andikkadai* (evening bazaar) the evening bazaar ((Sangam Polity, 1980: 244). Always they were busy and vibrant in buying and selling of goods. There were separate bazaars for textiles. In the markets such large

varieties and such large quantities of goods were sold and purchased, and such crowds thronged and busy transactions took place and made the poet Ilango call them, 'The residence of Tirumagal – the Goddess of wealth' (*Silapathigaram*: VI-12; Sangam Polit, 1980: 244). There is a detailed description of the markets in the city of Puhar and Madurai in the *Maduraikkanji* and *Silappadikaram* respectively.

People from different countries speaking many languages crowded the bazaar streets of Madurai and Puhar for purposes of trade selling (*Manimegalai*: III: 95; Sangam Polity, 1980: 245). A very simple type of advertisement was used by which a shopkeeper had his flags waved over his shop and the inscription on the flag announced the commodities sold in the shop (*Maduraikanchi*: 365-373; Sangam Polity, 1980: 245).

### **Merchants**

Surplus production of all sorts of goods brought about a new class of people for buying and selling and called as merchants. In some cases, articles were sold at the centre of manufacture. For example, salt was sold near the salt pans (*Maduraikanchi*: 117; Sangam Polity, 1980: 244). But salt is such a necessary article of consumption that the salt merchants called *Umanar* carried large bags from the saltpans to many places in the carts which had no covering overhead (*Kurinjipattu*: 388; Sangam Polity, 1980: 244). The numerous references to the manufacture and sale of salt make it appear to be a very important object of trade. There were different kinds of traders (*Perumbanatrupadai*: 80-82; Sangam Polity, 1980: 244). (a) The merchants who manufactured and sold at the place of manufacture. (b) The merchants who went about selling the goods – the retailers who were mostly hawkers. Bags of pepper were taken on donkeys



and sold in many places. (c) The third class of traders were those who sold in the established *angadis*. (d) The foreign merchants who were involved in large scale purchase and selling in the major towns of the time.

Generally, industry and the consequent trade were carried on by groups of hereditary craftsmen pursuing their profession at the ancestral work place. There were rare instances of persons of any one caste being engaged in activity not prescribed for their caste. For example, Nakkirar, the poet considered to be a Brahmin was engaged in the conch-cutting industry. Many instances of merchants and traders were poets known (Sangam Polity, 1980: 242). Kannan Puhundarayattanar was a palm leaf (*olai*) seller; Sittalai Sattanar was a seller of millet and grains; Beri Sattanar and Domadarannar were lapidaries (cutting and polishing of stones). It is clear that the leisured and moneyed merchant community was interested in literary activity too (*Ibid.*).

The merchants functioned often in a body. Apart from the tendency to associate as 'guilds' and 'chambers of commerce' the wandering hawkers literally went about in large numbers together. In the Sangam age 'caravans' of traders used to go from place to place as a 'whole group' because they were in mortal fear of high way robbers (*Ibid.* 246). Such merchant bodies were called *Vanikachchattu* (*Ibid.*). Members of the warrior clan were recruited to escort their caravans (*Agam*: 89). In spite of these protective measures, they were not free from danger from robber gangs. From the merchant bodies the kings and chieftains collected toll (Jambulingam, 1991: 15).

The merchants and the traders were prescribed an ideal code of conduct by the *Kural* as follows 'Refuse to take more than your due and never stint giving to others their due' (*Kural*: 100;

Sangam Polity, 1980: 246) It seems that this was not merely an empty advice or a desired ideal but was largely an ideal in practice. The merchants sold their goods by openly announcing the profit they were aiming at. It was believed that honest trade led to increased trade which meant increased wealth, integrity in trade was generally appreciated. As the merchants were able to amass a lot of wealth, they got social recognition and were in turn placed in the social hierarchy next to kings and priests in the society (Jambulingam, 1991: 20-21). The profits of the mercantile community improved the overall standard of living but only added wealth to certain sections of society.

### **Ship-building**

The Tamils took to the sea very naturally and had always a great reputation as seafarers. Ship-building was a native industry in Tamilaham. The ship was called '*Marakkalam*' as it was made of wood (Sangam Polity, 1980: 253). From the small '*Catamaran*' (*Kattumaram*) which was but a raft or float of logs tied side by side to big ocean going ships with mast and sail, all kinds of boats were in use in the Tamil ports. According to *Periplus*, in the harbours of the Chola land large ships made of single logs bound together, called *Sangara* and *Colandia* were used for long oceanic voyages (*Ibid.*). Among the smaller crafts *ambi*, *pahri*, *odam*, *padagu* and *timil* were common varieties. *Ambi* and *padagu* were ferry boats for crossing streams and rivers and *timil* was a fishing boat (*Ibid.*)

It was not unusual for even the ocean going craft to be caught in a storm and be damaged. The Tamils were quite familiar with the harrowing experience of being caught in a storm in mid ocean (*Manimegalai* IV 29 -34; Sangam Polity, 1980: 253). But generally, the sails of the ships helped the vessels to pierce the

stormy waves of the ocean; on board the ships, drums were beaten; and tall flags were waving from the mast, probably to indicate the country to which the ships belonged (*Maduraikanchi*: 77-83; *Pattinapalai*: 173-175; Sangam Polity, 1980: 253). While at harbour the ships were anchored by a thick, long rope to the nether end of which a big stone was attached. Thus, the Sangam Tamils had achieved a great mastery in ship-building and other allied activities in navigation.

### **Transportation**

As the products were produced in different places the merchants and people depended on various means to bring the commodities to the market centres for disposal. Different modes of transport were used for different purpose. The following were some of the types of transport that existed in the Sangam age.

**Mules:** They were brought from outside Tamilaham and called as ‘*Athri*’. It was used as a means for travel by the nobles and rich people. It was termed as the king’s vehicle (Venkatasamy, 1974: 26). It was never used for carrying goods. It was a rich man’s vehicle in the Sangam age.

**Horses:** During the Sangam age horses were imported from Sindh, Persia and Arabia through the sea route. The kings used horses for fighting in the battlefield. Cavalry was one of the wings of the army. Chariots were pulled using horses. Further, kings and rich people used horse-coaches for travel. There are a lot of references to the use of horses in the Sangam literature as a means of travel but not as a means for the movement of goods (*Ibid.* 27).

**Bullock-cart:** For the movement of commodities from production centres to markets and from the port towns to the bazaars bullock-

carts were largely used in the Sangam age. The merchants as a group or caravan had moved their goods from one place to another. It was called as ‘*Vanikachattu*’ with the attendance of soldiers on foot for safety and security on the highways (*Ibid.* 28).

**Donkey:** Small traders and hawkers depended on donkeys for the movement of goods from village to village. Especially in the hilly tracts and ghats, the donkeys were quite useful in carrying goods. Cargo was carried on the back of the donkeys and the merchants travelled as a group to avoid highway robbery along with soldiers (*Ibid.* 29). En route the merchants paid a toll and there were soldiers stationed at the toll gates for the security of the caravan. The Tamil merchants gave importance to omens in the commencement of their business journey. The Sangam literature throws a lot of light on these aspects of Tamilians. Thus, the traders and merchants of the Sangam age had depended on different means for travel and transportation of commodities and earned a lot of wealth in inland and foreign trade.

## **Conclusion**

Sangam literature is the classical literature of the Tamil society. It is a mirror, and reflects the different dimensions of the Tamilnadu roughly for six centuries. Earning through honest means was the basic ideology of Tamil culture. For achieving this goal the Tamils involved in agriculture and trade. But the demand for necessities and luxuries resulted in inland and overseas trade. The inland trade was mostly barter but the foreign trade was well developed and organised because of the inflow of wealth. Except textiles the majority of the goods that were exported from Tamilaham during the Sangam age were natural products. They were in very much demand in other parts of the world and in turn it brought a lot of money to Tamil society. The people who were involved

in the commercial activities were merchants and were able to amass lot of wealth through trade. This enabled them to get social recognition and in turn achieve social mobility in the social hierarchy next to the kings and priests in the society. The profits of trade added wealth only to certain segments of the society especially the merchants. The trade during the Sangam age had witnessed the flow of lot of richness in the form of gold. The balance of trade was always in favour of Tamilaham and it became prosperous. The alarming flow of gold into Tamilnadu was very much resented by the Roman statesmen, scholars and merchants.

The foreign trade of the Sangam age was brisk and had developed all the ancillary requirements of harbours, shipping and the Tamils excelled in seafaring. Many port towns thrived both on the eastern and western coasts of Tamilnadu. Major cities were vibrant and active due to commercial activities. A number of allied crafts were developed and patronised in tune to the growing importance of trade in the Sangam age. In due course, the people involved in trade came to be identified as '*Vaisyas*' and attained the status of a separate caste. On the basis of wealth the social status was determined. Thus, the Sangam age saw tremendous changes socially and culturally because of foreign contacts.

## Notes and References

1. Eight anthologies are: *Nattrinai, urundogai, Aingururnuru, Padirruppattu, aripadal, Kalittogai, Ahanauru and Purananuru.*
2. Ten Idylls are: *Tirumurguarrupadai, Porunar Arrupadai, Sirupan arrupadai, Perumban Arrupadai, Mullaippattu, Maduraikanchi, Nedunalvadai, Kurinji Pattu, Pattinappalai and Malaipadukadam.*
3. *Kautilya, Arthasastra, Chap. II.*
4. Caldwell, *Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages*, London, 1913, p. 88.

5. Gibbon, *Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 31.

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## EPIGRAPHY AND FOLK MEDICINE<sup>1</sup>

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### **Role of Epigraphy in the study of folk medicine**

Folk medicine and its practice prevalent among the people. are recorded in inscriptions. These early epigraphical records are from West Asia, particularly Babylonia and Egypt. For instance, a Rosetta Stone assigned to BCE 1572 -1342 mentions *Amun*, God of wind and fertility. Further, to get fertility, people worshipped this deity. In the course of the worship of the deity, the role of the priest is striking. He resorted to magic and spells which attracted large numbers of followers. Here the priest acted as folk physician<sup>3</sup>. Another female folk deity of ancient Egypt was *Nekhbet*. Women worshipped the deity to become pregnant and also for safe child birth. This is known from another inscription assigned to 500 BCE<sup>4</sup>. Along with the worship of folk deities, ancient Egyptians used folk medicines in order to have control over nature and personal luck<sup>5</sup>. Thus, in ancient Egypt, worship combined with magic and spells were performed to the folk deities and these played a prominent role in medical life. The Gods and the demons were thought to be responsible for many ailments; often, the treatments of these required supernatural elements. Often the first recourse was an appeal to a particular deity. Thus, the priests and the magicians were called to treat diseases instead of the physician. In such situations, the physicians themselves often used incantations and magical gradients as part of the treatment. But many medicines used by the physicians of this category apparently lacked active ingredients<sup>6</sup>. One of the inscriptions, assigned to 2400 BCE found on the tomb of Aknethep mentions a lady physician, Peseshet. The study of the inscription gives an impression

that the above mentioned physician cured the disease of women by resorting to magic, incantations, prayer and finally medicine. She is hailed as Lady Overseer of the Lady physicians<sup>7</sup>.

The stone tablets placed in front of the temples of Marduk, Ishtar and Nippur<sup>8</sup> (Babylonia, present Iraq) provide interesting information on the practice of folk medicine. The people in Ancient Mesopotamia had a strong belief in the Gods, Goddesses and ghosts. They believed that the displeasure of these resulted in diseases. Further, they opined that each spirit was responsible for one disease which affected the whole body or any part of it . The medical inscriptions found in the front of the temples and tombs substantiate the above point. According to Prof. Nancy Demand, these documents were assigned to 2700 BCE. One of the stone documents found in Temple Gula states that God Gula was one of the significant gods of healing. The deity was consulted before treating the patients. It was this deity who uttered an oracle regarding the god which was responsible for a given illness<sup>9</sup>. The study of some of the clay tablets in the temple reveals that the people believed in the sanctity of the rivers, which would drive away the forces causing illness and had the power of providing a healthy atmosphere<sup>10</sup> .

### **Indian inscriptions and folk medical features**

The antiquity of folk medicine in India is traced from the Egyptian Ibers papyrus. It is from the study of the papyrus that we presume that the Harappans used oils spices, other animal and mineral products used for medicine<sup>11</sup>. Further, the hygienic cities planning, personal hygiene and Yoga postures found in these cities indicate the origin of the folk medical concepts in the period of the Indus valley civilization<sup>12</sup>. However, we lack authentic evidence for the above point.



The genesis of folk medical concepts of environmental purity and its preservation is depicted in one of the Asoka's inscriptions of the third century BCE. It records "husks containing living being should not be burnt. Forests must not be burnt either uselessly or in order to destroy living beings. The living must not to be fed with the living"<sup>13</sup>. In another context, another inscription of the same ruler stressed the need for planting trees and herbs for maintaining environmental purity. For instance, the epigraph states "wherever there are no roots and fruits, they have been caused to be imported and planted. On the roads, wells have been caused to be dug and trees have been caused to be planted for the enjoyment of animals and men"<sup>14</sup>.

Association of the medical practice along with the divinity or supernatural forces was one of the concepts of the folk medicine.. This is known from inscriptions. For example, in the Saidapur, Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh inscription dated in the year 1034 CE records that Goddess Parvati revealed Aggalayya, a renowned Jaina physician<sup>15</sup>. The medical knowledge revealed to the physician was *Umatantra*. In the course of years, the name changed to *Rasatantra*, which is the synonym of the English term alchemy<sup>16</sup>.

Similarly, the contents of the inscription from Sravanabelagola (Hasan district, Karnataka) also support the above point. Dated in the year 1129 CE the same inscription mentions the medical skill of *Samantabhadradeva* by invoking the deity Chandraprabha, who cured disease (*Bhasmaka* = morbid appetite). The study of the inscription gives an impression that he used spells and charms in the treatment of the disease<sup>17</sup>.

The deity Dhavantari<sup>18</sup>, the God of medicine and surgery, is popular among the folk people. Some physicians considered themselves incarnations of Dhanvantari. For example, one of the

inscriptions from Hasan district, Karnataka, records that Devapilliyanna was as expert surgeon as Dhanvantari<sup>19</sup>. Similar references to Dhanvantari are known from Mancella copper-plate dated in the *Saka* year 1262 = 1340 CE. The inscription states that Kondu Bhatta, a great physician, was considered an incarnation of Dhanvantari<sup>20</sup>.

A mysterious method of curing some of the diseases by the physicians was popular among the folk people. In support of this, we cite one of the Nagar inscriptions from Nagar (Shimoga district). Dated in the year CE 1087<sup>21</sup> the inscription reports the following incident in connection with the army of Vikrama Santara. While hurrying to the scene of war, the men, in order to appease the fire in their bellies, fed on carcasses. It resulted in madness with indigestion. In this context the army doctor (probably folk physician) suggested that it would be cured by swallowing elephants. They followed it and they were cured of the disease. A similar incident is recorded in an inscription from Sravanabelgola, (Hasan district) dated CE 1398. The inscription states that Carukirti Pandita, the Jain pontiff, by some mysterious way, cured the diseases of Ballala Raya who was seriously ill and in a moribund condition. He earned the title of *Ballala Raya Rakshita* (saviour of Ballala)<sup>22</sup>.

The association of folk deities with the treatments of diseases are often cited in a few epigraphs. The deities cited in the inscriptions are *Polipuda devaru*, *Bhairudevarau*, *Chikki devaru*, *Chikka devaru Durgadevi* and also *Asvathakatte dharma* (holy fig tree) etc<sup>23</sup>. Very often these folk deities were honoured and invoked in case of calamities.

Water therapy is also recorded in a few inscriptions. In support of this, we cite an inscription found at Tumboli (Honnavar Taluka,

Uttara Kannada district). The inscription dated 1140 CE mentions leprosy. Further, inscription states that the King of Kama, the King of Chnadavra (Kumta Taluk), on the advice of Lord Siva (Saurashtra), took bath in the water and cured the disease<sup>24</sup>.

The snake bite curer played a significant role in the folk medical set up. The inscriptions also recognized this aspect. In support of this we have a copper plate inscription in Goa (now found in Lisbon). Dated in *Saka* year 1028 -1099 <sup>25</sup> the inscription introduces one Nagadevrasa, devotee of Lord Nagese. Next it states that he was an expert in curing snake bites. For that Nagadevarasa received a grant from the ruler of Goa, Tribuvanamalla. It is possible to infer that the physician cured the snake bite by the will of Lord Nagese.

An interesting piece of information regarding the service of Nanjamma in the eradication of a small-pox epidemic is known from two inscriptions dated 1818 from Krishnarajapet (Mysore). One of the inscriptions of the same place informs us of the occurrence of an epidemic of small-pox and cholera in and around Krishnarajapet. It resulted in the death of people. It was stopped in the following supernatural manner. Nannajamma, belonged of *Sudra* origin, belonging to the *Gandadikara* tribe, became an incarnation of Goddess Mahakali of Ujjaini. 'Wherever she went, these diseases and other troubles among the Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vaisyas and Sudras alike were cured'<sup>26</sup>.

Ecological purity and its proper maintenance was one of the folk medical aspects. This was recognized in a few inscriptions. These inscriptions record the planting of trees on either sides of the road and also stressed the need for their protection <sup>27</sup>.

This paper has given interesting information regarding folk medicine as revealed by inscriptions. Although lacking in scientific temperament, folk physicians have brought out the medicinal value of plants, herbs, leaves and roots. It is also an attempt to understand folk culture as reflected in medicinal practices.

## Notes and References

General characteristic of folk medicine is as follows:

- 1.. Its medical system is associated with nature and in practice a religious tinge is involved. The folk physicians have peculiar methods of diagnosing diseases and their treatments are peculiar. Although they lack in scientific temperament, the folk physicians make a shrewd guess on the nature of diseases. They are of the opinion that the diseases are caused by anger of spirit. Magico-medical treatment are seen in folk medical practice. Another interesting point in folk medical practice is that the physicians showed genius in recognizing medical potentiality of plants, herbs and leaves and roots. The treatment here is by trial and error. Regarding the nature and characteristic of folk medicine see Acharya Deepak & Shrivastava, *Indigenous Herbal Medicinal tribal formulations, Traditional Herbal Practices*, Jaipur 2008, p.440, Krishnamurthy Hunur, *Encyclopaedia of Folk culture*.
- 2 *Encyclopaedia of Folk Culture in Karnataka*, Madras 1991, pp. 200, 201, 202, Charles Leslie, *Asian Indian Medical*

system a Comparative study, Delhi 1998, p.359 -60 Kakar D.N, *Folk and Modern Medicine*, (New Delhi 1977), p.2-5. For Further details see Dr. K.G Vasantha Madhava's *Inscriptions as a source of Folk Medical History and Folk Medicine*" A research paper read on Epigraphical Conference held on 19th March 2010 at Kalyan. Roychaudhury, *Man, Malady and Medicine*, p.134.

3. Picture of Rosetta stone inscriptions, are kept in the Karpleles Manuscript Library, Santa Barbara, California(U.S.A),
4. *Ibid*.
5. John F Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine*, 1996, p.3, article secured through Professor Mysore Krishna Bhat.
6. *Ibid*, p.3.
7. *Jphn, Ibid and see New Scientist, 15th December 2007, p. 43.*
8. These are known as Sumerian documents and Hammurabi Codes. These are written in cuneiform script on tablet stones. These writings are assigned to between BCE 3100 and 1700 BCE by Nancy Demand in *Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia*. The copy of this article is kept in Louis M Darling Library, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. The Nippur stone document is assigned to ca 2200 BCE and see James Edgar Swain, *A History of World Civilization* (India Reprint) p.76
9. Prof Nancy Demands, *Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia*, an article kept in the Louis M Darling Library Los Angeles

- C.A. See also Horstmanshoff Masten Slat Cornetis, *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near East and Graceo-Roman Medicine*, Tilburg 2004, pp.97-99.
10. Nancy Demand, *Ibid.*,
  11. Roy Chowdhury, *Man Malady*, p. 153.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Sircar D.C, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p.65
  14. *Ibid*, p 42
  15. Hymavathi, *History of Ayurveda*, p.46
  16. *Ibid*, Regarding *Rasatantra* see Varier *Ayurveda*, p. 188-89.
  17. *Epigraphia Carnatica* Vol II Cited hereafter as *E.C*, Old Ed No 67 Saletore B.A., *Medieval Jainism ( with reference to the Vijayanagara Empire*, Bombay 1938 ), pp 229-230. Samantadeva was a renowned Jain Pontiff. The exact years of Saamantabhadra Deva's lived is not thereby solved. .However, on the basis of other sources, Dr. Saletore B.A is of the opinion that he lived in the first quarter of the second century A.D. Saletore, *Ibid*, p. 228, 270.
  18. D.P Agarwal, *Does Ayurveda Begin with Dhanvantari, The Ancient Physician*, for details, previous chapter of this work.
  19. E C ( Old Ed ) V.A.K No 8,9, Rice, B.L, *Mysore and Coorg*, p.188
  20. Hymavathi, *History of Ayurveda*, p. 23, 73.

21. *E.C(O) VIII Ng 40* See B.L Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, p 188.
22. *Ibid*, (R ) ii No 360, p. 408.
23. *Annual Report of South Indian* 1929 No 469, 70 found at Chitrapu Durga Devi shrine ( near Mangalore) The author of this article secured these inscriptions from the Late K , Venkataraya Achar Surathkal, The inscriptions are dated A. C 1395, 1400 *South Indian Inscriptions IX Pt II No 430* Dated in the year A.C1406 *Ibid*, No 467 dated A.C1506, *Ibid VII No192*, A.C 1423, *Ibid*, XVII No151 A,C 1494.
24. *Karnataka Bharathi* (Kannada Journal KarnatakaUniversity, Dharwad) 1991, Jan-March pp. 21-32. Dr Ganapathi Gowda, Reader in History, Field Marshal Kariyappa College Madikere (Kodagu Dist) discovered this inscription.
25. *Karnataka Bharathi, Kannada Journal*, Karnataka University Dharwad, 1991, Jan- March, pp. 21-32 . Dr Ganapathi Gowda, Reader in History, Field Marshal Kariyappa College Madikere (Kodagu Dist) discovered this inscription in the year 1990.
26. Sen, S.P, *Sources of Indian History*, Vol I, Calcutta 1978, No 27, p. 500, Lord *Nagese* is the deity of the temple Nagesa. *Nagese* is a serpent God. *Nagesha* is Lord Siva who adorns serpent. This temple, formerly existed near Bali, now in found in Ponda.
27. *E.C IV (old Ed) Kr Nos 25, 24* B.L Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, pp. 188-89.

28. SII XX No 175 dated 1190 A.D, *Epigraphia Indica*, and Xiii No 28 Dated A.D. 1126. SII IX Pt jj, No 457, dated A.D. 1145. For details see Jyotsna Kamat, *Ecological Awareness in Medieval Karnataka, Indica*, Journal of the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture Mumbai, 2001, pp. 104-105. Ramesh, K.V., *A History of South Kanara*, Dharwar, 1970, pp. 282.

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## **BHADRAKALI WORSHIP IN KERALA**

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Though there was Mother Goddess worship in all ancient civilizations and throughout the Indian sub-continent, every society worshipped her in different ways. This gave rise to various Mother cults with their distinct rituals. Even within the Indian sub-continent, the Mother Goddess was worshipped in different names. 'In Rajasthan, She was worshipped as Mammadevi and Gauri; In Kamarup as Kamakhya; In Madhya Pradesh as Bhavani and Sitalamma; By Gonda tribes as Dandiswari; In Bengal as Chandi and Durga; In Punjab as Shavod and Kali; In Orissa as Takkurani; In Karnataka as Uramma, Peddamma, Pellalamma, Nakulamma and Varidhiyamma; In the villages of Andhra as Pochamma, Polimeramma, Yellamma, Mangalamma, Upalamma, Kattamaisama, Smakka, Sarakka; In Tamil Nadu as Angâlamman, Meenakshi, Kaliyamman, Mariyamman and Bhairavi; In Kerala as Kali, Bhadrakali, Durga, Bhagavati and Srikurumba. When Jainism and Buddhism became dominant religions Mother Worship got sublimated into it. Mother was worshipped as Chakreswari, Kalika, Mahakali, Shyama, Chanda, Nirvana, by Jains and as Tara, Shiri, Lakhhi, Dakini, Yakshi by Buddhists'<sup>1</sup>. 'There are various evidences to show the existence of Mother worship during the Indus valley civilization'<sup>2</sup>. A Harappa seal depicts a female figure upside down with a plant issuing from her womb. Numerous terracotta figures identifiable as Mother Goddesses have been unearthed from various sites across the Indian sub-continent. The Harappa figurines identified as the Mother Goddess and often found standing beside a *figus religiosa* or else have a plant emerging from their womb, indicating a link between Goddess, fertility and vegetation<sup>3</sup>.

## **Mother Goddess worship in Kerala**

Kerala is the land which lies in the south western tip of the Indian sub-continent. The land to the south of the Indian peninsula beyond the Vindhya hills was known as Dakshinapatha (Southern Region). To its extreme south was the region known as Tamizhakam. The earliest mention of Tamizhakam appears in the Tamil grammatical literature *Tolkappiyam* of the Sangam Age. Its author, Tolkappiyanayar says,

“*vadavengadamtenkumariyayidaitamizhukurunallulakam*”,

meaning, the boundaries of Tamizhakam extended from the Venkata Hills in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. Being the South western tip of the Indian peninsula the land which is today's Kerala was part of Tamizhakam during the Sangam age. There is a mention of Kerala in the rock edicts of Ashoka during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. The earliest known treatise on performing arts Bharatamuni's *Natyasastra* which can be placed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE also mentions the name Kerala while listing the names of his hundred sons. Kerala is also mentioned in the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*<sup>4</sup>. The birth of Kerala has always been associated with Parasurama, who is considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This land between Gokarna and Kanyakumari is believed to have been recovered from the sea by the axe-wielding Parasurama and called Parasuramakshetram. It is also believed that Parasurama consecrated Sasta and Vanadurga as Gods and guardians of this land<sup>5</sup>. Mother Goddess worship prevalent in pre-historic times continues through the Sangam and post-Sangam periods to the present day.

### **Pre-historic period**

The rock engravings at Edakkal (Wayanad) caves and Marayur (Idukki) in Kerala are cultural signs of the past societies that give us hints regarding the modes of worship during the Neolithic age<sup>6</sup>. It is interesting to note that there are figures with ornaments and hear gears, with raised hands. This probably represents the ritual or cultural practises that were practised several centuries ago. Historians and archaeologists vouch that these engravings were incised between 4000 BCE and 1000 BCE (during the Neolithic period in South India). Clear remnants of Harappan culture have been found in the Edakkal caves linking the Indus valley civilization to South India. Historian M.P. Raghava Varier has discovered Indus valley motifs in these caves which could help trace the history of Kerala even beyond the Iron Age<sup>7</sup>. Along with ornaments, black and red ware, agricultural tools, archaeologists have also unearthed trisulas (tridents). Trisula might be a symbolic representation of the God or Goddess they worshipped. Lord Siva is said to have trisula in his hand. Sakti or the Mother Goddess is said to have slayed the demon Mahishasura with the trisula.

Like the archaeological findings help us rediscover our past, the oral traditions and rituals which have come down to us today from earlier societies should also be considered as valid historical evidences which help us unravel the stories of our past. Most rituals and practises might seem barbaric and uncultured to our mind, but this does not make it less historically important. Dancing in frenzy to appease the higher power, ancestral-spirit worship, using obnoxious language and addressing the deity, offering blood to the Goddess were rituals of primitive man. Most of these rituals still exist in many Kerala villages and mirrors the cultural past. The origin of these rituals and tradition in primitive societies was not for salvation or enlightenment but to help them go through life, face its complexities and hardships and to protect their land

and family. There was and still exists the custom of showering contemptuous and erotic expressions in the worship to the Mother Goddess. These are in the form of songs and are called *Teripattu*. This as a live tradition and still exists in places like Cherthala, Kodungalloor and Kottiyur. The Goddess is addressed as “*Amme Pulayadi*” which has acquired a very derogatory meaning. If we go to the root of this nomenclature, the term *Pulayadi*, comes from the terms *pulam* and *adi*. “*Pulam*” means land and “*adi*” means to dance. Thus *Pulayadi* is one who dances on the land or one who is the Goddess of the land. This might mean that the agricultural land was considered synonymous to the Mother Goddess. Man has slowly evolved from the Neolithic to Megalithic culture and eventually to a civilized society.

### **Sangam period**

Sangam, literally means confluence. In Tamizhakam, there was a confluence of learned people under the patronage of the Pandyan kings. The literary contributions of these scholars are called Sangam literature or the literature of the academies. Three successive Sangams have been identified between 300 BCE and 300 CE. The oldest extant literary work in Tamil, ascribed to the second Sangam period is a treatise in Tamil grammar, *Tolkappiyam*. *Tolkappiyam* defines the five-fold geographic division of Tamizhakam called *Tinai*s. They are *Kurinji* (Mountainous terrain), *Mullai* (Forest region), *Marutam* (Agricultural area), *Neithal* (Coastal land), *Palai* (deserted dry land). Each *Tinai* had their own regional variations in customs, beliefs, rituals and chief deities. *Kurinji* tribe worshipped Muruga, *Mullai* people were protected by Lord Vishnu, inhabitants of *Marutam* payed obeisance to Indra, the *Neithal* tribe adulated Lord Varuna and the *Palai* tribe venerated Kottravai. We can see the emergence of the Mother Goddess as a war Goddess, Kottravai during this time. This also brings to the fore the fact that the worship of Vedic gods like, Indra and Varuna and non-Vedic Gods like Muruga

and Kottravai co-existed. This might burst the myth of compartmentalising the Vedic and non-Vedic tribe and about the Aryan-Dravidian theories that have been etched in our memories. Other than the chief deities of each *Tinai*, a feminine unknown power or Mother was worshipped by people of all *Tinai*s. She was both the war Goddess as well as the Goddess of the land. Other works of the Sangam period are the eight anthologies (Ettutokai), and ten idylls (Pattupattu). In works on *Kurinji*, *Tinai* there is a mention of a ritual, *velanveriyadal*, where the main priest *Velan* dances in frenzy called *Veriyadal*. This form of frenzied dancing has come down to this age, in the form of ritual, spell and trans dances in Kerala. 'Mother Goddess was worshipped in various names during pre-Sangam and Sangam times, though they were all commonly called Bhagavathy'<sup>8</sup>.

### Post Sangam period

The post Sangam works like Kalittokai, Paripadal and Thirumurukkattruppadai gives more details about Kottravai. 'Kottravai, worshipped by Sangam warriors as a war deity is celebrated as "*vettiivelporkottravai*" in Thirumurugattruppadai. In the work Kalittokai, she is called "*kotri*", who lives in the forest in the midst of devils. It would be interesting to note that the Goddess worshipped in the Hinglai temple, Baluchistan is called Kottravai<sup>9</sup>. The Tamil Epics, *Cilappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai* also give us the religious and cultural background of Tamizhakam. There are various views regarding the date of these epics, though we can roughly date between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century. In the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter "*Vettuvavari*" of *Cilappadikkaram*, author Ilangovaligal gives a detailed picture of Durga worship. Here a woman named Salini is the priestess on whom the Goddess reveals. 'She dances in frenzy and makes many predictions. Through her the Goddess is appeased. She demands Narabali (human sacrifice) which was very common during those days'<sup>10</sup>. *Cilappadikkaram* also mentions the consecration of Kannagi as

*Pattini* (chaste wife) during the reign of Ceran Cenguttavan. *Pattini* later became the *Mulasthan* or epicentre of Mother Worship.

The history on the origin of Kerala, leads to the mythical story of Parasurama relocating the Brahmin community from Ahichatram<sup>11</sup>, which is located on the western side of the Gangetic plains to Kerala. Even though there is no evidence to prove the truth behind this myth, there is evidence that during the time of Kadamba King Mayura Sarman (4<sup>th</sup> century CE) and his son Chandraghata, many Vedic Brahmins migrated to Kerala. Between the 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE many Brahmin communities have migrated and settled in Kerala. This led to a change in Kerala's social structure. Mathrudatta, a contemporary of the Sanskrit scholar Dandin and the Pallava King Narasimha Varma Pallava (630-668 CE), was a Brahmin who conducted 33 *yagas* in Kerala. The Kadamba-Chalukya dynasties were responsible for the Brahmin settlements in Kerala which eventually led to the 9<sup>th</sup> century Mahodayapuram centred Cera Dynasty<sup>12</sup>. Though many communal rituals and modes of worship lived on, there were new rituals incorporated, new concepts sublimated into the old system. Initially all ritual dance forms were basically on the Mother Goddess, Bhadrakali winning over the demon Darika. We can still see these in rituals like *Bhadrakaliteyattu*, *Mudiyettu*, *Padayanti*, *Thira*, *Theyyam* etc. Later the Gods Rama and Krishna entered the pantheon of deities. There was a beautiful interspersing of the new and old concepts. The puppet play *Pavakuttu* on Ramayana, *Aivarkali*, a ritual dance on Mahabharata, *Mayilpelithukkam*, a ritual dance performed by the Pandava Arjuna were all performed before Bhadrakali to appease her. According to Kadamanitta Vasudevan Pillai, *Tottampattukal*<sup>13</sup>, mentions that Kali has come from "Aryanadu" i.e. the land of the Aryas and when many Brahmins got together in the Southern most land, one among them called *Valiyapotti*, did the "*patrakalipratitta*". Here *Valiyapotti*

means the senior Brahmin and “*Patra kali Pratitta*” means the *Bhadrakali Pratishta* or the consecration of Bhadrakali. It is believed that the Nair community were the inhabitants of Kerala before the migration of the Brahmins. They are believed to belong to the Naga dynasty. Sri Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal has reproduced old ballads in his book *Pracheena Keralam* which mentions that the Nairs were Nagas, who were worshippers of Siva<sup>14</sup>. They later became feudal lords and took over not only principalities but also spaces of Mother Goddess worship called *Ammakkavukal*. The ritual art of *Velakali* is an offering to the Goddess by these Nair soldiers.

### **From kavus to temples**

Though early man first worshipped nature out of awe or fear of the unknown, in due course, this nature worship evolved as one of the means of the conservation of natural resources, where the resources acquired a sacred or sanctified status. ‘Different forms of this nature worship are supposed to be deeply rooted in the Neolithic and Megalithic times when man was transforming from hunter-gatherer to food producer. Evidences suggest that early civilizations even created reserves to protect wildlife or natural habitats by instituting cultural and religious practices, for which the belief system gave a helping hand’<sup>15</sup>. A space, in the midst of a group of trees was transformed into a sacred grove. It was believed that the groves are under the protection of the presiding deity and anyone harming the plants or animals in the grove would be the subject of their wrath. These sacred groves were called *Kavu* in Kerala. *Kavu* in the Malayalam vernacular means a consortium of trees. The grove where Mother Goddesses were worshipped was called *Ammadaivakkavukal*, and the deity, who was worshipped, was called *Kavilamma*. Even though today, there are not as many *Kavus* as before, many places in Kerala still keep this tradition alive and have kept these ecological spaces and their associated belief systems intact. With

the onset of feudal culture, there also developed a feudal hierarchy among the various Mother Goddesses. *Kavu* in the vicinity of the ruling classes became the main Mother Goddess and she was considered the family Goddess of the ruler. In the feudal system, chieftains came under the main feudal Lord; similarly, *Ammakkavukal* of the other areas came under the main *Kavilamma*. They also paid occasional visits to her which was called *Ezhunnallatthu*. There was no village in Kerala, without an *Ammadaivakkavu*.

The priests of these *Kavus* were called *Velichappadu*. ‘The long hair, *kohl* smeared eyes and vermilion- marked forehead of the *Velichappadu* suggests that the priests of these *Kavus* were originally women’<sup>16</sup>. *Velicham*, in Malayalam vernacular means light and *velichappadu* is the one who reveals the light. He is actually the medium between the Goddess and her devotees. In Palaghat, the Mother Goddess reveals herself through women in the *Ammadaivakkavukal*. We can still see female *velichappadu* during the Kodungallur Bharani festival. When the *Kavilamma* reveals herself to the priest, he or she dances in frenzy which is called *uranjutullalin* the Malayalam vernacular. This frenzied dance which we still see in the *Kavus* and Bhagavati temples of Kerala might be the continuity of the *velanveriyadal* tradition mentioned in Sangam literature. A transition from *kavu* to temple must have taken place between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Kings of Mahodayapuram, are believed to have built many temples, even in places other than Kerala. ‘A 13<sup>th</sup> century temple in Myanmar is said to have been built by Kulasekhara Nambi of Mahodayapuram according to an inscription’<sup>17</sup>.



## **Kurumba and Bhadrakali**

*Kurumba* was considered the Goddess of the common man in Kerala. *Kurumba* can be considered the same as *Nili*, the Goddess of the Hills. The word *Kuri* means Hill, therefore *Kurumba* can mean the Goddess of the Hills like *Nili*. *Kuravar* were the inhabitants of the mountainous region called *Kurunji Tinai*. This tribe to this day, holds the right of certain rituals in the ritual dance tradition *Padayani*. Mother Goddess is called *Kuramakal*, meaning daughter of *Kurava*. Lord Siva was considered to be a *Kurava*. This very same *Kuramakal* has later become *Kurumba*. *Kurumba*, the Goddess of the Hills and *Bhadrakali* the Goddess who came from Aryanadu have merged in the Bhagavathy or Mother worship of Kerala. From the various oral traditions and stories behind the ritual dance forms we can get an idea regarding the myth of her genesis. Bhagavathy is said to have incarnated from the third eye of Lord Siva on a Tuesday afternoon. The purpose of her incarnation was to slay the demon Darika. Darika was born to Darumathy of the *Danava* clan as a boon from Brahma. Darika did intense penance to please Brahma for being immortal. He was granted the boon that he could not be slayed by anyone other than a woman. Darika's arrogance and pride crossed all boundaries. He defeated the *Devas* and conquered *Devaloka* and entered Kailash the abode of Lord Siva. It was to slay this Darika that Kali was born from the third eye of Lord Siva. In spite of slaying Darika, Kali was not calm, she was blood thirsty. *Devas* tried various ways of appeasing her, but in vain. Finally, Lord Siva cut his own finger and offered blood, which calmed her down and later sent her to *Bhuloka* (Earth). Kodungaloor in Kerala is considered to be her *Mulasthanam* or main abode. There are various other beliefs regarding Kali's manifestation. According to *Bhagavathapurana*, Kali manifested along with Veerabhadra to slay the arrogant Daksha as per Lord Siva's demand. According to *Devimahatmyam*, Durga is the

progenitor of Kali. According to *Vamanapurana*, Kali is the same as Goddesses Parvathy. *Lingapuranam* says Kali manifested in order to vanquish the demon Darika. Despite all these different stories on Kurumba and Kali, today they cannot be demarcated. They are both Bhagavathys for the people of Kerala. Chovva Bhagavathy of Malabar; Chamundi, the ferocious form of Bhadrakali worshipped by Nair soldiers for their victory in war; Rurujith of Thirumandhamkundu ; Bhuvaneswari of South Malabar; Mariyamman, the village goddess, Kurumbakavilamma of Kodungallur are all various forms of Bhagavathy.

Tottampattukal are songs which extols Bhadrakali. In the MadayikavilammaTottampattu, She is described thus:

*“ShankhanirargalaChakravaramkara-  
Valakavattakaparasukaduttala  
ShulavumennivaKoolinaKaittalaShalini.”<sup>18</sup>*

Initially Bhadrakali was worshipped in *Kavus* and open spaces through symbols like the *val* (sword), *vel* (spear). She was given form and life in the ritualistic performances through a ritual called Kalamezhuttu. When structures started appearing around the symbolic representations of Kali, we see the Goddess coming to life through mural paintings and sculptures. *Shoola* (spear), *Nandakamva l*(sword), *vattaka* (a weapon), *Darikashiras* (chopped head of the demon Darika), *mani* (bell), *Paricha* (defending weapon), *sarpam* (snake), *Grantha* (book), *Abhaya hasta* are the iconographic representations of the Goddess in paintings and sculptures. Bhadrakali is in a sitting posture and Her *vahana* (vehicle) is *Vetala*. The ferocity in her eyes and lips are her special attributes. Bhadrakali is described thus in the songs of the ritual performance Padayani-”*Kalum thee yerindakannil, kalakalanpetteduthaval*”. Kali is thus said to be born from fire, which gives both heat and light. She is the power

within the fire. She has all the attributes of Fire. Even in the performance, Bhadrakali is personified as Fire and brought from the *sanctum sanctorum* and placed outside. The burning pyre symbolises the presence of the Devi, which is supposed to be alight till the performance is over and till the fire is taken back into the sanctum.

Even though Durga and Kali are considered One and the same by many, scholars and researchers on Kali differ. Kali was an outcome of the Siva Sakthi cult and Durga was an outcome of the Vaishnava Sakthi cult according to many scholars. The Kali-Darika story seems to be a mirror image of the Durga-Mahisasura story. The Bhadrakali of Kerala is thus a combined manifestation of Kurumba, Kali and Durga.

### **Rituals for the Mother Goddess**

As mentioned earlier the cultivated land was considered to be the abode of the Mother Goddess. She needed to be appeased for a good harvest. This gave rise to various fertility rites. *Rakthabali* or offering of blood was one of the most significant offering in the *Ammakavukal*. Our ancestors strongly believed that blood was a sign of fertility. This belief must have born out of their infusing all the characteristics of a woman on to the Goddess. The monthly menstrual cycle in a woman was a symbol of her fertility. This also led to the symbolic offering of vermillion, *rakthachandanam* (red sandal wood), red cloth, and red flowers to the Goddess. Offering of human and animal blood was also born out of the faith that this will make the Goddess more fertile and thus they could reap a rich harvest. They initially offered the hunted animals and captive slaves to the Goddess. Even the *Velichappadu* strikes his own forehead with the sword and offers his blood to the Goddess. An instance of *Narabali* is also found in *Cilappadikaram* where the Goddess

through the medium Salini demands a *Narabali* from the Maravar tribe<sup>19</sup>. Bhavabhuthi's drama, "*Malathimadhavam*", mentions the ritual, *Narabali* for Goddess Kali in olden times<sup>20</sup>.

According to scholar Kadamanitta Vasudevan Pillai, Bali or sacrifice is a concept that has to be ingrained in a human society. The legendary King of Kerala Mahabali was known for his qualities of sacrifice, leadership skills in tune with *Dharma*. His reign was known for the equality among his subjects. Only when Mahabalis and the spirit of sacrifice rules the human society, will there be togetherness, according to Sri Kadamanitta. He says this is the spirit behind the *bali* or sacrifices that accompany rituals in Kerala. The rituals like *Kuthiyottam*, *tukkam*, *kuruti* etc that are still prevalent are the continuation of the *Narabali* tradition. There was a transition from *Narabali* (human sacrifice) to *Ninabali* (animal sacrifice). The Epic, Ramayana, mentions that Sita worshipped the Mother Goddess while going for Vanavasa (dwelling in the forest). While crossing the Sarayu River, she promised to offer *bali* to the Goddess if they are protected from all hurdles in their journey. In Mahabharata, Kunti, mother of Pandavas is said to have promised *Narabali* to Bhadrakali, if her sons would regain their Kingdom. This is the myth behind the ritual dance form *Mayilpittukkam* of Central Kerala. The spread of Jainism and Buddhism might have led to the transformation of these barbaric rituals. *Narabali* (human sacrifice) must have transformed into *chural uruliccha* (custom of tying the whole body with *chural* (cane) and circumambulation on the ground); the *Ninabali* (animal sacrifice) must have led to the breaking open of the white gourd.

*Ammadaivangal* of various *Kavus* were worshipped in different ways. *Theyyam*, *Thira*, *Padayani*, *Uttu*, *Ammankoda*, *Kuruti*, *Paranettu*, *Chavuttu*, *Puram*, *Pana*, *Kalampattu*, *Kalamezhuttu*,

*Mudiyettu*, *Tukkam* were some of the modes of worship. Though *Theyyam* and *Thira* of North Malabar are fertility rituals which have evolved into ritual dance tradition, it also represents the time in history where faith in the Goddess was a reason and venue to erase all barriers in social hierarchy. Kerala was a land where the Brahmin supremacy had created a clear demarcation among various castes. But these rituals in the *Kavus* venerated the people in the lower strata of society as the *Daivam* or *theyyam* i.e God. It was a day when even the Brahmin bowed down to the *Theyyam* who was the voice of the Divine.

*Kali* was the irate Mother, who could not control her anger in spite of killing *Darika*. In order to calm her down and bring her back to her senses, Lord Siva and his *Bhuta ganas* make *Kolams* or mirror images of her and danced in front of her. This is the story behind the ritual dance worship *Padayani*.

*Amma* or Mother Goddess had two different faces. One was the calm one and the other was a ferocious one. In certain places like Kollam there are two separate *Kavus* for the two different attributes of the Mother. Mother Goddess was worshipped as *Chipothy* by the agricultural community. She held paddy in one hand and she was welcomed by rituals which involved getting rid of *Chetta* or the Goddess of bad tidings. These customs are said to have prevailed in many ancient cultures. *Chipothy* later evolved to Sri Bhagavathy. She is the Goddess of the *Nelkkalam* or the paddy field. *Kalam* means a field or a piece of ground, in the Malayalam vernacular. An artistic ritual called *Kalamezhuthu*, where the Goddess is recreated and represented on sacred ground is still prevalent. *Kalamezhuthu* is a combination of two-dimensional and three dimensional designs drawn on the floor using fine powder culled from nature. The figure drawn comes alive when the eyes of the central figures are opened, again at a particular time marked

by ritual. A water filled pot is kept in the centre of the *Kalam* or the sacred ground. This symbolises the womb. A baby's head is drawn on its outside and it is covered by five leaves and a vermilion smeared coconut. The tradition of consecrating the presence of the deity in a water filled *kalasha* decorated with mango leaves and topped with a coconut might be a continuation of this ritual. Today, this art rests with the group called Kuruppu. The ritual for the Mother Goddess traverses from *Kalam* to *kolam* i.e. from the art of drawing to the art of performance. This *Kalamezhuthu* ritual might have been a precursor to the tantric form of *Yantra* worship. Rituals for the Mother Goddess have changed along with the changes in the attitudes, beliefs and psyche of man. Those that have been preserved through oral traditions are keys to unlock the stories of our ancestors.

## Conclusion

The literary, archaeological evidences along with the live oral traditions of Kerala give a clear picture about the evolution of Mother Goddess worship from pre historic times to today. A study on Bhadrakali worship in Kerala is not only a study of Kerala's religious history; it is a journey into Kerala's cultural and social history. The present study on the Bhadrakali worship in Kerala could be summed up thus:

Mother Goddess worship is the reflection of man's evolution itself. As he evolved from hunter to food producer his Mother adapted to his vicissitudes and changed in form. She has again incarnated and reincarnated at every stage of man's evolution as Kottuvai, Chipothy, Kurumba, Bhadrakali and Durga.

A continuity of tradition is visible in many of the rituals. The engravings in the caves of Edakkal revealing a ritual dancer with

head gears and the live ritual dances of Kerala speaks about the continuity of a tradition.

The songs of ritual dancers addressing Mother as the dancer in the fields and the Harappan seals portraying a plant sprouting from a woman's womb suggest that She was once an agricultural deity and this tradition is still not completely lost.

The *uranjutullal* and frenzied dancing of *velichappadu* is a continuity of the *velanveriyadal* tradition of the Sangam period.

*Kalamezhuthu* could be a precursor of Tantric form of *Yantra* worship.

Social hierarchy and caste system has not affected Mother Worship in any negative way. *Ammadaivakkavukal* have in fact witnessed a coming together of people in spite of social barriers.

This study has also revealed the coexistence of worship of these called Non Vedic Gods Kottravai and Muruga with the Vedic Gods Indra and Varuna. The tribes of the same period, co-existing in Tamizhakam have worshipped Indra, Varuna, Kottravai, Muruga and Vishnu. This erases the Aryan Dravidian myth that has been injected into our racial memories.

The story behind Mother Worship is a story of sacrifice or *bali*. The story of sacrificing one's ego, the story of sacrificing one's self. This essence was internalised every year through rituals: *narabalis*, *ninabalis*. As man moved from savagery to civilization, rituals diluted, the sentiment behind many rituals of the past were unknown. Trying to revive the old customs and rituals might not be possible as there has been a tremendous shift in human psyche.

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9. Dr. P. Soman, *Ammadaivavum Samskaravum*, p 44
10. Vishwanathan Nair Nanmara, P., *Cilappadikaram*, p 280.
11. *Ahichatram is the Ayodhya of today according to many scholars. A few scholars differ in this opinion and consider Ahichatram as Aihole of North Karnataka.*
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**EMBRACING CHRISTIANITY:  
TRACING PARATHAVAR CONVERSION IN THE  
LIGHT OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY SOCIO-  
POLITICAL RUPTURES**

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**Introduction**

Until 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Parathavars<sup>1</sup> were able to maintain a command over the economy of the Pearl Fishery Coast. They were engaged in diverse occupations such as business in pearls, salt manufacture, fishing and etc. Their contribution to the exchequer of the Pandyan state was immense and that was acknowledged through incorporation of fish as the symbol of the kingdom. The effect of the economy was felt in the sphere of the Parathavar religion wherein a correspondent pluralism that ranged from deities at the family level to the Brahmanical Gods emerged. With access to not only Brahmanical Gods but also to rival religions such as Jainism, Buddhism etc. the Parathavar upper class constituted by traders and headmen gave impression of having distanced themselves from other people. Despite the presence of hierarchy, the nature of coastal social life was such that the internal class difference determined by economy was never permanent. Therefore as rightly pointed out by the anonymous author of the *Chronicles of the Pearl Fishery Coast*, they constituted a nation unto themselves.

The turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century CE century witnessed the assertion of the Muslims that directly undermined the position of the

Parathavars in the coastal economy. Since the members of the economically assertive class within the Parathavar society were losing hold, the internal social difference determined by wealth was reduced. It on the one hand enhanced the internal solidarity and on the other hand questioned their position vis-à-vis other communities in terms of Sanskritization. At this juncture, one has to remember the point that the rise of the Muslims corresponded with the decline of heterogeneous sects such as Buddhism and Jainism due to the spread of the Bhakthi Movement and loss of political patronage.

The conventional understandings about the Indian sub-continent as made by the nationalist historians stressed upon the tolerant side of the natives and issues like unity in diversity etc. They have maintained that the division of people based on identity was a colonial product. To its contrast, the history of the Parathavar Conversion contained seeds of ideas that could germinate and project the colonial powers to have effectively utilized the existing division among the people. In the caste based society of India, the oppressed people hardly had any chance to unite and organize themselves against the perpetrators of oppression. In the case of the Parathavars, they were not a subdued people in the caste hierarchy, and therefore, had scope to decide upon the course of their social life. But with their conversion to Christianity, the pertinent question as to why they were not able to sustain within the majority religion remains to be answered.

The present article intends to survey the major dimensions that led towards conversion in the light of the political-economy characterized by the competition between the Muslims and Portuguese. It also seeks to explore the methods in which the Parathavars related themselves in the new economy. The primary sources used for the study is very limited and includes the travels of Marco Polo and Letters of St. Francis Xavier. Rather analytical

narration based on information culled out from secondary sources guide the course of the article. As such ideas of historians like H.R. Pate, Roche A. Patrick, Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, Luis Filipe F.R. Thomaz, Jorge Manuel Flores, Teotonio R. de. Souza, T.K. Oommen, Hunter P. Mabry, Fatima da Silva Gracias, Clarence Thomas Maloney, S. Decla, R. Pavananthi Vembulu, R. John Suresh Kumar and C. Veeramuthu have contributed for the consolidation of the subject matter of the article. The rational that is reached by the survey of both primary and secondary sources necessitate a pattern of narrative that starts from the history of the Muslims in the Pearl Fishery Coast, followed by the Portuguese interruption and Parathavar conversion. Therefore, such an approach has been followed.

### **The Muslim assertion and the political situation**

The Muslims from Arabia entered South India chiefly as traders. They were smart traders that they not only made huge wealth but also dominated the business<sup>2</sup>. Particularly in the Tamil country they made good profit by selling horses. They gradually evolved political aspirations as reflected in their literature wherein they recorded that Ibrahim Sultan of Arabia defeated a Pandyan ruler<sup>3</sup>. With the invasion of Malik Kafur and subsequent establishment of the Sultanate of Madurai their power reached the peak. They unleashed repressive activities against the natives that caused irreparable resentment in the minds of the natives. Nevertheless, the Sultanate of Madurai was able to rule only for a brief period from 1324 to 1372 CE and was routed out by Kampana Udayar<sup>4</sup>. With that the majority of the Muslim population moved either towards Keelakarai or Kayalpatnam where these already existed a considerable number of Arab Muslims and for want of trade opportunities and related economic benefits dwindled at Madurai<sup>5</sup>. Moreover the Pandyans located in the South required horses and contributed for the vibrancy of trade in Keelakarai or Kayalpatnam regions.

The society of the Muslims who settled at Kayalpatnam was constituted by people with diverse backgrounds. At the top were the Arabs<sup>6</sup> who took the honorific Marakayar title<sup>7</sup>. Over a period of time they were identified with the location and came to be mentioned as Kayalars also. They gradually diversified their occupation yet maintained links with the Arab settlements in other parts of Malabar. Their assertion in the Pearl Fishery Coast was coterminous with the political decline of the native Pandyan rulers. They learnt the Tamil language and gave indications of assimilation with the natives though it did not actually happen. They proved to be good soldiers and a substantial section of Muslim soldiers along with other tradesmen migrated from Kayalpatnam<sup>8</sup> to Ceylon<sup>9</sup>. When the degeneration of political life<sup>10</sup> had its toll in the native armed forces, the military strength of the Muslims was consolidated.

The Muslims of Kayalpatnam lived an orderly life in a chaotic situation and maintained social purity by what can be termed as Arabization. The concept of Arabization was a model of social mobility wherein the practices of those in the highest stratum of society were observed and followed by the inferiors. Since the Arabs were placed at the highest level of the society, Arabization denoted imitation of their life-style. The Arab Muslims formed an endogamous group and excluded the native Muslims.<sup>11</sup> Their women covered their physic with Purdah.<sup>12</sup> Although they learnt the vernacular language, they followed Arab scripts in transaction and their dressing style and appearance resembled of the Arabs<sup>13</sup>. They lived in separate streets and constructed homes in a style unfamiliar to the natives<sup>14</sup>. They established a mosque imitative of that in Mecca and followed rational principles compared to other Muslims and allowed little scope for superstition<sup>15</sup>. For the non-Arab Muslims, it was their ability to relate themselves

with the Marakayars that determined their status. This section of Muslims was constituted by the converts from the communities of Parathavar and Katasans who were chiefly residents of Kayalpatnam.<sup>16</sup> With conversion, they seemed to have constituted an endogamous group based on religion and limited their previous caste ties<sup>17</sup>. It was unlikely that these people were largely discriminated within the local fold of Islam for without their support the exploration of marine resources was a mere impossibility. Even if the new-Muslims were not treated at par with the Arabs, by virtue of their residential settlement at Kayalpatnam they were identified by outsiders as Kayalars which enhanced their prestige. In order to improve their status further the new Muslims sought to Arabize their life-style. Possibly, the orthodoxy of the *Arabs* was corrupted – to the advantage of the new-Muslims – when migrations like that occurred during Kampana Udayar took place.

In spite of an effective social hierarchy comparable with the stereotyped Indian social system, the Muslims undermined their internal differences and demonstrated unity at times of a collective crisis. But the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries never witnessed the reassertion of the Muslims at Madurai – the political head quarters – as the rulers of Vijayanagar seemed to have backed at first the Udayars and then a line of Pandyaans and then Nayakkans and not the Muslims<sup>18</sup>. At the time of the Parathavar conversion, it was the Zamorin of Calicut who came forward to collaborate with the Muslims. He realized the potential of the Muslims at the sea front and possibly thought of balancing the Portuguese influence in the region through them. Similarly, the Maharaja seated at Kanyakumari expected their alliance against the Vijayanagar kingdom, and therefore, allowed them to reap benefits of Pearl Fishery. The rulers of Kollam and Cochin predominantly supported the Portuguese<sup>19</sup> as also the rulers of Ceylon such as Bhuvaneka Bahu of Kotte, Mayadunne of Sitawaka<sup>20</sup> and Sekkarasa Sekaran of Jaffna<sup>21</sup>. The political trend was suggestive of the fact that



irrespective of whether the Muslims united or not, other people viewed them as a holistically united society. The arrival of the Portuguese further complicated the socio-political trends.

## **The Portuguese**

For long the kingdom of Portugal remained loyal to the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church. They recognized the spiritual suzerainty of the Popes and least bothered when that embarked upon the temporal authority. On their own right the rulers of the Catholic world in general and of Portugal in particular were committed to the cause of the spread and protection of Christianity. As early as 1310, Dom Dinis, the King of Portugal founded the Order of the Knights of Christ to protect his country and the Christian world from the onslaught of the Muslims<sup>22</sup>. The Christian kings, who shared the frame of mind of Dom Dinis, believed that the interests of the Christians and that of the Muslims were mutually opposed and the latter believed vice versa<sup>23</sup>. Perceptions as such heightened since the fall of Constantinople in 1453 that culminated in the closure of the land route between the east and the west to the great disadvantage of the traders. It was widely realized that the counter balance rested in oceanic explorations, and therefore, in 1493 Pope Alexander III issued the *Inter Caetera* that sought to divide the globe between the Portuguese and the Spaniards<sup>24</sup>. Through the *Inter Caetera* the *Portuguese* expansion towards the East was recognized. It gave an impression of spiritual motives being placed above trade motives.

The spiritual motive took twists and turns in a very short period with the assertion of Dom Manuel in the place of John II. Apart from the nationality based competition with the Spaniards, there was also a drastic shift in the frame of mind of the new King of Portugal. Particularly, he considered the discovery of a route to India as Divine Providence embalmed with a special message

to him<sup>25</sup>. He was inspired by the writings of Joachim of Fiore<sup>26</sup> who expressed his disaffection over institutional church and believed in the emergence of a Saviour King<sup>27</sup>. King Dom Manuel believed that he was the chosen Saviour King of the Universal Empire<sup>28</sup>. It was logical that he realized his ambitions required a huge support of men and material. When the Portuguese reached the Western Coast of India they witnessed the presence of St. Thomas Christians. However, these Christians were not important for King Manuel's ambitious program since the background of these native Christians was not martial<sup>29</sup>. Irrespective of that and unlike the Roman Catholic Church, he was accommodative of the differences at the level of Christian practices for he thought he represented all Christians<sup>30</sup>. He also aspired to establish control over Mylapore where St. Thomas was believed to be buried since that could enhance his overall image and for the spiritual support of the saint in his mundane activities<sup>31</sup>.

In a brief period of time, the Portuguese established their factories in the Coast of Malabar. The viceroys of the Portuguese King sought to give expression to the ambitions of the latter. They proved their ability not only as a competent maritime force but also as soldiers and diplomats. Notable viceroy among the Portuguese was Afonso de Albuquerque (1510-1515) who on the one hand challenged the weak Bahmani Kingdom while on the other hand established amicable relationship with Vijayanagar Empire<sup>32</sup>. He also signed treaties with the Zamorin of Calicut according to which all ships that entered Calicut from Coromandal, Kayalpatnam, Jaffna and Ceylon were required to procure Cartaz from the Portuguese prior to their arrival<sup>33</sup>. He realized that the Portuguese required more collaborators in India to support and sustain the imperialist ideas of the crown. Therefore, he attempted to reform the practices of Native Christians. He also encouraged his sailors to marry Indian women so that the children born to them would adopt Christianity and remain loyal to the

Portuguese crown<sup>34</sup>. Possibly his opinion on the Latin practices as best among all Christian practices did not clash with the views of his master King Manuel. Therefore, he thought of moulding Indian Christian converts in Latin spiritual lifestyle<sup>35</sup> so that the distance between the Europeans and the natives would be reduced.

Both the Portuguese king and Albuquerque substantiated their reforms with service<sup>36</sup>. Albuquerque also established hospitals initially for the benefit of the Portuguese upper class which was later extended to the Indian Christians also by the order of the king<sup>37</sup>. The declaration of Padroado by the Pope in 1514 gave an impetus to the activities initiated by Albuquerque. It was not clear whether or not the announcement of Padroado was a strategic move of Pope Leo X but it further strengthened the position of the King and his Order of the Knights of Christ vis-a-vis the monks since the King for a greater part relied upon the latter to execute welfare schemes<sup>38</sup>. Through the Padroado the King of Portugal was empowered to appoint Bishops though it mandated the formalization by the Pope<sup>39</sup>. Any monk or Orders within Roman Catholic Church cannot operate within the provinces ruled by the Portuguese without prior permission<sup>40</sup>. The King was also made responsible for the establishment of seminaries, schools, hospitals, orphanages etc. as also to meet out the expenses incurred on maintenance and salary<sup>41</sup>.

The focus of the Portuguese shifted from the West Coast after the period of Albuquerque. Nevertheless, his policy of conquests and alliances was continued by his successors<sup>42</sup>. They realized the strategic importance of the Strait of Ceylon to dominate Asian Trade. Though it did not enable the control of long range trade-routes, it helped to control trade between the Coramandal and Ceylon<sup>43</sup>. Particularly, when import of rice by Ceylon was blocked it enabled in the bargain of cinnamon from it. Also Estado da India cannot neglect the interest of the private settlers who traded

in other articles from the Coramandal region<sup>44</sup>. Therefore, they established a fortress at Ceylon in 1518<sup>45</sup>.

Coincidental to their landing at Ceylon was the conflict that ensued in the Gulf of Mannar between Khadhi Rayannah<sup>46</sup> of Kayalpatnam and Bhuvaneka Bahu of Kotte in Ceylon for the reason that the former crossed the natural sea boundary and indulged in pearl exploration in Ceylonese waters<sup>47</sup>. When the head of Kayalpatnam faced setback it was the duty of Raja Marthandavarma, the ruler seated then at Kanyakumari to stand by him since the latter was the receiver of tribute from the former. But Raja Marthandavarma lacked in marine force, and therefore, Mudalaiyar<sup>48</sup>, the successor of Khadhi Rayannah to the headship of Kayalpatnam sought protection from Antonio Miranda, the Portuguese officer in-charge of the Colombo Fort and offered to pay a substantial amount<sup>49</sup>.

Antonio Miranda did not decide upon the issue immediately<sup>50</sup>. Hitherto, the Portuguese had treated Muslims with hatred and enmity and vice versa. It continued to be so in Europe and West Asia. Despite all that the Muslims of Kayalpatnam – constituted largely by local populace – sought assistance. In such a context Antonio Miranda must have thought that he was not competent authority to decide on such a sensitive issue. Therefore, he wrote a detailed letter to the King of Portugal and awaited his reply. However, by 1521 King Manuel was succeeded by King John III who replaced the policies of the former with thoroughly commercial policies<sup>51</sup>. He ordered the Governor of Goa to send a ship to Kayalpatnam and capture it<sup>52</sup>. He also further ordered to lend lease the Pearl and chank *diving* in the name of the Portuguese Government<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, Kayalpatnam was invaded by 1523 and the Muslims who lived there sought help from Calicut. Leaders of the Muslims like Pate Marakkar, Kunjali Marakkar and Ali Ibrahim came to the protection of the Muslims and their influence had its own impact on the King of Calicut. As a result

the Treaty of 1513 that enabled the collection of revenue through Cartaz was brought to an end. Though it contributed for revenue loss, a substantial amount was earned from the proceeds of the Pearl Fishery Coast<sup>54</sup>. However, it led for continuous battles in the Gulf of Mannar from 1525-1539. The battles were characterized by ups and downs in both sides. On their side, the Portuguese realized that they need the support of at the least one community which had some martial character in the region.

### **Parathavar**

At a time when the Portuguese were looking for potential allies, the Parathavars were also awaiting for potential collaborators. Since the fall of the Pandyan kingdom, their political and economic influence in the region underwent degeneration. The arrival of Muslims followed by the Nayaks of Vijayanagar further undermined their interest. The rise of Kayalpatnam adversely affected the interest of the Parathavars. With better network of trade and technologically advanced sea vessels, they challenged the economically assertive class of the Parathavar society. It can be ascertained that with the control of the Pearl Fisheries and support of the King Marthanda Varma of Kanyakumari, that the dominance of the Muslims in the sea became absolute and it had its bearing in boat traffic to the disadvantage of ordinary fishermen.

The difference in the power axis did not contribute for eliciting the loyalty of the Parathavars in favour of the Muslims. In such a context, the scope for suspicion among Muslims about Parathavar supporting the Sinhalese during the conflict cannot be ruled out<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, there could have been positive gesture from the side of the Parathavars, to the dismay of the Muslims, when the Portuguese arrived at the Pearl Fishery Coast. All these happened despite the Parathavars and the majority of the Muslims shared Tamil language in common. They also shared common life space

in both sides of the Gulf of Mannar i.e. the Pearl Fishery Coast and Ceylon.

In the opinion of the present researcher, the mood for a shift towards the Portuguese camp could have occurred at the minds of the Parathavar elite ever since they observed the active presence in the Pearl Fishery Coast. Though the Sinhalese were friendly, they neither aspired to conquer any part of India, nor founded permanent settlements in the Tamil speaking world. To its contrast, the Portuguese freely spread throughout the regions where there was some trade activity and owned superior ships. They had the capacity to diversify trade. They also mingled with the local people to the extent of marrying them and such marriages were further supported by patronization. The Portuguese and their dependents were governed by a better legal system than that was in force at that time among the rulers who partitioned the Pearl Fishery Coast and ruled it. Trends like these naturally took the Parathavars closer to the Portuguese.

The event that was said to have sparked a civil-strife between the Parathavars and the Muslims<sup>56</sup> could be effectively viewed from this angle. The event was depictive of the unsympathetic attitude of other communities against the Parathavars. It was also self-explanatory of the unequal positioning of the Parathavars vis-à-vis the Muslims and other natives since the Parathavars as a group were not able to stop the onslaught by their religious fellows by offering a higher sum either for a Muslim head or for their protection. It landed the Parathavar people in an utterly chaotic condition and there was hardly any mechanism from outside the caste to restore normalcy. The rulers of the region such as the Pandyan King based on Kayathar named Vettum Perumal, Thumibchi Nayakkar who controlled Vembar, Vaippar and Keelakarai and Marthanda Varma of Kanyakumari did not take effort to control the Muslim onslaught<sup>57</sup>. Therefore, the community

at large resorted to three steps – initial protection, long term protection and retaliation.

The event thoroughly affected all the sections of the society. Those who had access to *catamarans*, *vallams* and *thonies* took asylum in the tiny islands located parallel to the Pearl Fishery Coast<sup>58</sup>. They were made to violate the professional norms that had considered women stepping into fishing vessel to be taboo<sup>59</sup>. They were very well aware of the fact that the islands where they took refuge could not provide adequate water and sanitation facilities for long. The higher and middle segments of the society that were located in some distance from the coast were worst hit<sup>60</sup>. Apart from their lives property was also threatened<sup>61</sup>. Though, there was a requirement of urgent settlement it was also very well understood by these people that the situation warranted long term solution.

Since there was no other option, they sought protection from the Portuguese. The Portuguese were cautious at the initial stage and seemed to have vacillated. However, the Parathavars found a suitable mediator in John de Cruz who by virtue of his personal relationship with the King of Portugal had considerable influence among the Portuguese Officers. For the Parathavars his was a personal example of the benefits attainable from association with the Portuguese. He was recognized by the King of Portugal to carry out tax-fee trade in horse as also recognized as tax-collector in the Pearl Fishery Coast<sup>62</sup>. As a Chevalier in the Order of the Knights of Christ and God-son of King John III of Portugal, he was bound by the duty to explain the tenets of Christianity and the spiritual intent of the Portuguese government. As a native he successfully convinced the Parathavars guided the Pattangattins in the right track. He also made the Portuguese to understand

the motive of the Parathavars and possibly about the latter's abilities.

The process of conversion into Christianity was with the baptism of 15 Pattangattins. Subsequently other Pattangattins followed and mass conversion of the Parathavar people took place. They were not only admitted into the fold of the Roman Catholic Church but were also deemed as Portuguese citizens eligible for the protection and other benefits released by the King of Portugal<sup>63</sup>. The Christian monks visited the coastal villages and desecrated the temples hitherto venerated by the Parathavars<sup>64</sup>. The conflict between the Portuguese and the Muslims in the straits of Ceylon included the Parathavars within it. John de Cruz was made to associate with the family of the Parathavar leaders and was honoured.

The adoption of Christianity by the Parathavars contained seeds of reconciliation for they were placed closer to the Muslims than before as far as their new socio-religious practices were concerned. The Muslims in general and of India in particular hated idolaters more than Christians who like them believed in the exposure of God through holy words. Moreover, the shrine of St. Thomas that attained the status of a pilgrimage centre for Christians was equally venerated by the Muslims<sup>65</sup>. Like the Muslims, the Parathavar converts also desecrated the temples in their surroundings.

### **Conclusion**

Identity shaped by religion played a very limited role in the Tamil society when compared to identity shaped by caste. But yet there were harmonious negotiations effectively present among castes



what even culminated in the conclusion of marriage bonds<sup>66</sup>. Events as such occurred during the Sangam period wherein political stability was well established. To its contrast, the assertion of one social group over another was mostly possible only in a situation of political void. Therefore, the differences based on identity of people as to Muslims, Parathavars etc. were attributable to the failure of the political mechanism to maintain a balance among contestants. The invasion of the Sultanate of Madurai and areas further south by Kampana Udayar in the long run caused the birth of small chieftaincies that fought among themselves. In chaotic situations, the relevance of social values like tolerance, adjustments, etc were naturally under-stressed<sup>67</sup>.

As far as the Muslims were concerned they were a numerical minority – though dominant in the sphere of economy – and were bound to protect their identity. Their extra caution was only natural which delayed their integration with the main stream society. The integration was further undermined by the rivalry over the resources of the Pearl Fishery Coast. The rivalry found expression in the division of other beneficiaries of the Pearl Fishery Coast into pro-Muslims and pro-Parathavars. It was unfortunate that the Parathavars found only a minimum support from other people. An introspection of the situation by the Parathavars easily explained the dimension of religion within it. The arrival of Portuguese who gave a tough time to the Muslims in the field of trade occurred at that time.

The gradual expansion of the Portuguese – traceable from their superior status in technology of ships, weapons etc. was followed by implementation of several welfare policies. Those who volunteered to associate with the Portuguese happened to confirm their loyalty by adoption of Christianity. But in the case of the Parathavars, the organization and military strength of the Portuguese had more meaning than these welfare policies. Moreover, those

who volunteered to collaborate with the Portuguese at the very first instance were the Parathavars of the economically assertive class whose support was also required by the former to establish themselves in both sides of the Gulf of Mannar.

In such a backdrop, their adoption of Christianity en masse in reaction to a civil-strife was but an excuse to protect their economic interest. The fabric of the Indian society of that time was tolerant as pointed out by the Nationalist Historians insofar there remained hardly any mechanism to either prevent or to reconvert the Parathavar into the majority religion<sup>68</sup>. Nevertheless, there was also effectively present scope for mass conversion to remain just an expression of disaffection over the erstwhile fellows of the majority religion. Therefore, it required a monk like St. Xavier either in person or as imagery to actually guide the people in the tenets of the newly adopted religion.

## References

1. Parathavars are Tamil-speaking native people who predominantly inhabit the Southern Coast of Tamil Nadu.
2. Benedetto, L.F., (ed.), *The Travels of Marco Polo*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1994, pp. 296-297; they never informed the need of farriers or the systematic method of horse maintenance. Therefore, out of 2000 horses bought every year by the *Pandyan King* only 100 horses sustained. The amount they fixed per horse was also comparatively higher.
3. Patrick Roche, A., *Fishermen of the Coromandel-A Social Study of the Paravas of the Coromandel*, (New Delhi,: Manohar, 1984) p. 39; he infers from *Theenerivilakam*, a thirteenth century work on political history of the *Muslims* of *Kayalpatnam*.
4. Nelson, J. H., *The Madura Country A Manual*, Part

- II (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), pp. 80-81.
5. Robert Caldwell, *Thirunelveli Sarithiram* (Chennai: Kavya, 1977) p. 81; their migration was explained through a myth according to which the area between Vijayanagar Kingdom and Kanyakumari was conquered by Mujahid Shah. This may be considered only as their influence continuing in the said region.
  6. J.H. Nelson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 86; these were the Saiyads, Sheks, and Pathans. The Saiyads claimed that they were the descendants of the Prophet, the Sheks asserted their lineage from the friends and followers of the Prophet.
  7. Pate, H.R., *Tinnevelly District Gazetteer (1916)*, (Tirunelveli: Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, 1993) p. 98.
  8. In a discussion with Mr. Vellaithamby Ameerdeen, Assoc. Prof of Political Science, Peradeiniya University, Sri Lanka during our stay at the Jawaharlal Nehru University between July and August 2002, he stated that the Tamil Muslims of Sri Lanka have Moorish physical features and they trace their origin from Kayalpatnam.
  9. *Marco Polo*, he has stated that there were no native soldiers in Ceylon and at times of military needs they made use of the *Saracens*, p. 291..
  10. The social life as projected by Marco Polo was suggestive of this degeneration wherein features of chastity and martial behaviour seemed to have disappeared.
  11. Pate, H.R., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 499-500.
  12. *Ibid.* pp. 499-500.
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. *Ibid.*
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. *Ibid.* he traces the converts chiefly from *Katasans*, p. 500;.

17. The Parathavar men were addressed as *chacha* by the *new-Muslims*. The contextual kinship meaning was that the *Muslims* could not enter into matrimonial alliance with the Parathavars since the latter avoid parallel-cousin marriage.
18. Nelson, H.R., *Op. Cit.*, the Udayars ruled from 1374 to 1451, the Pandiyans ruled from 1451 to 1500 and thereafter the Nayakkans, pp. 82-83
19. Jorge Manuel Flores in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.), *Sinners and Saints The Successors of Vasco Da Gama*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 60.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
21. Britto Vincent (ed.), *Thooya Saveriar Kadithangal* (Palayamkottai: FRRC, 2002), Letter of Francis Xavier from Punnaikayal dated 16 June, 1544; the letter mentions that the commander stationed at *Negapattinam* had considerable influence upon the *King of Jaffna*. But in a Letter of Francis Xavier from Cochin dated 18 December, 1544, the *King of Jaffna* was said to have rendered some serious injustice to the *Christian* converts. This makes clear the point that there was intolerance upon people who opted out of a religion followed by majority.
22. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu Ponvizha Vezhiyeedu, 1923-1973*, (Tuticorin: The Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 1973) p. 25.
23. Maria Augusta Lima Cruz in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.), *Op. cit.*, pp. 13-14;
24. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 26; it was popularly known as *Papal Line of Demarcation*.
25. Luis Filipe F.R. Thomaz in K.S. Mathew, et. al., *Op. Cit.*, p. 32.
26. *Ibid.* p. 31; He was a *Calabrese* monk who lived between 1130 and 1202. He divided the history of Human life into three phases and related it with the *Holy Trinity*.

The first phase was that of *God the Father* viewable in the *Old Testament* followed by *God the Son* viewable in the *New Testament*. The lapses of the institutional church in the second phase would lead towards the third phase inspired by the *Holy Spirit*. In this phase, purity will be ascertained and monks will lead the society.

27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.* pp. 29-35.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*; many of the practices of the native St. Thomas Christians were branded as heresy by priests of the Roman Catholic order.
31. *Ibid.*; the scholar states that King Manuel had such ambitions since 1501.
- <sup>32</sup>. Maria Augusta Lima Cruz in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.), *Op. Cit.*;
33. Jorge Manuel Flores in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, p.62;
34. Teotonio R. de. Souza in K.S. Mathew, Teotonio R. de. Souza and Pius Malekandathil (eds.), *The Portuguese and the Socio-Cultural Changes in India*, (Tellicherry: Fundacao Oriente, 2001) pp. 440-442; the *Portuguese* sailors married Muslim women who they took as captives and Hindu women they liked. But they were reportedly bored with their Indian consorts.
35. T.K. Oommen and Hunter P. Mabry, *The Christian Clergy in India Vol. I, Social Structure and Social Roles*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 43-45.
36. Fatima da Silva Gracias in K.S. Mathew et. al. (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, pp. 280-281; alms were regularly distributed by the king whereas Albuquerque ordered the release of financial assistance to poor Native Christians and Indo-Portuguese children.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

38. *Ibid*, p. 280.
39. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 26.
40. *Ibid*.
41. *Ibid*.
42. Jorge Manuel Flores, in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, p. 58
43. *Ibid*, p.60.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
46. Name as transliterated from the Tamil source *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu Ponvizha Vezhiyeedu, 1923-1973*.
47. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 29.
48. Name as transliterated from the Tamil source *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*.
49. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 29.
50. *Ibid*.
51. Luis Filipe F.R. Thomaz in K.S. Mathew, et. al., *Op. Cit.*, p. 36.
52. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 30.
53. *Ibid*.
54. *Ibid*.
55. Clarence Thomas Maloney, *The Effect of Early Coastal Sea Traffic on the Development of Civilization in South India*, Unpublished Ph. D. thesis submitted in the Dept. of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania in 1968, p. 115; the author records the Sinhalese proverb that states 'Parathavar people are like our people'. He also discusses about traditions of Parathavar immigration to Sri Lanka.
56. Decla, S., *Muthukulithuraiyil Porchukeesiyar* (Tamil), (Chennai: New Century Book House, 2009), pp. 22-23; There seemed to have emerged a quarrel between a Parathavar man and a few Muslim men since the latter eve-teased the former's wife at Tuticorin harbor sometimes around early 1530s. The Parathavar man was insulted

by cutting-off of his ear with ring. This triggered a scuffle between Parathavars and the Muslims. The Parathavars initially killed a few Muslims. The Muslims retaliated heavily by declaring that they will give five *panams* for every Parathavar head. The non-Muslims slaughtered Parathavar men in large numbers and ceased only when the amount was lowered.

57. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 33.
58. Letter of Francis Xavier from Manapad dated 16 June, 1544 and from Alandalai dated 5 September 1544; at times of crisis caused by politically powerful enemies they took refuge in any one of the three coral reefs located to the South East of Kanyakumari. There were also islands such as Kosal Yeri, Vaan Theevu and Pandyan Theevu (also called Muyal Theevu)
- <sup>59</sup>. Pavananthi Vembulu R and John Suresh Kumar, R, *Circling the Triangle: Vulnerability, Social Exclusion and the Making of Disaster*, Research Paper Series, (Tirunelveli: Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, 2010).
60. Letter of Francis Xavier from Manapad dated 19 August, 1544; it could be inferred from the letter that these people took asylum in the forest areas that was not familiar to them as much as it was to their rivals.
61. Ibid. dated 3 August, 1544; the letter highlights the importance of ransom in conflicts of that period.
62. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 33.
63. Veeramuthu, C., in Manikumar K.A. and Vinod Vincent Rajesh (eds.), *Southern Tamil Nadu through the Ages*, (Tirunelveli: Dept. of History, M.S. University, 2011), p. 101.
64. *Thuthukudi Maraimavatta Kaiyedu*, p. 35.
65. *The Travels of Marco Polo*, p. 309.

66. A. Sivasubramanian, *Uppittavarai* , (Chennai: Kalachuvadu Pathipagam, 2009).
67. Interview of Udhayakumar S.P., in *Kalachuvadu* dated November, 2006, p. 26; he states that tolerance is one of the internal features of Parathavar society.
68. During the mass conversion that occurred at Meenakshipuram political parties like BJP attempted prevent conversion. Leaders at the National level paid personal visit to the village. There were also sympathizers for the converts from among the communist parties.



## JAINA INSTITUTIONS

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### Introduction

Dr. Heinrich Zimmer regarded Jainism as the oldest of the non-Aryan group [and] believed that [Jain] religion goes back to a remote antiquity, the antiquity in question being that of the pre-Aryan, so called Dravidian period, which has recently been dramatically illuminated by the discovery of a series of great Late Stone Age cities in the Indus Valley, dating from the third and perhaps even the fourth millennium BCE<sup>1</sup>. Parsva, who was born about in 872 BCE. and gained *nirvana* in 772 BCE., is reckoned as a predecessor of Mahavira,<sup>2</sup> who in contrast to the Buddha, is never declared to have received through his enlightenment the understanding of any new philosophical principle or any special insight not already familiar to his period<sup>3</sup>. The Buddhist historical records, then, would seem to support the traditional Jaina representation of Mahavira as the last-not the first [Jina]<sup>4</sup>

Preceding Parsva, stands Aristnemi who by 'Jaina tradition breaks beyond the bounds of recorded history into the reaches of the mythological past'<sup>5</sup>.

The historic records of the establishment of the ecclesiastical institution of Jainism, known as *Mulasangha* is attributed to Mahavira. According to the Kalpasutra of Bhadrabahu I, the last *srutakevalin*,<sup>6</sup> the *mulasangha* consisted of 14,000 monks with Indrabhuti as the chief and 36,000 nuns with Aryika

Candana as the head<sup>7</sup>. The eleven ganadharas with Indrabhuti Gautama as the chief thus became the first pontiff of the *mula sangha* instituted by Mahavira. These ganadharas, who formed an important part of Jain history as well as Indian, were said to have understood the philosophy and preaching of Mahavira, and imported the preaching by *sutras* strung together in a systematic arrangement in sections and chapters for the benefit of the lay-votaries<sup>7</sup>. Indrabhuti Gautama was said to have composed the 12 Arigas and 14 Purvas, and was the interlocutor of the third Upanga, Jivajivabhigama. The fifth *ganadhara Sudharma* had actually taught the second section of *Nyadhammakaha*, *Suhavivaga* and *Anuttarovaityadasa* to his disciples Jambu and Prabhasa at Campa<sup>9</sup>. The name of Prabhasa, which is a Sanskrit form, is found in the Udayagiri caves of Odisha and its original Prakrit form, Prabha occurs at Vaddamanu<sup>10</sup>.

According to Avassaya (*Avasya Sutras*)<sup>11</sup>, Mahavira himself took up the task of spreading his gospel in different parts of the country. As the names of places were associated with the wanderings of Mahavira during his missionary work in the Magadha region<sup>12</sup>, correspondingly names of number of places of Jain origin like Nandigama, Hathigama (Sttili), Vaddamanu etc., in the coastal region between the rivers of Godavari and Krishna substantiate that Mahavira with a band of followers set on his missionary work at Tosali in Orissa and Mosali in Andhra, after leaving Bhoganagara near Vaisali. Other names of villages like Bhogapura, Bhohanagara in Andhra indicate the evidence of vestiges of Bhoganagara missionaries in Vaisali established by Mahavira<sup>13</sup>. Recent excavation in the ancient Jaina site of Vaddamanu in Guntur district in Andhra has yielded two potsherds with *Bramhi* inscriptions reading as *Bhogasangha*<sup>14</sup>. Though the letter characters are not very early on paleographic grounds, the inscriptions suggest a period not later than the beginning of CE.

In working out a datable sequence of the above events, one prominent *datum* was the *nirvana* of Mahavira,<sup>15</sup> which took place in 527 BCE., the date corroborated by historical record. Thus, it certainly can be stated that the *mulasangha* was established by Mahavira as the ecclesiastical institution of Jainism in the sixth BCE.

In the line of this monastic order, Gautama, Sudharma and Jambu who attained the highest knowledge of dharma-were identified as kevalins, and they transmitted their full knowledge to their disciples : Vishnu, Nandisvara, Aparajita, Govardhana, Sthulabhadra and Bhadrabahu-I<sup>16</sup>.

Bhadrabahu-I was the last of this lineage who maintained the complete knowledge of 12 *Angas* and 14 *Purvas* transmitted from the time of Mahavira. He was the preceptor of Chandragupta Maurya, the grandfather of Asoka, who reigned between 324-300 BCE<sup>17</sup>. His migration to the south along with his *sangha* and his emperor disciple is supported by historic evidence at Vaddamanu and the megalithic culture represented by 'dolemnoid cists' that are prevalent in parts of Andhra and Kumbakonam in Tamilnadu and in northern Karnataka<sup>18</sup>.

After the migration of Bhadrabahu to the south, this first ecclesiastical institution established by Mahavira had undergone metamorphosis with good response, and after 300 years, the *mulasangha* became a force in the South.

After Bhadrabahu, there hailed ten-Purvins, eleven-Angins and three minor-Angins over a period of 314 years. It was in 53 BCE., the last-Angins Bhadrabahu-II held the pontifical chair of the *mulasangha*. He was followed by Guptigupta, MaghanandinI and Jinacandra-I<sup>19</sup>. Kundakunda became the fourth in the line after Bhadrabahu-II.

## Division of the *Mulasangha*

Not long after the pontificacy of Acharya Kundakunda, Arhatbali at the behest of Dhurasena of Gujarat, the last repository of the full knowledge, summoned the assembly of the monks of north and south at Mahima on the banks of the river Venya in Andhra. During the official deliberations, the *mulasangha* was divided into Digambaras and Svetambaras, and then the groups resorted to the compilation of knowledge each on its own way<sup>20</sup>.

Although the *mulasangha* under the banner of *Nandisangha* continued in the south, it was split further around in 66 CE into splinter groups – Sena, Deva and Bhadra<sup>21</sup>.

The ecclesiastical institution established by Mahavira thus lasted for over 600 years and despite the fact that it got splintered into groups headed by respective acharyas, the *mulasangha* maintained its hold continuously with a singular religious and social structure till it was divided into irreconcilable Svetambara and Digambara traditions in circa 82 C.E.

The period from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries was most eventful in the history of the Jaina church in Andhradesa. It began with the establishment of several new monastic orders in Andhradesa. It has been stated in the earlier chapter that the Chalukyas of Vengi were a collateral branch of the imperial Chalukyas of Badami. They came from Karnataka and established their sway over Andhra where they ruled for at least four centuries. It is also apparent from the Musinikonda grant of Vishnuvardhana III<sup>22</sup> that Chandraprabha, the founder of the Nadumbi-vasadi, might have migrated from western Deccan along with Kubja-Vishnuvardhana to Vengi. Similarly, due to the matrimonial alliances between the Chalukyas of Vengi and the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta frequent migrations of Jains from Karnataka to

Andhra and vice-versa took place. In all probability this provided an important reason for the establishment of several new monastic orders in Andhradesa. Sometimes, new monastic orders were also founded by bands of zealous monks. It is also not unlikely, that deserted by their spiritual teachers, these Jaina monks went to nearby places and founded new monastic units. Monastic gradations were formed because every monastic group, indigenous or immigrant, traced its own origin independently in order to play up its organisational status. Connections with the places where their spiritual teachers lived and propagated and with the lineage of their ancient teachers like Kundakundacharya were also established with a similar motive. Thus the multiplication of monastic groups and also the use of several terms indicating the position of a particular order in the monastic gradations came into existence.

### ***Mulasangha***

It was, no doubt, the most predominant monastic order of the Jaina church in South India and figures prominently in epigraphs. The Sravana Belagola inscriptions of A.D. 1398<sup>23</sup> and 1435<sup>24</sup> have the following account about the nature of this well spread *sangha* : “Arahadbalin ..... made the *mulasangha* consisting of the Kundakundanvaya into four *sanghas* in order to minimise hatred and other (evils) that might arise owing to the nature of times. Let one make a difference in the case of all heterodox *sanghas* such as the Sitambara (Svetambara) and other which are of a form contrary to rule; but he who thinks of such a thing in the case of Sena, Nandi, Deva and Simha sangha is heretic.” The mention, in the above tradition of hatred and other evils is a sufficient commentary on the prevailing dissensions in the Jaina church. According to the above records the splitting up of *mulasangha* took place in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century. Further it must be noted that the splitting of the *mulasangha* by Arhatbali

was not a historical incident. It was a hallowed tradition woven around the personality of Arhatbali, perhaps with a view to convincing the majority of the faithful. Instead of strengthening the solidarity of the church, it actually bred internal bickerings and weaknesses in the monastic community. According to Dr. Ramendra Natha Nandi,<sup>25</sup> what Arhatbali did was not to split a big monastic order into four subdivisions, but to give *dejure* recognition to the existing monastic orders as independent churches.

It becomes clear that the Arhatbali tradition which was reported by the *Srutavata* in 898<sup>26</sup> and corroborated by the above two Sravana Belagola epigraphs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is untenable in the light of the available and authentic epigraphical as well as literary sources. For example, the *Darsanasara*<sup>27</sup> which is considered to be 55 years earlier than the *Srutavata*, accredits Jinasena of the Pancastupanvaya with the reformation and stablization of the four Digambara orders,<sup>28</sup> probably the Sena, Nandi, Deva and Simha sects. Some sects, which are attributed to the sub-divisions of the *mulasangha* seem to have been in a flourishing condition for some time before the days of Arhatbali<sup>29</sup>. The plausible conclusion, for the time being, is that originally these sects, which are described as subdivisions of the *mulasangha*, were perhaps immigrant, groups of monks. After they had settled down in Andhra-Karnataka, these groups were affiliated to the original parent monastic order of the region and were named variously. Since several inscriptions of our collection refer to this *sangha*, it is more than sufficient to prove its importance. The following subdivisions of this *sangha* are to be met with in epigraphs : Kundakundanvaya, Desi-Desiya, Sena, Kanur, Balatkara *ganas* and pustaka gacchha. Out of all these Anvayas, the Kundakundanvaya is the most important and the oldest. It is said to have been started after Kundakunda, the famous Digambara scholar, who flourished in the beginning of the Christian era<sup>30</sup> at Kondakondla in Anantapur district.

## Yapaniya sangha

The *mulasangha* was followed by the establishment of the Yapaniya sangha. Next to *mulasangha* it was considered to be the most important monastic order in Andhra. It figures in four records, the Peddapurappadu copper plates<sup>199(a)</sup>, the Maliyampundi grant<sup>31</sup> and Rayadurgam record<sup>32</sup>. The term Yapaniya is apparently derived from the root 'Ya' meaning 'expelled'<sup>33</sup>. Then they were considered to be a breakaway sect of their parent organization. Regarding the origin of this sangha, two different theories have been put forth : 1) Devasena, in the Darsanasara, refers to a tradition which assigns the origin of the sangha to Srikalasa, a Svetambara monk, who is said to have started it at Kalyana in V.E. 205<sup>34</sup>. 2) Another account refers to a certain queen of the king of Karnataka. She is said to have asked these monks to give up the use of clothes<sup>35</sup>. This is said to have resulted in the adoption of the practice of nudity without giving up of the rest of the practices of the Svetambaras by the Yapaniyas. The *Bhadrabahucharita*<sup>36</sup> thus illustrates the nature of the Yapaniya schism : they were a section of the Digambara community of the lower Deccan who put on white robes as against the Digambara ritual of nudity. They also advocated, contrary to Digambara opinion, that women and house holders were fully entitled to obtain salvation.

This dual allegiance and peculiar nature of the Yapaniya sect led the writer of the Nitisara to denounce them as *Jainabhasa*<sup>37</sup> (those who have only an outward appearance of Jaina monks).

As we are aware, the earliest reference to this sangha is in the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela<sup>38</sup>. According to inscriptions, it is evident that the Yapaniyas had strongholds at Nadupur in the East Godavari District at Dharmavaram<sup>39</sup> in the Prakasam district and at Rayadurgam<sup>40</sup> in the Anantapur district.

Dr. Ramendra Natha Nandi has wrongly stated that apart from Dharmavaram, there is no other evidence to show that the Yapaniyas were active Andhra<sup>41</sup>. It is quite evident from the epigraph engraved on the pedestal of the Rasassiddha image Rayadurgam, was a resort of the adherents of the Yapaniya sect<sup>42</sup>. Still we can see the symbolic representation of the Jaina University in stone there. We can see the ladies too amongst the pupils. “The figures are like the Rashtrakuta figures and they have a lateral pair of fly-whisks (as the Danavulapadu and Bankura figures have) and the triple umbrellas above”<sup>43</sup>. (perhaps Gaccha is not referred to). Three copper plates of Sri Vishamasiddhi (i.e.,) Vishnuvardhana II have been found in Peddapurappadu village, They refer to a certain Jain Acharya Kanakanandi belonging to the *Yapaniya sangha*.

Though the Yapaniyas became unpopular with both the Svetambaras and the Digambaras they helped Jainism to attract popular attention through their missionary zeal. In a word, what Mahayanists had done for Buddhism, the Yapaniyas did for Jainism. They were not rigid in matters of religious practices. They also introduced the cult of Yakshi<sup>44</sup> and gradually adopted Tantrism<sup>45</sup>. *Sriman-Indradeva-muni* of the Yapaniyas of Nandigacchha is said to have possessed *Pratiharyamahima* (i.e., power of working miracles)<sup>46</sup>. The Yapaniyas are called the *Gopyas* (secret orders) as they practised the occult lore<sup>47</sup>.

No doubt, its teachers played a distinguished role in propagating the Jaina faith in south India and influencing its monastic traditions. Karnataka-Andhra became the cradle of the Yapaniya movement. Here the sect was born and reared under the care of royal patrons and it established its branches at various places not only in Andhra but also in Karnataka. They produced many celebrated authors and preceptors like Sivaraya, Svayambhu, Pushpadanta, Ravikirti, the author of the Aihole eulogy and



Sakatayana. Umasvati and Jayakirti who built a temple of the goddess Jvalamalini at Navilagunda. Thus the Yapaniya movement was not a mere schismatic development it gave a long lease of life to the parent Digambara church in the south.

Gradually, a favourable turn took place in the history of Jainism. In the first century A.D. the Jaina *sangha* had been divided into the Svetambaras and Digambaras. The rigidity in the rules was relaxed. The Jaina Acharyas began to tolerate local practices. The rise of the Yapaniyas encouraged the spread of Jainism. In true missionary zeal, the Yapaniyas introduced into Jainism certain innovations and made compromises which attracted popular attention. In a word, what Mahayanists had done for Buddhism for its wide spread, the Yapaniyas did for Jainism. Then, the Jainas began to accept land and monetary grants from kings as well as lay worshippers and build temples, and alm-houses<sup>48</sup> which resulted in the increase in the popularity of Jainism. Moreover, the above change in the attitude of the Jaina *sangha* almost synchronised with the beginning of the decline of Buddhism in Andhra. It may not be wrong to assume that after the discomfiture of Buddhism, Jainism provided an alternative to all those who did not favour the Brahmanical religion.

Sufficient attention has not been paid to the *Yapaniya Sangha*, partly because there was a certain prejudice against the *Yapaniyas*, and because they do not exist today under that name like *Digambaras* and *Svetambaras*. There are various traditions about the origin of the *Yapaniyas*. Devasena, who compiled his *Darisanasara* in the year 909 or 990 after the death of the king Vikrama, records a tradition that Srikalasa a Svetambara monk started the *Yapaniya Sangha* in the town of Kalyana in the year 205 after the death of king Vikrama. Then Ratnanandi<sup>49</sup> (later than 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) narrates, in his *Bhadrabahucarita*, the origin of the *Yapaniya Sangha* in this manner. King Bhupala

was ruling in Karnataka. He had a favourite queen Nrkuladevi, by name. She once told her beloved that there were her teachers in her paternal town and that they should be requested to come over there for the glorification of the religious rites. The king, accordingly sent his minister Buddhisagara who brought those monks after great entreaties. After their arrival the king went forth to receive them with great pomp; but when he saw them from a distance and found that they were not naked monks, he began to wonder who were those new monks equipped with clothing and a bowl and a stick. He returned home without offering respects to them; he told his wife that her teachers were heretics; and he was not ready to respect them, because they were not Jaina monks. The queen understood what her beloved meant. She hurried to those monks and requested them to give up their white clothes and accept the *Nirgrantha* asceticism. Accordingly they give up their old robe and went naked with a water-gourd and a bunch of feathers. Then the king approached them and received them with due decorum. The monks, though Digambara in form, continued the practices of Svetambaras; it is they who formed the *Yapaniya Sangha*.

The tradition being very late in time, one has to be cautious in accepting it as a wholesale and literally. There are some implications of this tradition. The queen perhaps belonged to the Svetambara community, and the Svetambara monks do not appear to have been very popular in the south, if this Karnataka were to be identified with modern Karhad in Satara district of Maharashtra. The *Yapaniyas* are looked upon as a Svetambara schism by both *Devasena* and *Ratnanandi*, though they had an outward appearance of *Digambara* monks.

*Yapaniyas* have been looked upon as a heretic creed by some Digambara writers. Indranandi, in his *Nitisara*<sup>50</sup> (verse 10), includes them under five false sects;

*gopucchikah svetavasa dravido yapaniyakah  
nithpinchasceti pancaite jainabhasah prakirtitah*

The basic meaning of the term *Yapaniya* is a question by itself. Various spellings are available for it: *Uapaniya, Japaniya, Yapani, Apaniya, Yapuliya, Apuliva, Japuli, Javuliya, Javiliya, Javaliya, also Javaligeya*. Different interpretations are already offered, tracing it back to the root with the causal suffix. Telang explained the term ‘as those who wandered about without being stationary’<sup>51</sup>. In early texts like the *Pravacanasara* (III.10) two types of teachers are mentioned : *Pavvajja-dayaga and nijjavaga*. The duty of the *nijjavaga* is to re-establish a defaulter-monk in the correct behaviour. His function is that of controlling and correctly piloting a novice : the Sanskrit equivalent should be *nit-yamaka* rather than *nir-yapaka*<sup>52</sup>. The term *javanijja* is used in more than one sense in early Jaina texts. In the *Nayadhammakahao* there is the expression *imdiya-javanijje*. Here *javanijje* cannot be from *Yapaniya*, but from *yamaniya* going back to the root *yam* to control. We may compare also *thavanijja* stands for *sthapaniya*. So *Yapaniya* is not the correct Sanskritisation, though a catching back-formation. So the *Javanijja* monks (called *Yapaniya*) are those who lead the life of *yama-yama*; compared in this context to the *aujjama-caturyama* dharma of *Parsva*<sup>53</sup>.

It is necessary that we gather some details about the *Yapaniya* teachers, so that we can have a better picture of this *sangha* and of the teachers associated with it in different localities and contexts of events.

### **The Dravida sangha**

Like the *Yapaniya* order, the Dravida *sangha* also championed the cause of the new monasticism. A breakaway group, it is

variously known as the *Dravida*, *Dravila* and *Dramila sangha*. No precise date can be assigned to the origin of this order in view of the contradictory evidence of epigraphs and literary texts. The *Jvalinikalpa*<sup>54</sup> written about 939 CE by Indranandin of the *Dravila sangha*, mentions five generations of preceptors from Helacharya the Head of the *Dravida sangha*. Giving 25 years for each generation, Helacharya can be placed in the first quarter of the ninth century, when this order was founded by Vajranandin. *Darsanasara*, a work of the ninth century, asserts that the *Dravida sangha* was founded at Madurai by Vajranandin,<sup>55</sup> the disciple of Pujiyapada Devanandin, in the year 536 of the Vikrama Era. According to Saletore<sup>56</sup>. “the establishment of the *Dravila sangha* at Madura was the work of Vajranandin in the last quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> or in the first quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. Epigraphs mostly of the post-ninth century CE period, refer to it. At this stage we may conclude that perhaps this sect was founded in the late eighth or early ninth century CE. Two more records<sup>57</sup> belonging to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries CE., of our collection furnish the line of preceptors of this *sangha*.

Dr. P. B. Deasi<sup>58</sup> analysing the term ‘Pattini’ a Tamil expression which is commonly met with in the inscriptions of the Tamil area, connected the *Dravida sangha* with the Tamil country. On the other hand, innumerable inscriptions from Karnataka speak of its existence in the Kannada area. Even the *Jvalinikalpa* does not connect the *Dravida sangha* with the Tamil church, relying on the available epigraphs of Karnataka and the *Jvalinikalpa*, R. N. Nandi<sup>59</sup> rightly observed that the *Dravida-sangha* originated and flourished in Karnataka during the early medieval times. For instance, in 1040 (CE) the sect is characterised as a branch of the *mulasangha*<sup>60</sup> and it is also referred to as a subsect of the *Nandi sangha*<sup>61</sup> and the *Kundakundanyaya*,<sup>61</sup> which generally represent the Digambara church of Karnataka.

The origin of the sect may be attributed to the differences in monastic practices. Its members led by Vajranandin demanded a fair amount of latitude in matters relating to food habits, living in monasteries, earning their livelihood by agriculture and so forth.<sup>63</sup> when the puritans refused to oblige them they broke away from the parent church to found a new order, Vajranandin even prepared a new text of expiatory rites (*prayaschittas*)<sup>64</sup> in order to safeguard his monks against the criticism of the puritan Digambara teachers.

### **Gauli sangha or Gauda sangha**

The origin and development of this *sangha* is a mystery indeed, though the famous Somadevasuri belongs to it. *Gauli* or *Golla* is mentioned in the Sravana Belagola inscriptions as a kingdom in the south. It is also evident from the epigraphs<sup>65</sup> that only Somadeva-suri belonged to this *sangha*. Yasodeva, the guru of Somadeva's guru Nemideva, is also assigned to this *sangha*<sup>66</sup>. Since Somadeva-suri, the preceptor of Gauli-sangha, is said to have been a court-poet of Arikesarin III<sup>67</sup>, whose capital was at Lembulapataka (modern Vemulavada, Karimnagar district, Andhra Pradesh), it may tentatively be held that this *sangha* originated and flourished only in Vemulavada. This also explains the absence of the sect in other parts of Andhra.

### **Ganas**

Having dealt with the Jaina *sanghas* referred to in the epigraphs, let us now pass on to the subdivisions, namely *ganas*. Out of them, *Destya* or *Desi gana* is a widely prevalent branch of the *mulasangha* and is mentioned earlier. In the epigraphs from Andhra-Karnataka area, the *Desi-gana* is variously referred to as *Desiya Desiga* and *Desika*. It is referred more frequently

in the records of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Govinda Pai<sup>68</sup> may be right in stating that the country between the Western Ghats (the uplands of the present North Kanara district), the Karnataka country of early and medieval times and the Godavari river was known as *desa* and the teachers who settled there, christened their order as the *Desi-gana* for the adjective *desi* is derived from Sanskrit *desa* which means 'homeland'. In many records of Andhradesa<sup>69</sup> the *Desi-gana* is referred to as a branch of the *mulasangha* and the *Kundakundanvaya*, which was the parent church of the *Digambara* monks of the South.

Kanur or *kranur-gana* next of *Desi-gana* was an important order. Though it is considered to be a less known section of the Jaina monastic orders of South India, five records of our collection furnish valuable details pertaining to its teachers.<sup>70</sup> a lengthy pedigree of the teachers belonging to the *Kanur-gana* and *Meshapashana-gacchha* has been furnished by the Jadcherla, Govindapuram and Kolanupak records. Besides *Balatkaragana*,<sup>71</sup> *Sena-gana*,<sup>72</sup> *Simha-gana*,<sup>73</sup> *Kalamilupugana*.<sup>74</sup> *Surashtra-gana*,<sup>75</sup> *Valahari-gana*,<sup>76</sup> *Kotimaduva-gana*<sup>77</sup> etc. have been represented in one record each.

The existence of these various units leads us to the following conclusions

1. The multiplication of monastic groups is apparent from the fact that several terms are used to indicate the position of a particular order in the monastic gradations.

2. Some of these were named after the names of the eminent Acharyas, viz., *Kundakunda*, *Vadiraja* etc.<sup>78</sup>
3. Of all these *sanghas*, the *Mulasangha* and *Kundakundanvaya* appear to have been very old and prominent.
4. These *sanghas* referred to in epigraphs mostly belong to the period 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and after.
5. Most of these *sanghas* and their sub-divisions seem to have been prevalent only in Karnataka and Andhra.

### Notes and References

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2. *Ibid*, p. 183.
3. *Ibid*, p. 224.
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Ibid*, p. 225.
6. Kalparsutra; pp. XXV – XXVi, *Prakrit Bharati*, Jaipur, 1984.
7. *Ibid*, Verse 133-134.
8. Bhuvanendra Kumar, *Jainism in America*, p. 68 Jain Humanities press 1966.
9. *Ibid*, p.71.
10. *Ibid*, p. 73.
11. Arhat vacana, p. 61, December 1965, Indore.
12. K. C. Jain, *Lord Mahavira and his Times*, p. 52
13. *Ibid*, p. 54.

14. *Op. Cit.* p. 56.
15. J. P. Jain, *The Jaina Sources of History of Ancient India*, pp. 32-54.
16. Gopala Krishna Murthy, *Jain vestiges in Andhra*, p. 10.
17. *Age of Imperial unites*, p. 54, Baharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.
18. *Jainism in America*, p. 78.
19. A. Chakravarti, *Pancastikayasara*, pp. iii – v, Bharatiya -Jnanapith, 1975.
20. J. P. Jain, *Op. Cit.* p. 107.
21. *Ibid.* p. 268.
22. JAHRS. XVI, parts 1-4, pp. 42 ff. ARSIE, 1916-17.  
C. P. No.9.
23. Ec. II, No. 254, also No. 105.
24. S. R. Sharma, *Jainism and Karnataka Culture*, pp. 151-152.
25. Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan. p. 49.
26. *Srutavatara* was composed in 898, C.f. JA. XV, No.2; 1944 pp.I ff.
27. *Darsanasara* was composed in 843, C. f. Hiralal catalogue of MSS. p. 652, A. N. Upadhyay, *Pravachanasara*, Introduction, p. 21, B.A. Saletore MJ, p. 234.
28. *Darsamasara* (premi. Sedn) V. 30. Causamgha Samuddharana dhiro.
29. Thus the Nandi Sangha is mentioned as a branch of the Mulasangha in a record of 776; EC. IV. No. 86.
30. For details, see *Upadhye, pravachanasara*, Introduction p. XXii.  
(a). Bharati, October, 1983 and May 1985.
31. EI. IX. pp 47-56.
32. ARSIE, 1914. No. 109.



33. Monier Williams, *Sanskrit – English Dictionary*.
34. S. B. Deo. *Op. Cit.* p.555.
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36. *Bhadrabahucharita* (Kolhapur Edn.) Ch. IV 1921.
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## **STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE PERIOD OF RAJARAJA I**

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### **Introduction**

Women since ancient times played an important role in the social and economic life of a nation and they contributed a lot to socio-economic development. But their role had been totally neglected in history since only very few details are available from inscriptions about the condition of women. This article has made an attempt to study the status of women in the period of Rajaraja I (CE 985-1014). It does not include the temple women (*Devaradiyar*) since a detailed study about them has already been made.<sup>1</sup> The present study has been made primarily on the basis of the information given in inscriptions which record gifts to temples and other property transactions. Except a few inscriptions issued by the king, other inscriptions are brief and do not give elaborate details. An effort has been made to study the status of women on the basis of these inscriptions.

Rajaraja I was the most illustrious ruler of the Chola dynasty of Vijayalaya line which ruled the Tamil country from CE 850 to 1279. He conquered most parts of South India, Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) and the Maldives. With the accession of Rajaraja I in the year 985, the Chola dynasty entered into a period of glory and grandeur. His period witnessed the growth of art, and architecture, religion and literature in the Chola empire. Inscriptions issued by him give examples of women of the upper classes owning property rights and had the right to dispose it at their

choice. Sometimes princesses of the royal family (for example, Kundavai, sister of Rajaraja I) exercised a great influence in politics, religion and society. However the majority of the ordinary women folk did not enjoy property rights and did not have a voice in the society.

Generally, all the women named in the epigraphs were economically and socially privileged women. Details about the poor and marginalized women are almost neglected in inscriptions and so it is difficult to understand their status. For the sake of convenience, women who were named in the inscriptions are divided into four categories, viz., royal women, wives of chieftains, Brahmins, other or ordinary women. The largest number of inscriptions consulted gives us information about the royal women and a few about ordinary women.

### **Royal women**

Royal women include wives, mothers, daughters and relatives of the king and queens. The highest number of references in inscriptions which named women i.e. 46 (43%) belongs to this group. Royal women enjoyed a higher socio-economic status. They had property rights. Since they belonged to the economically advanced community, they gave liberal donations to temples and to other social activities. They set up images in various metals like gold, (eg.– Panchavanmahadevi, the senior queen of Rajaraja I set up the image of Umasahitar in his 10<sup>th</sup> regnal year)<sup>2</sup> donated Chauri to god in the third year of Rajaraja I),<sup>3</sup> granted land as tax free gift for conducting special worship to the god on the day of her and her husband's natal star Sadayam,<sup>4</sup> granted gold, silver and pearl ornaments and vessels to god (by Dantisakti-Vitanki alias Lokamadevi, another queen of Rajaraja I<sup>5</sup> and by Kundavai,<sup>6</sup>) performed *hiranyagarbha* in the temple (by Dantisakti-Vitanki alias Lokamadevi),<sup>7</sup> built a temple (by Dantisakti-Vitanki

alias Lokamadevi at Tiruvaiyaru<sup>8</sup> and, by Kundavai<sup>9</sup>), granted land as *tiruppalibogam* for conducting the *sribali* ceremony<sup>10</sup>, donated land as *devadana* for various services in the temple like dance master, for dancing, playing musical instruments, the maintenance of lamps in the temple, bathing the deity, food offerings to the deity and for feeding the *brahmanas* and ascetics. The liberal donative activities of the royal women during the period of Rajaraja I could be considered as being public and assertive. It also indicates their control over resources and their acquisition of prestige by involving in social, economic and religious activities.

Some royal women exercised great political influence in the kingdom. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri is of the opinion that they exerted influence on the public policy of the ruling princess<sup>11</sup>. They had the power to issue royal orders. For instance on the basis of the royal writ issued by Pirantakan Kundavai Pirattiyar, the elder sister of Rajaraja I, the officer named Aruran Aravanaiyan alias Parakramasola Muvendavelan of Panaiyur in Ilaiyur – nadu ordered the temple treasury to be examined and the gifts made engraved on stone in the three temples built by her in the city of Rajarajapuram in Nallur nadu, a subdivision of Venkunrakkottam.<sup>12</sup> In another instance, the assembly of the village Tirukkodika and the Maheswaras, on the receipt of an order from Udaiyapirattiyar Sembiyanmadeviyar in the 13<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Rajaraja I, met together and issued instructions to the temple servants as to how they should irrigate certain lands<sup>13</sup>. According to another inscription Latamadeviyar, wife of Virasolar, issued an order granting land as *Tiruppailbogam* for conducting the *sribali* ceremony in the temple during the three *sandhis* with five persons<sup>14</sup>.

The queens were highly respected in the society. So endowments were made in their names. For instance, a certain Arangan Kodandaraman of Panivagamangalam endowed a gift by purchase

of a tank and land for offerings to the god Tiruvira-Vinnagar Alvar in the name of the queen Sembiyan Mukkokkilanadigal alias Kannara Nachchi Pidaranangai in the 18<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Rajaraja I<sup>15</sup>. After their death, they were treated as goddesses and temples were built in honour of them. For instance the temple of Lokamadevi Isvaram was built by Rajaraja I in his 24<sup>th</sup> regnal year at Tiuvaiyaru in Poygai-nadu in Rajendrasimhavalanadu and daily worship was instituted in her name in the temple.<sup>15a</sup>. A temple called Panchavanmadevisvaram was built in honour of Panchavan Mahadevi, queen of Rajaraja I in the village called Pattisvaram<sup>16</sup>.

### **Brahman women**

The *Brahman* women occupied the second strata of the social hierarchy. They are generally referred to in the inscriptions as *Brahmani*. There are only 10 inscriptions (3.7%) which named *Brahman* women in the period under study. So it is difficult to study about their condition in detail.

### **Women of chieftains' family**

The women belonging to the families of chieftains, officers of the king and the headmen of villages and executive members of the village committee were next to the royal women in economic status and to the *Brahmans* in social status. There are 15 references (14.4%) about them in inscriptions.

### **Maid servants**

The maid servants in the palace are those who were in the service of the king and queens or those who belonged to a palace establishment (*velam*). They are mentioned in inscriptions as '*pendatti*'. They constitute 3.7% (4 in number) of the total number

of references of women in inscriptions. ‘They seem to have enjoyed a high status at the court’<sup>17</sup>. It seems they enjoyed greater social and economic status than other women in the society. Their endowment of sheep and money<sup>18</sup>, a gold *tali* set with a double row of gems, a necklace of 27 pearls and a pair of pearl *sidukku* to the goddess in a temple at Tiruvidaimarudur in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Rajaraja I<sup>19</sup> and silver and copper images<sup>20</sup> indicate that they enjoyed a better economic status.

### **Other women**

This category includes all other women who cannot be brought under other categories. Not many details about them are available in inscriptions because many inscriptions are very short and direct in recording their donations. They provide only sketchy information about them. This category of women is the largest in the number of references in inscriptions after the category of royal women. Their donations include various types of items including gold, land and sheep. Most of them were given for the purpose of lamps.

### **Social activities of women**

Women in the period of Rajaraja I were involved in social activities. They donated money for the reclamation of wasteland. An inscription issued in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Rajaraja records that a *Brahman* lady of Mudikonda-chaturvedimangalam in Vanagoppadi paid 60 *kasu* for reclaiming 315 *kuli* of unsaleable wasteland belonging to the Trivikrama temple at Tirukkoyilur<sup>21</sup>. Two inscriptions give information about the grant of land for the creation of *erippatti*<sup>22</sup>. For instance, a lady assigned 500 *kuli* of land as *erippatti* for Murugan-eri sunk to the south of the village Punnaippakkam in Vengi-nadu in the 28<sup>th</sup> year of the king for the merit of her brother<sup>23</sup>. Another inscription gives information



about the donation given by a lady for the renovation of the *ambalam*<sup>24</sup>.

### **Some social practices related to women**

Certain social practices which were related to women were practiced in the period of Rajaraja I. Of course, they had not been introduced in the Chola period but were the age old customs practiced in the Tamil country from ancient times. Some of them which affected women were *sati* and polygamy. *Stridhana* was given by a very few families of upper social strata and it was not compulsory.

#### ***Sati***

*Sati* or the self-immolation of women on the funeral pyre of her husband was practiced in the period of Rajaraja I. But it was not common. There is only one reference about *sati* in the inscriptions of Rajaraja. Vanavan-Mahadevi, the queen of Sundara Chola Parantaka II committed *sati* on the death of her husband<sup>25</sup>. "The language of these inscriptions together with the absence of any other instance of a Chola queen practicing *sati*, shows that the action of Vanavan-mahadevi was indeed applauded, but not imitated"<sup>26</sup>.

#### ***Stridhana***

"*Stridhana* literally means a property bestowed on a lady by her parents on the occasion of her marriage. Owing to their affection for the daughter the parents might have liked to give a part and sometimes even the whole of the bride price to be enjoyed by her as a separate estate during her life time"<sup>27</sup>. The practice of giving *stridhana* was found in the period of Rajaraja I. There is not much reference to this practice in

inscriptions except only one. According to an inscription belonging to the 3<sup>rd</sup> regnal year of Rajaraja, Iladaraya Kanamalan Nambili presented the village ....temari in Iladaippadi Kodungalur-nadu as stridhana to his daughter Keninangai on her marriage with Vanakovaraiyan Tongal Maravan alias Mummudisola-Vanakovaraiyar (Bana feudatory chieftain of Rajaraja)<sup>28</sup>. The reference of this practice by a feudatory chieftain indicates that it was not a common practice and was prevalent only among the wealthy people and among the people of the upper social strata.

### **Polygamy**

There are clear evidences from inscriptions on the prevalence of polygamy in the royal family. For instance Rajaraja I had many wives. "The queens mentioned in his inscriptions as making gifts to temples and in other connections number about fifteen."<sup>29</sup> Some of them mentioned in the inscriptions are Panchavanmahadevi, Dantisakti-Vitanki alias Lokamadevi, Vanavanmahadevi alias Tribhuvanamahadevi, Kuttan Viraniyar,<sup>30</sup> Ilangon Pichchi,<sup>31</sup> Solamadeviyar, daughter of Tittaipiran,<sup>32</sup> Battan Danatongiyar,<sup>33</sup> Nakkan Arulmoli alias Piridimadeviyar,<sup>34</sup> Vemban Sirudaiyar.<sup>35</sup> But K.A. Nilakanta Sastri feels it is hard to be sure of it<sup>36</sup> that he had fifteen wives.

Some rich men had followed the practice of having concubines or mistresses. At least a few women were the concubines of rich men. Another inscription records the setting up of the images of Vinayaka and Subrahmanya in the Tirukkalukunram-udaiya Nayanar temple at Tirukkalukunram by Aludaiyalammai, the mistress of Sattuvayan Viravisadan Atchikondan of Perumbachecheri in Mondur-nadu.<sup>37, 38</sup>

The study of inscriptions in the period of Rajaraja I reveals the fact that the significant role played by women was the role of donor. This was an important role of women of all categories of women mentioned in inscriptions. The following table gives details about the nature and frequency of donations given by all categories of women.

**Table: 1**

**Donations to temples by women of different social status**

S No.		Land	Gold and other precious metals	Money	Sheep	Lamp and Lamp stand	Paddy	Building Temples	Set up images	Total
1	Royal Women	9	14	4	8	3	2	3	3	46 (43%)
2	Maid Servants in the palace	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	4 (3.7%)
3	Wives of Chieftains and officers	9	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	15 (14%)
4	Brahman Ladies	1	2	5	0	0	1	1	0	10(9.3%)
5	Other Women	4	8	7	9	4	0	0	0	32(30%)

The data in the above table indicate clearly that most of the donations to temples were given by royal women. The larger number of donations of land, gold and other precious metals, setting up of images and building temples prove the fact that they enjoyed a higher economic status than the other groups of women. They had property rights and the right to utilize their property as they wished. Their donations included all types of things. It also proves that they played a major and active role in religious activities. “That the women who were taking part in Chola domestic and administrative machineries only appeared to have possessed both movable and divisible properties can be known from the fact that they were the people to donate or transact the properties to others/temples. They were at top in the society”<sup>39</sup>.

The women in the families of chieftains and officers of the king and the leaders of the villages played a significant role next to the royal women in religious and economic activities. Most of their donations were land, particularly land by purchase. They purchased and sold land and then gave their donations to temples. It shows that this category of women actively engaged in economic activities by possessing, purchasing and selling lands.

Most of the donations given by the *Brahman* women were in the form of money. However the donations given by the category of other women varied widely, with the category of sheep more in number. However there is no reference to the gift of images and for the construction of temples by them. It shows that very few women belonging to this category enjoyed property rights and that they did not exercise any influence or power in the society. Their donations might have been from the little economic resources they had.

The purpose of giving endowments to temple also varies from one group of women to another. Most of the endowments, whether it is sheep or money or gold or land, given by the category of other women are for burning perpetual lamps. There are 31 references for lamps and only 5 references for offerings to god from 33 inscriptions mentioning the endowments by other women. But the royal women gave their donations for the purpose of instituting festivals, special offerings and worship in the temples on festive occasions, feeding the *Brahmans* and ascetics, various services in the temple bathing the deity etc. apart from the purpose of perpetual lamps and for their maintenance. Except a few inscriptions which mention the endowment by them specially for the purpose of perpetual lamps, all the other inscriptions refer to the above said purposes.

There are 7 references in 15 inscriptions about the endowments by the women in the family of chieftains or members of the *alunganattar* about perpetual lamps and only 3 references about offerings to God and one reference about setting up of image and 2 about the *erippatti* land. On the other hand there are 4 references about the perpetual lamps and 3 references about offerings to god and one about the reclamation of waste land in 8 inscriptions which give information about the endowment by *Brahman* ladies. The number of inscriptions consulted about royal maid servants is 4. Among them there are 4 references for perpetual lamp and one for setting up of silver and copper images and one for the endowment of gold, silver and pearl ornaments to god. The nature of gifts given by different groups of women clearly indicates their social and economic status.

**Table: 2**

**Frequency of family relationship of women of different social status**

S.No.	Type of Relationship	Royal Women	Wives of Chieftains and Officers	Brahman Ladies	Ordinary Women	Total
1	Husband – Wife	23 (60.5%) [59%]	8 (21.1%) [72.7%]	1 (2.6%) [9%]	6(15.8%) [18.1%]	38 (40.4%)
2	Father - Daughter	8 ((80%) [20.5%]	1 (10%) [9.1%]	0	1 (10%) [3.1%]	10 (10.6%)
3	Brother – Sister	1 (50%) [2.5%]	1 (50%) [9.1%]	0	0	2 (2.1%)
4	Mother - Daughter	4 (44.4%) [10.2%]	0	0	5(55.6%) [15.1%]	9 (9.6%)
5	Mother – Son	2 (50%) [5.1%]	0	0	2 (50%) [6.1%]	4 (4.3%)
6	Mother-in-law – Daughter-in – law	1 (100%) [2.5%]	0	0	0	1 (1.1%)
7	Relationship not Mentioned	0	1 (3.3%) [9.1%]	10(33.3%) [91%]	19(63.4%) [57.6%]	30 (31.9%)
8	Total	39 [41.5%]	11 [11.7%]	11[11.7%]	33[35.1%]	94

- Figures in ( ) parentheses indicate row wise percentage
- Figures in [ ] parentheses indicate column wise percentage

The social identity of women was most often defined with reference to relations of kinship. Most of the names of women in inscriptions occurred along with the names of their close relatives and blood relatives. “By analyzing the way in which inscriptions emphasize particular family connections in their identification of women, we may be able to discover something about the salience of those traditional ‘*sastric*’ norms that define women’s roles in terms of their position in the family.”<sup>40</sup> More than one third of the women named in inscriptions were identified with reference to their husbands. Among the various families mentioned, the relationship with husband occupies the most prominent place in inscriptions. 40.4% of the inscriptions consulted referred to women as the wife of so and so. This relationship is portrayed thickly. Among them 60.5% belong to the category of royal women and 21.1% to the women of the family of chieftain and officers.

Other family connections mentioned in inscriptions as identification of women are father, daughter, mother, son etc. After husbands, the most frequently mentioned kinship identification for women is father. 10.6 % of the references of women in inscriptions consulted mention the father – daughter relationship. 80% of them are about the royal women. These two together constitute 51% of the inscriptions consulted which point out the relationship of close relatives of women like husband and father. It shows the influence of men in the lives of women. It could be inferred from this that women were under the influence of the husband after marriage and father before marriage. The references to these relationships are higher in the case of royal women and the women in the families of chieftains and officers.

After husbands and fathers, the most frequently kinship relation mentioned in inscriptions is mother. 9% of the women identify themselves as daughter of a woman. Among them 44.4% are royal women and 55.6% are other women. Mother is by and large the most commonly mentioned female kin. Women are identified with reference to their sons, as the mother of a man. In some inscriptions the names of brothers also are mentioned. 2.1% of women named in inscriptions are mentioned with their brother's names.

It is important to note that nearly a third of women do not have any identification of blood and close relationship. 31.9% of the inscriptions mentioning the endowments by women do not mention any type of relationship. That is, their names in inscriptions occurred independently. Among them 63.4% of the references are about other women and 33.3% is about *Brahman* women. 91% of the *Brahman* women named in inscriptions do not have any kin identification. Their identification is defined almost completely independent of their relationship with their natal or marital families. The reason for this could not be identified. However, it may be suggestions that social identities were not exclusively defined with reference to male relations like husband or father or son. However it can be said that women in the period of Rajaraja I lived generally at the direction of men folk, particularly their husband and father.

## Conclusion

Most of the donations given by women in the period of Rajaraja I was for religious works. They were given in the form of land, gold, money, lamps, images etc. The largest number of endowments was given for the purpose of burning and maintaining perpetual lamps. Royal women had property rights and the right to dispose their property at their will. They had the power to issue orders

on their own. They were highly honoured by the society. With regard to the castes of women only two castes, *Brahmans* (8 references) and *Vellalas* (3 references) are mentioned in the inscriptions. The *Brahmana* women occupied the top position after royal women in the social hierarchy. The caste of other women is not mentioned in inscriptions. It may be due to the less influential role played by them in the social and economic life of the period. Women's relation with their blood and close relatives has been portrayed in the inscriptions. But the frequency of references of their relationship with the husband in epigraphs is the highest. Many women are not mentioned without any identification with family relationship. Details about women in the bottom of the society are totally ignored in inscriptions. It may be because they were at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy.

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***SII – South Indian Inscriptions***

***ARE – Annual Report on Epigraphy***

## **EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE – A STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL WORKS OF THE BASEL EVANGELICAL MISSION IN MALABAR**

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Education occupies a prominent place in the social and cultural life of modern man. It is the backbone of social development and the essence of civilisation. Education satisfies the needs of society by developing human material and drafting this material into the nation's service. The social system of Malabar in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was well-entrenched in the principle of caste and kinship<sup>1</sup>. Caste system as an institution created separation and segmentation in the part of each and every section of Malabar society. Even after the advent of the British as a political power, the native practices were maintained on the basis of hierarchical order from the sacred to the unworthy<sup>2</sup>. The traditional institution of the caste system, feudalistic land ownership and various social evils like untouchability and unapproachability etc., were prevalent in the society. The higher castes enjoyed all the rights and privileges. Education was the monopoly of the upper castes and the lower class people had no right to be educated.

The activities of Christian missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century made a decisive change in the growth of education in modern Kerala. Though the Christian missionaries primarily aimed at the protection of the European capitalists in the state and the propagation of Christian religious faith, their attempt in the field of English education paradoxically resulted in the development of a new reformed society.

The British chose English as the medium of instruction in India after the Macaulay's minute of 1835. Thus the Indians got a chance to study English and were exposed to western education. Its introduction into Malabar was done by the Basel Evangelical Mission<sup>3</sup>. But the main intention of the Mission in introducing English education was not devoid of political interests. Therefore, through imparting modern education the missionaries were trying to proselytize the lower caste to Christianity and also were creating a new local petty bureaucracy. It is clearly stated in the missionary reports that the mission always believed the schools to be a powerful force for the evangelisation of India. The school established and run by the Basel Mission admitted all irrespective of their caste or religion. The educational works started by the Basel Evangelical Mission attracted the low caste people of Malabar and their schools helped to remove the barriers of caste from the Malabar society<sup>4</sup>.

The educational activities of the Basel Mission served as a model for the British government to follow. The school buildings were solid, airy and spacious where children sat on benches and used desks and wrote on slates and paper. There were text books to learn. The Basel Mission gave importance to elementary education. Dr. Hermen Gundert was instrumental in initiating this activity. He established an elementary vernacular school at Tellicherry on 14 May 1839<sup>5</sup>. In the beginning there were only 12 students in the school. Gundert visited both bungalows and huts, met the parents of the children in person and explained to them the necessity of educating their children. As a result of his incessant efforts students belonging to all communities began to enroll in his school. Later, he started another elementary school at Nettur near Tellicherry. As a recognition to his effort, in 1852, the Madras government appointed Dr. Gundert as the first School Inspector in Malabar and South Canara<sup>6</sup>. At school, Gundert's main intention was to lay a proper literary foundation

in Malabar<sup>7</sup>. He taught science, history, geography, Malayalam, English and the Bible in the school.

Another great Basel missionary and architect of English education in Malabar was the Rev: Samuel Hebbik. Like Gundert, he also started his work at Mangalore. Then the authorities requested him to stay at Kannur. From Kannur he extended his works to nearby areas such as Taliparamba, Sreekandapuram, Chirakkal, Thayyil and later to Palakkad. Under his initiative, a primary school was opened at Bernessery near Tellicherry in 1841. He appointed a popular *Tiyya* man named Ambu Gurukkal as Malayalam teacher in the new school and it helped to promote education among the *Tiyyas* of Kannur and the nearby areas<sup>8</sup>.

The support of the British aided the Basel Mission in spreading modern education in Malabar. With the help of the British, the mission started a school in Tellicherry in March 1856 with 74 students. A Parsi student gave donation of Rs.1500/-. Then the school was known as BEM Parsi school. When we examine the mission period from 1845 to 1899 we can see the growth of mission schools in the Malabar area. Mission schools were started in Kasaragod, Taliparamba, Melparamba, Ottappalam, Vaniyankulam, Vadakara, Koyilandy, Koothuparamba, Kannur, Payyanur, Palakkad, Vadakancheri, Kozhikode and Tellicherry etc. In 1900 about 48 Basel Mission schools were functioning in different parts of Malabar<sup>9</sup>. Many schools started by the Basel Mission are still functioning as important educational centres.

The Malabar Christian College situated at the centre of Kozhikode city was the important educational contribution of the Basel Mission. The Malabar Christian College was developed from a primary school established by the mission at Kallayi in 1848<sup>10</sup>. The school was later shifted to Calicut city with the intention of attracting students in and around the city. The institution

was upgraded as a middle school in 1872, a high school in 1879. It was upgraded as a second grade college in 1907<sup>11</sup>. On the outbreak out of the First World War in 1914, the Basel missionaries had to give the work and leave the country. The college was then being managed by the local Christians. In 1919 the, Madras Christian College took over the institution and it was known as the Basel Mission College. Later it was renamed as the Malabar Christian College.

Edward Brennen, a Basel missionary and a master attender in the harbour was another important name in the history of the development of the Basel Mission education in Malabar. He deposited Rs.12, 000 for starting a free school for giving modern education to all persons irrespective of religion, caste and creed<sup>12</sup>. The school was opened at Tellicherry in 1862. Since its opening the school has passed through many vicissitudes. In 1866 the school was taken over by the Basel Mission and named as the BEM Brennen school. Basel Mission gave up the school in 1871. So from 1872 onwards the school was known as Brennen District school. In 1891 the Brennen school was affiliated to the Madras University as a second grade college<sup>13</sup>. The government took over the college in June 1919. In 1925 a secondary training school for teachers was amalgamated with the college. In 1947, the Brennen College was upgraded as a first grade college. The college produced many famous scholars and contributed much to the development of education in North Malabar<sup>14</sup>. The Basel Mission at Palakkad was an out station of Kannur. The mission started primary schools in Mankara, Panayur and Vadakancheri. In 1866 the BEM started a high school at Palakkad and later it became the well-known Government Victoria College<sup>15</sup>.

### **Girls, vernacular and training schools:**

The Basel Mission gave sufficient encouragement to female education. The Basel missionaries were the pioneers to start female education in Malabar. They started a number of girls' school in all the important towns in Malabar. Elementary education was made compulsory for female converts. The mission opened two types of schools for female education, ie. boarding schools and day schools. The first girls' school of the BEM was opened in 1839 at Nettur near Tellicherry. Julie Gundert, wife of Dr. Herman Gundert opened an English school and Female Day school at Tellicherry in 1840<sup>16</sup>. A school for girls was started at Kozhikode in 1882 and Vadakara in 1886. In Kasaragod region the BEM opened nine schools for girls. The girls were taught reading, writing and also sewing and knitting. As a result of the work of the Basel Mission a large number of girls who were under the yoke of caste rigidity got a chance to receive a proper education by challenging the social customs of the time.

The BEM also started Anglo-Vernacular schools where elementary education was imparted with a little English education. The first Anglo-vernacular school was opened at Calicut in 1859 and later at a Tellicherry, Palakkad and Cannanore. These schools later faced many difficulties due to the establishment of government schools. Subsequently, the mission closed the Anglo Vernacular schools. The middle schools started by the mission also raised the standard of education. In the middle school instruction was given in religious and elementary subjects. The first middle school was started at Tellicherry in 1863<sup>17</sup>. Most of the students in the middle schools came from the orphanages. The students who were promoted from the middle schools were admitted to the training schools of the mission.

The Basel missionaries were pioneers in founding boarding schools in Malabar. The boarding schools were started at Cannanore, Calicut and Tellichery. Besides this the Mission started nursery schools, Sunday schools, day schools, Parochial schools, night schools, seminaries and orphanages etc. as part of their evangelical works in Malabar. The students in these institutions were given instructions in Bible history, church history, geography, arithmetic etc. By aiming at the upliftment of lower castes such as *Cherumans*, *Parayans*, *Pulayas*, *Karuvans*, *Nayadis*, *Paniyans* etc. the mission started *Panchama* schools<sup>18</sup>. In 1900, there were about 22 primary schools for *Panchama* children in Malabar.

Another important achievement of the BEM was the establishment of a training school for teachers. The first school of this category was established at Tellicherry in 1865. Those who were successful in the middle school were selected for study in these training schools. The mission training school trained men for elementary higher grade teachership. Only the Christian students were admitted into these schools. The main motive behind starting the training school seemed to be the replacement of non-Christian teachers by Christian teachers in the BEM schools. The mission started the Theological Seminary at Nettur for the theological education of Malayali candidates.

The industrial schools were another important accomplishment of the Basel Mission. The BEM started an industrial school at Manjeri where the poor people got free boarding and lodging. There they underwent a three year course in welding, carpentry and spray painting. In the field of adult education the Basel Mission played a great role in creating social consciousness among the rural masses. The mission opened schools for adults at Calicut and Tellichery. The Mission also started educational camps in different places and gave education to the workers and the lower classes.



## Press and print cultures

The Basel Mission used the press as a medium for the propagation of Christian religious faith. This indirectly strengthened the development of Malayalam language and literature. In 1840, the mission established a press at Balmetta in Mangalore, where religious and educational books were printed in both Indian and foreign languages. Soon the BEM established a new press in Malabar which, in effect, inaugurated a new stage in the development of the Malayalam language and literature in Malabar. In February 1846 Dr. Herman Gundert opened a lithographic press at Nettur near Tellicherry<sup>19</sup>. The Mission published a Malayalam fortnightly magazine called '*Keralopakari* in May', 1874 for circulation in Malabar church. *Keralopakari* was printed by using letter press printing method. Besides the religious news, *Keralopakari* published world news, news on the weather, agriculture etc<sup>20</sup>. The introduction of sophisticated printing technology and the publication of the text books for the schools by the Mission gave a great boost to the development of education in Malabar.

Dr. Herman Gundert made significant contributions to several branches of the Malayalam language and literature<sup>21</sup>. He devoted more attention to literary and educational work. He at first contacted local people like Ooracheri Gurukkal of Chokli near Tellicherry and developed a considerable knowledge in Malayalam. He also learned the Tamil and Kannada languages which helped him to make a comparative analysis of the three Dravidian languages.

Herman Gundert was considered as the pioneer of Malayalam journalism<sup>22</sup>. He started the first Malayalam monthly *Rajyasamacharam* in 1847 and the publication of it continued till December 1850. The journal was more interested in publishing news related to Christianity, religious propaganda, and conversion.

Simultaneous to the publication of *Rajyasamacharam* he, with the help of Fr. Miller, began publishing another monthly named '*Paschimodayam*' in October 1847. *Paschimodayam* was a Malayalam science magazine meant mainly to publish articles with the political interest of annihilating the superstitious believes on sun, moon and planets which existed in the minds of the people of Malabar. *Paschimodayam* also dealt with subjects like history, religion, geography, and astrology<sup>23</sup>.

Gundert also wrote and published works dealing with aspects of astronomy, geography, Kerala history and folklore. He published Bible stories in Malayalam and translated the Old Testament and the New Testament into Malayalam. In 1851 he compiled the first Malayalam grammar book. Among his other works were *Kerala Pazhama*, *Keralolpathi*, *Malayalarajyam* and *Pathamala*.

The most monumental work of Gundert is the Malayalam - English Dictionary popularly known as the '*Gundert Nigandu*' published in 1872. In the preparation of this work, he made use of all the available Malayalam works, both published and unpublished. It showed the humanity and strength of the Malayalam language. It is more scientific and authentically documented and gives good reference on the etymology of words<sup>24</sup>. Therefore his work immensely helps both native and foreign students who wanted to pursue the Malayalam language<sup>25</sup>. In addition to these, Gundert also authored several texts books of history, Malayalam, literature, geography, astronomy and a few other subjects taught in the Mission schools in Malabar. In those times when printed books were not in common use, Gundert's works contributed much to the development of the Malayalam language and literature. The contribution of the Basel Mission in the field of education

in Malabar is praiseworthy. Their involvement brought about changes in the educational and socio-economic realms of Malabar society<sup>26</sup>. The English education helped the people to improve their knowledge of the world and imbibe modern western ideas<sup>27</sup>. The spread of educational facilities led to the lower caste people's rapid advancement in the social scale. In the schools of the Basel Mission almost every community was represented; therefore, they were able to bring about changes in the attitude towards castes among the students of Mission schools.

The *Tiyyas* of Malabar were a prominent group who best made use of the facilities provided by the Mission. By enrolling themselves into Mission Schools the *Tiyya* boys and girls acquired new skills required to survive in the age of colonialism and after<sup>28</sup>. They got employment in colonial bureaucratic structures which also resulted in the improvement of their social and economic positions. Colonial documents show that by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century several bureaucratic positions became a sort of monopoly for the *Tiyya* community. The highest post that a native could reach in those days of British administration was that of a Deputy Collector. It was a *Tiyya* of Tellichery named Churayi Kannan who first became a Deputy Collector<sup>29</sup>. *Tiyya* men were also appointed as Tahsildars, subjudges, Resident doctors, legal advisors, teachers, and other employees in the colonial government services.

The educated *Tiyyas* were instrumental in starting journals, both in English and Malayalam, to spread the idea of social reform through education and bureaucratic services. The '*Malabar Spectator*' later known as '*West Coast Spectator*' edited by Puvatan Raman Vakil and '*Mitavadi*' by C. Krishnan were well known among them<sup>30</sup>. The mission appointed qualified low caste teachers to impart knowledge to the children in the Basel Mission

schools. Some of the English educated teachers renowned for their scholarship were the members of the *Tiyya* community. Though education among women was a slow process, the encouragement given to female education by the Missionaries inspired some *Tiyya* women to go in for higher education. The first women doctors of Malabar namely Ayyathan Janaki and Murkoth Madhavi were among a few low caste women who had got basic education at the Basel Mission schools.

A job in the government service was much desired in Malabar because it removed the caste grievances of an individual who belonged to an inferior community. The educated *Tiyyas* who constituted an emerging professional group in Malabar had been comparatively well-placed in economic status with a fixed income. They enjoyed considerable social prestige. Their status and social upliftment was more related to their English education and professions<sup>31</sup>. Gradually, the people who inbibed freedom and education from the Mission schools started protests against social evils like casteism and untouchability. They also questioned the domination of the upper classes in all fields of activities in society.

The Basel Mission's involvement in the educational activities brought about a great change in the contemporary Malabar society. The lower caste people got the chance to receive education and it improved their social and economic position. The educated youth began to criticise and fight against social evils like caste system, untouchability, superstitions, irrelevant traditional beliefs etc. The educational works of Basel Mission caused the growth of literacy in Malabar. English education helped the people to think about nationalism and freedom and it caused the rise of the nationalist movement in Malabar. Many students who studied in the Mission schools became active participants of the national movement in Malabar. The period also marked a new stage in the development of the Malayalam language and literature.

A large number of books written by the missionaries on various subjects helped the development of modern education in Malabar. Female education influenced the later women liberation movement in Malabar. The educational activities pioneered by the Basel Missionaries forced the government to interfere and help in the education of the people. Thus, the educational works of the Basel Mission played a vital role in the modernisation of the traditional Malabar society.

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## **PARLAKHEMUNDI UNDER GAJAPATI RAJ FAMILY**

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Among the important sons of Odisha, the name of Maharaja Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati shines bright as a brilliant luminary star of Odisha. Parlakhemundi became a centre of patronage for religious, literary and artistic activities<sup>1</sup>. The establishment of the Gajapati Raj family at Parlakhemundi is one of the greatest landmarks in the history of Odisha. The origin of this illustrious dynasty of the imperial Ganga lineage is traced from Chodaganga Deva, the founder of the Kalinga empire<sup>2</sup>. After occupation of the empire extending from the Ganga to Godavari, Chodoganga Dev transferred his ancestral capital of Kalinganagar to centrally located Vidanasikatak on the banks of the Mahanadi and Kathojori rivers<sup>3</sup>. As he individually could not control the large area, he left the administration of the Kalinga region in the hands of his younger brother Paramardi Dev, who was a famous warrior and an able administrator. His son Chodaganga Dev-II is said to be the founder of the Parlakhemundi Kingdom<sup>4</sup>.

T.J.Martby, the author of the Ganjam District Manual writes that, Gajapati Kapilendra Dev was the founder of the Suryavamsi Gajapati dynasty in 1435 CE. He had several sons. He faced challenges and family troubles in his own area. Due to this one prince of Kapilendra Gajapati left his father's kingdom and moved to Parlakhemundi<sup>5</sup>. Here he fought with the tribal ruler of a Pravalakhemunda and defeated him and founded the new kingdom first at Bisamkataka. After a few months the capital was shifted to Parlakhemundi<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the founder of this dynasty was a scion of the Gangas, but not of the Gajapatis. If the view point of T.J. Maltby is accepted the founder of the Gajapati



lineage, whatever the facts, remain the kings of Parlakhemundi who designated themselves as the Gajapati. According to the views of other scholars the Ganga rulers who ruled over Kalinga, Khemundi and Paralakhemundi were known as Prachya Ganga<sup>7</sup>. R.D. Banerjee, the great historian says<sup>8</sup> that –

“The Ganga Vamsa chiefs of the estate of Bumra, are distinctly from the eastern Ganga who claim direct descent from the western Gangas of Mysore. Dr. S.N.Rajguru, the great Ganga historian says that “Eastern Gangas and Western Gangas originally belong to one homogenous stock<sup>9</sup>. It is believed that they migrated from the western region known as Bombay Presidency”

“Gajapati” is a title adorned by the then rulers of Odisha. The literal meaning of “Gajapati” is master of elephants. In the past there were huge numbers of elephants lived in the dense forest area<sup>10</sup>. The rulers tamed them and used them for various purposes. The kings of Odisha accepted the Gajapati title since the thirteenth century. But historians say that the Ganga rulers first accepted the same title. Ananta Verman Chodaganga Dev entered into Purushottam *Kshetra* i.e. Puri after merging Kalinga with Utkal<sup>11</sup>. In the meantime the elephant rained water in gold pot and greeted. Since then he was called Chodoganga Gajapati Dev. It is known from the Kharoad stone inscription<sup>12</sup> that the Ganga King Narashima Dev-II, the son of Narashima Dev I, first adorned the Gajapati title.

According to the chronology fixed by Dr. S.N.Rajguru, on the basis of an old palm leaf manuscript of Chaitanya Rajguru and 14 copper plate grants, Veera Prataprudra Narayan Dev was the first monarch of the dynasty of Parlakhemundi<sup>13</sup>. The king had no male issue, so he adopted Jagannath Narayan Dev who ascended the throne in 1751 CE and ruled till 1770 CE. Pratap Narayan Dev was the first king who embraced Vaishnavism of

the Ramanuja School and was a great devotee of Ramaswami, the family deity installed in the premises of the Royal Palace. He was the first king of Paralakhemundi who took major steps for development of agriculture in this area<sup>14</sup>. He excavated five big tanks in the name of his family, deities such as *Rama Sagar*, *Radha Sagar*, *Sita Sagar*, *Laxman Sagar*, *Bharat Sagar*. In the later period, Parala Maharaja Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati extended great financial help to develop the existing tanks and excavated new tanks. He was rightly called Kharavela of this area, as the latter had repaired and extended the existing canal to Kalinga Nagari through Tansuliabat<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, during the days of political turmoil and conflict between the Marathas and Muslims for political ascendancy, Jagannath Narayan Deva Gajapati strongly faced the challenge and re-established the Hindu sovereignty in Paralakhemundi<sup>16</sup>. The king was thus a great warrior, writer, statesman, musician, diplomat, and poet.

The political condition of the Deccan in the late medieval period was very confusing. The Qutab Sahi dynasty was almost in a declining state. In 1687 and the Qutab Sahi rule came to an end and the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb asserted his authority in the Deccan. After the death of the last great Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, the Mughal empire disintegrated allowing a period of anarchy. By that time Muslim *Fauzdars* controlled *Chicacole Circar* or the Srikakulam area. In 1713 Nizam-Ul-Mulk was appointed as the *Subedar* of the Deccan by the Mughal emperor. In 1758 *Chicacole Circar*<sup>17</sup> passed into the hands of French under the leadership of the Bussy. In 1752 the struggle for occupation of the southern area started between the French and the English. Political trouble continued in Paralakhemundi for about ten years, when it was occupied by Sivaram Raju of Vijayanagaram. He was supported by British. Cotsford of the British East India Company came to Ganjam in 1767 CE of which Paralakhemundi was a part<sup>18</sup>. The Paralakhemundi *zamindari*

was the largest and its rulers king refused to submit to the authority of the English<sup>19</sup>.

Sir Jagannath Narayan Dev was a man of extraordinary courage and proved himself to be one of the most important kings. Apart from being a skilled general in war, he had deep faith in God and loved literary discussions. He composed *Sri Brundaban Chandra Vihar*<sup>20</sup> and dedicated it to Ramaswamy in 1767 CE. In his royal court there were galaxy of scholars to whom he granted lands for their family maintenance. The Ganga Kings of Parlakhemundi assumed the high sounding titles of *Virashree – Shree – Gaudeswar – navakoti – Karnata – Kalavargeswar – Viradhivira – Sri Sri Gajapat*<sup>21</sup>. Jagannath Narayan Dev breathed his last in 1770 CE. He was succeeded by Gajapati Narayan Dev. His period of reign was a phase of turmoil, confusion and enmity against the British and the neighbouring kingdom. In 1779, the East India Company temporarily assumed the control of the estate and it became a scene of continued disturbances<sup>22</sup>. Narayan Dev who was waiting for an opportunity in his inaccessible retreat, came down to the plain in December, 1768, when Colonel Peache's detachment left Parlakhemundi, he made Ramjogi Patro to retire. The East India Company's renter Sibaram Raju indulged in intrigues, and as a result in 1772, the Raja of Parlakhemundi left his state and placed himself under the protection of Bhim Dev, the king of Vijayanagar<sup>23</sup>. In October, 1861, Parlakhemundi became the field of another uprising as Spottiswood<sup>24</sup>, the Collector of Ganjam entered the estate with a force and brought the prevailing situation under control. In February 1822, Gajapati Narayan Dev strongly took held over the Parala Estate<sup>25</sup>. In August, 1831, fresh troubles had broken out in the estate and captain Keating was deputed to quell the uprising. But Keating failed in his attempt to solve the problems<sup>26</sup>. In 1833, a field force was sent to Parlakhemundi under General Taylor, and it was not until 1835 that peace was restored. In

1830, the control of Parala Estate was given to the court of wards<sup>27</sup>, on behalf of the Government and it continued uninterruptedly for over 60 years. After these long six decades the estate was handed over to Sri Goura Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1890<sup>28</sup>. This King was able to run the administration very efficiently and made all round development of the estate. He took positive steps for development of education and agriculture in Parlakhemundi. The *maliahs* were separated from the Estate and kept under the Agency<sup>29</sup>. In 1903, the first meeting of the Utkal Union Conference was held at Cuttack in where the *Rajas* of Talcher, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Athagada and the zamindar of Ganjam took active part<sup>30</sup>. Parlakhemundi played a key role in this movement. The birth of the Utkal Union Movement accelerated the efforts for the unification of all the Oriya speaking areas under the umbrella of one administration. In 1903 Shyam Sundar Rajguru was deputed by Goura Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev to Rambha Palace to represent the Oriyas of South Ganjam<sup>31</sup>. Those who had assembled there, chalked out a scheme for the formation of a National Conference of the Oriya people, otherwise known as “*Oriya Jatiya Samiti*”<sup>32</sup>.

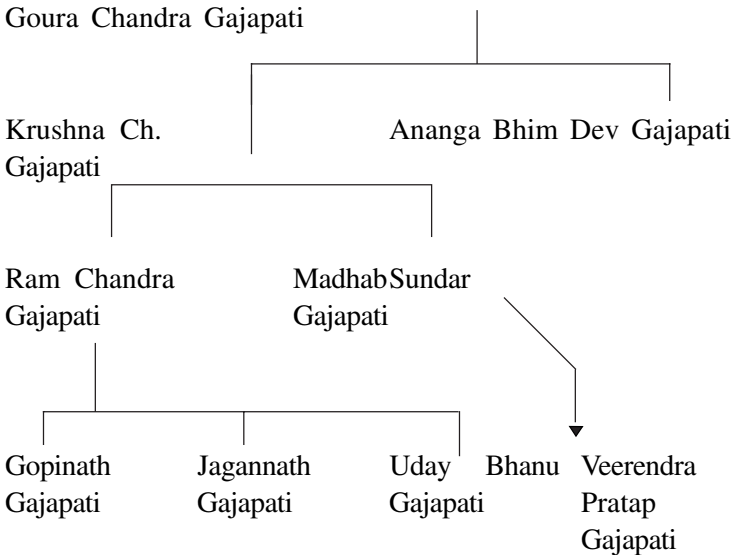
Parlakhemundi has been a paradise in the imagination of many poets of Orissa<sup>33</sup>. This gave Parlakhemundi a place of special significance and its rulers took pride in championing the cause of the unification of Odisha.

Goura Chandra Gajapati father of Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev encouraged poets, writers, play actors. He himself wrote dramas entitled *Dhruba*, *Padmabati*, *Swayambar*, *Banadarapadalana*, *Chandrabati harana*<sup>34</sup>.

The eminent writers of Parlakhemundi were like *Bhaktakabi* Gopal Krushna Patnaik, Andha Appana Parichha, Raghunath Parichha, Shyam Sundar Rajguru, Dr. Satya Narayan Rajguru, and Shimadri Patnaik. Padmanabha Narayan Dev was an established play wright<sup>35</sup>. He was a great musician of high order. Appana Panda, an eminent writer, in appreciation of Padmanabha Narayan Dev, wrote that he was an ideal social reformer and pioneer of drama in the district of Ganjam<sup>36</sup>. Goura Chandra Gajapati's premature death shocked everyone in Parlakhemundi. His son Krushna Chandra Gajapati was only a boy of twelve. As he was a minor, the estate passed to the court of wards for administration<sup>37</sup>. The young and enthusiastic ward Krushna Chandra Gajapati received his secondary education at Parlakhemundi's Maharaja's High School. For higher study he went to Chennai to join the Newington Residential College<sup>38</sup>. This educational institution was meant for princes and aristocrats of the Madras Presidency. Mr. Dala Hay and Mr. Cameran Morrison were appointed as his special tutors<sup>39</sup>. Apart from other teachers, he was also very much influenced by Mr. Kendlar. The education that he had received from Morrison, Syam Sundar Rajguru and Kendler stood him in good stead in future, when he became the ruler of Parlakhemundi. He was one of the few zamindars, who believed in the expansion of education. In this context he was tremendously influenced by his father grandfather and great grandfather. The Gajapati dynasty ruled over Orissa during the heyday of its glory, when the Kingdom was from Ganga to Godavari.

The table shows the extended family structure of Parala Maharaja Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev, the first premier of the new province of Odisha<sup>40</sup>.

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## FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TRAVANCORE UNDER COL. MUNRO

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The modern history of Travancore begins with the reign of Anizham Tirunal Marthanda Varma. Marthanda Varma who was the maker of modern Travancore in more than one sense. He had been the architect of a New Kingdom, out of the ruins of many old ones and laid the foundations of an orderly administration. The financial system of Travancore, on the eve of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was more or less a purely indigenous one not influenced by any notable extent either by the British Indian Government or by the other Indian States. The system of financial administration, the method of collecting public revenues and keeping public accounts were all peculiarly her own, initiated and developed by her kings and administrators. By the year 1810 CE the administration of the State had come down to a deplorable condition. The State was on the verge of financial bankruptcy and the administration was really in the hands of a few self seeking and unscrupulous people<sup>1</sup>.

Before the time of Marthanda Varma, there was no organized system of financial administration. The method of collecting revenue was crude. The revenue of every village or district was roughly calculated and the local chief was made responsible for its collection. Later, in the place of local chiefs, there were special agents, whose duty was to collect the revenue from various districts called *pakuthis* into which the State was divided. After meeting the expenditure on religions and other institutions the agent was

to pay the surplus into the King's treasury<sup>2</sup>. The administrative system of the State, at that time, was highly centralized. At the head of it was the Valiakariakkar, who was responsible to the King. He was assisted by a Melezhuthu Pillai or Head Accountant, one Rayasam Pillai or Head Clerk and several Rayasams and Kanakka Pillais (Writers and Accountants).

The origin of the Finance Department of Travancore may be traced to the reign of Marthanda Varma. One of the notable achievements of his reign was the organization and contribution of the Revenue Department<sup>3</sup>. There were a number of officers named Pillamar, Kariakar and Servandhikarika, who were appointed to collect the revenue and for maintenance of the necessary accounts as well as to guard the boundaries. When the tract known as Karappuram was added to Travancore by a Treaty, it was constituted as a new Taluk known as Sherthalai Mondapathumvathukal in 930 M.E<sup>4</sup> (Malayalam Era). In addition to the improvements in the administration the reign of Marthanda Varma is noted for the various schemes adopted for the reorganization of the finances of the State. The organization of the commercial department, the establishment of the *Pandakasalas* or Store houses, the setting up of Customs Houses at the frontiers of the State and above all, the survey and settlement of land begun in 1750-51, were all aimed at the improvement of the finance of the State.

After the reign of Marthanda Varma, Rama Varma Raja reformed the revenue administration department by dividing the State into three grand *Mukahams* or divisions – the Northern, Western and Southern – each of which was placed under the control and supervision of a *Valiasarvadhikariakkar*. In other fields of activity the structure of the departments continued unchanged.

When Rani Lakshmi Bai ascended the throne on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1810, the financial condition was precarious. The Rani could not find a man competent enough to tackle the problems which confronted the State. The alternative before the British Government was either to assume the entire administration or to permit the Resident as a temporary assignment to hold the office of the Dewan<sup>5</sup>. Rani Lakshmi Bai anticipated the British, by herself requesting the Resident to help her in the duty of administration. Thus Col. Munro who was Resident at that time assumed the Dewanship of the State in June 1811.

The first duty of the Dewan was to restore the financial stability of the State. The origins of modern finance in Travancore may be traced to the reforms of Col. Munro. His administration was a period of transition from the old to the new. The reforms carried out by this great administrator comprised almost all the departments of government-financial, judicial, police, military, administrative, religious and social- but finance was his primary concern. Col. Munro abolished the offices of *Valia Sarvadhikarikkar* and *Sarvadhikariakkar*. The *Kariakkars* were deprived of their civil and military authority over the people<sup>6</sup>. This state of affairs paved the way for the rise of Velu Tampi, a popular leader in South Travancore. He was a brilliant speaker and was perhaps the first political leader of modern India to make effective use of political oratory as the means of rousing the people to mass action<sup>7</sup>. The Maharaja yielded to the demands of Velu Tampi, who was appointed to an important post in the administration of revenue as the commercial minister of *Mulagumadiseela*<sup>8</sup>. The death of Velu Tampi was followed by a period of confusion in the history of Travancore. The affairs of the State were in the hands of Ummini Tampi, who was appointed Dewan of Travancore in March 1809. During his inefficient administrative system the payment of subsidy to the East India Company fell into further arrears.

It was at this time, that Col. Munro assumed office as British Resident in Travancore. He found that corruption and tyranny was rampant; oppression was at its zenith and the State was near bankruptcy.

The reforms carried out by Col. Munro during his period of administration marked a decisive stage in the development of financial administration in the State. His administrative reforms comprised almost all the departments of the State administration-police, judicial revenue and financial. The accounts of the State were extremely intricate and confused and Munro understood that the real disadvantage of the system was the confusion that existed in the functions of the finance department and that of the Treasury department. With this in mind, he tried to rectify the fundamental defects and organized a separate finance and accounts department, Treasury department and a Revenue department quite distinct from each other<sup>9</sup>.

The Accounts and Finance Department was solely charged with the duty of keeping an exact account of all the receipts and disbursement of the country, of examining and checking the expenditure of subordinate officers, of keeping the accounts between the Sirkar and the British Government and preparing reports of the resources and expenditure of the State<sup>10</sup>. The disbursements of the state were hitherto scattered among a number of officers. Munro caused them to be brought together and entered in one book which largely assisted in the maintenance of correct financial book keeping. Rules and regulations were laid down strictly forbidding the payment of any amount from the treasury without the sanction of the proper authority and careful examination of the accounts. For all the major payments, the Finance Department had to issue bills certified both by the Head of the Finance Department and his deputy and countersigned by the Resident. For all bills, thus certified by his signature, the

Superintendent of the Finance Department was held personally responsible.

Munro made remarkable progress in the field of the Treasury. The Treasury Department was kept distinct from the Accounts Department. Col. Munro established a central Huzur Treasury. All the money collected in the State had to be sent to the Central Treasury and payments in the provinces were discouraged except on account of urgent services. The Superintendent of the Treasury was instructed to make no issues except upon the bills duly signed and countersigned by the Head of Finance Department and Resident. Even in the case of bills signed by the Resident and the Superintendent of Finance, if it were of a doubtful nature, the Superintendent of the Treasury was not to make any payments before reporting the matter to the Resident and the Finance Department.

In the Revenue Department, he made every effort to increase the efficiency in the management of the public revenue. In 1815 Munro took initiative for a land revenue survey and land settlement. The earliest survey or *Ayacut* was made in 1773<sup>11</sup>. The Finance Department of the Kerala Secretariat, as it is known today, took shape during the administration of Col. Munro. It was under his strenuous effort, the Huzur Treasury became the apex of the financial transactions of the state. He bifurcated the three departments- Finance, Treasury and Revenue for improving the efficiency of administration. The three departments were collectively called the *Jamabandi* Department.

Thus the origins of modern finance in Travancore may be traced to the reforms of Col. Munro. His administration was a period of transition from the old to the new. The reforms carried out by Col. Munro included almost all the departments of Government- Financial, Judicial, Police, Military, Administrative, Religious and

social- but finance was his primary concern and the innovations effected by him in the other fields also contributed to the stability of the finances.

Col. Munro realized that the real defect of the administrative system lay in the lack of a Central Treasury and a proper system of accounting. He was aware of the fact that no strong superstructure could be raised without a strong foundation. His first business, therefore, was the abolition of the innumerable local treasuries and the establishment of a Central Treasury at the Huzur with a native of Travancore at its head who had to keep regular accounts of the receipts and expenditure and submit periodical reports to the Dewan. Similarly a separate Finance and Account Department was organized and Munro placed a Travancorean with a native of Malabar as the Deputy Superintendent of Finance. To this department was assigned the function of maintaining correct accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the State and of its financial transactions with the British Government. By a proclamation of 1817 CE it was ruled that apart from the fixed items of expenditure including miscellaneous, no additional expense of even a single *Panam* (money) should be incurred by any Government officer without special permission from the Husur<sup>12</sup>.

Munro understood that the re-organization of the State's finances could not be complete unless the various sources of revenue were systematized. There were too many items of income, several of which did not even meet the expenses of collection. The number of these items was reduced and they were made more regular and definite. Munro found that the method of collection of revenue from certain sources and the Government's trading in various articles of monopoly were inconsistent with a sound system of finance and early in his administration he took measures to abolish them. Col. Munro also attempted to make some reductions in public expenditure. A clear and definite scale of pensions to certain

local dependent chiefs, princes, princesses and government servants was established, but at the same time retrenchment was effected in the palace establishments with the co-operation of the enlightened Queen. The expenditure on palace in 1807-08 CE was Rs. 2,78,800 and in 1812-13 Rs. 1.62,400. The saving was Rs. 1,16,400 or 41 per cent and it shows the economy practised by the Queen herself. Velu Tampi and Ummini Tampi had maintained an army in contravention of the treaty of 1805 and this entailed a large outlay of Rs. 5,44,000 which was reduced to Rs. 44,000 by Col. Munro. By strict supervision over the expenditure on the charity houses (*Oottupras*) a reduction of Rs. 24,300 was brought about by Col. Munro and a new scale of expenditure in this head was drawn up<sup>13</sup>. The cost of the establishment of the Dewan's cutcherry, including the salary of the Dewan, amounted to Rs. 6000 before the coming of Munro. He cut down such unnecessary expenditure on salaries and brought it down to Rs. 5000/-. During his tenure of office as the Dewan and the Resident there was no separate payment for the Dewan and the expense on the Dewan's office was reduced to Rs. 1500/-.

But while retrenchment was effected by cutting down unnecessary expenses the demands of certain important public functions were not lost sight of. An organized effort for the spread of education was made by the establishment of four schools for the teaching of the vernacular languages in Mavelikara, Karthiakupalli, Tiruvalla and Kottarakkara. The amalgamation of the Dewoswom lands with the *Sirkar* lands was another important reform carried out by Col. Munro. It not only put an end to the mismanagement of the temples and temple lands but also brought in large revenue to the country. This was a reform of far reaching importance and augmented the State's revenue by Rs. 4,00,00<sup>14</sup>.

By these reforms, the sources of revenue were systematized and

made more regular and certain. The revenue system itself was modernized. Thus by a series of measures Munro thoroughly reorganized the administrative system of the country and placed it on a sound and secure basis. He retired from service in 1819 CE. and has left a name which has ever been cherished by the people of Travancore with the deepest feelings of gratitude and his period of administration is looked upon as one of the most constructive periods in the history of Travancore.

The system of financial administration as reorganized by Col. Munro continued practically unchanged for nearly a century. The few modifications made during the course of the century were more concerned with the outward form of the administration than with the character of the administrative machinery or the system of accounting.

It is certainly to the credit of Rani Lakshmi Bai that these changes were effected and the financial system of the country completely re-modelled during her reign. Her appointing Col. Munro as the Dewan reveals her insight and judgement and the way in which she made use of his talents for the well being of the Kingdom shows her tact and wisdom. While giving a free hand to Col. Munro to make every improvement that would be to the good of her people, the Queen kept a close watch over the day to day administration of the country and required that the accounts of the State should be submitted to her periodically. In appointing Col. Munro as her Dewan, she tactfully revealed her wish that in administering the State the age long principles of the country should be respected and that donations to priests and temples should never be restricted.

The labours of Col. Munro bore fruit during the period of his successors. When he left Travancore in 1819 CE, the financial condition of the State was undoubtedly stable.



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## **TRIBAL CULTURE- A CASE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS ADAPTATIONS OF LAMBADIS (BANJARAS)**

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As a result of both automatic (or processive) and induced (or sponsored) changes, many tribes in India are undergoing various transformations such as assimilation, acculturation, integration, peasantization, detribalization, retribalization, etc. Under a situation of prolonged, first hand contact and the resultant acculturation, a culture invariably faces the problem of maintenance of its cultural boundary or socio-cultural identity.

In the study of the changes in Lambadi economy and the resultant changes in other aspects of their society, the pattern of maintenances of a distinct cultural identity despite their continuous contact for a long time with the other settled communities in Telangana is quite obvious. When the ancestors of the present-day Lambadis (Banjaras) migrated from Marwar in Jodhpur and Bhojpur region of north India to Telangana<sup>1</sup>, it is hypothesized that they brought Marwari culture with them. Their descendants settling down brought them into contact with their non-Lambadi (non-Banjaras) neighbours. The Lambadis who settled down after the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. had to face the problem of maintenance of a distinct cultural identity of their own. This was not an acute problem for earlier nomadic Lambadis (Banjaras) who had limited and marginal contacts with others. Different migrating groups of the Lambadis (Banjaras) were exposed to different regional cultures of India. In spite of borrowing many a cultural traits from others, they have retained cultural identity despite being

surrounded; by other cultures in whose area the Lambadis have settled. Today, however, they are experiencing rapid changes, and their traditional customs, practices and institutions are undergoing far reaching transformations.

The data for the paper are drawn from a study of various types of sources such as government gazettes, references to standard works and field work.

### **Historical background**

The Lambadis are not the autochthones of South India. Their original home is supposed to be Marwar, Jodhpur, Bhojpur etc. in Rajasthan and parts of North India. They came to South India as transporters of supplies to the armies of Delhi emperors (both Afghans and Mughals) in their raids in the south<sup>2</sup>. At the time they were nomads and resorted to robbery frequently<sup>3,4,5</sup>. Some of the Lambadis returned to the north, but some stayed behind and carried on petty trade during periods of peace until the 1850s. Later, they took up service under the Maratha rulers of Satara, the Peshwas of Pune, Nizams of Hyderabad and the British in their Mysore and Maratha wars<sup>6, 7</sup>.

With the introduction of the mechanized transport and laying of roads and rail lines by the Government, the Lambadis lost their traditional occupation of transport of goods on the back of pack bullocks. The discontinuance of the use of bullock carts by the non-Lambadi peasants thereafter, because of better network of roads, deprived the Lambadis of whatever, little transport work they had in the interior regions. So, they turned to the forests for their livelihood by cutting wood and collecting other forest produce. But, this avocation could not provide enough to live as much of the forest in the country was cut down to provide wood for industry and rail-laying work. Being poor, illiterate<sup>8</sup> and

lacking in technical skills that would have allowed them to adopt other honest occupation<sup>9</sup>, they became 'brutal robbers' and bandits by the middle of the century<sup>10</sup>. To reform them through persuasion and education was considered impossible by the British administration<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, to control their criminal activities, they were brought under strict police supervision and severe sentences were passed by the courts for their crimes. Finally, the Lambadis along with similar crime-oriented communities were brought under the purview of the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.

Their economy became very precarious with the loss of transport work and checking of banditry. They did not like wage labour as it was against their proud spirit and tradition. Therefore, the Lambadi men continued poaching in the forest, though it had been banned. Their women took up collection of forest produce and, later, agricultural wage labour on the farms of neighbouring peasants, out of sheer economic necessity<sup>12</sup>. They, after the 1880, took up forest labour and sale of forest produce which became their main occupation. However, by 1930, the forest work had ceased to provide them enough earnings as the forests had shrunk in size, the forest measures became more stringent, and some forest areas were declared as 'reserved forests'<sup>13</sup>. This situation forced the Lambadi men to turn their attention towards agricultural and other types of labour in order to supplement the earnings of their women as it was becoming difficult to subsist on the wages of women alone, especially during the war and post-war periods. They ultimately settled down to agriculture although it had generally been their secondary occupation<sup>14</sup>. After they were listed in 1949 as one of the denotified (or ex-criminal) communities recently they have been recognized as Scheduled Caste in Karnataka<sup>15</sup>, Scheduled Tribes in Andhra in the Constitution Amendment Act. 1950 and earlier they were in the Backward Classes list in the Telangana region until in the month of July, 1977.

Now the Lambadis have new opportunities to work for their socio-economic betterment. Most of them have settled down in agriculture and various types of labour, although a few (as in the western Rajasthan) still carry on their traditional occupation of salt trade in their semi-traditional manner. But this section, too, is finding it difficult to carry on its occupation because of a declining demand for their goods and also because of shortage of grazing lands for cattle<sup>16</sup>. Their habit of living in isolated groups away from others which was a characteristic of their nomadic days, still persists. Even now, most of them continue to live in exclusive settlements some distance away from the multi-caste villages.

### **Religious traditions of Lambadis**

In the study of religion, we focus not only upon the typical life cycle of men and women, but also on that part of culture which is called the people's world view<sup>17</sup>. Some of the important aspects of people's world view are supernatural beings, religious specialists, magic and sorcery, and a self-image or cultural identity. These are the aspects which directly influence the maturing individual so that he becomes a normal member of the particular culture. The aim here is to show how the changing economy the Lambadis had influenced, directly or indirectly, the religious beliefs and the world view of the Lambadis and to what extent religious factors have influenced the economy and other aspects of Lambadi culture.

It is very difficult to speak about the Lambadis' past religious and belief systems for want of evidence. However, certain observations about the Lambadis made, by others who came into contact with them, viz., colonial officers, missionaries and travellers, are quite useful in reconstructing the magico-religious system of the lambadis during their nomadic days. Their present

religious ideas and rituals are compared with that of the ancient times in order to trace the process of constant adjustment to changing circumstances. The paper tries to discern the process of adaptations of Hindu pantheon and beliefs as well as agricultural rituals by the now peasant zing but erstwhile animist Lambadis.

### **Early Lambadi religion and beliefs**

In the recent centuries, the traditional view of the Lambadis have been conditioned by the limitations of the Physical environment (to some extent), technology and economy, their turbulent history, their subjugation to almost two hundred years of colonial rule and the nature of social change introduced by National and State Governments and urban contacts.

During their nomadic days, the Lambadis were animists<sup>18</sup>,<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, since they were strongly organized in Patrilineal clans they had strong belief in ancestral spirits of the male line, which were worshiped frequently,<sup>19</sup> and they believed that any lapses would lead to serious consequences for the living<sup>20</sup>.

The Naik combined the roles of both headmen and priest, though, in the cases, these two roles were separated and performed by two different persons. The relative isolation of the Lambadi religion and belief systems from those of other Hindus is discernible from the writings, of missionaries and travellers of the period. Writing about the Lambadis of South India for the period 1792-1823 Abbe Dubois said that the nomadic Lambadis have different manners and customs, “a different religion and language from all the other castes of Hindus<sup>21</sup>.

A strong fear of natural forces like lightening, torrential rain, tornado, and a deep anxiety about the imminence of misfortune, disaster, disease and death characterized the Lambadis attitude towards the world and nature. Their world was full of hostile forces such as famine, epidemics and malevolent spirits, which must be safeguarded. Therefore, they had a strong faith in magic and ritual.

It was a custom among the nomadic Lambadis before starting out on a journey to procure a child or a grown up person belonging to other castes and bury the victim up to his shoulders in a whey place, and then drive their loaded bullocks over the victim. They believed that the chances of a successful journey increased in proportion to the thoroughness of their trampling the person to death<sup>22</sup> (Dubois 1936, 71, Thurston 1909, 214). They also believed in the cure of dis-eases by magic of a shift of residence from one part of the jungle to another consequent upon on endemic or wrath of deities<sup>23</sup>. They hoped to escape death by leaving one camping ground for another. Halfway between the old and the new sites, a chicken or a goat was buried alive, unto its head. There all the bullocks were driven over the busied creature and the whole camp walked over it.

Another belief obliged them not to drink water which was not drawn from springs or wells. Thus, they were sometimes forced to make a big a hole by the side of a tank or rivers and use the tank water<sup>24</sup>. The reason for this practice is not known but may have been the result of the Lambadis fear of Sprits dwelling in the large water sources like a river or tank.

During their nomadic days, a shady grove and a protected well had a high value<sup>25</sup>. The Lambadies have a folk song in praise of one Dharmito Baba, who planted a grove and built a masonry well as an act of charity<sup>26</sup>.

Moore in “Narrative little detachment” says that he passed by a tree on which several bells were hung. This was a superstitious offering by the Banjaras who used to hang a bell / bells upon it, taking off the bells from the neck of their sick cattle, believing that they were leaving behind them the sickness of the cattle too<sup>27</sup>. It was believed that one touched these bells could be exposed to the wrath of the deity to whom the offerings were made and who was supposed to inflict the same disease on the bullock which subsequently carried a bell from that tree<sup>28</sup>.

During their nomadic days, and even for some time after settling down, the Lambadis believed in witchcraft. And many a witch (Dhakun) was tried in the jungle and killed. Wilks has noted that at the time of the Mysore wars (1771-1799) the Lambadis objected to two British Conditions for disciplining them, namely that no capital execution should take place without the sanction of the regular judicial authority and that they should be punishable for murders. “Execution and Murder” had their origin in witchcraft the power to communicate with evil spirits. For any misfortune or trouble, like a child falling sick or wife becoming unfaithful, a sorcerer was discovered and punished<sup>29</sup>. A substantial permanent house has a taboo. Previously, they also had a custom of moving a hut after death. Nobody entered the gates through which the spirit had entered and killed the person<sup>30</sup>. A peacock screaming on ones right and a jackal howling on the left were considered unlucky omens, when one set out on a journey<sup>31</sup>.

These beliefs, customs and practices are instances of both contagious and sympathetic magic. Keeping in mind their general illiteracy, we can imagine the role of magic in sustaining and giving meaning to a life which was hard, precarious and full of dangers. These beliefs and practices were attempts of the Lambadis to overcome, to feel a sense of mastery over the forces of nature among which they had to live. Such magical activities and the



beliefs relieved the tensions created by the anxieties and feelings of inadequacy thereby making the lambadis once more, in harmony with the life to which they were fated. As animists, they did not have any organized, higher religion resembling that of the long settled multicaste Hindus. Hence, the predominance of magic in the early Lambadi relation with the supernatural and by their very nature, magical practices were involved either personal or small local community issues, in contrast to religion. This involves both personal and social integration of a higher order<sup>32</sup>. The wandering life and the jungle habitation shaped the conception of their superstore world.

After setting down following the breakdown of the traditional occupation as transporters (C-1870), which necessitated an increasing range of contact with advanced communities, Lambadis religion and belief systems were increasingly modeled after the dominant Hindu caste groups.

### **Lambadi pantheon**

The Banjaras are believed to have originally descended from the Rajputs. There is a month to the effect that they became nomadic after Chittoor was conquered by the Moghals. They are now Vaishnavites and profess Hinduism. Their chief deity is Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver aspect of the Hindu Trinity (Bramha Vishnu Eswara). They also call Krishna, Balaji, the divine child and cowherd, and this concept of their high god as a cowherd is significant in view of their past tradition. In South India the Lambadies show great reverence for Tirupati Venkataramana, a localized version of Vishnu. They also worship many gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, Tulja-Bhavani, Amba-bhavani, Marianua, Martal and Hingla-bhavani, the lesser deities are Seetal, lakdya, Vagya, Mhasoba, Bahiroba etc. The

image of Balaji is a four handed figure of a man and that of Bhavani and other goodness, of a woman. Lakdya and Seetal are rough stones smeared with vermilion powder. On each side of the Balaji image, they plant a white flag. In times of distress or in consequence of a vow, these flags are replaced by new ones on the full noon day of Jeshtha (June-July) and during Diwali (Oct-Nov).

They also worship bullocks on these two occasions on grounds dis-similar to those professed by the Saivaites of the region<sup>33</sup>. Cows and bullocks are revered by the Lambadis<sup>34</sup> because (Krishna himself had tended cattle and cattle have been the means of livelihood for them (earlier as pack animals and now as agriculture drought animals)<sup>35</sup>.

The change from animism to sharing of the pantheon and ideology of the higher Hindu religion must have been a gradual process after settling down, by sanskritizing their behaviour after the fashion of the reference group behaviour.

They also have several patron saints who are seen as intermediaries between God and man; the Lambadis do everything to gain their favour. Every settlement has a shrine built for Sevayabhava, who was a saint, a strict vegetarian and teetotaler and died as a saint. His samadhis (shrines) are at Papuar and Lonand, in Maharashtra. Some of them visit his samadhi every year after Dasara, as an auspicious beginning for the year's work. Mitthu Bhukya (a meat eater and drinker of liquor) and Nanu Sadyu (a vegetarian) are other culture heroes for whom the lambadies have great reverence. A hunting expedition begins with an offering of fruit or coconut to mittu-Bhukya in the belief that the offering ensures the success of the expedition.

Soon after settling down and the consequent increased contacts with advanced Hindus, the Lambadies found that they did not have supreme gods like the other Hindus, whose supreme Gods were Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and Shakti; while they had only patron saints. They accepted Vishnu as their Supreme god, and raised Sevabhaya to godliness as a reincarnation of Vishnu since sevalabhava was supposed to be a cowherd.

The earlier ancestor worship continued despite the religious borrowing from high-caste Hindus. After smearing the houses with cowdung for ritual purity, once a year, and the emblems of the ancestors are worshipped during Dassera. A goat or sheep is sacrificed in the name of the ancestors. This ceremony is repeated when someone in the family recovers from sickness in order to propitiate the ancestors who are supposed to have caused the sickness.

Musalman pirs (saints) are also venerated by some Lambadis like some of the other Hindus. Some Lambadies also consecrate the panjas (plams) of Hassan and Hussain on the occasion of Moharum. However, this observance of a Muslim festival by the Lambadies is at the family level and, in terms of Titiev's distinction, is a 'critical' observance in fulfillment of vows taken, and not integral part of the total community's religion<sup>36</sup>. Thus, without being bothered about the doctrinal subtleties of the Hindu-Muslim dichotomy, the lambadies observe religions rites which appear efficacious to them.

Some of them also worship the so called "three-and-a-half-goddess (Sadeteen devi)", but never divulge the name of the half goddess. When an epidemic such as cholera or smallpot breaks out, Sevabhava, Durga and Mariamma are propitiated with offering of water, rice and goat or sheep meat.

By and large, the primarily utilitarian view of the Lambadi religion precludes fantasy, mysticism any preoccupation with metaphysics. They seek from religion concrete solutions to the problems of daily life.

They understand supernatural punishment for lapses on their part as well as the need for supernatural protection by doing what is expected of them; lighting a wick-lamp, burning incense, reciting a prayer or performing a ritual dance.

### **Religions specialists**

The Lambadi once recognize mendicant groups such as Gosai and Bhats as their priests and gurus; and Suri or Dhadi (Lambadi con-verted into Islam) acted as their genealogists, as some of the lambadis are for the Shivachar people of the region<sup>37, 38</sup>. But, by the turn of the 19th century the Gosai and Dhadi could not earn enough from their pursuits and therefore had to discontinue their service to the lambadis. They have now settled down to agriculture. Nowhere the Lambadis are employing Brahmins for priestly work as in the case of other Vaishnavaites of the region<sup>39, 40 & 41</sup>.

With the discontinuance of some of their religions practices for the lambadis in general had adopted a sedentary life. But one group among them accepted the ministrant work in each settlement and were being rewarded with a fixed payment by each household and job not being a full time one. These ministrants perform religious rites and worship in the Sevabhaya temples and are capable of outgoing as spirit mediums. There were two types of “Bhagats” (magicians) - good (Nimbakatna) and bad (Janta) -and both were approached and consulted<sup>42</sup>.

## **Beliefs**

The earlier beliefs in ancestors, the spirit world, good and evil omens still persisted among them; but were modified in line with the changing pattern of life. Many of the earlier magical practices, like human sacrifice, taboo on drinking stream water and permanent home, and witchcraft have disappeared from their belief system following changes in their occupation and discontinuance of their nomadic way of life. At the same time, because of contact and borrowing from other Hindu castes, new ideas, beliefs and practices have entered their life. For example, a person returning from a different place or on readmission into the caste group following expulsion had to give a goat meat feast to the community and his tongue was burnt with a red-hot gold piece symbolizing purification. Lambadi women are often troubled by ghosts, when they burn frankincense before the patient and ask the name of the ghost and its desires. If the ghost refuses to speak, an exorcist is brought who tries to drive the spirit away with the help of charms. They believe that the spirits of the wealthy and of those who die in the prime of life, and that of women who leave behind young children and of creditors afflict the human beings. Like other Hindus, they also believe in astrology and consult a Brahmin astrologer for auspicious occasions for performing ceremonies and beginning new ventures. They believe in the transmigration of the soul and say that a good man on death goes to heaven, but at the discretion of God may be born again in this world.

## **Recent changes and the present religion and belief systems rituals and celebrations**

The Lambadis follow the Hindu calendar of festivals and are considered as a caste among the Hindus. The festivals that the Lambadis have been observing traditionally, which formed part

of the calendar are, the Hindu New Years' day, Dassera, Deepavali, and Holy. On these occasions they worship the community gods and goddesses, the family gods and goddesses and ancestors by offering sweets. But on the final day, they also sacrifice goats and sheep and serve cooked meat in which the panchayat plays an important role in collecting money for the purchase of animals and distributing meat.

The most significant celebration among the Lambadis, the Gouri celebration, is observed for ten days, usually from the first to the tenth day of the bright half of the *chaithramaasa* (March-April), once in 4-5 years. During the Gouri celebrations in Telangana, an exception was made for this calendrical adherence by celebrating it from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> day. The postponement was necessitated by a death in the settlement and the death-pollution period of thirteen days ended on the third of *Chaithra-maasa*. The exception demonstrates two important considerations, the requirement of ritual purity in the whole community during the Gosai Celebration and the sympathy of the community for the bereaved family, which reveals communal solidarity.

The celebrations involves a lot of organizational work in conducting the rituals collecting materials and money, erecting the Pandal and providing food for the participants and guests on the last two days. The temples in the settlements are distempered and white-washed; continence and ritual purity for the period of the celebration has to be observed by everybody, and the seeding of grain which are the staple food of the people are to be raised in front of the patron deities and saints, and the flames of wick lamps must be kept burning for the duration of the celebration (Nandadeep), Five boys and ten maidens (who have not partitioned property) are given charge of the ten baskets in which the seeding called Gouri are raised. The boys and girls selected for this purpose consider themselves very lucky and

meritorious. So the selection is based on some rough representation of the different clans and lineages in the settlement. The communal solidarity of the settlement is reinforced by the ritual roles and the rewards received by the various kin groups. Incidentally it may be noted that representation of all the clans is not considered necessarily while selecting members of the panchayat which is in the secular domain.

The meticulous care and skill with which the crops are raised clearly indicate that the lambadies possess a sound knowledge of traditional agricultural techniques and practices. The immediate reason for the observance of this rare ritual may be a vow taken by the community in the face of calamities or epidemics likely to afflict them, their cattle or crops. Though they are unaware of them, the dominant values underlying the celebration are those of agricultural prosperity. It is a celebration connected with the fertility and cult fertility of both women and the soil. Therefore, the Gouri celebration must have been a consequence of the Lambadis adopting agriculture as their main occupation.

As a finale of the Gouri celebration in Telengana in the present remote hamlets of their inhabitants/settlements, the Lambadis put up a folk-theatrical performance (locally called Doddad or Bailat) whose theme was taken from the epic of Ramayana titled "Ramanjaneya Yuddha" (battle between Rama & his devotee Hanuman). It was enacted in kannada and hundreds of villages thronged to witness it. The Lambadi performers were tutored by one of themselves though they first learnt the art from shiva-devotee priest some years ago. Thus, such occasions provide an opportunity in establishing communication between the Lambadi tradition and the great Hindu tradition. This fact of theatrical performance in Kannada is also an evidence of proficient acquisition by the Lambadis.

Marikamba (locally called Gali-Durgavva) is the presiding deity of epidemics like plague and cholera and is offered fowl on the 'Holi' and full-moon day of 'Jeshta' (June-July), provide a vow has been taken on the occasion of the attack of the epidemic. "Seethalabhavani" (locally known as Elumaala tail in Kannada) in Telangana also is supposed to cause eye sore, cough, cold and fever, is offered a goat or two by the community, and a fowl by every family on either the first Tuesday or Friday after the full-moon day of *Ashada* (July-August), every year. The shrines of this goddess are found on the outskirts (the ritual boundary) of every settlement.

On the occasion of the Ganesh (elephant headed god) festival, the Lambadis carry out the ritual tonsure of their children by offering a sweet dish to the god Venkata Ramana or by sacrificing a goat or sheep to Sirsi Marikamba. These two deities belong to the great tradition of the local Hindus. In Telangana, in addition to the traditional stone symbol of Gali Durgavva (Marikamba) installed at the settle-ment bounding, a new temple was built within the settlement for Sirsi Masikamba, a goddess worshipped also by the progressive Hindus. This is an instance of borrowing and installing a goddess from the pantheon of the great tradition. It may also be considered as an instance of the need of the lambadis in preference to this other basic needs such as safe drinking water wells, sanitary provisions, school building, etc. which can similarly be secured through community effort, just as they build a new temple for a goddess.

Through the observance of life rituals, the Lambadis establish, demonstrate or herald lasting attitudes (feats of rejoicing on occasions such as a birth or adoption ceremony), stable relationship (the marriage sacrament) and an awareness of rights and obligations (intimation ceremony) which constitute a part of the social order<sup>43</sup>. They conduct the initiation ceremony (*vadai*) at the time



of marriage by giving the novice two burn marks with a red hot needle, and uttering a chant as the marks are made. An initiation ceremony requires two brothers, and the younger brother need not go through this ceremony on the occasion of his marriage. If the bridegroom has no brother, a boy of the same lineage or clan is adopted as a 'brother' for the purpose of the ceremony. This practice suggests the solidarity between brothers, who are supposed to stand united in both happiness and misery.

All these traditional, calendrical and life rituals are obligatory. The interesting fact is that the Lambadis now observe all the festivals, by following the calendar like the non-Lambadi Hindu peasants, whereas they used to observe only four in the recent past. Some Lambadis have become confirmed devotees (sants) of Pandharpur (in Maharashtra) Vithoba and Yellamma of Soundatti, and make pilgrimages to these shrines on scheduled occasions every year. The bhajanas they sing in the Sevayabhaya temple in the Banjara dialect have traditional themes, but the tunes have now been changed on the model of the bhajanas of non-lambadi peasants, as well as film songs.

In addition, they now observe agricultural festivals associated with different phases of agriculture. The new festivals and celebrations are observed not only by those Lambadis who have taken to agriculture, but also by those who pursue some other vocation like wage labour and wood cutting, though on a smaller scale, since the non- agricultural Lambadis are not usually well off.

Over the years, the lambadis have come to acquire these additions or accretions to their traditional ritual repertoires. So, in terms of religious changes - from tribalism to peasantry- it is not a case of substitution of traditional belief and pantheon with new peasant ones, but a case of addition. Therefore, a good chunk of their meager income is spent in rituals and ceremonies. An

obvious change that has come about in their religious observance, especially after 1955, is that the observances are becoming less detailed and pompous.

In regard to modeling their religious practices and beliefs after the advanced Hindus, the use of the services of the Brahmin priests after 1930 for solemnization of marriage, for knowing the auspicious moments to start a new venture or celebrate a marriage, and so on is a significant adaptation.

Similarly, the present-day practice of Lambadi priest supporting themselves and their families by supplementing their priestly rewards with earnings from farming or wage labour constitutes a distinct shift.

Another change in their ritual practices because of contact with non-Lambadi peasants whereby the Lambadis themselves have become peasant, is the practice of abstention from work on specified dedicated days (Tuesday & Fridays) as a mark of reverence to the goddesses of epidemics and the practices supposed to serve as magical cover to the community, as well as to propitiate the gods for rains when rain fail. Such dedicated abstention from work and the concomitant observance of ritual purity by the whole community, with offerings of prayers and bhajanas for such five consecutive dedicated days, constitute the ritual of abstention (Wara-Biduvadu). But in terms of loss of man-hours and delay in carrying out critical agricultural operations on time, such inter-ruptions because of ritual abstentions may seem unproductive from a rational and economic point of view. Similarly, expenditure for social and religious purposes which seems unproductive is not considered so by people who believe in its necessity and efficacy. A few families with adequate land resources and working population, were in huge debts, the net

annual income being absorbed by interest on such loans. The need for large loans was the contingent expenditure. Within a period of five years, these families had celebrated 2-3 marriage ceremonies and thanksgiving offerings to the deities who were supposed to have cured disease that had defied medical treatment.

In fact, through a study of the observance of rituals and celebrations we see kinship, economy, polity and religion, all together. The animal sacrifices and the feasts (vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian as the occasion demands) in honor of ancestors, family gods, gods and god lings connected with agriculture, and the community gods, involve heavy expenditure which is usually shared by the brothers. Even brothers who live separately pool their resources to perform a common ceremony and arrange a feast. This sharing calls forth not only the sibling solidarity, with the Lambadis emphasis on agnatic, but also the economic necessity of managing expensive occasions by polling resources and conducting the ritual ceremony in a cooperative and concerted manner.

### **Beliefs that affect economy**

Some of the beliefs and practices of the Lambadi affect, positively or negatively their economic activities. For example the meticulous care and skill with which the seedlings are raised during the Gouri celebration, and the practice of asking young ones to look after the baskets in which the seedlings are raised by making a seed-bed with fine soil and sand and allowing sunlight and water to the germinating seeds the whole process may be viewed as a part of informal education of the young in the agricultural know-how. Similarly, many of the rituals associated with the various phases of agriculture act as morale boosters to agricultural activities, the success of which depends on the vagaries of the

weather and other natural calamities. A few more beliefs and practices which affect their economic activities need mention.

Generally, they take bath once a week, certain days in the week are considered auspicious because they are dedicated to specific deities or saints and, therefore, the Lambadis wash themselves, their clothes and cattle on these days. These are also the days on which they begin a new venture. Fridays and Thursday are dedicated to their gods, goddesses and saints and are, therefore, considered auspicious. Mondays and Thursdays are considered auspicious for starting a new tenure of cultivation. Monday is sacred for the Shiva devotee peasants and is dedicated to Shiva, their patron saint and a reincarnation of Nandi (bull), the vehicle of Shiva. On that day they abstain from any agricultural work specially involving the yoking of bullocks, which are given a bath and rest. The day is also very sacred for them because they worship their god on that day. But Monday is not so significant for the Lambadis who are Vaishnavites. However, since they have accepted agriculture as their mainstay, the Vaishnavite Lambadis also follow the abstention from work and do not yoke the bullock on that day, being, to that extent, influenced by shiva devotee peasants. Monday has not made any dent in the Lambadi religious practices and domestic rituals, except that some of the Lambadis do not eat meat on Monday, as the day is dedicated to shiva. This is not the case in other Lambadis probably because some of the Lambadis are not yet peasantized to the same extent as other Lambadis. In addition to Monday being a weekly holiday, occasionally either Tuesdays or Fridays are declared as abstention days for five consecutive weeks. This practice sometimes affects agricultural operations adversely, as certain crucial operations like ploughing and sowing are not carried out in time.

As to why they stay in exclusive settlement outside the multi-caste villages, the Lambadis offer two reasons:

1. They want to protect their culture from undue external influences
2. There is the religious reasons forming part of the legend relating to Sevayabhaya which runs as follows though the Lambadis eat fowl purchased from others, it is a taboo for them to raise fowl in the settlement.

It is said that Sevabhaya obtained fourteen blessings from Sateebhavani, one of them being not to afflict his people with deadly epidemics like plague and cholera. The goddess is said to have granted the request, but asked in return how she would identify a Lambadi settlement. The saint gave her a clue, “where the cock does not crow, you should presume it is a lambadi settlement and spare it; where it crows, is a permanently settled village of the non- Lambadi communities, where you are free to enter”. Thus fowl rising became taboo and is one of the several marks of lambadis identity, the belief being connected with their well being. Therefore, even if a fowl were to be offered free for raising, as a supplementary source of income, the Lambadi would not accept them. This belief is an instance of how traditional religious ideas inhibit economic improvement. In the last few years they have again started keeping fowls in the settlement.

### **Other beliefs**

Sevabhaya was revered by the Lambadis from the early days of their settling down, to such an extent that there are folk songs in his honor, deifying him<sup>44</sup>. Today, the Sevabhaya shrine is a central institution of every settlement around which all the activities of the Lambadis revolve. It is here that they hold their

council meetings, meet important personalities and gossip in their leisure time. The reverence shown for their patron saint is quite obvious. Every Lambadi who sets out on an important errand, makes obeisance in the shrine.

Paradoxically, their funeral customs also reflect the Lambadis dread (a hangover from the past) of epidemic diseases which are almost deified even in these days of effective control of epidemic diseases by public health agencies. A married or initiated Lambadi is considered a full person and, therefore, such a person's body is usually cremated. Those who die before initiation or marriage are considered incomplete persons and hence a funeral by cremation is not accorded to them so, they are buried. Fifty years ago, there was the custom of slitting open the womb of a pregnant dead woman in order to take out the fetus for burial since it was an incomplete person, and then cremating the woman's body. But those who die of epidemics are buried and not cremated, as it is believed that they are already burnt in the mouth of the goddess causing the particular epidemic disease, and so are, ranked with the concerned deity. To burn such person's bodies will tantamount to challenging the deity and thus inviting more trouble. Improper disposal of the dead body is supposed to cause misery to the community by way of failure of rains, which affects their economy adversely, and of affliction of epidemics, which either reduces their man-hours or their population.

As is the case of the non-Lambadi peasants, the hooting of an owl is considered an evil omen, foreboding a coming death, natural calamity or epidemic. The Lambadi still believes in black and white magic and think that a strong, beautiful or talented man can be harmed by magical spells employed by jealous competitors or enemies. Similarly, crops, cattle, milk yield, etc., can be adversely affected by black magic. Thus, belief in magical

practices continues but has changed from practices characteristic of the risk-ridden, nomadic life, to ones that relate to the life of settled peasants. I did not come across any practicing magician or sorcerer among them; but they agreed that they make use of the services of non-Lambadi specialists. A stray case of human sacrifice (the killing of a young daughter of his brother) performed by some of the Lambadis in the hope of getting a hidden treasure, occurred a few years ago, indicating the Lambadis poverty which leads to such anachronistic pursuit of wealth.

Most Lambadi men and women take interest in preserving and continuing their religious practices and beliefs as well as a good moral behavior. Through child-rearing patterns, these are taught to the young. However, these days, the older generation complains about the lessening religiosity of the young. The expansion of the frontiers of understanding for the younger generation about man, society and nature is dispelling the mystery that surrounded these phenomena in the past, and is leading to the shrinking of the supernatural world and the lessening emotional involvement in the associated magic religious practices.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing discussion supports the view that “different orientation in the means of livelihood are reflected in the religious attitudes and codes of social obligations” in the case of the Lambadi as in the case of other communities such as the Africans<sup>45</sup>. From the days of their closely directed economic, political and religious life in the pre-British period, it is a great change for the Lambadis to settle down and adopt agriculture and wage labour, which in turn have necessitated modifications in their religion. In this process, the Lambadis have emerged as relatively emancipated individualists, from their earlier submission to the tighter hold of the Naik and his council. The changes

in economy which necessitated increased contacts with others have together greatly modified the Lambadis beliefs and rituals. As a result, communal celebrations and rituals are becoming few and far between, while family level observances are increasing. Thereby, the 'nouveau riche Lambadis are exhibiting their relative affluence by giving lavish feasts to the settlement, which is not possible now and the degree of ritual and ceremonial unity, as Forde rightly observed in the case of African societies: Belief and ritual tend... to mirror the scale and degree of social integration. The greater the economic self-sufficiency and the political freedom of action of localized groups, the greater the segmentation of economic activity and social control among such groups, the more extensive socially and the more firmly interconnected are the basic concepts and ritual forms'<sup>46</sup>.

The role of religion in Lambadis life is not limited to the religious and belief sphere, but related to other aspects of their life as well. There are one more soon simpler societies, which are characterized by integrated cultures and less true in case of the Lambadis who have been able to maintain their culture identity in spite of contact with advanced regional cultures, for centuries. The role of religion in the life of the Lambadis as well as of the villagers in India is pervasive, providing ties between the living and the dead, holding kinsmen and affinities together by family rituals, necessitating pilgrimages which provide travel adventure and new experiences in inter settlement bonds. Religion also provides for the Lambadis occasions of rewarding Aya clients, of gift exchanges, of emotional security and group solidarity. It also provides "Courage and hope in areas of life where uncertainty and anxiety are most prevalent"<sup>47</sup>.



Religion sanctifies and sustains social usage. It lends sanction to the structure and values of society, and in this sense is indispensable to the integrating and orderly existence of the community<sup>48</sup>. Because of this function of religion, we find that, when the Lambadis economy and its associated social practices and values changed, the supporting religious value system also underwent modifications. Many traditional ceremonies emphasizing rain, fertility and protection against the ravages of epidemics have lost much of their former significance (the community's sacrificial feasts are now arranged on fewer occasions because of increasing cost and weakening spirit of co-operation among the residents of the settlements), owing to economic changes, culture contact and widening attitude. Nevertheless, it is also true that these same ceremonies still retain their attraction for the Lambadis. The future of these seems assured for many years to come, partly as a survival of beliefs and sentiments associated with their former vital role, and partly as dramatic pageantry. As managing groups for much of this ceremonialism, the future of the Lambadi panchayats appears assured. But both the panchayats and the ceremonies have lost much of their esoteric and deeply religious significance. However, the out-ward manifestations of these in actual observance will continue, as to their folklore, the exoteric pageantry, when other bases have been lost. In fact, a close look at these ceremonials indicates several levels of persistence. Some of the past ceremonies and beliefs (such as sacrifices to epidemic deities) as well as of acculturative borrowings (agricultural rites). In this sense, while the Lambadis peasantization and the consequent increased impact of Hinduism has been a contributing factor in the transformation of their earlier animistic religion, it is also true that, by tolerating the merger of certain rites of the Hindu festival calendar, these same animistic rites are being perpetuated. Thus, rather than further reducing the traditional rituals and beliefs, it is apparent that the influence from the Hindu high castes on the Lambadis has been to Hinduize them all the more and to

widen their ceremonial and belief system. When faced with the need to decide one way or the other in personal observances, a Lambadi picks up the traditional and /or the modified version, depending upon his economic status and education, and the social milieu in which he lives (in settlements or in multi-caste villages).

This borrowing of myth, rituals and ceremonies by an erst-while animistic group seems to have been more rapid only in the last hundred years, after the Lambadis settled down, and is itself a feature of the gradual breakdown of the region of Hindu caste hierarchy, as a result of overall changes in the expanding economic system of the country. The emulation of high caste behavior as a mechanism of sanskritization was far more difficult in the past, when the norms of caste-hierarchy were more rigid. A similar process has been noticed among the Nayars of south Malabar by Gough<sup>49</sup>. In the historical perspective, the Lambadis have gone full circle. They were said to have descended from the Rajputs (a Hindu high caste) and so they must have been a caste. When they felt their homes after the fall of Chittode to become suppliers to armies in the south, they descended to animism. Now, with sedentarization, they have again acquired a caste status in South India. While thus borrowing new elements of rituals and beliefs because of internal changes in the society as well as acculturation, they have not lost their separate identity in terms of their few core traits<sup>50</sup>.

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**LOCAL CHIEFS VERSUS BRITISH  
A STUDY OF CHITTOOR PALEGARS' REVOLT,  
1804-05**

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The process of establishment of British rule was often quite unpopular; it was marked by frequent wars, increasing taxation and the removal of privileges, both economic and administrative, which were not liked by the local or petty rulers and landed elites. Scholars, for example Rajayyan, have revealed through their publications that these factors often triggered revolts in the second half of eighteenth century and the first half of nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>.

K. Rajayyan went to the extent of calling these revolts as the first war of independence<sup>2</sup>. Others like Nicholas Dirks provide us the history of a princely state where the Palegar ruled from late medieval period to its transformation and ultimate collapse under the impact of British rule<sup>3</sup>. S.K. Aruni has traced the historical and archaeological aspects of the Palegar state, Surapura Samsthana, which ultimately gifted to the Nizam of Hyderabad by the British as reward for the former's support during the 1857 revolt<sup>4</sup>. B. Sobhanan has discussed the origins of Palegar and their systems and considered them as feudal powers<sup>5</sup>. While D. Subramanyam Reddy considered the Palegar revolt as peasant resistance and gave a detail account of the tenures existed during the time of the revolt<sup>6</sup>. K. Venugopal Reddy published an article on Palegar Narasimha Reddy revolt, which overlooked a number of published sources both in English and Telugu languages<sup>7</sup>. Thus various Palegar's revolts or their aspects became part of the subject

of study of all the above mentioned scholars. None of them have looked into the details of the Chittoor Palegars' revolt, including Subramanyam Reddy, and hence a new attempt is necessary to present the real causes of the revolt, its details and nature. Different reasons were ascribed by the British to eradicate the Palegari system or to subordinate the Palegar over a hundred years in South India. This resulted, in many cases in a direct military encounter between the Palegar and the British, which finally ended in the extermination of few of the Chittoor Palegar and converted the others as landlords in the later period.

There were ten Palegar who held compact territorial units, Palem, which were not uniform but varied in size and their economic resources. All these Palem, i.e., Bangari, Yedaragunta or Yedurkonda, Naraganti, Gudipatti, Pakala, Mogarala, Pullur, Kallur, Pulicherla and Tumba,<sup>8</sup> were not rich in irrigation sources, but were dependent both on tank irrigation and rain, the latter, however, played a significant role as most of the lands were rain-fed. The control over the local agrarian economy was held by the Palegars,<sup>9</sup> but the actual cultivation was carried out by the others who hailed from a different social background such as *baliya*, *vellama*, *kamma* and *kapu or reddy*<sup>10</sup>. The Palem's society composed not only of these castes but also various other castes and indicate a highly developed social structure that was exploitative in nature. Subramanyam Reddy's description of the ryotwari system<sup>11</sup> or individual settlement of lands was not applicable to these Palem as they were under the control of various Palegars, who were directly responsible for the payment of tax (tribute). In contrary, the ryotwari system was introduced only in government controlled areas, viz., Chittoor, Sattevidu, Tirupati, etc., and in case of Palem it was introduced after the revolt<sup>12</sup>. However, at the lower level, i.e., village level, the presence of *mirasidars*, *inamdars* and other land holders could be seen as common (both in government administered areas and in Palem), who contributed land revenues

to the government and Palegars. The Palegars were served by 558 *amaranayakas* and 4324 *kattubadidars*, the immediate subordinates of the Palegar and were appointed on the condition of rendering military service to the Palegars<sup>13</sup>. The other important local personnel who supported the Palegar were the village headmen. Through them the Palegar approached the cultivators and collected fixed percentage of revenue. All these groups of communities did not share a common social background and therefore the Palegar and the cultivators belonged to different castes. The local chiefs or Palegar had emerged as formidable powers with the support of the agrarian economy and merchant capitalism over a period of time<sup>14</sup>.

### **Taxation and revolt**

The primary argument about the effect of early British revenue policy on the revolt is analogous to the argument about tax increases. The Government wanted to pursue such policies that served their interests more than the Palegars' interest and their tribute from *pagodas* 16, 828-14-50 to *pagodas* 35,775,<sup>15</sup> which the first district collector Stratton 'considered more adequate to their resources'<sup>16</sup>. Some scholars (Rajayyan 2000; B. Sobhanan in J. Alassir et.al. eds. 2000; Subramanyam Reddy 1988) argued that there is a relationship between levels of taxation and the early revolts of Palegar in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. The details of the revenues and tribute collection under the Nawabs of Arcot and the British rule suggest this as the basic and important factor for the occurrence of the revolt.



**Table 1 Tribute (Tax) Collected Under Nawabs of Arcot**

Name of palem (1)	Revenue (in Rs.) (2)	Peshcush or Tribute (in Rs.) (3)	Percentage of Col.3 over Col.2 (4)
Bangari	64,243	29,750	46
Mogarala	66,830	24,500	37
Pakala	67,090	21,000	31
Pullur	36,387	14,700	40
Naraganti	29,299	14,350	49
Pulicherla	26,114	9,187	35
Kallur	18,860	6,125	33
Tumba	6,262	2,450	39
Gudipati	15,306	3,150	21
Yadurkonda	17,056	5,250	31

Source: A.F. Cox, *A Manual of the North Arcot District in the Presidency of Madras*, (Madras, rep.1998), p. 131; H.A. Stuart, *Madras District Manuals: North Arcot*, (Madras, 1895), Vol.1, p.175; Graeme, *Report on Chittoor Polliams*, (Chittoor, 1893), pp.15-16.

During the period of Nawab, the range of tax on different Pales was from 10 percent (e.g., Gudipattipalem) to 35 percent (e.g., Nargantipalem), which in cases of some Pales considered to be high by their respective Palegars. The abnormal tax increase caused by the British from 21 percent (e.g., Gudipattipalem) to 49 percent (e.g., Nargantipalem) caused the 'revolt of all the Poligars, save Gudipati'<sup>17</sup>. Despite the fact that the British did not have exact information of resources of the Pales, the rate

of tax was increased on the basis of the revenues of the estates available during the Nawab's rule. Stratton fixed this tax on the basis of 'the accounts he received from the Poligar's Karnams, of the collections of Fusly 1210, as the revenues of the Polliams, and valuing the Amarum or Rajabandoo and Kutbudee lands as if they were to be resumed and their produce available to the Poligars'<sup>18</sup>. However, Graeme was of the opinion that 'not including the rent of the Katbudee lands, the Poligar's share was left at only between 38 and 39 percent'<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the other sources of Palegars, like kavelly fees, were denied to them as their right to collect them were sequestrated by the British. This system was continued in the next year also by Stratton, who did not want to 'raise the terms yearly since they might from thence infer that there never would be an end to the demands on them, which would tend to damp their industry and rather induce them to neglect the peaceable occupation of agriculture than cultivate their Pollams to the most extent'<sup>20</sup>. Nevertheless, there was a smoldering grievance against the settlement, because the British government made them accept the unjustified terms of the settlement. If the Palegar failed to pay the tribute, the government warned, they were liable to lose their lands (Palems). Thus an assertion of the state's coercive power could be seen in the dealings of the Palegar tribute payments were concerned. Coercion was continued on the Palegars, though a request was made for more time to pay the arrears of tribute due to the failure of rain and the loss of crop production<sup>21</sup>. Arrears and irregular tribute payment was not a new phenomenon as it was a regular feature during the Nawab's rule. Abdul Wahab, who was made the in charge of Chittoor and Chandragirijagir, received 'inadequate sums as the Palegar chose occasionally to pay'<sup>22</sup>. The British did not understand the broader political and economic relations that the Palegar had with the earlier rulers, they were rather struck with revenue issues that solely became the basis even for the establishment of political relations.

## **Administrative centralization and revolt**

The other important factor for the revolt was the administrative centralization introduced by the British. All the Palegar lost their control over the police administration which actually involved their subordinates, *kavalgars*, to provide security to the people and maintain law and order of the localities. After the assumption of administrative charges of the district the British appointed local officials, peons, and maintained law and order. A request was sent by Cockburn, District Collector, to increase the number of peons, from 115 to 345, indicating the additional employment of 230 peons for the better maintenance of law and order<sup>23</sup>. The Governor approved the step taken by the Collector and informed that the temporary arrangement made by him for 'conducting the Police duties of Chittoor under the resumption of the privileges of the Poligars, and authorizes the disbursement for defraying the expenses of the Police establishment, amounting to Star Pagodas 6,752-6-0<sup>24</sup>. This was a step towards modern police system that the British introduced in the later period, however, with this measure the erstwhile local traditional police officials, *kavalgars*, were gradually replaced by the British controlled police system. In addition, Palegar were restricted, through Regulation XXV, to alienate lands to 'religious or charitable or to any other purposes by which it may be intended to exempt such lands from bearing their portion of the public tax'<sup>25</sup>. This policy was adopted due to the existence of a large number of *inam* lands, which the British considered as illegitimate grants, and the government was not prepared for further alienations. Moreover, even the Palegar were not considered as legitimate chiefs in the beginning of the British rule<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, the above measures were adopted in order to shift the administrative powers from the Palegar to the British.

## **Penetration of British authority and revolt**

It is difficult to establish the exact nature of the relationship between tax levels and revolt as many revolts occurred during the second half of eighteenth century, for example the case of Marudu of Sivagangai where British ‘made no public demand on Sivagangai except the normal rent of one-third of its revenue and took no measure, calculated to cause any embarrassment to his position or to give any mortification to his person,’<sup>27</sup> and some in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, broadly it can be predicted that the abnormal increase in the rate of tax was a potent factor for the occurrence of revolt in many cases, e.g., the case of Chittoor Palegars. Therefore, the threat to local power and the extractive policy of the British had an impact on the Palegars. As evidences pointed out the dissatisfaction generated by the measures of the government was restricted to Chittoor Palegars only, it did not extend to other parts of the district, particularly to Kalahasti and Karvetnagar *Zamindaris*.

The early provocation from the side of Palegars began as a local event when a group of armed men from Naragantipalem made an unsuccessful attempt to rob the treasury in Chittoor. Later (June 1803) they attacked and plundered Utanthangal village. In another incident, Tumba Palegar instigated an attack on Captain Nuttall when he was passing through the Palem. Though it appears to be a local incident, they created tension between the government and the Palegar and forced the former to think of military action against the latter. Due to the non-availability of troops, military action was not taken by the District Collector. Nevertheless, Stratton initiated action against the Naraganti Palegar and arrested him, but he was released by the next District Collector, Cockburn. The Palegar was released on the assurance of the discharge of arrears immediately, but when the assurance was broken the provincial government directed the Collector to ‘resume the whole

of the lands and rassooms of the refractory Poligar, and on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1804 ordered that a battalion should at once march to Chittoor to enforce the order<sup>28</sup>. This was indeed a key turning point in Chittoor Palegar history and changed the relationship between the British government and the Palegars. The use of army against the Palegars, according to the Commission, was due to the 'hostile opposition' adopted by these local elites and to 'vindicate and upheld the authority of the Government'<sup>29</sup>. Earlier, the government warned against the hostile attitudes of the Palegar and informed them about the cases of Panjalamkurichi whose Palegar 'took up arms and resisted the troops of the Company, but he was taken from the heart of his jungle and his name became extinct. Veeroopatchy Poligar in like manner wished to try his strength and in this intention rebelled, he and his family are swept from the face of the earth'<sup>30</sup>.

The revolt of Palegars, though started as a small affair, spread to all Palems immediately. Different subordinates of these local chiefs participated against the British. Yet, in its intensity, the revolt had not assumed significance due to the overriding power of the British military. The active military action was supposed to start on 25 July 1804 in Pennamarri, but the Palegar of Pakala and Mograla surrendered to the conditions of the government and agreed to cede two-thirds of each of the estates he managed. Later, the British troops marched towards Chandragiri and destroyed the fortifications of the Kallur and Pulicherla Palegars. The next attention of Col. Darley, commander of military operations against the Palegars, turned towards Pullur, which consisted of strongest fortification among all the Palems but which was reduced to the ground very rapidly and on 19 September 1804 Palegar of Kallur, Pulicherla and Pullur were easily defeated. The British consolidated the position after these battles and hoped to settle the affairs of the Palems through a three member commission of Messrs. Webb, Hurdis and Stratton (the first District Collector). Though

the commission was able to establish relations with the Palegar and forwarded certain conditions to them e.g., disbanding military peon, no new fortifications, assistance in the construction of roads, payment of arrears before 15 December 1804 or assignment of whole Palem to government until the dues were realized and consent for survey for the settlement of land revenue at two-fifths of the estimated value. However, not all the Palegar were in favour of such settlement, but few like Pakala, Mogarala and Tumba had signed the agreement. Later, vexed by the government's revenue demand and interference and propelled by their ambition the Palegars, except Gudipati and Naraganti, once again revolted against the British authority. The commission reported the matter to the government and the latter began its military action under the command of Lt.Col. Moneypenny. By 8 February 1805, all Palem were 'reduced to perfect quiet'<sup>31</sup>. Four of the Palem, Pakala, Mogarala, Pullur and Yedaragunta Palem were declared forfeited and the rest were granted 18 percent allowance 'upon the revenues of their estates until such time as Government should restore them upon permanent *sunnuds*'<sup>32</sup>.

## Conclusion

To conclude the Chittoor Palegar revolt makes few things clear. First, the Palegar revolts were not the first war of Independence as conceived by K. Rajayyan. The evidences makes it clear that the increased tax and removal of local administrative powers basically incited the Palegarto revolt against the British. Neither the Palegar waged Independence war nor was there an idea of a nation existing at that time. Therefore, the idea of first war of Independence is not applicable to any of the Palegar revolt that occurred between 1750 and 1850. Second, the Palegar were not the feudal powers as considered by B. Sobhanan. On the contrary, Palegar were involved in the dynamics of agrarian economy and merchant capitalism since their origin, and whose

role could not be compared to that of west European feudal lords. The defeat of Palegar marked the emergence of the clear dominance of the British in South India.

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## **THE ORIYAS AND THEIR SOCIAL EVOLUTION - THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONDITION IN GANJAM: A CASE STUDY**

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Ganjam as ancient 'Kangoda' and 'Khinjalimandala' had a great and glorious past. Its history can be traced back to as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when the *Mahabharata* was composed. It has been referred to even in the later Vedic and Buddhist literature as a part of the greater Odradesa and Bharat Varsha, with most interesting stories of its own<sup>1</sup>.

In the Brahmanical literature of the *Puranas* the people of this region have been described as an ancient people of the country<sup>2</sup>. Geographically it was surrounded by Odra and Utkala on the north, Kosala on the west, Kalinga on the South-East, Tri-kalinga on the southern west and the Bay of Bengal on the east. Geography thus provided her distinct physical and cultural personality all through the ages and always she served as a distinct nerve centre of trade and traffic and politics and culture by being the gateway between Aryavarta (Northern India) and Dakhinapath (Southern India) for all practical purposes over the centuries<sup>3</sup>.

From the *Puranic* literature it is known that the region, later known as Ganjam remained under the rule of 32 kings, along with Odradesa, in the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>4</sup>. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE the region was ruled over by the first Shudra Nanda raja, Mahapadma Nanda of the Maghadhan Empire. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE the Maghadhan emperor Ashoka conquered Kalinga including the region (Ganjam)

in 261 BCE and ruled over it through his *Mahamatras* (officers)<sup>5</sup>. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, Kharavela, the Chedi emperor ravaged Kalinga's defeat at the hands of Asoka by asserting his imperial over-lordship over a major part of the Indian subcontinent, including Ganjam<sup>6</sup>. After the fall of Chedi (Mahameghavahana) dynastic rule, Kangoda came under the overlordship of the Andhra Satavahanas from the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE to 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. The region gradually was ruled over by the Sailodbhavas, Bhaumakaras and Somavamsis (Keshari) of Orissa. Ganjam remained under their rule from 10<sup>th</sup> century CE till the establishment of the Ganga rule in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>7</sup>. In the later half of the century Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva succeeded to the Ganga throne on the death of his father, Devendra Varman Raja Raja. He championed the language of the local people called Oriya and lavishly enriched its literature, particularly its prose, which got inscribed on the walls of a temple at Bhubaneswar at his royal patronage. He named his extensive empire from the Ganges in the North to the Godavari in the South with Kataka as capital as Odradesa or Orissa. He succeeded in closely knitting the Oriya people together politically and culturally and succeeded in giving them first the identity of a distinct linguistic and cultural group of people in the Indian subcontinent<sup>8</sup>.

In 1571, when Govinda Vidyadhara's son and successor Ram Chandra Deva was ruling over Orissa, Ibrahim Qutab Sahi the Sultan of Golconda invaded and occupied south Orissa right up to the Chilika lake and annexed the same to his kingdom of Golconda and in the process south Orissa comprising of modern Ganjam, Phulbani and Koraput district remained with the south of India, since then till 1936, for over 365 years, being away from the Orissan cultural and political mainstream<sup>9</sup>.

The economic condition of Ganjam under alien rule was highly

distressing and deteriorating. It became so as a result of economic and imperial exploitation of the district by different alien rulers like those of Golconda, the French and the British. Repeated resistance movements broke out in different parts of the district against alien rule from time to time, which were ruthlessly suppressed. Such spelt a disaster for the economic sustenance and survival of the people. The societies also fall prey to such a situation and became lawless and disorderly. For a good deal of time the force of disintegration and chaos crept into the social and economic fabric of the region. All sorts of instability and chaos were visible round the corner. Life became insecure and property became unsafe. The economic resources like the mineral and forest wealth and all such other raw materials and forest wealth and all such other raw materials were exploited mainly in the interest of the rulers, but not in the interest of the ruled. The economic condition of the people deteriorated letting loose a climate of instability and insecurity in the district. Despite all such unfortunate development some amount of economic progress took place in the period under review owing to the introduction of new means of transport, communication, roads railways, trade and commerce and industry which found their reflection in the growth of culture, literature in and around the district<sup>10</sup>.

### **Forestry**

In, 1854, the Government laid more stress on the trade of native fiber. This was necessitated due to the non-supply of flax and hemp, in the English market. Some specimens of the fiber products of Ganjam were shown in the London exhibition of that year<sup>11</sup>. The fiber products of the Ganjam forests were given special care and attention and they were much sought after goods in the national and international market at that time. But unfortunately the people of Ganjam failed to realize the importance of their native fiber

and had they realized that, it was sure that they could have easily developed their economy to a great extent<sup>12</sup>

Among the other forest export products of Ganjam included the timbers of various kinds of trees e.g (saul shorearoubusta), bamboo, dediduons, ravines, mango (Mangitera indica), sahajo(Terminalia tomentosa) , dhow (anogeissus latifolia) , Holondha (Aidha cord folia) , eboney or Kandoo (Disopyros tomentosa) , the satin wood (cholorylon swetenia),sahoo (soymida fabrifuga) Tamarind tangeny (xylia dolabriformica) and toon(cedrela tooha)<sup>13</sup>.

The larger river Rushikulya afforded a better means of rafting which led to a greater export especially of fire wood and salt pales<sup>14</sup>. The coomry agricultural products of the hill tracts which included dry produces were exported to the plain lands of the district. The hill tracts were also in the mainstream of both the inland and external trade of Ganjam<sup>15</sup>. The chief depot for the sale of timber remained at Russoll konda and forest houses were built at Surada and other places in Ganjam in course of time for marketing timbers. Most of the timbers went in form of sleepers to Calcutta, Aska, Berhampur and Gopalpur<sup>16</sup> Among the forest exports items were included timber, wax, honey, turmeric dry grains, cotton, oil-seeds, tobacco, etc<sup>17</sup>. The most important among the mineral resources found in the Ganjam forest were iron ores; limestone, building stones, sandstone, talc etc and they were exported to different parts of the country and the world from time to time<sup>18</sup>.

Ganjam provided a congenial climate for the growth and development of both internal and external trade. There was much scope for trade of all kinds of indigenous products. But the age old chronic poverty of the people stood on the way of the improvement

of native trade. No native trader was able to exercise considerable influence over the trade of the district. All rich traders came in from outside and exercised their monopoly hold on the trade of the district. They grew to be an extremely affluent community in the district at the cost of the well being of its teeming population of peasants and workers. Almost all the benefits of the earnings of trade and commerce, both internal and external and straight went away to the pockets of the outsiders and foreign monopoly traders and in no way benefitted the general welfare of the people of Ganjam<sup>19</sup>.

### **Agriculture**

The continued tension and unrest compelled the people to frequently leave their homes for the nearby jungles of the neighboring *Zamindaries* for temporary stay and settlement. This type of frequent emigration gave rise to new socio-economic class pertaining to the ownership of land and agriculture labour. However, the disputes regarding the ownership of lands were amicably settled with the intervention of the *grama panchayatas* (the village council of elders)<sup>20</sup>.

The agricultural products and food stuffs were either looted or destroyed during the course of military operations by the men of both the parties, the rebels and the government soldiers. At times the hoarded stockpiles of food stuffs were taken away by force to meet the requirements of the East India Company<sup>21</sup>. In the absence of regular agricultural activities the peasants and particularly the labourers suffered a lot of economic hardships. Moreover, there were no industries at work in the district to provide any regular remunerative wages to the labourers. The Company's government also did not make any other regular

arrangements for providing remunerative wages to the labourers and the peasants. As a result, the economic hardship of the people was ever increasing<sup>22</sup>.

Neither the temporary nor the permanent settlement of lands provided any relief to the peasants. Lands under the permanent settlement appeared more controversial than what it had been earlier under the *Zaminadari Rajas*. The introduction of the British land revenue administration in the *zamindaries* provided no immediate relief to the peasants and labourers but rather it added to the misery on a scale<sup>23</sup>. The peasants or the *riots* were required to pay fifty percent of their produce as rent to the government and with the rest half of the shared produce it was very difficult on their part to make both ends meet. The prevalence of the class of the intermediary tenants kept the real tenants deprived of their due share of produce and in consequence they also had to face deprivations<sup>24</sup>.

The agrarian population of the district were never free from exploitation and extortion. Mainly the business communities were instrumental in the manifold exploitation of the peasants and labourers. As the peasants could not have safe warehouses for storing their produce. They had to sell them to traders at considerable low prices and suffered heavy losses. The labourers got their price in kind. As a result, the prices of foodstuffs always remained at a low ebb causing considerable loss to cultivation. The non-agricultural products were sold at high prices by the traders. The peasants sold their produce at low prices but they purchased the other commercial goods at high prices. As a result, the people remained in a state of poverty and backwardness<sup>25</sup>.

In addition to political and military unrest natural calamities like drought famine and epidemics added to the economic hardships

and sufferings of the people. The heavy toll of lives lost in the epidemics of 1815 was one of such glaring examples<sup>26</sup>. Further the Pindaries overran the *Zamindary* in 1815-16, and caused large scale disturbances through their raids and plunder. This largely added to the economic distress and maladies of this people<sup>27</sup>.

Agriculture and irrigation received no favorable attention of government till the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The existing sources of irrigation like the reservoirs, tanks, and canals were left unused for cultivation since they largely remained dry. No efforts were made to improve the quality of the land. The principal objective of the government had been to collect land revenue without paying any heed to the real predicament of the cultivator in the absence of the required irrigational sources for water. The land revenue administration of the Company did not at all lay any stress on ameliorating the condition of the cultivation. As a result, cultivation remained inactive<sup>28</sup>. The need for applying new methods and techniques for improving the quality of agriculture was largely felt everywhere in the district. Keeping this need in view, the government tried to introduce the cultivation of new crops, like wheat and potatoes in the district. The cultivation of wheat was popularized among the aboriginal Khonds of Daringibadi of the maliah hill tracts of Khondamals of Ghumsur<sup>29</sup>.

Agriculture was the chief source of the economic activity of the district. Agricultural products were the main items of trade and commerce. Non-agricultural goods were also included among the commercial articles. Due attention was not given to industrialization. There was an absence of industries as they lacked in popular and governmental support and assistance. Agriculture received the lion to share of the Governmental patronage. This was also due to the fact that the cultivable lands were available for purchase and possession at cheaper price and



rent and that made the people invest their savings in the purchase of lands rather than for investing the same in industrial production<sup>30</sup>.

### **Trade and commerce**

Trade and commerce remained at a low level and this condition was due to several factors like the absence of good and *pucca* roads and other systems of communications like water routes and railways. The trade could not be expanded to other parts of the district and the country. Most of the trade and traffic were carried on roads, with the help of bullocks, asses and other animals. Wheeled carriages were hardly used for the purposes of trade. The Banjarries (traders) from Nagpur, a Maratha state, were found engaged in the markets of Ganjam. They made business mainly on salt. They traversed to Ganjam en route to Boudha, Chakapada and Sambalpur for doing trade in the markets of Ganjam<sup>31</sup>.

The trade was generally done with the help of barter system. Coins were rarely used in the markets. Salt and spices were imported into Ganjam in exchange of the export of its grains and forest products<sup>32</sup>. Customs duties were collected from the inland commercial goods among which were included grains, salt, spices, forest products, cattle and other necessary articles of daily use. These customs duties were called '*sayer*' which constituted a potential source of the state revenue. Another equally important tax called '*Moturpha*' was collected from the house tax (Ghavatkya); taxes were imposed on the use of agricultural implements, looms, professional crafts and cast-professions and privileges. Two percent of the total cost of goods was charged as state tax from all the commercial goods which were carried out of Ganjam to different parts of Orissa. A duty of Rs 2,

7.05 was collected from each carriage of commercial goods that came into and went from Ganjam<sup>33</sup>.

There were some reductions in the duties levied on rice, paddy and other essential articles. The Government collected export duties as well as the duties from the river anchorage at different ferry places on the rivers of Ganjam. Duties were realized from the freight of goods carried on river & Paddy, rice, coarse grain, cloth, wax, silk clothes, forest products were sent on the rivers. The Company collected customs duty at 3, 3.4 of the total price of the articles sent on the rivers, and in certain cases customs were collected from the total weightage of the goods. Customs were collected from all export articles sent out from the district. The government also collected “Metapesha” or the “land custody” on all articles either exported from or imported into Ganjam on the roads and highways<sup>34</sup>.

No customs duties were paid on the purchase of the goods for Company’s consumption and use. Goods for Company’s use declared duty free on the basis of certificates issued to that effect. Also no duties were paid on the sale of goods belonging to the Company and such commercial privileges and facilities were enjoyed by the Company all through the period under review<sup>35</sup>. In 1837, the Company’s Government made a proclamation abolishing inland duties on as many as 35 articles in the district. This proclamation provided a welcome relief to the small traders of the district<sup>36</sup>.

Ganjam from 1766 to 1866 thus presented the picture of an India in miniature by being the nerve centre of numerous cultural patterns, religious faiths linguistic and literary developments and the grand reservoir of vast unexploited natural and mineral resources and the scene of manifold socio-economic conditions,

trade, commerce, traffic and other activities. All the cultural diversities and the situation of the lives of the people made the district look unique and colorful in many ways and dimensions.<sup>37</sup> Thus, Ganjam in Orissa being inhabited by Oriyas had been a most important nerve centre of Orissa culture and as the gateway of trade commerce, traffic and communication between the plains and the hill tracts. It has also turned into an important centre of manifold activities-cultural, religious, political, administrative and academic activities and achievement over the years and as such it legitimately enjoys a special place of pride and importance in the annals of Orissan as well as Indian history and culture.

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## **HISTORICAL STATUS OF LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES IN TRAVANCORE**

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The genesis and progress of the legislative processes command greater relevance and significance in an age of democracy and peoples' government. The erstwhile Princely States of Travancore commanded a predominant position in the evolution of parliamentary institutions by virtue of its strategic and ecological factors. The historians and scholars who dealt with the history of Kerala did not give due importance to the role of Princely States in the constitutional experiments of modern Kerala. The legislatures formed the basis of the whole administrative procedure. It became the fountain head of the process of government. The standard of the government was largely decided by the qualities and competence of the legislators.

On the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the legislative council of Travancore Sri R. Venkataraman, then President of India wrote on 24 September 1988: "The Travancore Legislation Council came into existence in 1888 as a result of the positive response from the rulers of Travancore to the political aspirations of the people of the state. The Travancore Legislation Council is believed to be the first institution of its kind to have been formed in any 'native' state. This body together with the Sree Moolam Popular Assembly of Travancore conferred an opportunity on the people to bring to the notice of the State their grievances. In 1932, the Popular Assembly and Legislative Council were formally converted into two chambers of the legislature with elections from general and special constituencies to the Assembly"

1.

Among the princely states of modern India Travancore was a pioneer itself in the introduction of representative governments. Travancore commanded a hoary past with many traditions of popular governmental organizations. The people of Travancore were very much familiar with the working of popular assemblies from the ancient period onwards. The popular assemblies like *nattukuttam*, *desakuttam* and *tarakuttam* administered the local matters presided over by *naduvazhi*, *desavazhi* and *karanavar* respectively. The popular councils worked under the general supervision and control of the principal rulers of the country. Still the *naduvazhis*, *desavazhis* and *karanavars* being the local heads exercised enormous control over the people<sup>2</sup>. *Tara*, *kara* or *muri* functioned as the lowest units of the processes of legislation. Actually, the popular aspirations were ventilated through such popular forums. It represented the basic segment of legislative proceedings. A number of families in particular constituted a *tara*. For each *tara* there were leaders known as *mukhyathani* or *pramani*. The popular assemblies of the *taras* were known as *kuttams*. The *tara kuttams* usually met once in a month to discuss matters of local importance. They had striking similarities with the village republics of the Tamil country. It exercised vast powers including legislative, executive and judicial powers. It often functioned as a unit of the civil administration of the country<sup>3</sup>. They heard the local petty offences and settled such disputes. They wielded immense powers and shouldered much responsibility in protecting the rights and privileges of the local people<sup>4</sup>.

The elders of the *kuttams* commanded great respect from the common people. They were noted for the dispassionate and impartial decisions. The decisions of the *kuttams* remained supreme and final. No one dared to disobey their orders on pain of incurring social penalties far more stringent and far more efficient than any punishment that judicial tribunals could award. In their hands, the penalty of social ostracism was a potent weapon. Whoever

set at naught their authority or delayed their orders subjected to expulsion from society. He lost all privileges and became a social leper and political non-entity. The ban followed him wherever he went; he was treated in the same manner everywhere. Life became very miserable and finally he had the choice of either putting an end to his life or submitting to the orders promulgated by the assembly. In cases of continued obstinacy, the ban was sometimes extended to family and friends<sup>5</sup>. These popular assemblies curbed the arbitrary powers of the rulers and looked after the interests of the people. William Logan regarded as them 'the custodians of ancient rights and customs, the parliament of land'<sup>6</sup>. Still there are a number places in Travancore ending with the prefix of *tara*, *kara*, *nadu* and *desom* which clearly indicate an uninterrupted link with the past.

Certain number of *taras* joined together and formed a *desam*. Each *desam* had its own popular council called a *desakuttam*. The members of the *desakuttam* were elected by the representatives of the *tara*. The meetings of the *desakuttam* were presided over by a *desavazhi*. He exercised overall control upon the civil, religious and military affairs of *desam*. He was assisted by an inner council called *pramanis*. The *desakuttams* looked into the repair and maintenance of streams and channels used for agricultural purposes<sup>7</sup>.

The union of *taras* and *desams* resulted in the formation of the *nadus*<sup>8</sup>. The elected assemblies of the *nadus* were known as *nattukuttams*. The *nattukuttams* carried out the administration of the *nadus*. It was headed by a *naduvazhi* who was usually appointed by the Perumal, the reigning king with the consent of the people. The *naduvazhis* commanded much respect among his people. He usually remained the incarnation of all virtues. He stood for the happiness and welfare of his followers. He continued to be a source of support and assistance to the rulers.

On the other hand, the *nattukuttams* exercised immense powers if necessity existed they even set at naught the authority of the Rajas and punished the ministers for their unwarrantable acts<sup>9</sup>. Even in the midst of political turmoil and administrative instabilities, the popular assemblies continued to exercise their powers and privileges.

Such a system of popular government continued till the establishment of the Brahmin hegemony. Following the advent of the Brahmins, they introduced the temple assemblies. The temples became the nerve centres of the social contacts. The erstwhile Sangam culture was replaced by the Brahmanical culture where caste played the most predominant role. During the pre Brahmanical days matters were decided on the basis merit, ability and character. Thereafter, caste became the decisive factor. The temples and their precincts assumed greater importance. The popular assemblies began in the premises of the temples. The bulk of the society was reduced to the position of untouchable and unlookables. They were not permitted to come near to the temples. As a result, they were kept apart from the processes of legislation and the main stream of the society. The situation continued without any apparent change till the advent of the Europeans.

Travancore became the most prominent powerful military State of Kerala in the eighteenth century under the able guidance and leadership of Marthanda Varma and his successor Karthika Tirunal Balarama Varma<sup>10</sup>. The enlightened traditions of the makers of 'Modern Travancore' were followed by a line of illustrious rulers. Under the early rulers of Travancore popular bodies in the form of Village Assemblies and Sabha Yogams commanded great respect and were the most decisive in matters of legislation. They played an effective role in local affairs. But the local bodies became impotent when administration came to be highly centralised in character. The control over the local system of administration



gradually proceeded under the direction of the Dewans who were unfamiliar with the customs and traditions of the country. They managed public affairs without the support of any representative associations of the people<sup>11</sup>.

The history of modern Travancore began with the accession of Marthanda Varma (1729 – 1758) to power in 1729 with Padmanabhapuram as his capital. He annexed a number of major and minor principalities like Attingal, Nedumangad, Kollam, Kayamkulam, Purakad, Thekkenkur, Pantalam, Punjar, Mavelikara and Kottarakara to his princely state through conquests and consolidation<sup>12</sup>. He called the enlarged and expanded Venad as Travancore<sup>13</sup>. The newly formed Travancore under Marthanda Varma had its expansion from Kanyakumari in the south to Paravur in the north. It was divided into southern, central and northern divisions for the convenience of administration. The central division was popularly known as south Travancore. In order to establish an autocratic state, Maharaja Marthanda Varma purchased professional weapons from English merchants and built an army, comprising of the Maravars and Nairs. With the help of his army, he won the famous battle of Kulachel against the Dutch in 1741 and imprisoned the Dutch Captain D'Lannoy, who later became the head of the Travancore army<sup>14</sup>. To establish the kingdom on a firm footing Marthanda Varma adopted very stringent measures. In 1733, he killed the sons of the previous Raja and executed the rebel leaders except the Brahmins, following the laws of Manu. He made a treaty of alliance with Cochin against the Zamorin of Calicut in 1757<sup>15</sup>.

Marthanda Varma introduced a number of reforms into his administration. Certain influential families in Travancore wielded substantial powers in their hands. To prevent the unhealthy intervention of such families into the day-to-day administration of the kingdom, he organized a new public service, based on

efficiency and loyalty<sup>16</sup>. In 1739 he introduced land tax and also formed a centralized ministry, headed by the Dewan. He transformed Travancore into a Hindu State where Brahminism reigned supreme<sup>17</sup>. He accepted Sri Padmanabha as his tutelary deity and assumed the title of Padmanabha dasa, the servant of God Padmanabha. He was succeeded by Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma (1758-1798) popularly known as Dharma Raja.<sup>18</sup> In the words of Fra Bartholomeo “ the King had learned English for several months and spoke it exceedingly well”<sup>19</sup>. He ruled over the kingdom giving due importance to the welfare and prosperity of his subjects.

During the fag end of his rule in 1795 Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma entered into a treaty of perpetual alliance with the English East India Company. It was he who shifted the capital from Padmanabhapuram to Trivandrum. He was assisted by two able ministers, Ayyappan Marthandan Pillai and Raja Kesava Das. Dharma Raja's successor Balarama Varma(1798-1810) was a weak ruler. The three ministers, Jayanthan Namboodiri, Sankara Narayana Chetti and Mathu Tharakan took advantage of the inefficiency of the Maharaja and the state fell into confusion and chaos<sup>20</sup>. Bribery and extortion prevailed in all parts of the country and the people were growing restive under the weight of injustice and oppression<sup>21</sup>. Velu Thampi was made Dewan during this time and he maintained a cordial relationship with the English East India Company at the beginning of his tenure as Dewan<sup>22</sup>. However, his refusal to pay the annual tribute of Rs. 80,000 to the company caused his fall and death in 1809<sup>23</sup>. After the death of Balarama Varma on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1810, Rani Lekshmi Bai ascended the throne<sup>24</sup>. She ruled the country till 1815. She appointed Colonel Munroe, the Resident as the Dewan in 1811 to reorganize the administrative set up<sup>25</sup>. Accordingly, he built up a centralized system as it was in practice in Madras Presidency<sup>26</sup>. Colonel Munroe influenced the Rani to grant religious freedom

to Christians and Muslims and appoint them in government services<sup>27</sup>.

The Regency of Gouri Parvathi Bai (1815-1829)<sup>28</sup> too opened a period of administrative and social progress. During the period of Rani Lakshmi Bai and Rani Parvathi Bai, attempts like abolition of slavery and eradication of corruption in administration were undertaken for providing good administration. It ensured the social and cultural developments of their subjects. Swathi Thirunal who ruled from 1829 to 1847 was a patron of arts and a scholar of several languages. Poets and musicians gathered around him. He too composed many poetic hymns. As early as 1830's he introduced a Western style of judicial system and legal code. His successor Uthram Thirunal Marthanda Varma (1847-1860) with the help of the Resident and the Madras Government issued slavery abolition proclamation and also ended the age old upper cloth controversy by granting permission to the low caste women to cover their breasts<sup>29</sup>.

During the rule of Visakham Thirunal Rama Varma(1880-1885) his Dewan V. Rama Iyengar invited the leading landholders of the State to Trivandrum on 24 March 1883 and informed them that the object of the Government was to explain to them details of the introduction of land survey and revenue settlement and to afford them an opportunity to discuss and form their own opinions on the various problems allied to it. He sought their co-operation in the prosecution of an understanding intimately connected with the agricultural interests<sup>30</sup>.

Sri Mulam Thirunal Rama Varma ascended the throne of Travancore on 4 August, 1885 following the demise of Visakaham Tirunal<sup>31</sup>. The period of Sri Mulam Thirunal Rama Varma from 1885 to 1924 formed a distinct epoch in the realm of the history of Travancore in particular and of the Indian sub continent in

general<sup>32</sup>. His reign brought about many reforms which led Travancore along the path of progress and modernism. Sri Mulam Thirunal had a long reign of thirty nine years. During this period many social, economic and legislative reforms were introduced. His legislative reforms modernized and constitutionalised Travancore. He wanted to become a constitutional monarch like the sovereign of Mysore which was a native state of South India. In 1881 CE a Representative Assembly was established in Mysore which was not merely a petition body, but a forum of discussion on matters of general administration. It helped the government of Mysore to be in touch with public opinion and to attempt more measures of social legislation without offending popular sentiment. Thus the Re-presentative Assembly helped the Mysore Government to enact legislations in various fields successfully. The success of the Representative Assembly of Mysore inspired the Sovereign of Travancore to create a Legislative organ in order to train his subjects in the arts of civics and politics and to enable them to exert a continually growing influence on the administration of the state.

A constitutional monarch by temperament, he chalked out a bold policy that enabled the representatives of his subjects to offer their suggestions and constructive criticisms in the promulgation of laws<sup>33</sup>. Consequently under the instigation of the British authorities and on the advice of Dewan, Rama Rao, the Maharaja constituted a Legislative Council by a Regulation to sense the pulse of the people of Travancore<sup>34</sup>. This Regulation became the Travancore Legislative Council Regulation of 1063 and it came into force from the 15th August, 1888 (1, Chingom, 1064 M.E.)<sup>35</sup>. On 19 August 2012 G. Karthikeyan, the Speaker of the Kerala State Assembly declared the celebration of a twelve month programme since the year 2012 CE to mark the completion of one hundred and twenty five years after the formation of the first legislative council of Travancore. It was on 23 August 1888

that the first legislative council of Travancore with eight hand-picked men of substance on board, launched the process of formulating “legal stipulations and regulations” for the exercise of good governance in the State of Travancore<sup>36</sup>.

At the time of the establishment of the Council it was clearly pointed out that the Dewan should have the benefit of discussing with and taking the opinion of respectable persons in the matters of legislation<sup>37</sup>. The Dewan’s consideration was only to take the opinion of responsible officers. But the Maharaja who had a clear vision of the democratic possibilities of the future insisted that provision should be made for the representation of non - official elements as well<sup>38</sup>. The Legislative Council thus inaugurated was to consist of a number of members not less five or more than eight. The Dewan was the President<sup>39</sup>. The members were to be nominated. The Council was purely a deliberative body, with no administrative function. No Bill passed by the Council would be law unless the Maharaja gave his assent to be duly proclaimed by the Dewan in the Government Gazette. He could disallow any Bill passed by the Council and render it ineffective. In spite of its limitations and shortcomings it was a bold step as far as legislative history was concerned. Travancore became the first among the native States of India to recognize the value of a Legislative Council as an adjunct to a civilized and enlightened Government<sup>40</sup>.

The first meeting of the Travancore Legislative Council took place at the office of S. Shungrasoobyer, then the Settlement Dewan Peishkar of the Revenue Settlement nominated as the chairman of the council. The members present were S. Shanmukha Subba Iyer, Frank Watts, C. Pacchu Panicker, T. Rajarama Varma, P. Thanu Pillai, T.Vedadri Sadasa Mudaliar, P.S. Sivan Pillai and K. Neelakanta Pillai<sup>41</sup>.

Meanwhile there arose a terrible hatred among the educated

sections of Malayalis against the machinations and manipulations of the non Malayalis like Raos, Reddies and the Tamil Brahmins who were at the helm of affairs. They did not possess new ideas or novel ways of liberating the people from servitude. They had responded to the political and cultural domination of the British by clamouring for the installation of colonial institutions to fulfill their political dreams. They wanted to share power and to compete for the same<sup>42</sup>. The educated sections in Travancore demanded progressive association with the administration and submitted petitions to the Government for the redress of their grievances. They adopted the procedure, a special characteristic of the period. Purely constitutional methods propagated by the moderate leaders of the Indian National Congress had attracted them. Their popular agitation took the shape of Travancore Memorial or the Malayali Memorial<sup>43</sup>. The petitioners demanded protection for the political rights of the people of Travancore<sup>44</sup>. In the mainstream of Indian nationalism it was an era of petitions, memorials, prayers and protest. Thus, in tune with the national programmes and policies the people of Travancore resorted to popular agitations through a series of memorials and protests against foreign domination.

The unusual political atmosphere created by the Malayali Memorial as well as the enactment of Indian Councils Act passed by the British Government gave a fresh inducement to the ruling authorities of Travancore. The government of Travancore soon realized the pulse of the people. As a result in 1898 the government adopted the Legislative Council Regulation, of great constitutional significance to the State<sup>45</sup>. By this the minimum number of members was raised from five to eight, excluding the Dewan, and the maximum from eight to fifteen. The proportion of non officials was fixed at two fifths of the total number<sup>46</sup>. The work of legislation was conducted in the Huzur Office until 1888. The Regulation marked the beginning of a remarkable phase in the progress of the popular councils in Travancore.

In the beginning, the legislature had no control over the King. Its main function was to receive the petitions and to assist the King in all his administrative activities<sup>47</sup>. In due course the legislatures began to exercise more and more powers. The growth of the parliamentary system facilitated the rapid development of the legislative system. A sound system of legislature became essential for the success of democracy. The legislatures assumed greater importance as the Centres of law making. The destiny of a nation is often decided by the standard of its legislations. The laws enacted by the popular assemblies paved the way for the next stage of administration.

Since the establishment of the Legislative Council in 1888, there were nearly twenty seven petitions and memorials seeking to enlarge the non-official element in the Council and provision of an elected non-official majority in the Council<sup>48</sup>. The memorialists complained that during the last four- or-five years after the creation of the Council, there had been frequent exercise of legislation through Royal Proclamations by Government, although there was no necessity for it, for, as the Council was there, the Government could pass any laws in the usual way at any time and without the least difficulty. They argued that this method of treating the Legislative council was against its very spirit and intentions. Though it was a precious gift from His Highness the Maharaja, the Royal Proclamations were apt to defeat its very intentions. It was at this time that the British Government enacted the Indian Councils Act of 1892 CE which reformed the Legislative Councils in British India. Simultaneous with the expansion of the British Indian Legislative Councils, there was the Home Rule Movement in British India which awakened the spirit of democracy and evoked new hopes and aspirations in the people of the British Indian provinces. Under these changed circumstances the proposals made by the popular leaders of

Travancore had their effect upon the government of Travancore. It resulted in the enactment of the Regulation V of 1073 M. E. (1898 CE). In accordance with the established standards of the period the Maharaja sincerely wanted to be acquainted with the pulse of his people.

The people continued to clamour for more and more participation in matters of administration. The demand for responsible government also continued to gather momentum day after day. The main stream Indian nationalism began to vibrate with the growing discontent of the people. It was moving towards the threshold of the partition of Bengal, the citadel of radicals and the beginning of the Swadeshi Movement. From an era of memorials and petitions it was proceeding to an era of political unrest and turmoil. Sri Mulam Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore who realized the gravity of the situation went ahead with the next installment of constitutional reforms.

The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was formed in 1904 by the command of Sri Mulam Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore, in order to afford the people an opportunity of directly expressing to the Durbar their wants and wishes and representing their views regarding administrative measures, and to enable the Durbar to learn at first hand how their actions affected the people and to have the benefit of suggestions submitted by the latter with regard to those measures<sup>49</sup>.

It was constituted in order to promote administrative efficiency and to ameliorate the condition of the people. In 1904, the number of members of the Legislative Council was raised from eight to ten by the addition of one official and one non-official member. Another non-official member was appointed in 1911. In 1913, the Council was given its maximum strength of fifteen members, composed of eight officials and seven non-officials. No rules were



framed by the government for the selection of non- official members. But a change was introduced for the first time in 1907, which enabled the members of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly to select a member for each of the four Revenue Divisions of the State.

When the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was constituted in 1904, five major towns namely Trivandrum, Nagercoil, Quilon, Kottayam and Alleppey were given due representation in it. Subsequently, all the Town Improvement Committees were allowed to elect one member each from among the non-official members<sup>50</sup>. They represented the needs of the people directly to the government. Even though the strength of the Council was increased to fifteen through the Regulation V of 1898, the Council was composed of only the minimum of eight members until 1904.

After the formation of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly in 1904, representations were made almost continuously for the enlargement of the scope and usefulness of the Council. It was Sri Mulam Thirunal Maharaja who inaugurated the modernization of Travancore. The reign of Sri Mulam Thirunal synchronised with the origin of Legislative organs and popular government. The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly itself furnishes one of the most eloquent and tangible proofs of the earnest aim and desire on the part of Sri Mulam Thirunal to associate his people, more and more and in increasing degrees of intimacy and responsibility with the administration of state affairs in the shaping and management of which they were entitled to have a voice.

During the years 1910 to 1915 there had been frequent exercise by the Government of the power of legislation by means of Royal Proclamations, although there was no necessity for it; for, as the Council was constituted, the government could pass any laws in the usual way at any time and without the least difficulty.

In spite of section V of the Regulations no rules were framed under it and the principle of election for which provision was made in the Regulation was never put into practice. Since 1908 four of the non official members, one for each of the four revenue Divisions of Padmanabhapuram, Trivandrum, Quilon and Kottayam were appointed on the basis of the recommendation of the members of Sri Mulam Popular Assembly<sup>51</sup>. Thus, in reality the members of Sri Mulam Popular Assembly became the electors.

The Maharaja of Travancore always adopted a friendly and positive approach towards popular demands. He never followed a hostile attitude. As a result of the representations made at successive sessions of the Assembly for consideration the Maharaja promulgated a Regulation on 6th of September, 1919, as Regulation I of 1095 M.E. This Regulation was passed directly by the Maharaja instead of through the Council. It shows even after the formation of the Council and Assembly how the Maharaja directly looked after the evolution of the legislature and the welfare of the people.

The maximum strength of the Council fixed by the new Regulation was twenty five<sup>52</sup>. It was a significant move forward on the existing maximum number of fifteen. The new council was constituted with twenty four members, of whom thirteen were officials and eleven non-officials. Thus it continued to retain the official majority. Eight out of the eleven non-official seats were thrown open for election, four by the general electorate, one for each of the four Revenue Divisions of the State, one by the Jenmies, one by the European Planting Community, one by the Merchants, Traders and Factory owners, and one by the non-official members of Town Improvement Committees. The election, however, was not directly by the people, but through intermediate bodies. The members of the Council had not been empowered to move resolutions and to ask supplementary questions and

the number of questions to be asked at a session was restricted to three. Anyway it was the first time in the history of the Travancore Legislative Council that it had an elected representative. The South Travancore Planter's Association, the Central Travancore Planter's Association, the Mundakayam Planter's Association and the Kannan Devan Planter's Association jointly elected one of their representatives to the Travancore Legislative Council<sup>53</sup>.

The Council rendered remarkable service towards the political education and the constitutional training of the people. In the British Indian Councils, the principle of election had been recognized and all the Councils there had been reformed so as to afford facilities for associating the people in the work not only of occasional legislation but also of actual every-day administration. Discussion of the budget and the asking of questions and supplementary questions were also allowed in those Councils, the official majority having been done away with in the Provincial Councils by the Government of India Act of 1919. Similar concessions were given to the Mysore Legislative Council and the Representative Assembly of Bikanir, which were of comparatively simultaneous origin. There was a united cry all through the state of Travancore and in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly for the enlargement and reform of the Council<sup>54</sup>.

Leaders like K. Sukumaran, founder editor of Kerala Kamudi, Kumaran Asan, the famous poet of Kerala, Mammen Mappilai, the founder editor of the popular Malayalam daily Malayala Manorama, Paul Daniel from Neyyoor, K. N. Padmanabha Pillai of Thuckkalai, P. V. Padmanabha Pillai of Padmanabhapuram, Kanakku Thampi Martandan Padmanabhan of Kalkulam, Kanakku Ramaswami Pillai of Nagercoil, N. A. Sundram Pillai, a leading merchant from Kottar, A. Nesamony from Nagercoil, C. Ramaswamy Nadar from Thovala, R. Siva Subramania Nadar from Agastiswaram, Mannath Padmanabhan, the founder of the

Nair Service Society, Malloor K. Govinda Pillai, then Principal of the Government Law College and Changanacherry K. Parameswaran Pillai continued to bargain for the increased participation and more representation to the common people.

The situation of the people made it essential that, they should be more closely associated with the administration of the kingdom, the Education Boards, the Town Improvement Committee, the Legislative Council and the Panchayat Court. Even the Popular Assembly had been instrumental in making the people take more interest in the government of their motherland. The increase in the number of newspapers, the greater interest in the people took in public matters, the power of organization shown by them in local public associations and the capacity with which they managed such associations, the training received by public men in the Popular Assembly and the good sense, moderation and the feeling of responsibility of the members of the Council and the Assembly and the standard of efficiency of the members of the Legislative Council, all pointed to the fitness of the people to receive greater powers through the Legislative Council. Higher education was also making headway in Travancore and the educational advancement of the people required that they should be better treated and given greater powers, rights and privileges.

In Travancore as in British India the Legislative Council was at first merely an advisory body, but through various constitutional reforms it was given ample powers. But they were not exercised in a proper manner until there developed a good party system based upon a well educated and efficient electorate. The Council was the place for bills and notions, grants and votes, but to air the grievances of the people there was another forum, namely "The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly".

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33. *Ibid.*, Travancore, 1884-85, p.13.
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37. *The Travancore Legislative Council Regulation of 1063*.
38. *Ibid.*
39. In the absence of the Dewan, the senior official member present would preside.
40. Nagam Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, vol. II, Trivandrum, 1906, p.430.
41. *The Hindu*, 19 August 2012.
42. Ramachandran Nair, S., *op.cit.*, 2004, p.83.
43. The memorial was drafted by K.P. Sankara Menon, who subsequently played an active role in the Indian National Congress, Dr. Palpu and G. Parameswaran Pillai and others

- were also behind the memorial. Its copies were circulated in Travancore and more than 10000 learned men put their signature.
44. Menon, P.K.K., *op.cit.*, p.10.
  45. *Administration Report*, Travancore, 1899, p.17.
  46. It was called the Travancore Legislative Council Regulation of 1073 and it shall come into force on 1 Chingom, 1074. Regulation II of 1063 is hereby repealed; but the nominations made and proceedings held under that Regulation shall be deemed to have been made or held under this Regulation.
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## **THE EPISODE OF GANDHI'S PRESIDENTSHIP OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (1911)**

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The office of the President of the Indian National Congress had been one of honour and prestige in the history of the country's chief political organization during its long years of existence. Of the twenty-six sessions of the Congress from 1885-1911, six were presided over by Englishmen and the rest by Indians<sup>1</sup>. The Congress chose Englishmen because of their sympathy with Indian aspirations and also to prove its loyal and non-racial character. Generally, the Presidents were those who had earned a name for character and meritorious public service to the country. In the Constitution of the Congress in 1908, Article XXIII provided 'In the month of June, the Reception Committee shall consult the several Provincial Congress Committees as to the selection of the President for the year's Congress. The Provincial Congress Committees shall make their recommendations by the end of July; and in the month of August the Reception Committee shall meet to consider the recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to elect the President in the manner mentioned above, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final'<sup>2</sup>. The selections of the President were



not always unanimous. There had been bitter arguments and counter arguments. This paper seeks to critically examine the episode of the selection of the President for the Congress session of 1911 which was held at Calcutta.

By 1909 Gandhi had already become well known in India. From Madras Henry Polak, Gandhi's closest political aide and fellow seeker, who was then on a mission in India, wrote to Gandhi on 19 October 1909<sup>3</sup>. "He [Gokhale] is the one man who has deeply understood your passive resistance. Of that you may be sure. In a recent address to the students of Bombay he held you up as an example of patriotism, moderation, endurance, selfsacrifice and practical endeavour. His profoundest regret is that you are not here to join him and inspire him in his work. Were you two together, it would be a rare combination of moral forces. He was hoping that you would be the first member of the Servants of India Society and still fondly hopes, that, one day, you may return to India and take up the work here again, though I have warned him not to hope for anything more than a temporary visit."

Polak's book entitled *M.K.Gandhi: A Sketch of His Life and Work*, was published by Natesan in the same year. In this book Polak made a very significant remark about Gandhi: 'Perhaps, in this generation India has not produced such a noble mansaint, patriot and statesman in one'<sup>4</sup>.

Interestingly, as early as 1909, the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee had given three names for the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress session to be held at Lahore in 1909. The three names were M.K.Gandhi, Nawab Syed MahomedBahadur of Madras and R.N.Mudholkar of Nagpur<sup>5</sup>. Ultimately Pherozechah Mehta was chosen to preside and when he declined the offer,

Madan Mohan Malaviya from the United Provinces was requested to accept the offer.

At this time the political situation in India was rather grim, G.A.Natesan, a pioneer Madras publisher and an ardent Congressman, invited Gandhi who was then in England, to send a message for the forthcoming Congress at Lahore. In his message Gandhi attempted to establish a close connection between the Indian struggle in South Africa with Indian's own fight for freedom. He wrote: 'I hope our countrymen throughout India realise that it is national in its aim in that it has been undertaken to save India's honour.' He called the Indian struggle in the Transvaal 'the greatest struggle of modern times', because it was 'purest as well in its goal as in its methods'. He suggested that the struggle in the Transvaal was worthy of occupying the best, if not, indeed the exclusive attention of the Congress'. Gandhi dwelt upon the efficacy and virtues of passive resistance in terms which anticipated what he was to say a month later in his Gujarati booklet *Hind Swarajya*<sup>6</sup>. Further, he wrote<sup>7</sup>.

I venture to suggest that a struggle such as this is worthy of occupying the best, if not, indeed, the exclusive attention of the Congress. If it be not impertinent, I would like to distinguish between this and the other items on the programme of the Congress. The opposition to the laws or the policy with which the other items deal does not involve any material suffering: the Congress activity consists in a mental attitude without corresponding action. In the Transvaal case the law and the policy it enunciates being wrong, we disregard it, and therefore consciously and deliberately suffer material and physical injury; action follows, and corresponds to, our mental attitude. If the view here submitted be correct, it will be allowed that in asking for the best place in the Congress programme for the Transvaal question, I have not been unreasonable.

This was a crisp and lucid message of Gandhi which gave an insight to his larger mission. At the session of Lahore in 1909 itself glowing tributes were paid to Gandhi, in particular, from Gokhale who said: '...Mr. Gandhi is one of those men who, living an austere simple life themselves and devoted to all highest principles of love to their fellow-beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give them a new vision. He is a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot amongst patriots, and we may well say that in him Indian humanity at the present time has really reached a high watermark'<sup>8</sup>.

The 1911 session of the Congress was to be held in Calcutta and the British Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald was to preside over it<sup>9</sup>. He was sympathetic to Indian aspirations and had recently published a book entitled *The Awakening of India*<sup>10</sup>. But his wife was taken ill and therefore he informed his inability to chair the session. The Moderate Congress organization at this time was in disarray and the Provincial Congress Committees had an uneasy existence. Ramanand Chatterjee, the editor of the *Modern Review*, an influential Calcutta monthly, had opposed the choice of an Englishman to chair the session as he firmly believed that an Indian alone should be made the President. Interestingly, Chatterjee, watching Gandhi in action in South Africa, suggested the name of Gandhi and said:

No Indian in modern times has proved his possession of the qualities of leadership to the same extent as he. None has suffered and sacrificed so much for his people. No one has tested as he has done both strength and the weakness of Passive Resistance, theoretically the last weapon in the hands of a constitutional movement like the Congress<sup>11</sup>.

The moderate leaders of Bengal generally accepted the suggestion of Chatterjee and began to consider Gandhi seriously as a candidate to chair the session of the Congress<sup>12</sup>. But the Moderates of Bombay wanted Bengal to accept either R.N. Mudholkar or D.A.Khare, two prominent leaders of western India. The choice of the President thus became a controversial affair in 1911. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee sent a cable to the Natal Indian Congress asking whether Gandhi could preside over the National Congress to be held at Calcutta in December 1911. On receipt of the cable, Gandhi was persuaded by his fellow workers to accept the invitation. Gandhi accepted the invitation because it would serve the cause of his motherland; he would be allowed to return at once after the session and also because he would be able to express his ideas. He sent a reply via cable to the convenor of the Calcutta Congress Reception Committee accepting the offer.

The post of the Presidentship of the Congress has always been one of highest honour and respect. The telegram that was sent to Gandhi was so vaguely worded that he thought it was an offer and had conveyed his acceptance. Actually, it was only an inquiry. Soon the news was out in the press (Reuter) that Gandhi would be the President of the 1911 Congress at Calcutta. There was a procedure for the selection of the President of the Congress. Gandhi and his associates were not aware of the same. But the confusion became work confounded when a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees preferred R.N.Mudholkar to Gandhi. Gandhi was a radical and his seminal work *Hind Swaraj*, then considered radical had just been published in 1909 and was banned by the British Government in India. Gokhale therefore wrote in his letter to C.Y. Chintamani on 26 October 1911.

When I was in Calcutta at the beginning of last month, Bhupendrababu [BhubendranathBasu] and I had a talk about the advisability of electing Gandhi and we both agreed that in view of his proscribed pamphlet on Indian Home Rule, his name had better not be brought forward<sup>13</sup>. Gokhale had already discussed the subject with BhupendranathBasu, and they had both agreed that 'in view of his [Gandhi's] proscribed pamphlet [Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule] his name had better not be brought forward'<sup>14</sup>. Gokhale had the highest regard and admiration for Gandhi and felt 'that no honour we can possibly do Gandhi is too great and I should be prepared to bear a good deal of unpleasant criticism, if it has to be incurred in honouring him', but he doubted if Gandhi would be able to come and also if he still believed in the Congress programme'<sup>15</sup>. Not only Gokhale but many of the younger generation of the Moderates such as C.Y.Chintamani, V.K.Iyer and others were of the opinion that Gandhi with his firm belief in passive resistance was unfit to be the President of the Congress<sup>16</sup>. They requested the other members of the Provincial Committees to suggest names other than Gandhi for the session.

Meanwhile, Gandhi was set to sail to India and had already prepared his Presidential address. He soon understood the controversy over his candidature. He wrote a letter to Gokhale, his acknowledged political guru, expressing regret over the unfortunate episode and requested him to withdraw his candidature<sup>17</sup>. Gokhale faithfully carried out Gandhi's wish<sup>18</sup>. Gokhale wrote to Gandhi<sup>19</sup>. I cannot tell you how sorry I am for the whole incident. I feel that your name was unnecessarily dragged into a controversy and left there exposed to unnecessary criticism. However, the one comfort of your friends is that you yourself are too calm in spirit, too selfless and too fully conscious of the real triviality of such things to worry about what has happened.

In his letter dated 17 November 1911 to his lifelong friend Pranjivan Mehta, Gandhi wrote about this<sup>20</sup>. There is nothing to be said now about my speech [Presidential address to the Indian National Congress] in regard to which you expressed your hope. But I am these days in so fiercely earnest a state of mind that I could not have spoken otherwise. That is why I asked for full freedom, should they invite me [to be President]. I can well understand that they cannot grant this. It is just as well that I do not have to go there as President.

Some of the Bengal Congressmen were very disappointed that Gandhi could not be President. If Gandhi was not to be President, they wanted at least, Henry Cotton, an ex-civil servant sympathetic to Indian aspirations and one who had already served as President in the 1904 session at Bombay, to be the President<sup>21</sup>. But the Moderates would not accept it. The Congress then decided upon Bishan Narayan Dhar, a little-known person of the United Provinces to preside over the Calcutta session<sup>22</sup>.

Considering the fact that he had already conveyed his message to the Congress via Natesan's *Indian Review* in 1909, it is certain that Gandhi would not have hesitated in unfurling the banner of passive resistance. But what could have happened if Gandhi had become the President of the Congress is a matter of conjecture in the history of the Indian freedom struggle.

## Notes and References

1. The six sessions where Britons presided were Alfred Webb (Madras, 1894), George Yule (Allahabad, 1888), William Wedderburn (Bombay, 1889) and (Allahabad, 1910), Henry Cotton (Bombay, 1904), Mrs Annie Besant (Calcutta, 1917).
2. *Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress Held at Madras on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> December 1908*, Appendix B, pp. xix-xxx.

3. Polak to Gandhi, 19 October 1909, Gokhale Papers
4. H.S.L. Polak, *M.K.Gandhi: A Sketch of His Life and Work* (Madras, 1909)
5. *Madras Mail*, 13 July 1909. For Gandhi to figure in the Congress as a possible candidate for Presidentship was in itself a great honour.
6. *Indian Review*, December 1909, p.887-8.
7. Ibid, p. 888.
8. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (hereafter CWMG), vol. ix, pp. 506-7.
9. Ramsay MacDonald, J. 1860-1937, Labour leader and Statesman, Prime Minister of Britain, 1924,1929-31, 1931-5.
10. Ramsay MacDonald J, *The Awakening of India*, London, 1910
11. *Modern Review*, July 1911, pp.105-6. Another Bengali leader who admired Gandhi this time was Aurobindo Ghose. He wrote essays in which he said: 'The great glory of the Transvaal Indians is that while men under such circumstances have always sunk into the condition to which they have been condemned and needed others to help them out of the mire, these sons of Bharatvarsha, inheritors of an unexampled moral and spiritual tradition, have vindicated the superiority of the Indian people and its civilization to all other peoples in the globe and all other civilizations by the spirit in which they have refused to recognise the dominance of brute force over the human soul. Stripped by all means of resistance, a helpless handful in a foreign land, unaided by India, put off with professions of sympathy by English statesmen, they ignored by humanity, are fighting humanity's battle in the pure

- strength of the spirit, with no weapon but the moral force of their voluntary sufferings and utter self-sacrifice. ...The passive resistance which we had not the courage and unselfishness to carry out in India, they have carried to the utmost in the Transvaal under far more arduous circumstances, with far less right to hope for success. Whether they win or lose in the struggle, they have contributed far more than their share to the future greatness of their country'. It was first published in Sri Aurobindo, *Karmayogin*, 11 December 1909, and reprinted in his *Karmayogin: Political Writings and Speeches, 1909-1910*, Pondicherry, 1997, PP. 347-9.
12. It may be of some interest to note that C. Rajagopalachari, statesman and lawyer of the Madras Presidency, mentioned in another context that it would be good if the Congress nominated Gandhi or Tilak as President of the Congress. In a letter to the *Hindu* he wrote: '...Now that Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Tilak have both come back to us, these simple folk (in general simple minds) wonder why the crown of Indian patriotism is not offered to them?...Here are two men of India whose inspiring lives are known and recognised as inspiring among civilised nations outside India, and to whom your Congress Chair is no honour, but who add honour to your Congress. Here are two men who each of them may well be literally be worshipped as a real embodiment of the Prof Nancy Demands, *Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia*, an article kept in the Louis M Darling Library Los Angeles C.A. See also Horstmanshoff Masten Slat Cornetis, *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near East and Graeco-Roman Medicine*, Tilburg 2004, pp.97-99. Spirit of Bharata Varsham, whose words and acts have passed through the Sacrificial Fire, in whom love for the country and political thought burn with the fire and the light of true religion. No comment of Rajaji is available regarding the 1911 episode but there



is no doubt that he would have welcomed Gandhi as President. See the *Hindu*, 12 August 1916.

13. Gokhale to Chintamani, 26 October 1911, Gokhale Papers (NAI)
14. *Ibid.*,
15. *Ibid.*,
16. See Chintamani to Gokhale, 24 October and 1 November 1911, *ibid.*
17. Gandhi to Gokhale, 30 October 1911, *CWMG*, vol. xi, pp. 176-8
18. Gokhale to Gandhi, 3 November 1911, Gokhale Papers, NAI
19. Gokhale to Gandhi, 3 November 1911, *Ibid.*
20. Gandhi to Pranjivan Mehta, 17 November 1911, *CWMG*, vol. xi, *op.cit*, p.185.
21. Henry John Steadman Cotton (1845-1915), of the Bengal civil service, President of the Indian National Congress, 1904.
22. For a comprehensive history of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress see Prabha Ravi Shankar, *British Committee of the Indian National Congress* (New Delhi, 2011).

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CORPORATION OF MADRAS TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE CITY OF MADRAS**

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Hunter's Commission on Education (1882) laid considerable stress on the progress of elementary education. After Ripon's resolution of 1882, local self-government institutions began to make progress. In accordance with the recommendations of the Hunter's Commission, the local self-government institutions were entrusted with the onerous responsibility of maintenance and management of elementary schools<sup>1</sup>.

The Educational Conference convened at Simla in 1901 under the presidency of the Viceroy suggested certain measures to be enunciated for the promotion of primary education. Lord Pentland, the Governor of Madras introduced an Elementary Education Scheme. An Elementary Education Bill was passed into Act in 1919. This Act permitted the Municipal and Local bodies to levy special education tax to develop elementary education, which would be equally supplemented by government grants.

After passing the Elementary Education Act of 1919, new norms for the management of primary schools were regulated. The Government of India Act of 1919 was also an important Act in the history of Education. This Act placed education under the control of a Minister who was answerable to the legislature. Due to the efforts of A.P. Patro, an Elementary Education Council was established in each district.

One of the chief centres of elementary education in the city of Madras was the Corporation elementary schools. The Government also granted subsidy to the Corporation of Madras for the purpose of fostering primary education. It offered loans to it for the purpose of constructing buildings to house elementary schools.

The Corporation of Madras under P. Theagarayar made a modest beginning in introducing the mid day meals scheme in the Madras Corporation School, situated at Thousand Lights in 1920. Later, it was extended to more schools. This scheme resulted in the increase of enrollment of more children.

Substantial progress was affected in the field of elementary education in the city of Madras in the first half of the twentieth century owing to the relentless efforts of the Corporation. The free and compulsory elementary education together with the free midday meal to the pupils provided by the Corporation to enforce compulsion of attendance of pupils to acquire elementary education and the care bestowed by the Corporation on the pupils decisively resulted in the progress of elementary education in the City of Madras<sup>2</sup>.

Considerable progress was made in elementary education in 1946-47. The number of schools increased from 155 to 174. The shift system was introduced in schools which were lacking in accommodation. Five branch schools were opened in slum areas bringing the total to 20. The total number of children in these 20 schools was 2,300. The nursery classes for children opened in 1945 in four Corporation schools in labour areas continued to be popular<sup>3</sup>.

The number of Corporation schools rose to 202 from 196 in the year 1948-49. One noteworthy feature of the year was the receipt of a Government grant for Rs. 10,000 for constructing

two elementary school buildings for the first time. Six slum schools were opened at the very door of slum dwellers and more slum children were brought under instruction. There was a very considerable increase in the number of school-going children, from 72,452 to 80,510. Special attention was paid to physical education. Under “Visual Education”, 71 cinema shows were conducted in the Corporation Schools. The four nursery schools conducted by the Corporation continued to be popular<sup>4</sup>.

The Corporation continued to maintain a steady progress in the field of elementary education. The number of elementary schools rose to 218 from 202 and the total strength in the schools to 66,062. More slum schools were opened during the year 1949-50. Out of 174 complete schools, 94 were run in rented buildings. The gratifying features were the opening of schools for girls in Rutland Gate, Nungambakkam; and Nattu Pillar Koil Street, Georgetown, a school for Muslim girls at Saidapet; and receipt of an additional grant of Rs.16, 000 besides the grant of Rs.10, 000 made in the previous year<sup>5</sup>.

The Corporation maintained a steady progress in the field of elementary education and improvements were shown in all the activities of the Education Department. The number of Corporation Schools at the end of the year 1951 was 225 as against 218 on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1950. The total strength in the schools rose from 66,062 in 1949-50 to 70,361 in 1950-51.

The policy of opening schools at the very doors of slum dwellers was continued with great advantage. During the year, 10 slum schools were opened bringing the total number to 48. As many as 4,176 children mostly belonging to the Scheduled Castes/classes were attending these schools. Good progress was made in enforcing compulsory elementary education in the City. The percentage of enrollment was 88.25, showing an increase

of 0.87 per cent over that of the previous year.

The number of Corporation Schools in 1952 was 233 as against 225 on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1951. The total strength in the schools rose from 70,361 in 1950-51 to 71,633 in 1953-52. The problem of finding adequate accommodation to house the Corporation Schools continued to be difficult.

During the year 1951-52, eight new schools were opened in slums bringing the total number to 50. As many as 4,489 poor children, mostly belonging to Scheduled Classes were studying in these schools. Wherever there was scope and need, slum schools were being developed into complete lower elementary schools. Poor children attending Corporation Schools were given midday meals and reconstituted milk as usual.

During the year 1951-52, eight incomplete higher elementary schools were developed into full-fledged higher elementary schools by opening Standard VIII in them<sup>6</sup>.

The number of elementary schools at the end of 1952-53 was 243 against 233 at the end of 1951-52. The total number of pupils also rose to 75,133 from 71,633 at the end of March 1952. The policy of opening feeder schools in the slum areas was continued with advantage and eight such schools were opened during the year 1951-52. The total number of such schools was 50 with nearly 4,300 children on the rolls.

During the year 1952-53, six incomplete schools were converted into full-fledged higher elementary schools, two lower elementary schools were converted into higher elementary schools and two elementary schools were converted into basic schools<sup>7</sup>.

The number of elementary schools maintained by the Corporation in the year 1954 was 258 against 243 in the previous year. The total strength in the schools increased from 75,133 to 79,011. The problem of accommodation continued to be acute. Shit system had to be adopted in 25 schools to solve the problem of shortage of accommodation.

During the year 1953-54, eleven schools were opened in slum areas bringing the total number of such schools to 55 with nearly 3,900 pupils on their rolls excluding the 6 slum schools that had come to be independent schools. The children studying in these schools belonged mostly to the Scheduled Castes. Higher standards were opened in 18 slum schools. Six feeder schools and four branch schools were developed into full fledged lower elementary schools. With a view to developing health habits, children were taught practical hygiene. Soaps, towels, combs and coconut oil etc were supplied to them free. More than 11,000 poor children in the Corporation Schools were given mid-day meals free of cost. Deserving children were also supplied with books and slates free of cost<sup>8</sup>.

The number of Corporation Elementary Schools in 1956 was 275 against 270 in 1954-55, with a total strength of 87,583 students as against 84,657 in 1954-55. The main obstacle to rapid expansion of elementary education was lack of accommodation. Out of 216 main schools, 102 were housed in rented buildings. Out of 59 slum schools, 34 were run in rented buildings. The total number of schools in slum areas was 59 during the year 1955-56 with nearly 4,200 pupils on the rolls. With a view to prevent the pupils (in slum schools) from discontinuing their studies for want of facilities for further education and lapsing into illiteracy, higher standards in these schools were opened so as to develop them into complete elementary schools. Poor children continued to be served with midday meals by the

Corporation - when the scheme for compulsory elementary education was introduced in 1926, the number of children of school-going age in the City was only 48,115.

In 1956, there were 145,180 children of school-going age, of which 87,583 children were studying in Corporation Schools. The percentage of children in all schools in the City to the total number of children of school going age was 88.33 in 1955-56 as against 88.29 in 1954-55 and 37.6 in 1926<sup>9</sup>.

The number of Corporation Elementary Schools was 289 at the end of 1957-58 as against 280 in 1956-67 with a total strength of 99,382 as against 91,626 in the year 1956-57. The number of children in the Corporation Schools during the year was 99,382 which was the higher on record. Facilities such as supply of midday meals, reconstituted milk, medical aid, dress, books and slates for poor and deserving children, toilet articles such as soap, combs and towels especially in schools in the slums to educate their children having greatly contributed in attracting and keeping in the schools large number of poor children<sup>10</sup>.

The period under study reveals steady growth in the number of elementary schools under the Corporation of Madras. The overall attitude of the then administration and educationists was modern in the sense that students of weaker sections of society were looked after. Strategies to improve attendance in these schools were adopted like near residence location, midday meals, medical aid, etc.

The major problem facing the then administrators was lack of accommodation for the growth of these schools.

On the whole, the development of elementary school education in the City of Chennai was impressive. Due credit has to be

given to developments and planning in the Education field in the pre-independence period, especially from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

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## GENESIS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN KERALA

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*Kannankara, Nandavanam*

*Nedumparambu, Alamcode*

*Trivandrum*

This paper examines the genesis of the Communist party in Kerala from the 1930s to 1950s. An analysis of the formation of the Communist League, the first Communist organization in Kerala and the Congress Socialist Party have been attempted here. In 1937, the leftists in the Congress Socialist Party formed the Communist Party. However, it operated underground till 1939. During the Second World War, the Communists offered all help to the British and in return, the Communist Party got official recognition. But the post-War period witnessed violent clashes between the Communists and the Government. The Communists contested elections in all the three regions of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar but with marginal success. They raised their powerful voice for a united Kerala which was realized in 1956.

According to T.J. Nossiter, Communism came late to Kerala, a fact which contributed to its subsequent success in acquiring a mass following<sup>1</sup>. The Communist Party of India dates from the early 1920s, but apart from the publication in Trivandrum of a short factual biography of Marx in 1912 and a sympathetic obituary of Lenin (1924) Marxism attracted little interest in any part of Kerala until the 1930s. A biography of Marx, the first in an Indian language, was written by K. Ramakrishna Pillai, editor and manager of *Swadeshabhimani* published from Trivandrum. This was later translated into the English language by two prominent communist intellectuals P.C. Joshi and K. Damodharan under the title “Marx Comes to India”<sup>2</sup>. The obituary

of V.I. Lenin was published in *Swadeshabhimani* by K. Ramakrishna Pillai in October, 1924. But Marxism as an ideology attracted no interest in Kerala.

Victor M. Fic observes four phases of the genesis of the Communist Party in Kerala. In the first phase, during the first half of the 1930s, few men merely represented the radical and progressive wing of the Congress to which Jawaharlal Nehru belonged. In the second phase, they established the Congress Socialist Party in 1935 which, curiously enough continued to function within the organizational frame work of the Congress. In the third phase, they established a rival Congress party organization in Kerala in 1938, which began functioning independently of the all India leadership. Finally in 1939, a further shift took place, when the most radically minded members departed from this rival Congress organization and formed the Communist Party of Kerala<sup>3</sup>. The honour of establishing the first Communist organization in Kerala goes to the members of the Trivandrum based Communist League of 1931.

### **Communist League**

One of the most important political developments in Kerala in 1931 was the formation of the Communist League. Ponnara G.Sreedhar, N.P. Kurukkal and N.C.Sekhar were the founders of this League<sup>4</sup>. Communist leaders like N.E.Balaram and E.M.S. Namboodiripad give only nominal importance to the Communist League. Balaram says that much work was not done by that group. According to the Namboodiripad, the activities of the communist League were confined to Trivandrum alone and the Kerala Committee of the Communist Party which later arose, did not develop from that group<sup>5</sup>. Though the Communist League did not develop into the Communist Party, N.C.Sekhar later became one of the founders of the Communist Party in 1937. Thus,

a connection between the League and the CPI can be seen. Moreover, the ideology of the Communist Party of India was introduced into Kerala for the first time, though Communist and Socialist ideas in general were introduced into Kerala long before<sup>6</sup>.

The Communist League published a Malayalam translation of a statement made by Meerut prisoners, embodying Communist ideas. There were seven members in the League at the time of its formation. They were N.P. Kurikkal, Ponnara G. Sreedhar, N.C Sekhar, Sivasankara Pillai, Thiruvattar Thanu Pillai, R.P. Ayer and Thaikkat Bhaskaran<sup>7</sup>. According to N.C Sekhar, the members were quite aware that the organization of the league was illegal and if discovered, they would have to undergo stringent punishment including imprisonment for life. In 1934 A.K Gopalan made it clear that they were Congress Socialists trying to win over the Congress to Socialist path. In Trivandrum, it came to the notice of the Travancore Government and consequently the work of the Congress spreading Communism and Socialism was banned in Travancore. So also the KPCC, was banned as an organization of such Congressmen<sup>8</sup>. The Communist League ceased to exist by 1934. But the work done in organizing the Travancore Youth League continued to bear fruit in the struggle for responsible government in Travancore.

### **Congress Socialist Party**

During the year 1934 news of the formation of social groups and parties began to appear. The members of the Congress Party with socialist leanings founded a Kerala branch of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 upon the model of the All India Congress Socialist Party, which had been founded earlier by Jaiprakash Narayan and others to work within the Congress as a left-wing pressure group<sup>9</sup>. Throughout July and August 1934, the Kerala CSP carried out a drive for Congress members and enrolled 4,000,

mostly in Malabar District. Most of these new members were left-wing sympathizers, and on the basis of this support, the Congress Socialists won a majority on the KPCC in September 1934<sup>10</sup>. In October they elected a new ten member Committee of the Kerala CSP with E.M.S. Namboodiripad as the President and Krishna Pillai, as the General Secretary. The aim of the party was to win over the Indian National Congress to socialist principles.

The main attention of the Congress Socialist Party was the organization of workers against the employers to get their demands approved. Namboodiripad began to edit a weekly, *Prabhatam*, in which socialist education was imparted. From 1936, the left-wing created a peasant movement that was to develop into one of its strongest bases. The movement mobilized tenants and small landowners. Its strength lay in north Malabar and the Malayalam-speaking taluk of Kasargod in South Kanara District. Their demands were security of tenure, assignment of half the net produce of the land to the tenant, reduction in land revenue and the abolition of feudal subservience to land lords<sup>11</sup>. By mid 1937, taluk peasant conferences were held under the red-flag, and in May 1938, an All-Malabar Peasants' Union was formed. The Union stubbornly opposed illegal extortions; rents were withheld; made speeches about a possible no revenue campaign and volunteers organized to protect the Union interests even at the risk of their lives. By the beginning of 1939, even the Congress government in Madras was forced to conclude that there was an "attempt at parallel government" in north Malabar, and prosecutions were launched under the criminal law<sup>12</sup>.

### **Formation of the Communist Party**

The Communist Party of Kerala unit was formally constituted in 1939. But in 1937 itself, at the initiative of P. Sundarayya

and S.V. Ghate a secret committee of the Communist Party consisting of E.M.S. Naboodiripad, P Krishna Pillai, N.C. Sekhar and K. Damodaran was formed with in CSP<sup>13</sup>. Even their close associates who claimed to be Marxists did not know it. The secret publication, 'The Path of the Working Class' and other pamphlets were sent to the members of the secret faction, so that, the programme of the Congress Socialist Party was moulded in such a way that it was in agreement with the Communist Party of India. The task of transforming the Congress Socialist Party unit into the Communist Party unit was entrusted to that secret faction particularly to Krishna Pillai and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, which they had done commendably in early 1940<sup>14</sup>.

The last annual conference of the Congress Socialist Party was convened at Tellicherry on 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, 1939. 170 delegates from all over Kerala attended the meeting. By 1939, the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala emerged as a full-fledged political party with a deep-rooted popular base. The meeting was presided over by N. Narayanan Nair<sup>15</sup>. The thesis E.M.S. Namboodiripad introduced clearly stated that, any effort to keep out the entire rightist Congressmen from the party would result only in helping the British to tighten their grip on India. So the idea was to prepare the entire nation, for an anti imperialist resistance. For that there should be a united front of all parties, the Communists, Socialists and the left Congressmen to work within the Congress and thereby to make the entire Congress to wage an anti-imperialist agitation. After a lively discussion, the thesis was accepted. It resolved to organize a very strong political movement against the War and the attempt of the British imperialists to drag India into the War<sup>16</sup>. In December 1939, the entire CSP in Kerala decided to join the Communist Party. As the Communist Party was an unlawful body then, this was kept a secret. They were Congressmen in public and communists

in secret. They accepted Congress policies publicly and opposed them privately<sup>17</sup>.

Within a few months of the formation of the Kerala branch of the Communist Party, there arose an occasion to put their strategies into practice. Congress issued a call to observe September 15, 1940 as 'Anti-repression day. As Congress leaders, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and P. Krishna Pillai openly called for a peaceful observance of the day. However, in their capacity as the leaders of the Communist Party, they sent out secret instructions to utilize the occasion for organized terrorism<sup>18</sup>. Anti-Repression Day was observed throughout Kerala. They were able to carry out their secret plans of terrorist acts in a few places only Morazha, Mattannur, Tellicherry and Kayyur. As a result of the pre-organized stone throwing, a sub-Inspector was killed at Morazha. It was in connection with this incident that the communist leader K.P.R. Gopalan was sentenced to death. Due to the intervention of Gandhi, the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and on the formation of the Congress Ministry in Madras in 1946, he was released. In Tellicherry, two young men, Abu and Chathukutty, died in police firing. A police constable was killed in Kayyur. Four persons were hanged for it. This was the first occasion when militant resistance to the police was consciously organized by a political party as against the hitherto spontaneous resistance of the people<sup>19</sup>. It revealed the true colours of the Communist Party in Kerala.

### **Working of the Communist Party during the period of war (1939-45)**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, the Second World War started. On the same day, the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow declared that India was at war with Germany. Later he suspended all civil freedoms and the Defense Ordinance was proclaimed. It was done without

consulting even the Indian National Congress, the biggest popular party in India. The Congress condemned the declaration of the Viceroy. On 24 September 1939, on a call from the CSP, anti-war rallies and meetings were held throughout Kerala. The outbreak of the war was the decisive event that led the left wing to move en masse from the Congress into the CPI. With the emergence of the Communist Party the already existing relationships among the radical leftists of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore were consolidated and formalized. Throughout 1940, the Communists in Kerala conducted vigorous agitations against both the war and the Gandhian Congress<sup>20</sup>.

During the 1939-42 period the Communist Party in Kerala was more popular than the Indian National Congress because the former was more anti-British than the latter<sup>21</sup>. Most of the core leaders of the Communist Party operated from underground. The Communists who remained above ground conducted their anti-war agitations and propaganda in the name of the KPCC and thus gained legitimacy among the general public.

A dramatic turn in the policy of the Communist Party towards the war was made when the Soviet Union entered the war in support of the allies on June 22, 1941. The war became a “Peoples War” in defence of socialism and against fascism. As a result the Communist Party forgot their past differences with the British and supported Britain’s war efforts. The Communists also opposed the Quit India Movement which was started in 1942<sup>22</sup>. The ban on the Communists was lifted. Thus in July 1942, with the blessings of British imperialism, the Communist Party began to function as a lawful party.

However in Kerala, where the Communist movement had a tremendous influence over the peasantry and working class, a

section of the workers did not approve the new line and formed rival trade unions, youth organizations. About this V.M.Fic observes that(Kerala: Yenan of India) it created a new cadre of Socialists in Kerala. Thus the unity of the left forces was broken and a section of the leftists allied themselves with the right wing Congressmen. The Congress Party charged the anti-national stand of the Communist Party as the betrayal of national cause. The Communists were labeled as paid agents of British imperialism.

In 1945, the war ended and the cold war began. The change in Russia's attitude towards Britain was echoed by the Indian Communist Party. The militant struggle of the Communist party revived<sup>24</sup>. During this period the Communist Party in Kerala was dominated by the duo P. Krishna Pillai and E.M.S Namboodiripad. The biggest example of the militant struggle of the Communist Party in Kerala was the Punnappra Vayalar rising of 1946.

### **Punnappra-Vayalar**

When the agitation for responsible government in Travancore was gaining momentum Sir C.P Ramaswami Aiyar, then the Dewan of Travancore, tried to suppress the agitation and planned to introduce a non-removable executive headed government upon the model of the Constitution of the United States of America with the motto of protecting the continuation of the rule of the Maharaja of Travancore<sup>25</sup>. But the people of Travancore were in no mood to accept the administrative reforms of Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. The moderate wing of the Travancore State Congress had the idea to put into operation the administrative reforms as a measure of experiment. But the extremists opposed any move to introduce reforms in administration other than a government responsible to the legislature. The Communist Party



stubbornly opposed the reforms of Sir C.P Ramaswami Aiyar and aired their protest in one voice *American Model Arabikkadalil* (American model of Government in Arabian Sea)<sup>26</sup>.

The Communists organized a violent struggle in their strong holds in Alleppey district. In October, 1946 Vayalar and Punnapra witnessed a violent mass upheaval in which the workers openly challenged the authority of the Government and came into a violent clash with the police and the military. On October 25, the Travancore Government declared Martial Law in Alleppey and Shertallai and Dewan C.P Ramaswami Aiyar himself assumed supreme command of the police and military operations in the area<sup>27</sup>. The Travancore armed forces stationed in Shertallai town moved against the Communist camp at Vayalar on October 27 which lay surrounded by water on three sides. The workers at Vayalar offered stiff resistance. According to Communist sources in the ensuing carnage more than 300 persons were killed mostly peasants but also the real comrades<sup>28</sup>. C.P Ramaswami Aiyar aimed to suppress the Communist Party but the result of the Punnapra-Vayalar upheaval was counter productive. With this the Communist Party became more popular<sup>29</sup>.

### **Emergence of Communist Party as an electoral force**

The Dewan of Travancore declared on July 25, 1947, that even after the attainment of freedom, Travancore would remain an independent State on the lapse of British paramountcy. An unsuccessful attempt on his life forced him to leave Travancore on August 19, 1947. India became independent on August 15, 1947. For a few months there was a lull in the activities of the Communist Party. But it was the lull before a storm. They were preparing for an insurrection<sup>31</sup>. In February 1948, the Party leadership passed hands from P.C. Joshi to B.T Ranadive at the Calcutta Congress. This Congress called upon the Communists

to overthrow the governments by armed assault. The nationalist leaders like Nehru had been labeled as “traitors and running dogs of imperialism<sup>32</sup>. Based on the Calcutta thesis, a nation-wide struggle to capture power through sabotage and terrorism was begun. Murder, loot, arson and dacoity, were let loose in the country. Eramath in Kasargod Thillankary, Omchiyam and Munayarkunnu, in North Malabar and Pariyaram in Cochin, and Edapaaly and Sooranad in Travancore witnessed Communist atrocities.

On September 4, 1947, the Maharaja of Travancore issued a declaration to elect the Constituent Assembly in Travancore as a prelude to the introduction of adult franchise. The first election was held in February, 1948. Out of the total of 120 seats the India National Congress contested 112 seats and won 97 seats. The Muslim League secured eight, Tamilnadu Congress 14 and independent one. Though the Communist party contested 17 seats and the K.S.P. eight, they could not win even a single seat<sup>33</sup>. In Cochin, the first general election based on adult franchise was held in September 1948. But the Communists were defeated. However in the bye-election held in early 1949, from Kodungalloor constituency, the Communist nominee E.Gopala Krishna Menon was returned.

Following the national policy of integration, the States of Travancore and Cochin were merged into Travancore-Cochin State under the Raja of Travancore as the Raj Pramukh on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1949. The first general election to Travancore and Cochin state was held from December 10, 1951 to January 5, 1952. As the Communist party was banned, the Communists offered themselves as independents. Out of the 108 seats, Congress got 44 seats (three uncontested), Socialist 11(one uncontested), Communist 25, R.S.P. 6, Travancore Tamilnadu Congress 8, K.S.P. and Cochin Party one each and Independent 12<sup>34</sup>. Even though the Congress did

not command an absolute majority, its leader A.J. John was invited to form the ministry as the leader of the largest single group in the Assembly, a procedure which was stubbornly rejected two years later in another Indian State, viz., Andhra, because the biggest single group was composed of the Communists.

The John ministry continued in office till September, 1953. About this time, the TTNC group precipitated a crisis by breaking off their association with the Congress party, since it was not willing to support their demand for secession of the four southern taluks from the Travancore-Cochin state to Tamilnadu. They moved a no-confidence motion which was carried and the ministry fell. The ministry continued as a care taker government till the fresh general elections fixed for January – February 1954<sup>35</sup>.

The second general election to the Travancore – Cochin State was held in February 1954. Following delimitation the number of seats rose to 118. In the election the INC got 45 seats, TTNC-12, P.S.P-19, Communists-23, RSP-9, KSP-3 and independents -6<sup>36</sup>. The reduction of Communist strength was a result of the utmost lengths to which the Communist party went in order to secure unity among the leftists and alliance with the PSP, for which it sacrificed many of its sure constituencies<sup>37</sup>. Though there was an electoral understanding between the Congress and the P.S.P., the latter refused to support the Congress in forming a ministry. Though unsuccessful, this was the first electoral alliance in India. In order to avert a political uncertainty, the Congress extended support to the P.S.P. to form a cabinet. Thus a four member cabinet of the P.S.P. under its leader Pattom Thanu Pillai came to power.

When the Congress withdrew its support to the PSP ministry, it had to resign. In the mean time, two PSP legislators had joined

the Congress. Thus with the support of the TTNC, Panampalli Govinda Menon formed a five member cabinet. That ministry also fell because of the withdrawal of support by six Congress legislators and the State came under President's rule for the first time<sup>38</sup>.

In Malabar, the Communists contested elections for the first time in 1945 to the Madras Legislative Assembly. Malabar formed a part of Madras State till 1956. But they could not win even a single seat even though the candidates were the top leaders of the Communist party like E.M. Sankaran Namboodiripad, A.K. Gopalan, K.Damodarn, C.H.Kanaran and Ishahak<sup>39</sup>. The first general election under the Constitution of India was held in 1951-52 to the Madras Legislative Assembly. The Communists made an electoral alliance with the KMPP and contested the election. Out of the 31 seats, the Congress was able to win only five seats. The Communists won seven seats, KMPP-7; socialist-4; Muslim League-5; and independents-3. But the success of the Communists was not to be estimated merely in terms of the number of seats they won. The electoral success of the Communist Party was mainly due to the conjoint election campaign with the KMPP<sup>40</sup>.

### **Aikya Kerala Movement**

The continued separation of the administration of Malabar, Travancore and Cochin even after the formation of the part B State of Travancore-Cochin was one of many anomalies in political organization perpetuated after Independence. Congress had long been committed to a reconstruction of provincial boundaries that would take account of the country's linguistic and socio-cultural heterogeneity and a Malayalam-speaking Kerala was a part of this grand design<sup>41</sup>. In 1946-48, however the Congress High Command was more concerned with the maintenance of unity

than the fulfillment of past promises. The Dhar commission and the three men Congress Committee reported against the linguistic reorganization in general. But the agitation for a separate Telugu province changed the whole situation. The government was forced to establish the States Reorganization Commission in 1953<sup>42</sup>. It was based on this recommendation that Kerala State came into existence on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956.

The CPI had been consistently supporting linguistic movements. A.K. Gopalan, leader of the CPI in the Lok Sabha, asserted that the most important goal of the Communist party was the formation of linguistic provinces<sup>43</sup>. The Madurai Congress of the Communist party held in 1953 backed the creation of linguistic states on the Andhra model. Three basic proposals had been put to the States Reorganization Commission on Kerala: its incorporation into a large multi-lingual southern state; *Akhanda* Kerala, a greater Kerala which would include at least the existing Tamil –speaking Taluks of Travancore – Cochin; Aikya Kerala basically the union of Malayalam speaking Taluks of Travancore and Cochin with Malabar and Kasargod Taluk of South Canara<sup>44</sup>. The Travancore-Cochin Congress and P.S.P. favoured *Akhanda* Kerala. Congress was also anxious to minimize the effects of Malabar Communism on the balance of power in a new State. The Communist Party, on the other hand, clamoured for the Aikya Kerala State<sup>45</sup>. The Reorganization Commission also subscribed to the proposal of the Communist party.

## Conclusion

The genesis of the Communist Party in Kerala was unparalleled. It originated and grew up within the Congress Socialist Party and emerged as a full-fledged Communist party in 1939. International events affected the course of action of the Communists. That is why they joined with the British in their war efforts against

the Axis powers. The war period witnessed peace between the Communists and the Government. But this did not last long. Punnappra-Vayalar upheaval was one of the best examples of the violent clashes between the Communists and the Government. The Communists grew as an electoral force steadily which culminated in 1957 with the emergence of the Communist Party as a majority party on the floor of the Kerala State Legislative Assembly.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Sanskrit Education and Literature in Ancient and Medieval  
Tamil Nadu - An Epigraphical Study  
Chithra Madhavan, DK Print World, New Delhi, 2013.

The book under review is a valuable contribution to the field of epigraphical studies. It is interesting to note that this book has highlighted the Sanskrit educational initiatives during the reigns of the Pallavas. Pandya, Cola, Vijayanagara, Nayaka and other dynamic rulers of the Tamil country during the ancient and medieval periods. The book has been compiled into nine chapters bringing plentiful new evidences and explanations to bear on the subject.

Inscriptions are one of the major sources for writing history. It is also helpful to determine the history of the past and fixing the dates of many dynasties in chronological order etc. We can derive authentic information regarding the donors, land grants to the temples, village grants to the *Caturvedins*, *Pandits*, *Bramadheyas* or *Caturvedimangalam* by the kings and his followers etc.

The author has particularly focused on Sanskrit inscriptions which give information about the education system and the literary activities in ancient and medieval times in Tamil Nadu. In this book the author has given more importance to Sanskrit education and literary activities.

The first chapter discusses the various Pallava grants; *Ghatika* (centre for higher learning especially Sanskrit education), meeting place of the *Ghatika* and its members, what were the subjects taught etc, are analysed. In particular, the *Ghatika* was a famous higher educational institution during the times of the Pallavas.

In the second chapter, the author has dealt with Velvikudi and the Larger Sinnamanur plates of the Pandyas. The Vedic sacrifice done by the Pandyan King Palyagasalaimudukudumi Peruvaludi;

has been analysed and each and every aspect of the village to whom it was donated. For instance, the place Karavandapura, alias Kalakkudi has been identified with Uggirankottai in Tirunelveli district.

The third chapter mentions the Ays who were the earliest ruling dynasty in South Kerala. The author draws attention to identify the exact meaning of the words mentioned in the inscriptions. She mentions a few examples like *salai*, *cattars* etc., and correlates them with the educational institutions and their functions. In the fourth chapter, she has discussed the donations and land grants made by the imperial Colas for the sake of Sanskrit education. The author has discussed the copper plate grants of Tiruvalangadu, Esalam, Velanjeri, Karandai and Udayendiram issued by the Chola kings. She has pointed out how the *Caturvedimangalam* functioned and its role in the society.

In the fifth chapter, she has analysed the inscriptions of the second Pandyan Empire. Jatavarman Kuralsekhara I created the *Rajagambhira Caturvedimangalam* consisting of 1,030 *brahmadeyas*; perhaps he held the title of *Rajagambhira*. Further, the followers of this king donated several land grants for the benefit of Sanskrit education and that has been aptly studied and highlighted by the author. She draws our attention towards the evidences of the existence of libraries and their organization, namely *Sarasvathi-bhandaram* in this period and also the grants made for the study of the Vedas, teaching of the Sastras and the recital of the Puranas. Some of the lithic records attested to the Pandyan times from Chidambaram and Tirunelveli with regard to the libraries are discussed. The scholars employed in these libraries and their duties like reading and maintaining and conserving old manuscripts also find mention.

The sixth chapter discusses the contribution of the Hoysala kings towards Sanskrit education in the Tamil country. The inscriptions found in the Sri Ranganatha Svami temple in Srirangam speak

of the donations and library which existed during this period and are touched upon by the author. It is interesting to read that Vira-Ramanatha installed the images of Saraswathi Devi, Vedayasa Bhagavan and Hayagriva (all the three deities presiding over learning) in the *mandapa* constructed as an adjunct to the library by Nilakantha Nayaka of Palapalli, a contemporary of the Hoysala king Vira-Ramanatha.

In the seventh chapter the author has focused on various inscriptional evidences which she has culled from the enormous number of inscriptions issued by the Vijayanagara kings. The author narrates how the temples continued to play a major role in disseminating learning and education. *Mathas* (monasteries) which were attached to the temples rendered yeoman service in teaching religion and philosophy. The *mathas* attached to the temple at Srirangam, Varadaraja Swami temple at Kanchipuram specialized in teaching the Vedas. The Kamakoti *matha* at Kanchipuram, was a famous centre of *Advaita* philosophy. Appaya Diksita was a great scholar of *Advaita* Philosophy who lived during the reign of Venkata II. He was a contemporary of Pancamatabhanjanam Tatacarya and Vadhula Doddacarya or Mahacarya, author of the famous *Candamarutam*.

In the eighth chapter, she furnishes information about the Nayakas of Madurai and Nayakas of Thanjavur who contributed to the development of Sanskrit education. Particularly, the Vellangudi plates, which praise Krsnamahipati (Krsnappa Nayakka II) as being “very well –read in all the Nitisastras” (*Vijnata amita nitisastra vitali*), also mention that he granted enough money to the *brahmanas* of other kingdoms. Sevappa Nayakka C. CE 1532-80) is noted for his contributions to works of charity and religious tolerance. Acyutappa Nayaka (c CE1560-1614) Raghunatha Nayaka (c CE1600-34) were the prominent rulers during the Vijayanagar period.

The last chapter interprets inscriptions issued by the rulers of the later Pandyan kings who were also scholars. The Pudukkottai plates state that Varatungarama Pandya was ‘famous like *Bhoja*’ and well versed in literary works (*bhojaiva*). The Dalavay-agraharam plates mentions that Abhivirarama Pandya, also known as Ativirarama and Srivallabha, was very learned in the Tamil language (*kalasodhbhava jisnuvani tadbhusanas’ca*). Many of the epigraphs of the later Pandyan kings also refer to the grant of land to scholars.

The author makes a special note of the Maratha rulers who were great patrons of scholars. Several Sanskrit inscriptions attest to this. She further notes that many of the Maratha kings were eminent scholars and authored many works on Ayurveda and music. These Maratha kings also granted a number of *agraharas* to the learned *brahmanas* so that they could pursue their scholarly activities. Particularly, Shahjirapuram village was the seat of scholarship in languages, literature, philosophy and medicine throughout the Maratha period and some of the most distinguished scholars were Telugus.

The painstaking work of the author in interpreting the Sanskrit inscriptions make this book a notable contribution to scholarship in this particular field. It is not an exaggeration to say that this book will serve as a source book for researchers in this field for a long time to come.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Indigenous and Western Medicine in Colonial India by Madhuri Sharma, Foundation Books, Cambridge University Press Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, First Published in 2012, ISBN 978-81-7596-889-9.

The book focuses on the social history of medicine reflecting the multiplicity of social interaction between Indigenous and Western Medicine in India and attempts to understand it through a prism of Benares as a case study. Indigenous and Western Medicine in colonial India in many ways incorporates diversities ranging from by-lanes in Benares through the Ghats passing through Vaidhyas, Hakkims the Pharmacy and medical stores to the rhythms and paradigms associated with the discipline of history. The book emphatically begins with couplets from Akbar Allahabadi, “How can one discover” the essence of parents in the child, his milk is from a tin, his education from the government. This surmises the commercialization of food and education in child’s upbringing in colonial India with the dependence on market and government.

Colonial medicines proved, in fact, to be a twin-edged weapon which cut the colonial people both physically and morally, not only the body but also the mind was conquered. In contrast to the above argument, ayurveda had its own structure in the form of a hereditary occupation prior to the arrival of western medicine. Despite internal conflicts among the proponents of ayurveda, they succeeded not only in establishing parallel set of institutions, but also influenced the government policy for the step brotherly treatment. The work assumes importance as it’s not just the history of medicine; it is a history of accommodation and transformation to political change and also to markets and demands in medicine. Based on detailed and well analyzed sources, the book throws

certain queries concerning the reasons for the ascendancy of western medicine over indigenous medical systems. Was official patronage responsible for this dominance or does it derive strength from the society? Benares is chosen as it was a traditional centre of ayurvedic learning and a hub of ayurvedic practitioners. Work begins from the 1890s and moves on beyond the 1920s.

In the first chapter, 'Health and Healing Practices in Banaras: Patterns of patronage', the author argues that the western medicine did not completely replace the existing indigenous medical system, but it succeeded in coexisting with other medical systems while enjoying a dominant position. This chapter highlights the multiple points of patronage for western medicine that led to its popularization but could not replace the indigenous healing culture and practices in totality. The pattern of patronage made by different agencies shows an interesting admixture of multiple patrons. There existed multiplicity in both patrons and patronized. Moreover, western medicine grew in superiority with the invention of the vaccination of 'smallpox'.

The Second Chapter, 'Changing Perceptions of Health and Medicine: Authority, Anxiety and Attraction', focuses on debates on medical issues that cropped up in English, Vernacular newspapers and pamphlets at that time. It also deals with the question of how the educated section engages with the modern notions of disease and the medical technologies such as thermometer, stethoscope, injection, x-rays and contraceptive devices. This intervention generated a rich corpus of medical tracks in Hindi which generated discussions about the merits of indigenous versus western medicine. The educated sections were not passive recipients of information, but engaged in it to secure a space in the newly

created professional structures and a platform for themselves in the public sphere.

The 'Professionalization of Medicine' is the chapter three, which analyses the social respectability of the medical profession both for the British and Indian doctors and also their basis for conflict. At another level, indigenous medical practitioners and Indian allopathic physicians were engaged in a tussle to attract a wider clientele for their respective medical practices. The western medicine, along with the doctors, provided employment for a new set of paramedical staff like compounders, dressers etc. Indian doctors with training in western medicine were ready to label their competitors the vaidyas and the hakims as quacks. The indigenous medicine practitioners sought to improve their status and credentials by laying out their own institutions and other criteria for a professional standing such as Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Swadeshi movement and other Vaidya organizations at the provincial, local and at all India level. Major stimulus came from the challenges of the Medical registration Bill. It also tries to create a separate and parallel medical infrastructure equivalent to the allopathic medicine. They secured patronage of powerful people, such as Banaras Raja and Madan Mohan Malaviya to organize exhibitions and to lobby for political leverage for them. The author thus argues that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, medicine was a morass of many strands of Indian, European, Indigenous and Western, all entwined to each with many criss-crosses.

From social to commercial entrepreneurship in the field of indigenous and western medicine is the main focus in the fourth chapter titled, 'Entrepreneurship in Medicine'. The initial part deals with the complexity and multiplicity of medical entrepreneurship and the second half shows the competitive edge among the Indians and also between the Indians and the Europeans in order to capture

the market. Individuals mainly prepared medicines and began to set up medical and drug shops to sell them. The author argues, 'thus, on the one hand indigenous drug manufactures were trying to compete with the European products by adopting the same infrastructure of communication to create a consumer for their health product by generating the perception of universal panacea contrarily. They were also creating the space for their product by arousing the religious or national sentiments and also by using local codes and religious symbols. Some of them also began to manufacture it with their own label. Using a realm of print media and advertisement, the author showcases the medical practitioners of both allopathic and indigenous to attract consumers.

The conclusion summarizes the issues in a lucid and succinct way to understand the nuances of social interaction with western medicine during the colonial time. When the Western medicine helped in colonizing the body, mind and soul, the Indigenous medicine played its own role in liberating it. Thus, medicine, on the one hand tries to maintain health but the study concludes as a critique of colonial capitalism, where industrialization, city life and mechanization had adverse effect. More so Indians were not meek receptors of Western medicine and their attitude to Indigenous medicine was difficult to budge.

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