

MODULE-3
MAURYAS AD MUVENTAR
TOPIC-TINAI BASED PRODUCTION AND
EXCHANGE



PRIYANKA.E.K
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
LITTLE FLOWER COLLEGE, GURUVAYOOR



- 5 Tinalis or physiographic divisions
- 1. KURUNCHI
- Kurunchi- a plant that blooms once in 12 years
- Found in forest- clad ecosystem with hills & slopes
- Hunting & gathering & shifting agriculture mainly millet varieties
- Figures in several contexts in literature as the place of pepper cultivation
- Imp agricultural activity- slash & burn cultivation of millet on the hill slopes



- Tubers, sugarcane, peas
- Inhabitants- Kurava, Kanavar, Vetar
- worshipped- Cheyon or Murugan
- 2. MULLAI
- -Mullamaram-symbolic of tinai & not jasmine
- characterised by the presence of foothills with open terraces & grazing lands
- Mode of cultivation- slash & burn but repeated tiling, sowing & reaping in the same plots were also practised



- Varaku-most extensively cultivated cereal in Mullai
- Description of ploughed land in the poems suggests that the use of plough was common
- People of this tinai were agro-pastoralists called Ayar or Itaiyar
- Subsistence- animal husbandry & shifting cultivation
- Worshipped- cowherd god Mayon



- 3. MARUTAM
- A tree in the wetlands called niramamarutu or mistle tree
- Wet rice ecosystem characterised by the alluvial tracts along the river banks
- Main settlers- uzhar, Vinainhar, Tozhuvar
- Crops- rice & sugarcane
- Had service of artisans & craftsmen like Thachar & Kollar for plough agriculture



- Surplus in this tinai was large enough to sustain a variety of socially necessary functionaries such as preceptors, bards, dancers, magicians, physicians, astrologers
- Worshipped-Vetan
- 4. NEYTAL
- Flowering plant
- Seacoast, landscapes around natural water sources like lakes, rives backwaters



- Paratavar-monopoly of fishing, pearl diving & salt manufacturing
- Paratavar had the monopoly of fishing activity
- Called as thimilon, one who has a thimil or boat & valaiyon, one who has a net
- Drying fish in the sun is mentioned in poems
- Worshipped- Kadalon



- 4. PALAI
- Temporary situation based on seasonal changes leading Kurunchi & Mullai tracts to become dry land
- Inhabitants- Maravar, Kallar, Eyinar
- Plunder people passing through this tinai
- Necessitated the service of armed personages for the travellers protection from robbers
- Both protection & plunder were part of the means of subsistence of Palai tinai
- God -Kottavai

INTERPRETATIONS OF TINAI CONCEPT



- Early scholars understood it as mechanical compartmentalisation of nature into 5 divisions, denoting historical evolution from the primitive to the civilised in South India
- S.K.Ayengar, P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar & K.V.Subrahmanya Aiyer- debated the actual sequential order of 5 tinai & thought the order denoted the human evolution in world history
- Most scholars taken the tinai as a mere poetic concept of early Tamil literature



- P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar- saw an illustration of the evolution of civilisation
- To him it revealed the spread of the Tamils from the hills & mountains to the low-lying plains
- V.R.Ramachandra Dikshitar- tinais related to the 5 different stages of pre-history of the Tamils
- Kamil Zvelebil-it reflected the historical migration of pre-Dravidian & proto- Tamil population from the hills & jungles to the fertile plains & seashore



- Development from Neolithic hunter, through the intermediate stage of the keeper of the flocks, to the settled tiller of the soil & fisherman
- Poems follow a grouping of tinai based on the nature of landscape, according to which the zone of plough agriculture or marutham was called menpulam & the mullai & kurunchitina is called vanpulam
- K .Sivathambi- analysed the economic & sociological aspects of tinai



- Tamil literature mentions 8 social groups-Kuravar, Vetar, Itaiyar, Kallar, Uzhavar, Tozhuvar, Paratavar, Umanar
- Panar – wandering bards
- Women of Panar- Viralis figure in poems as dancing girls
- Pulavar- scholarly bards
- Brahmanas or Anthanar- association with Mullai & Marutam- priest as well as bards



- Parattai- prostitutes- in association with marutham
- Parayar, Tutiyaar, Vettuvar, Katampar- figured in Kurunch- Palai, Mullai-Palai blending zones
- People in mullai-marutham blending zone- practiced spinning & weaving & those in the neytal-marutam blending zones, pot making
- Metal smelting -important in both zones
- Rajan Gurukkal- tried to identify the forms & forces of production in tinaiis



- Forms of subsistence adopted by people of the time in various tinais were as follows
- Kurunchi-hunting & gathering
- Palai-plundering & cattle lifting
- Mullai-animal husbandry & shifting cultivation
- Marutam-wetland agriculture
- Neytal-fishing & salt manufacturing
- 4 forms of material production- animal husbandry, shifting cultivation, petty commodity production, plough agriculture



- Numerous references to the use of plough
- Tamil Brahmi inscription at Azhagarmalai near Madhurai refer Kozhuvanikam, means a dealer in kozhu or plough
- It places the antiquity of plough, at least in the Vaigai valley, to 2nd c BCE
- Division of region into menpulam or agrarian wetland & venpulam or non-agrarian tracts in early Tamil literature point out the nature & extent of agriculture



- Menpulam –confined to small areas surrounded by large vanpulam areas
- Nature of interaction among social segments & the process of its integration are studied by recent scholars
- Numerous references in poems to interaction of tinaia
- There were some fixed points of exchange known as avanam or ankati where people from far off places came for exchange
- Exchange was based on kind or barter system
- Role of local merchants in long-distance trade is not clear since the evidence is scanty



- Huge urban complexes are described in Maduraikanchi & Pattinipalai
- Recent excavations at Keezhadi near Madhurai-evidence of an urban centre
- Tinai concept encompasses the whole range of society, economy, culture of ancient Tamizhakam