

Political History and Functionaries of Vikramapandeswar Temple – A Study

B. Kandasamy

Assistant Professor of History, Rajapalayam Rajus' College, Rajapalayam, Tamil Nadu, India;
bkandasamy78@gmail.com

Abstract

Vikrama Pandeswara temple of Cholapuram is situated in ten kilometer surrounding of Rajapalayam town. This is one of the most important canonical temples built by the Pandya kings of 12th–13th centuries ruled from Madurai. This temple Vikrama Pandeswara was the creation of Pandya king Vikrama Pandya. The inscriptions of this temple are published in South Indian Inscriptions Volume XXVI from 509 to 530. These inscriptions possessed information about the temple in a number of items. It contains the political history of the temple, the villages and nadu's, tax procedure, temple officials and the temple rituals. The available inscriptions of this place, the inscription No. 525 published in volume XXVI deserves our attention. Many village names are found in the inscriptions of Cholapuram temple. Some places like Anmar Nadu, Mudi Valangu Pandya Nallur, Uttama Chola Chaturvedimangalam, Veerapandiya Chaturvedimangalam can be known from the inscriptions of this temple. One can also know the temple administration system through the temple inscriptions. This article indicates a brief overview on functionaries of Vikrama Pandeswara temple.

Keywords: Administration, Canonical, Inscriptions, Political History, Society, Tax Procedure, Temple Functionaries, Temple Rituals

1. Introduction

The name of the temple is called as Vikrama Pandeswarar. The name Vikrama Pandya indicates at the temple was built in the period of Pandya king Vikrama Pandya. But in the history of Pandya dynasty, there are many Vikrama Pandya kings ruled over the country. In the period of Chola king Rajadhi Raja, it is founded that Rajaditya Raja I defeated Vikrama Pandya and drove him to Ceylon. This happened in the year 1039 A.D¹. Vikrama Pandeswara temple of Cholapuram is situated in 10 km surrounding of Rajapalayam, Virudhunagar district. This temple contains rich number of inscriptions. All inscriptions belong to the Pandya period. The names of the King occurred in these inscriptions are Sundara Pandya, Vikrama Pandya, Sri Kulasekhara deva and Sri Vallabha deva. The letters of the inscriptions are in various sizes according to the place of

engraving. Some letters are big in size and some letter is moderate in size.

The inscriptions of this temple are published in South Indian Inscriptions Volume XXVI from 509 to 530. These inscriptions possessed information about the temple in a number of items. It contains the political history of the temple, the villages and nadu's, tax procedure, temple officials and the temple rituals. The available inscriptions of this place, the inscription No. 525 published in volume XXVI deserves our attention. This inscription datable to 1119 A.D, mention the name of the place Cholapuram. As the date is 1119 A.D, it is very easy to say that this place should have been come into existence in prior to 1119 A.D. Moreover the Cholapuram also indicates the place should have been come into existence due to the halt of Chola forces in the Pandya Country. The halt of Chola forces in the Pandya country had happened in several periods

of the Chola kings like Parantaka I, Rajendra I, Rajadhi Raja I, Kulothunga I, Rajadhi Raja II and Kulothunga III. However, the concentration of Chola forces in Pandya country happened in the periods of Rajendra I. The post Chola-Pandya viceroy was created and the Chola forces were stationed at the places like Tiruvaliwaram and Seranmadevi. Hence in this period of Rajendra I, i.e. in the period of Chola Pandya viceroy ship, some of the Chola forces should have halted in this place and later this might have called by the name Cholapuram.

2. History of Place Names of the Inscriptions

2.1 Anmar Nadu

The inscriptions of Sundara Pandya and Kulasekhara Deva mention that the temple was situated at the place Cholapuram². The Cholapuram belonged to geographical area called as Anmar Nadu.

2.2 Mudivalangu Pandyanallur

The inscription belongs to Kulasekhara mentions that there was a village by name Mudivalangu Pandyanallur³. This Mudivalangu Pandyanallur should get its name by offering throne to the Pandya kings. This should be situated somewhere from Cholapuram. This village should be very huge and it is stated that there was a big street in the village. The group of people Valanjaiyar of Southern Ilangai (tenilangai) settled to this village. It is also called as Mudivalangum Pandyanallur, because of its possession of a tank by name Mudivilangumkulam. Here, the term mudivilangum indicates about the paddy crop of this village. The inscription of Kulasekhara refers that the village had two village assembly bodies like Ur and Karanavar⁴. As the Karanavar indicates the military man, the village Mudivalangu Pandyanallur was the combination of agricultural settlement as well as military settlement.

2.3 Uttamachola Chaturvedhimangalam

This place name is found not only in the inscriptions of Shiva temple, but also in the inscriptions of Perumal temple of Cholapuram. The place of Uttamachola Chaturvedimangalam was the place situated near the

Perumal kovil temple⁵. The name Uttamachola suggests that this place should have been formed in the period of chola king Uttamachola. But, Uttamachola had no connections to the Pandya country. Kulottunga II possessed the surname Uttamachola⁶. Hence the habitation place Uttamachola Chaturvedimangalam should have established only in the period of Kulottunga II. As the Chola rulers like Kullottunga I, Vikrama Chola and Kulottunga II had incessant warfare with the Pandya kings, it is reasonable to assume that this village was formed during the period of Chola King Kulottunga II.

However, this village was not founded by Chola King Kulottunga II. It was founded by Parakrama Pandya and the title of the Chola king Kulottunga II was named to that village, in order to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Chola king. However, the original name of the Uttamachola Chaturvedimangalam was Sundara Pandya Chaturvedimangalam. Sundara Pandya, son of Sri Vallabha during 1104 to 1124 A.D. of Madurai, created the village Sundara Pandya Chaturvedimangalam for Perumal temple namely Sundara Pandyanagar. The village Sundara Pandya Chauvedimangalam was formed by the clubbing of village like Velliainallur Dhamaparayabai. Perceri of Anmar Nadu, Tiruchallur, Amamputtu, Kondiyaneri, Upayanamangalam of Tudaiyanurmuttam. The king Sundara Pandya had given orders for tax exemption and made the area as Sundara Pandya Chaturvedimangalam. The inhabitants had gone away from the five tanks by village and it was turned as forest and desert. Then the successor king Parakrama Pandya who ruled the Pandya Country under the grace of Chola king Kulltunga II, made requests to the Chola king and renamed the temple as Uttama Chola Vinnagar and formed the village Uttama Chola Chaturvedimangalam. It was donated to twenty Brahmins.

2.4 Vira Pandya Chaturvedimangalam

An inscription found at west portion of Tiruchchurramaligai refers to the village Virapandya Chaturvedimangalam. This village is belonged to Anmarnadu. This Chaturvedimangalam also should be a part of Cholapuram. The name of the village Vira Pandya indicates that, it was formed by the king Vira Pandya. It formed only after the construction of the temple Vikrama Pandeswaramudayar. The Sabhai of the village sold some lands to an individual of Tambikku Nalla Perumal @

Pillai Sundara Pandya Vana Kovaraiyar. This village had the hamlet village Sakaraneri. The eastern boundary of Sakaraneri was Vembunadu, Southern boundary was Vaigaitank and Srivallava river. Eastern boundary was vamba tank. This village Sakaraneri would get irrigation from the river Peraru. Sabhai members of Vira Pandya Chaturvdimangalam had come from the various villages of Tanjore district like Sattanur, Tirukaduvur and Iraivanmaraisur. The other villages are Peruvayur and Tirumalirun Cholai.

2.5 Other Place Names Mentioned in the Inscriptions

Sakara Nadu is another area mentioned in the inscription of south wall of verandah. In the Nadu, there were the following villages, Alur @Avanipradananallur. Other villages are like Kanchi and Melai Alur⁷. There was also another village Nankur. In it, there was a temple by name Nayriar Alagiya Pandeswaramudaiyar, Arukaikunrattur was a village in Anmanadu⁸. Some of the villages are mentioned below which indicate that the members of the Pandya Chaturvedimangalam *sabhai* had their native places 1. Peru Ariyur, 2. Sathanur, 3. Gomapuram, 4. Tirukkadavur, 5. Tirumalirumcholai and 6. Vankapuram.

Kannudai Perunteru was a street in the Cholaipuram town. The prefix perun indicates that it was a big street. But this street developed a village in the year 1103-04 A.D. Kannudai Perunteru was changed as Kannudai Perur. The term uillitta indicates that the village Kannudai Perur might have included many villages. Mudivalangu Pandyan was another village⁹. This belonged to Anmarnadu. It was also called as Cholai Cheri. This had ur bodies. In the year, 1573 AD., this village became as very important which possessed many plot of land donated to the Shiva temple. The other villages mentioned are Kunrattur, Irandu Chollathan, Sethu Rama Kurichi, Samantha Kandan, Vira Singanallur, Pandya Deva Kanchi¹⁰. This village had assemblies in the year 1303 A.D. In Mudivalangu Pandyanallur had a big street known as Narpathennairavan Peruntheru¹¹.

2.6 Formation of a Village

The villages are formed through the clubbing of house site nattam lands together. The old possessors and the

old name was exempted and granted to 14 Brahmins a Devadana Bramadheyam¹².

2.7 Temple Functionaries

Vikrama Pandeswarar temple, which is now in deserted conditions remained as an action oriented temple in the period of Later Pandyas of 14th and 15th centuries A.D. There were functionary people in this temple. They were Tanattar, Sri Rudra, Sri Mahesvaras, Madapathiyam, Tanikar Kanakku, Sri Pandarakkanakku and Madapathukanakku.

2.8 Tanattar

Inscription No. XXVI 512, 513, refers about this body. They must be the present Arankavalar body of a temple. These bodies received the order from the king. These bodies received the tax exemption Palm-leaf order from the king. This body was responsible for the establishment of stones with the symbol of chulam, in the four boundaries of the land donated by the king. They chiseled the orders in the copper and stone. This *Tanattar* body was the responsible body for the collection of taxes from the land allotted by the king. These bodies knew about the tax details from each plot of land. XXVI 513, inscription mentions that Tanattar body knew the economic translation held by the chieftain and the king. The inscription mentions that the king received a consolidated amount from the chieftain and gave tax exemption to the taxes of the lands of the exemption to the taxes of the lands of the temple. The composition of Tanattar body is not known. However, it can be guessed that it might be the body of Non-Brahmin.

2.9 SnRudra (kuru) Sri Mahesvaras

This is another body, which translated the temple functionaries. An inscription of Kulasekara 1304-05 A.D. records that, Sri Rudra, Sri Mahesvaras was a body, which give an agreement (pidipadu) to an individual¹³. From this inscription, it is understood that they were the responsible body for implementing any ritual in the temple. They also received money from the allotted place or land. They might be the rent collectors of the houses.

2.10 Madapattiyam

This post was one of the latest posts of the temple. It was found in the year 1561 A.D. and 1573 A.D.¹⁴. The term Madapattiyam is associated with the term Madapattiya Kanakku. The meaning of the term indicates that, it might be an accountant post to look after the expenditure of a mutt belonged to the temple. For the post, particular land is allotted by the rulers. It seems that this was the post of central administration (i.e) King. The accountant of the mutt was not a local person of the village Cholaipuram. He came from the village Vasudevanallur of Arai nadu. He belonged to Chinthamaninathan temple. He was a Kaikolar Bhattar. He was given the post of mutt supervisor and mutt accountant. He was given the kani rights to the lands of the king, which had been so far collected by the king. Moreover this mutt accountant was eligible to receive all the benefits of the other accountants (Asal Tanikar).

2.11 Tanikar Kanakkar

The term Tanikar, which derives from the word taniyam means that it denoted about the supervisory persons of the income of the temples in term of its grain. He received the orders from the king¹⁵. They had some allotment of lands from the dues of the king. They also possessed some privileges.

2.12 Sri Pandara Kanakku

This is another temple post mentioned in the inscription of Kulasekara¹⁶. As the term Pandaram means the temple treasury, the term Sri Pandarakkanakku indicates that it was an accountant post related to the temple treasury. The specific point is that this post was not hold by the individual of the concerned village. It was hold by the person coming from Madurai temple. The person to be appointed holds the post of supervisor of Madapattiyam at the temple of Tiru Vali Vayudaiyarat Madurai. He received some hereditary right over the land. Temple treasury accountant must be inferior to the post of mutt supervisor or mutt accountant. It is known from the emoluments of the two posts. While the mutt accountant got hereditary right (kani) over two ma of land the treasury accountant got only one ma of land rights.

2.13 Adisandeswarar

Adisandeswarar must be the highest body to the temple. Its composition is not clear. But, it was the direct body, which took over all the matters of the temple. This body Sandeswarar was associating the temple too much than the other bodies. The Sandeswarar body was alone claiming that the temple was their temple (Namalayathil). The inscriptions of Parakramakulasekara¹⁷ indicate that the orders of the king were written by the orders of Adi Chandeswarar. Hence, Adisandeswarar were the ordering body of the temple.

3. Taxes to the Temple

Many taxes were collected from the lands of the villages. They are Nerkadamai Tariirai, Tattoli, Tattarpattam, Sekkrai, Manairai, Puravari, Inavari, Idaivari, Eriminpattam, Kanikkai, Kartheikaipachchai, Anirai, Panchupili, Olaieluthu, Elanjanaiperu, Korraikkai, Kadaikuttu, Elakkai, Althevai, Andeluthutevai, Anaichalai, Kudiraipanthi, Vettipattam, Kaldevai, Karaidevai, Nancey, Karuncey, Nattam, Nattapal, Tottam, Tottakollai, Nattuvinoyyam, Kartheikaipon, Sandivikrakam, Nattapachai, Pilliyar, Nombithevai, Vadakadamai, Kadamairandubogam, Antharayam, Vettipattam, Vasalviniyogam, Kariyavocitchi, Ilanjinaipperu and Vannakuli.

3.1 The meaning of the tax term is as follows

Anirai - Tax on herd.

Althevai - Tax on human labour.

Andeluthutevai - Tax on yearly accounts.

Antharayam - Inner tax.

Eriminpattam - Tax on tank fishes.

Elanjinaipperu - Tax on seal.

Inavari - Tribal tax (?).

Idaivari - Tax on shepherd.

Kanikkai – Presents.

Kartheikaipachchai - Tax on crops on the month of Karthikaey.

Kudiraipanthi - Tax on houses.

Kaldevai - Tax on channels.

Karaitevai - Tax on boundary.

Karuncey - Tax on dry crop.
 Karthikaippon - Tax on the month Karthigai crops.
 Kadamairandubogam - Tax on two time harvesting.
 Nerkadamai - TAX on paddy.
 Nancey - Tax on crops.
 Nattam - Tax on house site.
 Nattappal - Tax on deserted house site.
 Olaieluthu - Tax on palm leaf writing..
 Puravari - Tax on revenue.
 Panchupili - Tax on cotton loom.
 Pillaiyar Nonbitevai - Tax on pillaiyar fast.
 Sekkirai - Tax on crushing stone.
 Tarirai - Tax on handloom.
 Tatter Pattam - Tax on coppersmith.

4. Conclusion

The above analysis indicates that Adisandeswarar were the controlling authority of the temple. Then, Tanattar were the highest body in deciding the affairs of the temple. Sri Rudra Sri Mahesvaras was the personnel who took affairs the ritual activity of the temple. Tanikarkanakku that is the accountants of grain enjoyed the powers, Madapathiyam and Madapathiyakanakku were the persons of mutt supervision. Temple treasury accountant was the person of the temple post. The accountants were mostly employed by the king. They could be transferred from the temple to another temple. This temple was patronized and protected by the communities and the individuals. It is started that many of the village bodies' urar, and karanavar of the villages donated money which occurred from their sarees business. This temple should have been also remained as a business centre especially for the sales of sarees is known from the inscription.

Many temple personnel stimulated to this temple. There were Tanattar, who did the transaction work between temple and the king. Sandeswarar a body looked after the whole activities of the temple. It inscribed the activities of the temple in the stones. But for the presence of those temple bodies, there would be no inscription in the walls of the temple. These were accountants for maintaining account for grain called as Asaltanikarkanakkar. There

was an accountant for mutt, who did the supervisor (madapattiyam) work of the mutt also. There was a separate treasury accountant namely Pandara Kanakku. There were also Sri Rudra Sri Mahesvarars who also did the specific ritual activities. This person might be the priests of the temple. This temple must be an influential one of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy than the vedic influenced temple.

Many individuals who were the members of village body and chaturvedimangalam might have been come and prayed. God Vikrama Pandeswarar is known through the prevalence of the signatures of them. This temple had a cosmopolitan outlook in its functioning, because the accountant of mutt had come from the temple of Chinthamaninattan of Vasudevanallur. The treasury accountant had come from Tiruvalai Udaiyar temple of Madurai. Hence these persons might have introduced a non-parochial outlook among the people in the behavior certainly these temple functionaries acted as a semi-feudal lords, as they collected the taxes of the king for their life pursuit. However how they collected their dues is not clear. Did they collect it through the temple servants? Did they collect it by directly? The above are some of the questions to be probed in further research.

Siya Ganga marayanadevar and Sundara Pandavarakuvaraiyar were the two important leading persons related to this temple. These two must be local chieftains possessed the major portion of temple lands as Karanmai that is cultivating right for them. They paid dues to the temple for performing rituals. The adjacent bramadeyam village namely Virapandya Chaturvedimangalam had a great regard to this temple. It sold its hamlet village. Thus the temple Vikrama Pandeswar exercised vast influence over all the activities of the village.

5. References

- 1.. Sethuraman, N. *Medieval Pandyas A.D. 1000-1200*, Published by N Sethuraman, Raman & Raman Private Limited, Kumbakonam - 626 001, Tamil Nadu, India. 1980, p 71.
2. SII XXVI, 518
3. SII XXVI, 518
4. SII XXVI, 517
5. SII XXVI, 525

6. Sethuraman, N. *Medieval Pandyas A.D. 1000-1200*.
7. SII XXVI, 512
8. SII XXVI 514
9. SII XXVI, 509, 510
10. SII XXVI 517
11. SII XXVI 518
12. SII XXVI 524
13. SII XXVI 518
14. SII XXVI 510
15. SII XXVI 509, 510
16. SII XXVI 510
17. SII XXVI 509, 510