CHAPTER - I
LAND AND PEOPLE

Tiruppudaimarudur, in the present Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu is a small village located in picturesque surroundings on the banks of the river Tamraparani very near where it joins with Kadana river. It is at a distance of about forty six Kilometer from Tirunelveli and seven kilometers from Viravanallur. It is bounded on the north by the historic place called Mukkudal, on the south by Athazhanallur, on the west by Tamiraparani river and on the east by the Then Thiruppuvanam and Arikesavanallur.1

Area of Tiruppudaimarudur

It covers a total area of 503.65.0 hect. lands. This area composed of 89.42.5 hect.wet lands and 36.24.2 hect. dry lands.2

Name of Tiruppudaimarudur

Tiruppudaimarudur was named as Thakchinakasi and Maruthakasi, Sivan nagar, Sivan mukhipuram, Indirapuai, Aathipuri, Thara Keswaram and Maruthur. The river Tamiraparani skirts the village flows as Uttaravahini from south to north and is a confluence of the Kadanannathi river. It is one of the three Arjuna Kshetras, where the Marudha tree is the Sthala viruksham. It is also named as Tiruppudaimarudil in Chola

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1 Sri Narumpunathar Gomathi amman Thiruthala Varalaru (Tamil), Tiruppudaimarudur, 2015, p.1.
2 A Register Number .18, Tiruppudaimarudur village, Ambasamudram Taluk, Tirunelveli District.
3 ARE 1905, No. 124
period after that, Tiruppudaimarudur Brahmadeya in Mullinadu a sub division of Pandi Nadu

The temple Narampunathar, facing east, is located on a beautiful bend of the Tamirparani river, and with the various additions made to it in later times, the entire temple presents a picturesque scene. The inscriptions on the walls of this temple refer to the deity as Putarjunesvarar.

The Tamiraparni

The river Tamiraparni is of considerable influence over the area. It makes the land fertile. It flows nearly 96 kms in the plain through, Tirunelveli district where Tiruppudaimarudur is located. The basin in which Tiruppudaimarudur lies is the most fertile and prosperous one for it has been adequately and vastly irrigated by the Tamiraparni. As an important land mark and perennial source of water to the people of Tinnevelly, the Tamiraparni was frequently mentioned as Tanporundam in the inscriptions of the Cholas, Mudi Konda Chola Peraru in the inscriptions of the Chola-Pandya Vice-roys, Mukti Kavahini, Tanporundapperaru in the inscriptions of the Later Pandyas and Tamraparni in an epigraph of the early 16th century A.D.

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5 ARE 1905, No. 123.
7 Ibid., p. 29.
8 SII Vol. V, No. 724.
9 SII Vol. XIV, Nos. 144 and 194.
10 ARE 568 of 1916.
11 ARE 400 of 1929-30.
12 ARE 402 of 1929-30.
Tamiraparani Mahatmiyam, a Sanskrit palm leaf manuscript of medieval period refers to various tirthas and temples on either banks of the river from its origin to the destination. It contains numerous mythological stories connected with the tirthas and the temple referred to. It says that each tirtha is unique and has merits of its own.

Soil

Broadly speaking, soil of Tiruppudaimarudur area can be grouped into two main varieties, namely, red soil and the black soil.\textsuperscript{13} Along the foot of the ghats, there is a belt of 10 to 20 miles width of light loam These two widen and fill the whole area south of Tamiraparni. The cultivation of Tiruppudaimarudur areas mainly includes paddy, sugarcane, ragi, chilli, cotton, groundnut, gingelly, horse gram, maize, coconut, turmeric, and plantain.\textsuperscript{14} Due to the irrigation facility of Tamiraparni river, Tiruppudaimarudur area is rich and fertile in mango, coconut, and plantain.

Climate and Rainfall

The climate of Tiruppudaimarudur area may be said to be equable. The maximum temperature is rarely above 108°F. The minimum temperature is normally below 80°F and it is often recorded during January.\textsuperscript{15} The rainfall is comparatively better than that in the most of the other areas in the district. The average rainfall is about 1000 to 2000 m.ms. The climate is not only good but is delightfully cool and attractive. During the months of July and August the South-West monsoon wind blows violently, the sand storms, start ravaging the place, especially in the red sand

\textsuperscript{13} Pate H.R., \textit{Tinnevelly District Gazetteer}, Madras 1993, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{15} Tirunelveli District Census 1961 Handbook, Madras, 1968 p. 6
soil tracts. This at times accumulates heaps of sand in the cultivated regions of Tiruppudaimarudur and thereby causing damage to the standing crops. By October-November the North-East monsoon invariably sets in and the temperature is set on a downward trend. The beginning of North-East monsoon period arrests the rising trend of the mercury level and thereafter the region experiences a rather fair climate accompanied by showers.

Flora and Fauna

The flora of the place combines the characteristic features of the Tirunelveli region. Few endemic species are also seen. There are over a hundred species flourishing here. However, the followings are the most common species: Caulerpa, Plumaris, Peltata, Sedoides, Sargassum, Dentifolium, Udotea, Dictyurus, Polysiphonia, Valonia, Halimeda, Turbinaria, Gracillaria, Ulva and Enteromorpha.\textsuperscript{16} Besides these, the green vegetation in the area includes teak, bamboo, mango, coconut, aracnut and plantain.\textsuperscript{17} The crops like paddy, sugarcane, ragi, chilli, cotton, groundnut, gingelly, horsegram, maize, and turmeric are the main sources of cultivation in and around of Tiruppudaimarudur.

The local representatives of the genera Mycalasis, Ypthima and Lethe among butterflies are all to be found on the grassy slopes in the neighborhood of the reed bamboos, where the trees give way to grass and scrub.

\textsuperscript{16} Caldwell, \textit{History of Tinnevelly}, New Delhi, 1982; p. 29.
\textsuperscript{17} Pate H.R., op.cit., p. 23.
Adjoining Places

There are a number of historical places around Tiruppudaimarudur which depict the ancient glory of the Tamils comparatively with those of other ancient sites in India. Athazhanallur, Arikesavanallur, Thenthirupuvanam, Idaikal, Sermadevi, Ambasamudram, Brahmadesam, Mannarkovil, Tiruvalesvaram Kalakad and Mukkudal are the notable historical sites in the neighbourhood of Tiruppudaimarudur.

Social Condition

The temple is surrounded by streets invariably occupied by the Brahmins. The Saiva Brahmins\(^{18}\) live in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple. Communal settlements are indeed the order of the day in the ancient and medieval times. Only in the recent decades some changes have been occurred towards a free mixing of the communities.

The Brahmins

The Brahmins though they constituted a small portion of the population, occupied a conspicuous position in the society of Tiruppudaimarudur. The Brahmin villages were usually known as Brahmadeyas or Chaturvedimangalam. The village Tiruppudaimarudur itself was one such.\(^ {19}\) The Brahmins were well-versed in vedic studies and served as priests, prohits and astrologers. They were primarily divided into two well-known religious sects, the Saivites and the Vaishnavites. Their ancestors were immigrants from the north who were induced to settle down permanently.

\(^{18}\) ARIE (1926-1929) No. 467, p 48.

\(^{19}\) ARIE (1926-1929) No. 393, p 40.
through liberal grants of fertile lands exempted from taxation. Many poligars in and around of Tiruppudaimarudur during the 14th century A.D instituted free feeding houses for the Brahmins.²⁰ Child marriage was practiced among the Brahmins. The strict adherence to vegetarianism, their puritanic traditions, study of Hindu, Sanskrit and vedic knowledge helped them to retain their individuality and respectability.²¹

The Brahmins were generally influenced by their religion ensured them to go to any territory unmolested. A distinction was made between the two groups of Brahmins-Vaidika or devoted to religion and Lokika or meant for worldly concerns. Sometimes, the Lokika Brahmins gave leadership to popular agitation against the British administration. When the Faujdar of Tinnevely broke an idol of a local temple near Tiruppudaimarudur into pieces, the Brahmins of the district including Tiruppudaimarudur area organized hartal, people stopped their production and harvest and demonstrated for several days.²²

Besides the Brahmins, there were people belong to other communities who had landed property and who also had a lively interest in the temple. They rendered numerous services to this temple. The Vellalas²³ looked after the temple lands and cultivation. The Dasanambis were in charge of the flower gardens of the temple.²⁴ The shepherded class maintained the cattle donated to the temple and supplied ghee,

²² Military Consultations, 3 March 1799, Vol. 250, pp. 1210-1215.
²³ ARIE (1926-29) No. 416, p. 43
²⁴ ARE 1929-30 495
butter, curd etc., to the temple.\textsuperscript{25} Besides these, there were many professionals and artisans such as the stone-masons, carpenter, metal workers, umbrella makers, pipers, musicians, dancers from Tiruppudaimarudur had served the temple.

**Vellalas**

The Vellalas were the descendents of foreign immigrants who entered the Pandya country about 900 AD. They came next to the priestly class in the order of social precedence. They also served as the chief advisors of the poligars of Panjalamkurichy and Sivagiri.\textsuperscript{26} The members were likely to be of versatile disposition and finally as statistics show that amongst all the castes in Tiruppudaimarudur region, the Vellalars were in height and chest measurement. Ariyanatha Mudaliyar who founded the Poligari system in the Pandya country also belonged to this caste.\textsuperscript{27} They worshipped Siva and Sakthi. They built temples for their family deities and priests called pandarams were appointed. They performed daily worship in their houses and studied the hymns of Nayanmars. They had their own religious institutions or mutts which were presided by the members of their own caste.

The Vellalas mainly undertook agriculture and soldiers as their primary profession. An inscription\textsuperscript{28} of the 1695 A.D found on the south wall of Maha mandapam registers a gift of Anandaparpana Pillai and these were left in the charge of

\textsuperscript{25} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 135, p. 70.  
\textsuperscript{26} Pate H.R., op.cit., p. 137.  
\textsuperscript{27} Revathy G., op.cit., p. 119.  
\textsuperscript{28} ARE 1916 No. 495
two Sivabrahmanas of the temple, who had to supply the ghee necessary for the burning of the perpetual lamp. Another inscription\(^{29}\) states that the Vellala residents looked after the temple lands and cultivation.

**The Nadars**

The Nadars ascerted themselves as the descendents and representatives of the ancient ruling race of Pandya and Chola Kings.\(^{30}\) They traced their descent from different gods and goddesses like Brahma, Siva, Subramania and Bhadrakali. The Nadars considered themselves as one of the ruling communities of South India with rich heritage. During the early days, they were called as Shanars. The title ‘Shanar’ is interpreted as the corrupt form of a term ‘Chantaror’\(^{31}\) which means the learned or the noblemen. The two inscriptions at Kallidaikurichy near Tiruppudaimarudur suggest that the Nadars served as administrators and accountants of both Chera and the Chola kingdoms.\(^{32}\)

The Nadars occupied a high place among the right-hand castes. In the Census report of 1871, it was recorded that the Nadars claimed descend from a great warrior caste and belonged to the Aryakshatriyas.\(^{33}\) The Police Administration Report in 1889 stated that the Nadars belonged to the left-hand castes, but were good traders and a wealth pushing class. They claimed descend from kshatriyas and had the right to wear

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\(^{29}\) ARIE (1926-29) No. 416, p. 43.

\(^{30}\) G.O.No. 785, Law General Dept., 7\(^{th}\) July 1921.

\(^{31}\) G.O.No. 56, Law Dept., 8\(^{th}\) April 1921.

\(^{32}\) ARE 1916, No. 325.

the punul (sacred thread) and was reckoned higher in the caste gradation scale that was
generally admitted.\textsuperscript{34}

The traditional occupation of the Nadars was toddy-tapping.\textsuperscript{35} The Nadars in
Tiruppudaimarudur evidenced the effect of change in the social setup on the eve of the
European colonization, the condition of the Nadars appeared miserable. They suffered
severe social disabilities and were considered as one of the most economically
depressed communities in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{36} In the social ladder, they were regarded as
outcastes.\textsuperscript{37}

Robert Caldwell, a Christian missionary described the Nadars as belonging to
the highest division of the lowest classes or the lowest of the middle classes.\textsuperscript{38} They
appear to have been in a social limbo between the sudras and the untouchables.
Commenting on the character of the Nadars, Rev. George Pettit wrote that they were
industrious, rude, unskillful and somewhat coarse in person and habits. Yet, they were
neither destitute of shrewdness nor insensible to kindness.\textsuperscript{39} Their gradual financial
stability and the educational progress empowered the Nadars to claim for an equal
status with the high caste people in the caste-dominated Hindu society.

\textsuperscript{34} G.O.No. 17, Judicial Dept (Conf.), 12\textsuperscript{th} Dec.1889.
\textsuperscript{35} Samuel Sargunar, \textit{Bishop Caldwell and Tinnevelly Shanar}, Palayamkottai, 1883, pp. 10-13.
\textsuperscript{37} Ramaswamy A., Ramnad District Gazetteer, Madras, 1972, p.150.
\textsuperscript{38} Caldwell. R., \textit{The Tinnevelly Shanars}, Madras, 1849, p.4.
The Nadars became socially awakened long before, the spread of socio-religious reform movements which fought for the removal of their social disabilities imposed by the caste Hindus. In order to escape from the tyranny and social stigma, large number of Nadars became converts to Christianity.\textsuperscript{40} Bishop Caldwell says that the Nadars were docile and tractable, peculiarly fitted to appreciate the advantages of sympathy, guidance, protection and were specially accessible to Christian influence.\textsuperscript{41} The advantage of Christianity became rapidly apparent to the Nadars as the material conditions of their Christian neighbours began to improve.\textsuperscript{42}

There were frequent clashes between the Maravas and Nadars with regard to caste distinction and each of them asserted their superiority over the other. When the British attempted to impose their power, the Maravas offered stiff resistance and were hence denied of their Kaval duties and the Christian Nadars were appointed in their place, which increased the animosity between the two castes. The Christian missionaries secured mass converts from this community.\textsuperscript{43}

The establishment of British rule in India was a real boon to this people, the value of which they could not realize until Christian missionary education opened their eyes. In case of oppression arising among the earlier converts, it was demonstrated that even the Nadars with the advice of their Christian teachers could

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Caldwell R., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 20-29.
\item Pate H.R., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 90.
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obtain justice and enjoy protection.\textsuperscript{44} Caldwell, Samuel Sargunar and G.U. Pope were all concentrated their attention on Christianising this caste. However, considerable number of Nadars continued to be Hindus in Tiruppudaimarudur.

**Shepherds**

The shepherded population occupied a unique place in the social hierarchy of Tiruppudaimarudur. Aikudi, Ayarpadi and Aipadi are the name of their settlements.\textsuperscript{45} Though the main occupation of these people is cattle-rearing, some of them served the temple and were called as a *nivathakarar vettikudi*.\textsuperscript{46} They had a long tradition of tending cattle and supply milk, ghee, curd and other milk products to the residents of Tiruppudaimarudur as well as the temple. They have their residence in north and south streets of Tiruppudaimarudur. An inscription\textsuperscript{47} dated in the 6\textsuperscript{th} regnal year (914 A.D) of Rajasmha II refers to the gift of 25 Sheeps by one Viram Elini and his wife Muventhapaingav and for providing *Nantha lamp*\textsuperscript{48} to the deity of Narampunathar temple.

**Courtesans**

Like many other temples of South India, the Narampunathar temple, had the class of maid-servants who were called Devaradiyars and were dedicated to the temple.

\textsuperscript{44} Caldwell R., *Tinnevelly and the Tinnevelly Mission*, Madras, 1881, pp. 55-63.
\textsuperscript{45} ARE 1929-30.No. 473
\textsuperscript{46} ARE 1929-30. No. 402
\textsuperscript{47} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 192, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{48} Panchagavya means the five products of the cow enumerated as milk, curd, ghee, gomutra and gomaya.
services. Their main duties were to sing and dance in front of god at specified time daily and accompany the deity in procession. Their public appearances were usually associated with religious festivals and they were generally experts in music and dance.

The girl to be admitted to the rank of devadasis should not have attained puberty. Invariably, the dedication took place soon after her sixth or ninth year of age. The houses of devadasis were located in the streets running around the temple. These young girls were used to promote cultural entertainments and to raise funds. They had an admirable place in the society. They mingled freely with the local population and maintained close touch with the wealthy high castes. They utilized them for entertainment and sexual purposes. They also participated in Santhikoothu, Ariyakoothu, Kakkaikoothu and Tamilkoothu in and outside the temple.

The courtesans led cultured life and enjoyed pleasure in the company of others. They surrendered their earnings to the temple. When the temple and its activities increased, the demand for the devadasis also increased. They donated grants and gifts in the name of devadasis for their maintenance in temple. Sometimes, the devadasis were permitted to have married life. A few devadasis became housewife after marriage. An inscription of A.D 1049 described the matrimonial relation of a courtesan with a citizen. Another inscription of Kulottunga III mentioned the marriage of a dancing girl. Some devaradiyars dedicated voluntarily to temple service were recognized with stamped trident. On festival days, opportunities were also provided to certain families to dedicate them to look after certain additional work in

\[49\] ARE of 1929-30. No. 438
the temple. They were remunerated for their services. The temple also had the habit of purchasing devaradiyars. In 1119 A.D four women were purchased for 700 kasu to the temple during Rajadhiraja II. These purchased girls were known as matha-adimaigal. They were treated as slaves. Most of the slaves of this type were sold to the temple due to famine and poverty.\textsuperscript{50}

Devadasis were transferred from temple to temple by royal orders as in present day government servants. Nearly 400 dancing girls were transferred to Tanjore from various temples. The devadasis were honoured with the hereditary title of ‘Talaikkol’ for their excellent performance in dance and music. The images of dancing girls were also kept preserved in the temple. They gave attraction to the temple. The money-minded devadasis even involved in prostitution. It was an evil in the society. Hence, various agitations were launched for the abolition of this institution. Finally, it was abolished constitutionally. Anyhow, the credit for the development of dance, music and other fine arts in temples goes to them. An inscription\textsuperscript{51} of 740 A.D belongs to the period of Kochadaiyan Ranatheeran refers perum kanmis of Narampunathar temple donated a land to the one devadasi namely Manikkathal.\textsuperscript{52}

The Vaishyas

There seems to have a sizable number of Vaishyas in and around of Tiruppudaimarudur who were mostly traders. They were variously called as Vaniyanagarattar, Sankara Padujar, oilmongor and vaniya chettiyars. Reputed as

\textsuperscript{51} ARE 1929-30, No. 443
\textsuperscript{52} ARE 1916, No. 419.
principal merchants,\textsuperscript{53} they had business connection in different parts of South India. Members of these communities have liberal endowments\textsuperscript{54} for the various offerings. Their chief avocation is the production of gingly oil and coconut oil. They deposit raw gingly seeds in the stone crusher pulled by two bullocks drawn around it, tied to a wooden yolk comes round about till essence from gingly seeds come out as liquid known as gingly oil which is supplied to this temple for anointing the idols in this temple. Similarly deposit coconut raw shells in the stone crusher and get coconut oil in liquid form. This coconut oil is also supplied to this temple to make vadai, murugu, Athirasam and similar eatables offered to the deity during pujas as neivatiyam and some quantity is being distributed to the devotees and some are sold.

From gingly seed crushing after taking out oil, the stiff essence of cakes supplied to this temple specially at the Kartigai festival. Some of the Vaishyas were land holders. These merchants lived as a group of families known by the term Karai. They remitted taxes known as \textit{antharayam}\textsuperscript{55} to the temple.

The Depressed Class

The important branches among the depressed class are Parayas, Pallas, Valluvas, Chakkiliyas, Kuluvas\textsuperscript{56} etc. They form a considerable portion of the society of Tiruppudaimarudur. In the past, they were educationally, economically and socially backward as even regarded as untouchables, unapproachables and out castes.

\textsuperscript{53} ARE 1929-30. No. 392
\textsuperscript{54} SII, Vol. XIV No. 202, P. 115.
\textsuperscript{55} ARE 1929-30. No. 410
The Adidravidas are serving as agricultural labourers in Tiruppudaimarudur. They are also asked by their masters to do kaval duties to keep the growing crops from the peril of theft and from treat of cattle rearing during the harvest time. They are socially degraded and are made as serfs and slaves by their masters. They are not allowed into choultreis, which are specially organized for the poor people. They cannot enter in to temples and use public wells. Regarding their religion, most of them are Hindus and nature worshippers. In recent times, a few of them became converts to Christianity due to social and economic considerations.

The condition of Chakkiliyas or Arunthathiyars is entirely different from Adidravidas. They are serving as scavengers and sweepers in the local administrative officers and Government and private hospitals. They speak Telugu with mixed Tamil. They are very low in economic and social standards than the Adidravidas. They have no property. The Kuluvas are also similar to the Chakkiliyas. Their main profession is pig-rearing. They own huts on the river side in small numbers. By selling cow-dung and pigs, they earn a good sum. But they completely spend the same for their drinking liquors like toddy, arrack etc. and are living almost like beggars.

The other important minority people living in Tiruppudaimarudur area are the Ambattars, the Barbers, the Dhobies, the Kuyavars, the Pandarams and the Kaniyans. The Ambattars are also known as maruthuvars. They attend to the maternity cases in village sides and even in the orthodox families of Tiruppudaimarudur, they used to take care of bathing children for certain months. The barbers are engaged in the funeral ceremonies of the Hindus. In ordinary days, they earn by opening saloon for hair cutting. The dhobies wash dirty clothes. The Pandarams are the temple servants
who assist the Brahmins in decorating the deities by making garlands of flowers. They plug flowers in the temple garden (Nandavanam) and other gardens. They are living in the western side of Tiruppadaimarudur.

The Kaniyans are the folk musical players and dancers. They play musical instruments by telling stories of the village deities. They have been living in thatched houses without any facilities. Originally the depressed class people were not allowed to enter into the Hindu temples till 1937. The Rajaji ministry passed the Temple Entry Authorization Act in 1938. By this Act, the depressed class people were allowed to enter into the temple.

Political History

Tiruppadaimarudur area is rich in pre-historic and early historic remains, which are found in the upper and lower regions of Tamiraparni. Neolithic stone implements were found at near Tiruppadaimarudur, Cheranmadevi\textsuperscript{57} and Urkadu\textsuperscript{58} which were evidently proved that certain parts of Tiruppadaimarudur area were once occupied by the Neolithic people from about 4000 BC to 2000 BC. This proliferation of human activities is obviously altered by the discovery of numerous megalithic sites in the present Tiruppadaimarudur.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57} Caldwell, \textit{A History of Tinnevelly}, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 4-5.
Nearly 20 to 25 megalithic burial urns containing human bones were unearthed in the neighbouring places of Tiruppudaimarudur such as Kilpuliyur, KilNattam, Kilpattam, Tiruvalisvaram, Cheranmadevi and Urkadu. At Adichchani, burial urns and a megalithic stone circle were discovered. All these prehistoric and early historic findings reveal that the present Tiruppudaimarudur area was inhabited by the pre-historic and early historic people until it was brought under the dynastic rule during the early Pandya epoch.

**Early Pandyas**

The present Tiruppudaimarudur area was under the control of the early Pandyas of Madurai. This can be inferred from the inscriptions found at Tiruppudaimarudur and the surrounding places such as Tiruppudai Marudur, Kovilukam and Singampatti. The ancient pandyas divided Tirunelveli region into thirteen subdivisions and among them Valuthivala nadu, Vaikuntha Valanadu and

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60 Ibid., p. 72.
61 Ibid., p. 72.
62 Ibid., p. 72.
63 Ibid., p. 70.
64 Pate H.R., op.cit., p. 358.
67 SII, Vol. XIV No. 61, p. 43.
68 SII, Vol. XIV No. 68.
69 SII, Vol. XIV Nos. 70 and 75.
70 SII, Vol. XIV No. 61. p. 43.
Sundara Pandya Venrumumudi Sudiya Parantaka Valanadu Mullinadu denoting Tiruppudaimarudur were important divisions.

During the reign of Rajasimha I (730-768 A.D) and Varaguna II (c.A.D. 865-885) the Pandya country was divided into four valanadus namely, Tiruvalunthi valanadu, Keralasinha valanadu, Sri Vallabha valanadu and Amithakuna valanadu. Tiruppudaimarudur was one among the hamlet of Mela Mullinadu. The valanadu was ruled by Arayars, the officers of the Pandya king with the help of ‘Ur Sabha’ and ‘Nattu Sabha’.

**The Cholas**

The early Pandya rule came to an end when the Pandya country was conquered and annexed to the Chola empire by Parantaka I, Sundara Chola and his son Aditya III in 926 and 966 A.D respectively. Under his successor Rajaraja I (985-1014 A.D) Tiruppudaimarudur became a small administrative unit of the Chola country in the name of Mullinadu Bhiramadeya in Rajaraja chola valanadu. During the reign of Rajendra (1012-1044 A.D) a representative was appointed to look after the administration of Madurai and Tirunelveli region in the name of Chola Pandya viceroy.

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71 ARE 1929-30. No. 454
74 ARIE (1926-29) No. 413, p. 43.
The Chola-Pandya Viceroy

During this period of Chola-occupation, a member of the Chola family named Sundarachola was deputed as viceroy of the erstwhile Pandya territory and the viceroy called themselves Chola-Pandya and assumed after the fashion of the Pandya kings, though in a slightly changed form the titles Jatavarman and Maravarman. Accordingly, Jatavarman Sundara Chola, the son of Rajendra I became the first Chola-Pandya Viceroy.

Then his successors namely, Jatavarman Udaiyar Sundara Chola Pandya (c.A.D 1021-1054), Maravarman Parakrama Chola Pandya (c.A.D. 1052-1063), Jatavarman Udaiyar Chola Pandya (c.A.D. 1063-1070) and Maravarman Vikrama Chola Pandya (c. 1050-1080) ruled the newly conquered Pandya country.

In about A.D. 1070 kulottunga (c.A.D. 1070-1120) ascended the Chola throne and under his control, Maravarman Vikrama Chola Pandya, the last of the four Chola-Pandya viceroys, ruled the southern part of the Pandya country and Kerala. The post of viceroy was abolished due to the uprising of the Pandya king during the period of Kulottunga I.

75 SII, Vol. XIV No. 172-p. 96.
77 SII, Vol. XIV No. 172, p. 96.
78 ARIE (1926-29), No. 450, p. 46.
81 ARIE (1926-29) No. 442, p. 45.
During the Chola occupation of the Pandya country, the temple building activities reached a saturation point and the Cholas constructed and renovated several temples (including the one under study) in the Pandya territories to strengthen their victory and supremacy. Tiruppudaimarudur also owns such Chola temple. These Chola monuments in the Pandya country display a mixed art and architectural traditions of the Cholas and the Pandyas.

**The Medieval Pandyas**

The accession of Kulottunga I\(^{83}\) marks a turning point in the history of the Chola Empire. He was an Eastern-Chalukya prince, and many troubles seem to have followed the accession of a comparative stranger like him to the Chola throne.\(^{84}\) This confusion in the accession of Kulottunga apparently gave the Pandyas an opportunity to recover some of their lost glory.

As a result, the Pandyas were allowed to rule their territory under the control of the Cholas till the end of the 12\(^{th}\) century A.D. These subdued Pandya kings were known as Medieval Pandyas.\(^{85}\) The epigraphs\(^{86}\) of these Medieval Pandya rulers are abundantly available in the Narumpunatha swamy temple. During the Medieval Pandya rule, the present Tiruppudaimarudur area flourished with temple building activities and subsequently some other temples also existed in the surrounding regions.

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\(^{84}\) Sethuraman N., op. cit., p. 82.

\(^{85}\) ARIE (1926-29) No. 421, p. 43.

\(^{86}\) ARIE 1926-29 No. 394, p. 40.
of Tiruppudaimarudur. Medieval Pandya monuments have incorporated certain architectural and sculptural characteristics of the Cholas.

The Later Pandyas

From the beginning of the 13th century A.D the Pandyas again started ruling their territory independently and they gradually emerged as a supreme power in the entire medieval Tamil country by slowly overpowering the Cholas. These mighty Pandya rulers who ruled between c.A.D 1190 and 1310 were generally known by the term Imperial Pandyas87 or Later Pandyas88 and their empire as Second Pandya Empire.89 The epigraphical records of these Later Pandya kings are found abundant in the Narampunathar temple.90

Though the Later Pandya monarchs were busy with the expansion of their empire in the whole of Tamil country, they like their predecessors, encouraged temple-building activities at Tiruppudaimarudur and other surrounding areas and this fervour of the Later Pandyas resulted in the construction and maintenance of Amman shrine in the Narampunathar temple. Despite their increase in number, most of the Later Pandya temples do not show any refinement or maturity in the treatment of architectural components and sculptural forms unlike the preceeding Early Pandya and Chola and the Later Pandya temples may be due to lack of skilled labourers and

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88 Sathianathier R., The Later Pandyas, the Struggle for Empire; History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol.V, Bombay, 1979, pp. 256-60.
90 ARIE (1926-29) No. 450, p. 46.
constrained economy. The downfall of the Second Pandya Empire started from 1311 A.D because of the war of succession between the two sons of Kulasekhara Pandya namely Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya. Internal feud led to the invasion of Malik-kafur in 1311 A.D. At the end of the 14th century A.D and the beginning of the 15th century A.D there were three kings ruled the Tenpandy region in the same name of Parakrama Pandyas from A.D. 1384-1445, 1387-1415 and 1401-1434 respectively. At the sametime, Sadayavarman Kulasekhara Pandya, Sadayavarma Vikrama Pandya, Tirunelveli Perumal Komaravarman alias Virapandyadeva also ruled the Tenpandy region.

Tiruvadi and Muslim Invasions

In the first decade of the 14th century A.D the Pandya Kingdom witnessed the Tiruvadi and Muslim invasions. Of these two invasions, the latter really weakened the position of the Pandya rulers and subsequently paved the way for the establishment of Muslim rule in the south of the Pandya country. Ravivarma Kulasekhara alias Virakeralan, the king of Tiruvadi country in the southern part of kerala had married a daughter of the Later Pandya King Maravarman Kulasekhara. He invaded the Pandya country in c.A.D. 1313 and defeated Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya, the sons of Maravarman Kulasekhara, occupied the Pandya country for a short period.

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91 Pillai K.K., Then India Varalaru (Tamil) Madras, 1960, pp. 7f.
94 Hussaini S.A.Q., op.cit., p.75.
95 Sreedhara Menon, A survey of Kerala History, Madras, 1994, p.139.
96 Sethuraman N., Pandiyar Varalaru (in Tamil) Kumbakonam, 1989, p. 188.
His inscriptions found at many places in Tamil Nadu including Tiruppudaimarudur\textsuperscript{97} support this. The discovery of Ravivarma Kulasekhara’s silver coins bearing the legend ‘Virakeralan’ at Vagaikulam\textsuperscript{98} in the district of Tirunelveli evidently indicates the present Tiruppudaimarudur and the neighbouring areas had also under the control of this Chera monarch for some time.

Apart from Ravivarma Kulasekhara’s conquest, the Pandya kingdom suffered heavily from the incessant expeditions of the Muslim invaders of the Delhi Sultanate also.\textsuperscript{99} The Muslim conquests of the Pandya country was first initiated by Malik Kafur, the army general of Alau-ud-din Khilji in c.A.D. 1310-11 and was successfully continued by Khusru Khan and Ulukhan (who later became named Mohammed-bin-Tughlaq) in c.A.D. 1319 and 1323 respectively.\textsuperscript{100} As a result of these frequent Muslim expeditions, the Madurai Sultanate was established in c.A.D. 1335 with Jalal-ud-din Hashan Shah as its first Sultan. The rule of Madurai Sultanate which lasted for about 43 years was finally, uprooted in c.A.D. 1378 by Kumara Kambana, the son of Bukka, one of the founders of Vijayanagar Empire.\textsuperscript{101}

During the reign of Madurai Sultanate many Hindu temples in the Pandya country were either destroyed or deserted and treasures in them were looted.\textsuperscript{102} It

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\textsuperscript{97} Idem.
\textsuperscript{99} Ussaini S.A.Q., op.cit., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{100} Raman K.V.; \textit{Pandiar Varalaru} (in Tamil) Madras, 1977, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{101} Nilakanta Sastri K.A., \textit{A History of South India}, Madras, 1955, pp. 238 f.
\textsuperscript{102} Raman K.V., op.cit., pp. 130-31.
\end{flushleft}
seems that the present Tiruppudaimarudur areas also witnessed such happenings at that period. An epigraph of A.D 1516 records that an individual started the reconstruction work of the Aditya Varaguneswara temple at Melachcheval, a neighbouring area of Tiruppudaimarudur which was earlier deserted during the Muslim invasion.

**The Vijayanagar-Nayak Rule**

After the downfall of the Madurai Sultanate, the Pandya country came under the control of the Vijayanagar empire. The rulers of the Vijayanagar empire deputed viceroy (Nayaks) to look after the administration of the newly conquered lands in the south. In c.A.D 1565 the Vijayanagar forces were defeated in the battle of Talikotta and subsequently the Vijayanagar empire started collapsing gradually. Taking advantage of the weak position of the Vijayanagar rulers, their viceroy (Nayaks), began to rule independently in their respective areas of operation. As a result, Viswanatha Nayak and his son Krishnappa Nayak established Madurai Nayakdom in the mid sixteenth century A.D and it lasted up to the mid-eighteenth century A.D. It was Viswanatha Nayak who adopted the Poligari system. During his reign Ariyanatha Mudaliyar, his General, divided the Nayakdom into seventy two palayams.

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105 Clement S., op.cit., p. 28.
106 Devanesan A., op.cit., p. 41.
and assigned them to the Poligars.\textsuperscript{108} Out of seventy two palayams, thirty four were southern palayams.

Ariyanatha Mudali was succeeded by his son Kalattinnatha Mudali. He devoted his attention only towards the south. He was succeeded by his sons Naina Mudali and Viraraghava Mudali respectively. During the reign of Muthukrishnappa Nayak II (c.A.D. 1601-1609), Viraraghava Mudali was succeeded by Kadantai Mudali who called himself as Mahipati, as the king of southern region.\textsuperscript{109} Kadantai Mudali was succeeded by his son Nainatti Mudali to the office of Dalavoy. During the Dalavoyship of Nainatti Mudali, the Tirunelveli region was separated from the Madurai country as a separate province and he himself was appointed as the first Governor of Tirunelveli by the then ruler Tirumalai Nayak (c.A.D. 1623-1659) of Madurai.\textsuperscript{110}

The history of the Dalavoy Governors had its long lineage in Tirunelveli province and its sub-divisions like that of Ambasamudram, Srivaikundam etc continuously until the formation of Tirunelveli Collectorate in 1801. Nainatti Mudali was succeeded by Chinnathambi Mudali, and after Chinnathambi Mudali, Madaikumaraswamy Mudali was posted as Dalavoy Governor. Vijayarenga Chokkanatha Nayak of Madurai (c.A.D. 1706-1734) visited once in two years and he endowed lands, gifted jewels, gold etc to the temple.


Governorship of Tirunelveli

Aral Alagappa Mudali, the son-in-law of Dalavoy Madai Kumaraswamy Mudali acted as Governor of Tirunelveli from 1700-1735 A.D.\textsuperscript{111} In 1736, Chanda Sahib invaded Madurai and declared himself as the ruler of Madurai and Tirunelveli. To govern the Tirunelveli province, he appointed one Kumaraswami Mudali as the Nawab’s agent in Tirunelveli.\textsuperscript{112}

Meanwhile Chandasahib was defeated by Marathas and they established their rule between 1740 and 1744 A.D. The Maratha agent Appaji Rao collected taxes in the Tirunelveli province.\textsuperscript{113} In Carnatic, the Novayet dynasty was replaced by the Wallajah dynasty in 1744 A.D. Anwardin was appointed as the first Nawab of Carnatic by the Nizam of Hyderabad.\textsuperscript{114} Instead, the Nawab appointed Anwarkhan as Faujdar and Amuldar to look after the Tirunelveli province.

The Nawab Period

The Tirunelveli province consisted of different categories of territories which included the sircar region, poligar region. The fertile, never failing Tamiraparani river bed and the region south of it formed the sircar region, which was under the direct jurisdiction of the Nawab agents called Head renters or Amuldars. The Amuldars appointed many Amils to assist them. The Amuldar of Tirunelveli governed this

\textsuperscript{111} Kulasekara Raj B.J.M., op.cit., p. 33.
\textsuperscript{112} Caldwell R., \textit{History of Tirunelveli}, NewDelhi, 1985, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 215.
\textsuperscript{114} Lusington S.R., Report on the Revenue Settlement of Madras Presidency, 28\textsuperscript{th} May, 1802, para 15.
region through one of his Amils. The Amils controlled the principal inhabitant or village headman who looked after the revenue of villages. The Wallajah authority collapsed for a while, Chandasahib nominated Kumarswami Mudali’s elder brother Tirutarappa Mudali for the post of Amuldar in 1751.115 Mundimeyan succeeded Tittarappa Mudali and acted as Amuldar in 1752 and 1753. Meanwhile, Muhammad Ali, the Wallajah Nawab of Carnatic consolidated his authority in Tirunelveli province. Mafuzkhan, the brother of Muhammad Ali killed Mundimeyan, the agent of Chanda Sahib and was posted Nawab in Tirunelveli province.116

He sought the help of the Governor of Madras to quell the rebels in Tirunelveli province. Likewise, the Madras Governor sent Col. Heron with a regiment of 500 soldiers and another 2000 sepoys under the command of Yusufkhan or Khansahib.117 Thus, for the first time, the British General was invited into Tirunelveli province. It opened a series of British invasion in later course. The Nawab, on his part, sent his elder brother Mahfuzkhan with 1000 horses. Mafuzhkhan with the help of some western poligars of Tirunelveli province, opposed the huge army of Muhammad Ali. He was suppressed and replaced by Alagappa Mudali in 1756 A.D. Thereafter, Yususkhhan became the Amuldar of Tirunelveli from 1757 A.D. He revolted against Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of Arcot. It invited major Donald Campbell’s expedition

115 Lord Pigot in Council, 21st April, 1755, Military Consultation Vol. IV, pp. 70-71.
into Tirunelveli province. Yusufkhan was captured and executed on 16th October 1764.\textsuperscript{118}

As regards Tirunelveli province after Yusufkhan, it was under the management of Dalavoy Alagappa Mudali in 1761. From 1765 to 1769 it was left under the supervision of Raja Hukuamt Ram. In 1770 Syed Muhammad looked after the provincial affairs and in 1777 Muhammad Ektibarkhan was entrusted with power.\textsuperscript{119} In 1778, 1779 and 1780, Tirumalaiappa Mudali, Alinawaz khan and Dalavoy Tiru were posted as Amulders of Tirunelveli respectively.\textsuperscript{120}

In 1780, Hyder Ali perpetuated his famous invasion of the Carnatic. He conquered the part of Tirunelveli province too.\textsuperscript{121} To safeguard his region, Nawab entered into an agreement with the British known as the Carnatic Treaty of 1781.\textsuperscript{122} The Madras Government introduced assignment system. This system continued upto 1785. Thus, by the Assignment, the company had authority over Tirunelveli province, there was only gradual progress until the year 1801.\textsuperscript{123} Lord Macartney, the Governor of Madras posted George Proctor as the superintendent of southern Assigned revenues on 8th December 1781. He was allowed to collect revenue from the Nawab

\textsuperscript{118} Caldwell R., op.cit., pp. 126-127.

\textsuperscript{119} Hodgson, Report on the Province of Tirunelveli, 24th September, 1807.

\textsuperscript{120} Rajayyan K., History of Madurai 1736-1801, Madurai, 1980, p. 56.


But George Proctor’s appointment created a clash in Tirunelveli province with Head Renter Dalavoy Tirumalaiyappaa Mudali. It made the Madras Government to recall George Proctor.

In 1782, Dalavoy Tirumalaiyappaa Mudali passed away and was succeeded by Tittarappa Mudali as the Head Renter of Tirunelveli. He failed to pay Peshkush properly. Therefore, the Madras Government posted Eylesirwin as Superintendent to secure the revenue of Tirunelveli province. He gave the Committee of Assigned Revenue of full insight into the state of the revenue of Tirunelveli province. Eylesirwin also dismissed Tittarappa Mudali and arrested him on 3rd June 1783 for the embezzlement of the considerable part of the revenue of Tirunelveli province and appointed one Zinulabdein as the head renter besides he himself supervised the Tirunelveli province by dividing it into the twelve revenue units for the revenue administration of the year 1783, 1784 and 1785 respectively.

The twelve revenue units were Ambasamudram, Kalakad, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Attur, Srivaikuntam, Alwartirunagari, Tiruchendur, Purasamesaum, Palayam kottai, Gangai kondon, and Srivilliputhur. These twelve revenue units

125 Caldwell R., op.cit., p. 147.
128 Ibid., pp. 101-102.
were left under the control of twelve renters, who were responsible for Zinulabedeen, the Head renter of Tirunelveli province.\footnote{Nambiar P.K., District Census Hand Book, Tirunelveli, Vol. IX Madras, 1965, p.84.}

**Restoration of Amuldarship**

As regard revenue administration, the system of Assignment ended in 1785. The Nawab appointed Ektiberkhan as Amuldar over Tirunelveli province from 1785 to 1790 A.D. He spread out violence. But, on 12th July 1792, the Carnatic treaty was signed between Nawab and the British company. By that treaty the British Government took on its shoulders the responsibility of collecting revenue from the Nawab over the poligar region. At the same time, the Nawab authority over his sircar region was not totally ended. On the other hand, the British drove over the poligar region in the name of revenue collection infuriated the latter who in retaliation attacked the sircar territory and plundered the revenue, which belonged to the Nawab concern. It is to be noted that Tiruppudaimarudur was committed to such plunder on many occasions. But on some times, the attempts of poligars were cracked down.

In 1862 the post Superintendent of Police was created in Tirunelveli district. In 1871 the Local Fund Act was passed, by which Tirunelveli district was divided into circles namely, Tirunelveli and Cheranmahadevi. Ambasamudram was the part and parcel of Tirunelveli circle.

**Tiruppudaimarudur Panchayat**

After Independence, there started a Panchayat office at Tiruppudaimarudur to have a proper administration of the village. It was established on 21\textsuperscript{st} September
1962. Now Mr. P. Muthu Iyyappan is the President of the Tiruppudaimarudur Panchayat.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{131} Tiruppudaimarudur Panchayat Office Records.