

## **Status Of Political History In Sethupathi Kingdom Before 1601**

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### **Abstract**

*The present Ramanthapuram District was an integral part of the Pandya Kindom. During the period of Pandyas this area was administered by local chieftains in a tributary capacity. This fact is learnt from the inscriptions fund in the Temples at Aruppukottai, Kovilangulam, Pallimadam, and Perunkarunai. But, the historians main stay for the Pandya History is the Sangam works which are generally attributed to the period 100A.D- 250 AD. It is bounded on the north west by Maurai, on the north by Tiruchirapalli, on the north east by Thanjavur, on the south west by Tirunelveli and on the east and south east by the Bay of Bengal. It is one of the coastal coastal Districts of Tamilnadu.*

**Key words:** Sethupathis, Pandya Kingdom, Marava country, Sangam works, Indigenous tribes, Purananooru, Silappathikaram, Kongu Nad, Rajendra Chola Mandalam.

### **Introduction**

The present Ramanathapuram District in the early days formed a part of the traditional *Marava Country*. Maravas are considered as an indigenous tribe.<sup>1</sup> During the Sangam Age the Maravas belongs to Palai (Dry lands) Tinai (Region), their Agam (Love)-long separation of love and their Puram (War)-Burning the countryside.<sup>2</sup> Deities of Marava were called Korravai and Durga. Numerous references to the Maravas are found in the Sangam works, like *Purananooru*, and

*Silappathikaram*. The above works allude to their war like qualities.<sup>3</sup> However, how the Maravas came to occupy the territory still remains as one of the thorny problems of history. The recent theory connects them to the Maravar of ancient Kongu Nad. The Maravas are said to have been one of the branches of the Malavar race.<sup>4</sup> Purananooru describes a Kongu king of kuthiraimalai near Salem as a Marava.

## **Status of Political History**

*Megasthenes* mentions some special features about the administration of the Pandya Kingdom in the south.<sup>5</sup> *Nedunchezian*, is considered as one of the outstanding monocular in the family of early Pandyas. Then Kalabhras invasion happened Tamil monarchs were defeated and put under the *Kalabhras*.<sup>6</sup> It was only in the sixth century Pandyas were able to rise under *Kadungon* (590-620-AD) and he paved the way for a long and firm Pandya rule. In this long rule, territory later called Sethupathi Kingdom was under the Pandya rulers. In 862 AD, Pandya country lost to a confederate force of Pallavas, Cholas and the Gangas. *Parantaka Chola* crushed the Pandya power. Thus, Chola domination of the Pandya country lasted for three centuries.<sup>7</sup> Pandya country was made a Chola province by the name “*Rajaraja Chola Mandalam*” during the period of Raja Raja.

During the second empire period of Pandyas, Ramanathapuram was under Pandya rulers. It is evident from an inscription found on the south wall of the central shrine in the Sundarawarar Temple at Aruppukottai, Ramanathapuram, District<sup>8</sup>

*Lankapura Dandanatha* invaded from Ceylon reached Kundugal and occupied Vedalai. Lankapura utterly routed the Pandya forces. He marched to Kalayarkovil and Nettoor and made these places the headquarters of his activities.<sup>9</sup> Then he moved to Thondi and Pasipattanam. Thus, Ramanathapuram was under the control of the Ceylon rulers for sometimes. Kulasekara Pandian fled to the country of the Tondaman.<sup>10</sup>

The Chola forces of *Rajadhiraja* marched towards the Pandya country to defeat Lankapura. But it also failed to retrieve Pandya. It is noted that Lankapura ordered Vira Pandya to use “*Kahapana*” a Ceylonese coin, in the Pandya country. The Chola inscriptions state that the Ceylonese generals suffered a severe defeat in the hands of the Chola and that it was this defeat that warranted their departure.<sup>11</sup>

Generally, it is said that the Ceylonese victory was due the presents given to several chiefs in the Pandya country and these look-like bribes offered to win them over, from their allegiance to **Kulasekara**.<sup>12</sup> Thus Ceylonese occupation of the Marava country lasted for a few years. Even today there are signs of this in the Marava country. Lankapura has immortalized by his name by his interest in works of peace reflected in his repairs to Temples, Tanks, and construction of roads.<sup>13</sup> Marava country was under the Pandya rule till 1311 AD, when **Malikkafur** invaded Madurai. The numerous inscriptions found in the Ramanathapuram District testify the fact that Marava country was under the Pandyas.<sup>14</sup>

Marava Country, with the fall of Madurai Sultanate passed under the **Vijayanagar Empire**. Nelson and Rangachari are of the view that Visvanatha Nayaka and this allele minister Dalavoy Ariyanatha ruled Marava country through two commissioners. Finally, it was Muthu Krishnappa Nayakka (1601-1609) who settled and created a kingdom under **Sadaika Thevar** by sprinkling water of Ganges on his head and gave him the insignia of dignity.<sup>15</sup> Thus Sethupathi started ruling the Marava Country with the relegated authority.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. Viswanathan in his work gives elaborate idea about the inner wall of the Thirumayam Fort was built by Muthuvayiriya Muthuramalinga Sethupathi in 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Nelson is of the opinion also that Sadaika Thevar was not the first Sethupathi. He was restored to his ancestral possessions. This view is also supported by the **Mackenzie's Manuscripts**. Raja Rama Rao also supports that there were already Sethupathi rules in Ramanathapuram. One by name **Verarasukonda Thevar** ruled not only the Marava Country but some parts of Ceylon. But these arguments are not supported by Pandya Records. In Tamil Literature also there is no reference to the earlier Sethupathi. Finally, it is established that Sadaika Thevar was a lineal descendant of ancient dynasty of Sethupathis and that the Pandya, Chola and Vijayanagar domination over the Marava country was more nominal than real.

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