

THE LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION OF PANDYAS

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Abstract: The major part of the Pandyas kingdom was depending upon the seasonal rain-fed tanks which were the next best possible choice for irrigation. Even now one could find innumerable remains of early Pandya reservoirs in the districts of Madurai and Ramanathapuram. These remains remind us of the result and action of early Pandya rulers and their ministerial staff for the promotion of agriculture. They regularly maintained the river channels, inundation canals and irrigation arrangements. A very interesting record from Vaigai of Sendam Jatavarman [645-670 C.E.] refers that construction of sluice [madagu] and excavation of a channel, which had remained in disuse for long for the purpose of irrigation the arable lands in the *Paruthikkudinadu* and also collected the taxes *Vaykkalpallam*. *Vaykkal-pattam*, *eri-vari*, *pasi-pattam*, and *eri padikkaval*. According to the plates of *Dalavayappuram* the king *Parantaka Viranayana* [862-907 C.E.] built many 'Tatagangal' but the details are not known. A careful study of the 7th and 8th century records of Pandyas show that Pandys ruler made two distinct technical advances for the construction of the tanks and river or bunds of channels dressed stones were used in place of the traditional rubble and late rite material and the stones were laid with precision using the string-line technique. This technique is mentioned in the record as *nilitteruvitta* in most of the cases stone-sluices were used instead of the usual Palmyrah trees trunks of uniform size. They were installed at suitable places to regulate the supply of water from the tank the same string line technique was no doubt followed by the other rulers more by the later Pandyas. The distribution of maintenance work among the village situated on the bank of the river Kaveri was known as *Kaveri-karai* and *kaveri-karai-tevai*. However, the citizen had responsibility of paying regularly for the maintenance of the tanks even with the absence of the rivers. The rain water was also stored in the tanks and utilized for irrigation. From these sources we can understand that a part of the land tax was utilized by the state for regular maintenance or irrigation works and water supply.

Keywords: Pandyas, Land Revenue System, Irrigation, Later Pandyas.

Introduction

Tamilnadu had the fullest control of all the resource of the state including finance Pandyas was not exemption in this tradition. Land revenue was the chief source of revenue under the Pandya state. Sadasiva Pandarathar lists the varieties of levies collected from state, village during the Pandyas. K.A.Nilakanta Sastri referred to the name of taxes and their nature on the basis of Pandya epigraphy, similarly K.V.Raman has pointed out the significance of revenue of the Pandyas.¹ A.J.Thinakaran has described the varieties of levies which had prevailed during the Pandya rule. He has explained about the land taxes and assessment on the basis of grade (*Thtaram*) other items of revenue are mentioned as per the records of the Pandyas. The major part of the Pandya revenue was derived from taxation various items of revenue.