

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF KAPPALUR

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Kappalur village is situated in Polur Taluk of Thiruvannamalai District. It is on the Polur-Thiruvannamalai road, 10 km. away from Kalasappakkam junction on the Chengam enroute cross road, 3 km. away north towards Dhroubathi Amman temple.¹ Villupuram Katpadi railway route will take one to Polur railway station and from there, one can reach Kappalur by town bus.

On September 30, 1989, North Arcot District was bifurcated into two districts Vellore and Thiruvannamalai. Thiruvannamalai was made the capital of Thiruvannamalai District.² This district consists of six taluks Thiruvannamalai, Chengam, Polur, Arni, Cheyyar and Vandavasi. This district is bordered by Javvad Hills, Polur and Thiruppatur.³

From the Sangam period, evidences show that this holy place Kappalur has been prospering well. In addition, this place has gained its importance during the Pallava and Chola periods. Since this Kappalur place has safety (kappu) and fort, this place got its name Kappur. Lust (kaamam) is desire. Since god fulfils the desires of his devotees, he is called Kameeswarar. On this basis, this place might have got the name Kamapullur and Kappalur.⁴

In the inscriptions, this place has been referred to as Kamapullur. In Pullur copper inscription, this place has been named a Kamapullur. During the Chola period, this place has been referred as Chaturvedimangalam, Rajachozha chaturvedimangalam and Sungam Thavirtha Chola Chaturvedimangalam.⁵

Borders of Kappalur

Around Kappalur, on the Eastern side is Kuruvimalai, West Vanniyanur, North Kangeyanur, and South Kalasappakkam. Besides, on the southwest is Poondi, in the northwest is Pettai, southeast is Vinnuvaampattu and in the northeast is Puthurampattu.⁶

During the Sangam period, the wellknown Sandror Udaithu' alias Thondai Nadu' had 24 taluks of which 'Palkundra' Taluk is one⁷. From the inscriptions, it can be learnt that Kappalur is an important place called Vasugar Nadu, a part of Palkundra Taluk⁸. Since this taluk has many hills and hillocks, it

night have got its name Palkundrakottam. Hiranya Muttathu Perunkundrur Perunkousikanar in his 'Malaipadukadam' refers to this place as "surrounded by hills." ⁹

During the Sangam period, Tamil Nadu was divided into five handscopes such as 'Kurinji', 'Mullai', 'Marutham', 'Neidal' and 'Paalai'. Kurinji refers to the places surrounded by hills. Since Thiruvannamalai District, Chengam and Polur Taluks are part of Paalkundra Division and also that part has many hillocks in it, this part could have been called Kurinji.¹⁰ Now Javvad Hill, Parvatha Hill and other hills are considered to be grand hills. Parvatha hill in the Sangam period was called Naveera Malai. On this mountain is situated a Siva temple of Sangam period, 'Kaariundi god.' Now that god is called Parvathanathar (Mallikarjunar).¹¹ This Mountain is situated 8 km away from Kappalur on the western side.

This part is made prosperous by the river Cheyyar. In those days, it was a great river with water touching the two shores, with gardens and fruit bearing trees. The river would never recede. This is referred to as, 'Kaanu narvaiya angatchin Cheyyaru'¹² And also as 'Kadvarar kalumic kaatchin Cheyyaru' Thus, the natural scenery is portrayed in 'Malaipadukadam'.

The river Cheyyar originates in the Eastern Ghats flowing through Thiruvannamalai, Polur, Arni, and Cheyyar and at last joins river Palaru near Chengalpattu. It is otherwise known as 'Shanmuga River'. There is an oral tradition, which confirms it. Since the son of Lord Siva brought it, it is called Shanmuga River or Cheyyar.¹³

Through historical evidences, one could know that during the Sangam period, Tamil Nadu was ruled over by the Chera, Chola and Pandiya Kings. Nannan Sei Nannan was one of the Chieftains. He is referred to as Palkundra kottathu Maathuvel Nannan Sei Nannan in 'Malaipadukadam'. It is discerned that this place was ruled by him .¹⁴ He liked Palkundra Kottathu Naveeramalai (Parvatha Hill) very much and worshipped the god of that place, Lord Siva Peruman, the Kariyundi God. Through **Malaipadukadam**, one could also know about elephant force, chariot force, horse force, and soldiery stabled at the foot of these hills.¹⁵ His reign must have encompassed Kappalur also which was a part of Palkundra Kottam near Parvathamalai.

During the reign of Karikal Chola, who was one of the rulers of Sangam era, Thondai Mandalam was under the jurisdiction of Chola and Kappalur was also an important part of Palkundra Kottam of Thondai Mandalam.¹⁶

The period between the 2nd Century and the 4th Century A.D. is called the Dark Age in the history of Tamil Nadu. Through the evidences, one could know that during this period, Tamil Nadu was ruled over by Kalapirars. These Kalapirars sowed the seed of growth for both Buddhism and Jainism. Hence, they installed the rare epitomes of these religions.¹⁷ The epitomes installed by the Kalapirars are found in many places of North Arcot District. So Kappalur, which was a part of North Arcot District, should have been under the rule of Kalapirars. Pallava emperor Shimavishnu conquered Kalapirars and established Pallava dynasty in Thondai Mandalam as stated in Kasakudi Copper Inscription.¹⁸ Thus the idea that Kappalur, a part of Thondai Mandalam, was once under the jurisdiction of Kalapirars is confirmed.

After the fall of Kalapirars, Pallavas ruled this place and it was extended throughout Thondai Mandalam.¹⁹ During that period, Kappalur was under the control of the Pallavas. The inscriptions of the Pallava Kings Thandivikraman and Kambavarman are seen in Kappalur Thirukameeswarar temple.²⁰ This shows that Kappalur had prospered well under the rule of Pallavas.

Later Cholas invaded and conquered Thondai Mandalam and brought it under their control. Hence, this place was subjected to the rule of the later Chola. The inscriptions carved during their period are immensely found in Polur. Among those from the Thirukameeswarar temple in Kappalur, twenty-six inscriptions of Chola period are found. From this, one could know that this place attained reached its fame during the reign of Parantaka I, Parantaka II, Aditya II, Rajaraja I, Rajendra I, Virarajendra, Kulottunga III and Rajaraja III.²¹

During the reign of the Chola Emperor, Parantaka I, Rashtrakuta emperor Krishna III invaded the Chola kingdom in A.D. 949 and captured Thondai Mandalam and Thirumunaipaadi.²² Hence, in this place, Parantaka II's inscription is not found. In lieu of it, Krishna III's inscriptions are found in Thondai Mandalam.²³ In Kappalur also three inscriptions of Krishna III are found. From this, one can discover that Kappalur was under the rule of Rashtrakutas also.

Sambuvarayars were the chieftains under the Chola kings. In the 13th Century A.D., they established their separate identify and ruled over Thondai Mandalam with Padaiveedu as their capital.²⁴

The inscription of Sagalaloga Chakravarthi Rajanarayanan, one of the Sambuvarayars, is found in Kappalur. This inscription refers to the proclaimed order to the villagers about the use of income from the tax exempted land.²⁵ From this one comes to know that Kappalur was a province of Thondai Mandalam and was under the reign of Sambuvarayars.

Ma. Chandramoorthy, in his book, **Tamizh Natu Siva Alayangal**, refers to the installation of a goddess in Kappalur Thirukameeswarar temple during the reign of Achutha Devarayar. Hence, one comes to know that this place was under the reign of Vijayanagar Dynasty.²⁶

During the Tanjore Nayakars' rule, Thondai Mandalam was under their jurisdiction. Sevappa Nayakar of Tanjore Nayakar Dynasty, during his rule, brought Cholamandalam and Thondai Mandalam under his control.²⁷ Hence, Kappalur should also have been under their rule.

The Nayakars ruled under the surveillance of Vijayanagar Empire. The Nayakars, on behalf of the Vijayanagar rulers, ruled the provinces outside the province of Vijayanagar. The Nayakars from various provinces followed the tradition and culture of the Vijayanagar dynasty.²⁸

Thus, this article its records the reasons for the naming of Kappalur, its boundaries, its rulers, and other significant details.

END NOTES

1. *Interview* with Mr. M. Balakrishna, Temple Guard, Kappalur, on 12.11.2019.
2. *Thiruvannamalai District Statistical Report*, 1991.
3. *Chengam Taluk Statistical Report*, 1991.
4. Ma. Sundramoorthy, *Tamizh Natu Siva Aalyangal* (Vol.1) p.295.
5. A.R.E. 1938-39, No.282-287.
6. Interview with Mr. Ku. Raji, Kappalur, on 12.11.2019.
7. Ka. Govindan, *Sangakala Arasar Varisai*, p.19.
8. A.R.E. 1938-39, No. 269.
9. Po.Ve. Somasundaranar, *Malaipadukadam Urai*. p. 19.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
13. Ka. Govindan, *Op. Cit*, p. 19.
14. Po.Ve. Somasundranar, *Op. Cit*, p. 19.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
17. K.K. Pillai, *Thamizhaga Varallarum Makalin Panpaadam*, p. 182.
18. S.I.I. Vol. II, Part III.
19. K. K. Pillai, *Op. Cit*, p.191.
20. A.R.E. 1938-39, Nos. 277-282.
21. T.V. Mahalingam, A *Topographical List of Inscriptions in the Tamil Nadu and Kerala States*, Vol. I, pp. 145-154.
22. K.K. Pillai, *Op. Cit*, p.255.
23. A.R.E. 1938-39, Nos. 269, 272, 274.
24. Ko. Thangavelu, *Sambuvarayar Varallaru*, p. 4.
25. A.R.E. 1938-39, No. 254.
26. Ma. Sundramoorthy, *Op. Cit*, p. 301.
27. Na. Jayabalan, *Tamizh Natu Varallru*, p. 152.
28. K.K. Pillai, *Thenindiya Varallru*, p. 68.

