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## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE IN SOUTH INDIA DURING CHOLA EMPIRE

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### *Abstract*

*Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Thanjavur, one of the cultural hubs of Tamil Nadu is the house to indigenous art and craft forms, developed through the Chola period and Maratha period. With time, the artists involved in performance arts have moved away from the city in search of a better livelihood. The artists involved in fine arts, although continued to live in the city, have started to pursue other modes of occupation for the same reason. The study aims at preserving the culture of Thanjavur, in the present-day working context, by envisioning it as a living entity that interacts with its tourists for a wholesome experience. It focuses on the idea of a cultural experience centre that integrates the tangible and intangible elements of the cultural heritage of Thanjavur.*

**Keywords:** Chola Country, Piramalai Kallars, Home Land, Rajaraja, Meenakshi Amman Temple.

### INTRODUCTION

This temple with its halo of the Tevaram hymns grew in importance and dimensions in subsequent ages. The walls of the central shrine contain many early Chola records. Thus, there are inscriptions of Parakesari Aditya II one of which records the gift of gold by his Chera queen Kilandigal. There is also an inscription of Kannardeva (Krishna III), the Rashtrakuta king who invaded Tamil country and occupied its northern parts

for a few years. But the presence of the inscriptions of Aditya II here and in the South Arcot region clearly shows that the Cholas had recovered the area from the Rashtrakutas.

In the first prakara wall see the records of Rajendra I, Virarajendra, Kulottunga IV, besides many Pandayan and Vijanagar inscription. The inscription of Virarajendra records some repairs to the tank. The inscription of Kulottunga III and his feudatories are found in a many

places in the basement of the Killigopra, which was constructed during his period also the vimana of the central shrine was done by his Bana chief Rajendran Ponparappainan alias Vanakovaraiyas of many battles and builder of many temple. He is called 'Ponparappinan' as he was responsible for gilding the Kullottunga III who gave endowments to the temple were Adiyaman, the chieftain of Tagadur in Ganganadu, Karikala Chola-Adiyurnadalvan, Rajagambhira Chedirayan, Cholendra – Simhan Pridhvi Ganga – Vikramachola Sambuvaraya.

There are also a number of inscriptions of the last two of the imperial Cholas viz., Rajendra III. They show that the feudatorie became more prominent at the cost of the central authority. Thus, a gift was made to the temple for merit of Vanakovaraiyan (Bana) (491); and also by Telugu – Chola chief Tirukalattideva (495), Smabuvaraya chief Edilisola (551). Giftes given by royal ladies are also recorded such as those by the daughter of Yadavaraya chieftain and another by Imai Yadavaraya chieftain and another by Umai Alvar, queen of Illakkumadeva.

### Under Cholas

The Sambuvarayar Kings Clearly mentioned in the imperial Cholasinscriptions that, they were from the line of Sambu-Kulam which means.they came from the First- pit of Sage Sambu maha muni” were patronized by the Sambuvarayar Kings. The Sambuvrayar Kings”, who hails from the velar clans had ruld “Oyma Nadu” in the Sangam age and also during the early imperial Cholas period as Chief tans / Fedatories.

12th Century poet, Kambar in one of this great work Silai ezhupathu clearly says about the Vanniyas (Agni Kulas) Came from the Fire – pit of Sage.

“Sambu maha muni” and ruled the earth to establish Dharma.

Vanniya Puranam and Several Copper plates pertaining to Vanniya history says the similar origin.

Obviously Vanniyar are the line of “Agni” is the reality in Sanskrit “Vanni” means fire both are synonyms.

We may not be far wrong if we assume that the in inscription as Shihhavikrampura or Vikramasimhapura. Under five generations of rulers these had gained possession of the northern districts of the Chola Empire and even held possession of the town of Kanchi the head – quarters of the northern Viceroyalty. Inscription of Manmasiddha and his brother Tammusiddha are available relating to early thirteenth century.

The son of the former Tikka by name, Claims to have Captured Kanchi and defeated somesa at champapuri, ( Sambuvarayanallur, hear Tiruvallur) in the District of North Arcot, the Country primarily of the Sambuvarayans. His son manmasiddha who seems otherwise called Gandagopala, which had become more or less a family, title, was action in that region and having been dispossessed, sought and obtained the help of the contemporary Kakatiya ruler Ganapati.

□ Ethirili Chola Sambuvarayar

□ Rajadhiraja Chola II

□ Kulothung Chola III who ruled

□ Thondamandalum, now Comprising the districts of – Vellore – Tiruvannamalai, Kanchipuram (and) Thiruvallur

Ethirili Chola Sambuvarayar, hailing from the sengeni family was the son of sengeni Ammaiappan Kannudaiya peruman, Vikrama chola Sambuvarayar, this titles were Virasani, Virchola and Pallavandan.

Madura Vijayam, a Sanskrit Poetical Work by Gangamma Mahadevi about Vijayanagar Prince. Kumara Kempanna udayar or Kumara kampanna II, the second son of Bukka Raya1 quotes thus “Bukka advised his son to march against the Sambuvaraya chieftain who is the leader of the Vanniyar and he is preparing soar war. If you subdue the

Vanniyar ruler, It would be easy for you to break the power of the Muslims at Madura. Storyed gopura. This is inscribed on the slab set up near the Thousand Pillared mandapa and dated S.1438 (A.D.1516) (574)

#### **Under the Nayaks**

The other Vijayanagar kings whose records are found in this temple are Sadasiva, Thirumala and Sriranga; but they were only nominal over lords and the real de factor power had gone by Sevappa Nayak of Thanjavur mentioned in the inscriptions. This Nayak ruler was responsible for many benefactions to the temple. An inscription on the eastern gopura of the temple dated S.1494 (A.D.1572) praises him for construction of rather completing the eleven strayed gopura. It is stated to have been done at the instance of the two tapasvings Sivanesa and Lokanatha. The inscription contains verses composed by Srinivasa Dikshitar, who was probably the court poet. He was much honoured in the court of Thanjavur Nayak rulers, especially I that of Raghunatha from whom he is said to have received the surname of Ratnakhatadvari. There are also, in the same gopura, Sanskrit verses composed by Govinda Dikshitar and Tamil verses by Kalmadatumudaliar. J Govinda Dikshitar became the minister of Senappa's successors Achyutappa and Raghunatha and earned a name for his administrative capacity and charitable disposition. Sevappa also assigned several villages to the temple and pounded tax-exemptions. Another inscription of probably the same period but without dated or king's name refers to the construction the main-mandapa and a tank in the temple.

Thus, Thiruvannamalai temple is rich in its historical association beginning from the days of Tevarmas when it was probably a small shrine. But it gradually grew in size and popularity, thanks to the benefactions made by the kings and queens, chieftains and officers and the

common folk, who had and abiding faith in the Lord of Arunachalaeswara. It is a fined example of a visit south Indian temple reared and beautified in the course of several generations. Several Tamil and Sanskrit inscriptions that are found in the temple walls of the shrines and mandapas and the gopuras of this temple prove the continuity in the history of this great temple. We get a picture of the political, economic and social conditions of the people of the olden times. Apart from the rule of the major dynasties like the Cholas, we come to know how the place came uneder the hold of Rashtrakuta kind Kannaradeva in the 10th Century; the feudatories like the Kadavarays and Sambuvarayas in the 12th – 13th centuries; the Pandyas in the 13th and 14th centuries; and the Hoysalas who occupied the place their temporary headquarter during their stormy struggle for survival.

Another remarkable feature of this temple is that we see the architectural contribution of several dynasties well-preserved in one complex. Thus, we have the smaller shrines built by the Cholas; the vimana of the central shrine was gold-gilded by a Bana Chieftain in the 13th century; the Kadavarayas built many structures in the same country ; the Hoyasalas built the Vallala-gopura and perhaps embellished some portions with paintings; the Vijayanagar kings built several mandapas including the 100 pillared mandapa, the tank and also one of the gopuras; of Nayak king Sevappa of tanjavur who constructed the eastern gopura and also probably the mani-mandapa and a tank also. Thus, the Thiruvannamalai temple has grown with the ages and was held in high esteem by the devotees for whose continued devotion and patronage it was an eloquent symbol. The rich ligature that has grown round the temple, the graphic inscriptions that around inscribed on its walls, the beautiful architectural and ichnographic examples that abound the temple would

ever remain as a source of education and inspirations forth devotee as well as his historian.

### **South India and her Huhammadan Invaders**

He was a distinguished member of the Chola family (race of Manu). His conquest of the Vira Rakshasas does not from their location; refer to the northern portion of the Chola dominions extending, worth wards into the territory of the Kakatiyas. The northern lanka here Seems to be a variant of the old Tamil Mavilangai territory which at the time of Rajendra III was under the Sambuvarayns, and further worth of them the Telugu – Cholas of Nellore, who were facidatories of the Kakatiyas.

That Seems the Condition reflected in the next following statement that Vira Somesvara was at first hostile to him and then submitted to the Chola, according to the Chola records; whereas apparently the same incident is referred to in Hoysala records that Vira Somesvara, uprooted Rajendra Chola in battle and reinstated him when he begged for protection.

Thus then it is Clear that during the best three years of the reign of Rajaraja III there was a Civil war between Rajaraja III and Rajendra II in which the Sambuvarayas on the One side, the Pallava Kopprunjinga on the other within the Chola domisions, the Telugu- Chola, Tikka the father of Manmasiddha and later, Kakatiya Ganapati from the worth, and Maravarman Sundara I, and later his Successor Sundara II, and Vira Somesvara from the Southern Side played each one his part and Succeeded ultimately in crippling the power of the cholas.

### **A History of Tamil Nadu - Sambuvarayas**

Sambuvarayas were originally the rulers of Omayanattu (Dindivanam) Manneerppalli. Later they became Chieftains under the Cholas. They remained Very loyal to the later Cholas,

The fall of Cholas helped the rise of Sambuvarayas.

They ruled the kingdom called Rajagambhirarajyam. It comprised the Arcot districts and Chengelpet. Viruchipuram was their Capital. Later Kanchipuram became their Subordinate Capital.

In the tenth century the rise of the Pandyas pressed the Sambuvarayas from the South.

The Sambuvarayas were brought under the Sway of the Pandyas. When Muslims invaded Tamil Country the Sambuvarayas stood for the Cause of the thindus they helped the Hoysala leadership Vira Bellala them.

Hoysala ruler who advanced in the Tamil country placed the Sambuvaraya prince in charge of northern regions of Tamil Nadu when the Muslim regions of Tamil Nadu when the Muslim oust laugh under Malik Kafur and his Successors took Serious turn Sambuvarayar's helped the displaced and frightened the Hindus. They provided them rescue houses (anchinampukalidam).

The defeat of Vira Ballala and the success of Muslim sultanate of Madurai created a bad time for the Sambuvarayas. Yet they successfully held the northern part of Tamil country. When, the Hoysalas, were thrown out of political leadership after the death of Vira Ballala at Kannanoor while fighting against the Sultan of Madurak.

The newly created Hindu Kingdom Vijayanagar advanced towards the South. At the time when Kumara of Kampana, the Vijayanagar Commander (against the Muslims of Madurai) was Governor at Mulbagal, the headquarters of Southern Mahamandalam, Kulasehara Sambuvaraya was ruling Raja Kanbhira rajyam.

In the contest that followed between Vijayanagar and Madurai Sultanate Kumarukampana did not mobilize the support of the Sambuvarayas. Instead he defeated

Rasanarayana Sambuvaraya and killed him in 1663 A.D.

The Sambuvarayas were great patrons of Tamil. They helped Tamil poets, the twin poets (irattai pulavar) received support from Sambuvarayas. The sambuvarayas issued Coins called Virasempankulikai.

### Conclusion

From this, we are going to conclude that the people of Kallars who have migrated and settled in the region surrounded by hills and hillocks known as Thenkallaganadu of Pandya country by thousands of years ago. They lived in the region of Thenkallaganadu as aboriginals and they know only the Tamil language and the Tamil land and does not know any other languages. So, it is clear that the homeland of kallars is the Thenkallaganadu of Pandya country at present the area covered by Vadipatti, Nilakkottai, Tirumangalam and Usilampatti taluks of Madurai District dominantly inhabited by this people. For a certain period, they lived as an aboriginal like Sombon, Jarava, Sentinel and etc., of Andaman and Nicobar Islands without knowing the outside world particularly without knowing they themselves are Indians and then in the later period especially during the late medieval period the Kallars involved themselves in the political arena.

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