Eventhough it may not be possible to give an exhaustive account of the local assemblies at Tirukkoilur we have references in the epigraphs here and there, which gives us an idea about local assemblies like nagaram and sabba and their role in economic and social life of the people of Tirukkoilur. "The nagaram, was in all probability a primary assembly of merchants which was organised as one of the local assemblies in important and trade centres and was the only assembly in places where the merchants interest over shadowed all the rest".

The earliest reference to nagaram in the epigraphs found at Tirukkoilur belongs to the period of Pallava Nandivarma III dated A.D.859. It records a gift of 48 kalaikku of gold by weight for burning
2 perpetual lamps in the temple of Tiruvirattam and states further that the gift was entrusted to the nagaram of Tirukkōyilur. Yet another damaged record of the same king refers to a similar gift and states that the gift was entrusted to nagarem.

We also learn from another record of the same king dated A.D.862 that the nagaram undertook to provide ghee for the lamp in the temple in lieu of 15 kalanjiu of gold given as a gift for maintaining a perpetual lamp.

Nripatsišga's record dated A.D.887 states that the nagaram agreed to maintain a flower garden for the 32 kalanjiu of gold given as gift. The nagaram was entrusted with the responsibility of providing wages and dress for the three labourers engaged for above with the money given.

In the absence of allusion to other form of assemblies and frequent reference to nagaram in the earliest known epigraphs found at Tirukkōyilur we may conclude that Tirukkōyilur was primarily a trading
centre in the beginning and the **nagaram** had a major role in the local administration, as well as temple management. The *nagaram* of Tirukköyilür appears to have maintained its prominent position till A.D. 959. This is attested by the record of Rāshṭrakūta Kṛṣṇa III dated A.D. 959 which refers to the *nagaram*. Later on the *nagaram* of Tirukköyilür appears to have lost its popularity and was completely overshadowed by the *sabha* of Tirukköyilür.

We are aware that the kings in the Tamil country settled brahmans in different parts of the country and gave lands as gifts for their existence. Such villages with predominant brahma population were known as **chaturvedimagalams** and **agarahars** and was administered by a body called **sabha**.

We hear from an epigraph of Kṛṣṇa III dated A.D. 960 that the Vaidumba Mahārāja Sundarai Pratipputrak Śiva Tiruvayan purchased some lands for gold from the *sabha* of Tirukköyilür and making them tax free, donated the same to the temple of Tiruvirattanam. It is possible to infer from the above epigraph that Tirukköyilür
was a Chaturvedimangalam at least around A.D.960 since the earlier epigraphs are silent about the activity of the sabhā and refer to the nageram right up to A.D.959).

We learn from an epigraph of Rājarāja I dated A.D.994 that a separate sabhā was in charge of Tirumi-nilai of the temple of Tiruvirattāṇam and with gold given as gift, it agreed to maintain a perpetual lamp as desired by the donor. Yet another record of Rājarāja I dated A.D.1001 informs us that the royal officers made arrangements for providing servants to the temple of Tiruvirattāṇam and the sabhā of Tirukkōyilūr was asked to supply two persons as pandāri to the temple.

In some special cases besides the sabhā of Tirukkōyilūr local assemblies of other villages were also involved. This is attested to by an epigraph of Rājarāja I dated A.D.1014. The above mentioned record states 150 cows were given as gift by an individual for the Mahādeva in Tirukkōyilūr for the sacred bath of the deity with milk. The sabhās of Tirukkōyilūr,
Chirriṅgūr, Akkalammukottuvēṇīṅgālom and the ūr of Morudūr and Tīru-unālgai sabhā of the temple of Vīraṭṭeṇāvara were enjoined to maintain the service.

An epigraph dated A.D. 1014 informs us that the sabhā of vishnudēva of Tīruṟkōyilūr gave some land as gift to Āḷavallān Tīruvīraṭṭeṇaṉamangāiyur. The senṭarapāiyar of the same place gave as gift some land as iriyili dēvadāna to the same deity.

An epigraph of Rājendra states that the sabhā of Tīruṟkōyilūr sold the land to one of the alunāgeṛtār (member of governing council) of Kāḍariyur. Nowhere it is stated in the above epigraph that the land purchased from the sabhā was meant for donating it to the temple. The sabhā sold the lands to the temple also. A record of Rājendra dated A.D. 1036 refers to the sale of land to the temple of Tiruvīṅgai-kalikāiyār by the sabhā of Tīruṟkōyilūr.

The sabhā also undertook the works of enumerating the ḍeṇadāna lands. A record of Kulottun-ga I dated A.D. 1076 states that the ḍeṇadāna lands of Tiruvīṅgai-kalikāiyār temple were enumerated by the sabhā of Tīruṟkōyilūr.
FOOTNOTES