CHAPTER VI

TEMPLE AND SOCIETY
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Perunkulam is a neatly laid out village nucleating infront of Tiruvaludisvarar Temple though in later years many portions on its south west including the areas infront the Mayakoother Temple and of Tiruvaludisvaram were added to make it the present Perunkulam. The original Settlement probably was confined to the three streets around the Tiruvaludisvarar Temple, besides a few more clusters of houses on the eastern and south eastern outskirts of the village. All major temples are immediately surrounded by streets invariably occupied by the Brahmins. Thus while the Saiva Brahmins live in the immediate neighbourhood of Thirvalutheeswarar Temple.

Sri vaishnava Settlement are to be found infront of the Mayakoother Temple. Communal Settlements were indeed the order of the day in the ancient and medieval times. Only in the recent decades some changes have occurred towards a free mixing of the communities in the residential quarters. Tiruvaludisvaram however was not exclusively a Brahmin village any more than Siva Perunkulam is today.

The Brahmin villages were usually known as Brahmdeyas or Sathurvethimangalam. Abramadeya in medieval South India referred to
the village where the rights of cultivation as where as supervision and control of lands well best owed on the Brahmin beneficiaries by the donar who wished the donees to lead a religious life performing the rites and ceremonies of the temple. Though the Siva Brahmins formed a size of Bulk of population there are people belonging to other communities who had landed properties and who also had a lively interest in the temple. From the inscriptions of the temple it is gathered that many of the non Brahmin residents too rendered numerous services to this temple.

The vellala residents looked after the temple lands and cultivation. The vaishiyas who were emerged in trade, small and big have made enormous endowments for the offerings in the temple. The Dasanambis were incharge of the flower gardens of the temple. The Manradis or the Shepherds class maintained the cattle donated to the temple and supply Ghee, butter, curd etc to the temple.

Besides these, there were many professional and artisan class like the stone mazons, Carpenters, metal workers, Umbrella makers, Pipers, Musicians, dancers who lived at Perunkulam and served the temple. Kulasekara I inscription of 1209 AD found on the west wall of Central Shrine from states Mahasabha of Maramangalam in Paranthaga Valanadu
granted tax free veli of land to the Tiruvaludisvarar temple at Perunkulam to provide for offerings to the image of Thirubuvana Sundaranar

SIVA BRAHMINS

The Brahmins were engaged as priest in the Tiruvaludisvarar Temple in reciting the Sacred hymns infront of the deity. Some in assisting priests some in bringing water for the oblutions some in cooking the food for consecrations. In short at least a male adult of every Siva Brahmana house did some service in the temple. Even now many Siva Brahmanas who had left Perunkulam seeking employment in other cities make it a point to be present in perunkulam during the annual and other important festivals and take pleasure in rendering some voluntary service to the temple.

The importance given to the conception of the personal gods imparts a spirit of local patriotism and Lord Tiruvaludisvarar for a Saivate of Perunkulam is unsurpassable in beating and compassion. In 1110 AD 40th reignal year Kulothunga I inscription found on the North Wall Arthamandapa States that Siva Brahmanas of Tiruvaludisvarar Temple agreed to feed some assertive pilgrim in the temple daily from an endowment made for purpose by certain Amaramkarumani of Mahipala

1 ARE., 1902-03, No.230.
Kulalakallapuram.² There are a number of non brahmins inhabitants at Perunkulam. Yadava Caste people inside at Yadava Street South east away from the temple.

In the inscription of Thiruvaludiswarar temple also there are a number of reference showed the contribution of Vellalar to this temple. In 891 AD second reignal year of Sadyan Maran, Son in law of Tayanyattan a vellalar of Palli perumbulingavu in Thinaikkala mangalam village in Kudanadu granted perpetual lamp to the temple.³

During the reign of Sundarachola Pandiya Deva in 1024 AD Ikkan siriyan a Vellalar of Perunkulam alias Utthamachola Nallur in Thiruvaluthinadu granted twenty five sheep to the Tiruvaludiswarar temple for burning a lamp before the image of Vishnu Durgai.⁴

In the 15th reignal year of Virapandya Deva AD 961. A sutracaste lady of Mahatavtakas alais Perunkulam gave a sheep for the maintenance of lamp and copper lamp⁵ stand Rajaraja chola I, 13th reignal year

² ARE, 1932-33, No.218.
³ S.I.I. XIV., No.47, P.36.
⁴ S.I.I. XIV No. 131. p.68.
⁵ ARE., 1932-33, No.237.
inscription found on the north wall of central shrine states that a Kaikola of Perunkulam village granted sheep to the temple for perfectual lamp.6

VAISHYAS

There seems to have been a sizable number of the vaishyas, who were most of traders. They were various called as vaniyan, nagarattar, sankarapadiyar, oilmonger and vaniya chettiar. Reputed as principal merchants, they had their business in different parts of South India. They contributed liberal endowments for the various offerings to this temple. They are found mostly in chettiar street. They reside there permantly from time immemorial. Their chief avocation is the production of gingely oil and coconut oil. They deposit raw gingely seeds in the store crusher pulled by two bullocks drawing around it, tied to wooden yolk comes round about till essence from gingely seeds come, out as lievid known as gingely oil supplied to this temple for anointing the idols in these temple etc.

Similarly deposit coconut raw shells in the stone crusher and get coconut oil in liquid quantity. This coconut oil is also supplied to this temple to make vadai, murukku, athirasam and similar eatables offered to idol in this temple at pujas as neivatiyam and some portion distributed to

6 ARE., 1932-33, No.239.
the devotees and some are sold. From gingely seed crushing after taking out oil, the stiff essence of cakes supplied to this temple specially at the Thiruvathirai festival. Some of them were landholders. These merchants lived as a group of family known by the termkarai. They remitted taxes known as antharayam to the temple.

In the fourteenth reignal year (1290) of Tribhuvana chakaravarthi of konerin maikondan alias Jadavarma Sundarapandyan inscription found on the south of Ardhamandapa states that on the request of Narasingadevan a royal order issued granting the taxes due to the king on oil mills erected on the devadanam land for a perpetual lamp in Tiruvaludisvarar temple at Perunkulam.⁷

**COWHERDS**

Some of whom served the temple and well called as a nivathakarar vettikudi. Their family consisted of brothers and the elder brother was important among them, their successors were called as varkathar. They possessed the title Konsenapathi and Palai Padittalium. The cowherds formed on important section, of the population whose services were essential. Even in the early Tamil literature their settlement were called ayarpadi. They had long trading of lending cattle and supplying milk,

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⁷ ARE., 1932-33 No.236.
ghee, curd and other milk products to the residents of the villages and towns. The families of the cowherds today have their residents in yadavar street. The temple as the largest and dairy farming by having a large contingent of cowherds to protected the cattle. Some of the earlier and later records of TiruvaluDISVARAR temple refer to numerous gifts of sheep, cows and buffaloes for the supply of Curd and Ghee to the temple.

In the first reignal year inscription of Maran sadiyan (835-862 A.D) found on the south of Ardhamandapa states that a resident of Elur granted sheep to the TiruvaluDISVARAR temple for a perpetual lamp. Ayan vasandi and Ayan sendil both Vettikudis agreed to supply the ghee for burning lamp.\(^8\) Raja Raja I ninth reignal year inscription found on the northwall of central shrine mention above the Vettikkudi of TiruvaluDISVARAR temple.\(^9\)

COURTESANS

Like many leading temples of South India the TiruvaluDISVARAR temple had this unique class of lady servants who were called as Devaradiyal or Padiliyar and were dedicated to the temple service. Their main duties were to sing and dance infront of God at specified time daily

\(^8\) ARE., 1932-33 No.215.

\(^9\) ARE., 1932-33 No.224.
and accompany the deity in procession. Their public appearances were usually associated with religious festivals and they were generally experts in music and dance.

In the nineteenth regnal year inscription of Kulasekhara deva I (1209) found on the west wall of ardhamandapa states that Mahasabha of Maramangalam in parantakavalanadu granted veli of land to the temple of Tiruvaludisvaram udaiyar at perunkulam alias Uttamapandya nallur in Thriqyaludivallanadu to provide for offering to the image of Tribhuvana Sundar setup there in by Nakkan Aludainachchi alias Rupa Sundarar Talaikkoli one of the Padiyilar of this temple.\(^{10}\)

On the same wall another inscription also engraved by Kulasekhara devas in his 25th regnal year A.D.1215. States that valankai regiment of Perunkulam sold a tax free land at Vadakkana putha the God Kunrammerin the pillaiyar (Kumara) Setup in the temple by Nakkan Udayanachchiyar alias Siva Gana Sambanda Taalaikkoli one of the Padiyilar of the Perunkulam village.\(^{11}\)

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\(^{10}\) ARE., 1932-33 No.230.

\(^{11}\) ARE., 1932-33, No.231.
In the 28th reignal year Kulasekhara I inscription found on the north wall of Ardhamandap states that at the request of Malavarayan a royal order issued to the devakanmis of Tiruvaludisvarar temple made Nakkan Aludiyal alias Rupa sundara Talaikkoli and her descendants as tenants of devadhana Iraili land in Elluppaikudi Kilavaneri.12

Maravarman Sundara Pandya I fourth reignal year 1220 A.D. inscription found on the west wall of the Kitchen in the Tiruvaludisvarar temple states that Nakkan Ulagudiyal alias Davagalsundara Talaikkoli as one of the Padiliyar of Tiruvaludisvarar temple granted sheep to the temple for four twilight lamps before the image of the deity set up the temple by Nanadesi Thalaikkoliyar another Padiliyar of this temple.13

In the 15th reignal year inscription of Maravarma Sundara Pandya I found on the west wall of the fourth prakara states that Nakkan udiya Nachiar alias Siva Gana Sambandar Talaikkoli of Perunkulam gave money to the regiment of Perunkulam for the sale of tax free land to the temple.14

12 ARE., 1932-33, No.217.
13 ARE., 1932-33, No.240.
14 ARE., 1932-33, No.242.
TEMPLE AS A PATRON OF MUSIC AND ARTS

During the festivals musicians rendered classical songs infront of the deity, both in side the temple and at car street at procession. Playing on the Nadaswaram with its accompaniments is considered to the specially auspicious and so it is played in the temple during the early morning and also during other, day-today, pujas functions and festivals. The artists considered it as a privilege and honour to sing infront of the deity both inside the temple and also at the procession of urchavar in the car streets.

In this temple religious discourses by eminent scholars are conducted very often. Musical instruments displayed as an art to make people to achieve sense of pleasure. By all these, this temple supports various artisans and given lessons of good morals to people and to arouse religious feelings.

TEMPLE AS AN AGENT OF POOR RELIEF

Feeding poor and deserving persons on the occasion of feasts and festivals, marriages and other ceremonies was considered an act of piety. For a rest house for the travellers and visitors form at side in a pilgrime centre like Perungulam is quite obvious. In early days the temple itself served as the agency to carry offered food freely among the devotees and
also to the local people who took part in some service. In the fortieth reignal year inscriptions for Kulotunga I (1110 A.D.) found on the north wall of central shrine state that an agreements made by the Sivabrahmins of Tiruvaludisvarar temple and Amaresukarumani of Mahiparakulakalapuram. By that agreement Siva Brahmins agreed to feed some ascetic pilgrims in the temple daily from the endowment made for the purpose by Amererukarumani.15

Now meals are provided to the two persons, as regular in daily. At 11 A.m. Atllaram Pongal and Tamarint mixed rice food distributed to the devotees as prasadam. Some portions as temple prasadams sold to public as an earning to the funds of this temple. Providing Jobs to carpenters and similar artisans required for the temple and many kinds of people employed as cooks and similar labourers which help their livelihood.

THE TEMPLES AS LAND OWNER

Land the immovable property appears to be the primary wealth of the temples. The accumulation of land was mostly by donations from the rulers and private individuals. The land donations made over to the temple was lauded as the best dana (gift) greater than another gift.16 This

15 ARE., 1932-33, No.218.
temple has huge properties as devadanams. These properties are in the name of deity. But the control in the hands of Government. Properties belonging to this temple are of many divisions of lands and ornaments.

Agriculture was the basic avocation on which the vast majority of the population depend for livelihood. The temple as the biggest land owner filled a large place in the agricultural economy of the locality. Right from the Sadiyan Maran alias Veera Narayana Sadiyan Maran's (880-900) time this temple had considerable landed property. Both royal benefaction and the public patronage took the form of land grants.\textsuperscript{17}

The royal grants were of two kinds, one the sarvamanya where the entire village with property rights over lands was given to the temple and the second type specified that all taxes payable by village to the government were to be collected and enjoyed by the temple. The farmer category, was also called Devadanam or Tiruvidaiyattam Irayili. During the 28\textsuperscript{th} reignal year of Kulasekara Deva I (1218 A.D.) inscription found on the north wall of central shrine states that on the request of Malavarayan a royal order issued to the devakanmis of the Tiruvaludisvarar temple, granted the tenancy right of land called Knoneri

\textsuperscript{17} ARE., 1932-33, No.228.
alias Kilavaneri as devadanam iraiyili to the Rupasundara talaikkoli and her descendants.\textsuperscript{18}

During the tenth reignal year of Jatavarma Sundarapandya (1286 A.D.) on the request of Pandya rayen a royal order issued to grant of some tax free lands to provide for offerings and worship to the deities in the temple of Tiruvaludisvaramudiya Mahadevar at Perunkulam.\textsuperscript{19} A number of villages in the neighbourhood of Perunkulam and elsewhere figure in the inscription as having been gifted to the temple.

GARDENS

A number of gardens were gifted to this temple to meet the constant need for flowers and fruits for the daily worship as well as during festival. In the 31\textsuperscript{st} reignal year of Kulottunga I (1101 A.D) Adittan Pallikondan of Perunkulam granted money to the temple for the maintenance of the person to look after the flower garden of the temple.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} ARE, 1932-33 No.217.

\textsuperscript{19} ARE, 1932-33 No.211.

\textsuperscript{20} ARE 1932-33, No.214.
LAND MEASURES

The land unit mentioned in the epigraph is Hundredkuli of land is to make (1) one *ma* and (20) twenty of the ma makes one *veli*. Measuring rod mentioned as *Malaikkodi*.

COIN

The inscriptions of this temple furnish us with interesting information regarding the coins that there current at various times. The gold coins were issued by many early pandya kings.

THE TEMPLE AS A CONSUMER

As an institution requiring a variety of commodities and services for its day to day conduct as well as on special festival occasions, the temple was the biggest consumer of the locality. In the early stages the requirements of the temple were probably few, some rice for offerings, flowers, sandal, milk ghee and oil for lamp etc were all these were required.

The steady increase in the offerings festivals and rituals from about 13th century A.D. resorted in the increase of the articles required by the

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21 ARE., 1932-33, No.228.
22 ARE., 1932-33 No.227.
temple manifold. The items constantly required by the temple are rice, gram, pulses, turmeric, pepper, mustard, jaggery, salt, betal, Camphor, Kumkum, Coconut, fruits, milk, ghee, butter, curd, oil, honey. Not only in the food article and perfumery, but in other articles like cloth, wooden objects, jewels, gold, silver, and brass metal lamps, decorative articles and the like is required. The temple still continues to be the biggest consumer in the locality. In this way, the temple stimulated and encouraged local trade and industry.

Thus from the foregoing account it is seen that Tiruvaludisvarar temple filled a large place in the social and economic life of the people of Perunkulam. The temple played a leading and constructive role for the large social and moral well being of the people of Perunkulam. The temple played a leading and constructive role for the large social and moral well being of the people.

Till 1937 depressed class people were not allowed to enter in to the temple. In 1937 – 38 Rajaji Ministry of Tamilnadu passed the temple entry authorization act with certain condition. In 8th July 1939 depressed class people of Perunkulam entered into the Tiruvaludisvarar temple without any opposition.