

Territorial Bestowals to Subordinate Nayaks in Tamilnadu under Krishnadevaraya – An Epigraphical Study

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Abstract

Tamilnadu under Vijayanagar rule witnessed a new politico-military framework centred on military establishments. The representative rule in the rajyams evolved later into the Nayak and Poligar Systems. Meanwhile the subinfeudation or the subordinate nayak system was strengthened under Krishnadevaraya in the regions under Vijayanagar empire. Such system is identified in the Vijayanagar epigraphs of Tamilnadu during the medieval period. Those subordinate nayaks were bestowed with nayakkattanam and assigned with sirmai, and its related delegations by the Vijayanagar rulers. The graded delegation of power, hierarchical transfer of fiscal and military responsibility and the services of subordinate nayaks in Tamilnadu under Krishnadevaraya is studied in this article by analyzing their epigraphs.

Keywords: *Subinfeudation, Nayakkattanam, Maagani Sirmai, Amara Sirmai, Parru, Uzhavukkudi, Pandaravadai.*

Introduction

Vijayanagar rule in Tamilnadu started with the representative government being Madurai its headquarters under Kumara Kampana and his successors. The Tamil region each was divided into rajyams each under a representative titled with Mahamandalesvara and Mandalesvara. There were five rajyams - Chandragiri rajyam. Padaividu rajyam, Tiruvathi rajyam, Chola rajyam and Pandya-rajyam during the reign of Krishnadevaraya (1509-1526 C.E.). These rajyams (provinces) were not in equal size and extent. Some were big (maharajyam) and some in small (rajyam) size. Later, for administrative purpose, these rajyams were grouped into three major regions as Nayaks of Senji (Gingee), Nayaks of Madurai and Nayaks of Thanjavur (Tanjore) each under an Amara Nayak (Military chief). These macro regions became independent during the rule of Krishnadevaraya.

The Nayakdom of Madurai became prominent under Visvanatha Nayak and his officer Ariyana Mudaliyar. This macro region was further divided into 72 micro units or barracks known as Palayams each under a Poligar. These poligars were responsible for agriculture, irrigation and forests of their area and they collected taxes, maintained military forces and paid tribute to their overlords, the so called Nayaks. Gradually, these poligars became independent and represented as a powerful institution in Tamil Nadu:

Subordinate Nayak system:

Besides these Nayak system and Poligar system, there were also minor chieftains called the subordinate nayaks by historians. The Vijayanagar epigraphical records in Tamilnadu reveal the subordination among those minor nayaks who played important role in the local administration of the Vijayanagar Empire. A large number of such nayaks who had lord-vassal relationship with the kings are identified in their epigraphs. With this historical insight into the Vijayanagar-nayak rule in Tamilnadu, this article proceeds to the some important territorial bestowals on the subordinate nayaks of Tamilnadu under Krishnadevaraya. Bestowal of Nayakkattanam, assigning of sirmai, magani sirmai, amara- sirmai and nayakkattanam sirmai are terms identified in twenty-four places covering thirteen districts of present Tamil Nadu between 1509 and 1526 C.E.. The distribution of those epigraphs in the entire state is furnished in two phases i.e. 1509-1513 C.E. and 1519-1526 C.E. The epigraphical silence between 1513 and 1519 C.E. may be due to the military preoccupation of Krishnadevaraya in northern and eastern campaigns.

Table No. 01: Distribution of Epigraphs in Two Phases

S. No.	Districts	Places	Epigraphs		Total
			I Phase (1509-1513)	II Phase (1519-1526)	
1)	Thriuvallur	i) Poonamallee	---	0.1	01
2)	Kanchipuram	ii) Nadungunam	01	--	03
		iii) Vittalapuram	--	0.1	
		iv) Senganmal	--	0.1	
3)	Thiruvannamalai	v) Salukkai	---	0.1	02
		vi) Devikapuaram	---	01	

4)	Villupuram	vii) Tindivanam vii) Elavanasur ix) Anniyur x) Arakandanallur	01 --- --- ---	--- 0.1 0.1 0.1	04
5)	Kallakurichi	xi) Rishivandhiyam xii) Elavanasur	--- ---	0.1 0.1	02
6)	Salem	xiii) Athur xiv) Aragalur	01 ---	0.2	03
7)	Namakkal	xv) Tiruchengode, xvi) Sithalanthur	---	0.1 0.1	02
8)	Dhamapuri	xvii) Kuthapadi	01	---	01
9)	Tricyh	xviii) Srirangam xix) Jambukesvaram	01 ---	0.1	02
10)	Dindigul	xx) Agaram- Thadikkombu	---	0.1	02
11)	Tanjore	xxi) Suriyanarkoil	---	0.1	01
12)	Pudukottai	xxiv) Kudimiyamalai xxiv) Melnilai- malambattu	01	0.2	03
13)	Ramnad	xxiv) Ilayathangudi	---	0.3	03
	Total	(24) places	06	22	28

For the purpose of easy understanding the titles and territorial divisions are divided into two phases i.e. 1509.-1513 C.E as first phase and 1519-1526 C.E as second phase, on the basis of availability of the epigraphs bearing the terms as shown in the table.

Table (No:02). Titles and territorial divisions in Two Phases

Terms Phase	nayakkattanam	sirmai/ maagani sirmai/ amara sirmai	nayakkattanam and sirmai	Total
	I (1509-1513)	01	02	03
II (1519-1526)	09	10	03	22
Total	10	12	06	28

Epigraphs pertaining to those terms in the first phase are found in six places each in a district. At the same time, eighteen places falling in the second phase are located in twelve districts. All the districts except Dharmapuri are contributing the second phase also. Likewise, out of the twenty two terms of the second phase, nayakkattanam numbering nine sirmai and the related terms numbering ten and nayakkattanam-sirmai numbering three are identified in the epigraphs. The following tables give a detailed account of the terms associated with bestowal of territories and titles of the subordinate nayaks in Tamilnadu under the Vijayanagar ruler Krishnadevaraya.

NAYAKKATTANAM

Table No. 3- Nayakkattanam

S. No.	Chronological Order	Epigraph	Nayakkattanam	Sub.Nayak	Transaction	Purpose
1.	1509	Kuthappadi (Dharmapuri)	Denkanikotta in Muluvagila Chavadi	Timmaraya Chakravarthi	Village Grant	charity of Timmarasa
2.	1519	Rishivandhiyam (Kallakurichy)	his nayakkattanam	Timmappa	Village Grant	for the merit of the King Krishnadevaraya
3.	1519	Jambukesvaram (Trichy)	Malainadu Merkur, as his nayakkattanam (Chola Mandalam, Trichirappalli Sirmai, Vadagarai Rajaraja Valanadu)	Timmappa	Village Grant (4 villages)	---
4.	1520	Elavanasur (Kallakurichy)	his nayakkattanam	Timmappa s/o Mallappa	Remitting taxes of a village	for the merit of the King
5.	1522	Agaram- Thadikkombu	Irapuram nayakkattanam	Kondamarasar	Forming new village	for the merit of

		(Dindigul)			(Dindigaul Sirmai)	the King
6.	1523	Tiruchangode, (Namakkal)	Muluvay nayakkattanam	Chama Nayanar of Kanchipuram s/o Manicka Nayak agent Thiriyambak Udaiyar	Tax Assignment to temple	---
7.	1522	Ilayathangudi (Sivaganga)	his sirmai as nayakkattanam	Viayirava Nayanar Visayalaya Thevar	Village Grant to Vishnu temple	---
8..	1524	Melainilai-Malambatti (Pudukottai)	Amara-sirmai as nayakkattanam	Andambar-Kardan-Pappaiyan of Chunjotti	Village grant to local temple	an amara-sirmai given for his nayakkattanam by treasury officers of Viranarasingar
9.	1526	Ilayathangudi (Sivaganga)	his nayakkattanam Ilayathangudi in Kalavasal nadu	Vajirava Nayanar Visayalaya Thevar	Establishment of a Brahmin Village	---
10.	1520	Suriyanarkoil (Tanjore)	his nayakkattanam ... parru, Virudharajabhayankara Valanadu Chola Mandalam	Mallappa (Kannadiya) Nayakkapdi of Marudarasar Padaivedu)	Village Grant to Temple	---

The first epigraph of the term nayakkattanam of the period is found at Kuthappadi in Dharmapuri district.¹ Denkanikkottai nayakkattanam in Mulavagila Chavadi is mentioned in this epigraph which refers to a subordinate rompe village grant of a subordinate nayak Timmaraya Chakravarthi. This grant was made as the charity of his master Timmarasar, the palace guard of the king. This record is also a testimony of the existence of lord-vassal relationship among the nayaks and the kings during the Vijayanagar rule (Table 3, no. 1)

Some epigraphs of the second phase refer to the nayakkattanams of a Mallappa nayak family in the districts of Kallakurichi, Trichy and Tanjore. Two epigraphs at Rshivandhiyam² and Elavanasur³ in the Kallakurichi district mention the nayakkattanam of the subordinate Timmappa Nayak, son of Mallappa Nayak. Timmappa granted a village and remitted its taxes in his Nayakkattanam for the merit of the King Krishnadevaraya. Two other epigraphs one at Jambukesvaram⁴ in Trichy and another at Suriyanarkoil⁵ in Tanjore districts allude to the nayakkattanam of the same Timmappa Nayak.

The Jambukesvaram record refers to Malainadu Merku as his Nayakkattanam in the Tiruchirappalli (Trichy) Sirmai, Vadagarai Rajaraja Valanadu, Cholamandalam. The Suriyanarkoil record mentions Parru (not clear) located in the Virudharajabhayankara Valanadu, Cholamandalam as the Nayakkattanam of Mallappa Nayak. An epigraph at Agaram - Thadikkombu in Dindigul district refers to Rarapuram Uchavadi as the nayakkattanam of Kondamarasar, a secretary (rayasam) and agent of Krishnadevaraya. The epigraph registers the creation of a brahmin village (agaram) by clubbing live villages belonged to Timmappa Nayak and Bommaya Nayak of Poti in Dindigul sirmai in the Rarapuram Uchavadi. A record at the Tiruchengode dated 1523 C.E⁶ bears the term nayakkattanam which was bestowed on Chama Nayanar (a variant of nayak) of Kanchipuram. This Chama Nayanar, son of Manicka Nayak assigned taxes on the cultivating tenants (Uzhavukudi) as well as tenants occupying rent free house sites (kasayakudi) to a temple in his Kunrathur Sirmai situated in the Muluvay nayakkattanam of Thriyambaka Udaiyar. Epigraphists have documented three records of Vayirava Nayanar Visayalaya Thevar from Ilayathangudi temple in modern Sivaganga district.⁷ He seems to have maintained Surakkudi as his sirmai bestowed on him as nayakkattanam by the Vijayanagar rulers. He is identified as the son of Pallikondaperumal Vijayalaya Thevar and ruler of Surakudi. His records at Neyvasal and Athanur in the same district are also the testimony of his activities of the region during the reign of the Vijayanagar rulers Immadi Narasimha, Krishnadevaraya and Achyutharaya. All these records reveal the grant of tax free lands to both Siva and Vishnu temples, establishment of a brahmin village and hereditary right of a village to a military commander.

An epigraph at Melainilai-Malambatti (Pudukottai district) documented in the Avaram magazine⁸ contains reference to a military commander Andambar-Kardan-Pappaiyan of Chinjottu. According to this record, Chinjottu was a territory bestowed on this Pappaiyan, for his military service, as nayakkattanam by his superior Viranarasingaraya in the year 1524 C.E. This Viranarasingaraya is identified as the master of subordinate nayak Vayirava Nayanar in the Kanchipuram region as per the record issued in 1511 C.E.

SIRMAI, MAAGANI SIRMAI, AMARAM SIRMAI**Table No. 4: Sirmai, Maagani Sirmai, Amaram Sirmai**

<i>S. Nol</i>	<i>Chronological Order</i>	<i>Epigraph</i>	<i>Sub.Nayak</i>	<i>Nayakkattanam Sirmai & Nayakkattanam & Sirmai</i>	<i>Transaction</i>	<i>Other Details</i>
1.	1510	Kudumiyamalai (Pudukottai)	Virnarasingaraya Nayaka Pallavarayar (Arasu of Vazuthur)	Parambiyur parru as his sirmai	Sale of Village	to pay the kanikkai
2.	1512	Tindivanam (Villupuram)	Tirumalai Nayak	Tindivanam sirmai (Kidangil maagani – sirmai)	Land Grant	to a Brahmin
3.	1513	Srirangam (Trichy)	Viraiya Dannayaka	his sirmai & temple sirmai	Tax collection	order of the king
4.	1519	Elavanasur (Villupuram)	Ramaiyar s/o Vasava Nayak	12 parru (maagani-sirmai)	Conversion of Village	for the merit of Timmappa and his family
5.	1519	Salukkai (near Vandavasi, Tiruvannamalai)	Virabhadrarayar	Vandavasi sirmai	Remitted tax on 2 temples	for the merit of the king
6.	1519	Devikapuram (Tiruvannamalai)	Arihara s/o Mallappa (Kannadiya Nayakkappadi of Marudarasar Padaividu)	Padaividu sirmai	Assigned people to a temple	for the merit of the king Tirumalai s/o Ettappa Nayak
7.	1519	Aragalur (Salem)	Amaram Timmarasar	Kallakurichi Parru / sirmai	Tax free Land grant	to the Perumal temple
8.	1520	Senganmal (Kanchipuram)	Viranarasingaraya s/o Taluvakkulaindam bhattar (Brahmin)	his sirmai	Village grant by a Pillai	for the well-being of the king
9.	1523	Arakandanallur (Villupuram)	Chinnappa / Channappa s/o Mallappa	his sirmai (Vazhuthilampattu, Thiruvathirajyam, Tirumunaipadi nadu, Trirukkoilur)	Village grant (2 villages)	to a mutt for the merit of his father Mallappa
10.	1523	Silthanthur (Namakkal)	Tirumalai Kangaiyan, subordinate of Channa Nayanar	Sirralanthur as his sirmai	Land grant	---
11.	1524	Aragalur (Salem)	Mritinjeya Agent of Tirumalai	Tenkarai sirmai	Assignment of servants to temple & Land grant	---
12.	1524	Melainilai Malambattu (Pudhukottai)	Andambar Kandan Pappaiyan, subordinate of Viranarasingaraya	his amaram-sirmai	Village grant	---
13.	1524	Ilayathankudi (Ramnadu)	Vayirava Nayanar Visayalaya Thevar s/o Pallikonda pillai	Ilayathankudi Sirmai	Village grant (people not evicted)	---

Sirmai Maagani-Sirmai and Amaram Sirmai

Table No. 04. Sirmai Epigraphs of Subordinate Nayaks under Krishnadevaraya:

Sirmai means land and in the epigraphical context it can be applicable to any size of land held by the nayaks. This term is first used in the Tiruthalur (Thiruthuraiyur) temple epigraph at Cuddalore district and issued during the reign of King Devaraya.⁹ The first epigraph reflecting this term in the reign of Krishnadevaraya is seen at Kudumiyanmalai¹⁰ in Pudukottai district. This record mentions Parambiyur parru as the sirmai of Viranarasingaraya Nayak Pallavarayar. This Pallavarayar sold a village in this sirmai as the temple village, with the people not evicted, to pay the presents (Kanikkai) imposed by his master Viranarasingaraya Nayak, son of Taluvakkulaindan bhattar. Payment in terms of presents was the most conspicuous during the Vijayanagar rule in Tamilnadu. Viranarasingaraya Nayak is identified as the master of Andambar-Kandan-Pappaiyan, Lingama Ayyan Nayanar and Vayiravara Nayanar in the epigraphs of northern region of Tamilnadu. An epigraph at Senganmal in Kanchipuram district mentions the sirmai of Viranarasingaraya Nayak, son of Taluvakulaindam bhattar. This Nayak ordered an individual by name Pillai to grant a village in his sirmai for the well-being of Krishnadevaraya in 1520 C.E.¹¹

A Srirangam epigraph (Trichy district) speaks of the territories (sirmais) of the subordinate nayak Viraiya dannayak.¹² The nayak received an order of the king regarding tax collection in these sirmais. Two epigraphs at Salukkai and Devikapuram in Tiruvannamalai district refer to Vandavasi sirmai and Padaividu sirmai from which the respective subordinates made their transactions. Virabhadrarayar of Salukkai remitted taxes on two temples in his Vandavasi sirmai for the merit of Krishnadevaraya. Arihara Nayak, son of Mallappa Nayak of Marudarasar Padaividu assigned some people to the Devikapuram temple to light the lamp (Tiruilakku kudigal) in his Padaividu sirmai for the merit of his King Krishnadevaraya and of his master Tirumalai Nayak, son of Ettappa Nayak. Two epigraphs at Aragalur Vishnu temple¹³ in Salem district allude to Kallakurichi sirmai and Tenkarai sirmai of the subordinate nayaks contemporaneous to Krishnadevaraya. According to one epigraph, Amaram Timmarasar, the chief palace guard (vassal) of the king received a tract of land as sirmai for his high position and made a land grant in this sirmai to the Vishnu temple. By the other record, it is understood that a subordinate nayak Miruthunjeya made land grants in Tenkarai sirmai to the temple servants as the charity of his master Tirumalai Nayak in the year 1524 C.E. This Tirumalai is identified as the son of Engappa in the nearby epigraph at Thammampatti in Attur taluk.

A temple record at Arakandanallur of Villupuram district refers to some village (names missing) as the sirmais of Chinnappa Nayak belonging to another Mallappa family. These villages seem to have been in the Tirukkoilur parru, Tirumunaippadinadu in Tiruvathi rayyam having Valuthilampattu as its uchavadi.¹⁴ Those villages were granted to a mutt for the merit of his father Mallappa Nayak. Sithalanthur in Namakkal district was also a sirmai of Tirumalai Kangaiyan, the subordinate of Channa Nayanar during the time of Krishnadevaraya.¹⁵ Similarly, Ilayathangudi record at Rannad district was a sirmai of Vayirava Nayanar Vijayalaya Thevar son of Pallikonda Pillai. These last two records allude to the land grant and village grant respectively. Thus, the term sirmai was widespread in Tamilnadu under the Vijayanagar king Krishnadevaraya, as testified by the epigraphs of his subordinate nayaks.

Maagani Sirmai and Amaram Sirmai Epigraphs:

According to Noboru Karashima, the word maagani used in the Vijayanagar epigraphs of Tamilnadu must have been the transliteration of the Kannada word magani. It seems to have been used synonymously with nayakkattanam or to mean a sub-category of nayakkattanam. The concept of maagani-sirmai must have been a territorial sub-division administered by the subordinate nayaks of Vijayanagar rulers. There are two epigraphs bearing the maagani-sirmai in Tamilnadu issued during the reign of Krishnadevaraya. An epigraph at Tindivanam in Villupuram district listed in the table (no: 4) states Kidangil village as the maagani sirmai.¹⁶ Another epigraph at Elavanasur in the same district also mentions twelve parrus as the maagani sirmai. The former speaks of a land grant of one Tirumalai Nayak, a subordinate of Krishnadevaraya. This Tirumalai Nayak is identified as the father of Kalathisurairayar, son of Ettappa Nayak, brother of Isura Nayak and master of both Miruthinjeya and Perumukkil Nayaks in the epigraphs of northern region of Tamilnadu under Krishnadevaraya. Tirumalai granted land in his maagani sirmai to a brahmin who in turn granted it to a temple for the merit of Tirumalai. The later epigraph at Elavanasur refers to an activity of Ramaiyar, son of Vasava Nayak. As an agent of Chinnappa Nayak (son of Mallappa), Ramaiyar converted the state owned (Pandaravadai)¹⁷ villages (12 parrus) in his sirmai into temple villages with the concurrence of Timmappa Nayak, brother of Chinnappa Nayak.¹⁸ This conversion was made for the merit of the members of Mallappa family. Thus, Kidangi village and the 12 parrus seems to have been the maagani sirmai within the sirmai as shown in the table (no.04).

Amaram Sirmai (also Amara – Sirmai) :

The term 'Amaram' means 'fighting'. But the conceptual meaning of the Amaram sirmai stands for the territory granted by the Vijayanagar Kings to the intruding Telugu and Kannada warrior chiefs in Tamilnadu.¹⁹ One such context is found in the Melainilai-Malampattu epigraph of Pudukottai district.²⁰ The record refers to a village grant to the local temple by Andambar- Kandan-Pappaiyan of Chinjottu, a subordinate nayak of Viranarasingaraya Nayak in his Amara- sirmai. It seems that the later was the master of former.

TABLE NO. 05 – NAYAKKATTANAM SIRMAI, NAYAKKATTANAM AND SIRMAI

Table No. 05 – Nayakkattanam Sirmai, Nayakkattanam and Sirmai

S. No.	Chronological Order	Epigraph	Sub.Nayak	Nayakkattanam Sirmai & Nayakkattanam & Sirmai	Transaction	Other Details
1.	1511	Nadungunam (Kanchipuram)	Viranarasingaraya (master of Vairava nayanar)	Padaividu rajyam as nayakkattanam sirmai	Land grant in Nedungunam village in 2000 veli parru in Padaividu rajyam	his agent Vairava nayanar made this grant in the nayakkattanam sirmai of his master
2.	1513	Athur (Salem)	Akki Timmaya	Arrur nadu as nayakkattanam sirmai (Maladu alias Jananatha valanadu in Magadai Mandalam)	Establishment of a Brahmin village	Brahmin village after his name
3.	1519	Vittalapuram (Kanchipuram)	Segadavi Kondayadeva Chola Maharaja (Mahamandalesvara)	Jananathanallur Vaipakkam as his nayakkattanam sirmai (Perambakkam sirmai, Tirukkalukunram parru, Amur kottam, Jayankonda Chola Mandalam)	Village grant	Executed by his agent Vayyappa Nayak
4.	1520.	Anniyur (Villupuram)	Pettiraju S/o. Allasani Chokkaraja	Kamachi sirmai as his nayakkattanam sirmai	temple building & Village grant	bestowed by Krishnadevaraya
5.	1525	Poonamallee (Tiruvallur)	Triumalai	Puvirundavallee as his nayakkattanam sirmai	Land assignment	Assigned to Baalaiya Nayak s/o. Katattama Nayak s/o Tellama

Nayakkattanam Sirmai :

It means the territorial division (sirmai) bestowed on the nayak chiefs of any category as Nayakkattanam by the Vijayanagar emperors.²¹ Five epigraphs in Tamilnadu speak of this context belonging to the time of Krishnadevaraya. The first of this category found at Nedungunam in Kanchipuram district is listed in the table (no:4). According to this record, it could be understood that Padaividu rajyam was the nayakkattanam-sirmai of Vijanarasingaraya. His agent Vairava Nayanar made a land grant in Nedungunam in the 2000 veli parru of the Padaividu rajyam.²² An epigraphical record at Vittalapuram in the same district also allude to Jananathanallur - Vaipakkam as the nayakkattanam sirmai of Segadavi Kondayadeva Chola Maharaja who made a village grant in this nayakkattanam sirmai situated in the Amur Kottam of Jayankonda Chola Mandalam.²³

An epigraph of the subordinate nayak Akki Timmaya at Athur in Salem district refers to Arrur nadu as the nayakkattanam-sirmai of the Maladu alias Jananatha Valanadu in Magadai Mandalam. The Nayak granted a village in this nayakkattanam-sirmai and the same is executed by his subordinate Vaiyappa Nayak.²⁴

The Anniyur epigraphical record on the Villupuram district²⁵ mentions the Karvachi sirmai as the nayakkattanam-sirmai of Pettiraju, son of the Allasani Chokkaraju. This Pettiraju built a temple and granted a village to the temple in his nayakkattanam sirmai. Lastly, a record at Poonamallee²⁶ (near Chennai) in Tiruvallur district mentions Poovirunthavalle as the nayakkattanam sirmai of Tirumalai who assigned lands to Balaiya Nayak, son of Kattama Nayak. Thus, subordinate nayaks were also assigned with some sirmais as their nayakkattanam and had power to execute their transactions of their own and the orders of their superiors.

Historical Implications :

The epigraphical study of the territorial bestowals to the subordinate nayaks in Tamilnadu under Krishnadevaraya reveals the structural character of delegated authority. This subordination of the minor nayaks differed from the three macro Nayakdoms (Madurai, Tanjore and Gingee) and Poligar systems. The territorial assignments formed part of an imperial administrative strategy. The local leaders and extra-regional military chief were integrated into a graded structure of delegated authority.

The occurrence of the terms Nayakkattanam in the epigraphs clearly shows that it is the thing bestowed on somebody who thus holded it. Most of the cases reveal that the territorial right was bestowed by the king. There are some cases which record that they were given by some superior nayaks to others. The appearance of the terms Sirmai in the Vijayanagar epigraphs issued during the reign of Krishnadevaraya also coincides with that of Nayakkattanam. Sirmai was also actual use for some particular administrative division. Sometimes both terms Nayakkattanam and Sirmai were applied to a large territory (Padaividu rajyam) and at other times to a small territory (Ilayathankudi, Kalvasal nadu). Thus, this study shows the practice of so called subinfeudation or subordination of the nayaks by receiving the territories and titles in the Vijayanagar Empire. Krishnadevaraya took effort to strengthen the system of his state rule based on these subordinate nayaks.

Conclusion

It is understood by this study that the Vijayanagar rulers bestowed on the subordinate nayaks some territories as nayakkattanam, sirmai, maagani sirmai and amara sirmai in their provinces. These minor nayaks played important role during the reign of Krishnadevaraya. These autochthonous and allochthonous chiefs had lord vassal relations with the kings and superior nayaks as well as with the officials. The epigraphical records reveal the delegated authority of the nayaks who maintained the revenue and military forces of King Krishnadevaraya. Also they executed the order of the king and superiors and transacted their own in their territorial divisions.

Endnotes

- 1 S.I.I.: vol. vii. no. 15, Kuthappadi.
- 2 A.R.E:110 of 1943-44, Rishivandhyam.
- 3 A.R.E: 494 of 1937-38, Elavanasur.
- 4 A. Krishnaswam, *The Tamil Country Under Vijayanagar*, (Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, 1964, p. 184).
- 5 A.R.E.: 230 of 1927, Suriyanarkoil.
- 6 S.I.I.: vol. V. no: 292 & S.I.T.I, no; 877.
- 7 A.R.E: 140 of 1915, Tiruchengode.
- 8 Avanam, 10, 274. Tamilnadu Archaeological Society, Thanjavur , July 1999.
- 9 A.R.E: 429 of 1925, Tiruthalur.
- 10 Inscriptions of Pudukottail State (IPS) no. 726.
- 11 A.R.E: 225 of 1916, Senganmal.
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- 13 A.R.E: 449 & 451 of 1913, Aragalur.
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- 18 A.R.E: 495 of 1937-38, Elavanasur.
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