



Geographical And Geology Feature Of The Pallavas

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The primary intent of the research is to bestow a well-furnished historical account that incorporates a totality of historical events including social and political currents. Which made the continuation of Pallava possible in ruling over such extensive territory for longer period of time. It also addresses the dynamic nature of Pallava Kings and their influential stance over the matter of political administration, social, cultural, economic and architectural aspects of the dynasty. The relevant sources in reconstructing the historicity of Pallava kings of south India were inadequate and insufficient in nature. Moreover, those sources of traditional knowledge were also biased and misleading till certain extent. With the discovery of various inscription on stone and copper plate brought little adequacy in studying the history of Pallavas, who ruled for seven centuries over Tamil land. Whereas, literary tradition from the hymns of Alvars and from the other texts: Nandikalambakam, the Periyapuram, Chintamani, Avantisundarikathasara are providing information mainly upon the cultural prospects of Pallava period.

In revitalizing the earlier research carried on the history of Pallavas-initially Walter Elliot's publications of south Indian inscription in the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society¹ and Madras Journal of Literature and Science². He argued that continuous dominancy of Pallavas over south India. In 1844, he also discovered the monoliths in seven pagodas which were excavated by Pallava kings³. Along the same line Dr. Burnell decipherment of some important inscription related to Pallavas, then James Fergusson book "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture" stresses upon the monumental grandeur of seven Pagodas. Also the continuous works of Hultzsch, Venkayya, Fleet, Kielhorn, and KrishnaSastri based upon the inscription on copperplate help in constructing Pallava history, those were published in Indian Antiquary, South Indian Inscription and EpigraphiaIndica.

Another couple of noteworthy works were furnished by some notable scholars starting from Mr. V. Venkayya in Archaeological annual survey report from 1906-07, this work reflects his elaborative work in the field of literature and epigraphy. Then Prof. G. JouveauDubreuil through his propounded various

original and imaginative set of theories as regard to origin, chronology, genealogy, art and architecture of the Pallavas. He further extended his opinion in constituting an interrelatedness between the Pallava kings of Prakrit charters and in Sanskrit records, and also critically pointed out the evidential challenges related to chronology and genealogy of Pallavas in his work “Ancient History of Deccan”, some other important works of him are the “Pallava Antiquities”, “Pallava Painting”, subsequently contribute towards the understanding of various subject related to the Pallavas.

Few other researchers like Dr. S. KrishnaswamiAiyangar paper “The Origin and Early Historyof the Pallavas” published in Journal of Indian History⁴and “Antiquities of Mahabalipuram”. Mr. GopinathRao on the “Ganga Pallavas”, Mr. K.V SubramanyaAiyar paper “The Ancient History of Conjeevarana” published in Journal of the Mythic Society. R. Gopalan work titled as “History of the Pallavas of Kanchi” and of Mr. P.T SrinivasanAiyanger work “A History of the Pallavas” all of them shaded light on the aspects of Pallavas. Through this research we deliberately injected the process of scrutinization in order to explain a wholesome nature of Pallavas history.

GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

While for better understanding of the history and culture of any region it is important to consider the physical, geographical and geological landscapes, as they all play significant role in manipulating the course of political history and also the cultural traits of the particular region, in turn it is externally expressed in the arrangement related to the pattern and depiction of sculpture, painting and architecture. Often we can locate that most of the artistic creations in the form of sculpture and architecture are stimulated by the natural elements such as the hills, rivers, plains, deserts, etc., and living beings like flora and fauna apart from the day to day activities of the humans.

The sculptural creation is also indirectly affected by the quantity and quality of stone available in the region.

The region that was ruled by the Pallavas called in the inscriptions as Tondaimandalam comprised of the former Chengalpattu, North Arcot and South Arcot districts in Tamil Nadu and Chittoor and Nellore districts in Andhra Pradesh. This region is marked intermittently by low raise hills, hill-locks, rivers, streams, creeks and dotted by lakes as well. In the case of lakes it is interesting to take note that during this period in addition to the naturally formed ones, the Pallava kings, chieftains, courtesans and even normal affluent people caused to dig lakes for the purpose of irrigation⁵. The Tondaimandalam region is surrounded by the Bay of Bengal in the east; the districts of Nagapattinam, Ariyalur, and Perumbalur in the south; Salem, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, the state of Karnataka in the west and Anantapur, Cuddapah, Prakasam of Andhar Pradesh in the north.

The Chengalpattu district in present day incorporates the districts of Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur and parts of Chennai which are located between 12° 15' and 13° 28' north latitudes and 79° 28' and 80° 20' east longitudes. It shares the Bay of Bengal as the eastern border with coastal line of 182 km and total

geographical area of 7869.16 sq. kms. Topographically the district has residual hills covering parallel to the coast ranging in elevation between 16 and 230 metres. Geographically the area can be allocated into the plains, lagoons, hilly regions, forests, coastal belt, rivers, basins, lakes and tanks. The coastal region of the district is mostly flat but on the other parts it is undulant and hilly in some places like in the Tiruttanitaluk, where a number of hillocks of small elevation one of them is St. Thomas Mount. In the north -western and south - western parts of the district is also hilly in nature that forms the part of the Eastern Ghat. Majority of the hills and hillocks is showing rocky formation and having sparse vegetation.

The district is confluenced by non-perennial and monsoonal rivers including Palar, Cheyyar, Cooum, Kortalaiyar, Arniar, Kiliar, Kallar, Ongur and Nandi as well as many other streams and lakes. There are certainly many prominent lakes such as Chembarambakkam, Madurantakam, Uttiramerur, Thenneri, Sriperumpudur, Thinnanur, Sholavaram, Puzhal, Poondi, Pallavankulam, Thamal and Palur those fulfilled the water requirement. The flora of the district can be broadly classified under five major kinds: Scrub jungles, Psammophytic, Halophytic, Mangrove and Aquatic vegetation. The fauna of the region can also be grouped into Herpotofauna, Aves, Mammals, fresh and brackish water fishes.

The southern and south-eastern part of the district composed of Archaean group of rocks belong to the Precambrian age, consisted of Charnockites, Migmatites, Gneisses, Dolerite, pink and grey Granites and Pegmatites. The Archaean group is covered by Talchaen rocks comprised of boulder beds, sandstone of varied hues, siltstones, shales and rhythmite. Overlaying them are sediments formed out of these rocks. Mineral resources like Clay, Kankery limestone, Quartzite Silica, Sand and other minor minerals are found⁶.

Present day Cuddalore and Villupuram districts are part of the earlier South Arcot district. While Cuddalore district is mostly plain in nature and lies between 11° 11' and 12° 35' North Latitude and East Longitude 78° 38' and 80°. It extended over an area of 3678 sq.kms and contains number of rivers and lakes like Gadilam, Pennar, Vellar, Veeranam, Perumaleri and Wellington Lake.

Villupuram District lying between 11° 38' 25" north and 12° 20' 44" south; 78° 15' 00" west and 79° 42' 55" east with an area of 7194 Sq. Km. has the Kalrayan Hills in the northern part of the district representing a continuous range of hills covered with some thorny forests and vegetation. Among the hills the most beautiful lies in the Gingee Hills. Besides, there are isolated hills namely Tayadurgam and Perumukkal. The rivers in the district are not perennial. The Ponnaiyar is the principal river and the other important rivers are Komugi, Manimuktha, Gadilam, Malattar, Sankaraparani and Varaganathi. According to the old district gazetteer, the South Arcot region consists of metamorphic crystalline rocks of Archaean age, belonging to Charnockite - Khondalite group and intrusive and extrusive rocks, namely Gabbro, Anorthosite, Puroxite and Dolerite. Considerable amount of laterite, building stones and lime are also found. Popular fauna, are Tigers, Cheetahs, Elephants, Bears, Sambar, Spotted deer, Antelopes, Hyaenas, Wild- dogs, Pigs and Porcupines⁷.

Tiruvannamalai and Vellore districts formed part of the erstwhile North Arcot district. Of these, the former lies between 11° 55' and 13° 15' North latitude; 78° 20' and 79° 50' East longitude and spreads over 6191 sq.kms, whereas the latter lies between 12° 15' and 13° 15' North Latitude; 78° 20' and 79° 50' East Longitude, having an area of 6077 sq.km. The district is intersected by number of rivers and streams like, Palar, CheyarMalattar, Koundinya, Goddar, Pambar, Agaram-ar, Ponnai, Kallar and Naga Nadi. Major hills are the Eastern Ghats, Javadi, Yelagiri and Swamimalai. The old district gazetteer mentions that North Arcot is rich in tanks in the Madras Presidency. The geological formation of the district, largely consists of rocks of Gneiss of metamorphic series and intervening bands of trap rock occurring in the form of dykes. However the north-eastern part of the district contains Conglomerates, Sandstones, Quartzite, Limestone and volcanic rocks. The Nagari hill beds are rich in granite and gneiss intervening with trap dykes and veins of Serpentine. The hills are also rich in Sandstone of various hues. Bison, Tiger and Cheetah are found in Javadi hills. Hayena, Sambar, Spotted deer, barking deer, Antelope, Wild pig and Porcupines are commonly found in forests. Similarly are found Pea-fowl, Jungle-fowl and other local birds⁸.

Chittoor district, in Andhra Pradesh, situated between 12° 47' and 14° 08' north latitude and 78° 03' and 79° 55' east longitude, shares its eastern border with Tiruvallur district, which formed one of the principal areas of the Pallava territory. The landscape of the district can be divided into two divisions, the mountainous plateau and the plains. The Eastern Ghats, the Nagari and the Horsley hills form the main mountains of this district. Important rivers of this region are Papaghni, Pancha, Koundinya, Palar, Ponne, Arani, Swarnamukhi, Bahuda, Kalyani and Kusasthali. More than three-fourths of this district is occupied by rocks of Archaean period, which are found in different forms like Schists, Granite Gneisses, Quartzite, Shale, Slates, Limestone and also as minerals of Quarts, Feldspar, Hornblende, etc. Granite is used as the best medium of building material and is available in different shades of pink, grey and black. Shale and Slate are used for the purpose of sharpening the tools. The district is rich in tamarind trees and various species of flora⁹.

Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh, lying between 13° 25' and 15° 55' north latitude; 79° 9' and 89° 14' east longitude, it is located to the east of the Coramandal coast of Tamilnadu. It shares its southern border with the districts of Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur, the core area of Pallava hegemony. The whole district is generally flat and is of low elevation.

The coastal taluks are more fertile than those lying under the Eastern Ghats. The principal mountain ranges are Eastern Ghats locally known as the 'Vellikondas' and the Udayagiri Doorg. The major rivers are Pennar, Kandelru, Swarnamukhi, Musi, and Paleru and Manneru. The greater part of the district is underlain by Gneisses and Schists with several ridges of Quartzite and basic igneous rocks. The coastal belt is composed of a laterite-capped band of sandstone, and of recent deposits of alluvium and sand. The climate is generally dry and the annual mean humidity is 75%.

The plains contain overly the scrub jungle and large trees like Margosa(Azadirachtaindica), different species of the Ficus(indica, Tsiela, bengalensis, religiosa), the Tamarind (Tamarindusindica), the Acacias and the Mango (Magneferaindica) are found only near the villages. However, the Nellore breed of cattle is well-known both for its physical strength and exquisite appearance. They have been exported to Java, Malay straits, Sumatra, Jamaica and even as far as Argentine. Tiger, Panther, Cheetah, Hayena, Sambhur, Bear, Antelope, Pigs and Bison are common wild faunas in this region. Snipe, duck and wild fowl are plentiful. Black buck, Bustard, Wild ducks, Teal and Brahmani ducks are occasionally met. Green Pigeon, Sand grouse, Peafowl, Golden plovers are scarcely seen¹

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