



Ancient Trade Centres And Tradeing Goods Of Sangam Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

This article describes the trade and commerce during the early period of the Sangam age. Trade emerged as a result of peoples need and as a part of economic activities. The ancient period trade was based on the Barter system known as Pandamattumurai (exchange of goods and services). Tamilagam had brisk trade relations through inland and external. Sangam works like Agananuru, Maduraikaanji, Manimegalai, Pattinapalai, Purananooru and various inscriptions from Alagarmalai, Pugalur, Mangulam and etc. proves that trade existed with well-established market system. The Sangam times morning and evening markets existed with caravans, security, marts, guilds and the commerce of chamber. In the Inland trade salt and paddy was considered as the medium of exchange, In External trade cotton and sandal as considered as medium of exchange.

Introduction

The ancient Tamil people classified the lands where they lived into five categories according to their characteristics and nature. They named the mountain region 'Kurinji', the forest region as 'Mullai', the field region as 'Marutham', the sea region as 'Neithal' and the desert region as 'Palai'. Apart from the desert region, the other four regions are endowed with natural resources to carry out business activities. It can be known through Sangam's literary songs that the ancient Tamil people have been making use of these natural resources properly. In each land area, each type of activity was carried out and each type of product was produced. In some lands, products are available naturally without human efforts. Products of land were not grown in other lands because of the land's characteristic nature. Therefore, the Tamil people of that time, who wanted to use the products of all the lands, exchanged one land product with another land product. Elephant, Elephant's Ivory, Honey, Tuber from Hill areas, Deer, Venison, Buffalo, Cow, Beef, Milk, Curd, Buttermilk from Forest areas, Paddy, Cereals, Sugarcane from Field areas, Pearl, Salt, and Fish from Coastal areas were used as exchange products in a domestic barter system of trade. This act led to the emergence of the trading process of trade known as barter and later on currencies emerged as a medium of exchange used for a trading process. Several songs from the Eight Anthologies (Ettuthokai) & Ten Idylls (Pattupattu) which are known as Sangam Literature implies the barter system of trade, things used in barter trade and the role of men and women in this trade. Thus, this article delineates and compares these evidences with the statements of Tamil scholars regarding barter trade in a detailed way.

Keywords : Sangam age ,Barter system , Tondi , Musiri , Puhar , Korkai

Objectives:

- It aims to covers the ancient trade and trade systems
- To study about the ancient ports and trading goods
- To get knowledge about the literary sources which helps to understand the trade in ancient times.
- To know the historical background of trade in Sangam age
- To know about the economy of Sangam people

Geographical Condition and Its Production

The ancient Tamils noted that the habitable parts of the earth surface but divisible into five natural regions they named its region as "tinai"¹. Tinai seems to be derived from my route for it which means a stretch of land. The word Tinai is also used in the sense of the earth in general. Ancient Tamil songs observed not only that the land surface of the earth considered of five natural regions back the manifestation of human life corresponding to the characteristics of the milers in which each tribe has grown. The five regions called Kurinji, Mulai, Marudham and Neithal. They were the people of the mountains (kurinji) of the forest (mullai), of the fertile (marudham) and of the coastal (Neithal) and the Palai or the arid desert tract, all these four kinds of natural regions are found in Tamil country².

Tholkappiyam say's

*"Mayon meya sarurai ulakamum,
ceyon meya maivarai ulakamum,
vendan meya tim punal ulakamum,
varunan meya Perumanal ulakamum,
mullai kurijci, marutam, neytal,
enac solliya muraiyan collavumpatume"³*

All these five kinds of natural regions are found in the Tamil country, Though on a small scale and as the South Indian spread from the region to region. They develop these stages of culture which each region was calculated to produce Anthropologist has noted three great regions as the three great areas of characterization of three different kinds of human culture. These kinds of culture have been called Mediterranean. The Meditrarian culture to use Tamil terms is that of neydal, the alpine, that of kurinji and the nordic that of mullai. The stages of culture through which man has passed or are then the hunter, the nomad, the pastoral the littoral and the agricultural the last including the industrial stage and the correspond to the kurinji, the palai, the Mullai, the Neithal and the marudham regions. The physical characteristics of each region provided the stimulus for the development of the special culture of that region.

The Kurinji

The kurinji denoted hilly,mountains regions with deserve forest, it is considered the earliest region inhabited by south Indian man was the Kurinji. They were the people of mountain. The region also named as Sirukudi⁴. The tract where the low stands hills resulting from the long ago erosion of the Deccan Plateau by the never failing yearly monsoon rains. The early man could easily find shelter from the sun and the rain and from his animal foes, behind boulders and within natural cows they had not then invented pots for storing water, but when the natural spring failed them. they found reservoirs of water in the rocky pits which abounded in the hilly region⁵.

Mullai Region [the herdsman]

When human beings multiplied in the Kurinji region and the available food supply began to shrink, they migrated to the next region, the Mullai or forest land. By that time they had taken the next great step is the adventure of human culture, the domestication of animals like the Buffalo, Cow the Sheep and the goat that dogs are so used to Hunting having already been domesticated in the car over stage. This lot to the second region the ladder of human progress, the pastoral culture, cattle breed feast, especially in the moonlight, and hence I rose the institution of private property, the position of which circulated the fusion of tribes into families.

The primitive form of what may be called natural marriage comes out of the union of lovers at first sight, unimpeded by the observance of marriage rights and formalized Molly by the presentation of a tali of Tigers teeth and a garment of strung leaves for the waist, was called kalavu in early Tamil literature and was in the pastoral regions slowly replaced by Karpu in which the marriage ritual proceeded the consummation of Love⁶.

Neydal Region (Fisher folk)

The next region to be occupied was the Neydal the sea bound. The broad bosom of the sea having and falling as if animated, invited the adventure-loving men with broad chests and finely chiselled muscles to court its dangers and venture forth to obtain its inexhaustible wealth of tasty fish from fishing near the coast, they went on to fish in deeper waters. The first boats were primitive canoes made of two logs bound together to form a float and the toni, wieter work basket covered with hide coracte followed lurk. The chief produce of this region was fish and fish. The paradancer had to take them inside and barter them for other forms of food snuff.

Marudam Region (Ploughmen)

Marudam regions the low, lying plains between the mullai and the neydal and that was at the close of the Paleolithic period with Neolithic age began modern civilization. The domestication of plants especially the rice, the plantain, the sugar cane and the mango which probably began in the relatively settled life of the pastoral stage was completed in this. The availability of the land in this region taught the ulavan, the plowmen of the manclam, the method of raising cereal after plowing the ground, and the easy slope of the land in the margin of the lowers taught the vellalar, the rulers of the flood, the method of conveying the life giving water to their fields. Beyond the trough of the river bed lived the karalar. The rulers of the clouds, those who stored rain water in tanks and converged them to fields through irrigation channels or lifted the water from wells and springs by water left and irrigated the plots they cultivated.

Barter system

The Tamils who lived during the Bartering period exchanged daily necessities like rice, lentils, salt, milk, curd, fish, meat etc, without paying for them. Bartering is the act of giving one thing and taking another in exchange for it. Only the most expensive items were bought with cash. Bargaining was common in towns and villages, although in large cities and towns there was a system of cash-for-purchase. Bartering took place not only in Tamil Nadu but in all countries of the world in ancient times. In Tamil Nadu, as in other countries, there was a barter system in ancient times. We know this from the Sangam texts. Mudukuttanar says that the shepherd gave milk and exchanged it for grain⁷. The pastoral woman used yoghurt to make buffer and ghee. Uruthirang kannanar, a bite-eater, says that he changed the yoghurt and got the grain and cooked the food⁸.

The nets were cast and the bait caught. Oram pokkiyar says that they took their favorite fish to the village of Pan ladies and converted it to pulses and grains⁹. Neithal lang bucks produced salt in coastal salt marshes. The narrator says that the salt merchants brought paddy in cattle carts and exchanged it for salt. Ummaravar woman who sold salt in the streets and she says that the mother converted the salt into rice¹⁰. Paddy and salt are straight forward Kadiyalur Uruthiran Kannanar says that he drove in the valleys. The Satan says that the Baddadawi's daughter has fallen to the sea the fetch of the fall Banana says that the molecule of the mouth

was built in the wake of the nearby society¹¹. The operable woman's says the flower soldiers in the streets. Pandian maran says in his poem that a woman sells a single flower for bartering of paddy. The commoner says that the fathers gathered and took the tusks of the elephant they had hunted in the forest to the liquor store and drank the liquor according to madattamak kanniyar¹².

Ancient ports

Trade was carried out on ships by sea. Seaborne trade was more prevalent than land trade. Sea trade was cheaper and faster than land trade, so shipping trade was successful. Maritime trade requires ships. Shipbuilding industries took place in every country. Ports are needed in respective countries to move ships across the seas and import and export goods. Thus, port towns arose in every country. Rivers were at the mouths of the river where they joined the sea; There were also few harbors without estuaries. Lighthouses were erected at every major port. Importers and exporters are charged customs duties at ports. The tolls belong to the kings of their respective countries.

Koltan durai

The port of Kolindurai was on the south bank of the north Pennayar at the mouth of the river. To the west of this is elore on the bank of North Pennai river. During this period they belonged to Andhra Pradesh. But there were Tamil Nadu even in ancient times during the kadai sangam period. At that time Thondai was a port city and the Tamil names were Kollanthurai, Nellore and Pennayaru. The was on the east coast of the northern tip of Palanthamil. The name Kollanthurai dates back to A.D called the Kandagopalapattinam in the 10th century .It is stated in the inscriptions that it was the Kandagopalapattinam in KollamThe port kollam is not mentioned in the Sangam poems.

Eirpattinam (chopattinam)

Eirpattinam was the main port of Thondai during the Sangam period. It was also known as chopattinam, cho means wall. The department got its name from the fact that it was surrounded by a wall. later it was known as Marakkanam. The Greek text Periplus refers to this pattinam is another form of chopattinam¹³. Nallur Nattathanar of the intermediate county mentioned this hunger in the small arm he sang. He says, in Sirupanatrupadai, It seems to have been brought from the country as it is said to have come from charoka, Ingredients such as agarwood and Sandalwood came from the land of the deaf at that time. They say that the tree is the knot that was shaped like a sleeping camel¹⁴. That is what kadlyalur uruthirang Kannanar says Due to this, he says horses and North Indian goods were among the items that landed in the ports during the famine. He does not say that Vadavalam (Northern goods) are still Bharath (sailors) claim that there were dirty streets here and the shipping trade seems to be going well here. The lighthouse here is best described by Kadiyalururuthirang Kannanar(He is the one who sang Kavirippompattinam in pattinappalai). It iscoustomauy to set up Lighthouses in ports so that ships sailing in the sea would know the location of the port and join the Shore in Iraq. This is what he says about the lighthouse in the port of Eyirpattinam. According to Ilangovadikal's Silapathikaram, a lighthouse was built at that time in the port of kaviripompstinam¹⁵.

Arikalmedu (Poduke)

Eir Pattinam (a port south of Marakkanan during the Sangam period. It was now two miles in the South of Pondicherry. Recent excavation have shown that it must have been the trading road of the Greeks who came to Tamilnadu in the first century. Greek text periplus refers to the Pattinam of Podaoke¹⁶) 60 km north of Kamars (kavirippompattinam) on the east coast of Tamil nadu. The sea trade between Tamilnadu and Romapuri expanded during the reign of Amasandavan and it appears that Arikalmedu must have been the merchant road of the Greek merchants at that time.

The site was excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1945. Many of the artifacts found here date back to the Greeks in the 1st century AD. It was used as a warehouse and was brought from the Mediterranean between 45 and 50BC. Discover posts and jars of ambore There were broken it seems that the king of that time drank the liquor be brought. He congradulate Turfiya nanmaran of Pandian Makinar

Fragments of Greek lanterns made of hol clay and also found in Arikalmedu, according to Sanskrit literature. The Greek lamps says Nakkiror.

Kaverippompattinam

Kaverippompattinam, Poompuhar, Tranquebar, purananuru explains the export and import goods in this trade centre. Piliny and Periplus refer to puhar as kahoris. There was a colony for Yavanas or Greeks called Yavanarirukai¹⁷. The date for this center is 3rd century BCE. Kilaryara part of kaveri pattinam Here beads, semiprecious stones and amphorae pieces are excavated significant discovery's an shaped brick structure exposed in the ancient channel of Kaveri at Kilaiyar which is now completely sited up carbon date.

Tondi

In Sangam text it is mentioned as chera city. Sangam literature says Tondi was surrounded by paddy fields. In foreign notices it is explained a well known trade center are many Yavana ships visited here. Silapatigaram and Agananuru Speaks about Tondi. The epic silapathikara also mentions this port of Tondi. According to silaphikaram, sailors carrying spices from over seas such as agrawood, sandalwood, silk, nutmeg . cinnamon, saffron and campor arrived at the port of Tondi with the help of the wind and sent the imported goods from tondi to Madurai, the capital of the pandian. The goods which are exported to Tondi and from Tondi it went to Madurai". According to silaphikaram, the goods imported from lower sea islands and imported into the port of Tondi are akhil, tugil, aram, vaasam, karuppuram etc.

Korkai

This is mentioned in Sangam literature in various ways. It is known for pearl Port trade center , and capital for pandian rulers, it is situated on the banks of Tamirabarani river. Its early date is 7th century BCE Black and red ware potsherds with Brahmi letters are excavated. In ancient times, Korkai was a well known center of pearl fishery; it is mentioned often in the Sangam literature and in classical western literature. Ptolemy refers to the place as Kolkhai and says that it was an emporium. The *Periplus* says that the Pandyan kingdom extended from Comari towards the north, including Korkai, where the pearl fisheries were.

Marungur pattinam

Marungur pattinam also known as Marungai, is a port on the east coast of Pandi. Nakeerar, a pandi folklorist, says that the market street of Marungur pattinam was rich in lakes (salt marshes) and gardens. He also says that the crows sat on the sailing poles of the ships parked in the harbor, catching the prawns that had been piled up in the store. To the west of Marungur pattinam was the town of Oonur which depended on it. The wall of oonur was fortified and there were paddy fields around conur, says Maruthan ilanakanar. In the chola country, the port area of the famous Kavirippoompatinam was divided into two parts Maruvurpakkam and Pattinapakkam, as well as Marungur pattinam.

Musiri

The name Masiri came from the fact that the pepper was taken from the port. The name of the city is Musiri. It was destroyed by flood in the middle of the 14th century A.D. Heavy rains in 1341 A.D so, the Periyar river flooded and the Mussiri famine subsided, resulting in new lagoons and sand dunes (sand island). After the Sangam period, Musiripattinam was renamed as Muirikkodu, makodri and magodaipattinam¹⁸

Kutta Nadu

People who lived here are called Kuttuvar. They were wealthy people. Their main occupation was Bead making and cattle breeding. By this these people are wealthy. These beads might have been bought by Yavana trader Ptolemy mentions this Kuttunadu. Ptolomy speaks about Nelkienda. Aynadu is mentioned by Ptolomy¹⁹, This Aynadu people may also involve in trade with them.

Trading Goods

Hence, the people from the West and the East naturally had a passion and fascination for the articles of Tamil Nadu and visited the ports and cities frequently. The result was a flourishing trade between the Tamils and people from the West and the East. The activities in the busy centers of trade in Tamil Nadu reveal the intensity of business carried on in the export and import fronts. Some of the items exported from Tamil kingdoms during the Sangam age can be identified when we gauge through the literature of that period and the notices of foreign authors. When the supply was more than the demand and when the excess products were eagerly consumed by foreigners, then the surplus was exported for much more revenue. None of the items which were in short supply were exported since in those days the people, particularly merchants, were never greedy.

Pepper:

Of all the items pepper, the king of spice, had been the much sought after article in western countries. This commodity grew in abundance in Taminadu, particularly in the Chera country, and it was of the highest quality. Ships from Ocelis, a port city in the Red Sea, after forty days of sailing reached Muciri. All ships from the emporia of Alexandria connected Rome and India. The main reason for the shipping was to import pepper from India because three-fourth of the articles were pepper. Pepper was exported to China and other Far East countries, the business of pepper was most lucrative and so the merchants from Arab, Venice and Genoa took it over in later days. West Europeans too were lured to this profit channel and so they sent Columbus, it is said, to find a way to India, but he ended up discovering America. Later, Portuguese Vasco da Gama and the Dutch reached the Kerala borders in 15th and 16th centuries for pepper trade²⁰. During the Elizabethan period, Britishers came to India and other Far East countries for such kind of business and ended up colonizing many places.

Tayankannanar of Sangam age says: "The beautiful ships of Greeks reached the plentiful Muciri on the banks of Culliyam Periyaru of Cheras with gold and returned with pepper" the same trade has also been mentioned by another poet in Puram too. In the North, people called pepper by the name 'marici', a corrupt form of its growing place Muciri. Since the Greeks and Romans were fond of this spice and had spent a large amount for buying and were also very crazy in using them, the article pepper was called 'yavanapriya'.

Pearls:

Pure glittering white pearls were found in large quantities in the seas surrounded by Tamil kingdoms. Korkai in Pandyan country was famous for pearl-fishery". These pearls had attracted the ladies in Greece and Rome. Hence, pearl export had an important place in the trade of Sangam age. Pearl is called 'muttu' in Tamil. Sangam literature very often mentions the pearls found in Korkai and other places 'Corkaiyam perunturai muttu and such other phrases describe the pearls found in Korkai". Korkai is situated where the River Tamparaparani joins the Bay of Bengal.

Hence the pearl found there was named in Arthashastra as "Tamaraparanyam"²¹. The pearls which were sold in Pantar, a place near Muciri, have found a place in Sangam verse as 'Pantar payanta palarpukal muttam' Pantar in Arabic means market place and hence this must be a place involving a large number of Arab merchants stayed for their business."

Gems:

Apart from the pearls all the other gems too were available in Tamil Nadu for which the foreign merchants made a beeline in the harbors of Puhar and other places. The gem was in various colors viz. Blue, green, brown of which the blue one was quite attractive. Being the color of the sea waters, this gem was called "aqua marine" by the Romans. This gem was available only in Punnatu and in no other place. The aqua marine gem got from the mines of Punnatu had verymuch attracted the Romans and the gem merchants imported these beautiful stones in Rome. Pliny has mentioned about Punnatu and also its mines,"

Ivory:

Ivory is one of the precious articles of the Tamil kingdoms exported during the Sangam age. The Chera and Kongu countries had plenty of this material for there were a series of hills in them which were the dwelling places for elephants. Even in other parts of Tamil Nadu wherever there were mountains it seemed that the elephant population was of enormous size. A poet while praising Ay Antiran, a chieftain, for his munificence of obliging the have-nots with hoards of elephants, says that the tuskers in his hills might have delivered at least ten calves at a single time ". The synonyms for elephant were yanai, kaliru, velam, kari, piti, tumpi and ipam .

Clothes:

Cotton was grown in plenty in many parts of Tamil Nadu. The clothes from Tamil Nadu were sent to many parts of the world. The nice varieties (muslin) were exported to Greece and Rome. It seems that they were sent to far Eastern countries because the cotton was not cultivated there. Arthashastra indicates that the clothes from Tamil Nadu went to Pataliputra of the Mauryas in the 3rd century BCE it uses the word 'Maturam' for clothes which means the cloth produced in the city of Madurai, the capital of Pandyan country.

Salt

"Unsalted product in the trash' is the salt that gives the fruit flavor, hence it was called bronze immersion. salt has been used as food by humans since ancient times. Salt is needed not only for food but also for pickles, eggs (salt continent) etc, so they madesalt in all countries. It is also used in Tamil Nadu as a salt product, a commercial product and a food item. The Neithal land of the coast surrounded Tamil Nadu and there were occasional salinities. Therefore, Tamil Nadu has never had a salt famine they made beds in salt marshes and made salt water by pouring sea water on them. The seawater that is poured into the beds evaporates in the sun and the salt blooms". The salt was placed up in piles after the salt had formed in the brine. Then, they looked forward to the salt merchant coming to buy salt.

Umanar (salt merchant) loaded the paddy in cattle carts. Bartering took place heavily at that time. So, they exchanged goods without giving or buying. They loaded the salt into carts that changed the look of the paddy. They came with their lives and people and bought salt and drove the cart with the family from town to town selling salt

Conch

The conch got more than the sea surrounded all three sides of the Tamil Nadu. There are two types of conch, the left handed conch and the right handed conch. The right handed conch availability is awesome. So the right handed conch is more expensive. The conch were cut into bangles and made into bangles. At that time all the Tamil women wear conch bangles on their hands. Wearing glass bangles was not a custom at the time. Wearing conch was considered auspicious from princesses who lived in palaces to the poor who lived in hunts, everyone wore conch bangles at that time. Thus bangle industry in conchs went better. The conchs were taken from the seas, conchs were produced just as pearls are made in the ocean. The flowers and designs on the bracelets were beautifully set up with lines. Sangam literature says that the bangle industry took place there. The name veluparppan that will work for those who are professionals in cutting conch nets

Jaggery And Sugar

Jaggery and sugar were made during the sangam period. Sugarcane is needed to make jam and sugar. Sugarcane was also cultivated. Therefore sugarcane and jaggery were important agricultural and productive products in those days. It is said that a long time ago in the royal dynasty of Yarasanda Adiyaman brought sugarcane from the heavens and cultivated it in Tamil Nadu. Thus the Adiyaman king of the kongu country brought sugarcane from some distant land and first to cultivate sugarcane in Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

The research paper is deals with the historical prospective of trade in ancient times and it covers the ancient trade between tamil nadu and other parts of the world . the trade in Sangam period was both internal and external it was conducted by means of barter system. Sangam work refer to grage traders and their markets caravans etc .this paper also try to explain the details of geographical features , barter system ,trading ports and goods etc.

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