

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF ARUVIKKARAI IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Suji. R,
Guest Lecturer,
Holy Cross College (Autonomous),
Nagercoil,
K.K. District.

ABSTRACT

Aruvikkarai is a village in present Thiruvattar Taluk and two miles to the east of Thiruvattar in Kanyakumari District in the state of Tamilnadu. The place Ponmanai is situated in the East, Thirparappu in the North-east and Arumanai in the North -west. The name Aruvikkarai is a Tamil word, *Aruvi* means brook *karai* means bank of the brook. The place located on the bank of a brook, so this place has that name. It has historical importance from olden days onwards. Aruvikkarai palace, Krishnaswami Temple, Ramayyan Dalawai palace and Aruvikkarai Dam added its historical values. This study analyse the historical importance of Aruvikkari.

Key words: Aruvikkarai, Thiruvattar, brook, corridor, palace, temple, *Dalawai*, inscriptions, dam, irrigation, paddy, tax, measurements

Introduction

The name Aruvikkarai is the combination of two Tamil words '*Aruvi*' and '*karai*' which means bank of a river. It has some historical monuments and inscriptions. Aruvikkarai is placed under the jurisdiction of former Kalkulam Taluk, now under the newly formed Thiruvattar Taluk. This place is one of the irrigated and fertile areas in Thiruvattar Taluk. The purpose of this study is to find out the historical values of Aruvikkarai.

During the seventh century A.D Aruvikkarai was part and parcel of Aynadu. There was a prolonged conflict between Ays and Pandyas in seventh and eighth century A.D. In the latter half of the eighth century A.D, the Ay kingdom was ruled over by Karunandan. The Kazhugumalai inscription records that Nedunchadayan, the Pandyan ruler led a successful expedition in the twenty third year of his reign that was in 788A.D against Karunandan of *Malainadu* and defeated the Ay ruler at *Aruviyurkkottai*. K.K. Pillay and M.G.S. Narayanan have identified *Aruvikkarai* near Thiruvattar as *Aruviyurkkottai*¹.

Aruvikkarai Inscription

The sub-joined three inscriptions are found in the Krishnaswami temple at Aruvikkarai. They are engraved in the Vattezhuthu script dated 1235A.D, 1237 A.D, 1240 A.D. They record the gifts of land made by certain private individuals to meet the expenses needed for the offerings to god Purushottamattudevar at Aruvikkarai².

The inscriptions mentions like this,

In the Mithuna month of the Kollam year 411(1235 A.D), Narayanan-Kumarasvami and Rama (n)-Mani of Palakkodu in Tiruvidankodu, gave for providing daily offerings of the nail of rice to Sri-Purushottamattu-devar at Aruvikkarai, i.e., for three kalam and three kuruni inclusive of the transit charges. three ma of land irrigable under the sluice-channel of the Perungulam of Mattur, a village in Tiruvidangodu. This paddy of three kalam and three kuruni shall be measured in (two) six-monthly installments. If there should be any failure in supplying this paddy at least once, and increase of default the quantity shall be twofold. If there should be default twice, this paddy are measured only after double quantity and with a fine of five kanam of gold.³

In the month a Karkataka of the Kollam year 413 (1237 A.D), the land which Kandan. Jataveda-Bhattar of Araiyanjeri endowed as gift to god Purushottamattudevar at Aruvikkarai is – one (tadi) of land called Avaniyar, three ma (in extent), under the mekkanai which is cultivable for paddy by water from Tachcha.....in Mattur. This land of three ma, Tiruvikkiraman Sankaran, a veriyan of Mattur, took over (for cultivation) on karanmai-tenure. Having (thus) secured (it), he promised to provide within the ‘twelve-feet time’ before noon, one nail of rice required for the offerings (to god), to remit the taxes current in the neighbourhood, to supply one garland daily for the god), and to receive the cooked rice- offering. If this supply of rice fail..... of Purushottama and the sabha shall conjointly conduct the charity.⁴

In the month of Minam of the Kollam year 416 (1240 A.D), Tuppa-Narayanan, Tuppan-Sennan and Kandan-Tuppan and his brother, endowed as gift to god Purushottamattu-Devar at Aruvikkarai.

2 ma of cultivable land under the Periyakulam in Mattur and 1 ma of land in the Mekkilparru.

On this three ma of land, three kalam of paddy shall be given as the produce share, for the expense of providing (one) nali of rice daily (to the god)

If this supply should fail once, double the quantity (at default) shall be measured and the expenses conducted. If it should fail twice.....

The fourth inscription of the temple is a pillar-label in Tamil dated on the 30th day of Ani in the Kollam year 830(1654 A.D), and stating that the patti was the gift of Jatavedan-Savitri, a lady of Palakkodu.⁵

From inscription of thirteenth century, this temple existed during the Venadu kings. The temple does not contain any special architectural features but its inscriptions are engraved on the base of the four walls of the central shrine. The inscription of 1235 AD mentioned that irrigation, agriculture, taxes lived and fines collected on those days and also privileges given to the temples. Mainly the measurement systems of the people are well known. Some grain measurements were recorded as *kalam, nail, kuruni, kottai and parai*⁶ for measuring rice. Land measures like *ma, mulam, tadi and avaniyar*⁷.

Aruvikkarai Rock Sculptures

Identification of Bas-relief Sculptures found in the rock of Aruvikkarai at Thiruvattar are Lord Vishnu in standing posture with his consorts Sree Devi and Boo Devi, Lord Vinayaga, Sivalinga, Devayani consort of Lord Muruga and Lord Muruga with his Vahana Peacock. In another rock sculpture of Sivalinga is found. They are belonging to Venadu period.

Aruvikkarai Palace

The palace was constructed approximately in twenty five cents of land and the walls were built around it. It had two gates on the western and eastern sides and the front entrance was situated on the western side and eastern gate had facility to face the brook inside the palace. In times of flood, the water of the brook did not enter into the palace. Thus, the palace was built with water proof facility it had a deck facing east. This palace was approximately thirty five feet long and ten feet wide in front of the corridor⁸.

The front side has two pillars and behind the long corridor there are six pillars. *Sapta Kannimar* Temple was found in the south eastern part of the palace. The king Marthanda Varma stayed in the palace to consult the *Dalawai* and other officers, about executive and administrative matters. Whenever the king came to the palace, first he had to take bath in the brook then worship at the *Sapta kannimar* temple and after that, he was involved in his day to day business. Near to this palace, Ramayyan *Dalawai* Palace was also found in the North Western side. Marthandavarma used to convene secret meetings against *Ettuveetu Pilamar* in the Aruvikkarai Palace. Now, this palace is converted into *Sapta Kannimar* temple⁹.

Aruvikkarai Ramayyan Dalawai Palace

Ramayyan *Dalawai* was the able *Dalawai* of King Marthandavarma, and he born in a Brahmin family. The king Marthandavarma constructed the palace at Aruvikkarai and gave it to Ramayyan *Dalawai*. So this was also called Ramayyan *Dalawai* Palace¹⁰. From here Dalawai observed the activities of the *Ettuvettu Pillamar*. Anandapadmanaban of Thachanvilai near Thiruvattar was poisoned by

Queen with the help of Ramayyan *Dalawai* in the palace¹¹. At Aruvikkarai, the high on the ground in western side where, the river flowing into the area was the place notified as Ramayyan *Dalawai* Palace. Later, the walls and palace were demolished and now converted into a rubber plantation. The structure of foundation stones which are used to build the wall and the stair way used to go from palace to Aruvikkarai brook are the only identification at present. There was a Brahmin *agrahara* and there the *Malai Devathai* Temple was situated in Aruvikkarai. This place was identified as Kirmattuvilai (Nowadays the place of Brahmin settlement called *Giramam*). Brahmins from the east of Krishan Kovil settled before the newly formed street¹².

Irrigation and Aruvikkarai Dam

The P.W.D. carried out extensive minor irrigation schemes during the years 1917-1945. The irrigation system in Travancore was often affected by natural calamities. Breach of tanks and silting of tanks, kaal, kulam, channels and sluices required proper maintenance. Hence, due attention was given to their renovation and other maintenance works¹³. In Aruvikkari also often flood occurred, it empowered the Diwan Peishkars to carry out such work. Aruvikkarai Dam had two branches towards left and right Aruvikkarai Left Bank Channel 1287 kilo meter 47.00 hecters and Aruvikkarai Right Bank Channel 4.22 kilo meter 214.69 hecters.

Aruvikkarai weir system was constructed across the river Paralayar at a place Aruvikkarai. The place Aruvikkari is located near river bed and surrounded by paddy fields, hills and valleys. So, irrigation was necessary for these areas and also often flood occurred in Aruvikkarai Dam¹⁴. In 1917, Aruvikkari Left Bank Channel was damaged during North West Monsoon¹⁵. For cultivation purpose, construction of an irrigation channel from the left bank and right bank of the Aruvikkarai Dam in the Kothayar Project division was undertaken¹⁶. In 1920, plan for constructing an under-tunnel for the first mile of Aruvikkarai right bank¹⁷. In 1921, steps were taken for the acquisition of land for constructing an irrigation channel from the left bank of Aruvikkari Dam¹⁸.

Of the dam at Aruvikkarai, the work was finished, the settling tank was dug and its bank formed to all but, six feet to its full height and the central division wall built to half its height. The masonry for the coagulation tank attached to the filter was nearly finished as well as the walls of the filter houses and the erection of pipes and other mechanical equipment therein was in progress at the close of the year 1930-31¹⁹. The foundation and masonry works connected with the low level services reservoir made good progress in the year 1930-1931. In 1941-1942, the reservoir at Aruvikkarai was overflowing in the dam on all the days of the year and the maximum level of water in the reservoir was 151'3 and the minimum level was 145'20²⁰. With all these developments, there was still potential in Kodayar and Paralayar rivers. Therefore, additional extension work was carried out in Pattanamkal area on the Thamaraparani River.

Conclusion

Aruvikkarai is one of the historical places in Kanyakumari District. It is a land of fertility and agriculture is the source of income olden days onwards. Now paddy fields are disappeared Rubber plantation is familiar in that place. The brook looks very beautiful it added matchless attraction. The Krishnaswami temple and its inscriptions very well express the social life of the people of Aruvikkarai especially the practice of taxation policy of on those days. The rock sculpture, wooden carvings of Krishnaswami temple and places denotes the historical value of Aruvikkarai.

END NOTES

SreedharaMenon, A., *A Survey of Kerala History*, Chennai, 2005, p.116.

² Kanyakumari Mavatta Tholiyal Kaiyedu, Tamilnadu Archaeological Department, Chennai, 2008, p. 64.

³ Travancore Archeological Series, Vol VII, Part .II, Trivandrum,1932, p.113.

⁴ Ibid, p.114

⁵ Ibid, p.113

⁶ Nali is a measure and 4 Nali is called Edanali and 5 Nalis as 1Padi.

Kottai measure by which paddy was measured.

1 Kalam= 1 Kottai; 5 Kuruni = 1Parai

⁷ One Tadi of land called Avaniyar

1 Ma = 14400s feet; 2 Chan = 1 Mulam

⁸ Siva.Vivekananthan., *Kumari Nattu Kottaikalum Kottarankalum(Tami)*, Nagercoil, 2013, p. 404.

⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰ Ibid.,pp.397-398.

¹¹ James R.Daniel, ed., *Proceedings of the Kanyakumari Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol.II, Second International Conference of KAAS,Nagercoil, 2013, p.89.

¹² Personal Interview with Sivaraman Nair, Thaliyal, May 13, 2019.

¹³ File No.942, P.W.D. Record, State Archives, Trivandrum, 1928.

¹⁴ File No.121, P.W.D. Record, State Archives, Trivandrum, 1917.

¹⁵ File No.1201, P.W.D. Record, State Archives, Trivandrum,1917.

¹⁶ File No.1117, General Department State Archives, Trivandrum,1922.

¹⁷ File No.44, General Department, State Archives, Trivandrum,1920.

¹⁸ File No.1117, General Department, State Archives, Trivandrum,1922.

¹⁹ Report on Travancore Administration (1930-31), Trivandrum,1932 p.157.

²⁰ Report on Travancore Administration (1941- 1942), Trivandrum,1943 p.142.