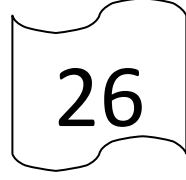


## Musical Inscriptions – A Historic view



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### Abstract :

History is an attempt made by man through centuries to reconstruct , describe and interpret his own post Inscriptions are considered to be the most reliable source of ancient history as they are devoid of myths. The study of inscriptions is called Epigraphy and it also includes paleography the study of ancient writing . Inscriptions form an essential and prime component especially when we study ancient and medieval period . Inscriptions and books are the best examples of written sources of History . They are the piece evidence of the past . Musical inscriptions are very important for historians and musicologists . As the are engraved on rocks they survived till date . Indian Inscriptions are engraved on stone or other durable materials are an important sources from the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> Century . The Arachalur rock- cut cave musical inscription of 2<sup>nd</sup> century , Kudumiyan malai musical Inscriptions of 7<sup>th</sup> century and tāla inscriptions of 14<sup>th</sup> century shows the highly evolved technical knowledge in music of the ancient Tamils The Inscriptions corroborate information about data and location of the significant events , trace details of royal genealogies, and provide an insight into early Indian political structure , religious and cultural practices.

**Key-Words :** Kudimiyan Malai Inscriptions - Arachalur Inscriptions - Simha Nandana Tala - Subthasuladi Tala – Parivadini – Raja Raja Chola Inscriptions

### Introduction :

Every country has a rich cultural heritage . Europe, China, India are places with very rich cultural heritage. History is a record of past and it has to be understood properly . Culture is a very big field comprising among others dance heritage , musical heritage , linguistic heritage and so on . History is at the mercy of sources . You cannot have history without proper understanding of sources Each region has preserved sources which tell us about our past. One of such important source is inscription. Inscriptions are Primary and literary sources of research .

### Inscriptions:

An Inscription is a writing carved into something made of stone or metal. They depicted important events of the past . Inscriptions are important specimens for chronology because they are often physical objects contemporary in execution with their contents. . Inscriptions and books are the best examples of written sources of History . They are the piece evidence of the past . Musical inscriptions are very important for historians and musicologists . As they are engraved on rocks they survived till date .

### Arachalur Musical Inscriptions :

Arachalur inscription is a rock- cut cave musical inscription. This rock – cut historical site of musical inscription is situated at the south of Nagamalai hills in Arachalur Reserve forest near Erode in TamilNadu. It belongs to 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD. There are three Jain inscriptions in Arachalur on a Jain bed . Out of three two inscriptions have musical syllables in Palindromic pattern that is which are the same when read from left to right and vice versa and they are also the same when read from the top to the bottom and vice versa . These inscriptions show that “Mnian Vannakkan Devan Sathan “ has organized



this musical syllables . This inscriptions belong to the same period as Silapadikaram which belongs 2 nd Century AD. It is much earlier than kudumiyanmalai inscriptions in music.

### Arachalur Inscription



### Musical syllables of Arachalur Inscription :

Ta Tai Taa Tai  
Ta

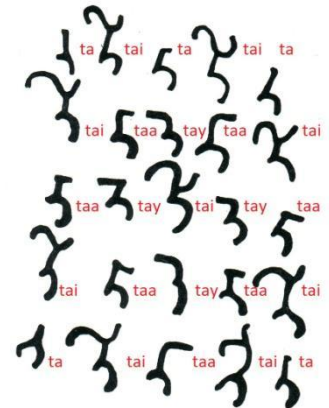
Tai Ta Te Ta  
Tai

Ta Te Tai Te Ta

Tai Ta Te Ta Tai

Ta Tai Taa Tai  
Ta

### Inscription



### Kudumiyan malai musical Inscriptions :



kudumianmalai Inscriptions are one of the important musical inscription which are the main source of music of early period . It is situated in Pudukottai district in Tamil nadu which belongs to seventh Century AD . This Inscription was written on the rocks of the cave Temple of kudumiyan malai . It is a celebrated musical inscription as it gives information on classical ragas of 7 th Century.

The area covered by the Inscription is 13'x 14'. In the history of Indian music it is one of the early source in music. It is the only treatise now extant between 4<sup>th</sup> century AD to 14<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### Significant feature of kudumiyanmalai inscription i:

First there are 7 sub sections . These sections has words like Madyama grame , Sadj a grame, Panchmi , Kaisiki Madyama .

Secondly musical technical terms now used in today's musicology are engraved but with a different intensity and meaning. It is said it has been carved in the period of Mahendra Pallavan who was the ruler in that place during 7<sup>th</sup> century.

### Parivadini :



Parivadini is inscribed inside a rectangle in the cave temple . This rectangular shaped Parivadini is inscribed at five different cave temples within Pudukottai district . Researchers identified this parivadini as the musical instrument Vina.

### Tāla Inscriptions :

#### Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple Inscription :

In music tāla comes under one of the main divisions . These tāla inscriptions shows the rhythmic knowledge of musicians and Architects .Many Tāla inscriptions like Simhanandana tāla Inscription , Saptha tala Inscription , 35 Tālas Inscription are seen in Tamil Nadu temples. For example Simhanandana tāla and Saptha suladi tāla inscriptions are seen in Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple and 35 Tāla inscriptions are seen in Nellaiappar temple in Thirunelveli .

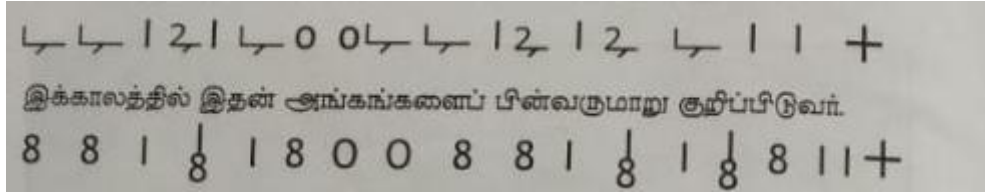
#### Simhanandana Tāla Inscription :

Simhanandana Tāla is engraved on a pillar in the form of a chakra in Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple. It is seen before the Nataraja in the inner Prahara of Lord Somasunundaresvara. In front of Lord Nataraja Statue there are two pillars and this Simhanandana tāla inscription is seen on the Left side stone pillar .\Simhanandana Tāla is the 37<sup>th</sup> tāla in 108 Tāla. The total count of the tāla is 128 beats . This is the longest tāla in 108 tāla scheme . It has 18 angas.

#### Simhanandana tāla :



## Tāla Angas of Simhanandana tāla :



Guru + Guru +Lagu + Plutam + Lagu + Guru + Drutam + Drutam

Guru + Guru + Lagu + Plutam +Lagu + Plutam + Guru + Lagu + Lagu + Kakapadam

Total Count : 8 + 8 +4 + 12+ 4 + 8 + 2 + 2 +8 + 8 + 4 + 12 + 4 + 12 + 8 + 4 + 4 + 16 = 128.

In this inscription of tāla chakra it is mentioned as **Simhanandana tālu** . It is in the form of a circular flower like structure . As a whole it looks like Lotus flower with three layers of Petals . Each layer has 17 petals . In the center there is a plain circular plate like structure followed by small sized petals carved around it and the next layer with median sized petals and the third layer with big sized petals . In the center of the circular plate + symbol ( kakapadam ) is engraved . From the center there are no markings in the first and second layer of petals . The third layer of 17 big petals has markings of rest of the 17 symbols other than kakapada of Simhanandana tāla. This chakra establishes the Architect's brilliance and creativity . This work belongs to the Nayaka period of 14 th century.

## Saptha suladi tāla inscriptions :

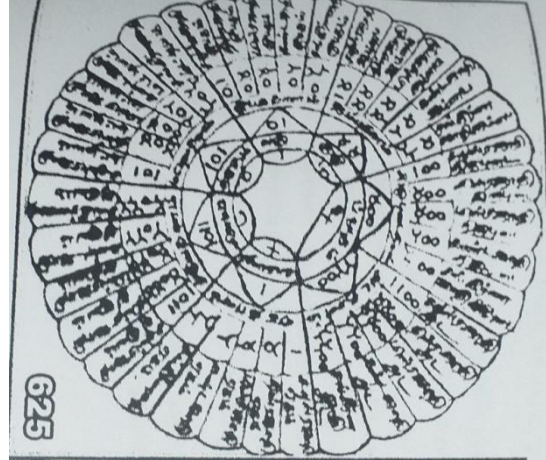
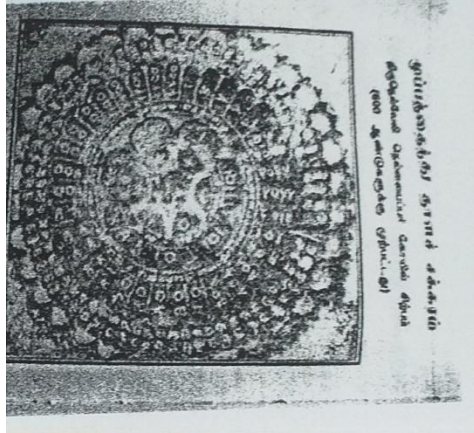
This Inscription is also seen in Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple It is seen before the Nataraja in the inner Prahara of Lord Soma sunundareshvara. In front of Lord Nataraja Statue Simhanandana tāla is engraved on the left side pillar and on the right side pillar Saptha suladi tāla is engraved . It is also circular lotus flower like structure with many layers of petals . On the top of the Inscription it is written as “ Saptha Suzhādhi tālam gnyaru “



## Saptha suladi tāla inscriptions

Center of the flower is like a circular plate and around it big sized five petals with the symbols of Jāthi and around it 35 tāla symbol is engraved This is also belongs to 14 th Century .

## Thirunelveli Nellaiappar Temple Inscription :



### 35 tāla Inscription - Thirunelveli Nellaiappar Temple

There is another tāla inscription seen at Nellaiappar Temple Thirunelveli . It is detectable in the outer Praharam of Nellaiappar temple in front of Arumugar sannidhi . It is found on the floor in front of two Dvārabālaka of Arumugar sannidhi . It also explains 35 tāla more in detail than Meenakshi Amman temple in Madurai . It is also flower like Chakra with 6 layers of petals . The Center is found with a star like structure around the six corners of the star Shadānga symbol is engraved . In the next layer the names of shadanga is engraved . In the third layer of seven petals symbols of saptha tāla followed by the names of saptha tāla symbol is carved . The fifth layer is engraved with 35 tāla symbol which is followed by 35 tāla symbol names. So totally 6 layers are seen . This also belongs to 14th Century AD..

### Musical Inscriptions of Rajaraja Chola :

There are many Inscriptions on music engraved during the period of Rajaraja Chola at Brahadeeshvarar temple , Tanjore belongs to 10th century AD .. It speaks about the musician, tamil singer, dancer , and the musical Instrument .

“ Aāriyam pādovor moovarkku Tamil pāda oruvanukku

Vānarāsi Koothanukku Kotti Matthalam “

( .S.1.1 , Vol .11 - Part . 111 .No . 66 of 1896 )

Another Rajaraja Chola Inscription shows astounding information's about musicians , musical instruments , musical Instrumental players and dancers. The Inscription shows the following

“Nilaiyai udukkai vāsippam oruvanum ivarhalile

Nilaiyai kottimatthalam vāsippam oruvanum

Kootham ven kădanăna Sivanukku

Koothan Thillai Kootyhanana Gnana sivanukku

Udukkai Vāsikkum Udukkai vijădiranana Soma sivanukku

Kotti matthalam vāsikkum gunapugazh Marudanăna Sivasivanukku”

(.S.1.1 , Vol .11 - Part . 111 .No . 65 - P 254 )

## Conclusion:

Indian Inscriptions are engraved on stone or other durable materials are an important sources from the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> Century . From the above Musical inscriptions of Tamil Nadu from second century to 14 th century contribute extensive information on highly developed musical knowledge of musicians, architects and sculptures, musical growth and development, political status OF Tamil Nadu. The second century Arachalur inscriptions showing the musical knowledge of that period is incredible . Kudumianmalai inscriptions of 7th century gives information about the highly evolved technical musical knowledge of that period The Tăla inscriptions of Meenakshi Amman temple and Nellaiappar Temple are highly commendable..The Inscriptions corroborate information about data and location of the significant events, trace details of royal genealogies, and provide an insight into early Indian political structure , religious and cultural practices.

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