

Muttaraiyar's Contribution To Saivism -A Study

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In India, the maintenance of an empire along with religion and art depended to a great extent not only on the loyalty of the rulers but also the ruled. This is true in the case of South Indian empires more particularly to the rulers of Tamil Nadu. The Muttariyars who ruled the regions of the parts of present Pudukkottai, Thanjavur and Trichy districts for nearly six centuries, that is from 6th century A.D. to 11th century A.D. were one of the illustrious rulers of South Indian history/From their inscription, the Muttaraiyars were closely associated with ancient Tamil Nadu politics. They served as an appendage of some imperial powers. The dynastic struggle of the pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas were in one way or other influenced their region particularly in the field of religion and art.

The Muttariyars also actively participated in the affairs of the Tamil country and contributed much to the development of art and religion of Tamil Nadu and consolidation of Pallavas and the later Chola empire.

There are a number of sources on various aspects which gives

information about the Muttariyars. The inscriptions are the primary and authentic sources, which gives a lot of information about them, 'Annual reports on Indian Epigraphy', South Indian Inscriptions Chronological list of Inscriptions of Pudukkottai State' Epigraphia Carnatica Eprigraphia Indica and Madras Epigraphical Reports are the primary works, exhibits the historical accounts of these chiefs and their beneficial attitude towards religion and art.

Man is not only a tool-making, cooking clothing and talking animal, but also a religious animal. Religion has played a very significant role in human life. Definition of Religion are numerous. Religion is something different from knowledge. The term science and History of Religion is often used in the wider sense referring to its function and history on earth. This is also the scope of the American Psychologist of religion has defined "religion as a serious and social attitude in individuals or groups, towards the power or powers which they hold to be an ultimate control of their interests and facts."

The earliest evidence of religion in South India is found in Adhichchanalhir near Tirunelveli. The religious position of the Tamils during the period of the three Sangam is too vast. The land of the Tamils was divided into five sections, namely Kurunchi, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Palai, each having a presiding deity. These were Ceyen, Mayon, Vendan, Valiyon and the goddess Kotravai.

The first five centuries of the Christian era in the Tamil country can be described in a sense as an age of religious toleration in which Vaishnavism and Saivism flourished side by side with Buddhism and Jainism. The Pallava and Chola period witnessed great religious movements in the Tamil country. Like other imperial masters the Muttariyars, a feudatories of the Pallavas and the Cholas also followed a liberal religious policies supporting all Greeds Most of their records contain their benefactions to temple and Matha.

Royal patronage of saivism by the kings and members of the royal family was constant and continuous and this can be revealed by numerous inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions on the temple walls, reveals the benefactions and gifts, occasionally a whole village and a many cases large units of arable lands for the different services of the local temple. A major part of these relate to endowments of lands for perpetual lamps (Nandavilakkupuram) and gifts of ghee and oil for keeping the temple lights burning. The benefactions were gradually extent to making endownments of land to defray their expense of almost all the services in large numbers of saiva temples including festivals, flower gardens annual repairs and renovation, recitation of devaram hymns during services and during special days. The building of siva temples and the religious endowments for various temple services came to regarded during the Muttaraiyar age as loudable objects not only by ruling kings, chiefs and prominent officials but also a large cross

section of the subjects reflecting their spiritual outlook in life.

Most of the Muttaraiyar chief adhered to saivism and rendered remarkable services to its growth, are clear from the epigraphical evidence at our disposal, Iangovadiyaraiyan alias Maran Paramesvaran was the son and successor of Kuvavan Maran.¹ He was a probable contemporary of both Paramesvara II and his son Narasimhavarman II Sattanpudi, a subordinate of Maran Paramesvaran constructed to original shrine of siva temple at Narttamalai Narttamalai temple probably considered as an example for the later Chola temple namely Vijayalaya Choliesvaram, suggests that the renovation noted in the record must have taken place in the time Us Chola long Viiyalaya².

Sendalai records of perumpidugu Muttaraiyan II alias Suvaramaran states that he built a pidari temple³. The place of construction is not mentioned in the record. Pandya inscription found in one of the Sendalai pillar, records a gift of land, to Makalattu pidari Amman of Nyamam⁴. Two other epigraphs found on the same place registers, gift of lands to the same temple⁵. These inscriptions clearly prove that there was a pidari temple at Nyamam, which is situated close to sendalai. This may the pidari temple that was built by perumbidugu Muttaraiyan.⁶ The mutilation of the top portion of the sendalai pillars and presence on them of the inscriptions stated above lead one to believe

that the sendalai pillar originally stood in the pidari temple a maaapa in front of the sundaesvara temple at sendalai.⁷

An inscription of Dantivarman form Malaiyadipatti dated in his 16th year states that Videlvidugu Muttaraiyan alias Kuvavan sattan scooped out Tiruvalatturmalai temple later know as the vagisvara temple.⁸

Pushbhavanesvara temple at Puvalaikkudi in Kulattur taluk of pudukkottai district is also an example built during the days of the Muttaraiyars.⁹ One of the inscriptions dated in the, reign of a Parakesarivarman calls the deity, Paramesvara of Puvalaikkutji? The earliest inscription at the entrance into the cave, seems to refer to the excauvation of this rock -cut cave temple by pudi-kalari also called Amarantrimuttaraiyan. This chief is evidently a son of sattanpudi the founder of the so called Vijayalayacholiesvaram.

There are two shiva temples one at kiranur and other at kilattaniyam the formar is now called Uttamanathasvara. The title Uttamadani being assumed by Ilangomuttarayar. This chief seems to have founded the two temple as suggested by the name of the deity.¹⁰

In addition to temple construction for the growth of saivism may number of repairs and additions were also undertaken by them. The vijayalaya choliesvaram at Narttamalai originally built by sattanpudi was destroyed by

heavy rains. Tennavan Tamiladiyaraiyan.¹¹ The cave temple excavated by sattan paliyili by adding a Muhamandapa, a balipita and a rishapa mandapa is a notable structure¹² she also made provisions for worship and offerings to the god of the pailyiliesvaram.¹³

Another inscription of the chief dated in his 13th regnal year, found in the Tirukkotisvara temple at Tirukkdikaval, Kumbakonam Taluk, Thanjavur district records a gift of sheep. Another record of the same chief dated in the same year found at Tiruchchennampundi (Thanjavur taluk) records a gift of gold for a perpetual lamp.¹⁴

A gift of gold for a lamp by Kallarru Kandanpratti of Karaikkadu¹⁵ (14 of 1930). Another notable epigraph found on a pillar in the Sadaiyar temple at Tiruchchennampundi states that one Ilangomuttaraiyar has donated 12 Kalanju of gold for a perpetual lamp.¹⁶ The same king mentioned above donated 25 Kalanju of gold for the god Mahadeva of Tiruchchottruthurai, situated in the division of Karaikkadu when Ilangomuttaraiyar was in power. It is an undated inscription.¹⁷ An inscription found on the east side of the north pillar of the Melaikkoil temple registers a gift of $7\frac{1}{2}$ kalanju of gold for a perpetual lamp in the temple Tirumulattanattu Perumaladikal of Tirunilakkundram by Nangaiyamangai Dayanidhiya, the wife of Perumbidugu Muttaraiyan, in memory of Nangai Vikramakesariyar a daughter of Nambi

Manatengalar¹⁸.

An inscription in the central shrine of the Azlagar temple at sevilipperri states gift of sheeps for a lamp to the temple of Ninnarulina Karumanickadevar at Tirumaliruncholai, a devadana in Kilakalakurram by the queen of a certain Sattrubayangara Muttaraiyan.¹⁹

An undated inscription found on the west wall of the Tiruvidaimarudur temple indicates that one Gandaratiya Muttaraiyan a native of Pudukkudi, donated 96 sheeps for a perpetual lamp of the same temple. This Muttaraiya, probably a contemporary of Gandartitya Chola.²⁰

Another epigraph discovered from Tiruvakkarai of South Arcot district speaks one Abimanameru Chola Muttaraiyan. According to that epigraph, he was the native of Attuppakkam, donated lamps for the God Mahadeva of TiruvakJcarai a place in the ancient Cholamandalam.²¹ Varagunatti the wife of Sempian Irukkuvel and a princes of Muttaraiya family has donated 7 kalanju of gold to temple of Kudumiyanrnalai, Pudukkottai district for a perpetual lamp. This is revealed by an inscription inscribed by Uttamachola at Kudumiyanmalai.²²

The rulers and the queens of the Muttaraiyar family not only constructed, enlarged temples donated lamps but also installed images in the

temples of their days. A record on the South wall of the mandapa in the Vaithiyanathaswami temple at Tittagudi records that Rajarajavangara which had been set up by a dancing ²³ girl. One more inscription found on the same temple is also an example for the installation of images by the Muttaraiyar chiefs.²⁴

The Muttaraiyars not only constructed temples very often but also maintained them properly. In order to upkeep the temples the rulers and the ruled donated much. An inscription found on the Melamalai hill in the same, village is also a good example for the Muttaraiyars' donation to conduct poojas and festivals. Muttaraiyars affinity with Saivism and the steps taken by them for its growth was really remarkable in those days. They donated much of lands for the growth of Saivism.

The inscription seems to record the provisions made, for the celebration of certain festivals in the temple of Vijayalacholiesvaram Udaiyanayanar of the village. An epigraph of the Adhipuriesvarar temple at Tiruvaraiyar mentions gift of 27 kalanju of gold for offering by Pudiaringigai wife of Videlvidugu Ilangovellar of Kodumbalur in Konadu. An undated inscription from Kunnandarkovil records a gift of rice by a certain Koduimayindan for feeding 110 Brahmins during the Arudra (Ardra) festival of Tiiukkundrakkudidevar.²⁵ Another inscription from the same place dated in the 3rd year of

Nandipottaraiyar III records a gift of prize for feeding 100 persons on the day of tiruvadirai by Ganavathiman of Vaduvur in Mipulanadu.

Videlvidugu alias Sattanmaran succeeded Perumbidugu Muttaraiyan II alias Suvaranmaran. During his days a servant of videlvidugu Muttaraiyar donated land the Pidari temple at Nyamam in the 10th regnal year of Maranchadaiyan (Varagunal). The Pidari temple was one, built by Suvaran Maran mentioned in the Sendalai Pillar, inscriptions. Apatsahayesvara temple, Tiruppalanam, Thanjavur taluk records a gift of 327 1/2 palam 7 to the temple of Mahadeva at Tiruppalanam by Marppidugu Tirukkottiyur - Kalvan - Amarkalan Anai Udaiyar.²⁶ The donar to judge by his name, seems to have been a Muttaraiyar chief ruling over the tract of Ramnad district. From the above discussion, it is clear that the Muttaraiyars contributions to Saivism was very great as known from epigraphs and the temples of their age.

END NOTES

1. Epigraphica Indica. Vol. XIII, p. 139
2. **Ibid**; A.R.E. No. 216-40-41; M.P.S. Vol.II, Part II, p.565
3. MS.Govindasamy, **The role of the feudatories in Pallava History**, (Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1965), P.39
4. A.R.E No.10 of 1899.
5. **Ibid**; No. S.I.I and 12 of 1899

6. ME.R. Paragraph 22,1899.
7. E.I. Vol. XIII, 139, S.LI. Vol. *XE*; No.63;
8. C.L.LP.S. No. 18; Bhatrar Means God Siva.
9. A.R.E No.142,of 1907.
- 10.S.I.L Vol. V, No.618; A.R.E. No.61 of 1896.
- 11.E.I. Vol. XH, p.139; A.R.E. No.216 of 401
- 12.S.I.I. Vol. XH, No.63
- 13.A.R.E. No. 39 of 1930-31
- 14.S.I.I. Vol.VII, No.529,
- 15.A.R.E.No.14 of 1930-31
- 16.S.I.I. Vol. VII, 529, p.3250.
17. A.R.E. No.39 of 30-31
- 18.S.I.I. Vol. XII, No.288; A.R.E. No.314 of 1904.
- 19.A.R.E.421of 1906.
- 20.S.I.I. Vol, XIV, No.715; A.R.E. No.151 of 1895.
- 21.S.I.I Vol, XIX, No.155.
- 22.**Ibid**, Vol, VIII, No.295; A.R.E.No.24 of 1903.
- 23.Intro. To No.44 of S.I.I. Vol, VII.
- 24.S.I.I. Vol, XII, 103; A.R.E. No.174 of 1912.
- 25.C.L.I.P.S. No.8.
- 26.S.I.I Vol. XIII, No.46; A.R.E. No.347 of 1914.