Chapter – II

Political Sovereignty in Musiri Region
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POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY IN MUSIRI REGION

An attempt is made in this chapter for a detailed study of Pallavas administration, territorial divisions of Cholas namely Mandalam, Valanadu and Nadu, Vijayanagar and Nayaks administration. The aim of the study is to identify the administration of Pallavas, Cholas, Vijayanagar and Nayaks. During the period of Cholas the country was divided into two major divisions viz, those on the northern bank and those on the southern bank with reference to river Cauvery.¹ In this classification, all the Valanadu and Nadu units of Musiri region belonged to the northern division. The mention of the division in the inscription of this area starts from the middle of the 9th century A.D.²

Pallava’s Administration in Musiri Region

The Pallavas were very much influential in Musiri region. Srinivsanallur has a hamlet called Mahendramangalam. The hamlet Mahendramangalam was a Brahmadeya established during the reign of Mahendravarman I (598-630). Then, Nandivarman II (732-796),

² ARE 159 of 1912; SII XII, No. 92.
Dantivarman and Nandivarman III (846-869) held sway over this region.³

During the time of Pallavas, the empire was divided into homogenous provinces for the purposes of efficient administration. The provinces were known Mandalams or Rashtras which were subdivided into Kottams or Vishaya, Nadus and Urs. There were 27 Kottams in the Pallava Empire.⁴

**Chola Administration in the Musiri Region**

**Chola Mandalam**

The name Chola Mandalam, did not come into existence until 1009.⁵ Till that date the Chola country was known by the name Chola-Nadu (or Chola Nadu) and was smaller in extent. Uraiyyur Kurram is found to be the Western most units. Tiruvali-Nadu is the northernmost unit and Kulamangala-Nadu is southernmost one. It is remarkable that not a single Nadu belonging to Mala-Nadu on the North bank of the Cauvery and to Konadu in the South, South Western portion of the Chola country is mentioned as belonging to Chola-Nadu. This can not be attributed to paucity of inscriptive references to these Nadus. Many of these are mentioned in inscriptions before 1009 AD, and either Mala-Nadu of Ko-Nadu is found to accompany them to

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indicate the bigger politico-geographical unit\(^6\) instead of Chola-Nadu. Therefore it has to be surmised that the territories of the older Malanadu and Ko-Nadu chieftaincies did not form part of the Chola-Nadu in 9\(^{th}\) and 10\(^{th}\) centuries AD.

The Chola-Mandalam is referred for the first time in an inscription of 1009 AD.\(^7\) Along with this it seems, some of the conquered territories were given new names: Tondai-Nadu alias Jayan Kondachola Mandalam. Pandai-Nadu alias Rajaraja-Mandalam. Nulamba-Padi alias Nigarilichola-Padi and Ilam alias Mummudi-Chola Mandalam.\(^8\) During the reign of Rajendra, Ganga-Padi was given the name of Mudikonda Chola-Mandalam;\(^9\) Tadigaivali, the name of Vikrama Chola-Mandalam;\(^10\) and Numbala-Padi, the name of Nigarili Chola Mandalam.\(^11\) There is an officer called Mandala-Mudali in connection with the Mandalams other than Chola-Mandalams. An inscription of Kulottunga I informs us that the king issued an order in his 12\(^{th}\) year (1082 AD) from Kanchipuram to a Tondaimanar who was acting as the Mandala-Mudali at Talaikkadu alias Rajarajapuram is Mudikonda Chola Mandalam asking the later to constitute a new Brahmadeya and make necessary entries in the Puravu-Vari: and that the same king issued

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 15.  
\(^7\) ARE No. 22 of 1923.  
\(^8\) SIH Vol. II, No. 92.  
\(^9\) Epigraphia Indica, Vol. III, Tn. 34.  
\(^10\) EI Vol. IX, Ht.142.  
an other order in his 34th year (1104 AD) to the then Mandala Mudali, Rajendra Chola - Brahmadirayar asking him to make entries, regarding some additional grant of land to the same Brahmadeya, in the Puravu-Vari of Mudikonda-Chola Mandalam.\textsuperscript{12}

The difficulty met with above in determining the exact extent of the Chola-mandalam is mainly due to the fact that the ‘Chola-Mandalam’ which replaces ‘Chola-Nadu’ is rarely mentioned in inscription; the formation of the Valanadus which find almost regular mention along with the Nadu units included within them. Even after the formation of the Valanadus, the nominal division of the country was divided into two with respect to the river Cauvery was observed such as Vadakari-Rajendrasinha-Valanadu,\textsuperscript{13} Tenkarai-Nittavinoda Valanadu\textsuperscript{14} and Tenkarai Uyyakkondar-Valanadu.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Revenue Division of Mandalam}

The Chola country\textsuperscript{16} was divided into a number of units for convenient administration. The Mandalam formed the biggest division. This is a separate geographical entity, the revenue accounts of each Mandalam were maintained separately. Then each mandalam

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} EC Vol. XIV, Yelandur 146.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} SII Vol. II No.6.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} ARE No. 125 of 1931-32.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} ARE No. 47 of 1930-31.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} The term ‘Chola Country’ herein is used to denote all the territories that were under the control of the Chola monarchs one time and Chola Mandalam is used to refer to core part of the Chola country.
\end{itemize}
had a separate Puravu-vari department, may be inferred from the following instances. In one instance (876) a reduction was made in the revenue account of Tondai Nadu (same as Tondai Mandalam). In another instance (1082 AD) the entry regarding the grant of an Iraiyili land was made in the Puravu-Vari register of Mudikonda Chola Mandalam. It is Rajaraja I who initiated the division of the Chola country into different Mandalams. Altogether the country was divided into ten Mandalams as follows.

2. Tondai Mandalam.
4. Adhiraja Mandalam.
5. Vikrama Chola Mandalam.
7. Malai Mandalam.
10. Mummudi-Chola-Mandalam.

The Mandalam was administered by an officer named Mandamalumutali. This officer was known during the days of

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17 EI XXI, 38.
18 SH XIX, 169.
19 EC XIV, YI. 146.
Kulottunga I in Vengi-Mandalam as Maha-Mandalesvara. The names Mandali, Mandalikan, and Mandalamutaiyan are variants of the above name. The Kalinkattupparani, Kulottunga-Cholan Ula also refer to the Mantalikan or Mantalikar which means the ruler of a Mandalam.

The Mandala-Mutali seems to be the authorised officer in the Mandalam to make entries in the Puravu-Vari register. In 1082 AD a Tondaimanar acting as Mandala Mutali at Taliaikkadu alias Rajarajapuram in Mudikonda Chadurvedhi Mangalam constituted a new Brahmadeya and made necessary entries in the revenue register under order from the king.

Valanadu

‘Valanadu’ means literally a fertile country. But this term denoted something different and district in the Chola country for about two hundred and fifty years from c. 1000 AD to c. 1250 AD, a political division. The Valanadu as a territorial element was peculiar and confined to Chola times and Chola territory. The study of Valanadu is closely connected with that of Chola history. Initiated by Rajaraja I, the Valanadu setup was perfected in the reign of Kulottunga I,

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22 SII X 62; EI VI 227.
23 SII VIII 288.
24 Ibid.
25 SII VIII 132.
after some transitional stages in between in the reign of Rajendra I and his three sons. The account of this set-up from its beginning through different stages is a fair indicator of the growth of Chola political set-up, as a whole, from its formative stage to that of consolidation.\textsuperscript{27} The use of the term Valanadu to indicate a distinct political unit may be aptly said to be an innovation of Rajaraja I. The Valanadu means literally a fertile country.\textsuperscript{28} During the period of Chola in Musiri region there were six Valanadus as follows:

1. Karikalakanna Valanadu.\textsuperscript{29}
2. Kulottunga Chola Valanadu\textsuperscript{30} same as Rajasraya Valanadu.
3. Vadakarai Rajaraja Valanadu\textsuperscript{31} same as Rajasraya Valanadu.
4. Rajasraya Valanadu\textsuperscript{32}
5. Tyagavalli Valanadu\textsuperscript{33} same as Rajasraya Valanadu.
6. Virarajendra Valanadu\textsuperscript{34} same as Rajasraya Valanadu.

**Karikalakanna Valanadu**

This Valanadu comprises three Nadus namely Valluvappadi Nadu 1098 AD\textsuperscript{35} Mel-Valluvappadi Nadu 1214 AD\textsuperscript{36} and Vannadu.\textsuperscript{37}
Present East Musiri and West Musiri region are covered in these territories and particularly the North of Cauvery river comprises in Karikalakanna Valanadu.

**Kulottunga Chola Valanadu**

In this territory there is only one Kurram called Pachchil Kurram 1094 AD. Present Thuraiyur is mentioned in this inscription.\(^{38}\)

**Vadakarai Rajaraja Valanadu**

The territory of Vadakarai Rajaraja Valanadu consisted the following Nadus namely Alagarai Nadu 13\(^{th}\) century AD,\(^{39}\) Mimalai Nadu 1150 AD,\(^{40}\) Vadavalli Nadu 1214 AD,\(^{41}\) Pachchil Kurram 1194 AD\(^{42}\) and Kil Valluvappadi Nadu 1199 A.D.\(^{43}\) The first three Nadus were situated in the Western side of the Musiri region and the rest of the two Nadus were situated in the East and North Eastern side of the Musiri region.

**Rajasraya Valanadu**

Rajasraya Valanadu occupied a long narrow strip of space along the Northern bank of the Cauvery from the Nandiyaru River on the East to very near the river Karaipottanaru on the West. This division was

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\(^{38}\) ARE No. 132 / 1938-39.

\(^{39}\) ARE No. 284 / 1926.

\(^{40}\) ARE No. 165 / 1938-39.

\(^{41}\) ARE No. 159 / 1938-39.

\(^{42}\) ARE No. 194 / 1938-39.

\(^{43}\) ARE No. 521 / 1912.
nothing but an older Malanadu renamed as Rajaraja Valanadu. This territory was comprised with two Nadus namely Mimalai Nadu 1033 AD, Vadavalli Nadu 1014 AD and one Pachchil Kurram 1014 AD. The first two of the Nadus were the part of the Mala-Nadu and it was situated to the West of Musiri region and the Pachchil Kurram was situated to the North East of Musiri region.

**Tyagavalli Vallanadu**

The territory of the above Valanadu situated to the West of Musiri region was called Mimalai. It is also a part of Mala Nadu. The period of this Tyagavalli Valanadu is 1112 AD of Vikrama Chola.

**Virarajendra Vallanadu**

The area of the Virarajendra Valanadu is Mimalai, that is West of Thiru Ingoimalai and the West of Musiri region. The period of the Valanadu is 1070 AD. The Thanjavur inscriptions of Rajaraja I give the names of nine Valanadus.

1. Arumolideva Valanadu
2. Keralantaka Valanadu
3. Kshatriyasikhamani Valanadu

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44 **ARE** No. 381 / 1932.
45 **ARE** No. 246 / 1930-31.
46 70 / SII 2.
47 5 / SII 2.
48 70 / SII 2.
49 5 / SII 2.
50 659 / SII 17.
51 **ARE** No. 165 / 1938-39.
52 653 / SII 117.
4. Nittavinoda Valanadu
5. Pandikulasani Valanadu
6. Rajaraja Valanadu
7. Rajaraja Valanadu
8. Rajendrasimha Valanadu, and
9. Uyyakondar Valanadu

This list is exhaustive for the period except for two territorial gaps in the Chola Mandalam. The territory of Umbala Nadu in the South Eastern corner was later considered as a Valanadu. Squalls, and that of what was later known as Karikalakkanna Valanadu in the Musiri taluk of the Tiruchirappalli district, are not represented in the list. The fact that the Nadus included in Karikalakkanna Valanadu are referred to only in inscriptions later than the time of Rajaraja I, may account for the absence of that territory in the list. But Umbala-Nadu is mentioned even in pre-Rajaraja inscriptions ranging between 917 and 950 AD.53

Rearrangement of Valanadu
The Valanadu setup as existed in 1014 AD considered sofar, was not united perfectly because of the unwieldy areas of some divisions. Though an attempt was made immediately in the next regime to rectify this draw back, attention was being devoted constantly during each of the successive reigns till it reached its acme in the reign of

53 SII Vol. XVII, No's, 515, 505, 565 & 530.
Kulottunga I, during this course of hundred and odd years, bifurcation of the Valanadus made about five times. But we do not get any record directly referring to these activities. The bifurcations could only be inferred and of course substantiated after a full analysis of the available material.\(^{54}\)

It is in this reign, Umbala Nadu having been recognized as a Valanadu. It is given in the appellation of Dinachintanmani Valanadu 1093. And it is in this same reign that the first reference to Karikalakkanna Valanadu in 1096 AD is found. There is no evidence to attribute the title Karikalakkanna to Kulottunga I. On the other hand, there is an evidence to attribute to Rajaraja I his near relative.\(^{55}\) Then, Umbala Nadu was changed to Taranimulududai Valanadu in 1135 AD. After Vikaram Chola the name of Rajaraja Valanadu was changed three times during the reign of Kulottunga II and Rajaraja II.

Among the original ten Valanadu including Umbala Nadu, four Valanadus got new names at times without any territorial rearrangement. Another division, Rajaraja Valanadu was not meddled with even for renaming. Some territory was added to Rajaraja Valanadu. The remaining four got bifurcated. Altogether,

\(^{54}\) Y. Subbarayalu, op. cit., p. 63.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 66.
subsequent to the reign of Kulottunga\textsuperscript{56} there were fifteen Valanadus including Karikalakkanna Valanadu in the Chola Mandalam proper, South of the Gandilam. It may be pointed out here just for comparison that there are about twenty modern taluks corresponding to this area.\textsuperscript{57}

Revenue Division of Valanadu

The Valanadu was an innovation of Rajaraja-I during whose reign the Chola Mandalam was subdivided into Valanadu.\textsuperscript{58} Valanadu functioned as a revenue unit, stated with reference to two epigraphs, both from Tirthangari. In these epigraphs, the village Jayangonda Chola Chathurvedi Manyam of which Tirutinai-nakar was a hamlet said to have become the 'Mutal' of Rajaraja Valanadu.\textsuperscript{59}

The term 'Mutal' denoted the total revenue income. The officer who was in charge of Valanadu is not mentioned in any of the epigraphs. However, the suggestion made by Y. Subbarayalu is worthy of consideration. The collective revenue administration of all the individual Nadu units of a Valanadu was supervised probably by a single functionary at the head of the whole division.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., pp. 56-71.
\textsuperscript{59} SII XVII No's, 135-138.
\textsuperscript{60} Y. Subbarayalu, op. cit., p.69.
Valanadu
Valanadu was a state contrivance. But very little positive evidence is available in support of the suggestion that Nadus being too small to serve as viable administrative units, were replaced by bigger valanadus. As against this, the suggestion that this set-up was introduced with the purpose of integrating the territories of the older chieftaincies into the growing Chola kingdom needs emphasis.

Etymology of Nadu
The word ‘Nadu’ as well as ‘Kurram’ may be expected to throw some light on the nature of the Nadu. As a verb ‘Nadu’ means to seek after or to approach. But this meaning is not helpful since ‘nadal’ (or nattam), not ‘nadu’ is the verbal noun of the verb ‘nadu’. On the other hand ‘Kurram; may be taken to be the verbal noun of the verb ‘Kuru’ which means ‘to divide’. Hence, Kurram could denote artificial divisions even if one concede for arrangements sake that the Kurrams were artificial division; they were only in the minority. There were thirty two Kurram of about hundred and forty units in Chola mandalam.61

Nadu
The Nadu was larger political unit than a village. It had an assembly which was called ‘Nadu’ and its members ‘Nattavar’. The Nadu is the key to the political geography of the Chola country. The Kurram

61 Ibid, p. 32.
is a synonym of the Nadu i.e. the assemblies of both these units were called Nadu. The evidence from epigraphical records amply supports it. Thus in an inscription (997 AD) of Rajaraja I, the village Chiru – Paluvur is said to be in Kunra Kurram and in the subsequent passage, it is stated, another village Tenpalan Nadu was in the same Nadu. So, the Kurram is the synonym for Nadu. A recent study takes the Kurram to be the major division and the Nadu, its sub division. This study reveals that the Valluvappadi Nadu, Pachchil Kurram, Alagarai Nadu, Mimalai, and Mala Nadu come under the Nadu division.

The fertility and favorable irrigation conditions in Nadu, it seems that it determined the number of villages it contained. Thus in the delta the Nadus contained relatively a larger number of villages compared with those higher up the Cauvery river. In the delta, the Nadus contained an average of village for every two square. An attempt is made for a detailed study of the basic territorial divisions and traces the territorial units of Musiri region. There were many territorial Nadu units in the Musiri area such as,

1. Mimalai Nadu
2. Valluvappaddi Nadu
3. Alagarai Nadu

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62 SII Vol. VI No. 683.
64 Y. Subbarayalu, op. cit., p. 22.
4. Anmur Kurram
5. Mel Valluvappadi Nadu
6. Pachchil Kurram
7. Vadavalli Nadu.

**Mimalai Nadu**

Mimalai Nadu is the westernmost Nadu belonging to the Chola Mandalam to the North of the Cauvery River near Musiri\(^65\). It was obviously called because of its position to the West (Mi) of the hillock Ingoy-Malai\(^66\). It comprises three villages namely Jayangondachola Chadurvedhimangalam or Mahendramangalam,\(^67\) Srinivasanallur\(^68\) and Thottiyam.\(^69\) This area was called Mimalai nadu during the Chola period.

**Valluvappadi Nadu**

The Valluvappadi nadu consisted of the present Musiri taluk and Thuraiyur taluk areas, and the villages such as, Araychchi,\(^70\) Adanur,\(^71\) Angiyam,\(^72\) Mahadevi,\(^73\) Pundurai,\(^74\) (Present

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\(^{67}\) 653, 659 / *SII* 17; 165 / 38-39.
\(^{68}\) 658 / *SII* 17.
\(^{69}\) 329 / *SII* 13.
\(^{70}\) *ARE* 61 / 1936-37.
\(^{71}\) *SII* Vol. IV No. 541.
\(^{72}\) *ARE* 61 / 1936-37.
\(^{73}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{74}\) *Ibid.*
Venkatacholapuram near Uppiliyapuram, Singalanthapuram, Tinnakkonam, Thuraiyur and Valluvappadi (Musiri) existed in this Nadu unit. The period of Valluvappadi Nadu is mentioned in the year 1184 AD of Kulottunga Chola II. During the period of Kulottunga Chola I (1098 AD) this Valluvappadi Nadu belonged to Karikalakanna Valanadu.

Alagarai Nadu

The villages located in Alagarai nadu were Alagarai and Thirunarayanapuram. ‘Alai’ means ‘waves’ and ‘Karai’ means ‘bund’ or ‘embankment’, the place which was ‘embankment’ to a tank with waves. Another village Thirunarayanapuram inscribed the name in memory of God Sri Narayanan. At present the above area is situated to the West of Musiri.

Anmur-Kurram

Tirunerkunram alias Tinnakonam was situated in Anmur-kurram. This village is situated to the East of Musiri. In the year 931 A.D.

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75 ARE 228 / 1943-44.
76 ARE 257 / 1932-33.
77 ARE 61 / 1936-1937.
78 Ibid.
79 ARE 61 of 1936-37; SII Vol. IV No. 541.
80 ARE No 228/1943-44.
81 ARE No 284/1926.
82 Ibid.
84 ARE No 284 / 1926.
Chola King Parantaka I mentioned it as Devadana in the Eastern part of Anmur Kurram.  

**Mel Valluvappadi Nadu**

For the Administrative convenience, Mel Valluvappadi Nadu was established during the Chola King Kulottunga II and it mentioned in the year 1214 AD. It consist the following villages namely Kannanur, Kollikudi and Singalanthapuram.

**Pachchil Kurram**

Present Thuraiyur and Tiruvellarai (Thuraiyur taluk in Tiruchirappalli district) were situated in Pachchil Kurram. According to an inscription, this place is said to be on the banks of kilp-palaru in Pachchil Kurram and also mentioned in the karandai Tamil sangam plates of Rajendra I. In 1194, during the reign of Kulonnttunga II, Tiruvellarai is found in Pachchil kurram.

**Vadavalli Nadu**

It was situated between Mimalai and Pachchil Kurram, both of them belonged to Malanadu. The present Mahendramangalam,
Srinivasanallur, Thottiyam, Thuraiyur and Tiruvellarai belong to this nadu. Tiruvellarai belonged to Vadavalli-Nadu till the reign of Kulottunga I (1070-1120 AD).

Nadu, the Assembly

The Nadu has been taken to be a sort of territorial assembly, which functioned in the territorial unit known by the same name. It has also been suggested that the assembly might have been constituted by the representatives of each of the villages in the territorial unit coming together or by the more influential residents of the unit. And there is another suggestion that the assemblies of Brahmadeya, Devadana, Pallichchandam, Kanimurruttu, and Vettapperu villages and the Nagaram were subjects to the administrative control of the Nadu.

The Nature of the Nadu Region

The elucidation of the problem of the Nadu assembly hinges to a large extent upon the question relating to the basis of the form of the territorial unit, ‘Nadu’. It is generally held that the Nadu was a unit

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96 SII 17; 165/38-39, 653, 659.
97 658 / SII 17.
98 329 / SII 13.
100 T. V. Mahalingam, South Indian Polity, Manorama Press, Madras, 1975, p. 369.
101 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, Studies in Chola History and Administration, University of Madras, Madras, 1975, p. 504.
102 Ibid., p. 369.
103 EI Vol. XXII, p. 231.
of administration got by dividing the country for administrative purpose. The application is that the ruling people should have been instrumental for such a division of the country under their rule.\textsuperscript{104} There are two more related things to be considered to decide the nature of the Nadu units, their names and the headquarters.\textsuperscript{105}

The names of all the Nadus, excepting a few, are derived from the name of some village (or) other Mimalai Nadu was obviously called so because of its position to the West (Mi) of the hillock Ingoy-Malai. Some Nadus which seem to have been named after some persons, for example Kurunagan Nadu.\textsuperscript{106}

**Nadu: Agricultural Region**

It is usually considered that 'Nadu' has the generic sense of 'land' (or) 'country'. But there is some evidence from literary sources that 'Nadu' signified something more than this generic aspect. In a Purananuru verse,\textsuperscript{107} a Chera king is extolled as a scion of a family of benevolent rulers who had the good fortune of being obliged by the hills, the forests and the Nadu under their rule. Here Nadu is clearly distinguished from hills and forests, obviously implying that it denoted the civilized and habitated space of the country. And this is supported by the Pattinappalai where - it is stated, the Chola king

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 40.  
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 41.  
\textsuperscript{107} Purananuru, Verse 17.
Karikala created ‘Nadu’ (Nadu-Akki) by clearing forests (Kadu-Konru). Taking clue from this, it can not be suggested that the Nadu was basically an agricultural region.\(^{108}\) If the suggestion is valid, then the Nadus could not have been artificial administrative divisions, they could be only groupings of agricultural settlements, whose formation would have been influenced by natural factors conducive to agriculture, like slope, soils, water supply, etc.\(^{109}\)

**Functions of a Nadu**

In some inscriptions, the Nadus figure as nominal custodians of some charities made by some others.\(^{110}\) They are just invoked to protect them in the same way as the Panmahesraras (or) the Srivaishnavas are invoked in many other inscriptions. Rarely the Nadus receive and administer endowments from private persons, by remitting taxes on receipt of the tax money.\(^{111}\) There are many references to donations made by the Nadu mostly to temples.\(^{112}\) Its lands are donated they are put under the category of Nattiraiyili; The Nadu remit taxes on the land granted and take the burden of paying the taxes remitted.\(^{113}\) Regarding the functions of the Nadu other than the charitable acts, there is an inscription of Rajaraja II (c. 1149 AD) where – it is stated that the Nadu of Vada-Panangadu-Nadu

\(^{108}\) Y. Subbarayalu, op. cit., p. 32.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., p. 33.


\(^{111}\) Ibid.

\(^{112}\) SII Vol. XVII, No’s. 503, 534, 549; ARE. No. 234 of 1924.

\(^{113}\) SII Vol. XVII, No. 549.
decided any offence against the property or person in the village of Ambanavar-Nalvayalur should be punished by confiscation of some land in favour of the local temple.\textsuperscript{114}

The basis of the political set up, be it a chieftaincy or kingdom, was the Nadu. The ‘Nadu’ which evolved out of the groupings of agriculture settlements preceded any organized political setup in this area. Any powerful person able to command these groupings of agricultural settlements could become the ruling lord of the land. An indirect hint is available from a 12\textsuperscript{th} century inscription. It is said that the consent of the Nadu along with that of the Udankuttam, was obtained for installing Rajadhiraja II on the Chola throne.\textsuperscript{115} The Nadu being the prime land holders of the respective territorial unit, nadu, were the chief spokesmen of the people of the region. For the government of the period under study whose source of power accrued mainly from land revenue and whose interest lay largely in realizing the same. The Nadu naturally happened to be the administrative unit.

The Nadu was not a state made, bureaucratic contrivance needs emphasis. With little inscriptional evidence there are available points to the fact that there was an imperceptible superimposition of state official over the already existing network of Nadus

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} EI Vol. XXI, No.31, pp.190 & 193.
imperceptible, because in most cases the influential land holder himself was the state official. The actual position and influence of the Nadu in matters of assessment and collection of land revenue by the government are not clear as indicated above.\textsuperscript{116}

There seems to have been direct annual negotiations with each Nadu on the part of the government which is indicated by the term 'Ottu'.\textsuperscript{117} Apart from this Nadu state nexus there do not seem to have existed another explicit bond. Most of the functions of the nadu are locally based and were self-sufficient without state interference. That is, there was not much scope for a centralized bureaucratic system to function in the localities of Nadus.

\textbf{Musiri under Vijayanagar Administration}

Tiruchirappalli during the Vijayanagar period formed part of the Cholarajam or Cholamandalam. It was called as a Rajya. The Rajya was divided into Valanadu and Valanadus into Nadus which were at times called Kurram or Kottams. It may be compared to modern taluks. The Nadus were divided into 'Aimbadhi Melagarams' or unity of fifty Villages. Below it was Agaram or Mangalam, consisted of a few villages.\textsuperscript{118} To each of these units were attached a few villages which were called Pidagai in Tamil districts. For the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116] Y. Subbarayalu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 41.
\item[117] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 42.
\item[118] A. Krishnasamy, \textit{The Tamil Country Under Vijayanagar}, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1964, p. 163.
\end{footnotes}
purpose of efficient administration, the Vijayanagar kings divided the empire into many provinces which were generally known as rajyas and sometimes vaguely as Mandalas.\textsuperscript{119}

\textbf{Mandalam}

A few of the Mandalams are the Jayangonda Cholamandalam, Nigarili Chola Mandalam, Tondai Mandalam, Magadai Mandalam and Chola Mandalam. Originally important political divisions under the Cholas, they continued to be called in later times though they no longer constituted and accept political division. From the point of view of size, the Mandalam was bigger than a Rajya, the regular largest administrative division in the Vijayanagar Empire.\textsuperscript{120}

\textbf{Rajya}

It was the biggest political division in the Vijayanagar Empire. The division of the empire into Rajyas depended more on historical accidents and local needs than on any deliberate. The number of rajyas within the empire seems to have varied from time to time. Some of them should have been created as the exigencies of the administration required.

The Rajya was in its turn, divided into districts called Kottams, also known at times as Kurrams. It was divided into Nadus

\textsuperscript{120} T. V. Mahalingam, \textit{Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar Administration}, Part I, University of Madras, Madras, 1969, p. 186.
which can be compared to the modern taluks. Rural parts in such Nadus seem to have been called Parrus.

The term Cavadi, literally meaning a hall or an office occurs in the inscriptions. A number of villages were attached to the Cavadi. An inscription dated 1428-1429 AD mentions Sunepuhanallur on the Malanadu as a subdivision of the Rajaraja Cholanadu which belonged to Musiri region of Tiruchirappalli Rajya or Cavadi.  

Palayam Administration

Viswanatha Nayaka (1529-1564 AD)

He divided his country into 72 divisions called Palayams. These 72 Palayam’s names were mentioned in the diary of Anantharangam Pillai. He entrusted the administration of each division to a chief who was called Palaiyakkarar or Poligar, the holder of unarmed camp. The services of the Poligar were at the disposal of the Nayak at Madurai. He was allowed, subject to the regular payment of tribute, to hold complete sway over his Palayam and to collect for his own use revenues from the lands he possessed.

In the Area covered by the modern Tiruchirappalli district, there were nearly 10 Palayams covering about 250 villages. In Musiri Region, there was only one Palayam namely Thuraiyur

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121 EI Vol. XVII, p. 111.
Zamindar. The Kaval system that had been in vague from the early days, perhaps, since the formation of the village group, was also utilized by the Poligar to extract money from the people. Under the system of Kudikaval or the Sthalakaval, the village watch offered protection to the villagers against insecurity for their lives and property. The office of the Kavalgar or watchman was hereditary. The Nayaks introduced Desakaval also in the early years of the 18 century.

Administrations of the Nayaks

With the advent of the Nayaks (1559 AD) there were some changes. But these changes were more in nomenclature than in form. The unit of administration continues to be the village. Several villages were grouped under larger division called the Maganum which was a part of bigger unit – ‘Nadu’. Several Nadus were in a province which was otherwise called the Tajyam, Desam, Mandalam or Tashtra. Villages were known by various names such as Gramam, Mangalam, Samudram, Kudi, Ur, Putam, Kulam Kurichchi and Patti. Each village had two judges and they were held in great esteem by the local inhabitants.

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125 R. Sathianatha Ayyar, History of the Nayaks of Madura, University of Madras, Madras, 1924, p. 241.