

# Origin Of Kongu Nadu And Kongu Vellalars

S. valarmathi<sup>a</sup>, Dr.G.Kasthuri Thilagam<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of History, Periyar E.V.R. College (Autonomous)- Thiruchirappalli-620023

<sup>b</sup>Asst.Prof.Department of History, Periyar E.V.R. College (Autonomous)-  
Thiruchirappalli-620023

## ABSTRACT

*The ancient Kongu Country is well known as Kongu Nadu and had its commercial contact with the western world during the first few centuries of the Christian era. To substantiate this, more than two thousand Roman Coins were unearthed from important places like Velanthavalam, Anaimalai, Pollachi, Vellalur, Karuvur and Kalyamuthur of Kongu Country ranging from 1st Century B.C to the 4th Century AD. There are many references in the Devaram, Periyapuram and Paripadal about the twenty highways connecting Kongu Country with Pandya Country facilitating the communication, commercial and military systems with the neighbour states, and so many Significance are there in Kongu Nadu. Though the Kongu Nadu is still populated by mostly agricultural communities, they are still politically and culturally very powerful communities. In fact, the Kongu leaders had so much freedom, reverence and respect during all three regions of pandyas, Cholas and cheras. The Kongu land is comprised of various castes and communities based on their occupation. The people were efficient and had extensive internal as well as foreign contacts.*

**Key word : Ancestors, Kani, Variyedu, Feudal**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Rituals and customs of Kongu Nadu is an ancient one. From the very beginning Kongu Nadu was a part of Tamil Nadu. Kongu means honey, which means fragrance of a flower. Since the country was full of flowers and abundant honey in mountain areas, the country was called by the name “Kongu Nadu”. The Kongu Vellalars are the sons of the soil. They live in one third land area of Kongu Nadu. Even though the people who practiced agriculture are called as vellalas, the word “Kongu Vellalar” refers to only Kongu Vellala Goundars who are a land owning and a feudal caste of Tamil Nadu. They are also known as Kongu Vellalars and are a sub division of the Vellala caste.( The Kongu region covered Kaveri uplands on the borders of Tipu Sultan’s Mysore, from which it was ceded to the East company.) The distinctive ethnic character of Kongu Nadu appears in unique documentation and its unique economic history is dramatized today by the Kongu vellalars who are owning industry in and around Tiruppur. Though ethnic domains like Kongu country became less visible as such in company’s times, District level administration recognized the territories of the Nayaks and Maravars inside the pandya country, and they retained their own very lively textual identity.

## **FEUDAL PAST**

The land was divided into 24 regions. These 24 regions are often suffixed by the word “Nadu” such as Annamalai Nadu, Kangeya Nadu. The chieftains of the Kongu Vellalars belonged to the Mandradiar family. Under their organizational system, the chiefs of the 24 regions would get together and decide on various political and social issues of Kongu Nadu.

## **SOCIETY**

The study of seven saivite temples in Kongu Nadu played a multifaceted role in the Social and Religious life of the people. Social life of Kongu People is one of the interesting event in TamilNadu History. The Kongu Region is comprised of various Castes and Communities based on their occupations. They were efficient in Trading. They had Trading contacts with both Inland as well as Foreign Countries. So an analysis has been revealed on Caste, Community, Coins and taxes through the Inscriptions found from the seven saivite temples and these Inscriptions throw light on the Customs, Habits and Practices of the people. The records from the seven saivite temples also describes about different Communities such as Vettuvvars, Brahmanas, Siva Brahmanas, Vellalas, Kaikolars ect., on the whole, the Kongu society was good in all aspects.

## **AGRICULTURE**

From the advent of the Imperial cholas the economic condition of this region met with many changes. The introduction of new innovative measures and the improved irrigational facilities might have changed the face of the region. The vellalas succeeded in converting the uncultivated lands into cultivable lands. The Kongu cholas levied comparatively very low taxes in this region. Probably it induced the people to bring more lands under cultivation. The kongu cholas encouraged deforestation and also permitted some kind of land ownership to the natives.

## **GUILD SYSTEM**

Guild system is an important organization for the occupational groups and it played a vital role in the economic, social and cultural life of the people. So it is necessary to highlight its active role in the cultural life of the Kongu Country.

It acted as a network among the various groups and strengthened its relations with the ruling authorities. The Guild did a lot for the betterment of the society. Guild system played a vital role in the life of the people and needs a special study. Guilds were an association of people created for

mutual aid are for the pursuance of a common interest. In medieval period these association were formed by craftsmen or merchants.

## **WOMEN**

Women in Kongu society held an important position. We can prove it Mahakavi Bharathi's poem.

“ Kongu Mangaiyarai Pirappatharke Nalla Madhavam Seithida Vendumamma”.

Which means it is a blessing to be born as a Kongu Women.

They received high education in the society, though they are soft obedient to elders and husbands, there are examples of being a Poet Scholars etc., and now a days they exhibit their talents and attitudes in different aspects such as Police, Military, Business and Politics etc., Family was the basic unit of the society and as a wife they were the house holders and they were the ultimate pivot of the society. The position of Kongu women as a girl, bride and widow, she occupied a respectable position in society as Mother. Mother is most honoured person in this world. Though they are good in all aspects there are some evil practices against them in this Society.

## **CENCLUSION**

Social life during Medieval period is traced out in this section of the study of literature and inscriptions, particular social groups like vettuvass and vellallas in Kongu Country had their own self identity. Vettuvass were the hunting tribes whereas vellallas were the agriculturists. Kongu Vellala had different clans namely Pidari Kulam, Kannan Kulam, Kadai Kulam, Mappuli Kulam etc., which have been traced out through inscriptional study. Further the agricultural expansion helped the traders to enhance both internal and external trade. The taxes were levied and collected without any major defaults. Various types of coins were in circulation. The well defined economic Structure paved way for the emergence of urbanization.

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