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CHOLA'S TEMPLES AS A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION — A STUDY

***S. Mala** , Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of History, Thiru. Vi.Ka. Government Arts College, Thiruvarur,

Dr.N. Marisamy, Associate Professor, Thiru. Vi.Ka. Government Arts College, Thiruvarur.

Abstract

The temples in the south played an important role in the development of Socio — economic conditions of the country which could be read from the inscriptions. The Hindu temple like the religion which it represents, has had a long history. Its genesis has been a matter of controversy, In pre historic times the worship of images in the open, possibly under trees, preceded the erection temples. Temples became way popular from the 7th and 8th centuries onwards, with development of the Bakthi movement.

The temples became not only a place of worship but the very Focus of the entire life of the people of village. Hindu temples that, they were fortresses, treasuries, court houses, Parks, Fairs, exhibition sheds, halls of learning and the pleasure all in one. Besides sacred literature and devotional songs, music and dance formed the part of the Nityotsevas or the daily services, such as musicians, Nattuvanars and Madathu settaperumakkal. These are known about the various information about the temples.

Key words: Nityotsevas, Nattuvanars and Settaperumakkal.

Introduction

The temples became the pivot of the village with the popularisation of temple worship by the Nayanmars and Always its importance attained a great height. Almost everyone in the village offered worship at specified times in the temple which on occasion of special celebrations and Festivals people from far and near used to through the temples.

The new devotional elaborations of rituals resulted in greater participation and greater involvement of the peasantry. from the 9th century A.D. (most shrines of Brahmanical gods were simple and austera, reflecting the amiconie propensities of the samartha tradition of the age.) Before A.D. 800 there was a reversal of the trend to greater iconic worship, due principally to the influences of the Bhakti poets.

The temple became not only a place of worship but the very focus of the entire life of the people of a village. It has been rightly said of Hindu temples that, they were fortresses, treasuries, court house, parks, fairs and halls of learning and of pleasure. Several temples have afforded protection for people against invaders. In various ways temple have proved themselves as agents of poor relief. As landholder, consumer of goods and services and as employer and in short as the focus of social life and development, the temple of medieval times form played unique role. Above all the temple as well as the math attached to it served as the centre of cultural and educational activity.

Temple as a Centre of Hygiene

In medieval times temples for worship normally subject themselves to a certain measure of physical and mental discipline. Personal cleanliness, including the taking baths before going to the temple and the wearing of clean clothes are aids to physical discipline Fasts on particular days or at specified times of certain sacred days serve as auxiliaries to discipline more importance is the mental cleanliness and the scope for concentration and meditation. The worshippers have a great chance for developing these qualities than others,

Temple as a Education Institution

The temple as most positive is the familiarity for education that the temple provided. During the period when other public agencies like the state had not began to shoulder the educational responsibility it was primarily the temple and mutt was provided the facility for education. Many are the inscriptions of medieval times that speak to the educational facilities provided by temples.

Temple — A Moral Institution

There is another respect in which the moral conduct of Brahmins as well as of others, were influenced by the temple, the idea was that divine sanctity was attached to such vows. In respect of quite a large number of people who took vows, adherence to the right code of moral conduct would have been a motive force.

The Temple and Devaradiyars

As in the period of cholas the dancing girls were appointed to sing and dance in the Aandal and Thirupalliezhuchi. As they were the servants of god they were called devaradiyars,. These people were religious minded and made endowments to the temple.

Temple — a Vedapatasala

As the Brahmedeya insisted the welfare of the Brahmins to learn mantras and to recite vedas. The temple became a school for chanting. Mantras, performing srirudram, singing and dancing became a regular custom in the daily rituals and poojas. There were scholars to chant Thirugnanam and perform Srirudram. The mutts of the temples became boarding and lodging of the pilgrims and the poor.

Temple as a Treasury:

The village life centre around the temple and the administration went on smoothly. Large amount of money had to spent to burn the perpetual lamps to make adhyayanam and for sandhi etc. As a consequence lands were donated. Goats and cows were donated to burn the lamps and for abhisheka. Most of the inscription denote the endowments of lands only. Paddy and rice were also donated. The stone to show the border of the land of siva temple was called Thirisoolkal.

The people who were in the service of the temple also were given land as service tenure and this was called Jeevitham, Bhogam and Kani

Lands given to those:

<i>Who performed poojas</i>	-	<i>Bhattavriti</i>
<i>For adhyayance</i>	-	<i>Adhyayanavriti</i>
<i>For chanting Thirugnanam</i>	-	<i>Gnanapuram</i>
<i>For performing Srirudram</i>	-	<i>Srirudhradhyayanapuram</i>
<i>Temple endowment</i>	-	<i>Thiruvidayattam</i>
<i>Lands endowed to mutts</i>	-	<i>Matapuram</i>

All these were registered in the name of chandeswara and were taken care of by the temple and supervised by the Mahasabha the government. The lands were given on lease and the person had to enjoy the product and income form the land after giving the share to the temple.

People will naturally go to the temple with offering such as flower, coconut, Champhor, betal leaf etc, and hence the shops sprang up. The temple also buys camphor, cardamom and other ingredients for the Poojas and festivals from the shops. The business flourished in the same manner, the temple has become a place of worship, a vedapatasala, a school of fine arts, a treasury, a place to give justice, a public place and a fort to safeguard the people during hardships and thus played a pivotal role in the socio — economic condition of the country.

Temple a Social Institution:

The temple has been described as a Social institution besides being religious one. Whatever the purpose for which it was originally intended later it became multipurpose. This development belongs to the later pallava period and its fulfillment can be noticed in the imperial chola times.

The temple became a centre of practically all social activities in the village. It housed school religious discourses were conducted there, in its multipillared mantapas kings were crowned. The temple was a banker. It owned property always tax — free. It employed a large bureaucracy of servants highly officialised in the case of construction of temples. It is a centre of industrial activities involving story masonry carpentry, Jewellery, goldsmithy and so on. Icon — making i.e., sculpture in stone and metal, garland making special textiles and numerous other ancillary industrial activities centred round the temple providing employment to a variety of people in the village.

Every segment of society i.e., the kings, officials, warriors, priests, merchants and peasants had something to do with it. Endowments were made for spiritual merit by pious people. The institution of devaradiyar began well but ended scandalously, but it was inevitable in that context.

A religious orientation to every secular touch to religion operating both ways resulted in the institution of temple in Tamilnadu.

Conclusion:

In Tamil there is a proverb 'live not in a village, which has no temple' whatever this might mean, from the purely economic point of view it looks as if employment opportunities were high in a own with a large temple complex.

The temple was not dissociated from the justice of the land, criminals washed themselves out of their crime by instituting a perpetual lamp in temple. It served the double purpose of extracting a monetary penalty from the criminal and securing divine pardon for him. The kings themselves who endowed most to the temples were perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of the scheme. Thus it was that the Thamilian temple which proliferated during times of imperial expansion and shrank when the imperial boundary shrank stood for not merely religious values but for all social values besides.

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அறிவிப்பு / Announcement

அன்பான தமிழ்ச் சொந்தங்களே

வணக்கம்.

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