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DEVIKAPURAM INSCRIPTIONS

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Abstract

Devikapuram is one of the biggest village in Arani Taluk of Tiruvannamalai district. The Brahadamba temple is located on the foot of Kanagagiri hill, biggest temple, it was built by the Vijayanagar period. The inscriptions numbering fifty five, they have been noticed in the Annual report on Epigraphy for the year 1912. Art&Architecture is very embellishing and marvalous during vijayanagar period. All the record says about the land transcration and donations.

Keywords

Adaippain, Devadana, Kalam, Marakkal, Kanikkai, Mugampavai, Mavadai, Maradai Virimuttu, Idaivari, Perkadamai, Veli, Padaividu Rajyam, Nayakas, Kaikolas, Jayamkondu Cholamandalam, Mutts, Thondaimandalam, mandradis, Shepherds, Epigraphy.

Introduction

Devikapuram is one of the biggest village in Armi Taluk of Tiruvannamalai District , Tamil Nadu . Most of the inscriptions from this temple refer the village as Devakkapuram The earliest inscription from the temple, dated 1419 A.D.¹ mention this name Other names mentioned in inscriptions are Devakapuram,² Devikkipuram,³ Devakkapuram⁴ and Devakipuram.⁵ Excepting the last one all the names can be considered as the corrupt form of Devikapuram. The popular name of the village seems Devakyapuram Devikilpuram. Deviyampathy, to be Devikapuram Kanagagini, Narayanavanam and Kanakachalam⁶ are other names for this village Very near to the Brahadamba temple there is a small hill, on which there is a Siva temple. In the village itself , there is a temple with a lofty tower and high walls dedicated to the Goddess Brahadambal. This is sanskritisation of the name “Periya Naichiyar” mentioned in the inscriptions of the temple The names of the Principal deity is **Kanakagiri Isvarar**. It is not known how this name originated in

the stone inscriptions are found the name of “Tirumalai Udarya Nayanar” and “Thirumalai Udayar”.

Inscriptions

The inscriptions numbering fifty five in the Brahadamba Temple and only one in the Siva temple They have been noticed in the Annual Report on Epigraphy for the year 1912. All of them are unpublished of the ss inscriptions 16 belong to Krishnadeva , 14 to Achutayadeva , 4 to Sadasiva , 4 to Immadi Narasimha and one each to Sri Ranga , Venkatadeva . Narasingaraya , Tulajaraja Sahib of Maratta King and Armi Jágir There are 12 undated inscriptions , however they may be assigned to the Vijayanagar period . Therefore , it is appropriate to conclude that these two temples were built during the time of the Vijayanagar period . Inscription provide some interesting information of socio - economic conditions of the Vijayanagar period .

The inscriptions show a village based economy with emphasis on agricultural operations . Though the village is located on the base of small string of hillocks , flat land for cultivation was available . The fields in Devikapuram were irrigated by water drawn from sources like wells, Lakes and canals. The irrigation facilities available in this area are known from some inscriptions In one instance a land is said to have situated near an En (lake) Probably the land was irrigated by the water of this lake These tank seems to have been used very well cultivation. So, the repairs to the tank were attended periodically⁷. Another instance a piece of land was given as **eripatti**⁸ for performing the repairs to a tank. The assignment of a piece of land to perform repairs to the tank periodically was an important mode towards the proper management of water for irrigation Desilting of tank was also undertaken⁹. This is also an important aspect in the maintenance of water source. Some information about units of measures are available from inscriptions The volume measure was based on the unit kalam (12 marakkal). This was divided into sub - units as **Nali**, **kuruni** (1 Marakkal) Padakku (2 Marakkal), alakku and **tuni**¹⁰ some of the volume measures were named after a deity or his weapon for instance, the measure Sulakkal was named after “**sula**” the weapon of Siva. This was most probably used in Siva temples, or temples associated with Siva. It was used to measure ghee and oil in the temple¹¹. **Veli** was the local land unit used to measure the land. **Kuli** was the sub - unit used in this area.

Many revenue terms are known Some of them are **Vari**¹², **Irai**¹³, **Kadamai**¹⁴, **Magamai**¹⁵, **Vettavari**¹⁶, **Puduvai**¹⁷, **Mavadai**¹⁸, **Maravadai**¹⁹, and **Vasalkadamai**. The above taxes were levied by the King probably on a piece of land. **Kanikkai**²⁰ and **Mugamparvai**²¹ were small present paid **Ponvairi**²², **Virimuttu**²³, **Idaivairi**²⁴ and at the time of audience **Perkadamai**²⁵ are some of the other taxes mentioned in inscriptions The **looms**²⁶ and **sekku**²⁷ in the area were also taxed.

These inscriptions provide some insight into the social life of the people during the Vijayanagar rule in the Tamil country. The Vijayanagar rulers brought many Telugu and Kannada speaking people in to contact with the Tamil population. The Kannadiya Nayakas was prosperous in many Tamil areas. Padaividu area became an important centre of Kannadiya Nayakas. In Devikapuram, we may notice a small settlement of Kannadiya Nayakas. To them lands were assigned and the temple honours were also given as a recognition of their service.

The temples in the Devikapuram may be assigned to the early Vijayanagar period. The architecture of the **Brahadamba temple** seems to have been built entirely by Vijayanagar rulers. The covered courtyard and the corridors could be assigned to the Nayakas. The temple complex covers an area of about 3 acres. The temple has some good specimens of Icons and sculptures. They represent the art and cult of the Vijayanagar period.

Out of the fifty six inscriptions, two are in Sanskrit, one is in the Maratta language, the other fifty three are in Tamil. Lands were owned by private persons and also by temples. For the temple the income from land formed the permanent source of income. Temple lands were generally leased. In an instance a temple land was leased to Tirumalai Nayaka, a Kannadiya Nayaka, living in Padaividu. This was granted by Isana Sivacharya of the Bhiksha matha, temple officials, **tanattar** and chief of Mayeswara and Kaikkola Mudalis at Devikapuram²⁸.

Capital city of Padaividu Rajyam

The Vijayanagar kings ruled the whole of South India under one flag, or as the indigenous phrase goes, South India was brought under one royal umbrella. The Headquarters of the King was Vijayanagar, there were a number of chieftains who were his representatives in the various regions or Mandalam. Each Mandalam was divided into many sub - divisions. Among the many Rajayams in the Tondaimandalam are Padaividu in Polur Taluk was one. It was made the capital of the chieftain who was the ruler of that region. The temple of the Devikapuram is located within the Rajayam over which this rulership extended.

Those who ruled the Padaividu Rajyam belonged to the Kannadiya race of the Vijayanagar kings. They were entitled to use the title of "**Nayaka**". During the reign of Saluva Narasingarayar, Ettappa, Nayaka was a high official in Padaividu Rajyam. When Immadi Narasingarayar was the ruler, the administration of the country was looked additionally by the General of the Army. **Narasa Nayaka** who was father of Krishna devaraya. During that period, and also during the period of Krishnadevarayar, Thirumalai Nayanar son of the before mentioned Ettappa Nayaka was a high official in Padaividu rajyam. During the reign of Actudarayar, Kalatisvara Nayaka son of this Tirumalai Nayaka, ruled over the Padaividu rajyam. One inscription says that Ekambara Nayaka, son of Ramappa Nayaka was the ruler of the area.³⁰

Endowments for the Welfare of others

It was customary for the petty chieftains and high officials to make certain offerings to the temples for the welfare of their kings. In the same way, for the welfare of petty chieftains and the rulers of a Padaividu faryam high officials and others used to give offerings of charities . The prevalence of this custom is revealed in 16 inscriptions to be found in this temple Some of the temple charities have been made for the welfare of kings like Narasa Nayaka, Krishna Devaraya and Achutha Devaraya The rulers of Padaividu ayam like Tirumalai Nayaka . Kalathiswara Nayaka , also had come charities made by others for their welfare Similarly there were also other charities for the welfare of high officials³¹.

Thirumalai Nayaka and Isavara Nayaka son of Ettappa Nayaka by mat employed two persons for the purpose of singing the sacred hymes for the They were given house and land and welfare of Narasa Nayaka arrangements were made to give them food in the temple³² when Narasa nayaka died , they commemorated his memory by giving away the house and land to Samarapungava Dikshitar³³.

Devadana village :

Devikapuram was mentioned stone in a inscription as “Devikapuram” belonging to Murugamangalapparru of Melkunra Nadu in Palkunra kottam of Jayakonda chola mandalam. The temple of this place was endowed with many small villages. They were Sembiya Mangalam³⁴, Kailasam , Sorappundi³⁵, Kamatchi Ravuttam Thangal , Uvattur³⁶ and its adjoining small villages. Singayya Ravuttan thangal, Somasipuram known as Manalpakkam³⁷.

Charities

It is gathered from the stone inscriptions that Tiruvadirai Tirukkarthigai and Uttira Thirumal festivals were celebrated in the temple³⁸. Many people gave gifts of money, land and ghee for the conduct of those festivals. The Armi Jaghirdar had the Ashtapanthana Kumbabhishekam performed for the Deity on the Hill³⁹. Some stone inscriptions reveal that officials endowed certain taxes as offerings to the temple. A high official called Mallappa Nayaka endowed a tax worth 33 % panam⁴⁰. Collections at the rate of 1 % panam per loom were made Devikapuram and gives to the temple⁴¹.

Mutts

A famous mutt of Devikapuram was known as Bhiksha mutt. It is situated south of Devikapuram⁴² (very near to Cheyyar river) two of the heads of this mutt who lived at different times, were Isana Sivachariyar and Visvesvara Sivachariar⁴³. They took a great part in the administration of the temple.

Communities

This temple inscriptions provide some social groups and their activities of during the Vijayanagar period. In Devikapuram, Kaikkolas appear as an important weaving community. They

associate themselves more in the temple administration during Vijayanagar period. In one record (1520 AD) of Krishna deva me may notice a house and some lands at Devikapuram⁴⁴, was sold under the supervision of the Kaikkola community be suggested that at least in the temple administration and in distrating temple lands, the Kaikkola⁴⁵ community played an important role.

Mandrads

The **Manradis** were the shepherds or cattle keepers. This community played an important role in this temple. Their work was to look after the cows, buffalos and goats donated to the temple and they should supply certain quantity of ghee, butter and milk to the temple for the daily puja. One of the epigraphs⁴⁶ gives information that two families of **Manradis** dedicated to the temple looking after the perpetual lamps. In the inscriptions, the **Manradis** pledged to fulfill the provisions of the agreement as long as the “**sun**” and “**moon**” last .⁴⁷

Paraiyas

The Paraiyas were considered to belong to the lower strata of the society in an inscription of Krishnadeva⁴⁸ the lands owned by **Parayan** named as **tinri paraiyan**. From this we may say that lands were owned, by some **Paraiyans** in this period at Devikapuram.

Goundars or Vanniyas

One of the Devikapuram inscription refers to the grant of the village for conducting a festival in the temple . The inscriptions mention Virana Goundan and Dimmana Goundan⁴⁹, two residents of the village .The mercantile community was known as **Chettiar** and **Vanniyar**. Some of Nayakas have taken the profession of trade An undated inscription mentions the construction of a Ganesa temple and a tank at Devikapuram⁵⁰, by merchants (Nagarattar) of the Vaisya Vaniyan sect.

Conclusion

Devikapuram is one of subcentre (additional headquarter) of Vijayanagar period. The Brahadamba temple was built during the Vijayanagar dynasty and more than 55 inscription. All the inscription mentioned about the lord shiva (Tirumalaiudhiyanayanar), previously it was the lord shiva temple and laterly converted in to amman temple. This village has many industries like weaving and dying particularly the textile industries very famous. Another shiva temple is located on the kanagagiri hill namely kanagagiriswarar and it was maratha period.

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4. Ibid., 357 and 394 of 1912.
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6. Census of India, 1961 Temples of Madras state, Vol. IX, Part XI D, 1968, P. 127.
7. ARE., 353 of 1912.
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9. Ibid., 367 of 1912.
10. Ibid., 381 of 1912.
11. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
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14. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
15. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
16. Ibid., 354 of 1912.
17. Ibid., 373 of 1912.
18. Ibid., 373 of 1912.
19. Ibid., 354 of 1912.
20. Ibid., 375 of 1912.
21. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
22. Ibid., 354 of 1912.
23. Ibid., 375 of 1912.
24. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
25. Ibid., 375 of 1912.
26. Ibid., 354 of 1912.
27. Ibid., 375 of 1912.
28. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
29. Ibid., 353 of 1912.
30. Ibid., 404 of 1912.
31. Ibid., 355, 357, 358, 360, 361, 363, 364, 376, 377, 381, 383, 391, 399, 400, 401, 403, 404 of 1912.
32. Ibid., 355 of 1912.
33. Ibid., 357 of 1912.
34. It is now known as Semmiya Mangalam.
35. This is now known as Savarappundi.
36. It is now known as Tivattur.
37. Ibid., 357 of 1912.

38. Ibid., 360, 362, 383 and 384 of 1912.
39. Ibid., 397 of 1912.
40. Ibid., 355 of 1912.
41. Ibid., 314 of 1912.
42. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
43. Ibid., 352 and 389 of 1912.
44. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
45. Ibid., 352, 35, 356, 365, 367, 368, 369, 372, 373 and 375 of 1912.
46. Ibid., 374 of 1912.
47. Ibid., 360, 361, 362, 378, 380, 385 and 370 of 1912.
48. Ibid., 352 of 1912.
49. Ibid., 384 of 1912.
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