

ADVENT OF ISLAM IN TIRUCHENDUR REGION - A STUDY

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Abstract

Islam was both spiritual and human. It contained a religious form that was simple and beautiful. It contained a living political and social ideology that was appealing for the masses. In the nineteenth and twentieth century and even at the dawn of the 21st century, it is the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent who lead the Muslims of the world in their zeal and practical endeavor for strengthening the religion of Islam. King Cheraman Perumal was the last of the Chera kings who ruled over Kerala. When a group of Arabs led by Sheik Saharudeen was forced to land at Kodungallur, the people took them to the king. These Arabs gave the message of Islam to the King Cherman Perumal who was attracted towards this new ideology. As these Arabs were actually bound for Ceylon they proceeded with their journey and then returned to the King only to take him to Arabia. The king embraced Islam in the presence of the Holy Prophet (Sal) and renamed himself Abdur Rahman Samiri (Rali).

Key Word: Islam, Muslim, Region, Muslims, Mohamed,

Introduction

Religion can never be defined so easily, but it exerted profound influence in many activities of human life. Mysteries of nature and universe around him urged man to explain the unknown in the light of existing knowledge and experience. The problems which eluded solution to him were the origin of earth and universe, death and its relation to life, the working of nature etc. These are the problems of religion and philosophy, which are occupying mans thinking from times immemorial. Man found that forces of nature of sun, the moon, the wind, the water, the rain etc were more powerful then him and they did not always work, in his best interests. When he could not control them, he considered these forces to be Gods and Goddesses to be worshipped and appeased with prayers and sacrifices and offerings. The needs of man multiplied and his activities to extend too many areas. New areas demanded new explanations through the medium of religion. Man tried to explain the mysteries of the universe. This is turn gave birth to new ideas or new religions like Hinduism. Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity and **Islam**. In course of time these religions have evolved themselves to suit the changing needs of man.

Advent Of Islam In India

Islam was both spiritual and human. It contained a religious form that was simple and beautiful. It contained a living political and social ideology that was appealing for the masses. Therefore when it reached India, as in other places, it found fertile ground. In this soil of India, Islam achieved not only the high point of human civilization but also an unparalleled spiritual ascendancy in ultimate communion with the divine.

In the nineteenth and twentieth century and even at the dawn of the 21st century, it is the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent who lead the Muslims of the world in their zeal and practical endeavor for strengthening the religion of Islam. As we endeavor to study the history of the religion is quest of the Muslims of India we see that the spread of the faith in this land was by and large by peaceful means. Islam came as a liberating force with a message of equality for thousands of people dehumanized, exploited and violently treated an animal's by the dominant Brahmanical Hindus of the caste hierarchy at a time when the "tolerant era of Buddhism had been brought to an end and Brahmin reaction had triumphantly restored Brahmins as the dominant case" Therefore Shri Swami Vivekananda said.

Advent Of Islam In South India And Tamil Nadu

The world Islam is derived from 'aslama' meaning to resign oneself. The leading doctrine of Islam is the belief in one All-Powerful Allah, which Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) firmly established. The Holy Quran is accepted as a direct revelation from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (Sal) and hence forms the basis of all Islamic teachings. Historians have much to say on the advent of Islam in this region. While some historians and archaeologists believe that Islam came here during the ninth and tenth centuries A.D, certain others argue that Islam came here much earlier.

According to Ibrahim Kunju, trade link existed between the Malabar coast and Arabia even earlier than the establishment of the Roman Empire. Ibu Rustah, the Arab geographer argues that Indian ships used to sail upto Al Madain which was on the shores of the river Tigris even before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (Sal). Another strong reason for the present argument is that, Kerala being rich in spices, it should have attracted Arab traders in large numbers. Thus when these traders learnt the message of their Prophet Muhammad (Sal) in Arabia, they should have attempted to spread their religion in Kerala, the place of their trade.

The first Muslim fleet reached the Indian waters during the period of Hazrath Umar (Rali) in 636 A.D. This was near Tana. But another popular theory is that related to the Hindu King Cheraman Perumal who was converted to Islam even during the life time of the Prophet Muhammad (Sal), Nagam Aiyar in his work has mentioned the conversion of Cheraman Perumal to Islam.

King Cheraman Perumal was the last of the Chera kings who ruled over Kerala. When a group of Arabs led by Sheik Saharudeen was forced to land at Kodungallur, the people took them to the king. These Arabs gave the message of Islam to the King Cherman Perumal who was attracted towards this new ideology. As these Arabs were actually bound for Ceylon they proceeded with their journey and then returned to the King only to take him to Arabia. The king embraced Islam in the presence of the Holy Prophet (Sal) and renamed himself Abdur Rahman Samiri (Rali). The convert being pleased with Islam and filled with the zeal to spread the truth requested the king of Damascus to send a group of preachers to Kerala. The king Malik sent his son Malik Ibnu Deenar and family. On the way back Abdur Rahman Samiri (Rali) fell sick and passed away at Zufar on the Arabian Coast. However, the two ships proceeded without any break with the letter of introduction from the deceased King. One ship with Malik Ibnu Deenar landed at Kodungallur, the other landed at Kayalpatnam in Tiruchendur region.

The Muslim Conquest

The civil war in the Pandyan kingdom paved the way for the interference of Muslims in Tamil politics, Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya. I had two sons, namely Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya. Kulasekhara I arranged for the succession of Vira Pandya. So the rightful heir to the throne Sundara Pandya invaded Madurai, killed his father and drove his brother from Madurai and ascended the throne in 1310. Then, Vira Pandya challenged his brother. So Sundara Pandya sought the help the Malikkafur. Taking advantage of the royal rift, Malikkafur, the general of Ala-uddin Khilij invaded Madurai in 1311. Thus the civil war ended with a foreign invasion and paved the way for the downfall of the Second Pandian Empire.

Advent Of Islam In Tiruchendur Taluk

Tiruchendur is located 710 kilometers from Chennai, Sixty Kilometers from Tirunelveli and forty kilometers from Thoothukudi. It is bounded on the north by Virapandyapatnam and Kayalpatnam on the south by Kulasekharapattinam on the west nallur and Kurumbur and on the east by Bay of Bengal. From 1911 to till date Tiruchendur is served as the headquarter of Tiruchendur taluk. Tiruchendur is included in Thoothukudi district carved out of Tirunelveli District on 20.10.1986. Tiruchendur has three revenue Firkas out of 480 revenue Firkas of Thoothukudi District namely Authoor, Udankudi, Tiruchendur. Tiruchendur is one among the ten Taluks of

Thoothukudi District Viz., Eral, Kayathar, Ettayapuram, Kovilpatti, Ottaipidaram, Srivaikundam, Sattankulam, Thoothukudi, Tiruchendur and Vilathikulam. Tiruchendur is one among the three revenue divisions in Thoothukudi district viz., Thoothukudi, Kovilpatti and Tiruchendur. Tiruchendur means a sacred and prosperous town of victory. Tiruchendur enriched by the end less tidal tributes of the sea, stands hearless as a pilgrim centre

Settlement at Tiruchendur region

In Tiruchendur region the early people had settled due to Tamiraparani river, Karumaniyar and forest. The water facility has been the basic amenity of the people of past and present beyond doubt the people who settled in Tiruchendur region had never faced any acute water problem. But the course of rivers sometimes created thorny issues among the people due to over flowing particularly during monsoons.

Historical Region

Tiruchendur region sustained and nurtured ancient civilization for many centuries that man can remember. The historical places. Alwarthirunagari, Angamagalam, Tenthirupperai, Tirukkalur, Alagiyemana, Valapuram, Malavarayanattam, Poraiyur Suganthalai, Kurumpur, Nallur, Kayalpatnam, Virapandyapattinam, Speak the historical antiquity and soil fertility of Tiruchendur.

Society

The Society of Tiruchendur taluk was divided into various castes on the basis of profession. A look at the cross section of the people of Tiruchendur at present would reveals combination of different religious faith living in harmony. Brahmins, Vellalas, Yadavas, Naidus, Chettis, Maravars, Nadars, depressed class people and parathavas are Hindus inhabiting the land Christians are living in considerable number sand they have subsets namely catholic and protestants, Muslims are found in considerable numbers and trade remains their main profession.

Economy

Agriculture is the main occupation of Tiruchendur people. They are hard working and have a good knowledge of local conditions of rain seasons menuring and rotation of crops. The fertility of soil and availability of irrigation facilities make the people agriculturists. Dams are constructed across the river Tamiraparani. After the construction of Srivaikuntam anicut in 1870 A.D. twenty one thousand and seven hundred and twenty one hectares of lands are receiving the water from Srivaikuntam anicut South canal of Srivaikuntam anicut supply the water the the tanks in the northern part of Tiruchendurtaluk.

Conclusion

Tiruchendur had been in Tirunelveli country for a long time how Tirunelveli was the centre of activity in Thambiraparani valley and served as a link both upper and lower Thambiraparani valleys in the same manner, Tiruchendur was the centre of importance in the lower Thambiraparani Valley and served as a link place for the both western and eastern places in Lower Thambiraparani Valley in the past. It was also connecting centre for both pre-historic places of Kurumbur, Alwarthirunagari, Korkai, etc.,

Tiruchendur is one of the six holy centres celebrated for the worship of Lord Muruga. Whereas the remaining five sports are situated on hill top. This is the only place that is on the seashore in a picturesque setting. This place has been praised in Thirumukurupadai of Nakkirar. Saint Arunagirinather in his Tiruppugal has devoted eighty six songs in praise of this place. In the 17th century Kumaraguruparaswamigal has song in praise of this place in two hundred and twenty four lines in his Kandarkalivenpa. Pagalikuttar in his Tiruchendur Pillai Tamil has waft ecstasy of this place.

Though this place has been praised in literature ranging upto two thousand years, the vattaluttuthu inscription of Maranjadayen is about 1200 years old found in the Subramanyar temple of Tiruchendur.

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