



STATUS OF WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL SOUTH INDIA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHOLAS

ABSTRACT
OF THE
THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

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IN

HISTORY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Womens' studies can be defined as studying women with a women's perspective or looking at women from a women's point of view. Ancient literature of our country both general and legal lack unanimity of views regarding the question of status of women in society. It is very difficult to draw up an accurate picture of their position in early medieval period. Their status in life, since the beginning of creation has been a subject of amelioration. Reformers for ages have tried to assign them a definite position in life. But inspite of their best endeavour it remains a baffling problem to adjust theories with practices.

Earlier studies on the societies and status of women concerned mainly with social life of women in general and include only a description of women, thus, marginalizing their contribution. In recent times, gender history has been a matter of great interest among the historians, the persuasion of gender history had also produced many scholarly works. This study aims at bringing women to the centre of historical process and attempts at studying the status of women during early medieval South India with special reference to Chola Empire. This work also aims in dealing with some of the unexplored and neglected themes which have not been touched by the historians and royal household functionaries, naming pattern among women, and position of war captives (women). The present study is in a sequential manner and has been divided into six chapters.

The first chapter deals with informations regarding the subject and area of the work. It also throws flood light on the sources of the work. The aim of

this work has already been mentioned above, as far as the area of the study is concerned, it covers the whole Chola Empire which comprised parts of Orissa, whole of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, parts of Karnataka. The time bound of this work is confined to Cholas of Vijayalaya line to Chola Chalukya line i.e. till Rajaraja III (850 to 1279 A.D.) who ruled the Tamil country from the 9th to 13th century A.D.

Inscriptions, mostly on stone and a few on copper plates found in various parts of Tamil and its adjoining areas constitute the primary sources of this study. They have been discovered and published by the Epigraphy branch of Archaeological Survey of India, the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology and some other agencies since 1887 onwards. These inscriptions are written in Tamil and some in Sanskrit and Kannada. Engraved mostly on temple walls, these inscriptions record the grants made to temples by common people, officials and member of royal household. They contain rich informations throwing light on various aspects of political, social, economic and religious life of the contemporary period and they can generally be relied upon for reconstructing the history of the contemporary period. The secondary sources includes all the published work related to the study including articles, papers and journals etc.

The second chapter “Women living in different strata during Chola period”, deals with the study of general aspects of women of different strata viz. Royal, Middle and Lower, and this chapter has two sub-sections, (A) General aspects of women like marriage, widowhood, sati, dress, ornaments,

food and drinks and means of entertainment. (B) Naming and Identity pattern of women during Chola period.

Though the early and medieval Chola society was a male dominated one, women enjoyed a position of respect and reverence. After making a detailed study on different aspects of the women belonging to different strata that lived during Chola period it can be said that not a vast difference can be seen with regard to the Sangam Age. Slight variations are there, but the systems were altogether the same. Strict marriage rituals were introduced, but the condition of widow was same as it was, dress and eating habits were altogether the same. Inscriptions throw a considerable light on the varieties of ornaments worn by the women during Chola period.

Adopted names along with the original name were also a unique feature practiced by the women during Chola period. These names or titles were bestowed on them by kings and temple authorities according to their specialization in their work. Like Pendatti, Annukki, Velaikkar are the titles given to the royal servants. Likewise, Adiyal, Talaikkoli, Mannikkan are the titles bestowed on temple women. Apart from these Nachchiyar, Deviyar, Adigarichchi, etc., are the titles given to women of different capacities.

The third chapter “Women and her role in economy during Chola period”, make a study of earning women of Chola society. This chapter is divided into three sub-topics (A) Women as Temple servants, (B) Women as Royal household servants, (C) Other avenues of work done.

The Indian tradition fixes the gender roles of men and women to be public and private respectively, these divisions appear to be less rigid and

certain amount of interchangeability is always noticed. Women always played an important role in the socio-economic life of the country; same was the case with the women belonging to Chola Empire. In early medieval period every class of women was involved in one or the other kind of economic activities. Though women of elite did not take up any economic activity but those of weak economic sections of the society undertook variety of profession to supplement their family income which shows the economic independence experienced by the women during this period.

Temples and Royal palaces are the main employers of the women. They work in different departments of temples as well as royal palaces. Temple functionaries of medieval south India temple carried out many duties apart from singing and dancing. They were employed in various capacities like garland making, cleaning, husking paddy and many more. They were at par with men in many ways like recruitment, service, and management and to some extent in wages also.

The royal household comprised numerous servants of varied description including bodyguards. The bathing and kitchen establishments comprised mostly women. The palace servants of the Cholas were organized into Velams. They were branded when introduced to an institution. They do not have a normal family life but they are open to sex life. These women were economically independent and enjoyed a specific social status far better than the common folk. The appointments and wages pattern of Royal household servants are not known to us.

Apart from Temples and Royal household there were other avenues which have contributed a lot in giving financial satisfaction to the women during Chola period, they were agriculture, dairy farming, handloom sector, cooks, wetnurse, prostitutes and what not. In some they act as a helping hand for their male counterpart and in others they took up their profession on their own.

The fourth chapter 'Women and Wealth Disbursement' deals with (A) Articles donated by the women, (B) Women as donors during the Chola period.

Women actively participated in making donations to the temple. There were two sources through which women use to make donations, they are stridhan and personal earning of the women. Inscriptional evidences shows that women had power to disburse their personal earning according to their own will. There were two intentions of making gifts, one was the removal from past sins and other was to achieve religious merit in the future life.

Temples were the main beneficiary of these donations. Gifts were sometimes made directly in kind like gold, silver, money, ornaments, livestock, lamps, vessels etc. But were more often given indirectly in which the services were maintained through the income earned or interest on an asset which was assigned to the temple.

Our finding shows that royal women donated a large portion of their wealth in philanthropic works as they were providing a mode for the masses. Next to the Queens were Devaradiyar and Royal household servants who had also made a large number of donations. But there was no inscription describing any women belonging to the lower strata as donors.

The fifth chapter enumerates the Women contribution to Chola Art and Architecture as well as Religion and Culture.

Chola were the inheritors and continuers of the Pallava tradition in temple construction. The survey of the temple building activities evinces active participation of women, particularly those of the ruling families, in constructing temples like Sembiyan Mahadevi, Kundavai and Lokmahadevi. Their patronage to temple building art indicate that queens were in possession of huge amount of money or controlled such regular and rich resources of income that they could undertake big building projects of great artistic merit and carry them to successful completion.

During Chola period portrait sculpture and metal casting were also known to the people. This period is said to have witnessed an explosion of this art form. Rajaraja I and Rajendra I was great metal caster but it was Sembiyan Mahadevi who showed them the way and blessed them in their endeavours in this direction.

Chola paintings, like all other forms of Chola art was a continuation and development of Pallava-Pandya work. Among the Chola paintings the most important painting are found in Tanjore temple most probably belonging to the time of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. The themes of the Chola paintings are religious drawn. Women contribution in Chola painting are not the direct one, but women indirectly contributed a lot in the Chola painting. We do not come across any women painter of the period under consideration. They were only the part of the paintings.

Generally formal education was provided to men and non-formal, mostly traditional education to women. Girls of royal family were given training in art of fighting and in statecraft. Women of every strata had their own way of contributing to the religion as they all wanted to secure their place in the heavens. They made lots of donations to the temples, constructed several lofty temples, involve themselves in day to day rituals of the temple and they also worked in the temples in various capacities.

As far as the cultural contribution of the women is concerned the information regarding this was very limited and scarce and we also do not have any informations regarding the women contribution in the literature of the Chola period. So to draw a conclusion on such aspect was very difficult task to do.

The sixth chapter “The Women and Politics” has been divided into four sub topics (A) Women and her role in Chola politics (B) Women and her role in Wars and Battle fields (C) Politics and Marriage (D) Women as the sufferer of Manmade and Natural Calamities.

In India for many centuries women did not assume the role of sovereigns, though there has been no written laws which made them ineligible for the political succession. Despite the fact that law giving authorities are not unanimous about women’s political participation, substantial reference can be found in the records pertaining to ancient and medieval periods regarding women administration. Women occupying the high profile position are few but they existed at all is the matter of considerable significance.

One can notice a great involvement of women in the political affairs of the medieval Andhra Pradesh, Chalukya domain and other ruling classes but Cholas are silent on this point. Chola royal ladies are more talked about their involvement in philanthropic works.

Undoubtedly royal princes act as a binding medium in bringing together the two warring king/states through marriage. Abundant epigraphical references substantiate this argument.

The women was also the sufferer of calamities, they are the victims of manmade as well as natural calamities. They were the worst hit of the wars as they were caught between the crossfire of rival camps. In this scenario royal as well as common classes of women suffered equally. They were raped and defaced by the victorious kings and the victorious kings feel proud in doing such inhuman acts.

To conclude, it can be argued that the civilization has been jointly created by both men and women but the traditional historiographies only highlights the contributions of men. Unless the study of history is taken up with a wholistic perspective bringing women to the centre of historical process it will become very difficult to understand the phenomenon.



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T7321



Proclaim ! (or Read!)
In the name
of thy Lord and Cherisher
who created man, out of
A (mere) clot of
congealed blood;
Proclaim! And thy Lord
is most Bountiful....
He who taught
(The use of) the pen
taught man that
which he knew not

Sura (Alaq) XC VJ 1-6
Al-Quran



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Certificate

This is to certify that **Miss Farheen Mansoob** has completed her research work under my supervision. The present thesis prepared by her on “**Status of Women in Medieval South India with Special Reference to Cholas**”, is her original research work. I consider it fit for submission for the award of Ph.D. degree in History.


(**Dr. S. Chandni Bi**)
Supervisor

Dedicated
To
My Loving Grandparents

**(Late) Sheikh Abdul Shakoor
&
(Late) Mohammadi Begum)**

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(Farheen Mansoob)

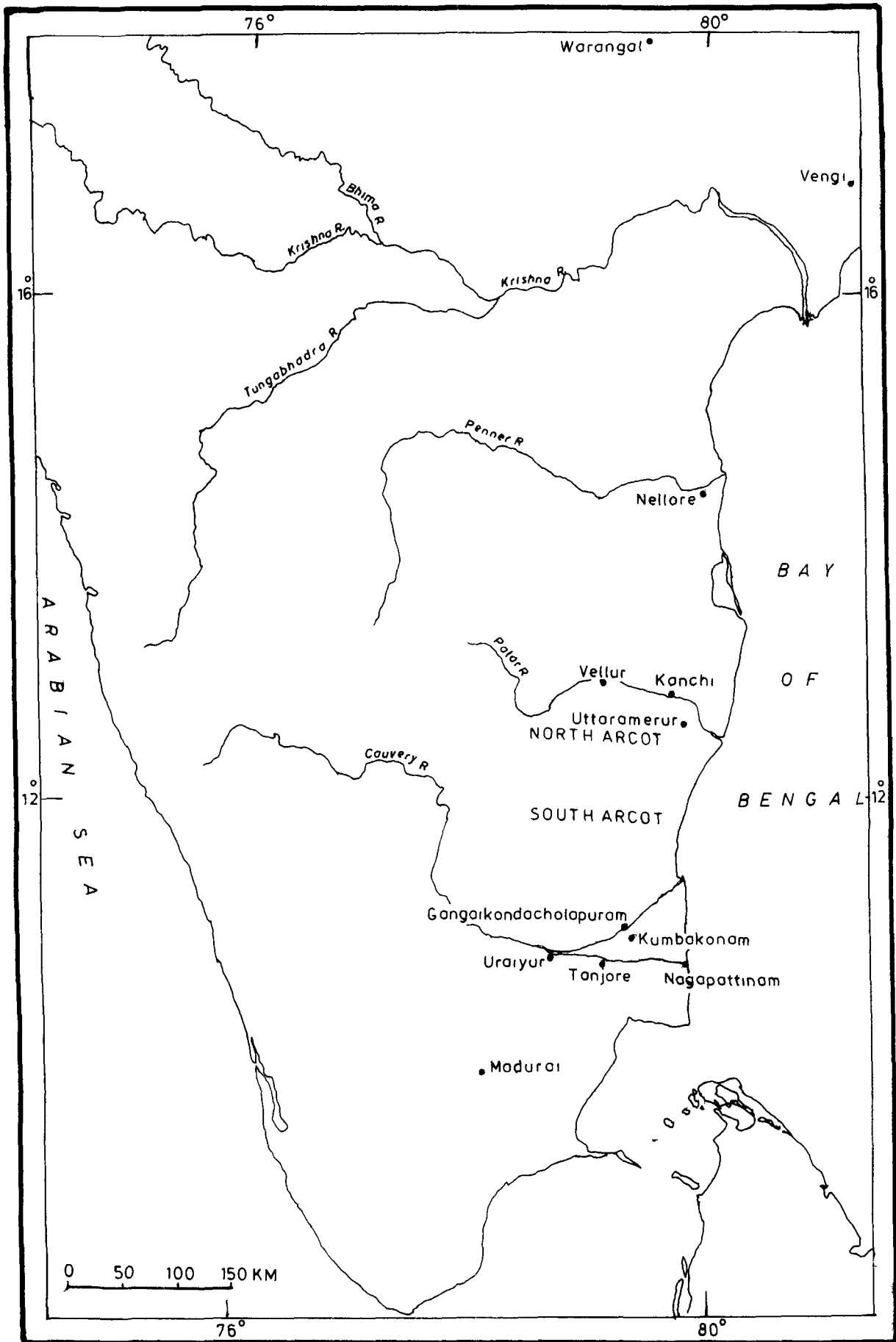
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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ARE</i>	Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy
<i>ARSIE</i>	Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy, Madras
<i>IESHR</i>	Indian Economy and Social History Review
<i>PIHC</i>	Proceedings of Indian History Congress
<i>JAA</i>	Journal of Asian and African Studies
<i>JAS</i>	Journal of Asian Studies
<i>JIHC</i>	Journal of Indian History and Culture
<i>SII</i>	South Indian Inscriptions

CHOLA EMPIRE 850-1300 A.D.



Courtesy: K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "The History of South India from Pre historic time to the fall of Vijayanagar" OUP, 1996 Page 202.

Chapter - I

Introduction

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

“If we say the world of man is the state, the world of man is his commitment, his struggle on behalf of the community, we could then perhaps say that the world of the woman is a smaller world. For her world is her husband, her family, her children and her home. But where would the big world be if no one wanted to look after the small world? How could the big world continue to exist, if there was no one to make the task of caring for the small world at the centre of their lives? No, the big world rests upon the small world? The big world cannot survive if the small world is not secure”¹ – Adolf Hitler.

A.S. Altekar points out, “To understand any given civilization in its fullest sense and to realize its limitations and excellencies, it is essential to study the position of women and their status in it”.²

It is generally believed that in the strong patriarchal society of India, the position of women was quite miserable. They were enjoying a lower status in the society. It is argued that the improvement in their position occurred only with the advent of colonization. The British with their enlightened and modern ideas, liberated women from centuries of subjugation.

In describing the position and status of woman it may be noted at the outset, that in the main it conformed to the dictum laid down by *Manu*, the law giver that “a women does not deserve freedom and that her life should throughout be one of dependence on man”.³ There was nothing peculiar in this dictum as it was a feature characteristic of the world including the West in the

Pre-Industrial Era. It was in some primitive societies which were matriarchal in character the woman held a position equal to and sometime superior to that of man.⁴

She did not participate directly in public life and no career or public position was open to her. These were of course a few like Kakatiya Rudramadevi who ruled as queen and a few like the Palnad-Nayakuralu who distinguishes herself as a minister. But these were exception to the general rule. It is however a point worthy of consideration that her dependence on man did not mean that she was not honoured or respected in the society, she had her recognized place in it and especially as mother responsible for the upbringing and proper training of children. She was held in great esteem. She held her unique place in the family as having the same divinity in her as the father had, and her blessing were as much valued as those of father. Manu himself says that “women must be adorned and honoured by their fathers, brothers, husbands, sons and brother-in-law who desire their own welfare, where they are not honoured no sacred rites yields rewards”.

Ancient literature of our country both general and legal lack unanimity of views regarding the question of status of women in society. It is very difficult to draw up an accurate picture of their position in early medieval period. Their status in life since the beginning of creation has been a subject of amelioration. Reformers for ages have tried to assign them a definite position in life. But inspite of their best endeavour it remains a baffling problem to adjust theories with practices.

To many, women’s history is not “*intellectually interesting*”. A wide spread impression is that it is held in low esteem and the field itself lacks

legitimacy. Many feel that the study of women must be the ultimate harbinger of scholarly chaos.⁵

Since, history has been taken away from women, it is necessary to put them back into the picture and to document their role and work, a task which may take many years of painstaking work. However this is not enough. The effort is not just to tackle on women's history to the existing framework but to work for a better understanding of the past, to understand the evolution of an ideology, social relations and institution that led to the subordination of women. This perspective had proved extremely fruitful both in terms of theoretical insight, as well as in detailed empirical studies.

A big lacuna is that most often works related to women's studies in the historical background are based in European context and there are very few works which have attempted to look at women with a women's perspective in the historical context, in the Indian situation. The problem is more so in the medieval period with its male biased elite sources. In order to write a new history worthy of the name we will have to recognize that no single methodological and conceptual framework can fit the complexities of historical experience of all women.⁶

Indian history till the 1970's is mostly silent on all gender based issues. History was unequivocally male history. In the specific context of South Indian history, pioneering scholars produced lengthy histories in which the only references to the women could be listed on a single page. Alternatively women were pushed to the end of the text, literally locating them in the periphery of social history. N. Subramanian's '*Sangams Polity*' (1966) established a pattern

which is replicated in the early historiography on South India. Usually a brief section or even a chapter is appended at the end of the book between an account of “Dress and Ornaments” and another on “Games and Amusement”. Needless to add that the representation of women was an entirely homogenized ignoring issues of caste and class. The bulk of text was largely denoted to ‘male’ concerns and enterprises especially politics and war. If women were mentioned at all they were kingly queen like Rani Rudramma or Rani Chinnamma. The task facing a historian examining gender issues in early South India is therefore a daunting one of putting women back on the historical canvas. This enterprise has been defined by ‘feminist’ historian as ‘*salvage or retrieval history*’.⁷

In recent times, gender history has been a matter of great interest among the historians, the persuasion of gender history had also produced many scholarly works which deals from the angles of customs and practices, clothing, fashion and some work on their political activities had also been done by Nilakanta Sastri, A. Padma, Karashima Noboru, Lesilie Orr and Vijaya Ramaswamy.

In recent works like the work done by Y. Subbarayalu, A. Padma, Heitzman James E., Aloka Prashersen are all touching the economic, political and general aspects of Chola history but a deep research in the social aspect is yet a gap to be filled Hence my effort would be to make a detailed study of the Status of women during Chola period.

In my work I would be dealing with some of the unexplored and neglected themes like identity of women through naming pattern and position

of women as war captives and women's donation. All these themes are novel and untouched yet due to some unknown reasons this has not fired the imagination of the historians, still a deep and systematic research is required for the better understanding of the social history.

Inscription, mostly on stone and a few on copper plates found in various parts of Tamil and its adjoining areas constitute the primary sources of this study. They have been discovered and published by the Epigraphy branch of Archeological Survey of India, the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology and some other agencies, since 1887 onwards.

The inscriptions are written in Tamil and some in Sanskrit and Kannada. Engraved mostly on temple walls, these inscriptions record the grants made to temples by common people, officials and members of royal household. Incidentally they contain rich informations throwing light on various aspects of political, social, economic and religious life of the contemporary period and they can generally be relied upon for reconstructing the history of the contemporary period. Of course, there are some inscriptions which contain exaggeration, myths, and eulogies which are not so useful to our purpose. There are also problems posed by mutilated or incomplete inscriptions some of the terms used in inscriptions are obsolete now and so difficult from proper explanation. In spite of all these difficulties, it can be said that the epigraphs are more reliable than contemporary literature and provides much useful informations regarding society prevalent during Chola period.

Chapterization : The first chapter of the thesis is a formal introduction chapter giving information about the subject of the work, area of the work, source

material and scope of the work. As far as the area of the study is concerned, it covers the whole Chola Empire which comprised in its hay days parts of Orissa, whole of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, some parts of Karnataka and northern parts of Ceylon. The Cholas belongs to early medieval period but there are many theories regarding the period of early medieval. Hence I am placing it in the medieval period. The time bound of the thesis would be confined to the Cholas of Vijayalaya line to Chola-Chalukya line i.e. till Rajaraja III (850-1279 AD) who ruled the Tamil country from the 9th to 13th century AD. The source material for the research are carefully scrutinized. The sources includes Epigraphical and Literary sources. In Epigraphical sources, information through Inscriptions, Copper plates published in the form of the Annual Reports on Epigraphy, South Indian Inscriptions. On the other hand literary sources of the work are *Devaram*, *Kalingattuparni*, *Periyapuranam*, *Tiruvalliyadal Puranam* etc. The secondary sources include all the published work related to my study including articles, papers and journals etc.

The second chapter of the thesis is devoted to make a detailed study of different strata of women, lived in the Chola period under the three broad categories viz. royal, middle and lower. In this chapter [the general aspects of women are discussed like marriage, life of a widow, sati system, dress and ornaments and means of entertainments. Further in this chapter we will be making a detailed study on the naming pattern or identity pattern of women. There are references of different names adopted by different strata of women. Queens and wives of chieftain use to have names apart from their original names, like '*deviyar*' was the title given to the wife of chieftains. Some women were identified through the work they do for example temple servants were known as '*devaradiyar*' and royal household servants were known as '*pendatti*', some were identified through their husband's profession and so on.

When the study of any society was made it was usually caste centered but my efforts would be placing it on class specially economic class. [Women played an important role in the economic activities right from the pre-historic time. In early medieval period also every class of women was involved in one or the other kind of economic activity. The next chapter of the thesis is dealing with the earning women of the Chola dynasty.] Their main avenues were Temple services and Royal household services. The Chola temples employed a considerable numbers of functionaries who were directly or indirectly connected to temple related jobs. To assess the position of female temple servitors it is necessary to look at the nature of appointment, the scale of remuneration and terms and conditions of the profession. We should also look into the various duties performed by them inside the temple. Naturally we have to compare them with male counterpart for a better understanding of their situation. The second avenue for the earning women was the Royal household services. In this area major employment was made in kitchen establishment, bathing establishment and giving personal comforts to the royal members. Women were also employed as spies to other countries and also act as personal bodyguards of the king and princes.

Donations and Wealth disbursement by women is the fourth chapter of the thesis. The inscriptions of the concerned period give many examples of the women of various classes giving donations to the temples and for many other public works. Here we are dealing with the purpose of donations, articles of donation and the identity of donors i.e. to which class, caste and region these donors belong to, has been traced as much as possible.

The next chapter of the thesis is about the Women's contributions to Religion, Culture, Art and Architecture.

The sixth chapter of thesis is throwing some light on the Women's role in Politics during Chola period. In this chapter we have tried to know the answers about some important aspects like whether women had a say in the politics of the state or not, either they were directly or indirectly involved in the politics and her participation in wars and battle fields. In this chapter we have discussed about the women and her role during the occurrence of natural and man made calamities. The natural calamities like floods and droughts and manmade calamities like wars. In this aspect discussion has been made with reference to royal and common women and their positions as war captives.

In the final chapter the conclusion an assessment on the status of women during early medieval South India has been attempted.

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Chapter - II

Women Living in Different Strata

CHAPTER – 2

WOMEN LIVING IN DIFFERENT STRATA

It is now acknowledged on all hands that the history of people is enormously wider than the history of their Kings and ministers, wars and treaties. Edward Freeman's epigrammatic definition that 'history is past politics and politics is present history', is found to be far too restricted in character. It emphasizes only one aspect of history.

Among modern historians who have taken a more comprehensive view of history, the foremost scholars are York Powell and Sir Charles Firth, both are the professors of *Oxford University*. Possessing a wide conception of what history should be, York Powell emphasized that history deals with the social conditions of masses of mankind, while Sir Charles Firth expanded the same idea and observed that "history seems to be the record of the life of societies of man, of the changes which those societies have gone through of the ideas which have determined the actions of those societies and of the material condition which have helped or hindered the development".¹ History strictly speaking cannot be separated as political or social, though political or social factors many a time may be the underlying force for a change.

"Everyday life in the past, with all its rituals and regularities, social institution with all their precepts and peculiarities, religion with all its quest for inquiry and interrogation and education with its concepts and connotations would be mere meaningless social relics, if they have no background to explain their historical evolution. Similarly politics is unthinkable without a society which has always been the theatre for all political drama, tragic and comic."²

Social history primarily concerns itself with the daily life of the people in the past, the character of family and household life. It comprises the human as well as the economic relation of different classes to one another, the social stratification and group occupation, craft and trade, the condition of the labour and leisure. Intimately connected with these their appears the history of ideals and aspiration of manners, customs, beliefs and superstition.

Though it is more difficult to reconstruct the social history than the other branches of the history of the people, none can dispute its importance and its social value. Infact the structure of society is based upon the entire body of social custom and traditions beginning from birth ceremonies passing through marriage and ultimately ending with the death, as well as upon the side range of social institution which binds various groups together.

History of the Tamils, their social history in particular has not been adequately written even many a century after the advent of the Europeans who are well known for their sense of history. It is really amazing that even many decades of marvellous and meticulous venture in the realm of historical research have not prompted historian of this part of the country to write such a history which even today remains largely an unexplored field.³ Apart from professional contribution relating to a limited period or even little has been done in the way of writing a comprehensive social history of Tamils. As we go through the general aspects of the Chola society we came to know that the caste was the basis of social organization. Each caste was more or less a hereditary occupational group with an active organization for the regulation and protection of its economic and social interest and the Indian society of those

days is best conceived as a loose federation of strong self regulating groups which shared a common background of social rights and obligations making for mutual understanding and accommodation.⁴

No study of a society can be completed without a reference to the position of women in it. The position of women in a society reflects the standard of its civilization, culture and refinement. The code of Manu, the ancient Hindu Law giver has ascribed to our women as dependent, yet honourable status in the society.

Though the early and medieval Chola society was a male dominated one⁵ women enjoyed a position of respect and reverence. Contemporary inscriptions make particularly clear that they enjoyed the freedom to make liberal gifts to religious institutions like temples not only for the merit of her husband but also of her parents. Women of higher status were given higher education while a common housewife was perhaps educated to a very limited extent. Nevertheless she was very well acquainted with moral and worldly affairs, she was able to win the heart of her husband by her absolute devotion, command respect from the children and other junior members of the family due to her motherly affection and earn blessing of elder of her selfless service. Because of these laudable qualities, she was considered as the very goddess of prosperity of the home.

This second chapter of the thesis will be devoted for making a detailed study of the general aspects of the women living during Chola period. This study will include the women of all the three stratas viz. royal, middle and lower, and a discussion will be done on their marriage, widowhood, sati, food,

dress and ornaments and her means of entertainments. Further in this chapter we will be making a detail study on the naming pattern or identity pattern of women during Chola period. So let us first deal with the general aspects of the women.

1. Marriage : Marriage is one of the sixteen *samskaras* of life stated in the inscriptions. It is a sacred as well as the secular observance. It is also the foundation of family life of an individual. It enables a man to perform religious, rites and continuation of the family through progeny.⁶ It is a necessary ritual in one's life and gives a certain status to women.⁷

The earliest form of "marriage" among the Tamils seems to have been simple and natural because in most of the cases love must have been the basis of the marriage. The kind of marriage which involve no rituals is seems to be known as "*kalavau*" to the Tamils, because it is performed by the consent of man and women without the knowledge of parents; and it involve the element of "*Kalavu or theft*". The idea is stealing women by a man.

There were eight forms of marriage known to the Tamil people of that period.⁷ They were (1) *Brahma* (2) *Prajapatya* (3) *Arsha* (4) *Daiva* (5) *Gandharva* (6) *Asura* (7) *Rakshasa* (8) *Paisasa*. The first was the gift of a twelve year old girl to 48 year old Brahmachari (bachelor)., The second was the giving of a girl to a person of different Gotra if he asked for her. The third was giving a girl by the process of *Datta* i.e. standing the girl between a golden cow and a golden bull and giving her away along with the golden cattle. The fourth was giving the girl to the purohit who performed the Vedic sacrifices. The fifth was the natural coming together of man and woman without the

parents or others arranging the marriage and it was free of rituals and usually clandestine. The sixth was the taking the girl to wife after performing a prescribed and difficult task as Rama and Arjuna who bent the bow and married Sita and Draupadi respectively. The seventh was forcibly carrying away a girl without her consent and without the consent of her people. The eighth was marrying (out of seduction) a woman older than oneself, or who is asleep or is in a drunken state.⁸

To the Tamils *manral* or *manam* meant marriage and for the Sangam age the only form of *manam* they know were *gandharva* system of marriage. This system did not last for long because, if the elders happened to be tough and refuse to recognize the union, the couple was surely in a trouble. But generally it ended in settled family life. The *Tolkappiam* says that this system came to be abused in course of time as any system of free love can so easily be abused. When falsehood and error made their appearance, the wise men of the community whom *Tolkappiam* called the “*aiyar*” invented the rituals”.⁹ The *aiyar* were perhaps the Brahmins but this statement does not tell us anything about their rituals. Wearing a *Tali* was the only ritual known, incorporated by Brahmins of that period the wearer of the *Tali* can be identified as a married lady.

According to *CHAU JU KUA*¹⁰, a Chinese traveller to Southern India in 1225 AD, when marriage was contracted, they send in the first place, a female go-between with a gold or silver finger ring to the girl’s home. Three days afterwards there was a meeting of bridegroom’s male members to decide upon the amount of land, cotton, betel nuts, wine and the like to be given as marriage

portion. The girl's family sends in return gold or silver finger ring, *Yue-no*¹¹ cloth and brocaded clothing to be worn by the son-in-law. If the man wish to withdraw from the engagement, he would not dare reclaim the marriage gifts. This was the process prior to the marriage ceremony in Chola dominion, the system of marriage that was actually in practice during Chola period was kind of ritualistic marriage not much different from that practice in Sangam Age.

In *Silappadikaram*, a graphic picture of the marriage is given. It was the marriage of Kovalan and Kannagi. The marriage was arranged by the parents, the grand old brahman's conducted the marriage of Kovalan and Kannagi. Kovalan circumambulated the sacred fire in a clock wise direction and wedded Kannagi. The womenfolk, just as they do even today took round the "*paligai*" (the grains or the seeds which were made to grow into sprouts in diminutive pot and which anticipated the future prosperity of the couple). The bride Kannagi in her marriage was on the eve of completing 12 years and the bridegroom Kovalan was 16 years old. According to Haradatta, twelfth century commentator, the marriageable age for a girl was 14 years. This shows that since the beginning child marriage was the order of the day and it was mostly followed by the Brahmin families of the age.

On the occasion of marriage '*Aranamu*' (bride price) was given to the bride. It can range from land, gold, to livestock and attendants, depending on the economic status of the bride family. *Aranamu* forms a part of *Stridhana* or the property of the woman. Beside *Aranamu*, *Oli sulka* or bride price is to be paid to the bride's parents, it was also known as *Mulai Vilai*. Due to the constant demand for higher bride-price by the parents of the girls the caste

guilds had to frame strict regulations.¹² The practice of paying a fee for the bride is mentioned in such ancient texts like *Ahananuru*, *Purananuru*, and *Kalittogai*. Even now the latter practice of the bride being paid a price is quite common among some communities in South India.¹³

Marriage may also be of political nature, the records show that some of the marriages were due to the diplomatic policies of the rulers of the day. Virarajendra Chola gave her daughter, Rajasundari in marriage to the Ganga ruler *Rajaraja Devendravarmen*.¹⁴ Likewise Anuguraju married Mailame, the daughter of the chief of Velanadu, Gonka II and became the Lord of Palnad.¹⁵ Aditya was a careful diplomat and he tried to assuage Pallava feeling by marrying a princess from the family. Aditya's senior queen was Ilangonpichchi, a Rashtrakuta princess (d/o Krishan II). This was also a diplomatic marriage intended to bring about peaceful relations between them. Sometimes marriage among the ruling classes were arranged by parents on political ground when Rajaraja Chola was ruling over the Southern Kingdom there was a confusion in Vengi Mandala, so he brought that territory under his control and set up Saktivarman, the Eastern Chalukyan King as the head of the Vengi Mandala. In order to strengthen the relations between the two kingdom he gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to Vimladatiya, the crown prince of the Eastern Chalukya who bore the title '*Ariyanka Bhima*'. Bhima had two wives of whom one was Ankidevi who was a Kalinga princess whose marriage was also probably on political grounds.¹⁶

The practice of polygamy seems to have been quite common among the members of the royal families. Kulottunga I the first Chola Chalukya ruler had

many wives¹⁷ like Solakula Valli and Dina Chintamani. Rajaraja I too had many wives like Lokamahadevi, Panchavan Mahadevi, Chola Mahadevi, Prithivi Mahadevi and Trilokya Mahadevi. Though there were polygamy among the kings and the rich, the majority of the commoners were monogamous.

2. Food and Drink : Tamils whether vegetarian or non-vegetarian believed in eating well. The several articles of food mentioned in the various records of this period, speak of the excellence of Indian cuisine in this period. The food and drink habits described in the *Periyapuranam* as belonging to the earlier centuries should have been relevant specially to the Chola period.

One section of the Chola society i.e. Brahmanas confined themselves to the vegetarian diet. The rice, (specially *Rajannam*), melted butter, milk, curd, vegetables like unripe mangoes, pomegranates, and cabbage are parts of their daily diet. Brahman women folk were expert cooks, taking pride in their mastery of the culinary art. *Pongal* is a delicacy made up of millet and rice cooked in boiling milk which is very popular even now. The people sat down on the floor and women folk served the already mixed up food. Food was served on plantain leaves, an still current practice. Rice was the staple food during Chola period.

A lithic record refers to the gift of rice to the diety.¹⁸ Generally, the cooked rice offered to the God is known as “*Amudu*” or “*Amudupadi*.”¹⁹ A record from *Bhumavarana* includes pulse soup (*pappu*) green grams (*pesatu*), ghee (*neyi*), curd (*perugu*) in the *Amudu*.²⁰ Another record from the same place included in *Amudu* rice, *pappu*, curd, pumpkins, plantains, brinjals, bitter gourds, and pepper.²¹ The curries and pickles served in a meal are known as

Nanjndhu in the records.²² Betel leaves and areca nuts were also offered to the god. All these items are of a complete vegetarian meal.

Non-vegetarian diet includes fish and mutton, eating of mutton was always accompanied by drinking of toddy. In the market separate places were allotted for the sale of toddy. The customer drank the heady toddy in bowls called “*mandai*”.

The use of betel leaves were known and were quite in vogue. The rolls of betel leaves were known as “*tiraiyal*” (literally meaning a “*roll*”).²³ suggesting that before those leaves were used they were rolled into fanciful shape. There were special servants appointed to wait on kings when the latter chewed betel leaves. Diminutive boxes containing these leaves then as now were being carried about and the privileged ones had gold betel leaf boxes. They felt that the use of betel leaves added freshness and beauty to the chewer. There was a special class of persons called ‘*pasavar*’ whose business was to roll the betel leaves and get them ready for sale. The practice of the wife giving her husband betel leaves and areca nut after he had taken his food is mentioned.²⁴

Apart from these items sugar was also much in use and was called *Sakkara*²⁵ and jaggery was mentioned as *Bellamu*.²⁶

The only food which was prescribed for widows to whatever community they might belong was cold rice and cabbage leaves. The ascetics were to be content with cold rice and hot water.

3. Sati and Widowhood : The loving wife was a lucky one if she predeceased her husband; but if she had the misfortune to survive him, her position became

deplorable. She could either perish with him on the funeral pyre or survive him to lead the humiliating life of despised widow. The name by which the former practice is well known in India is *Sati* which literally means ‘*a virtuous wife*’ but historically has acquired the meaning of ‘*self immolation of widows*’. This term was not in use in Sangam literature, though the practice was there but not widely prevalent. ‘*Tippaidal*’ (falling into flames) is the expression used in Tamil. There are few references from ancient Tamilagam where it can be seen that women commit sati on the death of their husbands. *Perunkoppendu*, the wife of *Bhudappandiya* wanted to die on the funeral pyre of her husband. Men of wisdom around her requested her to give up her decision. She refused to comply with their request and addressed them in these words, “O men of wisdom! You are wise but you have hurt me. You want me to eat rice mixed with seasmum seeds and Velai greens cooked with tamarind, you want me to sleep on hard pebbled floor. Be assumed that I am not such a mean woman to live performing the “*Kaimmai Nonbu*” (*widowhood*). The funeral pyre may be frightening to you, but to me, you should know it appears as cool as a beautiful lotus pond.”²⁷

What prompted these ladies to commit this extreme act of self immolation is a matter of speculation, some of them at least must have been prompted by the most genuine and irrepressible sorrow to commit Sati; the tradition that such an act constitute great heroism for women finally landing them in heaven must have been an additional driving force, and it is also known that the ancient Tamils raised monuments over the remains of women who committed Sati.²⁸

Sati or self immolation of a woman on the funeral pyre of her husband is occasionally mentioned in the inscriptions, but the references are very few, that it cannot be regarded as the common practice in the Tamil country under Cholas. Gangamadeviyar, the wife of Virasola Ilangonclar is said to have endowed a lamp before she entered the fire,²⁹ this, was perhaps in the reign of Parantaka I. According to *Tiruvallangadu plates*³⁰ Vanvana-Madevi, the queen of Sunda Chola also committed sati and her daughter Kundavai had installed her image in the great temple of Tanjore. The language of the inscription shows that the action of the queen was indeed applauded but not often imitated. Scholars on the basis of sparse evidence use to believe that the practice of sati was prevalent in the south. The evidence for this, however, at least before the 14th century AD are limited.³¹ In a rare instance, a Kannada poem dated AD 1057 narrates the passionate appeal for self immolation by Dekabbe, the daughter of chieftain of Nunganad.³² There is another reference where a father was commemorating the death of his son and daughter-in-law who committed sati in Mysore in AD 1088.³³ Yet in another reference which belong to 5th year of Virarajendra region, in the district of Sennainadu in Vikkirasolamandal records the self-immolation of a lady who entered the fire on the death of her husband.³⁴ The practice may have acquired a status symbol among communities influenced by Brahmanism, it does not seem to have enjoyed popular sanction during Chola period. In an inscription dating to the reign of Vira Rajendra from South Arcot, the widow rants against those who prevent her from committing sati.³⁵ The issue of sati in early medieval south India have been glorified in canonical literature but did not enjoy much social sanction. In oral tradition, however there is no consideration of sati. One would therefore

agree with Nilakanta Sastri's observations that the references to sati are so few that it can hardly be regarded as a common practice in the Tamil country.³⁶

In an inscription recorded from the reign of Virarajendra from South Arcot, there is a pathetic declaration of a woman who does not want to commit sati due to her physical suffering but has to do as she can't live up to an inhuman standard of duty. She says that if she lived after the death of her husband, she would become the slaves of the other wives of her husband.³⁷

The performance of sati by a woman has a great political significance. Sati is found to be mostly related to the royal families. The possible reason for this could be the miserable plight of the wives of the defeated King. They were either taken as captives by the victorious kings or they were subjected to molestation.³⁸ Probably as such accessions to safeguard themselves they preferred sati.

It was not every woman whose husband predeceased her that committed Sati. From *Manimekalai*³⁹, we understand that usually one of the three things happened to a surviving wife, they are, a woman very intensely in love with her husband died immediately as she heard of his demise. This was considered to be the top class chastity. Some women burnt themselves to death along with the remains of her husband. This affection was considered to be of second sort. Many women choose to lead a life of widow with all the suffering so their affection was considered to be the lowest. Kopperundevi, who died the moment she saw her husband roll to death belongs to the first category, Budappandiyan's wife who died on the funeral pyre of her husband falls into second category.

Women who chose to lead a widow's life was called '*Alil Pendar*' (means they have no proper person to protect them).⁴⁰ The life of a widow was to be that of an ascetic. It was called the life of *nonbu* (penance). It was a degraded life she was prescribed a kind of diet which was of austere in the extreme. The boiled velai leaves and cold rice, the lilly flowers fried or boiled were a kind of food prescribed for them. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri says "women gave up eating betel leaves and bathing in hot water when their husbands fall in battle."⁴¹ S.K. Aiyangar says that "Sati was not permitted to women who had children to bring up and had natural guardians to fall back upon."⁴²

The widows earned their living by spinning hence they were called "*Paruththippendu*" or (cotton women).⁴³ As the widows removed their jewels they were called "*Kali kala Makalir*".⁴⁴ They also tonsured their heads. Western scholars are of the opinion that women cut off their hair to add to the strength to the departed. Sir J.G. Fraser, while discussing the reason for shearing of locks as an offering for the dead says "still it is to be remembered that in the opinion of some people, the hair is the special seat of its owners strength, and that accordingly in cutting their hair and presenting it to the dead they may have imagined that they were supplying him with a source of energy not less ample and certain than when they provided with their blood to drink".⁴⁵

4. Dress and Ornaments : Dress, decoration and ornamentation is one of the sixty four arts meant for learning and practicing by both men and women. All these sixty four arts comes under the head "*Alamkarana*". From the mere sight, through this medium we can identify the people and their hierarchies to which they belong. The way of adornment varies according to occasion, and

place i.e. private and public. Through the costumes and jewellery we can identify the ethnicity, occupation and socio-economic status of the person wearing it.

Cultural traits and attributes, climatic and geographical variation may influence the food and dressing habits of a region. The climate of Tamil land is mostly dry and temperate except in the coastal area; thin, soft, cotton attire and simple ornaments is preferred on normal occasion. However on important occasions silk clothes and precious jewellery were opted. Somesvaradeva in his *Manasollasa*, a contemporary literature gives the account of seasonal pattern of dressing of the royal families. According to the author, royal personages including the king should adopt such wearing as to suit the seasonal changes. For example.

- Spring season : Cotton or fibre garments generally white in colour and thin in texture.
- Summer : Thin, delicate cotton attire
- Rainy : Red, Purple or rose coloured beautiful garments
- Autumn : Thick fibre garments.
- Winter : Woolen or thick cotton fabrics.

The higher social privileges necessitated women from royal families to adopt exhaustive ornamentation on all occasions. They had to take special care to plan their costumes and jewellery wearing, as adornment is a symbol for the expression of royal majesty.⁴⁶

The Dharmasastra specify that a harlot cannot gain anything without ornamentation. They prescribed ornaments as tools of trade for Vesyas and if she commit anything wrong, a king can confiscate their property but not their ornaments.⁴⁷ This could be due to the nature of profession they practice, and to maintain the continuity of their earnings, they had to keep a distinction between themselves and other family women by way of rich ornamentation and beautification.

The quality of the cloth, metal used for preparing ornaments and the number and value of jewellery sometimes reveals the socio-economic status of the person wearing it. Women belonging to the families of petty peasants, agricultural labourers, poor artisans, small vendors did not give that importance to ornamentation and dressing as given by the women of elite class. Due to their low socio-economic status they could not procure better clothes or precious ornaments made up of gold and silver. They had to satisfy with simple cotton dress and ornaments made up of beads, glass, false corals or shells.

Despite these variations, traditions, customs and belief system of the society determine the necessity of ornamentation for women irrespective of the class and status. It was a common belief in Tamil land among women that wearing jewellery and decorating hair with flowers cause longevity of married life.⁴⁸ *Mangalasutra* (the token of marriage) *Mattiyalu* (toe rings made up of silver) and *Gajulu* (colourful bangles) are considered to be auspicious. These are supposed to be worn by married women, widowed women are not provided with the opportunity of wearing it.⁴⁹

(a) Dress : Normally the dress of a women consisted of a sari and a boddice. The length of an ordinary or silk sari varies from 6 to 7 yards. In *Basavapuramamu* it is mentioned that the silk sari of the wife of Basavesvara was of 12 cubits in length and it took 12 years to complete the same by the weaver.⁵⁰ Srinatha in his Catu verses describe a women of Satani community weaving a “*Madicura*” (pure, unpolluted sari).⁵¹ Brahman ladies use to tie their sari in such a way as the border was turned on the head and was brought on the other shoulder thus looking like a veil.⁵²

Palkuriki Somanatha in his *Basavapuramamu* gives names of fifty seven kinds of sarees which were in fashion during the period under review. They are (1) Venjavali (2) Jayarangi (3) Manchupun Jamu (4) Manipathu (5) Bhutilakamu (6) Sri Vanniya (7) Mahacherri (8) Cherri (9) Bhavajutilakamu (10) Pauchapattu (11) Rayasekharanu (12) Rayavallabharmu (13) Vayumegharmu (14) Gajavalamu (15) Gandavadamukavulu (16) Saripattu (17) Hamsapadi (18) Veenavali (19) Palladadatli (20) Varanasi (21) Cheekurayu (22) Kendogaru (23) Gonriganayamu (24) Ksheerodakambupattu (25) Ratnambupattu (26) Sankupattu (27) Marakatapattu (28) Pombattu (29) Netrapattu (30) Velipattu (31) Netapattu (32) Tavarajamupattu (33) Mandoliravipattu (34) Chandratapannu (35) Sandhyaragamu (36) Indraneclamu (37) Mahendrabhushanamu (38) Sannanadanchu (39) Saradhi (40) Meghavanne (41) Rudrakshavanne (42) Kambhoji (43) Puligorupattu (44) Bhupati (45) Rudratilakamu (46) Saripattu (47) Malayajasiri (48) Kolanimeghamu (49) Gajavali (50) Hayavali (51) Valipambu (52) Sarigammi (53) Telupudiviyambaramu (54) Udayaragamu (55) Devambaramu (56) Potti (57) Gujarashtrambupattu.⁵³

Various contemporary works throw a flood of light on the variety of designs that were printed on sarees. It ranged from sun and moon patterns, circles or square designs to that of animals and bird figure like swans, parrots, strips of squirrels, dolls etc. Generally the colours preferred by the women of that time are pollen yellow, rudraksha seeds, pure white, red, yellow, indigo, green, blue, saffron etc. Women of elite group used fine and costlier cotton and silk sarees. Bodices were either plain or printed and it was with and without stripes. Their garments contain raised pattern of gold and silver thread. The dress patterns for the royal women were designed separately. Special care was taken to select perfect clothes for them. Women of elite class wore sarees and bodices as well. They were stitched with gold and silver threads. They were referred as '*Pattukuppasamulu*' or '*Ravikdu*'.⁵⁴ Tailors were appointed to stitch blouse for women of higher classes. They were called "*Kutrepupanivaru*". They lived in a separate locality of the city called "*Moharivada*".⁵⁵

The garments of women belonging to the lower strata of the society were comparatively cheap and coarse variety. Widows were supposed to keep themselves away from colourful and fine quality sarees. They were supposed to wear old garment. Not only the attire, but temple sculpture and literary reference point to the variation in the hair styles that was also adopted by women. Most commonly hair are plaited or braided into twists and the ends were let loose. Sometimes the hair are turned up and arranged in the form of a "*koppu*".⁵⁶ This arrangement is of many varieties either tied in the centre or towards one side of the head or in the form of a loose knot. Decorating flowers in the hair is a common feature observed in Chola Tamil. Flowers are arranged in various styles to look more appealing. Women decorate their hair with

flowers on different occasion like marriage, festivals or attending fairs.⁵⁷ Widows did not adopt any kind of hairstyle because their hair were usually shaved off.

(b) Ornaments : Ornaments are another component of adornment. It also determines the socio economic status of the people. “*Todavulu*” is a general term used in literature to denote the ornaments.⁵⁸ Women of elite group had a taste for costly and valuable jewellery Boxes used for the preservation of these ornaments are known as “*Alankarpeti*”.⁵⁹

Ornaments as stated is the status symbol for royal women, even the small children of royal family were supposed to wear ornaments like a small chain with a pendent called “*Puligoru*”. Professional necessity determines the style of ornamentation as in the case of courtesans or prostitutes.

Ornaments were also preferred by the women of middle and lower classes of the society. However the number is less and the metal used are brass, bronze, lead, glass, beads, ivory, conch shells, false corals and bamboo pearls. The maids of elite group are described in the literary works as wearing bead necklaces, brass bracelets, amulets made of false corals toe rings of bell metals, finger ring of shell or bead and coarse black bangles.⁶⁰ Manufacturing of ornaments is taken up by traders belonging to the guild *Panchanambaru* (traders in fine metals).⁶¹

A variety of ornaments and jewels find mention in the inscription from the temples of Chola domains. Rajarajesvara temple gives us many interesting and informative details of the ornaments prevalent and donated during Chola period. They were Valayal, Soodagam-bangles of gold and pearls. Tiruk-karai,

Kalavan, Kantha-Tudan, Kantha-Nan, Kanthika, Padakkam are different type of necklace found during Chola period. Kundambai was an ornament which was not identifiable but assumed as an ear ornament. Other type of ear ornaments was Olai, Tagaadu, Katpu, Muttin-Mattirai and Tiru-Makaram. Tiru-Makaram is shaped like a makara (crocodile). Generally only one ear was adorned with it and the other with Olai or tagadu.

Talakkattu, Sutti, Jata-makuta with Siras-chakra, Mattagat-Tagadu, Pattan are the ornaments worn on head and forehead. Pottu and Vajibandana – the exact meaning of these ornaments are not known but it seems certain that it was worn by women over the arms. Likewise, Sidukku, the meaning and to which part of the body it was worn is not known but it was only worn by women. Sripada-Sayaalam is a heavy ornament and worn on the feet only by women. Tali is a pendent worn by the married women as a token of marriage. They also worn foot rings or leg ring called Tiruk-kal vadam. Waistband or more literally a belly band as it went round the torso, above the naval and below the nipples were also worn by the women known as Udara-bandha. Other informations regarding these and other ornaments can be seen from Appendix I. Few pictures of these ornaments can also be seen from the section ‘Pictures’ just after the Appendix I.

A variety of ornaments were gifted to the temple deities indicate that there was a culture of giving new ornaments or the ornaments belonging to the donor itself to the diety of the temple. Like a record from Ujjwanattar temple which gives the particulars of the ornaments given to the goddess by Sembiyan Mahadevi, the mother of Uttama Chola. She presented a costly bejeweled

crown to the deity of the temple in the tenth year of Rajraja I (995 AAD). The crown comprise of 149 kalanju of gold, 190 kalanju of silver, 700 pearls, 3 rubies and 27 diamonds.⁶² An epigraph from Draksharaman temple register the grant of two gold bangles studded with precious gem by king Kulottunga Choladeva.⁶³

The literary texts of medieval Andhra are also full of descriptions of the ornaments worn by the women of the period. Even the temple inscriptions registering grants of ornaments contain description of ornament pattern. The classification given below is based on the position of ornaments.⁶⁴

(a) Head ornament : (1) *Netti Billalu* is the term commonly used for head ornaments, are worn on the head, at the parting of the hair, on either side of it, on the hair and at the end of the hair. To quote few (2) *Bangarupuceru* – Golden flowers to be decorated in the hair (3) *Chandravanka* – Gold elaborately set with precious stones (4) *Chercukka* or *Papata* – Gold studded with precious stones. Its *Bothu* or *Papidiceru* was generally kept at the centre of the forehead at the parting of hair. (5) *Chudamani* - A small circular ornament connected with a long chain arranged at the centre of the forehead. (6) *Koppupuvulu* – Flowers made of pearls to be decorated in the hair. (7) *Lalaticamu* – Forehead ornament of gold set with precious stone or pearls. (8) *Mutyajalli* – hair of pearls. (9) *Mutyala kuchhulu* – A tassel made of pearls usually tied as a knot at the root of the tress of hair. (10) *Nagaranmu* – An ornament of gold worn at the centre of the hairs.

(b) Ear Ornaments : *Kammulu* or *Kundalamulu* is the term used for denoting ear ornaments. Earlier leaves of palm tree were used for the purpose, hence the word *Tatankamulu*. Based on the variation of their designs they are classified

into (1) *Bavire or Baviralu* – An ornament usually of gold worn from the tip of the ear. (2) *Kammavuvulu* – Ear rings made of gold in the form of flowers. (3) *Kuntulu* or *Makanakundalamulu* – Large ear-rings usually made of gold (4) *Mutyala kammalu* – Made of pearls (5) *Nilapuralu* – Ear-rings of blue coloured stones (6) *Tatankamulu* – Ear-rings made of palm leaf (7) *Vrittakundalamulu* – Large circular shaped ear-ring made of gold.

(c) Nose ornaments : *Mukkira* or *Mungara* denotes nose ornaments. *Nattu* was perhaps a mandalika variation of the same, it was a common practice among women of medieval Andhra to adore the nose with small ornaments usually made of gold studded with stones on either side of the nose as well as below at the centre of the two nostrils. Based on their location and design they are termed variously. (1) *Addabara* or *Bulaki* – A nose jewel worn at the centre of the nose (below) (2) *Mukkeru* or *Mungara* – A nose ring generally made of a white stone studded in gold. It is also made with emeralds, corals, diamonds or pearls in which case, referred with the respective names of the precious stones, (3) *Rendugundla mungaralu* – A nose ring having two pieces. (4) *Tagarapu mukkeva* – Nose ring made of lead.

(d) Neck Ornaments – *Kantikaharamulu* or *kantebharana* is the name of necklaces or chains. *Nanuchuttlu* could probably be another variation for the same varieties of necklaces are worn by women of all classes of the society. They ranged from tight neck bands called *Pattida* to long chains, sometimes hung down to naval portion. These necklaces are in addition to the compulsory ornaments and the chain of black beads. Variations are noticed sometimes based on the religions faith such as *Nandidanda*, *Rudrakshapusalu*, or *Tomaladanda* etc. The following are the different types of neck ornaments

mentioned in the contemporary literary and epigraphical sources. (1) *Bandi guriginja tavadamu* – Necklace of Gunvinda seeds (2) *Banna Saramu* – A necklace (3) *Chandraharamu* – A chain of gold in two or many rows (4) *Chennumeruguta kulu* – A kind of shining necklace of leaf pattern (5) *Guntapusalu* – Small nuts made into heads and arranged in the chain. (6) *Gundlaperu* – A chain of gold beads. (7) *Guryaperulu* – Necklace of Gunvinda seeds generally worn by women of forest dwelling classes. (8) *Mangalyamu* or *Pasuputallu* – The marriage token. The applications of haldi are indicative of its auspicious nature and importance of its presence. (9) *Medamulu/Gattimulu* – A gold chain made up of small thin bands. (10) *Minukulu* – Twinkling chains of gold (11) *Mutyalaharamu* – A chain of pearls (12) *Mulyala patteda* – A neck band of pearls. (13) *Mulyalasarulu* – Small chains of pearls (14) *Nallapusalu* – A chain of black beads worn by married women. (15) *Nandidanda* – A chain used by devotees of Siva (16) *Pikilipuladandalu* – A chain made with the wings of small birds called *pikilipittalu*. (17) *Tali batlu* – A marriage token (18) *Tomala danda* – A garland of Tulsi leaves. (19) *Vepaku chigulla dandalu* – A chain made with the tender leaves of Neem tree.

(e) Hand and Wrist Ornaments : (1) *Chekattu palelu* – Bracelets of gold or coral beads alternatively arranged (2) *Manjira Kankanalu* – A bracelet having bells, (3) *Manipuramu* – A wrist ornament (4) *Murugulu* – Gold were twisted in the form of bangles (5) *Nabla muduka gajulu* – Ordinary glass bangles, black in colour. (6) *Ratna kankanamulu* – Bracelets of diamonds.

(f) Shoulder/Hand/Wrist Ornament (Bracelets, Bangles) : The upper part of the elbow as well as its lower half upto the wrist is adorned with different types

of ornament. The former are called bracelets and the latter bangles. Precious metals like gold and silver together with pearls or costly stones are moulded into different shapes skillfully by the artisans. Their workmanship is clearly noticed in the bracelets *Kankanamu* or *Kadiyamu*, is the popular name for the bracelets. The term “*chekattu*” refers to hand ornament whereas the term “*Dandakadiyamu*” refers to the shoulder ornament. The following is the list of shoulder and hand ornaments mentioned in the contemporary literature and reflected in the sculpture of the period. (1) *Chamala Kadiyalu* – Golden bracelet (2) *Ittadi kadiyalu* – Bracelets of brass (3) *Katte vamkilu* – Twisted cane rings (4) *Lakka tayetulu* – Amulets of false coral (5) *Nagabettamu* – Bracelet of the shape of snake (6) *Sari danda tayetulu* – Talismans for upper arm. (7) *Vamkilu* – Curved ornament worn round the upper arm.

(g) Waist Ornaments : Ornaments worn on the garments surrounding the waist comes under this head. Commonly these are made of gold and silver metals. Often pearls are studded in the middle. “*Oddanamu*” is the general name for waist ornament.

(1) *Gajjela Oddanamu* – Silver and gold waist ornament having bells. (2) *Kiljada* – A twisted ornament tied around the waist. (3) *Molanulu* – Silver or gold waist ornament. Occassionally has bells. (4) *Ratnamekhala* – Waist ornaments made of precious gems.

(h) Anklets : The foot ornaments are commonly referred to as *Andiyalu*. They are mostly made of silver metal and occasionally made of gold. Some names of the anklet are (1) *Gajjelu/Andiyalu/Muvvalu* : Anklets having bells made of silver (2) *Kanchemupura kanhanmulu* – Anklets having bells.

(i) Finger Ornaments : *Anguliyakamu* or *Ungaramu* is the term for denoting finger ornaments. Though the ring finger is used for the purpose of ornamentation. Sometimes other fingers too are decorated with a variety of ornaments Gold and precious stones are generally used in the making of finger ornament.

(j) Toe Ornaments : Generally worn by married women “*Mattiyalu*” is a common term. Like the finger ornaments these are also worn at all the toe fingers. Following are their nomenclature (1) *Bobbilikayalu* – Toe-ornaments for the great toe. (2) *Gillumattelu* – Toe rings made of tin (3) *Kanchu mettiyalu* – Bell metal toe rings for the fourth toe (4) *Lingapukayamattelu* – Toe rings of the shape of the *Siva linga* (5) *Pillandlu* – Silver toe-rings for the fourth toe. (6) *Viramadduyalu* – Silver toe rings for the large toe worn on the occasion of war.

It is thus observed that the attire and ornamentation style have both sacred and secular feature and can be taken as the parameters to study the socio-economic distinctions among women during the period under study. There are a list of ornaments usually worn by the ladies of Chola dynasty which have been listed from various inscriptions taken from Rajarajesvara temple. This list and picture of ornaments can be seen from Appendix I.

5. Means of Entertainment : Basically recreation provides entertainment and are meant for spending the leisure time. However there were two more aspects which cannot be overlooked. The recreational activities relieve one’s mind from the physical and psychological stress and strain caused due to the nature of work, professional engagements or domestic responsibilities while few others have a socio-political significance. Such as hunting which can be

regarded as a sport for royal members and at the sometime acts as an exercise of authority.⁶⁵

Means of entertainment can be divided under two broad heads i.e. outdoor games and indoor games. These are based on the interest and time of the person. Environment, nature of social life, customs, beliefs and personal factors like age, gender also influence the type of activities people were involved in. Socio-economic status of a person may also influence the mean of entertainment. Sometimes it seems that certain recreations are specific for the elite class women. These include *Jalakrida* (water games) *Vasantotsava* (Holi) and engaging in philosophical discussion etc.

Hunting is an important sport even for the women of royal families as observed from the temple sculpture. A sculpture from Srisalam depicts women in hunting process. Tikkana, in Andhra Mahabharatamu mentions that the women of ruling class used to drink to relieve the minds of psychological tension.⁶⁶ Nannechoda in his "*Kumarasambhavamu*" describe the competitive attitude of young women while they played in water. The game was referred to as *Jalakrida* or *Olalata*.

Children from middle class families use to play very simple games like hide and seek, playing with toys and dolls. Interestingly these games are also played by the children of higher class.

Not only these, many other games like swinging, playing a kind of game with tamarind seeds, playing with balls also appear to be common for girls of both the common and higher classes of the society. There seems to be no gender preference among the games played by the children. As children

grew big, there was a tendency to separate boys and girls and this clearly reflected in the games and choice of plays. While boys prefer more outdoor games as hide and seek and the girl prefer playing with toys and dolls. These activities such as cooking for the toys, serving, worshipping and performing marriage for toys indicate the nature of duties accepted by them as part of the tradition which had come to them through their mothers.

Games of young ladies include games that increase their intelligence power and at sometime some games are played by them that give them physical exercise. Married women's leisure hours were generally in the afternoon and they use to play more mature games like certain strategical thinking.⁶⁷ Further they spend their time in attending to religious discourse held in the temple and mattas in the evening hours.⁶⁸

Thus modes of recreation which involved women in different ways served not only as pastime activities but created awareness in their minds about the contemporary socio-religio-political issues.

(b) Naming and Identity pattern of women :

“*Title*” is a name denoting nobility or rank or office held or attached to a personal name of a person.⁶⁹ Since Sangam age it was believed to be an aristocratic practice of giving titles to the people. The Kings use to bestow titles and honours on his subordinates who had distinguished themselves in the discharge of their duties. This must be an incentive to their greater efforts and a recognition of proved worth and it also attached the senior officials to the king.

Women were also a part of this practice. Titles were bestowed on them also but rather in a low frequency as compared to the males. These titles are

given to them for their specialization in certain work they perform like devotion, dancing etc. These titles show their distinction from, the common people as every one was not entitled to these honors. It also threw a flood light on the informations regarding their good work, power, authority and their closeness with the royal authority.

Along with the Kings, temples authorities were also allowed to grant titles to the women working in the temples, because they hold the second most important position to the King. All the title holders have a special name of recognition apart from their original name and they are best known through those titles only.

As we go through the Chola inscriptions we came across a number of persons holding different titles in a regular pattern. This start increasing from the time of Parantaka and reaches the height in the post Rajaraja I period.

As we know that titles were conferred on the individual by kings and by temple authorities, there are many inscriptional records which shows us that kings and queens themselves are the holders of titles and names apart from their original names. At the time of coronation the Chola king use to add the titles like *Prakesari*,⁷⁰ *Rajakesari*⁷¹, *Udaiyar*, *Chakkravertigal*⁷², *Tribhuvane Chakkravartigal*⁷³ and so on along with their original names. During the period of Rajaraja I the king was called '*Chakkravertigal*' but in the earlier official records he was found described as '*Udaiyar*'. But later he came to be referred as the "Emperor of the three Worlds" i.e. *Tribhuvana Chakkravartigal*⁷⁴ Similarly the Pandya king had the titles like *Jatavarman* and *Maravarman*.⁷⁵ Raja Basavasanhara Konerideva – maharaya, a mahamandaleshvara, who ruled

the Tirudurappalli and Tanjavur – simals almost as an independent rulers took the birudas, “*Pattukkatarrri, Kanchipura Varadhisvara*”.⁷⁶

Like the Chola Kings their queens also observed the titles. *Nachchi* or *Nachchiyar* is the title used for respectfully denoting all the women specially the Royal women.⁷⁷ Queens like Sembiyan Mahadevi (mother of the Chola King, Uttama Chola) observed various titles like *Udaiyar Pirattiyar*, *Madhurantakanar Medevadigalar* and *Parantakar Madevidigalar*.⁷⁸ The wife of Uttama Chola was popularly known as “*Tennavan Medevi*” or the queen of the Southern King” she was also known as *Panchavan Madevi*.⁷⁹ Likewise the queen of Rajaraja I, *Danti Sakti Vitanki* was known as *Lokmahadevi* and *Udaiyar Rajaraja Devar Nampirattiyar*⁸⁰ so on.

After going through a number of inscriptions we can make out that the kings use to bestow titles on their subordinate also. ‘*Irumudi-Chola*’, *Mummudi-Chola*, *Brahmamaraya*, *Araiyan*, *Muvendavelan*, *Cholakon*, *Kuditanji*, and *Cherekon* are the some titles awarded by the Kings. These titles were normally associated with the names of the king as ‘*Arumoli*’ alias *Uttama Chola Brahmamarayan*. *Irumudi Chola Muvendavelan*, *Mummudichola Brahmamarayan*, *Aranyan Kadakkamkonda Cholan Rajaraja Animurinadalvan*, *Bhupalasundaran* alias *Cholakon* etc.⁸¹ But it should be noted that the title *Brahmamarayan* was offered only to ‘*Brahmin officers*’.

After discussing the royal titles and royal official’s title, we should now look towards the naming and identity pattern of the women during Chola period. After carefully scrutinizing the inscriptional evidences of the concerned period we can easily make out that Royal Establishments and the Temples were

the main sources of employment for the women during Chola period. Women use to work in different capacities at these places. She was a dancer, a body guard of the king and sometimes she also hold an office of responsibility in the Royal Establishment. So for the appreciation of her able and good work, she was bestowed with the titles of recognition. In this part of the chapter we will be discussing about her titles according to her work. Let us first deal with the titles of women working in the Royal Establishment and after that the titles of the Temple woman will be discussed.

(1) Titles for the women of Royal Establishments :

The term “*velam*” denoted to a collection of servants connected with the royal household and by extension may have loosely referred to the residential quarters where such personnel were domiciled.⁸² Inscriptions suggest that the *velam* as an institution underwent significant changes as the Chola Empire evolved. During the “early” Chola period (c.925-985), in the tenth centuries nine different *velams* are mentioned in approximately fifteen inscriptions, while during the ‘middle period’ (c 985-1070) in the eleventh century, twenty one different *velams* are mentioned in roughly thirty five records putting aside a cluster of records from the Kongu the later period of Chola rule (1070-1250) saw a marked in variety and over all incidence of *velams* in the epigraphic record, with just three different *velams* mentioned in four inscriptions. The number of *velams* attached to the royal household as well as the frequency that their members appear in the epigraphic records seems to have doubled during the reigns of Rajaraja and Rajendra and his sons (c. 985-1070) when the empire rose to its greatest territorial extent and political power

the military successes of the Chola armies during this period would have flooded the imperial household with the spoils of war, both material and human. Velams must have grown in size and proliferated in number to accommodate the influx of men and women.

The categories of people most often associated with *velams* in inscriptions are “*pendatti*”⁸³ and to a lesser extent “*kaikolar*”. *Kaikolar* literally means “*those of strong arms*” were a class of apparently hereditary military retainers who resided in proximity to the palace and who formed an integral part of the Chola armies. The female members of the *Velams* are usually describe as “*pendatti*” a difficult word because of a long historical sedimentation and multiple usage. Though used informally in contemporary Tamil to mean “*wife*”, in medieval times the term denoted a women of generally servile status⁸⁴ and most usually are connected with the royal palace in some capacity – what Leslie Orr has called a ‘*palace woman*’.⁸⁵ In at least one reference a *pendatti* seems also to be identified with a term which less ambiguously denoted a slave (*atiyal*) but for the same reasons this may means very little.⁸⁶

Though *pendatti* shared a number of characteristic with temple women, there is no existing epigraphic evidence of the presentation of sale or purchase of a *pendatti* to or by the royal court as we sometime possess in the case of temple women. These *pendatti* entered in the palace service as war booty or as a token of friendship and submission from the other kings so their was no need to acquire them through purchase.

Pendatti is itself a title given to the servants of Royal household, but some seems to have acquired titles of distinction once within the *Velam*, like the pendatti “*Tevayan Pulalkkar*” of the *Kilai* (Kilantikal?) *Velam* were given the title ‘*Avanisikhami*’ (*Crest Jewel of the Earth*), another pendatti named “*Cattan Ramadevi*” of Rajendra Chola-periya-velam, known from two inscriptions took the title “*Tirunnuvalmanikkam*’ meaning “*Ruby of the sacred Jambu fruit*”.⁸⁷ The term ‘*manikkam*’ or ‘*ruby*’, seems to have been a title incorporated into the personal names of a number of *pendattis* in eleventh century and was even more widespread among temple women.⁸⁸ Though its particular significance is uncertain, “*Manikkam*” clearly had a honorific connotation as is confirmed by two 11th century inscription which mention a women with the title “*Sembi kulamanikkiyar*” means “*Ruby of the Chola family*” who was also termed as “*annukki*” or intimate”.⁸⁹ The term ‘*anukki*’ was clearly a title of favour bestowed on those close to the member of the royal family, this intimacy may or may not have involved sexual relations but appear to have indicated a status distinct from the category of “*pokiyar*” or “*concubine*”.

Speaking about the title “*adigarichchi*’, *Nilakanta Sastri* state that ‘we have obvious instance of women in the female establishment of the queen bearing the title of their own right.’⁹⁰ This indicate that the term *adigarichchi* does not denote the wife of the *adigari* or a higher official but devotes female officials equal to the rank of an *adigari* or a higher official. Lokamadevi, queen of Rajaraja I, had an *adigarichchi* to supervise her endowments to the temple she built.⁹¹ In another reference Piranar had donated a pearl umbrella through an *adigarichchi* named *Araiyar Udaiyalar*. She also had a title of ‘*Arayan*’.⁹²

The *Perunkathai* suggest that there is a possibility of women being bestowed with the title like “*Etti*”, “*Kavidi*” and “*Enadi*”.⁹³ *Etti* and *Kavidi* were the local titles of honour conferred by the King on merchants, it was in a shape of a flower, which the distinguished recipient were entitled to wear, the floral badge must have been of gold. *Kavidi* is generally grouped with *Etti* and these honours seem to have been shared by women also at times. The commentator of *Perunkathai*, U.V. Swaminathan Iyer is of the view that women derived these titles through their husbands. According to N. Subramaniyan in his *Sangam polity* he says that apart from *Etti & Kavidi*, another title which was shared by the women is “*Enadi*”. They were the bodyguards of the King and they were given a gold ring studded with gems. Such women lived in separate suburbs in cities like Madurai. Another title for the women bodyguard of the king is “*Padimagalir*”⁹⁴. These women bodyguards of the king were camping in the time of war. Apart from these female attendants there were the “*Velaikkari*”.⁹⁵ The exact function of the *Velaikkaris* were not known. But it is seen from one of the inscription that the *Velaikkaris* would not survive if the master was killed in battle.⁹⁶ It seems that the *Velaikkaris* were the main personal body guards of the king and that they were so much attached to the king that they would not hesitate to lay down their lives if their master was killed. It could be said that these *Velaikkaris* took up themselves the duty of protecting the king from any possible harm and that if at all any harm could be done to the king by the enemy, it could perhaps be achieved only after killing the *Velaikkaris*.

Perunkathai, a literature of the Chola period suggest that women served as the “*tirumandiravolai*” means those who issued the orders of the king

and the lady who acted as the ambassador is referred as “*Kathurai Magal*”.⁹⁷ The queens establishments comprised of a variety of other attendants like the foster mothers who were known as ‘*Sevilliyar*’⁹⁸ or “*Thayar*”⁹⁹ and there were “*Vana Magalir*”¹⁰⁰ who adorned the royal ladies and the courtesans.

(ii) Titles for the temple women :

Women are frequently mentioned in Chola period inscription most often as donars. The inscriptions provide us with some clues that allow us to distinguish different types of women working in the temple during Chola period. Although titles or professional identification were applied less often to the women than to the men, and there are a number of inscriptional references to women in which no information beyond a name is given. But in some inscriptions temple women have been mentioned along with their titles and their original names. These honorific titles are given to them as a mark of identification of their status and their distinctiveness from the common people. Sometimes these titles were given to them because of the work they perform in the temple and also as a mark of reward for the specialization of certain work or duty they perform in the temple.

After carefully going through a number of inscriptions related to the concerned period we can make out that there are six titles usually adopted or conferred to the temple women. These titles were *Devaradiyar* or *Teveratiyar*, *Padiyilar*, *Talaikkoli*, *Nakkan*, *Atiyal* and *Manikkan*.

Temple women were known by different names like *Devaradiyar*, *Soole*, *Sani*, *Patra* and sometimes as *Dasika* and *Ganika*. In Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka during eighth and ninth centuries there are reference of

“*Vilasines*” (charming or coquettish women) who were evidently the temple women, an eight century reference of Orissa, a *dasikas* (‘female servants), and ninth and tenth century inscription from Kerala that refers to temple women as “*nankaimar*” (laides) and eleventh century reference in Andhra to the temple women who are termed as “*Sanis*”¹⁰¹ (Ladies). It is striking that in the inscription outside of the Tamil country, there are no terms equivalent in meaning to the definitional terms applied to most temple women in Chola period inscriptions – terms meaning “*devotee*”, “*daughter of God*” or “*temple women*”.¹⁰² There is some overlap in terminology between Tamil and non-Tamil inscriptions when terms meaning “*servant*”, “*dancer*” or “*singer*” applied to temple women.

The term which is used most frequently to designate the temple women is the “*Devaradiyar*” or “*Tevaratiyar*”¹⁰³, the two are the synonym of each other. In course of time the frequency with which it is referred to the temple women also increase. It is an honorific term conferring social or ritual status of the temple women. This is a compound term made up of the word “*tevar*” (god, lord) and “*atiyal*” (female slave, servant, devotee). The first part of the compound, *tevar* means “god” or “king” and is the honorific plural of “*tevan*” derived from Sanskrit “*deva*”. Often the term “*tevaratiyar*” is spelled as “*devaradiyar*” in Chola period inscriptions and these *tevaratiyar* was the devotee of a particular diety let it be Siva or Vishnu. The second part of the term *tevaratiyar* is derived from ‘*ati*’ the Tamil word for “*foot*”. The male (*atiyan*) and female (*atiyal*) is the one who is at the feet of other as slave, servant or devotee. It shows the lowliness and humility of the “*atiyal*”, related to his matter, “*atiyal*” is also an honorific term, which in the Tamil bhakti

context is a great privilege to bear. In Chola period *atiyal* is more often applied to “devotees” than to “slave”. *Atiyal* is the title referred to the people of high ritual status and they are the honoured devotees, is indicated by the fact that they were offered food in the temple.¹⁰⁴

In the early Chola period, and in the preceding countries, the *atiyal* was a person for whom the fact of subordination, of “serving” was itself a source of status, to be connected with a divine or royal figure was an honour. It is possible that the earlier honorific connotation of *atiyal* may, in the later period, as slavery in a real sense became more prevalent, have served to legitimize the use of title and obscure the actual status of people especially women, who worked in the temple as slaves. These women were the powerful, financially independent and apparently socially respected. An eleventh century Rajaraja’s inscription states that the *devaradiyars* were invited to serve the Thanjavur periya koyil and given housesite and land near the temple. Sometimes these *devaradiyars* also enjoyed the privilege of an exclusive audience with the King.¹⁰⁵

Next honorific title given to the temple women is ‘*Padiyilar*’ (literally means those who is without husband). The SII Vol. 5 No.707 indicates that the term “*padiyilar*” or “*patiyilar*” might have been conferred as an honorary title. This inscription records a donation made by *Ariyapiratti Ulaiyapperuman*, a women who is identified as one of the *Padiyilar* of Rajarajesvaram (the great temple of Thanjavur) it does not carry the sense of an exclusive relationship of devotion or service to a particular deity. In the hierarchy among the temple women the *Padiyilar* occupy the foremost rank, the *tevaratiyar* second and the *Istabhattliyar* (servants beloved of the Lord?) the last rank.¹⁰⁶ Main dancing in

the temple was done by *Padiyilar*, *Tevaratiyar* and *Istabhattaliyar* provide the music.

In Chola period the title “*Talaikkoli*”¹⁰⁷ is found only in the names of temple women and it is borne virtually by every women who is said to be a “*Padiyilar*”. The title is formed by the addition of the feminine suffix-‘i’ to *talai* meaning ‘*head*’ which is first, best and highest. This title is extensively for the temple woman and this honour is bestowed on the female dancers of the temple. These women are granted the right to bear these title by the temple authority and not by the ruler of Chola period, because this title is suffixed to the name of a deity like “*Tillainayakat-talaikkoli*” is a name means (she is of the illustrious staff of Lord Tillai) than the name of the king.

“*Manikkam*”¹⁰⁸ is also an honorary title bestowed on the temple women. It is linked with the status of women living in the temple. *Manikkam* mean “*ruby*”. This title is found in few inscription of Chola period. Earlier this title was related with the queens and palace women then this was adopted by the temple women. Towards the end of eleventh century this title was increasingly used by the temple women. There was four temples in various part of South India that had the groups of temple women all bearing “*manikkam*” titles. The earliest example of this kind of phenomenon is from *Pulannaravu* in Sri Lanka where a Tamil inscription dated 1070 AD gives the names of seven *tevaratiyar* all with *Manikkam* titles.¹⁰⁹ In some cases the name was conferred by the temples, but usually these titles are given by the kings.

“*Nakkan*”¹¹⁰ is the name of the male deity. This name is applied to god Siva. *Nakkan* literally means “*Nagna*’ or ‘*naked*’ and it shows his ascetic and mendicant aspect. *Nakkan* is also a term meaning ‘*dancing women*’ attached to

the temple.¹¹¹ When Rajaraja I had the Brihadisvara temple built at Tanjavur, he got settled 400 families of dancing women from different parts of his kingdom and they all bore the term “*Nakkan*” as a part of their name. This title is also given to the temple women who acquired the status of “tevanar makal”¹¹² (a daughter of the god of “this temple”) or tevaratiyal who entered into a relationship with a particular temple. The title *Nakkan* is equally shared by the temple’s male servants also. Other informations regarding this title is not known.

As far as the titles for middle and lower classes of women are concerned, our inscriptional record did not throw considerable light on this issue. Inscriptional records are mostly imparting donative informations and they are not providing us with other specific informations regarding women donors. So these inscriptions did not tells us about the titles of the women relating to lower and middle classes. This does not means that they were not given any titles but it can only be assumed so. We cannot reach to a concrete result regarding titles for common women as our information are very scarce on this issue.

CONCLUSION :

To sum up it can be said that this chapter had made a detailed study on different aspects of the women of different strata lived during Chola period. While dealing with the general aspects of these women like Marriage, Life of a Widow, Sati, Dress, Ornaments and Means of Entertainment it can be said that not a vast differences can be seen with regard to the Sangam Age. Slight variations are there, but the system was altogether the same. Strict marriage

rituals were introduced, but the condition of a widow was same as it was, dress and eating habits are altogether the same.

Inscriptional records throw a flood light on the varieties of ornaments worn by the women and men during those days Recreation or means of entertainment for women were more mental oriented than physical. Young girls play more physical games then the grown ups.

The second part of my chapter deals with the naming and identity pattern of women during Chola period. References are there which can clearly convey the message that different names were adopted by the women apart from their original names. Women belonging to royalty observed the title like Nachchi or Nachchiyar. Queens observed their personal titles like “Tennavan-Madevi”, title for Uttama Chola’s wife. Women working in different capacities were bestowed with titles like Pendatti, Annukki, Manikkam, Pokiyar, Padimagalir, Velaikkari etc. These are the titles given to the women working in Royal household. The temple women were also bestowed with the titles like Adiyal, Devaradiyal, Tevaratiyar, Padiyilar, Talaikkoli and Nakkan. Some other titles which were given to the women are Kathurai Magal, Thayar, Vana Magalir, Adigarichchi, Kavidi, Enadi, Etti etc.

These names are bestowed on them by kings and by temple authorities. Some women identify through their work they do and sometimes they were identified by their husband’s profession.

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8. N. Subramanian, op.cit., p. 291.
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17. Epigraphica Indica Vol. VI, see Chapter III.

18. SII Vol. IV, No. 1133.
19. Ibid, Vol. V, Nos. 65, 66.
20. Ibid, Vol. V. No. 65.
21. Ibid, Vol. V No. 65.
22. Ibid, Vol. IV No. 66.
23. Silappadikaram XX, 14.
24. Some scholars like K.A.N. Sastri express the view that the chewing of betel leaves was not prevalent in Sangam society but later introduced into Tamil Society. The practice of chewing betel with areca nuts is an ancient as Silappadikaram and Manimekalai.

The reference in a Buddah Jataka Story (The Jataka Vol. I, pp. 132, 152) the use of “Verilai” by Buddha Bhikshu is well known. In ancient days it would appear that instead of slaked lime, clarified camphor was used by betel user and it was quite an aristocratic practice.

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Chapter - III

*Women and Her Role in
Economy*

CHAPTER – 3

WOMEN AND HER ROLE IN ECONOMY

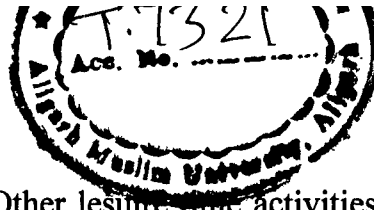
**“Women live like bats and owls,
Labour like beasts
And die like worms....”**

- Margaret, the Dutchess of New Castle, England, 1660 AD

Women as a biological and social category have been on the margins of history for centuries and the correlation between women and work is its most neglected segment. Women’s labour, being by and large considered informal, was neither recognized nor recorded, not just by men but perhaps by women themselves. History passed them by¹. To quote Virginia Woolf in her celebrated classic ‘*A Room of One’s Own*’ wrote ‘I saw a very ancient lady crossing the street ... And if one asked her, longing to pin down the moment with date and season, what she was doing on the fifth of April 1868 or the second of November 1875 (both historic dates) she would look vague and say that she could remember nothing. For all the dinners were cooked the plates and cups washed, the children sent to school and gone into the world. Nothing remains of it. All has vanished. No biography or history has a word to say about it.’”

In primitive societies, no division of labour is found between the two sexes. Anthropological studies project women of ancient societies as food gatherers and food processors.²

Men usually take up the jobs which need a heavy muscular power and labour. On the other hand the work which involved patience, skill and



forbearance were practiced by women. Other leisure time activities of women like spinning, weaving, stitching clothes etc had also contributed to the family economy. The Manusmriti can be seen as a text illustrating the nature of the work that was assigned to the women in the traditional societies. According to Manu³ a women's main duty is to manage the household and the family budget. She had to perform various physical homely task like drawing water from the well, churning, husking and winnowing. Manu interestingly also credits her with a head for finance. As the controller of her husband's earnings she was incharge of domestic finances and was the pay master. Manu also points out that collecting and spending of money was in the hands of the house wife because she was expected to spent it wisely.

During the Vedic period, women used to take part in agriculture and in the manufacturing of bows, arrows and other war material. Samhitas also refers to female workers employed doing embroidery, dying clothes and basket making. Female workers who are employed in doing the above mentioned work were denoted with some special words, which have disappeared in the later literature. This shows that women of higher strata were also involved in manufacturing bows and arrows, cloth and baskets in Vedic period, but given up these professions in later times, whereas the women of other class of society continued doing the same.

In the post Vedic period two or three professions were opened for the women of higher section of the society, the most common career that was adopted by the ladies were the teaching profession. This is quite clear from the coining of a separate word to distinguish a lady from a teacher's wife. The

latter was by courtesy called "*Acharanyi*"⁴ but if a woman was herself a teacher, she was to be designated "*Acharya*". The lady teachers usually teach poetry, grammar and literature but some are specialized in teaching theology and philosophy. Women were also admitted into Buddhism and Jainism as nuns and were allowed to preach. Some of them like "*Dhammadinna*" developed into remarkably eloquent and successful preachers.

Medicine as a career was also opted by some women in post vedic period. This profession was not common in those days. There was a work translated into Arabic during 8th century AD and was written by a Hindu lady whose name appears as Rusa in the Arabic language was on mid-wifery.⁵ Lady doctors in the past, like those in the modern age seem to be usually specializing in mid-wifery.

In the realm of business we find that women had no disabilities. Women of lower classes, commercial and industrial circles used to take an active part in carrying on the business transactions of their families. They could even pledge their husband's credit and enter in contracts on their behalf (Yajnavalkyasmriti II, 47). We have unfortunately no evidence to show what part ladies in higher circles used to take in the business of their families.

Music was also taken up as a profession by the ladies in cultural families since very early time. Ladies could sing and dance, were much admired for this. Now a question arises that whether music was open as a career to the ladies in respectable families or not. The answer is probably in the negative. We nowhere come across respectable ladies as music teachers. Girls in royal and rich families were usually coached either by male musicians or by dancing

girls. When child marriage became the order of the day, women in cultured families ceased to be connoisseurs of or even acquainted with the arts of vocal and instrumental music and dancing. Music as a career was not possible after the marriage owing to the progressively stringent ideas about decorum and seclusion. So these fine arts became the exclusive accomplishments of the courtesan class.

Singing and dancing girls enjoyed the same privileges and status as the courtesans in post Vedic period. The numerical strength of the class of singing girls was fairly strong throughout her history India has been studded with princes and kings who have been accustomed to extend a liberal patronage to singers and dancers. In the royal courts of ancient and medieval periods a large number of singing girls were engaged as betel carriers, fan servants etc. Besides the nominal duties indicated by their names, most of these women used to sing, dance and even stage dramas at the courts. Dancing girls were also employed as spies by the secret service department.

Some women also served as parasol bearers, door keepers, guards and hair-dressers in royal courts. But these careers were probably not open to the women of higher classes during ancient and medieval period.

When Hindu temples came to be built and endowed on a magnificent scale, some people began to feel in course of time that there should be singing girls attached to shrine to play music on the occasion of the different services and worships of the deity. The custom of the association of dancing girls with temples is unknown to Jataka literature. It is not mentioned by Greek writers; the Arthasastra which describes in detail the life and duties of dancing girls is

silent about it. The custom, however had come into vogue by about the 3rd century AD, for Kalidasa refer to dancing girls present in Mahakata temple of Ujjayini at the time of evening worship (Meghaduta I, 35). Several Puranas also recommend that arrangements should be made to enlist the services of singing girls to provide vocal and instrumental music at the time of divine services. These singing girls were usually prostitute and we are pained to find that some of the Puranas should have gone to the extent of recommending the purchase of beautiful girls for the dedication to temple.⁶ Parents would often vow to dedicate their first born child to the temple, thus increasing the number of temple girls.⁷ This custom probably became quite common in the sixth century AD, when most of the Purans containing a reference to it, seem to have been composed. In the 7th century AD, Yuan Chwang saw numerous singing girls in the temple of the Sun at Multan. The Rajtrangini (IV, 31) attests to the existence of this custom in Kashmir from about the 7th century AD. The famous temple of Somnatha is said to have employed 500 dancing girls in order to provide music before the deity continuously throughout the day and night. Several inscriptions from South Indian prove the association of dancing girls with temple service from about the 9th century AD. When the King Rajaraja I built the Tanjore temple in 10th century AD, he provided for the temple service by no less than 400 dancing girls.

The introduction of dancing girls in temples tended to lower the moral and spiritual atmosphere. Some people began to visit shrines not so much to pay their respects to deities, as to carry on their love intrigues with the singing girls employed there. The custom, when introduced was therefore vehemently opposed by all the champions of social purity like Brahmanas and ascetics.

Alberuni refers to this opposition and says that it proved of no avail because the custom was championed by Kings and members of aristocracy.

Courtesan had a peculiar position in ancient India. Society treat them with a certain amount of consideration as the custodians of fine arts, which had ceased to be cultivated elsewhere in society. Men who had a liking and love for music and dancing could not find delight even in the company of their wives, who ceased to possess these accomplishment Famous capitals like Vaisali and Rajgriha had chief courtesans of their own, who were often formally installed in their position by the state with due pomp and ceremony. *Ambapalli*, the chief courtesan of Vaisali (in northern Bihar) in the days of the Buddha, excited considerable admiration in the contemporary society, known for her beauty and accomplishments she possessed a considerable amount of wealth. Her pomp and pageant was in no way inferior to that of a member of the Senate of the Lichchavi Republic. Buddha did not deem it inappropriate to accept her invitation for a lunch. *Salavati*, *Ambapalli*'s contemporary and competitor at Rajgriha (in southern Bihar), enjoyed an equally high status. These chief courtesans had their own trains of singers and dancing girls and were as extravagant in charging fees as in spending their earnings.

With the dawn of Modern Age, the theme of historical writing has been shifted from the political aspect to the socio-economic aspects. Women has always played an important role in the social life with developing aspect of women emancipation. She occupies a very prominent picture in socio-economic studies. A lot of work has been done to analyse the role of women in Modern history but the same work is yet to be done in medieval history.

Especially in Tamil Nadu able quantity of work has come out on women and their status in society has been fully not brought out in print.

Generally three criteria's are adopted to understand the status of women. They are Education, Profession and Property rights. These factors had served as a barometer to mark the status of women in the society by almost all the historians of social history.⁸

Inscriptions shows that women have property rights, Generally we the historians conclude that the women enjoyed property rights from the donations made by them to the temples. A number of epigraphs speak about the women donating in the form of money, gold, land, cattle etc. A careful analysis shows that all donar came under five categories (1) Royal women (ii) Royal maid servants (iii) Women attached to temple as "devadasi" etc (iv) Women connected to ruling class like chieftains, military heads etc., and (v) a very marginal number of common folk. All these women could be broadly divided into two sections (i) Women donated on their own capacity and (ii) Women donated at the backing of male members. Women who are donating at the backing of male members are not worth discussing here because their male counterpart earned for them, but the working women are need to be discussed here because they earned money and donated through their own earnings. This discussion can give a clear picture of different profession opted by the women during Chola period and the role played by women in enhancing the economy of the state. It also make us understand the economic independence experienced by the women during this period. Temple and Royal palaces are the main employer of the women. They worked in Temples and Royal palaces

in different departments. Apart from Temple and Royal household there were other avenues also which has contributed a lot in giving financial satisfaction to the women.

So let us first deal with temple and its female functionaries.

Women as temple servants :

In early medieval South India, the temple culture was dominant and the tremendous growth of temples was witnessed there. During this period temples were considered as an institution of great economic importance. Temple construction required a large number of architects and craftsmen and after the establishment of temples a large number of labourers were needed to do the daily routine works of the temples. For that the temples gave the constant employment to priests, musicians, dancing girls, florists, cooks and many other classes of servants. According to Sir George Birwood “The village communities have been strongholds of the traditional arts of India. The same could be said about the temple of this period. It is true that perhaps temples are the largest employer next to the king, “a great landlord, bank, school, hospital, fortress and what not.”⁹

Much have been written about the origin, history, architecture and festivals of the temple, not only these aspects but to some extent economy of the temple had also been analysed. But the temple servants because of whom these temples exist were never studied upon. Male temple servants have been dealt to some extent but the female temple servants have not been discussed at large.

The temple is a big structure and various functions were performed in it, and for those different functions a large number of people were required who were directly or indirectly connected with the temple related jobs.

Inscriptions throw a considerable light on various temple functionaries like drummers, musicians, dancers, weavers, priest, garland makers, accountants, shephards, lamp lighter, gardeners, potters and carpenters. Inscriptions shows that females were also the integral part of the temple functions. They were required for cleaning, washing, assistance in cooking, garland making, flower collection, paddy husking, singing and dancing.

As we know that inscriptions are the main source of our information but most of the Chola period inscriptions do not provide us a full picture of temple life because they are the records of addition to or alteration of existing arrangements like the gift of another perpetual lamp, provision for offerings of flower or food in daily worship or the institution of a special service at the celebration of a festival, but still these inscriptions impart us some very valuable informations regarding the female temple functionaries.

First and foremost question that arises in our minds is that how a female can enter in the temple services? Inscriptions inform us that some females dedicated themselves to the temple services, while some were donated, some are sold and some others were appointed by the kings. On the basis of their modes of entry into the temple services temple women can be classified into seven types

1. Datta: one who gave herself as a gift to a temple.
2. Vikrita : one who had been sold for the same purpose.

3. Bharityu : one who offers herself as a temple servants for the prosperity of her family.
4. Bhakta : one who joined a temple out of devotion
5. Hrita : one who was enticed away and presented to a temple.
6. Alankara : one who being well trained in her profession and profusely decorated was presented to a temple by kings and nobleman, to add to the magnificence and charm of temple.
7. Rudraganika or Gopika : who received regular wages from a temple being employed to sing and dance.¹⁰

Temple women were known through different names in Chola inscriptions. These names were given to them according to their qualification, work and honour. They were known as Devaradiyal, Talicceripentukal, Nakkan, Manikkam, Tevarmakal and Kutti. Devaradiyal is made up of 2 words Devar or God and adiyal or slave or servant which means slave or servant of God. Talicceri Pentukal means 'women of temple district' like the women settled around the Rajarajesvaram temple were identified as talicceri pendukal, but each one of them also has an individual hometown identity.¹¹ Next is tevenar makal which means 'daughter of God', Nakkan, Manikkan and Nachchi were the honorifice titles given to temple women, and last is Kutti. It is the feminine form of 'dancer' derived from 'Kuttu' (dance, dancing) the male dancer is known as 'kuttan'.¹²

All the servants of the temple were referred by the term 'taliparivaram'.¹³ Inscription informed us that women were donated to the service of the temple by their own family members like Achcha Pidan Ganvadi-Nambi alias

Alagiya Pandya Pallavaraiyan belonging to the community of Irumudisolatterinda Villigal assigned certain women of his family as temple servants. This information belongs to 49th year of Kulottunga Chola and cited from Bilvanathesvara temple.¹⁴ Another inscription of 23rd year of Kulottunga's reign gives us information that in Vedapurisvara temple, a list of men and women had been given who were bound to the temple by service in perpetuity.¹⁵ Likewise 10 women was appointed in the temple of Tiruttendonrisvaran Udaiyar-Nayar to do the service in the temple.¹⁶

Vayalurkilavan Tiruveganban had gifted 5 women and their descendent for husking paddy in the temple shows that sometimes the whole family were gifted or donated to the temple for performing various tasks in the temple (Adipurisvara temple, 19th year of Rajaraja III).¹⁷

In one case the whole joint family of 15 members comprising the donor, named Nambanambi Nangai, her daughter grandson, children and others were sold to the temple for 30 kasu (Dakshinapurisvara temple, 13th year of Vikrama Chola).¹⁸

Men also sold themselves to the service of temple like in 3rd year of Rajaraja 5 men, 5 women and their descendents sold themselves to the temple (Vedaranyesvara temple).¹⁹ 4 women sold themselves as devaradiyar in the temple for 700 kasu (Uttarapatisvara temple 3rd year of Rajadhiraja).²⁰ In another inscription Nalayirathu Munnurruvan had gifted 3 women for singing hymns and for service in the temple. This information is collected from Agnisvara temple in 41st year of Rajaraja.²¹

Inscriptions also reveal that not only people sold or donate themselves to the temple but sometime temples and mutts buy the people for doing service.

Like a stone mason named Mulaittu, his wife and 4 sons were the servants of the mutt (name lost) which had bought them (Somanathesvara temple, 3rd year of Rajaraja).²²

Temple functionaries when enter the temple certain duties were given to them, these duties were given to them according to their qualification like dancing and signing but some duties they purchased or acquired through making a deal with the temple like performing festival dance, and singing Tamil devotional songs.²³ Apart from these duties there are other works which were performed by the temple functionaries like bearing fly whisks, bearing lamps, acting as personal attendant on the deity, adorning the image of god, accompany god in procession, sweeping floors and purifying them with cow dung and decorating them with kolams, garland making, cooking food, assisting in food preparation, husking paddy, performing dramas etc.

Bearing fly whisk, lamps and acting as personal attendant on the deity are similar to singing and dancing in their connotation of special privileges but rather different also because they are entirely unskilled function. The term used for these women is '*kavarippina*' or flywhisk women. In one case, slave women who had been donated to the temple by a local notable, perform this function. In this inscription slave named Uran Colai, her daughter Velan Piratti, and her daughter Aramaiyintonkanti were donated to sing hymms and to act as *kavarippinavarkal* for the Supreme Lord of the temple.²⁴

In another inscription from Tiruchirappalli district, Siva temple records that seven temple women were assigned a turn to sing, wave lamp (*alatti*) before the god and attend him, which shows women bearing lamp and

attending God and also waving lamp before god. The other inscription from Tirunelveli district records a series of roles to various temple women including cleaning and decorating temples floors and applying kappu (substance such as sandal paste for ritual protection and adornment) to the images of the deities in the temple.²⁵ It is clear from this inscription that personal attendance on the deities was a coveted honour and women do these job to acquire recognition and status in the temple. The above described inscriptions also specify that women performed the service of cleaning temple floors and also decorating them. Women were frequently charged with cleaning the floors of eating halls. The cleaning of the floor of temples was considered an honored task in the Chola period. It is the only inscription that indicates that making auspicious designs (kolams) had place in the Chola period temple or that this was a distinctively feminine task. The temple women are involved in preparation of food that was offered to human or divine recipients.²⁶

Religious singing and dancing was the integral part of the South Indian temples and these duties were performed by female and male functionaries side by side. Temple women did not inherit the right to perform dance and to sing the Tamil devotional songs Tiruvempavai instead they purchase it or acquire it by making a deal with the temple. Like in the reign of Kulottunga a sale was made by a tanattar of the temple, of the rights of singing the hymns (Tiruvempavai) in the temple of Nallanayanar and of accompanying the god on foot in the procession to two devaradiyar for a kalanju and a half.²⁷ Similarly a devaradiyar named Udaiyanachchi alias Kulottunga solemanikkan were given the right to sing hymns by the tanattar of the temple. This inscription belongs to 20th year of Kulottunga Chola. But male singer and dancer were not required to

enter in any type of agreement before performing singing and dancing in the temple.²⁸

The songs were either preceded or followed by dance. Inscriptions informed about three types of dances they were 'Cantikuttu', 'Sakkaikuttu' and 'Ariyakuttu'. Cantikuttu is a dance performed during temple festivals and the women who perform Cantikuttu is known as 'atuval'.²⁹ Sakkaikuttu is another form of dance performed by both men and women. In an inscription dated 24th year of Kulottunga records the appointment of Bumalvi d/o Porkoyil-Nangai, as the devaradiyar of the temple for performing the Sakkaikuttu on festival occasion.³⁰ Ariyakakuttu is mainly performed by men.³¹

Inscriptions also reveal that there was a hierarchy among the temple female servants. They performed their duties in group and they have fixed periods of the day to perform the duties.³² There are also references which shows that they also got transferred. As inscription related to 18th year of Kulottunga Chola seems to register an order of the king to transfer a dancing girl and her descendent from his (?) own service to the service of temple at Tirukkulatta (141/1922, Kalahastisvara temple). In another inscription an order was given by (?) that Anandavalli [who to be appointed 3rd kudi] in the temple of Alagiya-Mannar of Rajarajachaturvedimangalam in place of Valli Mannikkamalai and her set who formerly occupied the 3rd kudi but were transferred to the 4th. This inscription clarifies that these temple women work in group as well as they got transferred from one strata to another which confirmed that hierarchy do present among them (388/1916, Gopalasvami temple).

As the religious records declared that women should not enter the temple and her kitchen when she is impure than when a female temple functionaries is going through her menstruation period and as she was not considered pure and not allowed to enter in the temple so they cannot perform various duties than it can be thought that she must have transferred her duties to other female functionaries of her group and continue her work after getting pure.

Temple women though operated outside the traditional family system but they had religious sanction to have sexual life yet their profession commended respect in the society. Generally it was assumed that the female temple servants never get married but actually there are references which can prove that temple servants do get married. An inscription belonging to 11th year of Kulottunga I record the marriage of a certain dancing girl belonging to the temple. This information is cited from Somnathesvara temple.³³ Similarly a devaradiyar named Chatturan Chatturi wife of a Nagar Perungadai donated 95 sheeps for a perpetual lamp to the temple of Tiruvarriyur Mahadevi in 31st year of Rajadhiraja deva. This inscription is cited from Adhipurisvara temple.³⁴ Hence these inscriptions proved that they were married but the nature of their marriage is not known to us because these inscriptions are silent on this issue. Their heirs were their daughters as they carried their names with them.³⁵ Names of the devaradiyar sons were also mentioned in the inscriptions but they are very rare.³⁶

The female servants who were appointed by the temple authorities were paid by them. Aloka P. Sen in her work 'Social and Economic history of Early Deccan had given a table which shows potters, carpenters, astrologers, tailors and many others were paid at par with temple girls but the author did not feel

the same and to prove my point I would like to quote an 11 century record from Tiruvamattar in South Arcot district, it says that women were employed in Abhiramesvara temple at Tiruvamattar³⁷ to pick flower and making garlands. It also states that while men were paid at the rate of 8 nali of rice per day for the task of lifting water, irrigation of fields, gathering of flowers and making garlands, women were paid half the rate i.e. 4 nalis for performing the same work. It seems that appointment made by the royal authority must have paid at par with men but it may not be possible in other cases.

Temple girls who were sold or donated to the temple we do not have any inscriptional evidence about their livelihood but it is quite understandable that they were paid by the temple and mutts to which they were attached. People usually donate in the temple for maintaining these female temple functionaries like a sale of land by the residents of Iganaiyar village was made to Sattan Iramadeviyar who is called the ‘anukkiyar’ of the king. The purpose of the sale was to maintain 12 devaradiyar in the temple to serve (?) the goddess Gauri. This information belongs to 26th year of Rajendra Chola.³⁸ Likewise an assignment of land was made by the big assembly of Madurantaka-Chaturvedi mangalam for opening a street round the temple called Tiruvenkattuppearnteruva and privilege was granted to Siva brahman, uvachchars, tapasvins and devaradiyar to settle in it. This information is cited from Svetaranyesvara temple.³⁹ Similarly a lady named Korriyamai donated 28 kalam of paddy to feed female dancers during the Sittarai festival.⁴⁰

According to an inscription from the end of Rajaraja I's reign (AD 1014) records the establishment of 400 talicceri pendukal at the Rajarajesvara temple in Tanjavur. This inscription specifies “that the share (panku) of produce and

the responsibility of performing service (pani) assigned to each women should, when she died or moved elsewhere, be transferred, her nearest relative or if such a person was not suitable (yogyar), to someone who was qualified, chosen either by the near relative, or by the group of (talicceri pendukal) from among themselves".⁴¹ This inscription reveals that substitution process exist during those days and reasons were specifically told in the inscription and for the remuneration, they might be getting the same remuneration as the previous female servants was getting.

The devardiyar had kings and queens name and title along with their names denoting their high social status like any other chieftain or artisan. It is very difficult to identify or differentiate between female temple servants appointed by the royal authorities or the others. Since both were referred by the term 'Devaradiyar'.⁴²

Many temple women make donation of gold, livstocks, land, money, ornaments, vessels, rice, paddy. As Peeri Ponnambolen a dancing girl gifted gold for burning 2 perpetual lamps in the temple. This information belong to Kachchisvera temple from 16th year of Rajendra Chola.⁴³ Similarly Kuttadum Nachchi a devaradiyar in 18th year of Rajaraja gifted gold for gold casing for the feet of the image (Vachesvara temple, 107/1929).

A dancing girl of Tirivengamban Udaiyar temple in 13th year of Kulottunga gifted vessels to burn a twilight lamp for the merit of her deceased daughter (Abhiramesvara temple, 47/1922). Duggai Nierral alias Vikramakula Manikkan, a devaradiyar gifted 15 kasu of money for burning a twilight lamp in the temple in 2nd year of Kulottunga Chola (Gramardhamatra temple,

147/1906). Two inscriptions belonging to 13th and 14th year of Kulottunga records that dancing girls donated land. In first case donation was made to set up the image of kshetrapala and in second land was given as stridhana to goddess⁴⁴. Aynathirunrruva Manikkan a dancing girl constructed outer prakara wall, the abhishek mandapa of the shrine and daily gift of one kurmi of rice for her own prosperity in 38th year of Rajaraja (Sundaravada Perumal temple 172/1923). Likewise a devaradiyar gifted 32 cows and a bull for a perpetual lamp in the temple during the 5th year of Kulottunga.⁴⁵ These above given informations prove that the temple women donated a lot and according to their capacities. Certain devaradiyar use to pay taxes to the government. In 11th century in Karnataka state, some temple women were exempted from the payment of house and mirror tax which means usually devaradiyar use to pay these taxes.⁴⁶ Thus it can be said that these devaradiyars enjoyed good social as well as economic status and their children also enjoy the same status.

Branding was also a trend practice during Chola period mostly the temple servants were branded before entering the temple. This can be prove from an inscription of 49th year of Kulottunga when Achcha Pidaran Ganvadi-Nanbi alias Alagiyapandyapallavaraiya belonging to the community of Irumudisolatterinda Villigal assigned certain women of his family as temple servants (deveradiyar) to the temple of Tiruvallam-Udaiyar after being branded with the trident mark or (sula).⁴⁷

The above discussion reveals that the female functionaries of medieval south Indian temple carried out many duties apart from singing and dancing. They carried out various other duties also. They worked either individually or in groups and they get transferred too, they were at par with men in many ways

like recruitment, service, management and to some extent in wages also. They enjoyed economic freedom and social status also.

Royal Household Servants :

A king's household is a big affair, Royal palace served as the largest employer in the inner circles of the palace. The royal household comprised numerous servants of various descriptions. It may includes body guards, entertainment maids, women employed in royal kitchen and bathing establishments, wet nurses, concubines and courtesans. *Manasollasa* recommends employing women in the royal households are for cleaning rice, serving food, washing feets, massaging, dressing hair, applying unguents and for providing entertainment with programmes of music, dance and instrument playing.⁴⁸

All the royal household servants lives in 'Velams'. Velams were the residence of the women and children who were captured during the wars, and these Velams comes in the vicinity of the capital. The worst hit of the war were the women and women of all categories suffered this. The royal women when captured were taken as captives to the 'harem' of other kings. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri says, 'Velams' is the place where war captives, women and children lived. Many inscriptions described how women folk were raped, hair shaved by the victorious king and his army. The most vulnerable of it was that, the saviour of the society, the 'king' who took pride in such activities.⁴⁹ There is an inscription belonging to Rajaraja-I reign and quoted from Barhadisvara temple written in Tamil and Sanskrit language whose middle portion is damaged seems to endow the king with the title 'Naratungan' and described how the

vanquished chiefs bowed to the victorious king. A Sanskrit verse at the end described the plight of queens of the vanquished Kerala king (Information not available).⁵⁰

According to another inscription, Velams does not seem to mean 'herams' but it is the female part of the palace establishment⁵¹ It means that the residence of the palace servants were known as 'Velams'.

All the royal people like king, queen, prince, princess, king's mother, sister, chieftain or wife of a chieftain they all had their own separate living space or palace and they have a separate set of servants for serving them. These servants look after their daily needs like they look after their bathing establishment, their food and at times they also provide them with personal comforts. All the royal males can employ both male and female servants but only women were appointed for the inner apartments of the palace where only royal females reside and these women also act as a personal body guard for the royal women. The work of these women were supervised by a supervisor, Manasollasa prescribed that usually elderly and experienced women were allowed to supervise the work done by the maid servants appointed in the royal household.⁵²

The female working as royal household servant were known as 'Pendatti' and those who were appointed by the king may be treated at par with other male servants of royal household. Their personal names did not suggest their social status. But the names given to them by their employers gives us an image as if they were much respected and powerful than any other common folk. They were called 'Avanisikhami' which means Crest Jewel of the Earth,

‘Tirunnuvalmanikham’ means Ruby of the Sacred Jambu fruit and ‘Sembikulamanikkiyar’ or Ruby of the Chola family.⁵³

Recruitment criteria of these maid servants are not known to us as the information regarding it is very scarce, but one logically can assume that they can be appointed by the royal people like kings, queens, prince, princess chieftain etc. Secondly war captives were also employed as maid servants. Last but not the least maid servants were sent as a token of love and as a part of tributary to the king by petty kings and chieftains. No specific payment plan have been given for these servants but it can be assumed that they may be paid in terms of gold and paddy because it was a normal mode of payment during Chola period and their counterpart temple female servants were also being paid through the same mode. This section of ladies in the society operated out of the general family structure. There is no inscriptional record of them being married but they bear children can be prove from the inscriptional sources. A palace woman (pendatti) named Tiran Sattividangi gifted 48 sheeps for a half lamp in Mahadeva temple for her daughter named Uttamodari (Naganathesvamin temple, 212/1911). Similarly in 44th year of Rajarajadeva, a nritta-mandapa was constructed in the temple by Ottuvar-Nayar, son of Nambattal of Alagu gasiyanallur: a palace maid servant of Pallavandai.⁵⁴

These inscriptions shows that while living out of the general family structure these servants were open to sex life and they bear children and these children carry only the mother’s name not the father’s name while all sections of people known from their father’s or husband’s name. This suggest that this class of women did not have normal family life. If at all these women who

There is an inscription which records a gift of gold by Nattamai.... A maid servant of bath establishment in the palace of Gangai Kondasolapuram (Kahiranathesvara temple, 510/1926). Similarly a gift of money was made by Kavidi-Sirudaikkalali a lady belonging to the bathing establishment of the king, his mother and sister for 15 lamps in the temple. This information belongs to 12th year of Rajendra Choladeva (Sakatrisvara temple, 149/1931-32). Likewise a record of 96 sheep gifted for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple of Paramesvami by a kitchen maid (of the palace) at Tanjavur by name Baladevankidasani. This information belongs to 4th year of Uttamachola (11/1914). There is a long list of donative inscriptions of royal household servants like discussed above and they all cannot be mentioned here.

Branding of royal household servants were also done. Such stamps were pressed on their shoulder. According to an inscription of kulottunga time, some ladies who were recruited for the temple service were allotted to the service of palace by mistake. These ladies through a supervisor, reported the matter to the king, and king ordered that the palace emblem should be removed and branded with the temple emblem so that they were restored to the same.⁶⁴

From the meager epigraphical and literary sources we can not get more information about the female royal household servant and their other important aspect. But what we come to know is that though these people operated outside of the traditional family system but they were respected. They were paid servants and housing sites were also granted to them. Their economic conditions was far better than common folk because they use to give donations to the temple in terms of gold, land, cattle and paddy. They exercise their

profession like other professionals and enjoyed economic freedom and social status.

Through the above given information we can say that the avenue of work for Royal household maid servants includes bodyguard, entertainment maids, women employed in royal kitchen and bathing establishment, wet nurses, concubine and courtesan. They were operated either individually or in groups. They are branded when introduced to an institution. There is no doubt that these ladies had employment to earn for their livelihood. They did not have a normal family life but they are open to sex life. The Royal household maid servants were economically independent and enjoyed a specific social status for better than the common folk.

Other Avenues of Work :

An examination of South Indian historiographical tradition reveals that women were part of the domestic and men were essentially a part of the public domain. The first break in this kind of historiography was made by a woman Mary Frances Billington. Her book on 'Indian Women' written in 1895 apart from the usual chapters also includes a chapter on 'Female work in Field and Factory'. Since Billington, women's studies have come a long way and the presence of women in the economic and political domains especially the former has become an important agenda of historical enquiries.⁶⁵

The South Indian literature made a significant contribution towards our understanding of the role of women in early South Indian economy. This work had been marvelously done by Vijaya Ramaswamy in her women's related work namely 'Women and Farm Work in Tamil Folk songs' and 'Aspects of

women and work in Early South India'. In these work she had dealt with different avenues of work done by women during Sangam Age. She had described women involvement in agriculture, dairy farming, spinning, basket and garland making, women cooks and what not. Women actively participated in all these avenues in the time established fact. They not only involve in these works in Sangam age only but till now they are the active participant in these avenues. The evidences in early medieval literary works as well as inscription regarding women involvement in these avenues are widely scattered and meager. But an attempt have been made to assemble all those informations and write about the women contribution in different avenues during Chola period.

Women actively participated in the agricultural sector. They exclusively do weeding, planting, guarding of corps, husking, winnowing and pounding of the paddy. These practices not only survived in the post Sangam period, but also continue to be exclusively women's work even today. Another agricultural activity which was and continues to be women's work is the sowing of crops as well as transplantation which they perform while standing in rows. The genre of folk songs related to this activity are called "*nattru padal*" or sowing songs⁶⁶. Women equally participated with men in the work of irrigation and harvesting. The irrigation songs or '*etra padal*' are punctuated by rhythm of buckets being drawn up.⁶⁷ The Periyapuramam refers to the Pulatti singing while husking paddy and her husband the Palaiyar were employed in the field.⁶⁸ The Pulaya were invariably landless agricultural labourers and the term used for them is 'Kadaiyar' or the lowest. So it can be logically inferred that both Pulaiyar and Pulatti were being employed in agriculture as labourer by the landlord.

Pastoral economy existed along with agriculture in South India. It can be said that women played a leading possibly even a dominant role in the pastoral economy.⁶⁹ A familiar sight in the Tamil countryside even today is the 'morkari' or 'neykari' literally the buttermilk women and the women who vends the clarified butter (ghee). These women are mainly vendors and generally carry their wares on a earthen vessel on their heads. The shepherdess in the Tamil country is known by names Aaichchi, Kovichchi and Idachchi⁷⁰. She starts her day by dawn and churns the curd and take out butter and then sells it door to door.

Among the domestic industries, the most important was the handloom industry. In South India spinning of yarn was also done by housewives, but it was largely the sole occupation of widows and unmarried or destitute women. These female spinners were referred as '*Parutti pendugal*' in Sangam literature.⁷¹ In this connection the English word 'spinster' for a single woman provides an interesting parallel since the word originates precisely in the same context as a woman who had to spin for her economic survival. According to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* the devadasi who were too old to perform any services in the temple were employed to card cotton for their livelihood.⁷² References to women spinners also appear in medieval literature especially Virasivism, a 12th century religious movement which provide scope for self expression to many craft persons and lower order professionals. The movement has two prominent preachers from this profession they both were spinster named Kadire Remmavve and Kadire Kayakade Kalavve. Kadire means 'spinner' and kayakade means work.⁷³

There was another profession which was associated with the handloom industry i.e. bleaching and washing of clothes. This was again a sphere of work in which women engaged independently or actively assisted by their husbands. Referring to these Pulatti women the Periyapuram says that they use to indulge in drunken dancing.⁷⁴ Washing of clothes was a paid service but there is no indication of what was the nature and mode of payment. There was hardly any reference to this. One can only logically assume that like other menial and professional of the village community they were being paid from the heap of grains. In spite of her low caste and low social status, the pulatti or washer women remained a very essential component of the village community.⁷⁵

References to women in any other handicraft are very scarce. Thus the role played by the women in any other craft and profession is attempted to built on the basis of the limited evidence available.

Liquor distillery was predominantly managed by the women of the lower castes. Liquor was brewed from rice, fruit etc. Women were in charge of the door to door sale of toddy. Perhaps due to their active participation in the liquor industry led them to become hard drinkers.

Basket making and mat weaving have been associated with women. Both are the part of cottage industries and very poorly paid profession. They were known as 'medara'. Due to their poor conditions the women of medara caste were forced into prostitution.⁷⁶ The old type baskets and coconut leaf and palm leaf umbrellas are still a common sight in South India and these are still being largely made by women. Basketing is the specialized craft of the fisher women in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the women of Ramanathapuram were

known today for their intricate basket work. Women were largely employed in the unorganized sector. There are some evidence that they worked for daily wages in temples and at construction sites. They were usually paid in terms of grains and cooked rice. A Chola inscription of Rajaraja period tell about the male and female daily wages workers and points out that women were paid exactly half of what their male counterpart received.⁷⁷

Women act as cooks in private homes or in the temples. There are references to the appointments of female cooks. There are reference to the appointment of female cooks in the medieval period. An inscription from Talaguda in Karnataka dated 1158 AD states that three female cooks were appointed to cook food for the students and were paid in terms of money and clothes.

Women of Valaiyar caste earned a living as professional mourners. According to an inscription from the Pudokotai state, whenever death occurred in any household the Valachchi women were called and they covered their faces with cloth and wailed loudly to mourn the dead.⁷⁸

The above discussion reveals that the female functionaries of medieval South Indian temple carried out many duties apart from singing and dancing. They carried out various other duties also. They worked either individually or in groups and they get transferred too, they were at par with men in many ways like recruitment, service, management and to some extent in wages also. They enjoyed economic freedom and social status also.

The following informations shows that during medieval times professions were mostly caste oriented and the contemporary sources provide an evidence of women's direct involvement in most of them. The main avenues

of work done by women were agriculture, dairy farming, handloom industry, cooks, wet nurses and what not. In some profession they act as a helping hand for her male counterpart and in 'others' they took up the profession on their own like prostitution and wet nurses etc.

CONCLUSION :

To sum up the chapter we can say that women since beginning had contributed a lot in the economy of her household as well as the state. She act as a helping hand for her husband and always shares the burden with him. During early medieval period apart from other avenues two professions were mainly opted by the women they were working as Temple servitors and working as Royal household maid servants.

Temple servants carried out various duties apart from singing and dancing. They should be called female servitor rather than dancing girls. Like wise the Royal household maid servants carried out many duties besides giving personal comforts to the king. They look after their food, bathing needs and many others. The female service holder seems to be at par with other male service holder of the temple in many ways like recruitment, service supervision and to some extent in wages but there is no information of this sort from the Royal household maid servant point of view.

They both made donations to the temple in terms of gold, land, cattle and money and one thing worth mentioning here is that they made these donations through their own earning. They all exercise their profession like other professionals and enjoyed economic freedom and social status.

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Chapter - IV

***Women's Donations and
Wealth Disbursement***

CHAPTER – 4

WOMEN'S DONATIONS AND WEALTH DISBURSEMENT

Anyone who has gone to visit an old temple in the southern part of India, and particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu may notice inscriptions carved into walls, doorways, pillars and even on pavement stones. These inscriptions are among the most important sources for the early medieval history of South India. They are mostly copies of legal deeds that were originally written on palm leaves to record donations of land, money, agrarian produce and a variety of other articles to religious institutions. Engraved in stone to preserve their gifts for all times, these deeds in their thousands contain a multitude of reference to religious, political and economic practices.¹

The Chola Empire produced a long list of able rulers who ruled a vast empire stretching from Tamil Nadu to Ceylon. The four centuries of Chola rule witnessed a long period of peace and prosperity so they devoted much of their energy and wealth for philanthropic works. The philanthropic works carried out by the kings and nobles provided a model for the masses.

The richness of historical material from the Chola period, with over 10,000 inscriptions collected until now heightens the significance of this dynasty. Chola inscriptions are the sizeable, and datable body of data, found mostly at the places of origin, explicitly describing relationships among social groups and system in South India. Any study of the early history of South Asia must take it into account the world patronage by this database. Their range and sheer volume indicate that inscriptions can indeed be used as a sound basis for reconstructing social history.

Almost all the Chola period inscriptions are engraved on stones, copper plates, originally on temple walls and records in Tamil, a multitude of transaction and arrangements relating to temple affairs, most of which centre around donations made to the temples. The inscriptions make explicit and public the identity of the donors, the nature of gifts and detail about how endowments are to be put to use in order to maintain worship in the temple. Although Chola period inscriptions carefully describe the substance of gift to temple (eg gold, livestock and land) and very frequently indicate the object of gift (eg. the support of a perpetual lamp or a festival service) the motive for making the gift is seldom mentioned. Gifts were presumably made, at least in part, with the intention of generating religious merit or possibly to fulfill a vow or expiate a sin.²

There is a remarkable increase in the number of temples built and rituals performed to the temple deities. This necessitated the maintenance of regular resources by each temple which came mainly through land grants by people from different sections of society. No doubt women too contributed greatly to this new development in their individual capacity. They also paid huge donations. Women belonging to different sections of society liberally came forward in giving various grants to temples such as villages, land, cash, gold, ornaments, and livestock. In this connection it becomes quite interesting to know whether these grants suggest economic independence of women or what could be the source of their donations. Or rather women were propertied? It is clear that women from different strata occupied varying position vis-a-vis the crucial issue of property rights. The issue of property rights has to be viewed at both in terms of its theoretical underpinning and the actual social reality. Due to

paucity of evidences, it is possible to make limited conjectures in this regard. The theoretical stance is best elaborated in Vijnanesvara's "*Mitaksara*". It states that women have the right to share in property as their legitimate inheritance but they do not have right to divide or share property.³ However the widow's rights to inherit is sustained even more strongly in an inscription from Achchalpuram in North Arcot district which records the decision of the sabha of Kulottungacholachaturvedimangalam, to allow a widow to inherit the lands, slaves and other articles of her dead husband.⁴ This work also makes it clear that the widow is the natural inheritor of her husband's property.

"In sacred tradition..... the wife is declared to be the half in his body..... of him whose wife is not dead, the half of the body lives; how can another inherit while the half of his body is still alive? Though his kinsmen, his father, brother or uterine sisters be alive, the wife of a deceased sonless man is his heir."⁵

The *Mitaksara*, the *Sarasvativilasa* and other canonical texts agreed on the point that "*stridhana*" or "*manjakani*" was legally the exclusive property of the women. Legal texts point out to five different kinds of stridhana as that which is inherited, purchased or given as a gift by the family members, relatives or friends. It may be believed that this stridhana was originally part of the bride price or *Kanyasulka* paid by the bridegroom, a part of which was passed on to the bride by her parents. According to *Sarasvativilasa* "Neither a husband, nor a son, nor a father, nor brother, have power over stridhana either to receive it, or to dispose it off. If anyone of these shall forcibly consume stridhana, he shall repay it with interest and he shall also receive punishment."⁶

It also clearly points out that stridhana should invariably be inherited by the daughter. Thus, it is evident women inherited property through stridhan.

The question regarding the sources of donation, which is a natural enquiry in the mind of everyone has been answered, that there are two sources of donation. First is stridhana which has been used in the right sense by the women of Chola period because she had power to disburse this wealth according to her own will, her husband or any other individual did not have any right to use it except when he is in a great need of it and his wife had allowed him to use it.

The other source of wealth for woman was her personal earning through which she had donated a lot. It seems that during Chola period women had a right to earn and to spend her earning according to her own wish. Different avenues of work done by women have already been dealt in the previous chapter under the head "*Women and her role in Economy during Chola period*". In that chapter different avenues of women work have been discussed like women in agriculture, dairy farming, handloom sector, basket and garland making. They also worked as oil, salt vendors, toddy makers and they also did menial jobs. But during Chola period apart from these avenues women mainly opted for professions like Temple Servitors and Royal household Servitors.

Temple servants carried out various duties apart from singing and dancing. They were called female servitors rather than dancing girls. Likewise royal household maid servants carried out many duties besides giving personal comforts to the king. They worked in different capacities like body guards, wet

nurses, spies, looking after the royal kitchen and bathing establishments and providing entertainment with programmes of dancing, singing and instrument playing. These females made donations in terms of gold, land, cattles and money and one thing worth mentioning here is that they made these donation through their own earnings. They all exercised their professions like any other profession and enjoyed economic freedom and social status also.

The donations made by a female comprised a variety of articles. These vast varieties of articles ranged from the commodities of household to valuable metals like silver and gold. Above all donations also includes immovable property like land Donors usually make these donations to ensure that their generosity would be recognized both immediately and in long term ie. *“for as long as the moon and sun”* as most of the inscriptions themselves declare. In medieval Tamil inscriptions, gifts to temple were described as gifts to the deity enshrined in the temple, who was regarded as receiving them in the same way as a human being would.⁷

This chapter aims to bring to the limelight the different varieties of articles donated by the women during Chola period and also to make a detail study of different strata of women who dumped their wealth in the temple as donations, ranging from queens, royal family members, royal servants (maid), mistress and self earning females like temple functionaries, ordinary housewives and widow. Donar usually make these donations because each one of them wanted to get recognized in the society.

ARTICLES DONATED BY THE WOMEN :

Let us first deal with the articles that are donated by the women during Chola period. Endowments in terms of gold, livestock, land and money were

made to the temples to provide for both service and rituals. Beside these inscriptions also reveal the gifts of images, ornaments, lamps made to the temples by the philanthropic minded women donors. Let us begin with the land, as an article of donation.

LAND :

Both small and large plots of lands were donated to the temples. There are references to the grant of 400 kuli of land, eighteen plots and 1000 kuli of land in the Chola inscriptions.⁸ At times small plots of lands were granted for general religious purpose, like for burning a lamp in the temple as Panchavan Madevi queen of Uttama Chola donated some land for burning a lamp in the temple(?) in the 8th year of Rajendra Chola (84/1995) Grants of land as salaries to the temple employees or the villagers in order to secure their services for the temples were also made.⁹ As a donor (name lost) had gifted a land to a dancing girl for her services in temple. This information is cited from Vaidyanatha temple (26/1920). Along with land, houses and tanks were also gifted to the temple as a brahmana lady(?) gifted land and houses to the temple in the 5th regnal year of Rajadhirjadeva II. This information is collected from Siddharathesvara temple (494/1912). Likewise a donor (?) gifted a village Arunpulaippadi to a devaradiyar for her service of singing and dancing in 30th year of Kulottunga I (489/1937, Granadhanathesvara temple). Lands granted to the temples was tax free in most cases. Most donars deposited certain amount of money with the local bodies and got the taxes remitted fully and partially.¹⁰

The land endowments enriched the temple on the one hand and widened the sphere of their activities on the other. It was very difficult for a handful of

temple officials to look after the vast landed property. Hence the temple had to assume the role of a landlord.

In many cases fallow or barren land was first reclaimed and then donated to the temple like Bhumalvi, daughter of a chieftain (?) reclaimed some lands and gifted it to temple for midnight service of God in 21st year of Kulottunga (Oppilamanisvara temple, 116/1934). If the temple came in possession of barren land, it would be reclaimed by individual and then it could be gifted a ways. Tiruttalaiserani, a maid servant of royal household gifted land after purchasing it from temple for a flower garden for goddess. This information is taken from 10th year of Rajaraja (Natraja temple, 13/1935-36). At times land was also gifted for conducting festivals, for special worship and also for feeding Brahman on certain occasion. Tappili Talviyarvi, devaradiyar endowed 7 ma of land after purchasing it from temple for special worship on festival days in 10th regnal year of Kulottunga Chola (Vilvaranyesvara temple, 154/1940). Similarly Tennavan Madevi queen of Kulottunga and Rajamanikkan, Pendatti of queen gifted land for feeding brahmanas and providing rice on certain occasions. It is cited from Ranganathesvaram temple in 25th year of Kulottunga I (126/1947-48). During Kulottunga I land was the most common item of donations because mostly donations in terms of land were made during Kulottunga's reign. All these valuable aid and assistance made the value of land grants all the more higher.

MONEY :

Numerous gifts of money were made by all ranks of society. Even persons of humble means made gifts in terms of money. Money was given to

the temple for lamps like 3 ladies one of whom was the wife of Rajaraja's officer donated money(?) for lamp in the temple during the 27th year of Rajaraja (Amavanesvara temple, 294/1917). Likewise Tiruvira nisvaram Pichchi mother of saint Muttari Adavallan gifted 4 kasu for 3 twilight lamps in 24th year of Rajendra I (159/1995-96, Ramanathesvara temple). Money was given for land purchase, the queen of Kulottunga donated money for bringing land in 5th year of Kulottunga I (Ranganathasvamin temple, 125/1942). Deviyar Somaladeviyar, a queen (?) gifted 50,000 kasu for supply of flowers to the temple. This information is cited from Ranganaathesvamin temple in 21st year of Rajaraja III (72/1986-37) same lady had gifted 20,000 kasu for the supply of ghee for lamps in the temple.

The most common object was the maintenance of sacred and perpetual lamps in the temples (chart III). The rates of this object varied from time to time but in general at least 10 to 15 kalanju in gold were required to put up a perpetual lamp. This money was invested with the temple authorities like a lady (?) wife of an officer gifted 8 kasu to Siva brahman of the temple to burn a perpetual lamp in the 2nd year of Vikramachola (Tirthapurisvara temple, 229/1928). At times money was also given for half lamp.¹¹ Money gifts were popular especially from about AD 1000. We have got reasons to believe that only a fractions of these gifts could be recorded in the inscriptions. The money gifts offered by thousand of pilgrim as in the present practice, does not find mention any where.¹²

LIVESTOCKS :

We have several references of gifting cattles by donars. These livestock were considered as a form of wealth during Chola period. There are references of various battle cause due to these cattle wealth. These livestock were meant for the installation of perpetual lamps and for *bali* (sacrificed), the first cause being very popular and common. Numerous Chola inscription relating to the gift of cattle, sheep, rams, eves, bulls testify to the popularity of this kind of charity. The animals given for this purpose were usually those who gave milk that could be turned into ghee such as sheeps, cows, buffaloes etc.

We have some idea of the number of sheeps which were needed for maintaining a lamp. In the beginning 45 sheeps were donated for lamp which was burnt throughout day and night. As regard to cows, 25 to 32 cows were regarded sufficient for maintaining one lamp, like a lady (name lost) donated 32 cows for burning a perpetual lamp in 10th year of Kulottunga I (Ramanathesvaram temple 164/1995-96). From this we can infer that approximately one cow was regarded as equivalent to 3 sheeps as 25-32 cows were required for the maintenance of a lamp where as for the same purpose 90-96 sheeps were generally required. Likewise one ram is required for burning a lamp which can be seen when a lady donated 2 rams for burning 2 lamps to the Lord Tirumaluvadi Udaiyar in 15th year of Kulottunga II (Vaidyanatha temple, 84/1920). We have references when 1 bull was donated along with 32 cows. Bull singly was never donated, it was donated along with cows only like in two inscriptions a lady(?) donated 32 cows and 1 bull respectively for a perpetual lamp. These informations belong to the 5th year of Kulottunga and 31st year of Rajaraja respectively (173/1918, 511/1902).

Through the cattle were generally provided for lamps, there are instances where we find that they were given in donations in order to provide milk, as a devaradiyar gifted 4 cows for daily supply of milk to temple for god's bath during 17th year of Rajaraja (Kripaparisvara temple, 478/1921). Curd and ghee was also provided for the bath of deities on specific and general days. Nakkan Vichchiyabam daughter of Devanar of village donated 45 sheeps for milk, ghee and curd for the sacred bath of God on Sankranti days every month (Odenavanesvar temple, 122/1930-31).

FOOD AND GRAINS OFFERINGS :

Beside these items the temples also receive offerings of different kinds of food stuff and grains from the donors. An inscription from 4th regnal year of Aditya II¹³, shows that even spices were provided by the donors. For salt offerings king Rajendra II and his predecessors granted a salt pan to the temple.¹⁴ Rice and Paddy are commonly donated grains in the temple the specific measurement for donation is not known to us but they donated it is known like Korriyanmai gifted 28th kalam of paddy for feeding the dancing girl during Sattirai festival in 9th year of Rajendra Chola (Punyanathesvamin temple, 29/1918) similarly a dancing girl named Aynathirunrruva Nanikkam constructed outer prakara wall, the abhisheka mandapa of the shrine and daily gift of one kurmi of rice for her prosperity in 38th year of Rajaraja I (Sundaravarada Perumal temple, 172/1923). Food offering were made in great quantities on festival days such as eclipse as informed by an inscription belonging to 19th year of Rajendra Chola where 3 daily offerings were made for special worship on ayanam days and during eclipses to the image of

Anantanarayana, 176/1923). Offerings were also made on new moon days and sankranti days as proved by an inscription of 10th year of Rajendra Chola where offerings were made to the temple of Tiruvagnisvaramudaiyar at Kilinallur on Amavasya and Sankranti days (148/1919). These food offering were known as “*sribali*”.

UTENSILS AND VESSELS :

The donations of utensils also occupied a considerable place among the various gifts made over to the temple. A large number of ritual aids and vessels, kitchen vessels were referred to have gifted to the temples during Chola and later period.¹⁵ These utensils and vessels were the pots (Silver, gold), lamps stand, ghee stand, bell metal utensils, servers, silver plates and bowls. These utensils were used for the offerings and for the sacred bath of the God in the temple.

Apart from large number of gold vessels, Rajaraja I presented 155 silver ritual vessels to Rajarajesvar temple at Tanjore.¹⁶ Kundavai, the sister of Rajaraja I donated 8998 Kalanju of ritual vessels and aid for worship to the same temple.¹⁷ A large number of such donation to the temple by different people were also known from the Chola period inscriptional reservoir, like Vanavan Madevi wife of Rajendra Chola donated golden vessel and a silver pot to God in the 19th year of Rajendra Chola (Vaidyanatha temple, 79/1895) Likewise Solamadeviyar, a queen gifted silver server for betel offerings and silver vessels weighing 5 palam to the Vaidyanatha temple in 10th year of Parantaka I (1/1920) similarly a dancing girl gifted a lamp stand and certain bell metals utensils to the temple in 3rd year of Kulottunga (Tiruvirattanesvara temple, 56/1921) and so on.

WOMEN :

While going through the inscriptional records of Chola dynasty one interesting thing came to be known that during Chola period women was also an item of donations to the temple. There were very few references of this category of donation so it can be said that women were not the common item of donation but they were donated to the temple. They were donated for performing different works in the temple like serving, singing hymns, and for husking paddy. Two inscriptions can be cited to prove my point. A donor named Nalayanathan Munnurruvan gifted three women for singing hymns and for service in the temple. This inscription belongs to 41st year of Rajaraja from Agnisnara temple (149/1936-37). Next inscription belong to 19th year of Rajaraja III cited from Adipurisvara temple it says that Vayalurkilavan Tiriovegaban gifted 5 women and their descendents for husking paddy in the temple (122/1912).

GOLD AND ORNAMENTS :

The devotion of the people often found expression in the gift to the deities of rich ornaments and various articles necessary for the daily worship. Ornaments such as crown, bracelet, ear ring, gold flower, garland, umbrella and articles like gold vessels, lamp stand, silver salver, flywhisk, pots of gold, silver bronze and bell metal etc. were given to the deities like a lady(?) donar who was a dancing girl of the temple gifted number of jewels and vessels to God and Goddeess of the temple (217/1910). Similarly a brahmana lady donated gold ornaments set with jewels and a gold flower to the temple in the 17th year of Rajendra Chola. This information is cited from Vaidyanatha temple

(69/1920). Some inscriptions give minute description of the ornaments. In the Tanjore inscription the descriptions and weight of every ornament is given.¹⁸ We find kings, queens and other members of the royal household donating various ornaments to the gods. Among the royal ladies Sembiyan Madevi stands way ahead in terms of gifting ornaments to the temple, after her Kundavai, sister of Rajaraja I and Lokamahadevi, wife of Rajaraja I were the other notable royal personalities who made lavish grants to the temple. After his victory over Cera and Pandya, Rajaraja made lavish gifts of ornaments and gold to the temples. Pearls were also given in a good quantity.

Gold itself was donated in large number by the women of Chola period. Gold was usually donated for burning lamp and for offerings to god. Like Koyil Perral, the concubine of King (?) donated 42 ½ kalanju of gold for perpetual lamp, daily mid day offering of god and to feed the Bhatta, well versed in Vedas. This information is cited from Ananttisvarasvamin temple of 37th year of Rajendra Chola (594/1920). Likewise a lady who is maid servant of royal kitchen invested gold on land for feeding 3 persons daily. This information also belongs to 37th year of Rajendra Chola (553/1920). Similarly Tirvadi Irayei, maid servant of a queen gifted 16 kalanju of gold in return for a certain temple land pledge to her by the temple authorities. This information belongs to Mahavalisvara temple (134/1926).

However after AD 1070 we find that comparatively lesser number of gold gifts were made to the temple. This indicate that the flow of gold through trade as well as conquest was not as uninterrupted as it was before 1070 AD.¹⁹ All this gold and silver was kept amassed and hoarded as a sort of reserve fund.

They were sometimes used in helping in the time of scarcity. Like an inscription which belong to 27th year of Kulottunga Chola registers that the temple of Tiruvegambansudaiya Naiganar at Melgangapadi alias Tadavur in Arrurkurram a sub division of Miladu alias Jananathavalanadu, was built of stone, the cost being met from gold already in possession of the temple and from what was then presented by the king and the youngest of queen (458/1913) Generally, gold and ornaments remain as a form of wealth in the temple.

EDUCATIONAL DONATIONS :

People use to give donations to their teachers as these people taught them and make them responsible citizens. Women did not lag behind in this type of donation also. Like a lady disciple had gifted a matha to her teacher called Tattanudaiyar Isamadeva. Later on the grant of an additional land was also made to the same matha by the same lady disciple. This information is cited from Kalyanasundaresa temple and it belongs to 25th year of Rajarajadeva (49/1911) similarly on the wall of Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Uttaramalluri it registered a gift of land for the support of teachers of grammar (18/1898).

WOMEN AS DONORS IN CHOLA PERIOD :

Dana or gifts giving is sacred observance promising merit in the other world. *Agnipurana* refers to ten Mahadana, gifts of gold, horses, chariots, land, houses, maid, a bride, a dark brown cow etc.²⁰ Based on the nature of danas they can be classified as *Uttama* (of higher order) like food, curd, land, honey, gold, butter, oil, protection of cows, horses, elephants etc, *Madhyadana* (of middle order) like Vidhyadana, grihadana, utensils, medicines etc and *Adhama*

(of lowest order) like furniture, vessels, lamps etc which can worn out and are not of much use.

There were two intentions of making gifts. One is the removal from past sin and the other is to achieve religious merit in the future life. In this sense, donation can be termed as sacred observance. However, gift giving to temple or monasteries served secular purposes specially when made by the members of the royal family. Making donations also has the effect of acting as a medium of exchanging and redistributing economic wealth.²¹

The popularity of the idea of making donations among women in Chola period can be understood from the number of epigraphical references, registering grants to temples, charitable and religious institution, priest etc. The details are shown in form of charts in Appendix III categorized depending on the nature of gifts into five different units. Chart I include land grants, Chart II, the particular of livestock donated to the temple is given. Chart III contains detail of monetary and ornamental endowments. Chart IV include the grants in term of gold and chart V include all other general grants made by the women.

It can be observed from the charts that women belonging to different sections of the society have figured as donors. The items of gifts however varied according to the socio-economic status of the donors. The grants ranged from villages, gardens, lands to livestock. Livestocks were donated for sacred bath of gods as well as for daily supply of milk and oil in the temple. However Chola inscriptions speak about the donation of animals to the temple for the purpose of sacrifice²² also. Cash, food, and lamps were also donated. Installation of lamp was the most common form of donation during Chola

period usually money, land and livestock were donated by the people for the installation of lamps in the temple. Sometimes consecration of Gods, institution of certain ritual service in the temple and providing special privileges to the temple employees was also taken up by them like dancing on specified days and singing the religious hymns as can be seen from the above charts. Further, it is also seen that gifts are generally made on a certain auspicious occasion or during eclipses to get more benefits as stated in the scripture.²³ As *Nakkan Vichchyaban* who was the daughter of Devanar of the village(?) had gifted 96 sheeps for milk, ghee and curd to give a sacred bath to God on “*Sankaranti*” day every month, this information is cited from Odenanamesvara temple from 23rd year of Uttama Chola. (122/30-31). Charts also show that the donation was made in the memories of the deceased family members as well as for the merit of the living individuals like husbands, sons etc. As recorded from the 9th year of Rajaraja, Sembian Mahadevi mother of Uttama Chola gifted silver plate and bronze stand for the merit of her son. (262/1923) Likewise a lady (name lost) who was the daughter of an officer (?) gifted 8 palam kasu to Tirttapurisvara temple for the welfare of her husband. This information is recorded from the 15th regnal year of Rajaraja (310/1928).

While going through the inscriptions an interesting fact was came to be known that there was a social custom prevalent in Chola reign that women use to adopt gods and goddess as their daughters and sons and they use to celebrate their marriages and provide daily offerings by endowing land which the donor woman had obtained as *Stridhana*.²⁴ One such information is cited from the Agnisvara temple at Kumaravayalur it tells us that during 15th regnal year of Rajendra Choladeva a lady named *Sendan kari* had consecrated the

image of goddess, *Uma-Bhattaraki* in the temple of Tirukkarrali-Perumal and she had adopted the goddess as her daughter and celebrated her marriage with the god and she provided for the daily worship and offerings to the goddess by endowing lands which she had obtained as 'stridhana'. And some times they gifted land to goddesses also as her 'stridhana'.²⁵ which we can prove from another inscription belonging to Valmikontha temple at Seyyur. This inscription belong to 4th regnal year of Kulottunga I, it states that a lady gifted a land as 'Stridhana' to the goddess. Name of the donor is lost.

As we know that every strata of women donated according to their own capacity. Now the question arises that which strata of women donated the most? So, for answering this query I have divided the women donors on the basis of their economic status, then two categories of women donors came into being. The first category consist of women who earned themselves and had rights to disburse their wealth according to their own will like temple servants, women royal household servants, last but not the least the devaradiyar. The second category consist of women who are better known from their husband's profession like brahman women, women of royal officials and lastly queens and princesses. After taking into consideration the number of inscriptional evidences shown in the form of Table I & II in Appendix No.4 we can derive that queens and princess donated a large chunk of their wealth to the temple. They were the largest among the women donors. They donated every item from land, gold, ornament to cattles, villages, food etc. They had done so to get affiliation in religion or dharma. Their gifts to the temple conveyed an impression of dharmic figure and upholder of social and religious values. Apart from this we also know that royal women had a large amount of wealth because

they belong to royal families and they get a large amount of 'stridhan' from their parents and they also inherit wealth from their husband's side. As stridhan was at their own disposal they donated it without hesitation. Next in this list are women of royal officials and brahman women. The brahmans not only benefited as a priestly class from the temple but they also made religious endowments. The gifts were made by both the sexes freely. In a record of 27th regnal year of Rajadhiraja I, a brahman women donated money for festivals and offerings and for services of 8 men on *Abhisheka* (holy bath) days²⁶. Following the foot steps of the kings of early dynasties, the Cholas also made lavish land and village grants to the brahmans.²⁷ The land grants by the royal member naturally made the brahmans landlords and land became one of the main items for donating to the temple. About three cases of land donation by Brahman ladies are encountered like during the 5th regnal year of Rajadhirajadeva II a brahman lady (name lost) had gifted lands and houses to the temple at Tiruttorrattur in Urraturanadu. This information is taken from Siddharathesvara temple at Uttatur (494/1912). In next two informations, brahman ladies (name lost) gifted land and garden to the temple (34/1936, 590/1904). This information is taken from Ranganathesvarsmin and Korangunatha temple respectively.

Next in the category are the women servants of Royal house hold, Temple women servants and Devaradiyar. These women come under the category who earn for themselves. They are the sole earning members and they do not have the traditional family life so they donated most of their earning to the temple for their recognition in this world as well as for the betterment in the next world. One of the most striking features of temple women's donation is

that a very high proportion of their gifts were made to their home temple. Temple women, like other people mentioned in Chola period inscriptions were often identified with reference to a 'home town'. Temple women might for example be identified as the 'devotee' or daughter of a particular temple deity or belonging to a particular temple or village.²⁸ These women also donated food grains, land, gold, ornaments and sometimes they themselves donated to the temple for a little amount of money.²⁹

These women also set up the images of goddess³⁰ and consecrated the image also³¹. There is an instance worth mentioning here about these type of donations. There were two girls (sisters) who were dancing girls of the temple, one of them register that she will set up the image of Kshtrapala in the same temple to which they belong (name of the temple is lost (345/1911). This information belong to the 13th regal year of Kulottunga I from Mukudunusvara temple at Kalathur. Like wise *Umaiyalvi*, one of the dancing girl of the temple Togummani Nayanar had consecrated the image of goddess and she also constructed the shrine and a prakara wall in the temple. This information belongs to Siddhranatesvara temple at Uttattur (504/1912).

Royal household servants also donated according to their capacities. They donated items of gold, land, food, livestocks and ornaments. At times king, to whose velam they belong, donated on their behalf³². A record from Ananthisvarasvamin temple at Udayargudi tells us that a lady named Koyil – Perral alias *Gunavan-Madeviyar* gifted 42 ½ kalanju of gold and deposited it with ganapperumakkal of the year, for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple and for the daily mid-day offering to the god, with which a *Bhatta* (well versed

in the Vedas) to be fed. The offering comprised rice, kummayam and three other dishes, ghee, curd, sugar, plantains and betel leaves and nut. It also mentions that the king (devar?) is said to have paid on her behalf. It is so inferred that perhaps she was his concubine.

Finally came the rest categories of women like the local ladies living in cities, towns and villages. They do participate in donation. They donate according to their economic status, they also dump their wealths in the temples. Like the wife of a merchant gifted her ornaments to the image at Vichchesvara, which had been set up by a chief (17/1903). This information belongs to 13th regional year of Kulottunga Chola from Vaidyanattur temple at Tittigudi.

Apart from these women there are various inscriptions which do not specify the social status of the women but still it was found that they donated various items to the temples. Like a lady of Tiruvilinulalai gifted money for burning a twilight lamp in temple (520/1922). A lady *Iraiyamangaku* had gifted money for a lamp for the merit of her sons (470/1912). Like wise a lady in 16th year of Rajaraja gifted gold for lamp in the temple. (391/1913). Lastly a lady belonging to Tanjore district gifted sheeps (?) for bathing the god with ghee on the days of Sankranti. The same lady (?) is said to have presented 32 agal (lamps) of copper to the temple (170/1930-31).

This in turn shows that Chola period was one of the most financially well off dynasties because the women of this dynasty are economically strong and they are free to use their wealth according to their own will.

CONCLUSIONS :

Certain derivations could be drawn on the basis of the message conveyed in this chapter. Women in Chola period actively participated in making donations to the temples.

The question of sources of donation was a natural enquiry in the mind of everyone, which had been cleared in this chapter. There are two sources of donation First is 'Stridhan' and second is 'personal earning' of the women itself. 'Stridhan' is the gift, a women gets at the time of her marriage. It could be anything ranging from gold, money and land gifts also. She had a power to disburse this wealth according to her own will. From the inscriptions examined here it seems that Stridhan had been used in the right sense by the women of Chola period. The other source of wealth for a women was her personal earning which means in Chola period a woman had a right to earn and to spend her earning according to her own wish. This gives us a picture of self earning women and their power to disburse wealth. This in turn shows us that the economy during Chola period was on high strata.

In our findings Queens are frequently represented as taking active roles as donors. Royal classes donated a large portion of their wealth to the temple. As a well publicized form of symbolic expression their gifts conveyed an expression of dharmic figure, an upholder of social and religious values such religious presentation constituted periodic reaffirmation of generosity as a royal as well as social virtue.

Temples were the main beneficiary of major patronage and endowments from the royal houses and other classes of donors because temples were the

focus of social and economic life of the locality. The variety of offerings are made for the merits of donors or a specified beneficiary like husband, son, king, brother etc. From these endowments a variety of routine temple services were conducted like lamps which burned day and night (*nanka vilakku*) or at dawn/dusk (*Sandhya dipam*), food offerings or flowers etc to the devotees and brahmans. Gifts were sometimes made directly in kind, gold and silver jewellery, vessels, lamps etc. but were more often given indirectly in which the service were maintained through the income earned or interest on an asset which was assigned to the temple.

Next to the queens were the devaradiyar and the royal household servants who had also made a large number of donations. Next to them are temple female functionaries who served in the temple in various capacities and rest come in last category.

After going through the inscriptions it was known that there was no inscription describing any women belonging to the lower strata like the cobbler, paid labourer, carpenters, smiths and shepherds as donors. It may be assumed that those classes of women may not be economically well off but they may offer their services to the temples.

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Chapter - V

*Women and her Contribution to
Chola Art and Architecture,
Religion and Culture*

CHAPTER 5

CHOLA WOMEN AND HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHOLA ART AND ARCHITECTURE, RELIGION AND CULTURE

Introduction

The temples are created in a short period of time for all time, buildings human in scale; yet suited to the divinity of their gods. They dominate the ancient monuments of the country belonging to different regions and period.¹ The Cholas of Thanjaur were the great conquerors, who were not only paramount in South India but for sometimes extended their sway as far as river Ganga. They were also mighty builders, who erected a large numbers of temples in their empire, some of them constituting the finest specimens of South Indian architecture. Cholas are considered as the inheritors of the Pallava traditions of architecture. The imperial dynasty of the Cholas may be said to have fostered a golden age of art and architecture in South India. Chola period is studded with gigantic temples, fascinating in their beauty and imposing in their appearance. Many of them are the creation of the Cholas and they proclaim, in mute eloquence, the glory of a galaxy of kings and emperors.² The enormous wealth of inscriptions found in these temples reveals the heights attained by the literature under the Cholas. Grants inscribed on copper plates – one of which is an epigraphical wonder being the biggest among such plates in weight and longest in terms of running matter of the document proclaim a degree of aesthetic and artistic attainment that could well qualify the Chola period to be the Classical age of South Indian art.

One often wonder why South Indian Art and architecture has remained a comparatively ignored field in the study of Indian Art. Art historians have contented themselves with a casual mention of the repeated examples of Dravidian art – the Shore temple at Mamallapuram, the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, the Rajarajesvaram temple at Tanjavur and the Gangaikondasolisvaram temple at Gangaikondasolipuram. Peninsular isolation and possibly the local indifference have contributed to this lack of interest and the surfeit of monuments itself a demoralizing factor, for they tend to get taken for granted. Except for the pioneering work of the early archaeologist like Fleet, Consens, Hultsch, Venkayya, Krishna Sastri and a team of dedicated men who worked under very difficult conditions around the turn of the 19th century, there has been a general stagnation in the study of South Indian Art.

In Chola architecture, the niches are narrower and decoration is round. The “*kudu*” develops a lion-head in the Chola monument and this continues thereafter. The capital of the pillar and pilaster in Chola monument is rectangular and sides cut off in a slant at 45°, and its central portion is projecting.

In the early Chola temple the shrine is magnified, and in the time of Rajaraja and his successors it becomes colossal, as one notices in the temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondasolapuram, Darasuram and Tribhuvanam. The *gopura* in the early Chola temples, though layer in size are comparatively short, and it is only in the late Chola period that gigantic gopuras came into being and dwarf the central shrine.

The dwarfpalas in the Chola structure are those with a fierce men and four arms, the one in the Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram temples

being typical examples they carry the *trisula* (trident) on their crowns, bear tusks protruding from their mouths and strike terror with their knit eye-brows, rolling eyes and hands always in the *tarjini* (threatning) and *Vismaya* (wonder) attitudes.³ The main characteristics of the Chola temples were high platform of the deities and large courtyards. The “*Vimanas*” was also a important feature of Chola temples that can be seen in Rajarajesvara temple and Brahadesvara temple. Besides this many copper images of the deities were also built under the Cholas. The Natraja image is a symbol of Chola culture. In the praise of Chola temples Fergusson once wrote “The Chola artists conceived like giants and finished like jewellers.”

This chapter deals with an aspect of Chola art that has received casual attention only and attempts to bring out the role played by the Chola queens and princesses in the growth of the Chola temple art to the stage that resulted in the erection of edifices like the one at Thanjavur, Gangaikondasolapuram Darasuram and Tribhuvanam.

Sembiyan Mahadevi, who lived through the later half of the 10th century, stands head and shoulders above all others in this respect. Her contribution extended to building new temples and replacing the old brick ones, introducing certain major development in temple art even in a flux and casting some of the finest specimens of Chola bronzes. The next place is taken by Kundavai, the sister of Rajaraja I, inspired by Sembiyan Mahadevi and revered by Rajaraja I, Kundavai concentrated her activities in the Tondaimandalam region where her husband, a Samanta in the service of Rajaraja I, lived and ruled as feudatory of the over lord. And third in the order is Rajaraja I’s

principle queen Lokamahadevi, who independently and jointly with her consort added considerably to the movement of Chola art. The other queens of Rajaraja I have humbler contribution to their credit most of them being in the form of metal images given to the temples built by their lord, and elaborate jewellery for those icons.

On Sembiyan Mahadevi, the source material from the inscription is very vast indeed. On Kundavai and Lokamahadevi it is less so, on others it is meager or none at all. But a study of this nature can help to throw light on a rarely known aspect of South Indian Art.

a) SEMBIYAN MAHADEVI AND HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHOLA ART AND ARCHITECTURE :

On the death of Rajaditya, Gandaraditya, Parantaka I's second son, became the crown prince. He ascended the throne on his father's death in AD 955. He married Sembiyan Mahadevi the daughter of Malavarayan, a nobleman. Their son Uttamachola ruled for over sixteen years before Rajaraja I ascended the throne. From the 40th year (AD 947) record of Parantaka I at Karadi we hear about the second queen of Gandaraditya named "*Viranarayaniyar*"⁴. The earliest reference of Sebiyan Mahadevi occurs in an inscription⁵ found in the temple of Ujjivanatrar at Uyyakondar Tirumalai in Tiruchy. It relates to a gift of sheep made by her. In the inscription she was referred as Parantakan Mahadevadigalar, the wife of Parantaka Gandaradittadevar for the purpose of maintaining permanent lamp before the deity. The last reference to this noble lady is contained in an inscription belonging to the 16th regnal year of Rajaraja I (AD 1001). The recorded references to Sembiyan Mahadevi are spread over a span of 60 years.

She was born in the Tamil month of Chittirai (March-April) she lived to ripe old age. Widowed early, she dedicated herself to a life of piety and to the patronage of art and for nearly six decades, which constitute a significant phase in the evolution of Dravidian art, she directed her unrevalled energy and enormous wealth to the development of art, religion and culture.

She was a great temple builder, part from building new temples she made extensive addition to existing ones. She also rebuilt old brick temples in stone. Her contributions are extended to many temples: Umamaheshvarar temple at Konerirajapuram, Tirukkurangattuturai temple at Aduturai, Tirukkotisvarar temple Tirukkodikkaval, Cholisvarar temple at Kuttalam, Kailasanathasvamin temple at Sembiyan Mahadevi, Agastisvarar temple at Anangur, Achalesvarar temple at Tiruvariar and Mayuranathesvarar temple at Mayuram in Tanjvur district, Sivalokam Udaiyar temple at Tiruvakkarai and Vriddhagirisvarar temple at Vriddachalam in South Arcot district and finally Masilamanisvarar temple at Vada Tirumullaivayil in Chingleput district. Sembiyan Mahadevi was not content with simply building temples she made fabulous gifts of jewellery made of gold and precious stones. What is remarkable is that the details of the jewellery have been handed down to us through inscriptions. This tradition is followed in later days also, particularly those of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I.

But more significant for Indian art than these gifts is her contribution of some of the most fascinating bronzes cast at her instance. She set up a tradition of metal casting that become a matter of pride with her grand-nephew, Rajaraja I in whose time the ateliers of the kingdom brought out innumerable bronzes of unsurpassed quality and grandeur. Rajendra I kept up the tradition.

Sembiyan Mahadevi was known by many names – Udaiya Pirattiyar Madhurantaka Madevadigalar alias Sembiyan Mahadeviyar whose son was Gandan Madhurataka devar alias Uttama Choladevar⁶ and Parantakar Madevadigaleir alias Sembiyan Mahadeviyar⁷.

TEMPLES BUILT BY SEMBIYAN MAHADEVI :

THE UMAMAAHESVARAR TEMPLE AT TIRUNALLAM (KONERIRAJAPURAM)

The foremost among the temples built by Sembiyan Mahadevi is the one dedicated to Umamaahesvarar at Tirunallam (the ancient name of Konerirajapuram). This temple must have been in existence even in the days of Appar (7th century AD) as can be informed from his Devaram hymns. He called this place “Tirunallam” and the Lord, “Umaikkunallavar” (He that is dear to Uma). But the present structure is a foundation of Sembiyan Mahadevi (before AD 972) during whose time the deity was known by the name “Tirunallam Udaiyar”. This temple is well preserved, and was made in the memory and name of Gandaraditya, the husband of Sembiyan Mahadevi.⁸ This temple is worth a close study for its architectural and artistic wealth.

This temple is facing west, consists of a *garbhagriha*, and an *antarala* with a grille connecting an *ardhamandapa*. The basement moulding are plain. On the outer wall of garbhagriha, there are *devakoshthas* housing *Brahma* in the north, *Lingodbhavar* in the east and *Dakshinamurti* in the south. The eastern devakoshtha is flanked by two short and two tall pilasters, surmounted by a markara torana, in the centre of which is installed a miniature figure of Gajalakshmi. On the other surface of the ardamandapa walls are the sculptures

Natesa, Ganesa and *Agastya* all on the southern side. While on the northern side are the figure of *Bhikshatanar, Durga* and *Ardhanari*. Encircling the garbhagriha, the antara and the ardhamandapa is a covered verandah supported by pillars. Finally there is the addition of a mukhmandapa.

Sculptural representation of the ruling kings and local chiefs is a rare phenomenon in South Indian Art. But here a some examples of them found in this temple. One of them is the panel of portraits of the king and queen worshipping the Linga (Fig.1). There is also a portrait of the architect of the temple is installed here. Konerirajapuram and Tiruvengadu have the largest and perhaps the finest collection of early Chola bronzes most of them belong to Sembiyan age. The bronze of Bhogesvari at Konerirajapuram (Fig.2) is perhaps one of the earliest of Sembiyan casting. Other icons cast in this age are those of Tripuraviyayar, Rishabhavahanadevar and Ganapati. There are two small metals of Nataraja also, in addition there is a set of metal image of Natraja and his consort presumably belonging to the age of Rajaraja I.

The inscriptions written in this temple cover a span of nearly 250 years i.e. from Uttama Chola's days to those of Rajaraja III (AD 1292). Few inscriptions of this temple seem to be a valuable record. It throws light on the contemporary practices It tells us the role played by the temple in day to day life of the people. It tells us that with which devotion and trust the temple was treated by the people. Temple was considered not only the place of worship but it seems to be at variance with the fact. It was a nerve centre of social, political, administrative activities of village, towns, cities as well as regional units like *nadu, kurram* and *taniyur*. From the temple inscriptions only we came to know

about the mode of documentation and registration of deeds prevalent during Chola period. An inscription belonging to the eight year of Uttama Chola reign (AD 977) tells us that documents are signed by the king's councillors known as *karumanaraikkinra adhikarigal*. Other royal and local administration function are also mentioned in the documents such as executor of the grant (*anatti*), the revenue officer (*puravu vari*), the royal secretaries (*Varykkelvi*), accountant (*Varippotagam*), and the engraver of the king records (*mugavetti*).⁹

This temple provides us with ample informations regarding the donations and gifts made by the royal personages. Sembian Mahadevi gifted two velies of land with the income of 224 kalams of paddy, brought from the Assembly of Tirunallaur, for raising a flower garden called *Gandaradittan* apart from other gardens. Likewise Uttama Chola ordered the panchavara paddy of 600 *kalams* derived from 12 *velies* of land in Pungudi and 200 *kalam* of paddy from 4 *velies* of land at Musittaikkudi. At representation that this was also not sufficient he granted 1590 *kalam* of paddy for 12 *velies* of land from village Ilanalam. He also ordered that a part of his share of the income from Tirunallam should be given to temple later 2 ½ *velies* out of 70 *velies* land at Tirunallam was made tax free and made over for temple use. Uttama Chola had also gifted land for maintaining lamp in the temple and for offering to the shrine of Ganapati in the temple of Tirunallam (11 and 14 year of Uttama Chola)¹⁰. There is another inscription in this temple belonging to the fifth year of Rajendra I which refers to a gift made by *Alvar Pirantakar Kundavai Pirattiyar*, another member of the family of the Cholas, who is said to have been living at the palace of Palaiyaru near Kumbakonam.¹¹

Beside these inscriptions there are other inscriptions which reveal a variety of interesting facts like a covered verandah was put by one Arumolidevan, alias Vayanattaraiyur of Adanur, the gopuram was a gift of Mudalippilai of Vengipuram, a silver image of the deity, Umamahesvarar and a copper image of Chandesvarar were gifted to the temple by one, *Nakkan Nallattadigal*, a servant by the palace harem and a member of Rajaraja terinja kaikolar (12th year of Rajaraja I).

(b) TIRUK-KURANGADUTURAI MAHADEVAR TEMPLE - ADUTURAI

According to an inscription¹² of the 16th year of a Parakesarivarman, identifiable with Uttama Chola, this temple was reconstructed in stone by Sembiyan Mahadevi. The inscription mentions the temple as being situated in Tiraimur nadu on the southern bank of the Kaveri. Like the temple at Tirunallam, the temple of Aduturai was in existence even in the days of Appar. In his praise of deity Appar describes the temple as being situated on the bank of the “*Ponni*” (Kaveri). Bali and Sugriva are said to have worshipped the Lord of this temple.

Sembiyan reconstruction comprised of an Ektala shrine with a spherical griva, crowned by a sikhara. There is a grabhagriha with an antarala connecting it to the ardhamandapa. Two cushion capitalled pillars in the centre support the structure. There are two dvarapalas on either side of the entrance. There are nine devakoshtas on the outerface of the ardhamandapa and garbhagriha walls, four on each sides and one at the rear of the grabhagriha. These are *Ganesa*, *Natraja*, *Agastya* and *Dakshinamurti* in the south, *Brahma*, *Bhikshatanar*

Alinganamurti (Siva and Parvati) and Durga in the north and Lingodbhavar at the rear.

From the epigraphical material found on the walls of this temple some interesting details are available about some ancient practice like preserving ancient records and re-engraving it on the walls of the new structure as it was done by Sembiyan Mahadevi in this temple. Due to her far sightedness the basic source material of South Indian history have been preserved. Each generation was imbued with a sense of fidelity to the past and was confident that future generations would honour its grants and donations. The inscriptions conveying grants and donations were order of the king, or a chieftain or an assembly, or a body of town, village district or province and generally ended with a hope and an exhortation that they shall last “*as long as the Sun and the Moon last*”. In most cases, there was the threat of the wrath and the curse of Gods descending on those who did not honour the commitment. A variety of phrases were used by the donars to express their gratitude to future generations who were exhorted to maintain the charity. One such common expression is : “*He will bow to him and say may his feet be on my head, who will protect and maintain the charity,*” such was their code of conduct and sense of propriety and duty. This shows how the earlier grants of a former ruler were faithfully copied from stray slabs in the presence of witnesses and they reengraved on the walls of the new shrine when the earlier structural was dismantled and a new edifice erected.

CHOLISVARAR TEMPLE AT KUTTALAM :

Among the three temples at Kuttalam in the Tanjavur district the most important is the '*Uttasavedisvarar*' or '*Uktavedisvarar*' temple which is also known as *Cholisvaram*. The study of this temple was known as *Sonnavararisvar* means '*He who kept his word*' because according to the local legend Parvati expressed a desire to marry Siva in a traditional wedding style and Siva consented, so she was born as daughter of Bharat Muni who lived on the bank of river Kaveri and Siva emerged from the Linga of Turuttiyur and paid court to Parvati and marry her while keeping his words.

Composer of *Devaram*, Appar and Sundarar have sung praises of the Lord of Tirutturutti because it is said that Sundarar have been cured of some bodily ailment after bathing in the sacred tank at this temple.

According to an inscription¹³, 7th year of Rajaraja mentions that this temple was reconstructed by Sembiyan Mahadevi, she gifted land for making offerings, worshipping, music, for maintaining 25 brahmins who recited *Talavukara Sama*, *Taittiriya* and *Chandogya Sama Vedas* in the temple.

This temple consists of a *garbhagirha*, an *antarala* and an *ardhamandapa*. The entrance to the *ardhamandapa* is flanked by two *dvarapalas*. The *antarala* is relieved by a diamond shaped grille serving to let light into the *sanctum*. Images of *Brahma*, *Lingodbhavar* and *Dakshinamurti* are installed in the main *devakoshthas* of the *garbhagriha*. The other *devahoshtha* sculpture in the *ardhamandapa* are *Ardhanarisvarar*, *Durga* and *Bhikshatanar* in the north, and

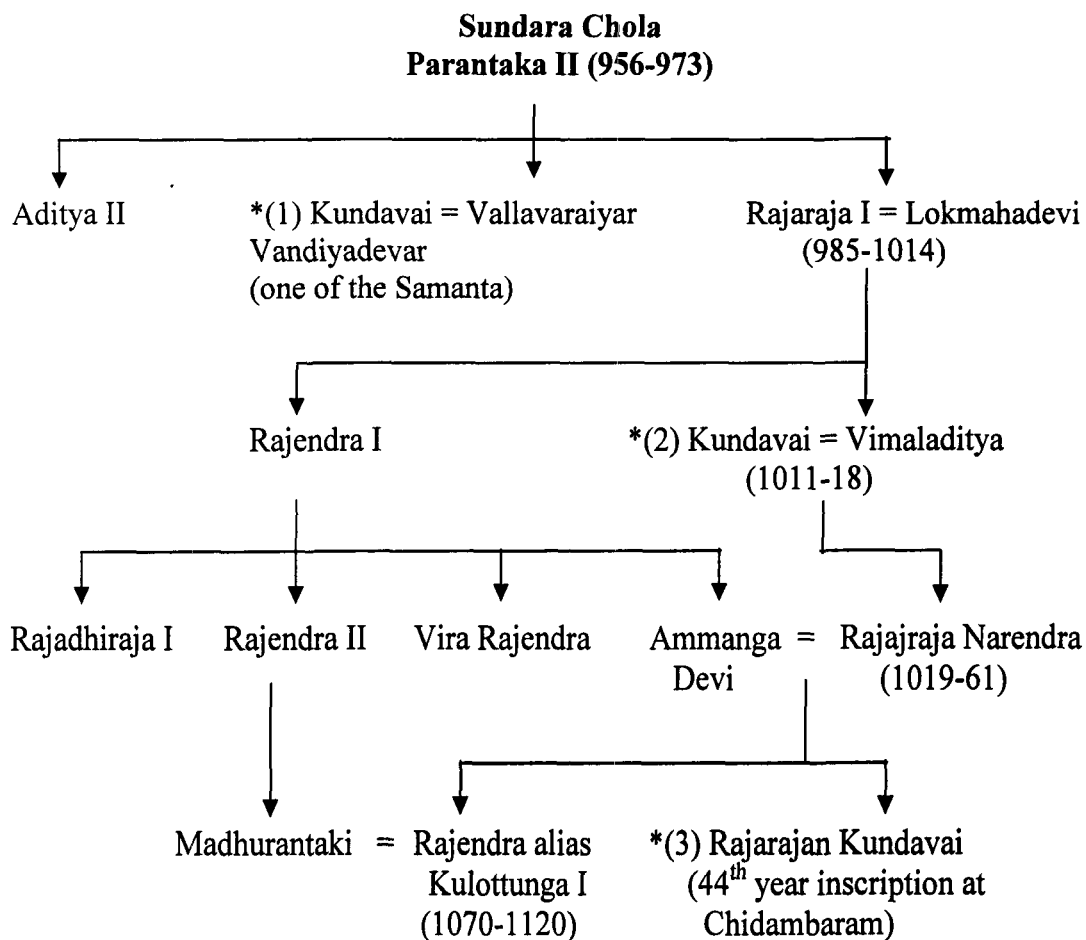
Natraja, Ganapati and Agastya in the south. The niches are crowned by makara-toranas.

An interesting feature of this temple is the presence of a number of panels of miniature sculptures. There is a portrait sculpture which probably represents Gandaraditya worshipping the linga.

KUNDAVAI'S CONTRIBUTION TO CHOLA ART AND ARCHITECTURE :

No women in the history of the Cholas have established her name and fame as Kundavai. It has been accepted beyond doubt that Sembiyan Mahadevi, the wife of Gandaraditya Chola, was the first Chola lady to found innumerable Siva temples in Cholamandalam and to donate freely for the maintenance of the same. But it was Kundavai, a Chola princess, who showed keen interest in multifarious activities during the reigns of her father Sunder Chola, brother Rajaraja I and nephew Rajendra I. She is said to have made donations upto the early years of Rajendra I.

Kundavai was a common name among the Chola princesses and much confusion has been caused on this account. Rajaraja I's elder sister should be distinguished from his daughter who married Vimaladitya the Eastern Chalukyan ruler of Vengi. A third Chola royal lady by the same name was the younger sister (tiruttangaiyar) of Kulottunga I. The following genealogical table will show the relation of the three Kundavais.



These three princes are best remembered respectively as the sister and the daughter of Rajaraja I, and the sister of Kulottunga I. The last of them, known by her full name of Rajrajan Kundavi Alvar, made extensive addition to the temple of Nataraja at Chidambaram, according to an inscription.¹⁴ belonging to the 44th year (AD 1114) of Kulottunga I, found on the outer north wall of the second prakara which encloses both the Natraja and Govindaraja shrines.

In this chapter however we are concerned with Kundavai; the elder sister of Rajaraja I who is described as the daughter of “*Pomaligaitunjinadevar*”, which is an epithet describing Parantaka II alias Sundara Chola. Rajaraja I reverentially refer to her in his inscriptions as “*akkan*” meaning “elder sister”. She was married to Vallavaraya Vandiyadevar, the chief of the Samantas of Rajaraja I.

Rajaraja I held Kundavai in high esteem is known by the fact that he issued orders on completion of the Rajarajesvaram temple at Tanjavur, the Chola capital, that only the records of gifts and endowments made by him, his elder sister and his queens and possibly persons closely connected with the royal household, should be engraved on the '*srivimana*'. From one of the elaborate inscription found on the walls of this temple.¹⁵ we gather that Kundavai set up four images in metal in the temple of Dakshina Meru Vitankar and Tanjai Vitankar set up by her brother Rajaraja I. Both the consorts were known by the same name-Uma Paramesvari. The two other were metallic images of her father and mother *Ponmaligai tunjiya devar* (Sundara Chola) and *Vanavan Mahadevi* whom she merely describes as "*tammai*" (mother). She donated separately for all the four images she had set up in the Tanjore temple. She gave 20 ear rings (*Tirukkambi*) to the image of her mother and a string of beads for the marriage badge. She deposited 520 *kasus* with the village authorities of Kundavainallur, fetching 130 *Kalams* of paddy as interest per year. She made another gift of 488 *kasus*, the interest of which was to be used to purchase the sacred cloth, curtains, towels, canopies and other items. She deposited this amount with the assembly of Parantaka chatmvedimangalam. To burn a twilight lamp before her mother's image. She deposited 32 *kasus* with Patlerttalan Kaliyan Paradan.

Similarly for offerings to be made to the image of her father Ponmaligaitunjinadevar, she deposited money with various village assemblies of Gandaraditya Chaturvedimangalam, Viranarayana Chaturvedimangalam and Sulamangalam which had to see that the interest was paid in paddy for the same. In addition for keeping ten twilight lamps burning for this deity, she

deposited 32 *kasu* with Pirantakan Achchan Adigal for purchasing 96 sheep at the rate of 3 sheep for one *kasu*. The milk from these sheep was to be converted into ghee which was used for keeping the lights burning, for which purpose the donee was to give one *ulakku* of ghee everyday. Regarding the gifts she had given to the two Umaparamesvari one would not easily believe the varieties of gold and jewel ornaments she donated. She donated ornaments made up of gold and jewels to be used from head to foot, vessels made of gold and silver, money for daily offerings and buying garlands, clothes, decorating the halls, lighting lamps etc. For decorating the sacred hall (*tiruvaranju*) which the two Umaparamesvaris occupied while on procession during the sacred festival, Kundavai gave 3500 *kalanjus* of gold which was a quarter superior in fineness to the gold standard called “*Dandayani*” and 1500 *kalanju* of gold which was one degree inferior to that standard, making a total of 500 *kalanju* of gold.

The ornaments included crowns, ear rings, marriage badge, sacred garlands of diamonds, rubies and pearls, armlets, pearl ornaments, bracelets, girdles, rings for foot, pendants, ring for toes, gold flowers, necklaces etc. made of gold and decked with diamonds, pearls, rubies and other precious stones of different varieties. Similarly utensils of gold and silver ware also donated by Kundavai Plates, bowls, water pots, cups, stands, chunnam box, censer, swans, parrots, handle for *vensamaram* were some such gifts made by her.¹⁶

Another remarkable deed of Kundavai was the establishment of a hospital in Tanjore but also for the perpetual maintenance of the same. She named it as *Sundarachola Vinnagar Atulasalai* (hospital) after her father

Sundarachola. The land given for the same was known as “*maruttuvakkani*”¹⁷ This clearly shows the interest of Kundavai in public welfare besides the various religious activities.

A Vishnu temple in Rajrajapuram was also built by Kundavai known as *Kundavai Vinnagara Alvar* and she donated liberally for the maintenance of the temple and gave many ornaments, the most important being the “*namams*” name of gold to the presiding deity of the temple.¹⁸ This Vishnu temple built by her is known as Karivarda Perumal temple in modern Dadapuram.¹⁹ She gave many vessels and ornaments made of gold, silver and pearls and sheep for lamps. Rajaraja I’s senapati Krishna Raman, who built the compound wall of the Brahadisvara temple at Tanjore was in charge of the management of this temple.

A Vaishnava mutt at Uttiramerur was also named after her as *Kundavai mutt*.²⁰ Similarly the Jaina temple built by Kundavai was known as *Kundavai Jinalaya*.²¹ Tirumalai a small village in North Arcot district was an important Jaina centre during the time of Pallavas and Cholas. Some of the inscription found in this place refers to the Kundavai Jinalaya. An inscription of Rajendra I dated in his 12th regnal year refers to the donations made to Kundavai Jinalaya.²² The donor was Chamundappai, the wife of the merchant Nannappanyar, resident of Perumbanappadri. She gave a lamp to this temple on the holy mountain, at the Pallichchandam of Vaigavur in Mugainadu a division in the middle of Pangulanadu in Jayangondasolamandalam. She gave 20 *kasus* for the temple lamp and 10 *kasus* for the sacred food offerings.

Kundavai is said to have built the Kundavai Jinalaya at the foot of the hillock and reconsecrated the sculptures of Yaksha and Yakshini set up in the days of *Elini*, the ancient Chera ruler, and the paintings on the walls were carried out at the instance of Kundavai.²³ Kundavai is also said to have built a Siva temple in Rajarajapuram, the modern Dadapuram. It was known as Ravikulamanikka Isvaram.²⁴ The temple is no doubt the modern Manikantesvara temple at Dadapuram.²⁵ The main shrine consist of a garbhagriha and anardhamandapa. The Devakoshta crowned with makara torana found on the outer walls are that of Ganesh, Ghana Dakshinamoorti, Vishnu and Durga. Kundavai gave many ornaments of gold and jewels and vessels to this temple Apart from donating vessels and ornaments Kundavai gave ten lamps also to this temple.²⁶

Thus as a princess of the Chola time Kundavai rose in a position equal to that of a munificent monarchs. She engraved her name deep in the history of the Tamil country by showing her tolerant religious attitude which resulted in the building of temple for Siva, Vishnu, Jama and Buddha and by liberally donating for the maintenance of the same.

LOKMAHADEVI AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO CHOLA ART AND ARCHITECTURE :

Another Chola queen whose contribution to Dravidian art is noteworthy is '*Danti Sakti Vitanki*' alias *Lokamahadevi* one of the *Rajaraja I*'s queen. Among the temples built by Lokamahadevi one important temple is the Vada (oruttaru) Kailasam temple at Tiruvaiyaru, "*the place of five rivers*" in the bank of the Kaveri. This temple is located on the northern side of the

Panchanadisvarar temple at Tiruvaiyaru and must have been built between the 21st and 24th year of Rajaraja I. It is named Lokamahadevi Isvaram after the queen who built this temple.²⁷

The temple is an *ektala* structure facing east with a spherical *stupi* and two *dvarapalas* on either side of the entrance to *ardhamandapa*. It consist of the *garbhagriha*, the *ardramandapa*, and the *Mukhamandapa*, with an *antarala* linking the latter two. The two side walls of the *ardhamandap* are continuations of the side walls of the *garbhagriha*. Originally there should have been five *devakoshtha* figures adorned with *toranas* over them. The images of *Dakshinamurti* and *Brahma*, the former in a mutilated state, are the only ones among the original sculptures of this period still found in the *devakoshthas* of the main shrine. They are the excellent workmanship. The other sculptures have disappeared.

The first reference to the existence of *Vada Kailasam* is found in an inscription²⁸ dated in the 21st year of Rajaraja I (AD 1006), engraved on the south wall of this temple According to this inscription a shepherd by the name of *Aiyaran Valavan* of the *Brahmadeyan* of *Perumpuliyur* received from the *Tribhuvana Chandesvara* *kanmis*, 192 sheep for the supply of 27 *uris* (a measure) of oil for burning two perpetual lamp at the temple of *Lokamadevi – Isvaram (Vada Kailasam)*.

Another inscription²⁹, belonging to the 24th years of Rajaraja I, on the base of the north, west and south walls, relates to the extensive gifts of ornaments and vessels made by *Lokamahadevi* alias *Udaiyar Rajaraja Devar Nampirattiyar*, *Danti Sakti Vitanki*, to the *Mahadevar* of *Lokamahadevi –*

Isvaram (the deity of the central shrine) and to the Uloka Vitankar devar (the processional deity). This inscription gives a complete and exhaustive description of the jewellery of various types presented to the deities.

There is another interesting inscription which belongs to the 29th year of Rajaraja I, found on the east wall of the mandapa it mentions the gift made by Sri Vishnuvardhan Mahadevar alies Vimladitya devar of Venginadu of a number of silver pots to the Mahadevar of Ulokamahadevisvaram in the devadana village of Tiruvaiyaru. The eastern Chalukya prince was the viceroy of Vengi under the Chola and was married to Kundavai, daughter of Rajaraja I.

While discussing this temple, it will be interesting to mention yet another inscription.³⁰ which belong to the 32nd year of Rajadhiraja I (1018-1054) and is found on the wall of the temple. This inscription is important as it gives a complete narration of all wars and victories of the Chola king, thus enabling us to gather a good deal of information regarding contemporary political events and also an idea of the extent of the empire.

Apart from building temples on her own and endowing them with generous donations and gifts, Lokmahadevi and the other queens of Rajaraja I joined their husband in the extensive munificence. A large number of images in bronzes, copper and other metals and alloys were set up by the various members of the royal household as well as by the other nobles of the court. In the 29th and last year (AD 1014) of Rajaraja I reign all the grants, gifts and donations were ordered to be engraved on the walls of the temple. In these inscriptions³¹ we find mention of a copper image of Bhikshatanar or Pichchadevan as he is called in Tamil set up by Lokamahadevi. The same

inscriptions carry a detailed inventory of all the piece of jewellery donated to this deity by Lokamahadevi.

PORTRAIT SCULPTURES AND METAL CASTING : During Chola period, Portrait sculptures and metal casting were also known to the people. There are few sculptural representations either in stone or in metal but metal or bronze casting as it was said preferably expanded beyond conceivable limits during this period. In fact this period is said to have witnessed an explosion of this art form. As far as the portrait sculpture is concerned the earliest of them is that of Gandaraditya who is represented as worshipping Siva in the form of Linga. This could be found in the Umamahesvarar temple at Konerajapuram. In that sculpture a Chauri bearer and an attendant holding an umbrella is also shown. A priest is shown performing the anointment ceremony. Next is the portrait of Sembiyan Mahadevi in Kailasanathasvamin temple. The figure is shown in a posture of prayer with folded hands, severely clad and wearing only the barest of ornaments, possibly made of beads.

We also have a reference of metallic images of Parantakan Sundara Chola and his queen, Vanavan Mahadevi in an inscription in the Rajarajesvaram temple at Tanjavur. These metallic images were set up by Kundavai but unfortunately, these portrait sculptures of Sundara Chola and his queen have been lost, along with many others. Next in chronological order is a portrait sculpture of Lokmahadevi along with her consort, Rajaraja I, which is found in Tiruvisalur temple dedicated to Sivayogarathasvamin. These portraits were possibly intended to commemorate the hiranyagarbha ceremony performed by her and the tulabhara ceremony performed by her husband. Rajendra I is also represented in one of the mural panels adorning the wall

surfaces of the vestibule between the outer and inner wall of the grabhagriha of the Rajarajesvaram temple at Tanjavur. There the king is shown with three of his queens of whom one must be Lokmahadevi.

Huge man-size bronzes of most intricate and perfect workmanship proliferate during this age. The vast output of the royal metal casting workshops did not lead to any compromise in quality which attained new heights, perhaps yet to be surpassed. Rajaraja I and Rajendra I were great metal caster too, but it was Sembiyan Mahadevi who showed them the way and blessed her nephew and her nephew's son in their endeavours in this direction. Some of the bronzes sample of Sembiyan Mahadevi and other queens of the age have been given in the following table:

1. Konerirajapuram; Umamahesvarar temple; Siva, Natraja, Bhogesvari, Natraja, Sivakami, Kalyanasundarar, Kali, Rishabhavaahanadevar.
2. Kuttalam; Cholisvarar temple; Appar, Bhogesvari, Sundarar and Manikkavachapan.
3. Peruntottam, Airavastesvarar temple : Consort of Natraja.
4. Vada Tirumullaivayil, Masilamanisvara temple: Natraja and Amman
5. Tanjavur, Sri Rajarajisvaran temple : Copper image of Rishabhava hanadevar.
6. Tanjavur; Sri Rajarajesvaram temple: Natraja, Uma Paranesvari and Solid image of Ganapati with four arms.
7. Tanjavur; Rajarajesvaram temple; Image of Pusupatamurti
8. Tanjavur; Rajarajesvaram temple; Copper image of Lingapurandevan.

9. Tanjavur; Rajarajesvaram temple; Copper image of Siva, Uma, Vishnu Brahma.
10. Tanjavur; Rajarajesvaram temple; Metal image of Sri Kanthamurti (Siva), image of Parvati with two arms.

WOMEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHOLA PAINTING

Chola painting, like all other forms of Chola art, was a continuation and development of Pallava – Pandya work. No specimens of Chola painting have survived and we have no other means of forming a close idea of the nature of art as it was practised then “Paintings are the delicate product of art and they are the first sufferer of the action of time and weather.”³² Often excellent early paintings have been overlaid as it was done at Tanjore. In the midst of many gaps and much uncertainty, there remains no doubt about the continuity of a painting tradition in the Tamil country.

Some Pallava paintings are still traceable in the ‘Cave temple’ of Tirumayam and Mamandur while the outer layer of paintings in Sittennavasal, often mistaken to be Pallava, and those in the Tirumalaipuram cave temple in Tinnevely district are both Pandya in origin and belong to 9th century AD³³. Among the Chola painting the most important paintings are found in Tanjore temple most probably belonging to the time of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. All other painting in South India series are found in the temple of Mamandur, Tirumayaram, Kanchi, Narttamalai, Sompalayam, Lepaksi, Malayadipatti, Travancore and Cochin.

From the technique point of view the South Indian paintings stands apart from the better known painting of Ajanta, Sigiriya, Bagh, Badami and Ellora.

Here the ground plaster is of coarser lime mortar below with a finer coat of lime wash above it on which the pigment has been laid in accordance with the “lime medium” technique. In lying of the pigments there is absence of any adhesive material. This important feature distinguishes them from Deccan and Ceylon painting.

The theme of the Chola paintings are religious drawn mostly from the hagiology that was later worked up into the Periya-Puranam.³⁴ The episodes of the life of Sundaramurti form the subject of some of the best panels in Tanjore temple.

Women contributions in Chola painting is not the direct one but women indirectly contributed a lot in the Chola paintings. We do not come across any women painter of the period under consideration. Women were mostly the part of the painting done during the Chola period. There are ample of examples which shows that women was painted by various painter in their beautiful paintings. There are various examples of paintings which included women, the examples are mostly cited from the Tanjore temple. They are, on the top of the panel on the west wall of the temple there is a scene depicting Siva seated in Yogasana and apsara maidens were shown dancing at the opposite end. It was also shown that maidens and gandharas were showering lotus petals and playing musical instruments. The body of dancing aspara maiden is shown bending in rhythmic curves in abhayapose. Her beautiful clothing and the elaborate coiffure, jingling anklets and wristlets add charm to her graceful form. The lower panel show women enjoying cooking it portrayal the preparation for Sundarar’s marriage.

On the west wall of the shrine we get a grand painting of Natraja and his devotees which includes many women of high rank. Another panel on western wall of the temple recently uncovered depicts Natraja in Kanakasabha worshipped by a royal devotee and his queens and retinue. There is no difficulty in identifying the royal figure as Rajaraja I, who called himself 'Sivapadasekhra' and named every unit of measurement. Adavallan indicating his intense devotion to the Lord of the Dance-Natraja. His principle queens and consorts are portrayed on a large scale as standing behind him, while the other queens and also the retinue are smaller.

There is one more painting in the north wall of the temple showing Durga on her lion thrusting her spear into the body of an asura while her lion is holding another by the neck.

The above examples of painting show that women were the integral part of some of the important painting of Chola dynasty. Women of every strata have been depicted here even the mother goddess have a special place in the painting. Various details regarding beauty, dressing, ornaments and hair-do can be seen through these painting like the faces are drawn in three quarters front, square in outline with pronounced chin. The eyebrows are set low in human forms and high in celestial beings; the eyes themselves are liner and fish form and the eyelids are not pronounced but full of emotions. The noses are long, straight and sensitive, very rarely curved and nostril wide. A variety of ornaments worn by women is a study by itself. The drapery consists of a sari of muslin decorated by floral patterns or horizontal lines. The bust is generally bare except for a piece of cloth worn over the left shoulder and passing

between the bosoms under the right arm. The hair is done into elaborate coiffures of different pattern with small ringlets falling in front on the face and decked with flowers, birds and ornament shaped like crescent and star. Last but not the least the dancing forms of the women depicted in the paintings were full of action and expression.

The Cholas who succeeded the Pallavas in south carried out a brisk temple building activity throughout the length and breadth of their empire. This would have been possible due largely to the munificence of such royal ladies as Sembiyan Mahadevi, Kundavai, and Lokmahadevi.

The survey of the temple building activity evinces active participation of women, particularly those of the ruling families, in constructing temples. It also highlights that the ladies of the royal house were free in following any religious faith of their choice which may ever be different from that of their husbands or kings and further that their independent decision in this respect did not affect their relationship or the position and status in the royal family. Had this not been the case their donations would not have been as munificent and liberal as they were. Their patronage to temple building art indicate that queens were in possession of huge amount of money, or controlled such regular and rich resources of income that they could undertake big building projects of great artistic merit and carry them to successful completion. A consideration of the total evidence on the point suggests that all the ladies must have possessed money and wealth which they could freely use for such works of religious merits as renovation of a temple, addition of a mandapa to an existing temple, excavation of a tank etc.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the princess and girls of higher class well to do families received adequate education and training and consequently were nicely accomplished and cultural ladies processing refined taste and administration ability. They had a regular source of income and possessed wealth and they were free to expand it on meritorious and charitable work as they desired. This presupposes their happy position and their respectable status in the family.

(ii) WOMEN AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGION AND CULTURE : The patronage of the ladies to temple art may also be taken to reflect their inner personality. They seem to have been well educated women upholding religious and spiritual values and endowed with generosity, liberty and devotion to the well being of all. In our finding women of every strata had denoted a large chunk of her wealthy for the religious good. They have done so to get affiliation in religion or dharma. Their gifts and their participation in temple works conveyed an impression of their dharmic figure and make them the upholder of social and religious values.

Women of every strata had their own way of contributing to the religion as they all wanted to secure their place in the heavens. They do that for the betterment of their own future as well as far the betterment of their family members. Although women are dependent on men for their every need, but the general dependency of women on men did not stand in their way while making the religious endowments. They made it in their own name. We came across women of different caste, strata and different ranks making endowments either

to the temples, choultries or other works of public utility. They contributed freely and liberally in their individual capacity for the pious works.

Women during Chola period contributed to the religion mainly through her donations, which she made to the temples. She also constructed large, lofty temples as done by Sembian Mahadavi, Kundavai, Lokmahadevi and various other royal ladies. These royal ladies apart from constructing the lofty temples denoted various items of utility in the temple built by them and by their husbands and sons. They also donated gold, ornaments to the main deity of the temple. They give tax free land to the temple and donate lamps, cattles and money for the betterment of the temples and for conducting various festivals in the temple.³⁵ Royal ladies usually give money and gold for maintaining flower gardens in the name of their husbands and son.

Apart from giving donations women were also involved in day to day rituals of the temple. There are ample examples that show women working in different capacities in the temple. They do so not only for their economic good but also for their religious benefits. They sometime donate themselves along with their family members for working in the temples.³⁶ Some time women sold themselves as devaradiyar in the temple.³⁷ There are other avenues also in which women contributed to the fullest for her religious benefit like she act as a fly wisher, cooks, slaves, singer of hymns, dancers and drama performers. They also act as personal attendant to the main deity of the temple. They involve in burning the lamps, making garlands, and act as a decorator of temple floor with 'Kappu' (sandal wood powder). These ladies also put aside a part of their earnings to be donated in the temple or for feeding Brahmin.³⁸ or giving

donation to Brahmin who are well versed in the Vedas,. Sometimes women pay for seeking rights of singing hymns in the temple on specific days.³⁹

During those days there was a social cum religious custom prevalent, through which a person can adopt god/goddess as their own son/daughter and celebrate their marriage and give a lots of “stridhan” to the goddess.⁴⁰ This custom reveals that how women is religiously involved and how much she do for her god and religion.

As far as the cultural contribution of the women is concerned the information regarding this is very limited and scarce. Inscriptions give as a very limited information regarding this. We have examples of women performing dances (kuttu) in the temple. They serve as the performer in the temple. They perform dance, sing hymns and play various instruments.⁴¹ Their dancing duties are assigned in relation as there are different forms of dances performed in the temple. Women also perform dramas in the temples with the permission of the king. Dance masters are also employed in the temple for giving special training to the dancers.

Formal education was imparted to the girls of royal and aristocratic families and to those also who belonged to the class of courtesans and prostitute. Lower strata were not lucky enough to get any formal education. Nanne Choda says in his Kumarasambhavam that usually girls learnt dancing, music, drawing and painting, stringing of rosaries, necklaces, garlands, making dolls, images of mud, ivory and glass, cooking and preparation of drinks etc. We also have several instances of women proficient in the art of drawing figures with flour on the ground. This art is still in practiced and is in great

demand at the time of social function. Girls of royal family were also given training in art of fighting and in state craft as king Ganapati Deva trained his daughters Rudrama devi and Ganapamba in the art of fighting and in state craft.

Women of common classes did not receive formal education but they were all interested in listening to puranas, epics, specially when they are recited in the temples on different occasion but they all are perfect in the household chores.

We do not get any informations regarding the women contribution in the literature of the Chola period. There may be indirect involvement of women but she is not directly involved in giving any contribute to the literature of Chola period

CONCLUSIONS :

For the contributions made by these ladies, the religious and artistic activities in the Chola period would not have been so sustained, continuous and richly variegated as it has been seen, these lady patron independently undertook construction of large edifices and lofty temples and they were successfully completed. They also made complimentary contribution to large scale projects under taken by ruling monarch. They also added new component buildings to the existing establishments either to fulfill the latter's additional religious requirements or for their beautification. These munificent religious activities of the Chola queen are indicative of the happy position and status which they enjoyed in the royal family. They must have possessed huge amount of money or rich resources of income which enabled them to finance construction of new

temples, renovation of old one and to make monetary donation for the maintenance and up keeping of functioning temples. They must also have been greatly esteemed by the people more so after of their munificent religious deeds.

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Chapter - VI

Women and Politics

Chapter - 6

WOMEN AND POLITICS

In India, for many centuries, women did not assume the role of sovereigns, though there has been no written law which made them ineligible for political succession. This might be due to the general dependent position of women. Moreover, warfare's and internal security were considered as male oriented activities and women were not fit to assume these roles.

The issue of political rights of a woman is not uniformly agreed upon by the legal text writers. There was a proposal in *Ramayana* to offer the crown to Sita, when Rama was banished to the forest.¹ It could not materialized owing to Sita's determination to accompany her husband in his banishment. *Santiparna of Mahabharata* mention that it is the duty of the conqueror to place on the throne of the conquered country, the brother, son or grandson of the vanquished ruler and if no prince is available, even the daughter of the deceased.² Thus *Mahabharata* accepts women as political heirs only in the absence of male heirs. Kautilya too, in his *Arthashastra* declares that on the event of a king dying without leaving behind a male issue the minister should invest with authority, a princes or widow of the late ruler, to ensure continuity of rule in the same dynasty.³ However he made it clear that the princess was evidently not to succeed in her own right just as the widow was to wield the authority, till a son was begotten and was duly crowned.

On the contrary, *Manu* did not invest women with political rights. According to him, successions in monarchy are determined by the law of

primogeniture and women do not come under this law.⁴ A similar argument is put forward by another text "*Nitivakyamitra*". According to this text the order of succession to the throne is, the king, his son, full brother, half brother, uncle, male of the same family, daughter's son or even a stranger who is elected by the people or who takes up the charge of the kingdom.⁵ No reference is made either to the widow of the deceased or the daughter. Despite the fact that law giving authorities are not unanimous about women's political participation substantial references can be found in the records pertaining to ancient and medieval periods regarding women administration and women holding responsible position in public administration.

Girls in ruling families used to receive some military and administrative training, if such were not the case, dowager queens like Nayanika of the Satavarna dynasty(2nd BC), Prabhavati Gupta of the Vakataka family (4th AD), Vijayabhatarika of the Chalukya house(7th AD) and Srigandha and Didda of Kashmir (10th AD) could not have successfully administered extensive kingdoms during the minority of their sons. In Chalukya administration (980-1160 AD) queen governors and officers were quite common. The due discharge of these administrative duties presupposed a good training on proper lines. Women guards of king, referred to in dramas belonged to Kshtriya families, they are usually expert in the use of bow and arrows and swords. South Indian Inscription of the medieval period disclose the existence of many Kshtriya heroine defending their hearths and homes in times of danger. A heroine from Mysore is known to have died in a village affray at Siddhanhalli in 1041 AD.⁶ In 1264 AD another Karnataka heroine was honored by the government of the day with the reward of a nose jewel in recognition of her bravery in

overpowering a dacoit.⁷ A Nilgund inscription record a military expedition led by a feudatory queen. In 1446 AD a Mysore heroine died in Shikoga Taluka fighting to avenge the murder of her father.⁸ In Orissa when King Lalitabharnadeva and his son died towards the end of the 9th century AD, the widowed queen mother was requested by the feudatories to accept the sovereignty. In compliance of their request, we are told, she ascended the lion-throne and ruled till the birth of a grandson.⁹ Queen Didda of Kashmir ruled that state for 22 years not as a regent but as a full sovereign.

The examples of queen reigning independently in their own right are however few. This is attributed to the fact that a school of the political thinkers opposed the accession of women to the throne because they thought that women should not be made rulers, for an account of their natural limitation, they cannot become efficient administrator.¹⁰

Hindu princess, even when entitled to the throne in their own rights, did not usually like to become the legal heads of their states in supersession of their husband, who they revered intensely. Their consorts usually became *de jure* as well as *defacto* heads of the govt. Thus when Gauri, a Ratta princess who was an heir to a fiefdom in Karnataka, married a prince of Banabhatta family in the 10th century, her husband became the ruler over her principality.

The Gupta history provides perhaps the only exception to the rule. The founder of the dynasty, Chandragupta I was ruling the kingdom jointly with his Lichchavi queen Kumaradevi. The names and effigies of both the king and the queen appear on their coins, along with the name of the Lichchavi clan from which the queen was descended. Political reasons however were responsible

for this joint rule because Lichchavi were too proud to allow their state to be merged in the Gupta empire on the marriage of their princess with Chandragupta, and so compromise was arrived at, under which both the king and queen was regarded as equal and joint rulers of the state.

Queens usually did not assume the reins of government when their husbands were alive, they did not hesitate to assume full control of the administration as regents, when their husband died or sons are minors or taken as prisoners. Many dowager queen regents also are known to ancient Indian history like in 4th AD Prabhavtigupta was directing the Vakataka administration in Madhya Pradesh for more than 10 years after her husband's death as the queen regent for her minor son. In Rajput history also there are several instances of widowed queens carrying on the administration efficiently during the minority of their sons even in troublesome times.

As far as the early medieval South Indian history is concerned the instances of female participating in administration are more common during the period of Rashtrakuta and Western Chalukyas. To quote a few they are :

- (1) *Revakammadi*, daughter of Amoghavarsha (Rashtrakuta) was the governor of Edatore region during the first half of 9th century AD.
- (2) *Mailala Devi*, wife of Chalukya Somesvara held the charge of Banwasai region in AD 1053.
- (3) *Ketaladevi*, another wife of Chalukya Somesvara was incharge of Ponnadagrahara.

- (4) *Akkadevi*, sister of Western Chalukyan monarch Jayasimhavallabha is described as a great warrior and governor of Konkan region during her brother's region.
- (5) *Dandimahadevi*, queen of Ganjam region had typical Chalukyan titles of *Parambhattanha Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara* indicating her political status etc.

The Chola history is silent on the women's involvement in political administration. Chola queens are mentioned in the inscriptions of the period due to their philanthropic works but not due to their political achievements.

If we go through the Sangam literature or any contemporary literature of other places, we do not come across a single instance of a women ruling over any of the traditional state of Tamilaham. There were references which were not historical but go back to the days of legends as Tadatagai Pirattiyar ruling over Madurai is mentioned in *Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam*. These are legendary or mythological informations on which no historical conclusion can be based. V. Kanakasabhai discussing the 'crown' however say that "the queen did not wear a crown unless she had inherited it in her own right."¹¹ This implies that she had a right to inherit the throne in her own right but the presumption is not warranted by any evidences from the sources.

According to P.N. Chopra, T.K. Ravindra and N. Subramanian "Women in Tamilnad did not hold public office and did not go out to the battle. She had no claim to the throne. In a sense legally she was a "perpetual minor." This information convey the message that women was treated as a perpetual minor and she had no right to the throne and in case her husband died, she should remain a widow or commit a suicide.

N. Subramanian in his *“Sangam Polity”* reveals that no queen ever seems to have ruled the dominion in her own right like Catherine of Russia or Elizabeth of England or even have jointly ruled the kingdom with her husband, like Nurjahan and Jahangir or Mary and William III. The queens could not succeed to the throne because of ‘*Makkal Tayam*’¹² system of succession. The queen may present in the audience by the side of the king whether the queen shared the throne or whether she was present invariably at the court was not known. The queens does not seem to have participated in official business but it is presumed that it played a subordinate and occasionally advising role in the palace as well as in the govt. But being the wife of the king she was much respected by the subjects. But the king treated the queen just as any man treated his wife compelling her to accept a position of subordination. From the above discussion it is clear that during Sangam Age women was not given the political freedom, they act as the subordinate to the king and can only advice the king if her advice on any matter was sought for.

In the early medieval South India, the epigraphs from Andhradesha indicate the participation of women in politics ever since the period of Satavanas¹³. It appears that women’s involvement in the affairs of the state was almost continuous which was not highlighted so far. This could be due to the fact that the traditional society was not readily accepting the authority of women in politics. According to *Keyurabahucharitramu*, the king of Lata country has no male issue. Fearing insult from the fellow kings, he decided to bring his daughter up in the attire of a boy and named her Mrgankavarma as against her time name Mrgankavali.¹⁴ Similar is the case with the Kakatiya empress Rudramadevi who had to appear in the court in a male attire and had to take the name “*Mahamandalesvara Rudradeva Maharajuguru*”.¹⁵

Women participation in state administration can be divided into two heads (1) Active Participation (2) Passive participation. Active participation can be defined as direct involvement in political affairs of a state like possessing the right to issue orders, to make grants in the royal capacity, to take policy decisions with regard to administration and state craft to participate in the wars and to involve in all matters of the policy of a state where is physical presence of the ruler is required. On the other hand passive role can be as involvement in the policy of a state from behind the curtain or making indirect contribution. In other words acting as king-makers, counsellors or advisors to the king and serving as a source of inspiration to him.

Various queens in medieval Andhra played actively and directly involve in the political affairs of the state like the very base of Kakatiya state was formed by the diplomacy of a woman called Kamasani¹⁶ Further Kakatiya empire is unique in having two women ruler, Rudramba & Ganapamba. As the daughters of the emperor Ganapatideva both received sufficient military and administrative training from their childhood.

Rudramadevi was also famous for her administrative strategies and policies of statecraft. She reviewed the feudal set up of the empire and reconstituted various administrative structure. She instituted Naayankara system based on military and fiscal control.¹⁷ A sculpture from Warangal fort, showing a woman with a sword, a shield in her hands and mounted on a lion is to be of Rudramadevi.¹⁸

In addition to the above category of woman who actively participated in the state affairs, there is another category of elite women who indirectly or

passively assisted their husbands in administration like Silama, mother of Brahmanayadu, had adequate knowledge in warfare techniques and the rules of war. She was described as giving ample guidance to her son regarding these issues. She directs him to declare the war before proceeding towards enemies and advises him not to kill Brahmans, women and cows as it is against the code of war.¹⁹ She gave instructions to her son to cut the heads of soldiers like plants. She also advises him to kill the horses and elephants of the enemy's side to drive them away.²⁰

Itama, mother of Balachandra is also known for her act of counselling²¹ Katamaraju kathalu is a traditional account of the fighting due to cattle raids, during the reign of the Telugu-Choda chief Nallasidhi. His commander Khatgatikkana participated in the war but fled from the battle field on being defeated. Enraged with this his wife and mother tried to raise his valour. He returned to the war field with a new inspiration and brought victory to the king. But he met with death in the course of war.²² This episode suggests the attitude of women belonging to royal families and wives of military commanders who preferred heroic death of their husbands in war front rather than defeat.

As far as the Chola dynasty is concerned after observing a wide range of inscriptional record. We got to know that there is not a single example of any Chola queen directly participating in the politics of the state. They perhaps assist or advice their husbands passively. During Chola period there were two royal women namely Sembiyan Madevi, mother of Uttama Chola and Kundavai; the sister of Rajaraja, who are considered to be very important. They both showed a keen interest in multifarious activities. Kundavai showed keen

interest in her country also because there is no proof to say that she left her mother country after her marriage along with her husband. Instead her husband also joined hands with her and stayed permanently in the Chola country and remains as the chief of Samantas till the reign of Rajendra I Rajaraja showed a great respect to her and assigned Kundavai, next place to himself. Even his queens are mentioned after her. But in spite of such strong position there is no reference that Kundavai had ever involve in the Chola politics directly or indirectly. Same was the case with Sembiyan Mahadevi. The Chola queens and royal ladies were mostly talked about their philanthropic works rather than their role in politics.

(a) Politics and Marriage :

Marriage is one of the sixteen samskaras of life stated in the inscriptions. It is a sacred as well as the secular observance.

A woman, through marriage becomes a binding medium in uniting two different families. On the same ground, a royal prince was often offered as a medium of peace between two warring kings.²³ According to a literature, marriage relation between powerful political rivals in an important aspect of diplomatic *Rajniti* (moral of polity).²⁴ There was no bar of caste or creed in such marriages what mattered was only a “political contract” for which a girl was used as a medium of contract. In middle ages particularly in South India it has become a regular feature.

During Sangam days matrimonial alliance to strengthen dynastic ties, extend territories and augment one’s power were quite common among the major kings and the *Velirs* (Superior Vellalas).

In the royal families of the three kingdom viz Chola, Chera and Pandya, inter-marriage among the members of these families were common. The Cholas and Cheras seemed to have been more related to each other than the Pandyas. The Vels, the traditional feudatories and the higher class Vellalas were enjoying *jus connubun*' with the royal families and so socially there was no distinction among them.

It quite often happened that when some king asked a *Vel* (or mother king) for his daughter's hand and the latter refused this led to a war.²⁵ This military situation is technically known as "*Mahatpar Kanchi*". At times abduction of girls led to war if the parents of the girl considered the abduction an insult to them. This situation is known as "*Palai*".

Some marriages were of political nature because the records show that some of the marriages happened due to the diplomatic policies of the rulers of the day. Virarajendra Chola gave her daughter, Rajasundari in marriage to the Ganga ruler Rajaraja Devendravarman.²⁶ Likewise Anurajaguru married Mailama, the daughter of the chief of Velanadu Gonka II and became the Lord of Palnad²⁷ because according to Palnativira Charita, the whole region of Palnad was given as "*arananu*" or stridhan to Mailamadevi by her father.

Aditya was a careful diplomat and he tried to assuage Pallava feeling by marrying a princess from the family. Aditya's senior queen was Ilangopichchi a Rashtrakuta princess who was the daughter of Krishna II. This was also a diplomatic marriage intended to bring about peaceful relation between them.

Sometime marriages among the ruling classes were arranged by parents on the political ground. Like when Rajaraja Chola was ruling over southern kingdom there was confusion in Vengi Mandala so he brought that territory

under his control and set up Saktivarman the eastern Chalukya king as the head of the Vengi Mandala. In order to strengthen the relation between the two kingdom he gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to Vimladitya, the crown prince of the Eastern Chalukya who bore the title "*Ariyanka Bhima*". Bhima had two more wives one among them was *Ankidevi* who was the Kalinga princess, whose marriage was also probably on political grounds.²⁸

In medieval Andhradesha Rudramadevi in continuation of her father's policy of achieving political stability through marriage alliance gave her second daughter Ruyyama in marriage to Annayamantri of Induluri Brahman family. Her third daughter Rudrama was married to one Yadava prince Ellandeva.²⁹ The son of her elder daughter, Prataparudra was adopted by her and was nominated as her successor.

From the above discussion it can be inferred that there were various marriages which had been took place during Chola period who was politically motivated. Sometimes these marriages took place to pacify the warring kings and sometime they happened to strengthen the relations between the states.

(b) Women and Role in Wars and Battlefields :

After scrutinizing the inscriptional records we can say that not a single record informed us about the direct involvement of Chola women in wars and battlefield. It has been said that medieval South Indian armies travelled with large number of supporting personnel including the members of royal families and various ranks of male and female servants and in case of defeat these retinue often falls into the hands of the enemy. These supporting personnel who are present in the battlefield played any role in war or not is not clear but they

are there for many other different works like, cooking, serving, giving personal comforts to the kings and other royal members and sometimes they work as spies also.

According to *Sangam polity* of N. Subramanian there was a warrior community during Sangam Age and the women of that warrior community is known as “*mudri mahalir*”, they did not belong to the normal category of women, even then we do not hear of these women participating in warfare. Further he says that women were not recruited as soldiers, ministers and ambassador or advisor to the king but there were king’s female bodyguards which belong to the courtesan class and constituted the king’s “*urimai surram*”. These women accompanied the king even to the battlefield. They were beautiful and buckled in a short sword on the waist bands and they also looked after the comfort of the king.

R. Lalitha in her work “*The Economic status of women in Imperial Cholas*” had mentioned about the ‘*Padimagalir*’, *Velaikkaris*’ and ‘*Annuki*’. They are the different categories of bodyguards of the king. *Annuki*³⁰ are the women bodyguards of the king inside the palace. *Padimagalir*³¹ are the women bodyguards of the king who attended on him while the king was camping in times of war. Apart from these female attendants there were the *Velaikkaris*³². The exact function of these *Velaikkaris* are not known but it seems from one of the inscription that they would not survive if their master was killed in the battle.³³ This shows that *Velaikkaris* are the personal bodyguards of the king and that they were so much attached to the king that they would not hesitate to lay down their lives if their master was killed. It would be said that these

Velaikkaris took upon themselves the duty of protecting the king from any possible harm and that if at all any harm could be done to the king by the enemy it would perhaps be achieved only after killing the Velaikkaris.

From the above information's we can say that Padimagalir and Velaikkaris are the women bodyguards who accompany the kings in wars and battlefield.

In battlefields women was also employed as spies. The main work of these spies was to collect the valuable informations of the opposite camp and these women do their work perfectly.

There are few examples from Aandhradesha which held up to say that women do involving in wars like Rudramadevi, who herself fought various wars during her reign.

We can conclude by saying that as the Chola queen did not directly involve in political affairs of the state so it can be assumed that they do not go to the battlefields or involve in the wars. We have not come through any instance which shows that Chola queens have fought any war. Apart from Royal women other categories of women do involve in the wars and try go to battlefields not as a soldier or fighter but as a bodyguard, food maker and server or as spies.

(c) i. Women as the sufferer of Manmade Calamities :

Inscriptions are amongst the sources we use for the reconstruction of the early Indian history. Apart from giving other valuable informations, these inscriptions also record the various activities of the kings. They suggest that

rulers were constantly at war with one another, either attempting to annex each other's realms, or raid and loot them. The impact of constant warfare on women both the ruling families and on other's can be well imagined.

The famous Prayag Prasasti or Allahabad Pillar Inscription records the exploits of *Samudragupta* (4 century AD) the greatest warrior in the early Indian history. He claims that he have "uprooted" nearly a dozen rulers and compelling others to accept his suzerainty. It would not be wrong if we say that such "achievements" of the kings have disrupted or destroyed the normal and routine lives of the ordinary men and women. In warfare between ruling elites, or in situations of caste conflict, men often try to "teach a lesson" by attacking the women who belong to men of the opposite camp. Thus, apart from the routine disruptions that people had to cope with in any violent situation, women often face heightened sexual violence as they are caught in the cross fire. We also learn that some of the defeated rulers like the ruler of Sri Lanka were expected to provide their daughters to the king as a mark of servitude. This suggest us that inspite of their high status, women belonging to the ruling families would have functioned as pawns in military and political strategies devised by their male kinsfolk.

If we look at Kalhana's famous history of Kashmir the *Rajtarangini* (composed in the 12th century), we find that victories in battle, more often than not fought between rival claimants to the throne are invisibly described in terms of the impact they had on the women of the vanquished; they turn pale, the vermilion mark is wiped off their fore head, and they are represented as being in acute distress. None of this violence is condemned it is regarded as a routine indication of victory in battle.

The worst hit of the wars were the women and the women of all the categories suffered it. In early times these unfortunate women had very often to enter the harem of the conqueror, as is clearly shown by the recognition of *Rakshasa or Kshata* form of marriage. Manu allows each soldier to retain such women as he may have himself captured, he is obviously referring to this old barbarous practice. The historian is however compelled to observe that in a large number of cases this rule about the chivalrous treatment of women was disregarded by Hindu commander and soldiers long before the advent of Islamic armies. When the Mankhari king Grahavarman was defeated and killed in war in 605 AD, his wife Rajyasu was put in prison with heavy fetters on her feet.³⁴ Medieval inscriptions often refer to several cases of ill treatment of women seized in war.

N. Subramanian in his *Sangam Polity* informed us that during Sangam Age women were taken as prisoner and was also made the part of victor's domestic establishment. He further says that these prisoners bathed in the tank and lightened the perpetual lamp in *Podiyal* and prayed to God, probably to secure their own deliverance and to save the souls of their dead husbands. *Nachchinarkkiyar* commentary on this passage says that this practice of compelling female prisoners of war to do the service at the Podiyal was because it was felt that it would add to the glory of the victorious king.

Medieval inscriptions from South India contain several other cases of the ill treatment of women were very often come across the victor carrying away the treasure and wives of his enemies into his own heram.³⁵ K.A. Nilakanta Sastri says, "*Velam*" are the places where the war captives, women and children lived. There are instances which shows how women folks are

raped, hair are shaved by the victorious kings and his army. The most vulnerable fact about it is that the savour of the society i.e. king took pride in such activities.³⁶

The inscriptional eulogy (*meykkirtii*) of king Kulottunga III (1178-1218) describing his protracted struggle, with Vira Pandya of Madurai, boasts that having beaten the Pandya king on battlefield he “caused the best of his women to enter his velam”.³⁷ A later versions of the same eulogy adds that the Chola king caused Vira Pandya’s ‘young queen’ to enter his Velam.³⁸ The *Kalingathuparni*, the famous court poem composed during the reign of Kulottunga I, which contains the only attested literature, use of the term *velams*. The first substantive canto of the poem takes the form of an entreaty to the women of royal city to “open their doors” for the returning Chola army. A string of verses is specifically addressed to the women of the Velam;

“You gentle women of the Pandya country, the flag of which bears the fish, who have entered the velam after running through the wilderness in tears, open your doors! Women of Tulunatu, women of Malainatu give tribute to Kulottunka, from the land of the splashing waters, open the door to your houses.... You Karnata women, approaching uttering a confused mix of beautiful words in Tamil and Vatuku in your gentle speech; open your doors!”³⁹

The *Kalingattuparni* and Kulottunga IIIrd’s *meykkiritti* clear that at least some of the women of the Velam were war captives.⁴⁰ The practice of capturing or forcibly abducting women as part of annual military campaign in rival kingdoms was well attested in South India as “seizing women” was a regular boast in the royal eulogies which cover the walls of scores of Chola

period temples. Medieval South Indian armies traveled with large trains of supporting personnel including members of the royal family and various ranks of male and female servants. In the case of defeat, these retinues often fell into the hands of the enemy. In their Meykkirittis (inscriptional eulogy) the Cholas are often quite particular about the fate of women captured from the rivals.⁴¹ In some instances they were “defaced” –their nose shorn off as when Virarajendra boasts of severing the nose of the Chalukya Mahadandanayaka Camundaraja only daughter, the beautiful Nagalai. In other cases these women were simply added to the king’s retinue, as in Virarajender’s claim to have taken large numbers of elephants, camels, horses, banners, queens and women of lesser rank left on the battlefield by the retreating Chalukyan monarch (SII 3.29).

The forcible abduction of women of lesser rank from the cities and country side is also known. A famous Chalukyan inscription dated in 1007 AD at the village of Hottur in contemporary Dharwar district describes the campaign of a large Chola army from the other side as it “ravaged the whole country, murdering women, children and Brahmans, seizing women and overthrowing the order of caste....”⁴²

One of the medieval poems composed at the Chola court describes the crowds of women who lined the streets during royal processions as being descendants of women brought to the Chola capital from victorious campaigns and settled by the king in area assigned to them.⁴³ Though the word ‘Velam’ is not mentioned in the poem the passage clearly involves these establishments and is broadly corroborated by a contemporary Sanskrit text on architecture called Mayamata, which recommends that the royal street be lined with mansions, where the king’s retinue was to reside.⁴⁴

Closely related to capture through war was the receipt of women as tribute from subordinate kings, a practice which was not unknown elsewhere in early medieval India. The Kalingattuparni which portrays the splendor of the assembled Chola court, lists among the annual tribute-gift required of subordinate kings, “the forehead bands (pattam) of women who are rightfully yours”.⁴⁵ At least one woman known from the inscriptions who served Rajaraja’s queen Panchavamadeviyar in Kotantarama Velam at Tanjavur, has a name Vanakovaraiyan Porkali, which identifies her with a lineage known to be subordinates of the Cholas. It is possible that this woman who was clearly not a gift to the Chola family as a token of friendship and submission.

It is likely then that many women entered Velams through military conquests and as political tribute. Indeed, the period of the greatest number of Velams mentioned in inscriptions coincides neatly with the military success of the Chola armies in the eleventh century under Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I. It remain an open question however to what extent Velams were filled exclusively with such women. Assuming that at least some women entered palace service as war booty this may have obviated the need to acquire them through purchase.

ii. Women are the sufferer of Natural Calamities:

The state of famine is a common phenomenon in the agricultural countries more particularly those depend mainly on the monsoon. The Tamil country is no exception to this some instances of scarcity and famine is incidentally recorded in the inscriptions but they are not many. So it will be very difficult to get the clear view of woman conditions through this scarce

information. It cannot be denied that people did not suffer due to these natural calamities. Women also suffered due to these calamities.

The famines were usually caused by the unfortunate circumstances of nature. The failure of monsoon, the unprecedented floods and also the ravages of war seemed to be the factors that led to severe famines in the Chola period.

The failure of monsoon, generally caused the outbreak of the famines is attested by a number of epigraphs.

An inscription of Rajendra I from *Tirukkarugavus* (Thanjavur dt, 1019 AD)⁴⁶, refers to the failure of the crops probably caused by the failure of monsoon. The most outstanding instance of a somewhat widespread distress is known from the two *Alangudi* (Thanjavur dt.) records. The first record⁴⁷ states that in the reign of Vijayarajandradeva (11 century AD)⁴⁸ the village Alangudi had been afflicted with a famine caused by the failure of rain. Another record⁴⁹ mentions that in 1121 AD a severe drought was anticipated owing to the failure of monsoon. Resulting in the rivers 'Jananatrappareru' and 'Parantakarpperaru' being dried. In the year 1160 AD a severe drought had occurred at Panjai⁵⁰ and Tirukkadaiyur in the august, september, october month and the consequence failure of the crops. This drought was caused by the failure of monsoon.

Apart from the failure of monsoon, another obvious cause of famine was the unprecedented floods. In the 6th year Vikramachola reign there was scarcity and distress consequent on a big flood which brought destruction to the villages and their crops. A fairly extensive tract of land in the North & South Arcot district seems to have felt the effect of the visitation. An inscription⁵¹ of AD

1125 from Tiruvottur (N. Arcot) records a flood and the consequent destruction of the crops leading to the sale of some land by the *Ur* for raising money to pay the taxes of the year. In the same year at Tiruvadi (S. Arcot), the Mahasaba had to sell some of the common land for the same purpose on account of difficulty experienced in the payment of the land tax (*Kadaimaittatur*) for the 6th regnal year.⁵²

The *Somangalam* (Chingleput dt) record of Kulottunga III⁵³ refers to heavy rain and consequent breach of the tank bind in 1190AD and 1191 AD probably subjecting to a famine.

As has already been pointed out, it would be manifestly inappropriate to ascribe famines solely to droughts and flood. More frequently they were brought about by the savages of war also⁵⁴. Though the Chola inscriptions are emphatically silent about the ravages of war on Chola territories and their aftermath during the late 13 century AD. It may not be wrong to surmise that the war ravages would have led to serious consequence including famines. Though there is a paucity of epigraphic evidence for the occurrence of famines in this period, the description given in the Pandya Prasasti⁵⁵ about the war ravages on the Chola region leads us to conclude that there would have been severe famine.

Epigraphical records also reveals the failure of crops resulting in the scarcity of food and rise in the price of food grain. In the 23rd and 24th year of the reign of Kulottunga III (1201 AD)⁵⁶ there was apparently a wide spread of scarcity of food grain and a high rise in price of food grains. It is stated that paddy was sold at 3 nali for 1 kasu. It is therefore not a little remarkable that an

inscription from N. Arcot (Tiruvannamali)⁵⁷ records that during famine when rice was selling at $\frac{1}{4}$ of a measure per kasu, two person started relief work in the form of an embankment for the river and a construction of a fresh tank and paid the labourer in gold, paddy or any other form that they desired.

Occasionally the effect of famine was seen in the desertion of villages and in the migration of the people to the neighbouring villages. The contemporary record from the adjacent area indicates that such migrations were often temporary and the people returned to their original houses after a certain period of time. Such temporary internal migration led to unauthorized occupation of land property and to consequent disputes, and the state government or the local government had to interfere to set them right.⁵⁸

Sometimes, the acute famine enforced the individuals to sell their personal liberty for want of food and thus reduced to a state of slavery. An inscription of Kulottunga III (dated 1201 AD) from Tiruppambhram⁵⁹ illustrate this point. It states that owing to the famines and the high price of food grains, a vellalan of the village sold himself and his two daughters as slaves (admai) to the temple of Tiruppamburam Udaiyur for a sum of 110 kasu in order to escape from starvation.

The inscriptions reveal no information on the action taken by the government as famine relief. But it would not be safe to conclude that the state did nothing in such situation. As pointed out by K.A. Nilkanta Sastri, it should not be forgotten that the inscriptions are the records of a narrow range of transaction and by no means the moral and material progress report of the time.⁶⁰ Hence it is difficult to prove the existence of any '*famine policy*' which guided the govt. the available evidence help us to point towards the fact that

village assemblies, the temples and the private individuals help the suffering people during the times of famine. It was known that during the period of distress the individual and the village assemblies borrowed money and food grain from the temple treasury, like the Tiruppamburam records.⁶¹ states that when the time was very bad and paddy was sold at 3 nali per kasu, a Vellalan borrowed 110 kasus from the temple treasury in 1201 AD. Beside the economic aid the temple also offered asylum for the victims. For instance the inscription of Rajaraja III from *Pillichchndal* (S. Arcot dt)⁶² states that Neminatha who was incharge of Guncloradittapperunpalli declared that a portion of the village called Jambai alias Virarajendrapuram as an asylum for the distressed by an order.

Thus it can be safely concluded that during Chola period natural calamities do occur and it also leave its aftermath on the lives of the people living during that period. As far as the epigraphic records are concerned no organized relief measure was undertaken by any ruler at any time. Circumstantial evidence forced to say that government might have taken some method to relieve the victims. People suffered a lot sometime individual faced starvations also and sometime they seek their livelihood at the price of their personal freedom.

CONCLUSION :

Women occupying the high profile positions are few but they exist at all is a matter of considerable significance. To summarize the argument, women's right to political succession is recognized by the laws at least on certain occasions. In line with this one can notice a great involvement of women in the political affairs of the medieval Andhradesh, Chalukya domain and other ruling

clans but Cholas were silent on this point Their royal ladies were more talked about for their philanthropic work rather than their active participation in the politics, wars or battlefield.

The State of affairs demanded their active or passive participation. In addition one can also find that the institute of marriage, the relationship between husband and wife and the ritual domain of wife with the family are all related to historical relationships in feudal polity. Inscriptional evidence show clear similarities between lord-servant, deity-devotee and husband and wife relationship. The idea of submissiveness and loyalty are clearly enforced in all these and an attempt was made to raise the ritual position of the king, which was very much essential for the stability of the kingdom when viewed with reference to the multifaceted power structure of the state.

As far as the women as the sufferer of calamities are concerned they are the victims of the manmade and natural calamities. They are the worst hit of the war as they are caught between the crossfire of rival camps. In this scenario royal as well as other classes of women suffered equally. They are raped, and defaced by the victorious kings and they feel proud in doing so.

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Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Women's studies can be defined as studying women with a women's perspective or looking at women from a women's point of view. This study aims at bringing women to the centre of historical process and attempts at studying the status of women during early medieval South India with special reference to Chola empire. Earlier studies on the societies and status of women in medieval South India, concerned mainly with social life of women in general and include only a description of women thus marginalizing their contribution. The role of women as donars and her participation in different profession have not been given much emphasis. Further the classification of women like Royal, Middle and Lower strata was not specifically done, the reason for this is that only a general information about women was usually given in the previous works.

This work aims in dealing with some of the unexplored and neglected themes which have not been touched by the historians like royal household functionaries, naming pattern among women and position of women war captives.

The region of the research was confined to Chola empire comprising the area of Orissa, whole of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, some parts of Karnataka and Northern parts of Ceylon, the time bound of my research was confined to Cholas of Vijayalaya line to Chola Chalukya line i.e. till Rajaraja III (850-1279 AD).

No study of a society can be complete without a reference to the position of women in it. The position of women in society reflects the standard of its

civilization culture and refinement. Though the early and medieval Chola society was a male dominated one, women enjoyed a position of respect and reverence. After making a detailed study on different aspects of the women belonging to different strata that lived during Chola period it can be said that not a vast difference can be seen with regard to the Sangam Age. Slight variation was there, but the system was altogether the same. Strict marriage rituals were introduced, but the conditions of a widow were same as it was, dress and eating habits were altogether the same. Inscriptions throw a considerable light on the varieties of ornaments worn by the women during Chola period.

Adopted names along with the original names were also a unique feature practiced by the women during Chola period. These names or titles were bestowed on them by kings and temple authorities according to their specialization in their work. Like *pendatti*, *annukki*, *padimagalir* and *velaikkar* are the titles, given to the royal servants. Likewise *adiyal*, *devaradiyar*, *padiyilar*, *talaikkoli*, *mannikkan* and *nakkan* are the titles bestowed on temple women. Apart from these other titles like *nachchiyar*, *deviyar*, *thayal*, *kathurai magal*, *vana magalir*, *adigarichchi* etc. also the titles given to the women of different capacities.

The Indian tradition fixes the gender roles of men and women to be public and private respectively and Dharmasastra emphasized a complementarity between the two. Thus, these divisions appear to be less rigid and certain amount of interchangeability is always noticed. Women always played an important role in the socio-economic life of the country same was the case with the women belonging to Chola empire.

Inscriptions show that women have property rights, generally we the historians conclude that the women enjoyed the property rights from the donations made by them to the temples. Donations to the temples were also made by the women who earn for themselves while engaging in different profession. Though women of elite did not take up any economic activity but those of weak economic sections of the society undertook variety of profession to supplement their family income. It makes us understood the economic independence experienced by the women during this period.

Temples and Royal palaces are the main employers of the women. They work in different departments of temples as well as royal palaces. Temple functionaries of medieval South Indian temple carried out many duties apart from singing and dancing. They were employed in various capacities like garland making, cleaning, husking paddy, and many more. They work either individually or in groups and they get transferred too. They were at par with men in many ways like recruitment, service, and management and to some extent in wages also.

The royal household comprised numerous servants of varied description including bodyguards of sorts. The bathing and kitchen establishments comprised mostly women. The palace servants of the Cholas were organized into velams and settled in separate quarters in the capital. They were also operated either individually or in groups. They were branded when introduced to an institution. They do not have a normal family life but they are open to sex life. These women were economically independent and enjoyed a specific social status far better than the common folk. The appointment and wages pattern of Royal household servants are not known to us.

Apart from Temple and Royal household there were other avenues which have contributed a lot in giving financial satisfaction to the women during Chola period. During medieval times professions were mostly caste oriented and the contemporary sources provides us evidences of women's direct involvement in most of them. These avenues were agriculture, dairy farming, handloom sectors, cooks, wet nurses, prostitution and what not. In some they act as a helping hand for their male counterpart and in others they took up the profession on their own like prostitution and wet nurses.

The extent of economic independence of women is reflected in their grants to temples and various charitable institutions. Women in Chola period actively participated in making donations to the temples. There were two sources through which women use to make donations first was '*stridhan*' and second was personal earning of the women. It can be said that *stridhan* had been used in right sense by the women of Chola period. Inscriptional evidences show that women had power to disburse their personal earnings according to their own will. There were two intentions of making gifts one was the removal from past sins and other was to achieve religious merit in the future life.

Our findings show that royal women donated a large portion of their wealth in philanthropic works as they were providing a model for the masses. Next to the Queens were *devaradiyar* and royal household servants who had also made a large number of donations. But there was no inscription describing any women belonging to the lower strata like cobbler, paid labourer, carpenters, smiths, and shepherdess as donars. It seems that these classes of women were not so economically well so that they can donate a part of their earnings as donations to the temple.

Temples were the main beneficiary of these donations and a variety of routine temple services were conducted through these donations. Gifts were sometimes made directly in kind like gold, silver, money, ornaments, livestock, lamps, vessels etc. but were more often given indirectly in which the services were maintained through the income earned or interest on an asset which was assigned to the temple.

The Cholas were the inheritors and continuers of the Pallava tradition in temple construction, they carried out a brisk temple building activities throughout the length and breath of the empire. This has been possible largely due to the munificence of such royal ladies as *Sembiyan Madevi*, *Kundavai* and *Lokmadevi*.

The survey of the temple building activities evinces active participation of women, particularly those of the ruling families, in constructing temples. Their patronage to temple building art indicate that queens were in possession of huge amount of money or controlled such regular and rich resources of income that they could undertake big building projects of great artistic merit and carry them to successful completion.

During Chola period portrait sculpture and metal casting were also known to the people. There are few sculpture representation either in stone or in metal but to metal or bronze casting as it was said preferably expanded beyond conceivable limit during that period. Infact that period is said to have witnessed an explosion of this art form, Rajaraja I and Rajendra I was great metal caster, but it was *Sembiyan Mahadevi* who showed them the way and blessed her nephew and her nephew's son in their endeavours in this direction.

Chola painting, like all other forms of Chola art was a continuation and development of Pallava-Pandya work. Among the Chola paintings the most important paintings are found in Tanjore temple most probably belonging to the time of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. The theme of the Chola paintings are religious drawn mostly from the hagiology that was later worked up into the Periya-Puranam. Women contributions in Chola painting are not the direct one but women indirectly contributed a lot in the Chola painting. We do not come across any women painter of the period under consideration. Women were mostly the part of the paintings done during the Chola period. There were ample of examples which shows that women was painted by various painter in their beautiful paintings. Various details regarding their beauty, dressing, ornaments and hair do prevalent during that period can be seen through these paintings.

The system of learning in Indian tradition is modeled to preserve the family system and kinship relation. A woman has to carry the legality and prestige of the family created by man to the future generation in her role as a mother. Thus generally formal education was provided for men and non-formal, mostly traditional education for women. However families of ruling elite, courtesans and girls in temple services varied according to the need. Girls of royal family were given training in art of fighting and in statecraft.

Women of every strata had their own way of contributing to the religion as they all wanted to secure their place in the heavens. They do so for the betterment of their own future as well as for the betterment of their family members. They made lots of donation to the temples, constructed several lofty

temples, involved themselves in day to day rituals of the temple and they also worked in the temples in various capacities.

As far as the cultural contribution of the women is concerned the information regarding this was very limited and scarce and we also do not have any information regarding the women's contribution in the literature of the Chola period. So to draw a conclusion on such an aspect was a very difficult task to do.

In India, for many centuries women did not assume the role of sovereigns, though there have been no written laws which made them ineligible for the political succession. Moreover, warfare and internal security were considered as male-oriented activities and women were not fit to assume these roles. Despite the fact that law-giving authorities are not unanimous about women's political participation, substantial references can be found in the records pertaining to ancient and medieval periods regarding women administrators and women holding responsible positions in public administration.

Women occupying high profile positions were few but they existed at all is the matter of considerable significance. Women's rights to political succession are recognized by the law at least on certain occasions. On these lines one can notice a great involvement of women in the political affairs of the medieval Andhra Pradesh, Chalukya domain and other ruling classes but Cholas are silent on this point. Chola royal ladies are more talked about for their involvement in philanthropic works rather than their active participation in the politics, wars or battlefields. Undoubtedly royal princes act as a binding medium in bringing together the two warring kings/states through marriage.

Moreover the relationship between husband-wife, deity-devotee, and lord-servants were linked with political relations inseparably. The abundant epigraphical references substantiate this argument.

The women was also the sufferer of calamities, they were the victims of man made as well as natural calamities. They were the worst hit of the wars as they were caught between the crossfire of rival camps. In this scenario royal as well as common classes of women suffered equally. They were raped and defaced by the victorious kings and the victorious king's feels proud in doing such inhuman acts.

To conclude it can be argued that for civilization has been jointly created by both men and women but the traditional historiographies only highlights the contributions of man. Unless the study of history is taken up with a wholistic perspective bringing women to the centre of historical process it will become very difficult to understand the phenomenon.

Appendices

APPENDIX - 1

Appended below is the list of the various ornaments which find mention in the inscriptions of Rajarajesvaram, some are currently in use, some are identifiable and many unfortunately not.

1. **EKAVALLI** : This is a single-strand bejewelled string or chain. This term is equivalent to the Sanskrit expression "ekavali" meaning a single stranded vadam.
2. **KARAI OR TIRUK-KARAI** : This is a collar in gold, evidently solid unlike a chain or necklace.
3. **KACHCHOLAM** : This is a griddle in the form of a snake worn by Siva, Natraja, Bhikshatana and other ascetic forms of Siva and was often made of silver.
4. **KALAVAN (OR KATAPAM)** : This is also a griddle.
5. **KANTHA-TUDAN** : This is a necklace of one or more parallel chains held together by clasps at the ends.
6. **KANTHA-NAN** : This is a type of bejeweled necklace, with various combinations of jewels strung or set in them. It is evidently a loose gold ring round the neck with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, komalam etc. Occasionally with a centre piece set with jewels (ratna pattigai).
7. **KANTHIKA** : This is again another form of necklace, or chain worn round the neck.
8. **KANTAKAM** : This is a plain gold or bejeweled bracelet but is often embellished with various types of gems, all of one type or mixed.

9. KOMBIR-KOLGAI : This is perhaps a ring or cover for the Kombu (tusk).
10. KOTPU : Its exact meaning is not known, it could refer to an ear ornament.
11. KUDAMBAI OR TIRUK-KUDAMBAI : This is an earring and the terms were applied perhaps to an earring of a particular type, but in spite of repeated references to it in the inscription, we are unable to gather a clear picture of the shape of this ornament.
12. MATTAGAT-TAGADU : This finds mentions in only one place and is evidently a forehead plate (mattaga = mastaka mastishka = forehead, tagadu = plate).
13. MODIRAM, TIRUK-KAL-MODIRAM, TIRU-VADIKKAL MODIRAM : This terms continues even today to bear the same meaning viz. a ring. In fact it is used to cover the rings worn on the fingers as well as on the toes, a ring worn on the fingers went under the appellation of a mere-modiram, where as the ring worn on the toe was called tiru-vadik-kal-modiram or tiruk-kal-modiram.
14. MUTTIN-MATTIRAI : This is evidently an earring made of pearls (matra in Sanskrit meaning an earring).
15. PDAKKAM : This is a medallion, forming part of a neck ornament generally as a piece of ornamented plate or plaque suspended over the neck, breast and chest. The term is in vogue even today with the same connotation. It can also be a breast plate and forms the main ornament. Its surface is studded with jewels.
16. PATTAM OR TIRU-PATTAM : This is a diadem or tiara, an expression currently in use. This term is also used in such combination

as Pattabhi Shekam (coronation) and Pattamahishi (the principal queen) and symbolizes royalty.

17. **PATTAIK-KARAI** : Karai would seem to be a general expression meaning a firm ring or strip of gold closely fitting the body. The term 'karai' occurs in combination with terms referring to various parts of the body. Like kal-karai (kal=leg) and Kaik-karai (kai-arm). Pathi kharai means a neck-ring which often carried the tali (marriage badge).
18. **POTTU** : Its exact meaning is not clear but it seems certain that it was worn by women (and female deities) over the arm.
19. **SIDUKKU** :The meaning of the term sidukku is not clear nor do we know on what part of the body it was worn. It seems however, that it was an ornament worn only by women.
20. **SOODAGAM** : It is a bracelet of pearls. The term soodagam is perhaps derived from the Sanskrit word Chudika or Chuda meaning a bangle. They were perhaps pearl bangles or bejeweled bangles corresponding to the modern muttu or Vayira-Valayal (pearl or diamond bangles).
21. **SRI BAHU-VALAYAM** : This ornament was a popular one among the Cholas and from the description in the grants given to temples are know that it was a golden armlet with front plates and clasps studded with precious stones. In one description, we find that lac was used for cementing the stones and thread for trying the piece over arm.
22. **SRI CHHANDAM** : This is a bejeweled gold ornament with crystals, diamonds crystals, pottis and pearls.
23. **SRI PADA-SAYAALAM** : Sayalam was an ornament heavy in nature and worn on the feet. Evidently it was worn by women only.

24. SURI : It is an ornament with a screw base. One comes across a number of instances of Rudraksha ponnin suri, a screw of gold fixed in a rudraksha.
25. SUTTI : This is a gold forehead plate.
26. TALI : This is a pendent worn by married women as a sign of their being sumangali (i.e. being with husband);it is also known as Mangalyam or tiru mangalayam.
27. TALI-MANI-VADAM : This is a chain or string (vadam) of bead (mani) meant to have the tali (marriage badge) fixed on it.
28. TALK-VADAM : This again is a type of necklace and has been referred to in connection with a necklace of rudraksha.
29. TAGAADU : As the name implies, it is a plate or sheet, perhaps a strip, worn as an ear-ornament (kudambai).
30. TIRU-CH-CHAMA-VADAM : It exact meaning is not clear but it is mentioned in the context of a suspended chain or loop attached to a face plate or forehead plate.
31. TIRU OR TIRUGU : This term means a screw or spiral and the ornament is known as such Generally, a circular bejeweled disc like ornament is screwed on to a ring or necklace or chain. Even now an ornament that is crewed on to the hair is called tirugup-pu meaning a flower with a spiral or screw.
32. TIRUK-KAL-KARAI : This does not seem to be different from tiru-vadki-karai, if different, perhaps it refers to anklets as distinct from foot ring, worn on feet.
33. TIRUK-KAL-VADAM : It is a chain (or string) round the leg or foot and best translated as foot ring.

34. TIRUK-KAIK-KARAI : This is best translated as a sacred arm-ring (OR ARM PLATE) and was a very popular item of jewellery.
35. TIRUK-KAMBAI ; This is an ear-ornament in the shape of a ring or wire.
36. TIRU-MAKARAM : This is an ear-ornament shaped like a makara (crocodile). Generally only one ear was adorned with tiru-makaram and the other with "Olai or tagaadu".
37. TIRU-MALAI : This is a sacred garland, very often hanger down low (kil-niyadathi); large number of pearls of various varieties were string on it.
38. TIRUK-VADIK-KARAI : This is an ornament similar to the tiruk-kaik-karai, but worn on the feet and may be described as a foot-band or foot ring.
39. TIRU-VADI-MILAI : This is a bejeweled wooden foot wear generally in form of closed shoes.
40. TIRU VALI, VALI AND VADIYA VAALI : Vali is an earring whose exact features are not known; Vadugavali is such an earring perhaps fashioned in the Telugu style. Vaduga refers to the country north of Choladesa and Tondaimandalam generally meaning the Telugu or Andhra country. In this region the ear lobe is artificially enlarged so as to accommodate such ear ornament as olai, and such an ear is referred to as Vadugakkodu (a Telugu ear), presumably because of the prevalence of this practice of enlarging the ear lobes to accommodate by ornaments inn the Telugu speaking country a practice which prevails even now in the Tamil & Telugu speaking regions in certain area.

41. TODU : This evidently had the same connotation then as now and referred to a stone-studded ear-ornament. It could also be of gold without being set with precious or semi-precious stones. This was an ornament worn by both male & female deities.
42. TUKKAM : This is a pendant.
43. TURUTTU : This is evidently an ornament, but we do not know what the term means and of what shape the ornament was.
44. TRISARAM : As the name implies, this is also a necklace, but with three strands or strings.
45. UDARA-BANDHA : This is a waist band, or more literally a belly band as it went round the torso above the navel and below the nipples.
46. VIRA-PATTA : This is an ornamented and bejeweled diadem or tiara worn on the head as a symbol of royalty or divinity and consisted of a narrow strip of gold.

Courtesy : B. Venkataraman, *Rajarajesvaram Temple : A Pinnacle of Chola Art*, Faridabad (Haryana) Thomson Pres, 1976.

Appendix - 2

Table 1

Temple functionaries and their Remuneration by Land

No.	Recipient	Amount received in land
1.	Ketis setti(?)	12 Matters
2.	Drummers	10 Matters
3.	Musicians	6 Matters
4.	10 Temple girls	4-5 Matters each
5.	Dance Master	5 Matters
6.	Steward of Temple Girl	5 Matters
7.	Keeper of Temple Girl	5 Matters
8.	Manager of the Estate	6 Matters

Adopted from Aloka Paresher Seen (ed) Social and Economic History of Early Deccan, p. 250.

Table 2

Temple functionaries and their Remuneration by Paddy

No.	Recipient	Amount received in land
1.	400 temple girls	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
2.	Drummer	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
3.	Carpenter	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
4.	Brazier	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
5.	Washerman	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
6.	Barber (Navisan)	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
7.	Astrologer	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
8.	Tailor	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)

9.	Superintendent of Gold Smith	One share (100 Kalam of Paddy)
10.	Potter of sacred kitchen	One share 11.
11.	Lamp lighter	One share
12.	Holder of Sacred Parasol	One Share
13.	Dance Master	Two share
14.	Chief Accountant	Two share
15.	Chief Musician	Two share
16.	Supervisor of Temple women	
	And female Musician	Two share
17.	Singer in Sanskrit	One and half share
18.	Singer in Tamil	One and half share
19.	Jewel sticher	One and half share
20.	Master carpenter	One and half share
21.	Instrumentalist	Three fourth share
22.	Velaikkarar	Three fourth share
23.	Anukkar	Three fourth share
24.	Padaikkarar	Three fourth share
25.	Sub accountant	Three fourth share
26.	Drummer under a leader	Half share
27.	Water sprinkler	Half Share
28.	Assistant Potter	Half share
29.	Assistant lamp lighter	Half share
30.	Helper to hold sacred parasol	Two fifth share

Adopted from S. Chandni Bi article "Female functionaries of Medieval South Indian Temple" Journal of Indian History and Culture, Twelfth Issue, Sept. 2005.

APPENDIX-3

Chart-1

GRANTS BY WOMEN – LAND

S. No.	Donar	Status	Donee Temple	Particular of land Grants	Service Instituted	Date of Inscription	Source
1.	-	Nurse of Chola king Parantaka (I)	Apatsahayesvara temple	Gift of land	-	31 st year Parantaka (I)	129/1895
2.	A resident of I[ga]naiyur	-	Adhipurisvara temple	Sale land to Sattan Iramadeviyar, maid of the king	To maintain 12 devadiyar in temple to serve (?) the goddess Gauri	26 th year Rajendra Chola	153/1912
3.	-	Nurse of Kannaradeva	Tiruvaiyaru temple	Gift of land	For a lamp	16 th year of Rajadhiraja	251/1894
4.	Kandan-Chatthi	d/o Alindul kandan	Agnisvara temple	Sale of land made tax free	For a lamp	7 th year of Rajakesariverma	147/1936
5.	Bhumalvi	d/o Chieftain	Oppilamanisvara temple	Reclaimed some lands and made gift of them	For mid night service of God	21 st year of Kulottunga Chola	116/1934
6.	Brahman lady	-	Ranganathasvamin temple	Gift of land	As tiruvedayattan to god Alagiyamanavala Perumal	37 th year of Rajaraja	34/1936
7.	- do -	-	Korangunatha temple	Gift of a garden	-	30 th year of Parantaka I	590/04
8.	Two sisters	Dancing girls	Munkudusvam temple	Gift of land	To set up the image of Kshetra pala	13 th year of Kulottunga I	345/1911

35.	-	Woman servant attached to the Karralippirathiyar velam	Nagesvara temple	Sale of land	For maintenance of a person who was to supply a pot of water from Kaveri river thrice every day for the sacred bath of the God	5 th year of Uttamachola	234/1911
36.	Brahman lady	-	Siddharatnesvara temple	Gift of land and houses	To the temple	5 th year of Rajadhiraja II	494/1912
37.	Alaguja perumal	Mistress of chief of Kiliyur	Jambunatha temple	Gift of land	For meeting the requirement of worship on the day of festival	24 th year of Kulottunga I	87/1906
38.	Megan karunaiyali	w/o headman of Kurugadi	- do -	Gift of land	For kitchen construction, and to meet the expenses of a festival in Purattadi month	4 th year of Kulottunga I	99/1906
39.	-	-	Haralokesvari temple	Gift of land	For feeding devaradiyar, Sivayogins and tapasvins in the matha called Elunuruvan tirumadam	4 th year of Kulottunga I	179/1914
40.	Mogan Andatiru	w/o Virrirundar Panchanedi	Vatanunlesvarasva mi temple	Give away land belong to her husband and brother after their death	For the expenses of providing unguents to the image of Tiruvalanadurai Udaiyar Nayanar	5 th year of Rajadhirajadeva	258/1926

41.	-	Talaikkoli	Mahalingasvami temple	7 ma of land granted	-	Date lost, Parantaka I	223/1907
42.	Vannan Manrulla diwan	-	Brahmapurisvara temple	6 ma of land	For burning a lamp in the temple	9 th year of Kuloottunga III	63/1906
43.	A lady	Dancing girl	Vaidyanatha temple	Gift of land	For her services in temple	-	26/1920
44.	Tiruvengana Nachchi	-	Siva temple	Grant of land	-	-	232/1906
45.	Arijigai	Queen	Panchanadesvara temple	Gift of land	For feeding a Brahman with sumptuous meal daily in temple	40 th year of Madurai konda Parakesarivermi	144/1918
46.	A lady	-	Kondandarama Perumal temple	4 padagam of temple land	Brought under cultivation for providing offering to god Tiru-Ayoddi perumal	7 th year of Vikramachola	391/1922
47.	Sembiyan Mahadevi	Queen	Masilamanisvarar temple	9300 kali of land for 80 kalanjus of gold	Made a gift it to the temple	14 regnal year of Uttama Chola	669/1904
48.	- do -	- do -	Cholisvarar temple	Gift of land	For offerings to the deity for maintaining 25 brahmans who recited Vedas in temple	2 nd year of Rajaraja I	156/1908
49.	- do -	- do -	Siddhanathasvamin	6 velis of land gifted	The income from which was to defray the expenses on rice for sacred offerings,	-	159/1908

50.	- do -	- do -	Udvahanathasvami temple	14 velis of land was gifted	vegetables, ghee, arecanuts, plantains, sugar, milk curd, fried paddy and maintenance of priest	2 nd year of Rajaraja I	- do -
51	-	-	Panchamadesvara temple	Gift of land	Out of the income whereof paddy is allotted for several items of expenditure viz. 4 lamps, ghee, vegetable, betels and nut, ten Uvachchars, four singers, gardeners and sweepers of temple premises and maintenance of temple priest and servants.	For a lamp	17 th year Raja dhraja 245/1894

Chart - II

GRANTS BY WOMEN - LIVESTOCKS

S. No.	DONAR	STATUS	DONNE TEMPLE	DETAILS OF LIVESTOCK				REMARKS	DATE OF INSCRIPTION	SOURCE
				COWS	EVES/ RAM	SHEEP	BULL			
1.	Sembiyan Madevi	Queen	Ujjivanathar temple			90		For a perpetual lamp	10 th yr. of Prantaka I	470/1908
2.	Sembiyan Mahadevi	Queen	Ujjivanathar temple		90 eves			For daily supply of one Ulakku of ghee for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp	34 yr of Prantaka I	96/1829
3.	Sembiyan Mahadevi	Queen	Anantis varasamin temple		1 ram	96		For a lamp	2 nd year of Uttamachola	540/1920
4.	Sembiyan Mahadevi and Viranarayaniyar	Both queens of Gandaradittar	Tirumadapparai Mahadevar temple			96		For a perpetual lamp	-	220,21 1936-37
5.	Nakkan Vichchiyabam	Daughter of Devanar of village	Odenavanesvara temple			45		For milk, ghee & curd for the sacred bath of God on Sankaranti day every month	23 rd of Madiralkonda Parakesarivar man	122/30-31
6.	-	Women servant attached to royal kitchen at Tanjavur	Udvahanathasva min temple			96		For a lamp, of a lamp stand and of the stone on which this inscription have been engraved	4 th year of Parakesari varman	11/1914

7.	Tiran Sattividange	Palace woman	Naganathasva min temple				48	For half a lamp for the daughter of donar named Araiyar Ultamadam resident of Udaiyar Anai merrunjinar velam	8 th year of Rajendra Chola I	212/1911
8.	Chittrakomalam	Female servant of Kokkilanadigal the mother of Raja dityadeva	Bhaktajinesvara shrine at Tirunamanallur				90	For a lamp	28 th year of Uttam Chola	335/1902
9.	-	Maid servant of the king	Vishnu temple				90	For a lamp	23 rd year of Rajaraja	11/1919
10.	-	Maid servant of Atti alias kevalan takanallur	Vedapurisvara temple	Cows no. not given				For a lamp	15 th year of Rajaraja	83/1939-40
11.	-	Kitchen maid of the palace at Tanjavur	Udvahanattasva mi temple				96	For a perpetual lamp in the temple of Paramasvami	4 th year of Uttama Chola	11/1914
12.	Paluran Porsa [marai]	Maid servant of the royal harem of Queen Kilanadigal at Tanjavur	Sarangnatha perumal				90	For a perpetual lamp with an ulakku of ghee everyday in the temple of Tirumattirukkoyil Perumal	-	139/1932
13.	Children [makal] of Kari-Satti	Servent of queen	Vedaranyesvara temple				90	For burning a perpetual lamp to the deity with one Ulakku of ghee	Parantaka I (949-50 AD)	488/1904

14.	Aiywaran-Devi yanar	Maid servants of the princess	Manikyesvarasa vamin temple			No. not given		daily	For a lamp	19 th year of Rajaraja	20/1919
15.	Nakkan Kenjan	-	Vaidyanatha temple			90			For burning a perpetual lamp	5 th of Prakesarivar man	3/1920
16.	-	Servant of queen	Svetaranyesvara temple			No. not given			For a lamp	4 th year of Rajendra chola	463/18
17.	Chaturan Chaturi	Dancing girl	Adhipurisvara temple			95			For a perpetual lamp to the temple of Tiruvorriyur Mahadevi	31 st Year of Rajadhirajadeva	147/1912
18	-	Daughter of an officer of Yadavarayar	Arunachalisvara temple			120			-	18 th year of Rajarajadeva	494/1902
19	Pancharan mahadevi	Chola Queen	Vishnu temple			120			For a lamp	Lost	338/06
20	-	Dancing girl	Mahalinga svamin temple		1				For a lamp	7 th year of Vikrama chola	299/1907
21	-	Daughter of Miladudaiyar	Lakshmi Narasimha Perumal temple			100			For a lamp	28 th year of Uttama chola	279/1902
22.	Tyagasundari	Daughter of Nulambar	Vaidyanatha temple			90			For a lamp	4 th year of Kulottuga II	84/1920
23.	Karpagan Rajendra Soliyar	Wife of royal officer	-do-			90			For a perpetual lamp	45 th year of Kulottuga I	80/1895
24.	A. Lady	-	-do-		2 rams	180			For two lamps to the Lord Tirumaluvadi udaiyar	15 th year of Kulottuga II	83/1895
25.	Malaiyavvai deviyar	Queen	Vridragirisvara temple			90			For a lamp and a lamp stand	7 th year of Rajaraja	49/1918

26.	Arunan Ambala ttadigal	-	Svataranyesvara temple		90		For a lamp	10 th year of Parakasari varman	485/1918
27.	Ariyan Nambanangai	Mother of the queen Trailok yamudaiyar	-do-		No. not given		For two lamps	34 th year of Rajadhiraja deva	446/1918
28.	Vanavamadevi yar	Daughter of Rajasimha the Pandya king	Devanayakap Perumal temple		96		For burning a lamp	31 st year of Parantaka I	92/1995- 96
29.	A Lady	-	Sundaravarada Perumal temple		96		For a lamp	26 th year of Rajaraja	190/1923
30.	-do-	-	Arulala Perumal temple	1			For half lamp	23 rd year of Rajaraja	388/1919
31.	A Lady	-	Tiruvallisvara temple	No. not given			For a lamp	20 th year of Kulottuga III	249/1912
32.	Marandaikkalam	-	Sivayoganatha temple		28		For burning a perpetual lamp for merit of her brother	11 year of Rajakasari vaman	45/95-96
33.	Name lost	-	Ramanathesvaram temple	32			For burning a perpetual lamp	10 th year of Kulottunga	164/1995- 96
34.	-	A devaradiyal	Mahalingasvami temple	1			5 nali milk to temple	7 th year of Vikrama Chola	299/1907
35.	-	-do-	Kripaparisvara temple	4			For daily supply of milk for gods both	17 year of Rajaraja	478/21
36.	-	-do-	Brahmapurisvara temple	32		1	For a perpetual lamp	5 th year of Kulottunga	173/1918
37	-	-	Devanayakapper umal temple		96		For supply one ulakku of ghee daily for burning a lamp	31 regnal year of Prantaka I	90/1995- 96

38.	A Lady	-		Somnathesvara temple			No. not given	For a perpetual lamp	24 th year of Rajaraja	386/1929-30
39.	Name lost	-		Chokkanatha temple			-do-	-do-	23 rd year of Kulottuga chola	201/1928-29
40.	A Lady	-	1	Mahalingasvamin temple				For a lamp	7 th year of Vikrama chola	298/07
41	A Lady	Vellala		Somnathesvara temple			-do-	For a perpetual lamp	27 th year of Rajaraja	397/29-30
42.	Sembiyan Mita dudaiyar	Queen		Virattanesvara kilur shrine			192	For two lamps	2 nd year of Parantaka I	271/1902
43.	Nakkan Arumoli alias Pridimadevi yar	Queen		Ujivanatrasvamin temple			90	For a lamp to the temple of Vilumuyar at Karkudi	27 th year of Rajaraja I	455/08
44.	-	Queen		Bhaktynesvara shrine			100	For a lamp	-	338/02
45.	-	Queen of Katti Arasar	32	Arunachalesvara temple				-do-	31 st year of Rajaraja	511/02
46.	Tiruvaranyam	Wife of Si [vagiyan] of the village		Pasupatisvara temple			12	For twilight lamp	28 th year of Kulottuga Chola	134/33-34
47.	A Brahman lady	Wife of alunganttar of the village		Dandisvara temple			90	For a lamp	6 th year of Parakesariverman	302/11
48.	Manjari sendi	Wife of resident of Vayalur		Agastysvara temple			No. not given	For a lamp	8 th year of Rajakesari	397/39-40
49.	A lady	Queen of Prince of Rajaditiyadeva		Bhaktajanesvara shrine			100	For a lamp	39 th year of Parakesarivan	363/02

50.	Sedi....	W/o an officer	Agatsahayesvara temple			No. not given		For a perpetual lamp	11 th year of Parakesari varman	151/27-28
51.	A lady	-	Odenavanesvara temple			-do-		For bathing the god with ghee on the days of Sankranti	1 st year of Parakesariverman	170/30-31
52.	Kalanga sundar	d/o royal officer	Odenavanesvara temple	-		No. not given		-	5 th year of Virarajendra	127/30
53	-	Queen of Vikrama Chola	Virattanesvara temple			-do-		For a lamp	5 th year of Rajakesarivarman	7/05
54.	-	-	Vedaranjiesvara temple			90		For a lamp	3 rd year of Rajaraja	466/1904
55.	-	-	Nagesvara temple			96		- do -	8 th year of Rajendradeva	234/1911
56.	A lady	-	Anantisvara temple		1 ram	96		For a perpetual lamp in temple	2 nd year of Vikrama chola	537/1920
57.	-do-	Maid servant of queen household	Saranganatha perumal temple			No. not given		For a lamp in the temple	5 th year of Rajaraja	139/1932

Chart – III

GRANTS BY WOMEN – MONEY AND ORNAMENTS

S. No.	Donar	Status	Donee Temple	Particular of Grants		Service Instituted	Date of Inscription	Source
				Money	Ornaments			
1.	Sembiyan Mahadevi	Queen	Ujivanattiar temple		A costly bejeweled crown	-	10 th year of Rajaraja I	95/1892
2.	Lokamahadevi	- do -	Kapardisvara temple		Ornaments	To the temple built by king	25 th year of Rajaraja I	633/1902
3.	A lady	w/o a merchant	Vaidyanatha temple	-	-do-	To the image of Vichchesvara set up by the Chief	13 th year of Kulottuga chola	17/1903
4.	-	Dancing girl of the Tirivegamban Udaiyar temple	Abhiramesvara temple	-	Jewels, vessels	To burn a twilight lamp for the merit of her deceased daughter	- do -	47/1922
5.	A lady	Brahman	Vaidyanatha temple	-	Gold ornaments set with jewels and a gold flower	-	17 th year of Rajendra chola	69/1920
6.	-	Dancing girl of the temple	Siddhanathesvara temple	-	Gold jewels	To the temple	5 th year of Virarajendra	522/1912
7.	-	- do -	Tiruvallisara temple	-	No. of jewels and vessels	Presented to God and Goddess of the temple	3 rd year of (?)	217/10
8.	A lady	w/o Vanokadaiyar	Umamahesvara temple		Gold ornaments and silver bugle	To the temple	11 th year of Rajendra chola	643/1909
9.	-	King's mother	Sivayoganathesva min temple		Ornament	-	15 th year of (?)	28/1907

10.	-	Queen of Pandya king Sri valluvar	- do -		- do -				3 rd year of Rajendra Chola	46/1907
11.	-	Queen (?)	- do -		Silver pot				- do -	340/1907
12.	-	Queen of Sadium Perumal	Arunachalesvara temple		Vessels & ornaments				31 st year of Rajaraja	488(a)/02
13.	Alagiyanchchi Alvi	Lady of king's velam	Muruganatha temple		Money (?)				14 th year of Vikrama Chola	126/1915
14.	-	Pendatti of Uyyakkonelan terinalatiru manjanattar velam	Pipalikesvara temple		- do -				5 th year of Rajendra deva	121/1914
15.	Anukki Sattian Rannadevi	Maid servant of royal household	Tiriviliattanesvara temple		100 kasu				9 th year of Rajendra Chola deva	401/1921
16.	-	Dancing girl	Muruganatha temple		Money				29+3 rd year of Virarajendra deva	111/1915
17.	A lady	-	Punyaanathesvamin temple		40 kasu				9 th year of Kulottunga Chola	25/1918
18.	Nakhuandai	-	Ranganathesvamin temple		Money				Rajaraja III (?)	71/1936-37
19.	Deviyar somala deviya	Queen	- do -		100,000 kasu, 50,000 kasu, 25,000 kasu, 20,000 kasu, 3000 kasu				21 st year of Rajaraja III	72/1936-37

20.	A lady	-	Vaidyanatha temple	100 kasu		For a perpetual lamp	16 th year of Rajendra Chola	78/1895
21.	- do -	Queen of Kulottunga	Ranganathasvamin temple	Money		For bringing land	15 th year of Kulottunga I	125/1942
22.	- do -	-	Sauviraja Perumal temple	- do -		For burning a twilight lamp	5 th year of Rajaraja	520/1922
23.	- do -	Maid servant of queen Elulagar Udaiyar	Shiva temple	5 kasu		For burning a perpetual lamp	48 th year of Kulottunga Chola	274/27
24.	3 ladies	One of whom was the wife of Rajaraj's officers	Amavanesvara temple	Money		For lamp in temple	27 th year of Raja raja	294/17
25.	A lady	w/o an officer	Madhyanesvara temple	- do -		For building shrine	61 st year of Rajaraja	28/1914
26.	2 laides	Wife & daughter of village headman	Svayanbhanathasva min temple	1500 kasu	-	-	3 rd year of Rajaraja	212/1917
27.	Tiruviranisvaram Pichchi	Mother of saint Muttari Adavallan	Ramanathesvara temple	4 kasu		For 3 twilight lamps	24 th year of Rajendra I	159/1995-96
28.	-	Dancing girl of Arumolideva valanadu	Punyanathasvami temple	Money		For a lamp	19 th year of Rajaraja	16/1918-19
29.	Duggai Nirerral alias Vikraman kulamanikkam	Devaradiyar	Gramardhemattra temple	15 kasu		For a twilight lamp	2nd year of Kulottunga Chola	147/1906
30.	-	Dancing girl of the temple	Bilvanathesvara temple	30 kasu		For a lamp	11 th year of Kulottunga II	50/1914
31.	A lady	w/o a merchant of Tanjavur	Matsyapurisvera temple	20 kasu		For a lamp	4 th year of (?)	246/1923
32.	A lady	-	Marundisvara temple	Money		For a lamp for the merit of her sons	26 th year of Rajaraja III	470/1912
33.	Two ladies	-	Sauriraja Perumal temple	-do-		For a lamp	(?) Rajendra Chola	518/1922

34.	A lady	-	-do-	1,000 kasu		-do-	Rajaraja I 5+1 year	500/22
35.	3 ladies	Dancing girl, her sister and daughter	Kachchisvara temple	12 Kasu and 2 lamp stand			6 th year of Rajadhiraja	60/1921
36.	Periyanchchi alias Narpattenn aiyira manikkam	-	Kailasanatta temple	300 kasu			38 th year of Kulottunga III	473/1907
37.	Vikiramabasani	Royal female servant	Brihadisvara temple	12 kasu			4 th year of Aditya II	574/1970
38.	-	Temple women	Devanayakasvamin temple	Money			34 th year of Rajaraja	235/1910
39.	A lady	-	Agnisvara temple	Money			11 th year of Rajaraja	145/1936
40.	-	Dancing girl	Tiruppalesvar temple	-do-			5 th year of Virarajendra	344/1928-29
41.	A lady	-	Cholisvara temple	Money			15 th year of Rajaraja	64/1947-48
42.	-	Devaradiyar	Tirumarapap Perumal temple	-do-			14 th year of Rajaraja	179/1929-30
43.	2 ladies	Dancing girls	Munludumivara temple	-do-			15 th year of Rajaraja	336/1911
44.	A lady	w/o a merchant of Avaninarayana puram	Siddhanathesvamin temple	One kasu			5 th year of Vikramachola	180/1908
45.	A lady	w/o an officer	Tirthapurisvara temple	8 kasu			2 nd year of Vikram chola	229/1928
46.	-do-	d/o an officer	- do-	8 palam kasu			15 th year of Rajaraja	310/1928

47.	Kodaiyandalsani	w/o a Brahman	Trivikrama temple	30 kasu		For burning a lamp	10 th year of Kulottunga	245/1934
48.	-	w/o Rajaraja Nilagan garaiyur	Kachchnapesvara temple	Money		- do -	- do -	271/1909
49.	Sadiri	d/o royal official	Vijaghrapadesvara temple	- do - lamp stand and 3 vessels of bell metal		- do -	3 rd year of Vikrama chola	378/1909
50.	A lady	w/o village headman	Ramanathesvara temple	Money		- do -	3 rd year of Rajake sariverman	148/1911
51.	Brahman lady	-	Agastgesvara temple	-do-		To the temple	6 th year of (?)	35/1945-46
52.	-do -	-	Varaha-Perumal temple	-do-		-	27 th year of Kulothunga I	278/1910
53.	Nangai Sattaperumanar	Mistress of Chola king (?)	Pushpavanesvara temple	30 pon		For a lamp	11 th year of Rajakesari verman	105/30-31
54.	Kavidi siru daikkalali	Lady belonging to bathing establishment of the king, his mother and sister	Sakastrisvara temple	Money		For 15 lamp in temple	12 th year of Rajendra Chola	149/1931
55.	A lady	Female servant of Varagurkottan Udaiyar	Vyaghrapadesvara temple	-do-		For 2 lamps	7 th year of Rajaraja I	422/1909
56.	A lady	-	Trivikrama temple	300 kasu		For a twilight lamp in temple	26 th year of Kulottunga Chola	248/1934
57.	A Brahman lady	-	Agastyesvara temple	Money		For burning a lamp	5 th year of Rajendra Chola	31/1945

58.	-do-	-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	30/1945
59.	-	Queen of Rajaraja	Kanyakumari temple		A string of rubres	-	112/1895
60.	-	-	Vagisvara temple		Gold ornaments	-	5901893
61.	-	-	Panchanadesvara temple		Gift of ornament and vessels	-	222/1894

Chart – IV

GRANTS BY WOMEN – GOLD

S. No.	Donar	Status	Donee Temple	Particular of Grants	Service Instituted	Date of Inscription	Source
1.	A Lady	-	Odanesvara temple	25 Kalanju	For burning a perpetual lamp	13 th year of Rajaraja	176/30
2.	A Lady	Pendatti of tiru manjanattar velam	Brihadisvara temple	Gold	-	-	325/64
3.	Panchavanmadevi	Queen	Mahalingasvamin temple	Gold image of Umasahitar	-	10 th year of Rajaraja	254/07
4.	Uran-Ponnambalan	-	Agnipurisvara temple	2 gold flower & some gold	For burning one twilight lamp	19 th year of Rajaraja	60/1927
5.	A lady	Maid servant of royal kitchen	Ananttisvarasvamin temple	Gold invested on land	For feeding 3 persons daily	37 th year of Rajendra Chola	553/20
6.	Koyil Perral alias Gunavan Madeviyar	Concubine of king	- do -	42½ kalanju of gold	For perpetual lamp, daily mid day offering of god and Bhatta well versed in Veda is to be fed	- do -	594/1920
7.	Diran Tirrali	Women servant of royal palace	- do -	12½ kalanju of gold	For a perpetual lamp	2 nd year of Arinjaya	537/1920
8.	A lady	w/o a chieftain	Lakshmi Navasimha Perumal temple	Gold	For a lamp	5 th year of Rajendra chola	299/1902
9.	Nigarlli-Lokamdevi Perri Ponnambalam	Servant of queen and dancing girl	Kachchisvara temple	-do -	For 2 perpetual lamp	16 th year of Rajendra Chola	73/1921

10.	Nattamai.....	Maid servant of royal bath establishment	Kahiranathesvara temple	Gold	-	4 th year of (?)	510/1926
11.	Nidur karumanikkan	Royal household maid	Manikanthesvara temple	10 Kalanju	For a forehead plate of God	21 st year of Rajendra chola	291/1906
12.	Nakkan Bhattalaki	A songstress attached to the Periya-velam	Ananthesvarasvami temple	12½ kalanju	For 96 shees & a ram for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp	2 nd year of Arinjaya	537/1920
13.	A lady	Maid servant of important royal official	Vilinathsvami temple	Gold	For a lamp	3 rd year of Rajendra	235/38
14.	-	Dancing girl	Kachchisvara temple	- do -	For a twilight lamp	11 th year of Rajadhi rajadeva	66/1921
15.	Sattiperri	- do -	Pasupatisvarasvamin temple	- do -	- do -	17 th year of Virarajendra	163/1920
16.	A lady	- do -	Ramanathesvara temple	10 Kalanju	For burning a perpetual lamp for the merit of king	30 th year of Raja devaraja (I)	162/1995
17.	Two ladies of village	-	Tiruvanantivara temple	Gold	For two twilight lamps	27 th year of Kulottunga	414/1922
18.	A lady	-	Kabambavesvara temple	- do -	For a lamp	16 th year of Rajaraja (II)	391/1913
19.	Kuttadum Nachchi	d/o a devaradiyar	Vachesvara temple	Gold	For gold casing for the feet of the image	18 th year of Rajaraja	107/1929
20.	Ilangon-Pichchi	Queen	-	10 kalanju	For burning a perpetual lamp	27 th year of Aditya I	14/1920
21.	Nakkan Piratamadevi	Daughter of a dancer	Anantivara temple	Gold	For maintaining a perpetual lamp with an ulakhu of ghee every day	11 th year of Uttama Chola	563/1920

22.	Korri	w/o a Brahman named Sankara Narayana Bhatta	- do -	- do -	For 96 sheeps for burning a perpetual lamp in temple for the merit of her husband.	Lost	575/1920
23.	A lady	Female relation of a petty king	Malaikkial temple	- do -	For a lamp	20 th year of Raja Kesariverman	314/1904
24.	-	Queen of Mummudi Chola Perumal	Tirthagirisvara temple	- do -	- do -	4 th year of Parakesa reverman	673/05
25.	Nili	d/o Brahmana	Ananthisvarasvamin temple	- do -	-	38 th year of Madiraikonda Parakesari vermin	547/1920
26.	Tirvadi Irayeri	Maid servant of a queen	Mahavalesvara temple	16 kalanju of Gold	In return for a certain temple land pledge to her by the temple authorities	16 th year of Raja kesariverman	134/1926
27.	-	Maid servant of (?)	Anantisvarasvamin temple	Gold	For a perpetual lamp	2 nd year of Parakesariverman	541/1920
28.	-	Dancing girl of the Tirumerralisvara Alvar temple	Tirumerralisvara temple	7 Kalanju of Gold	For burning a lamp at day time in temple	2 nd year of Raja Kesariverman	130/1995
29.	A lady	-	Agastiyesvara temple	Gold	For burning a perpetual lamp	37 th year of Madiraikonda Parakesari vermin	358/1924
30.	- do -	-	- do -	- do -	- do -	6 th year of Raja kesariverman	364/1924
31.	Pudi Adichcha Piratiyar	Princess	Chandrasekhara temple	Gold	To the temple built by her	3 rd year of Parakesariverman	316/1903

32.	A lady	-	Pasupatisvara temple	- do -	For a perpetual lamp in the temple	14 th year of Parakesarivarman	250/1932
33.	Mullur Nangaiya	Queen's mother	- do -	30 kalanju of gold	For a lamp	3 rd year of Parakesasi vermin	107/1930
34.	Puliyumathi Adigal	Chieftain Queen	Valirthanatha temple	Gold	-do -	10 th year of Parakesari vermin	348/03
35.	Pandiyadiyarrasi	Queen of Pandya king	Melaikkoyil temple	- do -	-	12 th year of (?)	348/04
36.	Aruram Ambalattadigal	Senior queen of Uttama Chola	Vedapurisvara temple	25 kalanju of Gold	- do -	15 th year of Parakesariverman	118/1939
37.	Sembiyan Mahadevi	Queen m/o of Uttama Chola	Udvahanathesvarmin temple	16 Kalanju of Gold	For sandal paste, offerings, cloth and oil for lamps to the Mahadevar of Tirumananjeri	6 th year of Rajaraja I	159/1908
38.	-	Dancing girl of the king	Panchanadisvara temple	Gift of Gold	For a lamp	17 th year of Rajaraja	284/1894
39.	Nangai Sattaperumanar	Concubine of sola Perumanadigal	Ghritastanesvara temple	30 kalanju of gold	For a lamp	14 th year of Raja raja	244/1894
40.	-	Queen of Rajendra Chola	Vaidyanatha temple	Gift of two vessels of Gold and silver	-	19 th year of Rajendra chola	79/1895
41.	-	Dancing girl	Ghritasthanvara temple	Gift of Gold	For a lamp	11 th year of Rajaraja	36/1895
42.	-	-	- do -	- do -	For ornaments	11 th year of Rajaraja	35/1895

Chart – V

GRANTS BY WOMEN – OTHERS

S. No.	Donar	Status	Donee Temple	Particular of land Grants	Service Instituted	Date of Inscription	Source
1.	-	-	Vilvaranyesvara temple	Sale of singing right	To a devaradiyal named Kovanavarkal	9 th year of Kulottunga	144/40-41
2.	-	Tanattar of the temple	- do -	Sale of singing rights of hymns in temple and accompanying the god on food and in car in procession	To two devaradyal for 1½ kalanju	Lost, Kulottunga	143/40-41
3.	Lady (name lost)	-	Agastyesvara temple	Perpetual lamp	-	Lost, Rajaraja	13/45-46
4.	Amuder Perral	Chola Queen	Vishnu temple	Gift of lamp	-	31 st year of Parakesarivarman	303/06
5.	Viranaranyar	Queen of prince	Jambunatha temple	Building of a mandapata the city of Valayur	-	24 th of Parakesarivarman	108/06
6.	Ammangaiyaluar	d/o Choladeva (?)	Brihadisvara temple	2 fly whiskes to diety	8 mari weighted	11 th year of Kulottunga III	321/64-65
7.	Pugaliyalira	d/o Vanaven Madeviyalver	- do -	1 fly whisk	20 pon of 8 mari	- do -	- do -
8.	-	m/o Vikramachola	Virathanewara temple	Contruaction of kitchen	-	4 th year of Kulottunga	285/02
9.	-	-	Vilvaranyesvara temple	Appointment of Bumalvi	As devaradiyar for performing Sakkai on festival and to	24 th year of Kulottunga	160/40-41

10.	-	-	Sishapurisvara temple	Sale of a vellalan and his two daughter	sing Tiruvembai before deity on certain term (lost)	23 rd year of Kulottunga	86/1911
11.	Maraikkattadigal	A female servant of Manjunattan velam	Brihadisvara temple	Gift of a perpetual lamp and 24 kasu for maintaining the same	-	4 th year of Aditya II	579/70-71
12.	Nalayirathan Munnurruvan	-	Agnisvara temple	Gift of 3 women	For singing hymns and for service in the temple	41 st year of Rajaraja	149/36-37
13.	Pichchan Ponnambalan	Female servant - a sakklu kulakalatterinda velam	Brhadisvara temple	Gift of a sandhi lamp	To go Talikkulamuddiya mahadeva	4 th year of Aditya II	583/70-7
14.	Sundai-Udaiyal	w/o a kilavan of Irungalur	Kaluganathesvara temple	Gift of a lamp to God	For the merit of her husband	22 nd year of Rajaraja	49/47-48
15.	Sendan-kari	-	Agnisvara temple	Consecration of the goddess Uma-Bhattaraki	She had adopted the goddess as her daughter and celebrated her marriage with God and provide daily offering by endowing lands which she had obtained as 'Stridhna'	15 th year of Rajendra chola	151/1936
16.	-	Dancing girl	Seshipurisvara	Images set up by	Register certain	35 th year of	94/1911

				temple	her	privileges granted to her by the temple priest	Kulottunga I	
17.	-	Dancing girl		Vyaghrapadesvara temple	Gift of pillar by her	-	14 th year of Rajadhiraja	428/09
18.	Palariyar	-	-do-		Gift of vessels and a lamp stand	On behalf a two dancing girl	35 th year of Rajaraja	416/09
19.	Nunkama Mahadevi	w/o Siddharasan		Ranganathasvami temple	Gift of 12 Bhujabalamadai	For a lamp in temple	19 th year of Kulottunga I	67/36-37
20.	Ottuvar Nayar	S/o a palace maid servant of Pallava n dai		Margasahyesvara temple	Construction of a nritta mandapa in the temple	-	44 th year of Rajaraja	192/1939-40
21.	Semibikula Manikkattar	An anukkiyar of the king		Krittivasesvara temple	Palagaippadai was caused to be made	-	Lost, Kulottunga	328/1911
22.	-	-		- do -	Sale of maid servant to the temple of Kariwatta konda	-	30 th year of Kulottunga	296/1911
23.	-	-		Vedaranyesvara temple	Sale of 5 men and 5 women and their descendants	-	3 rd year of Rajaraja	499/1904
24.	Great Assembly of Kamaravalli chaturvedimangalam	-		Karkotakesvara temple	To sakkai Marayan vikra mosolai gift the land	For performing dance sakkai kuttu thrice on festivals	29 th year of Rajendra Chola	64/1914
25.	-	-		Vyaghrapuriovara temple	Gift of land to a lady	For performing dance called Sandhikuttu during festival in the	14 th year of Vikrama Chola	253/14

26.	Vayalurkilavan Tiruveganban	-	Adipurisvara temple	Gift of 5 women and their descendants	month of Sittirai For husking paddy in the temple	19 th year of Rajaraja III	122/1912
27.	-	-	Uttarapatisvara temple	Sale of 4 women for 700 kasu	As devaradiyar	13 th year of Rajadhiraja	80/1913
28.	Nambanambi Nangai	W/o Vellala residing in Solapandyanalur	Dakshinapurisvara temple	Sale of 15 person comprising herself, her daughter grandson, & children & other for 30 kasa	-	13 th year of Vikrama chola	219/25
29.	-	-	Vedapurisvara temple	Give list of men and women	Sold to temple by service in perpetuity	5+1 year of Kulottunga	74/1925
30.	Arumoli-Nangaiyar	d/o Rajendra Chola I	Vaidyanatha temple	Donated 2 brass lamp stand	To the temple	16 th year of Rajendra Chola	77/1895
31.	Raman Chola Kula Sundariyan	W/o a chieftain	- do -	Gift an ivory cot, a mirror stand, a ghee stand, a brasso lamp. Also donated a land	For daily offering of milk for abhisheka, for tumbai flower garland & for taxes	22 nd year of Rajendra Chola	78B/1895
32.	Vanavan Madevi	w/o Rajendra Chola	- do -	Gift of golden vessel and a silver pot to God	-	19 th year of Rajendra Chola	79/1895
33.	Kettamaladeviyar	w/o Pillayar Ganda gopalan	Arulala-Perumal temple	Gift of one lamp stand and cows	For a perpetual lamp	10 th year of Rajaraja	514/1919
34.	Ologanadeviyar	w/o Rajaraja	Panchanadisvara temple	Gift of 7 lamps of various sizes	To the deity Ologama hadevi	3 rd year of Rajendra I	110/95-96

35.	Solamadeviyar	-	Vaidyanatha temple	& fineses	Gift of a silver sever for betel offering to the temple	Isvaram	To the temple	10 th year of Parantaka I	1/1920			
36.	A lady and her 2 daughters	-	Adavallesvara temple		Gift of 3 lamps	To the temple	To the temple	18 th year of Rajaraja	55/1919			
37.	-	Dancing girl	Tiruvirattanesvara temple		Gift of a lampstand and certain bell metals utensils	To the temple	To the temple	3 rd year of Kulottunga	56/1921			
38.	-	d/o servant of Rajaraja	Vedapursivara temple		Gift of six nail of ghee	For burning a lamp in temple in the month of Kartigai every year	For burning a lamp in temple in the month of Kartigai every year	25 th year of Rajaraja	519/1921			
39.	Salamadeviyar	Queen	Vaidyanatha temple		Gift of silver vessel weighing 5 palam	For offering betel nut to god	For offering betel nut to god	10 th year of Parantaka I	1/1920			
40.	Korriyanmai	-	Punyanathesvamin temple		Gift of 28 kalam of Paddy	For feeding the dancing girl during Sitirai festival	For feeding the dancing girl during Sitirai festival	9 th year of Rajendra Chola	29/1918			
41.	-	Dancing girl	Vishnu temple		Gift of vessels	For sacred bath of the god	For sacred bath of the god	5 th year of Rajendradeva	16/1919			
42.	Umaiylvi	Dancing girl of the temple Togumani Nayanar	Siddrenatnesvara temple		Construction of shrine & Prakara wall	-	-	Lost	504/1912			
43.	Panchavan Madevi	Queen	Vaidyanatha temple		Gift of silver armour and 30 kasu	For 3 sacred baths of god and for one perpetual lamp	For 3 sacred baths of god and for one perpetual lamp	25 th year of Rajendra Chola	70/1920			
44.	Sembiyan Mahadevi	m/o Uttama Chola	Matsyapurisvara temple		Gift of a silver plate and bronze	On behalf of her son	On behalf of her son	9 th year of Rajaraja	262/1923			

45.	- do -	- do -	- do -	stand Gift of gold pot	- do -	12 th year of Rajaraja	263/1923
46.	-	-	Muruganatha temple	Assignment of certain privileges and service in the temple	To three dancing girls	Lost, Vikram chola	92/1915
47.	Aynathirunruva Manikkam	Dancing girl	Sundaravarada Perumal temple	Construction of outer prakara wall, the abhisheka mandapa of the shrine, daily gift of one kurmi of rice.	For her prosperity	38 th year of Rajaraja	172/1923
48.	-	-	Panchanadesvara temple	Gift of a lamp	In the temple	21 st year of Uttama Chola	223/1894
49.	-	Princess	Vaidyanatna temple	- do -	-	45 year of Kulottunga I	80/1895
50.	-	Queen of Rajaraja	Kanyakumari temple	Gift of a golden bowl	-	20th year of Rajaraja	111/1895
51.	-	Mother of queen	- do -	Gift of a lamp	-	28 th year of Rajaraja	117 / 1896

Appendix - 4

TABLE 1

DONATIONS MADE BY THE NON-EARNING WOMEN

Different strata of women	Land	Money	Gold	Livestocks	Utensil	Food/Lamp	Ornament	Images	Privileges	Women
Brahman ladies	6	4	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Women of Royal officials	3	5	6	9	-	3	-	-	-	1
Royal women	17	1	13	20	8	3/5	12	1	-	-
Others	8	6	9	11	-	-/4	1	-	2	6

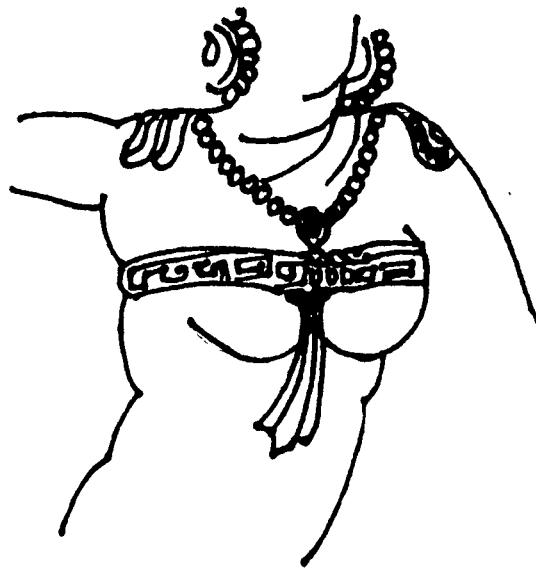
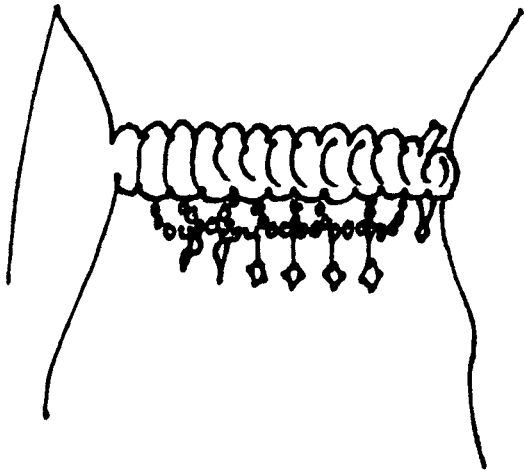
TABLE 2

DONATIONS MADE BY THE SELF-EARNING WOMEN

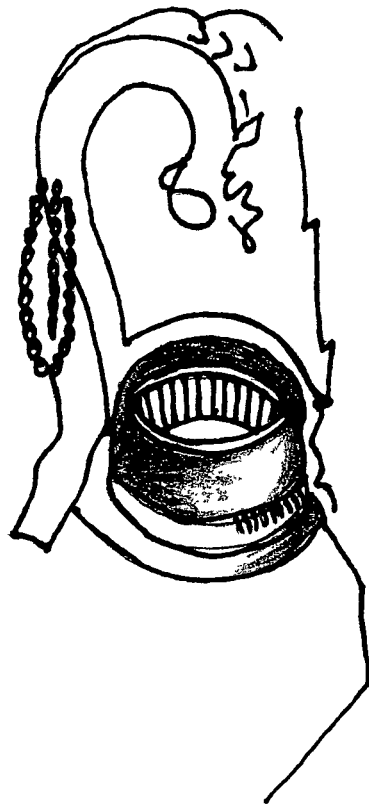
Different strata of women	Land	Money	Gold	Livestocks	Utensil	Food/Lamp	Ornament	Images	Privileges	Women
Dancing girls	10	8	4	5	4	3	4	3	6	-
Women servants of Temple	5	4	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	3
Women servant of Royal establishment	12	9	11	13	-	1/3	-	-	-	-

Pictures

Waist-band with pearl strings, clusters & Sarris



Kucha-bandha or breast band

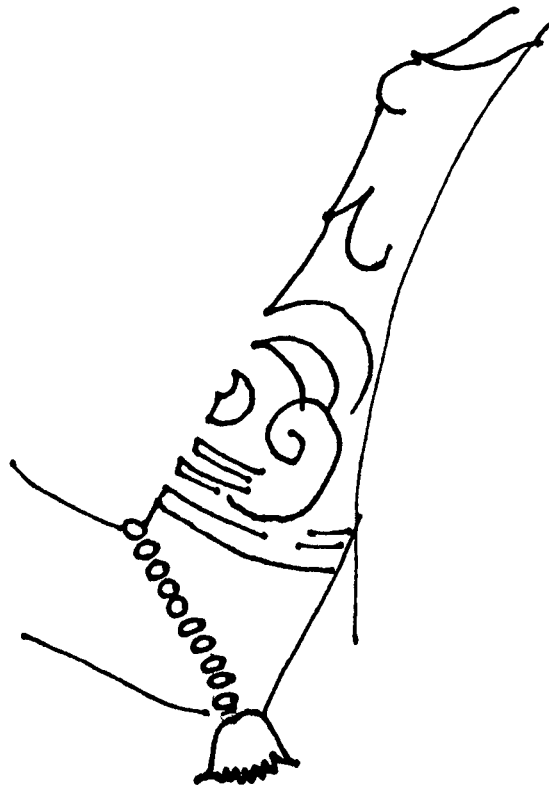
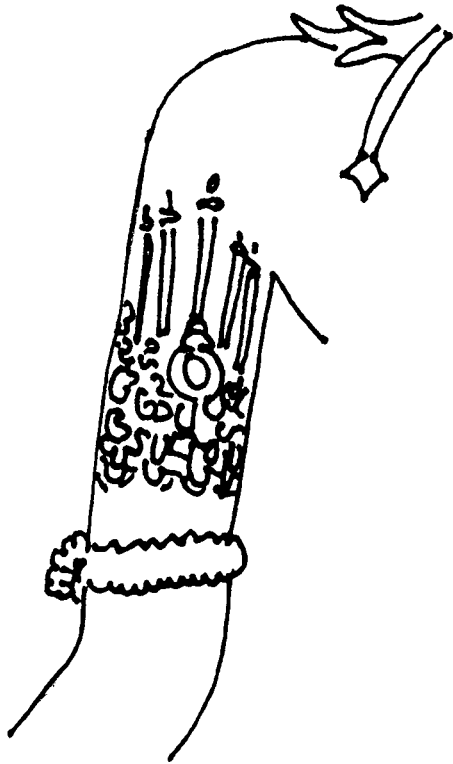


Ōlai (ox plate ear-ornament)



Kirita, makara-kundala, necklaces.

Pottu and Vajibandha

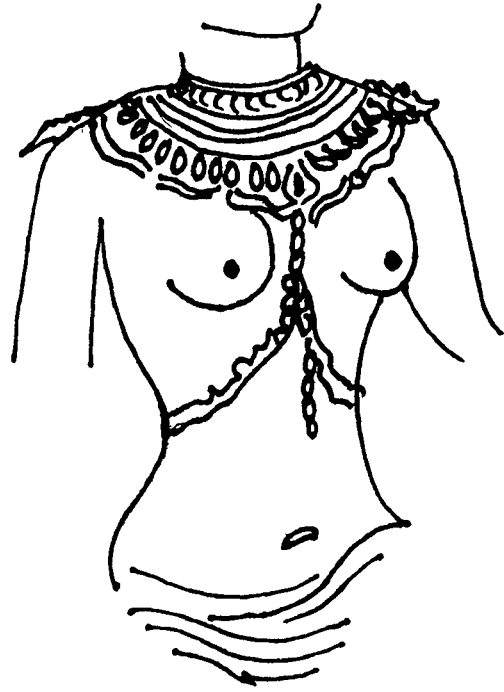




Pottu

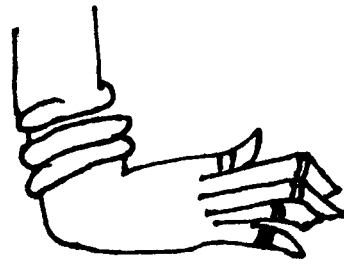
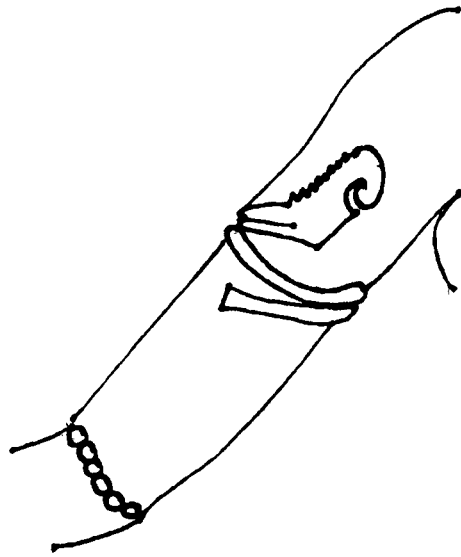


Pottu

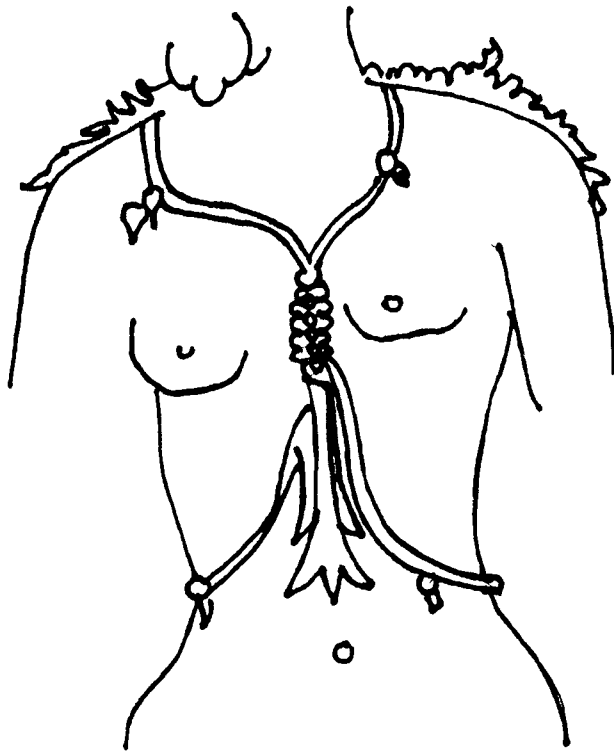


Vaikakshaka with chest and shoulder
ornamentation

Pottu and Vajibandha (Simpler design)



Finger rings and katakas

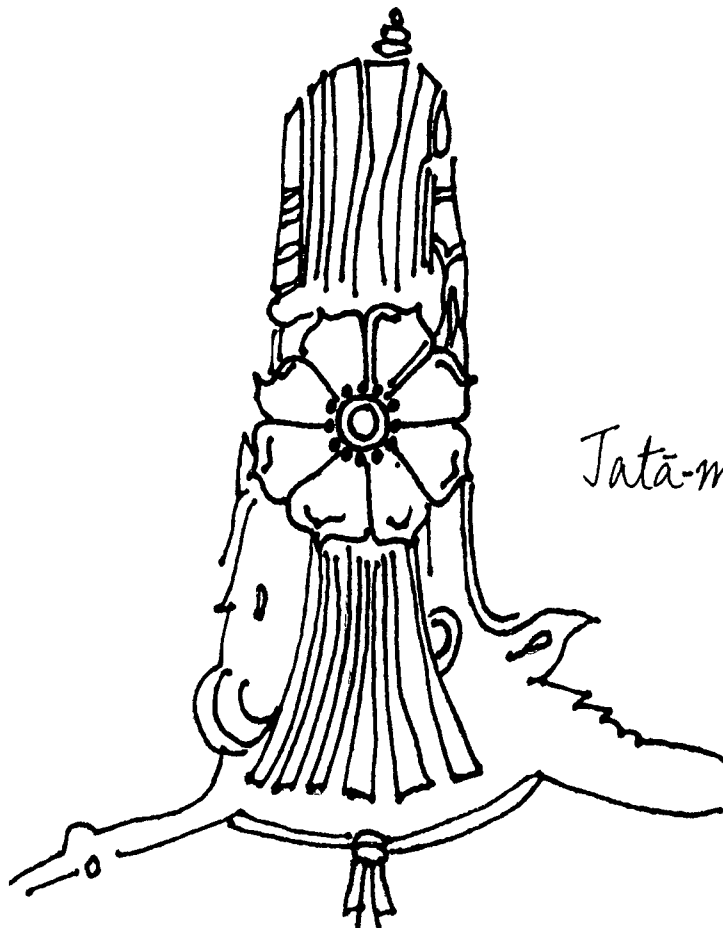
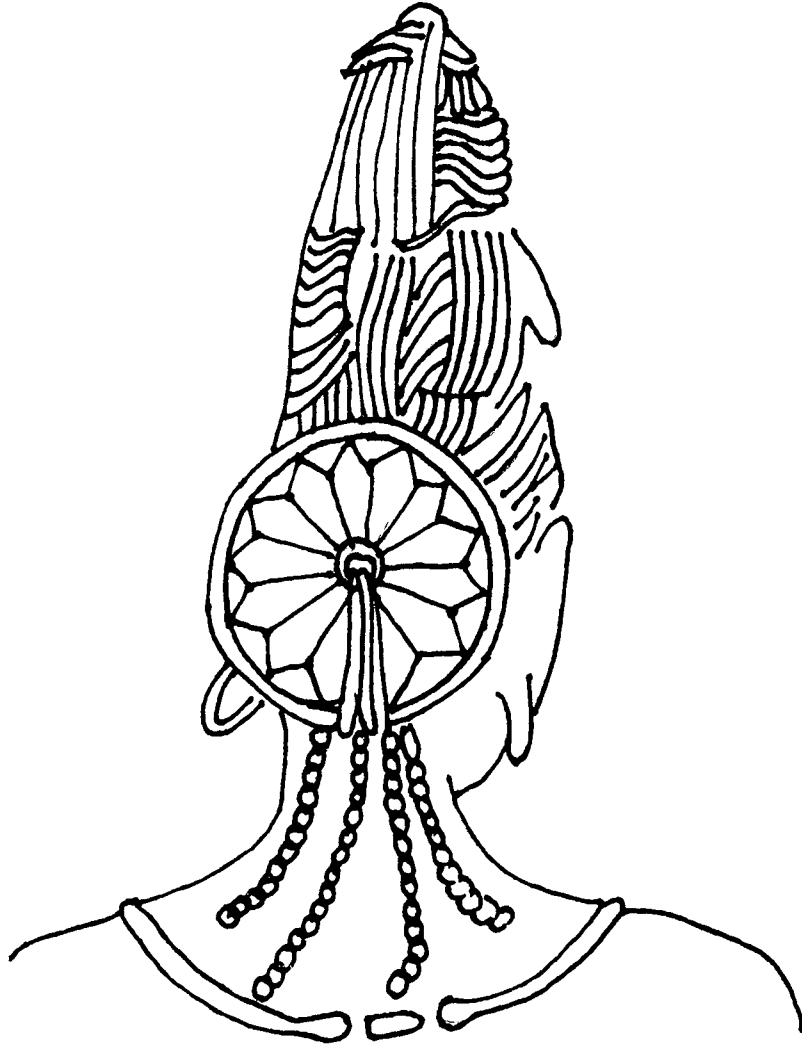


Vaikakshaka (front view)



Vaikakshaka (rear view)

Tatā-makuta with Siras-Chakra

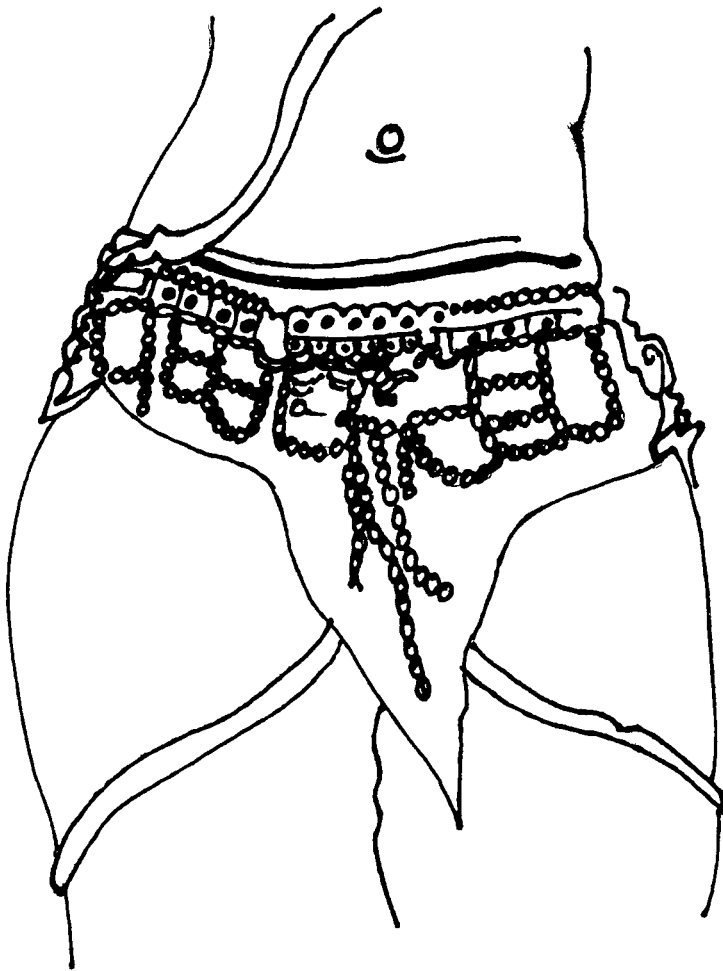


Tatā-makuta with siras-chakra



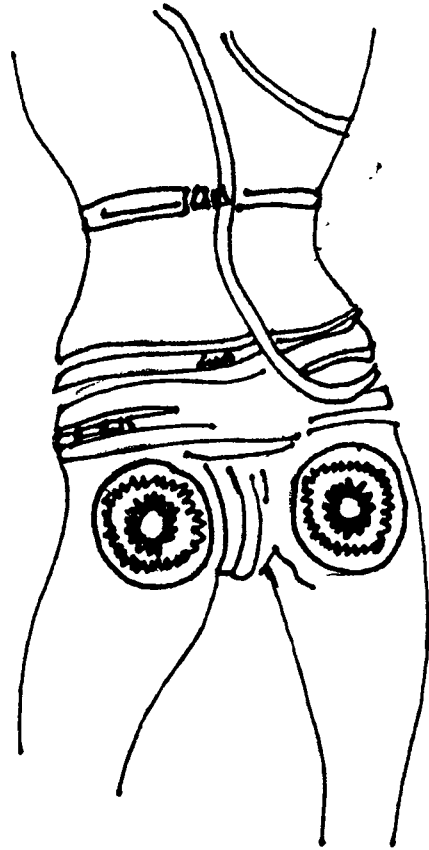
General Ornamentation of a female
deity

A pearl strung waist-band

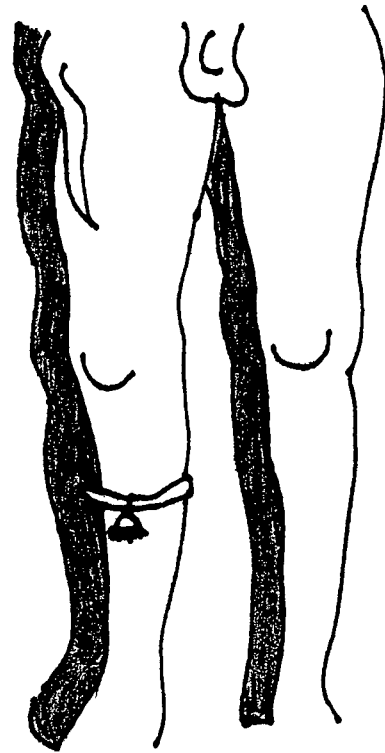


A waist-band or girdle with simha-mukha
adornment





Buttocks adorned with Prishtha-
Chakra



kinkini (belled rings)

A bejewelled necklace

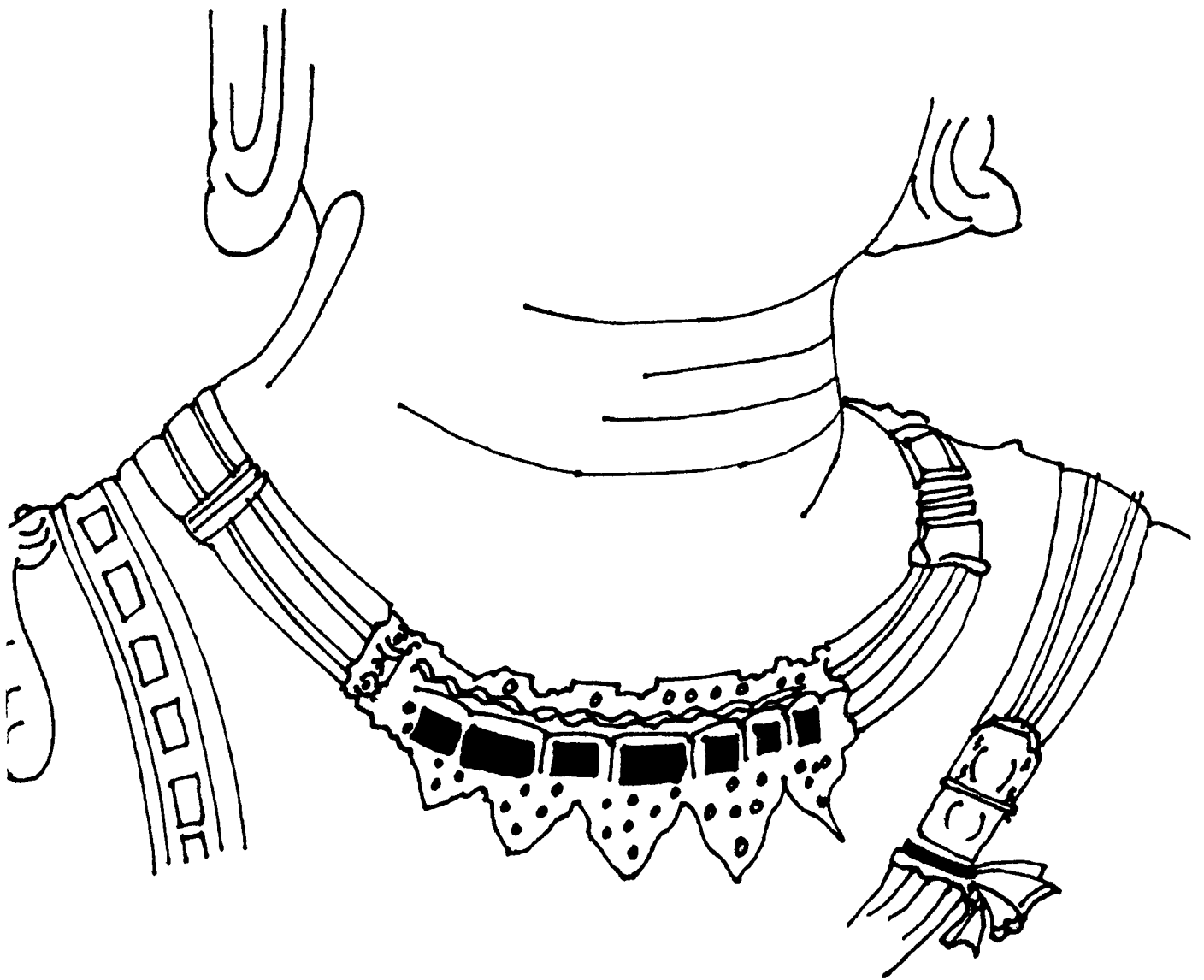




Fig. 1: Konerirajapenam Uma-Mahesvarar Temple Panel Depicting Ganderaditya Worshipping the Linga of Terunallam

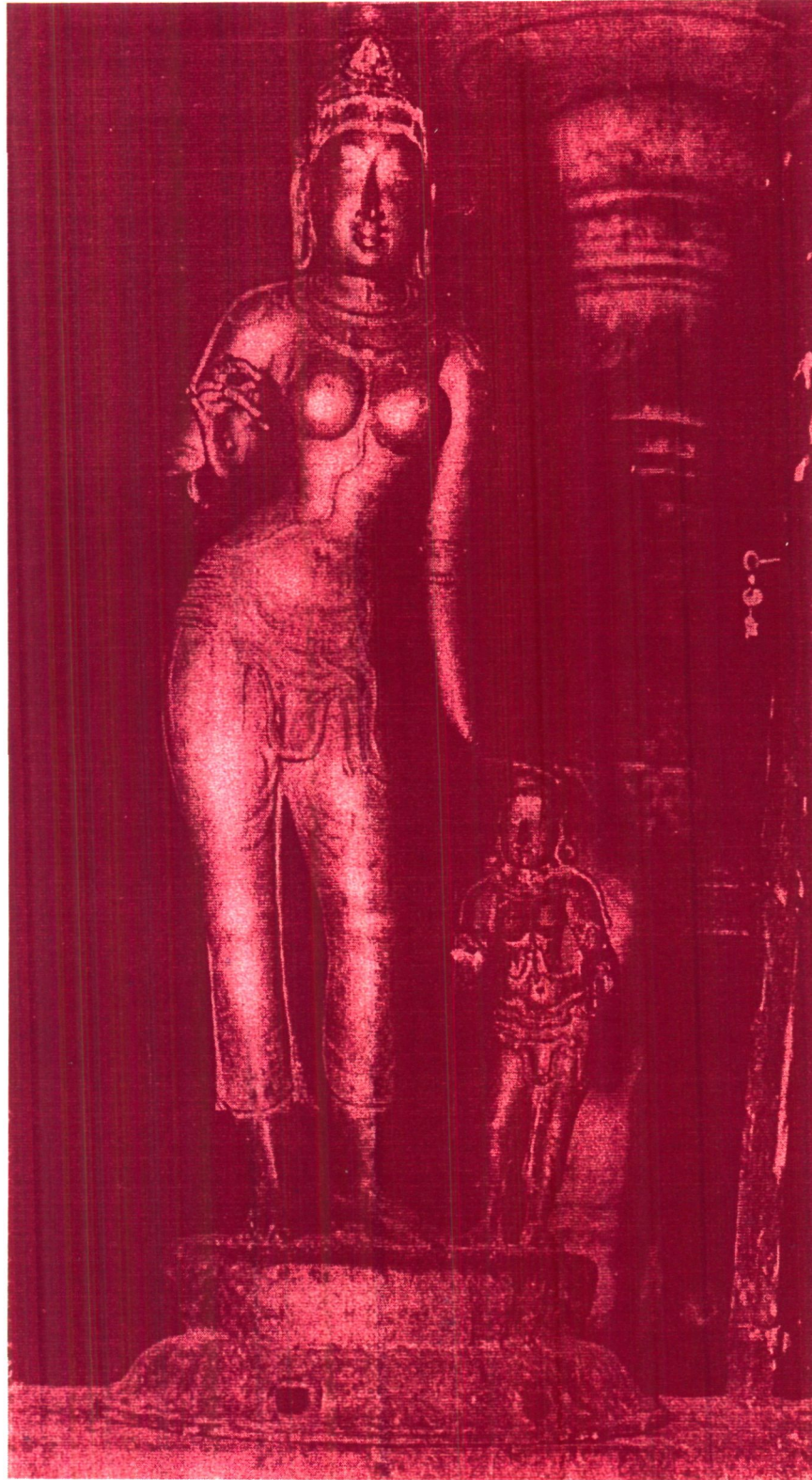


Fig. 2: Konerirajapuram Uma-Mahesvarar Temple. Bhogesvari

Glossary

GLOSSARY

Abhisheka	Holy bath
Agal	Lamp
Antarala	Part of a temple connecting the garbhagriha and mukha mandapa
Ardhamandapa	Front porch
Bali	voluntary gift
Devkoshta	niche for subordinate deities on the outer wall of the main shrine.
Dvarapalas	Door keepers
Ektala	One storey
Garbhagriha	The chamber in which the main diety is housed.
Gopuram	Temple gateway
Griva	Literally the neck; the part in the superstructure of srivimana between the topmost tala (tier) and the sikhara
Kalam	a grain measure
Kalanju	name of a gold coin
Kasu	money, a coin of copper believed to have been introduced by Cholas.
Komalam	a type of stone
Kombu	Tusk
Kudu	horse-shoe shaped windows
Kuli	a small land measure equal to 1/240 of a padagam
Makara-Torana	motif of a crocodile with floriated a decorative element with makara designs.

Meykkiritti	inscriptional euology
Mukhmandapa	Hall in front of the ardhmandapa or even in front of the garbhagriha sometimes.
Palam	name of a weight
Sankranti days	The entrance of the sun into a sign of zodiac; regarded as an auspicious time for performing religion duties.
Sikhara	top covering of the vimana, above the griva
Sribali	daily offering of the bali service in temple like honey, fruits, uncooked rice etc to the god.
Srivimana	Central shrine of the temple
Stridhana	dowry
Targini	Threatening
Trisula	Trident
Udaiyar	a possessor, a king or lord, the chief diety of a temple
Ulakku	measurement for oil, ghee
Urimai surram	personal attendant
Uris	a measure
Vadam	String or chain
Veli	a big land measure
Vensamaram	White fan for waving the deity
Vimana	The pinnacle or upper structure over the sanctum of a temple, the central shrine of a temple.
Vismaya	wonder

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