

## Scientific approach to Archaeology as revealed from Thirukkural.

**Dr.S.Vasanthi**  
**Deputy Superintending Archaeologist (Retd)**  
**Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology**  
**sreevasanthi@gmail.com,**



### Abstract:

Thirukkural was written in Tamil around the end of the first century B.C.E., during this period outstanding didactic poetry primarily to Jainism were written. Tirukkural was not only a book that preaches moral and art of living leading a life of virtue in the society. Apart from these facts the condition of social and economic perspectives are prevalent in Thirukkural. The recent developments in the field of archaeology, epigraphy of Tamil country needs to be reviewed in the context of the great work Thirukkural. It is right time to analyse and review the old available data's with the light of currently available material and interprets them with the present scenario with historic perspective.

In this context it is highly essential to study the formation of town and Urbanization in ancient Tamilagam. In ancient Tamil country the formation and urbanization centers mainly on the ecology, the economic system, political and social conditions of the region where the development of town and urban centers evolved. The increased food supply, increase in population, craft specialization, marketing and trade, social statues, administration and warfare and defense are the primary factors for emergence of towns and urban centers. Towns emerged precisely at the moment when the agriculturist started producing a surplus agriculturist product. The migration and raise in population in the urban centers mainly due to economic factors. The trade and crafts are the main factors for the urban economic growth.

The urban centers mostly depended on the craftsmen production of articles which formed important items of trade both inland and foreign trade. It is the right time to bring out the development of town and urban centers as revealed from the great work Thirukkural. This paper tries to high light the features in connection with town and urbanization with the content present in Thirukkural along with other Archaeological and Epigraphical materials.

The Ancient Tamil Land has been divided into six main divisions such as Tondainadu, Cheranadu, Pandiyanadu, Cholanadu and Kongunadu. These regions were ruled by kings of Chera, Chola, Pandya dynasty. There were number of reference about their capitals, town under their control. The archaeological exploration and excavations conducted in the respective capital and towns of Chera, Chola, Pandya namely the at Karur (in Karur district), Uraiur (Trichy district) and Kaveripoompattinam Nagapattinam district), Korkai(Thoothukudi district) and Thondi (Ramanathapuram district) and the antiquities recovered from the excavations certainly proved the factor on the raise of town and urban centers.

The variety of antiquities recovered falls in the major division such as Potteries, Terracotta objects, Metal objects, Shell objects, Textiles arrow heads made up of Bone Deer horns etc., The pottery includes black and red ware, russet coated painted ware, rouletted sherds, red ware, black ware, coarse red ware potteries, potsherds with graffiti marks and writing with early Tamil script, conical jars and Amphorae pieces. The shell bangle pieces, shell, paste, terracotta and semiprecious stone beads, terracotta objects such as

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gamesmen, spindle whorls, dice, Hip-hop etc., are the other antiquities discovered from the excavation sites. The scientific study of the collected materials have also made the time span of the archaeological sites more precise and authentic. This will further strengthen the facts mentioned in Thirukkural. This kind of study definitely focuses the cultural richness of the ancient Tamil Society as gleaned from Thirukkural which is considered to be a moral literary work. This kind of study have to be taken up in future to bring out the ancient glory of the Tamil people in the arena of international community.

### Introduction:

Thirukkural was written in Tamil around the end of the first century B.C.E., during this period outstanding didactic poetry were written. Tirukkural was not only a book that preaches moral and art of living leading a life of virtue in the society. Apart from these facts the condition of social and economic perspectives are prevalent in Thirukkural. The recent developments in the field of archaeology, epigraphy of Tamil country needs to be reviewed in the context of the great work Thirukkural. It is right time to analyse and review the old available data's with the light of currently available material and interprets them with the present scenario with historic perspective.

Urbanization process was built on several prerequisites which included a well- developed agricultural sector a diversified economy, physical structures like buildings and monuments and complex social structure.

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In this context it is highly essential to study the formation of town and Urbanization in ancient Tamilagam. In ancient Tamil country the formation and urbanization centers mainly on the ecology, the economic system, political and social conditions of the region where the development of town and urban centers evolved. The increased food supply, increase in population, craft specialization, marketing and trade, social statues, administration and warfare and defense are the primary factors for emergence of towns and urban centers. Towns emerged precisely at the moment when the agriculturist started producing a surplus agriculturist product. The migration and raise in population in the urban centers

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mainly due to economic factors. The trade and crafts are the main factors for the urban economic growth. The urban centers mostly depended on the craftsmen production of articles which formed important items of trade both inland and foreign trade. It is the right time to bring out the development of town and urban centers as revealed from the great work Thirukkural. This paper tries to high light the features in connection with town and urbanization with the content present in Thirukkural along with other Archaeological and Epigraphical materials.

There are number of references in Thirukkural about the industries, trade activities, formation of state, warfare etc., the study of antiquities found in the excavations in Tamil Nadu 1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE onwards and comparing them with Thirukkural verses.

In this research article the primary factors for emergence of towns and urban centers such as the craft specialization and social statues are discussed elaborately.

#### **Craft specialization special reference to Iron implements:**

The excavations carried out in Tamil Nadu revealed the occurrence of agricultural and fishing tools such as axes with crossed iron bands for hafting, spade, hoes, pick axes, sickles or bill- hooks, wedges, ploughshare, crowbars, knives chisels, adzes and fishing hooks. The iron weapons included daggers, swords, arrowheads, spearheads and tridents and some of the horse objects such snaffle bits and stirrup were also found in the excavations.

It is very interesting evidence of a sword collected (K.Rajan 2017) from an Iron Age grave at Thelunganur (11° 54' 06" N; 77° 44' 31" E) and Mangadu in Mettur taluk, Salem district revealed that it was made of ultrahigh carbon steel. The radiometric date obtained from the carbon sample collected from the sword places it in the 13th century BCE. The evidence of iron production in India has been securely placed around 2nd millennium BCE and that of Ultra high carbon steel pushed back to 13th century BCE. This sword was made up of Wootz steel produced by a method known in ancient India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. This kind of steel was termed as Ehugu in Tamil. Another interesting study carried out with the crucible furnace unearthed at Kodumanal firmly dated to 6th century BCE based on radio metric dates and on the associated findings like punch marked coins. ((K.Rajan 2017).

The iron ore and implements found in the excavation at Mayiladumparai were investigated with Radio metric dating AMS methods. The usage of iron from this excavated site yielded 2172 BCE.

The higher technological production of iron is known as steel. It is also called as wootz (steel). The iron ore absorbers carbon from the wooden chips in a clay container at the time of heating it. This kind of iron metal is known as wootz steel. This variety of iron steel is known as Ehugu in Tamil. This terminology is used for strong, sharpened implements particularly spear, sword the warfare weapons.

The term Ehugu is identified for iron implements particularly the shining strong sword, spear etc., in Thirukkural. The archaeological excavations conducted in various places in Tamil Nadu also yielded iron implements both used for agricultural tools and weapons. The following Thirukkural verses are taken for study and discussed.

Thirukkural verse no.759.

செய்க பொருளைச் செறுநர் செருக்கறுக்கும் எஃகதனிற் கூரிய தில்.

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English transliterate:

Ceyka poruḷaic cerunar cerukkarukkum

Ehkatanin küriyatu il.

Meaning:

Make wealth, for there is no sharper sword with which to destroy

The pride and confidence of the enemy.

In this verse the name for iron is given as Ehku.

Thirukkural verse no.773.

பேராண்மை என்ப தறுகண்ஓன் றுற்றக்கால் ஊராண்மை மற்றதன் எஃகு.

English transliterate:

Pēraṇmai enpataru kanon rurrakkāl

Ürāṇmai marratan ehku.

Meaning:

It is a soldier's virtue to be fierce and pitiless to the foe, but if he is down, It is virtue of a higher grade to be compassionate.

The Thirukkural verses no 726

வாலொடென் வன்கண்ணர் அல்லார்க்கு நாலொடென் நுண்ணவை அஞ்சு பவர்க்கு.

Transliteration

Vālotuen vankaṇṇar allārukku nulotuen

Nuṇṇavai ancu pavarkku.

Meaning

A man without bravery, carrying a sword is like a wax doll decorated in the fashion of a toy soldier.

குறள் 727:

பகையகத்துப் பேடிகை ஒள்வாள் அவையகத்து அஞ்சு மவன்கற்ற நூல்.

English transliterate:

Pakaiyakattup pēṭikai oḷvāḷ avaiyakattu

Añcu mavanakarra nūl.

The Thirukkural verses no 727 is obviously a re-statement of Kural 726, comparing the learning of a person who lacks the intellectual courage to face an assembly of the learned to the bright and shining sword

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exhibited to no purpose by a eunuch.

From the above verses we can infer that Iron technology was known to the people during the period of Thirukkural. Both iron tools and weapons were manufactured.

குறள் 500:

காலாழ் களரில் நரியிடும் கண்ணஞ்சா வேலாள் முகத்த களிறு.

English transliterate:

Kāl alkalarinnariaṭum kaṇaṇcā

Vēlāḷmukatta kaliru

Meaning

On marshy ground, where the foot sinks, even a fox can beat a mighty elephant, With fearless eyes on his majestic face, and two spears too of ivory.

In this verse the spear is mentioned.

social statues as revealed from Epigraphs:

**Nadukal: (Hero stones)**

Nadukal (hero stone) are generally erected as a memorial stone to remember and commemorate the death of a hero who died in war and cattle conflict protecting the town from enemies; heroes who died saving the village from wild animals. The Hero stones are usually noticed on the place where the martyr passed away, village roads (on a side), the village's boundary, under tree or inside a temple. The Maka Catikkal, Mācatikkal, Māstikkal, Catikkal are the memorial stones erected for the women who died along with their husband.

Evidences of nadukal found in Tolkāppiyam, Sangam literature and other Tamil literatures.

The Sangm works gives the detailed worship of the nadukal. It mentions that they were bathed, decorated with peacock feathers, ghee lamp lighting and offering toddy.

The Thirukkural verses no 771

என்னைமுன் நில்லன்மின் தெவ்விர் பலரென்னை முன்றின்று கல்நின் றவார்.

Transliteration

Enaimun nillanmin tevvirpalar enai

Munninru kal ninravar

Meaning:

Do not challenge my leader; many are those, who stood against him before,

They stand only in stone now.

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Thiruvalluvar in this verse address the enemy prince that it is not wise to fight his leader, because those who dared to challenge him earlier had been killed in the battle and only stone monuments stands to their name. In this verse we see the custom offsetting up memorials in stone for those killed in battle was prevalent and even continued in the days of Thiruvalluvar, which was the practice noticed in many Sangam anthologies. It seems from this reference that the stone memorial was raised on the field of battle and the victors did this as much out of their pride as an act of chivalry towards the opponents who fell in battle.

This kind of study definitely focuses the cultural richness of the ancient Tamil Society as gleaned from Thirukkural which is considered to be a moral literary work. This kind of study has to be taken up in future to bring out the ancient glory of the Tamil people in the arena of international community.

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