



Available online at: <http://www.advancedscientificjournal.com>

<http://www.krishmapublication.com>

IJMASRI, Vol. 1, issue 1, pp. 155- 161, Oct. -2023

<https://doi.org/10.53633/ijmasri>

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY
ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
(IJMASRI)**

ISSN: 2582-9130

IBI IMPACT FACTOR 1.5

DOI: 10.53633/IJMASRI

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF SRI ALAGAIYA NARASIMHA PERUMAL TEMPLE IN
ENNAIRAM: A STUDY THROUGH INSCRIPTIONS**

Dr.P. Karthikeyan

*Guest lecturer, P.G & Research Department of History, Arignar Anna Govt. Arts College, Villupuram -
605602, Tamil Nadu, India.*

Abstract

India is a land of temples. The temple is a place of worship. Tamil Nadu is proud of having inherited a glorious culture in the form of temples. The temple is a material record in the spiritual evolution of man. The temple forms an important part of India's heritage. It is not an exaggeration to state that the richness of Indian culture rest upon the stable base of our temples. They are traditional nurseries for art, literature, painting, dance, music and sculpture. Due to lack of proper data is difficult to ascertain the antiquity of temples here. At the beginning, the temples of Tamil country had no connection with worship of any deity. The ancient people worship of tree, water, fire, snack and some stone were very popular and primitive in nature. The Brahmanical influence changed the practice of constructing the religious edifices by adopting the pattern of Buddhist structure. It gradually changed the religious art tradition of Tamil Nadu herring us in new era of art – pool and architectural forms during the post Sangam period. In Sangam literature, the temples are variously known as koyil nagaram, kottam and il but there is no material evidence at present. The reason may be that all perishable materials like mud, brick and wood had been used for construction in the early times of Sangam period but there are few good pen pictures in the sangam anthology about the existence of religious of edifices.

Keywords: Ennairam, Brahmanical Influence, Life and livelihood, inhabitants, Inscriptional sources, Socio-economic status

Introduction

Rajaraja and his successors were constructed many temples in Tamil country. They constructed new temples and they carried rebuilt of old temples in stone.

Some temples that stand a good example of the architectural style belong 10th century. The present Alagiya Narasimha Perumal (Rajaraja Vinnayagar) at Ennayiram is one of the few existing temples of Rajendra I the great with a rich and hoary past.

155

Ennayiram is situated in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. Ennayiram is about five kilometers from Nemur, a village at the 19th kilometers from Villupuram on the Villupuram – Gingee road. Brahmadesam and Esalam villages are within three kilometers of Ennayiram. During the medieval period, Ennayiram was a famous centre and the main attraction is the temple. An insignificant village today, Ennayiram was the hub of considerable activity during the middle Chola period and received the royal attention of Rajendra I, his sons and grandsons.

Socio Economic Condition

Temples play a unique role in the socio-cultural and politico economic life of Medieval Tamil Nadu. They are preserved the rich heritage and were the traditional centres fostering the growth of civilization. A pivot around which all-human activities revolved, temples, besides a place of worship and festivals, serve as countries of education, recreation clubs, as employers, courts of justice and undertake various welfare activities. The south Indian temples were the hub of the socio – religious life of the people of ancient and medieval times. The temples served as the centre of the social activities of the village communities. They played considerable role in the economic activity of the people. To some extent, they fostered administrative institution. Their contribution to the success of the local administration was also no way small. Primary Agravain in nature the medieval village communities could not have found a better place for developing their social life. As such, they had to depend on the temples, which were the property owners of the area.

The People and the Temple

Throughout its existence, the Ennayiram temple seems to have enjoyed the deep devotion of the people of all communities of Ennayiram and its neighborhood. This is an evident from the records of the endowments instituted by the people of this area. First king himself took interest on this temple and gift of forty-five veli of law in Anangur village alias Rajaraja nallur was made to the temple Rajaraja Vinnagar. This order was issued on his 25th regnal

year¹. Similarly, the assembly Rajaraja chatur vedimangalam, which was a Taniyur, made land settlements to temple². As the village Ennayiram was a sabha that is village owned by temple, the Brahmins sabha was the administrative body of the Brahmadeya villages dominated it. Its membership was restricted to Brahmans who possessed a certain proprietary and academic qualification. It was known variously as Mahasabha, Perunguri Mahasabha etc. The assemblies of certain villages are also called by some other titles like vira narayana chaturvedi mangalam (Kattumanar kovil of Cuddalore district) *Sembiya Mahadevi chaturvedi mangalam (Nagapattinam district) were known as Sasana Baddha chaturvedi – bhatta perumbadi and sasana baddha – chaturvedi – bhattachar – dana perumakkal mangalam*³ respectively.

Sabha was a supreme authority of the whole village, the sabha also extended its control over the temples located mainly with its jurisdiction⁴ many inscriptions of the temple give information that all temple officials were Brahmins. The learned Brahmin scholars were highly respected and fed in the temple. The Brahmins occupies important posts in the local assembly. Nambi – Udattur was a Brahmin, who governed the village. Most of the document writers of the village assembly were Brahmins. For instance, Adittachula mani Brahma marayar was an administrator⁵ of the sabha of Ennayiram. Apart from holding offices in the assembly, they held membership in such assemblies. Thus Brahmin community stood at the top in the society of the Ennayiram village.

The inscriptions⁶ of the temple provide information about three types of settlements in the Tanniyur of Ennayiram itself. The settlements were the brahmadeyam mainly occupies by the Brahmins urn dominated by the people other than Brahmin communities the Nagaram, a settlement of mercantile community. From it is clear that Ennayiram village was entirely owned by the temple and in this the Brahmins the other communities like ur like sabha, the urn also took part in the administrative affairs of the temple. The Brahmana villages – Epigraphical⁷ references are also showing that the urn jointly undertook the maintenance of charities either with another urn or with other bodies. Number of

inscriptions of Ennayiram temple speaks about joint maintenance of the Brahmadeya with the neighbouring urn and the mercantile professionals had their settlements separated within the preview of the Tanniyur.

After Brahmins the vellalas were dominated the society. They were agricultural people and they were the administration of the urn. They were settled in the precincts of the temple area. A record of the twenty first year of Rajendra I mentions that Peasants (Ulukudigal) who cultivated the temple land were exempted from paying taxes such as sirrurai, vetti, and Echchoru. In some of the inscriptions a few persons who belonged to the vellala community figure as the document writers of the sabha. The forty first inscription of Kulottunga chola mentions about one Kulottunga chola muvendavellan was an administrator of this place. Likewise, a 15th year record of vikrama chola mentions about Karikala sola muvendavellan. An epigraph of Rajadhiraja also focuses light on various works of vellala community.

Another important community was that Manradi which undertook to graze the sheep and cows, which were donated, to the temple. Their main duty was to supply of ghee for the offerings and lighting the lamps in the temple. They settled in the precincts of the temple itself. A number of inscriptions of Ennayiram speak about their works. The existence of pottery community (pottery makers) is mentioned in an inscription⁸. Potters were temple servants who were supplied different size pots daily and during the festival times⁹ of the temple. Kaikolars were the next important community in the village. Generally, they were weavers. Apart from weaving work, they were soldiers also. Number of inscriptions of cholas speaks about their regiments. Aditya terinja Kaikolas, Gandraditya terinja Kaikolar were some of the regiment names in the chola dynasty. A damaged record of Devaraya Maharaya of Vijayanagar period mentioned about the Kaikolar community in this territory. Thus, the records in Ennayiram temple provides an idea of the harmonious settlement of the different kinds of people and communities of the village.

Economic Condition

Temples played an important part in the economic life of the people. They provided employment opportunities to a large section of the population either directly or indirectly. The former refers to the servants employed permanently on a regular basis, the latter were the casual labourers employed to cultivate the temple lands or to look after the livestock donated to the people. Different categories of servants were employed as administrative staff, spiritual functionaries, quasi-religious functionaries and manual and menial labourers. In all these categories, the services of the people of various castes namely Brahmins, vellalas, mudalis, kaikkolars, kammalars, kusavans, konars, chettis, vaniyars, barbers and washermen and other were utilized who had a honest and peaceful livelihood. The Rajarajesvaran inscriptions of Rajaraja state the employment of not less than 609 people in different categories from various castes, which is a clear instance of integration.

The temple of the early period was a simple institution and therefore its income and expenditure were very limited. However, it gradually became a major institution and served a part from the religious institution par excellence as a pivot round which the major economic activities of the locality revolved. Hence, it naturally required a huge income to meet its expenditure. However, the temples seem to have been well placed in this regard because of the grants made by the kings, chieftains, royal members, rich individuals and corporate bodies such as the sabhs, urn, nagaram etc.

The numerous inscription of the period under study speak about the various occasions of making gifts¹⁰. The king to make grants on the day of his coronation at the time of leading expeditions on the occasion of the victory in a battle on the time of visiting the temple, while he was camping for long life, health and victory. The items of income of the temple include village grants, land grants, money grants, grants of animals, utensils, ornaments and grants of various dues and taxes.

Village Grants

Endowment of village to the temple is an important one, which provides a permanent financial footing as well as social status. Since the villages were under the suzerainty of the king, he alone could grant villages for charitable purpose. However, sometimes, the Yuvaraya or their apparent was also empowered to make village grants. The chieftain's royal women and other also made grants of either village or its revenue after getting prior permission from the reigning king.

There are many types of village donation. The devadana villages were often distinguished by the suffix *nallur*. If a village was already occupied, the cultivators were removed from that place or put under the control of the new done. Sometimes only hamlets of village were granted which other, parts of the village were left undisturbed.

However, many references to village donation have to the Brahmanas as *brahmadeya* in the chola rule. In early pallava period, the order of village or 1 and gifts as *devadana* and *brahmadeya* were issued by the king himself to his officials which instructions to make a note of the gift and grant the village or 1 and all kinds of immunities making it an entirely tax – free village¹¹. Likewise, the pallavas the chola kings lavishly endowed villages to the temples both from their own country and from the countries, and they conquered. A record of 11th year of Rajendra I tell us about the king's village grant to the temple of Ennayiram. An inscription of Rajendra I in his 30th regnal year gifted of village purpose. A fifth year of record Rajaraja mentions gift of land for temple offerings.

Land Grants

Like the village donations, the land donations to temple also generally meant the transfer of the revenue or income from it and not the sole proprietorship. There are many kinds of land donations referees to the inscriptions during pallava and chola rule. Lands were donated to temple after their purchase from the corporate bodies or from the individuals¹². The land to be donated was clearly demarcated in the records and details about the land were mentioned.

The chola inscriptions state that the demarcating stones are engraved with the symbol of weapons of siva and Vishnu according to the temple to which the land is donated. There are many types of land endowments enumerated in the inscriptions. The term used for donating the land donations which generally the suffix *puram*. The term *puram* may be taken to be *mora* or less the same as *pangu*, *kani*, *patti* or *virtti*. A 30th record of Rajendra found in the south wall of the temple mentions a gift of land for *chittirai* festival. It is said to that; the endowment was called as, “*vilapuram*”. A fifth year record of Rajendra mentions about a land donation to this temple for recitation of *Tiruvaimozhi*. From the above records that the income of these lands were utilized both for offerings for the purpose and for the livelihood or remuneration for the *brahmanas* who were involved in the *puja* performance¹³.

The grant of various taxes and dues also constituted a considerable part of the total income of the temple. The tax grants were generally made by only their categories of people:

1. King
2. Village assemblies like *sabha* and *ur*
3. Taxable articles

The land grants made by the king to the temple were in many cases only transfer of taxes and due on that land to the religious institutions¹⁴. The chieftains and royal officials were also involved in granting taxes due to the temple.

A regnal year of 25th year record of Rajendra I is found north wall of the central shrine of the temple. It supply information about the tax free income was utilized for various service. A regnal year of 11th 15 year record of Rajarajadeva, focused on tax free land granted to Rajaraja *vinnagar Alvar* temple of Ennayiram. An inscription of Rajaraja *deva* dated his 5th regnal year supply information about the land donation to this temple. Another record¹⁶ of the same kong on the north wall of the *mandapa* and it speaks about land donation to the temple for offerings and festivals. The last information is about the land donation is found on the south wall of the first *prokra*

of this temple. It belongs to 38th regnal year of Kulottunga.

Animal Grant

Generally, the temple received numerous cattle gifts. These were meant for the installment of perpetual lamps¹⁷ for the sacred bath of the deity for the supply of ghee to offering of the deity¹⁸. The other purpose of the animal donation for maintenance of the lamps was very popular as compared to the other inscriptions speaks about the donation give animals to temple for the purpose of 4 sacrifice. A 7th year record¹⁹ of Kulottunga gives information about gift of ten cows to the temple.

Temple Construction

The construction of temple and other manapams are most plus of all charities. There is number of epigraphical evidence which speaks about construction, renovation and additions made to the temple. The benefactors, who topped the list of constructing, renovating and adding to the temples are kings²⁰, chieftains²¹, royal members, officials²² and merchant groups²³ and citizens.

A date less record of Rajendra I supply of information about the re construction the temple of Ennayiram. Another record speaks about construction is belong to the period of Virarajendra. 6th year record of him is found on the east wall of the mandapa and it focus on the construction of the mandapa.

Miscellaneous Grant

Under this category fall the grants of jewellery, gold, silver ornaments, vessels, and aids of worship used for serving oblations before the deities. The donation of images to the temple was also popular. A data less record²⁴ of Kampana udaiyar of vijayanagar supplies an information about the donation of images to the Alagiya Narasimha temple of Ennayiram. These grants were popularly recorded the boundaries of the temple land were demarcated clearly. In most of the case, the donations are mentioned to have been left under the protection or supervision of devotee groups

like Mahesvara Srivainavas or under village administrative bodies.

The real wealth of the people was land and cultivation was their main occupation. Most of the transactions recorded in the epigraphs are connected with land. Both individuals and village assemblies owned land in the village. As the village assembly was the ultimate ruling authority of the village, it was at its own discretion that lands were donated to the Rajaraja varam mudiyar temple as iraiyili devadavam. This sort of land deeds appear in the records of temple even the earned interest of an individual deposit of money as gift to the temple, was converted in to landed property.

A few references are seen as revenue taxes which were collected from the cultivators. Kanikadan (land tax) was collected from Devadena land calles Tuppuniyetham. The amount was about 34 kalam of paddy. It shows that the land taxes were collected not in cash but in kind. Further it is noticed that even temple lands were not exempted from taxation. Taxes like near vilai, vetti, amanji, echchoru and perirai are mentioned in the epigraphs. They were collected from those who cultivated the lands of the local assemblies or sabha. But when such lands were donated by the sabhas or urars as "Iraiylili Devadanam" to the temple, the above mentioned taxes were not collected from the cultivators of those lands. On the other land, the sabhas or urars accepted to pay such taxes directly to the government.

Weight and Measure

However, the inscriptions deal with the land transactions only little reference is made of measuring the lands. Usually the unit of kuli measured land. The measure of land such as Ma, kani and veli are mentioned in the Ennayiram temple. Different measure was used in the temple to measure paddy. There were Rajakesari marakkal, Arunmoli devan marakkal which were hammed after the surnames of Rajaraja I, the great. Besides many measures of grain such as *kalam*, *marakkal*, *nail*, *tuni*, *pathakku* and *kuruni* are mentioned in the inscription.

The table of measuring units which is known from the records of chola time and which is given below:

S.No	Scale	Meaning
1	2 Sevidu paddy	1 Pidi
2	5 Pidi paddy	1 Alakku
3	3 Alakku	1 Ulakku
4	2 Ulakku	1 Uri
5	2 Uri	1 Nali
6	8 Nali	1 Kuruni
7	2 Kuruni	1 Padakku
8	2 Padakku	1 Tuni
9	3 Tuni	1 Kalan

These measures were very frequently used when the rate of interest was fixed on investment of gold or land. Liquid was also measured by the units of measures like Uri, Nali and Ulakku. Gold and silver stones were weighed minutely and inscriptions refer to the smallest unit of such weights. They also give the names of standard weight used for weighing. Record of Rajendra I refers to all these weights. Dharmakkattalaikal, Kudinjakkal nirai, Kasukal and Tulai were the standard weights were used.

Currency and Rate of Interest

Though they were different kinds of coin in the Chola empire only three types of coins used. They were kasu²⁵, ponkalanju while the first currencies were used in the period of cholas, the later was used during the rule of pandyas. Except to know, the name of the currencies there is no evidence to know their value or purchasing capacity. On the other hand, the percentage of interest, which was in practice, is known by the currencies. Accordingly, the interest for one kasu for one year was one padakku of paddy that is 1 kasu – one year – 1 padakku of paddy. 30 kasu – one year – 5 kalams. This was the rate of interest for 30 kasu the

amount that was invested by a donor for arrangement of endowment in this temple.

Conclusion

Apart from the above coins, gold and sheep, cows were used as standard units of value in those days. Ninety sheep or 10 cow were considered enough to supply one Ulakku of ghee daily for a peripheral lamp. There is a stray reference to know about the percentage of value between two different commodities in those days. The ongoing discussion clearly reveals the role of the temple in the day-to-day economic life of the area. Many pieces of land and villages donated to the temple were brought under the cultivation. This increased the resource territory of the temple. The irrational network is also revealed in many records of the temple. These lands were cultivated by the vellalas of the village. The agricultural produce were brought to the temple and distributed for various requirements of the temple and vedic college at Ennayiram. Thus, both the temple and the community depended on each other for their existence.

References

1. *S.I.I.*, XIII, No. 146.
2. *S.I.I.*, XIX, No. 383.
3. *A.R.E.*, 333 / 1918
4. *A.R.E.*, 335 / 1918
5. *A.R.E.*, 351 / 1918
6. *A.R.E.*, 333, 334, 335, 337, 340 / 1918
7. *S.I.I.*, XIII, No. 195, 247, 270.
8. *A.R.E.*, 164 / 1918; 159 / 1918
9. *A.R.E.*, 341 / 1918; 351 / 1918
10. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. 2, Bhandav Oriental Research Institute, 1941, p.848.
11. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social lose under the Pallavas*, University of Madras, Chennai, 1938, p.163.
12. *S.I.I.* Vol. VI 356, *S.I.I.*, Vol. III 42, *S.I.I.*, Vol. XIV 19 and *S.I.I.*, Vol. XIX 191, 196, 150.
13. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VI 288 and 347.
14. *S.I.I.*, Vol. III 23 and Vol. XII No. 44
15. *A.R.E.*, 336 / 1918
16. *A.R.E.*, 343 / 1918

17. *A.R.E.*, 562 / 1911, 39/1930 – 31, 157 / 1968 - 69.
18. *S.I.I.*, Vol. XIX; No. 35 and Vol. XIII No. 237
19. *A.R.E.*, 340 / 1918
20. *S.I.I.*, Vol. IV No. 136 and IV No. 136
21. *A.R.E.*, 145 / 1943 - 44, and 306 / 1939 - 40.
22. *S.I.I.*, Vol. III No. 91
23. *S.I.I.* Vol. VIII No. 63.
24. *A.R.E.*, 327 / 1918
25. *A.R.E.*, 286 / 1959 - 60
