



SAIVA MATHAS – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUPPALAIVANESVARA TEMPLE AT TIRUPPALAIVANAM

Subhashini R.

**Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Ancient History and Archaeology,
University of Madras, Chepauk Campus, Chennai.**



ABSTRACT

Tiruppalaivanam was known by several Saiva mathas. They were Danmadavalavan - tirumadam, Anbarkadiyar – matha and Gandagopalamanikka – matha. The mathas at Tiruppalaivanam played vital role in the medieval period in Tondaimandalam. Here in Tiruppalaivanam name of the study area is traced from the early inscription of the Tiruppalaivanesvara temple. The legends are connected with the place name also taken in account to reveal the meaning of the place.

KEYWORDS: *Tirupalaivanam, Saiva mathas, Inscription, Temple.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A matha or mutt is a Sanskrit word that means "cloister, institute or college",¹ and it also refers to a monastery in Hinduism.²

Ascetic life, for profound investigations or the quest for moksha (otherworldly freedom) follows its roots to the first thousand years BCE, in the Vedic tradition.³ The most punctual Hindu cloisters (mathas) are in a roundabout way induced to be from the hundreds of years around the beginning of the BC, in view of the presence of Sannyasa Upanishads with unequivocally Advaita Vedanta content.⁴ The matha convention in Hinduism was likely entrenched in the second 50% of first thousand years CE, as is proved by archeological and epigraphical evidence.⁵

Mathas developed after some time, with the most celebrated and as yet enduring focuses of Vedanta studies being those begun by Adi Shankara. Other major and compelling mathas have a place with different schools of Hindu way of thinking, for example, those of Vaishnavism and Shaivism.⁶ The religious community host and feed understudies, sannyasis (priests, renunciators, monks), masters and are driven by Acharyas. These cloisters are once in a while joined to Hindu sanctuaries and have their sets of accepted rules, commencement and race ceremonies.⁷ The mathas in the Hindu convention have not been constrained to religious examinations, and chronicled proof propose that they were places for assorted investigations, for example, medieval medication, language structure and music.⁸ The term matha is additionally utilized for religious community in Jainism, and the most punctual cloisters close Jain sanctuaries are dated to be from about the fifth century CE.⁹

SAIVA MATHAS

At the close of the twelfth century A.D. a new type of monastic institution viz, the Tamil Saiva mathas were coming into prominence in various parts of the Tamil country. Their number and influence steadily increased. The 13th C.E. was a landmark in the history of Saiva monasticism. Since, almost every

important temple in the land had one or more mathas attached to it, or functioning in collaboration with it. The activities of these mathas were confined to the Tamil country.

The mathas of this type headed by non-Brahmin Saiva preceptors had as their aim the following of the Tamil Saiva Siddhānta philosophy and their doctrinal works. This philosophy with its intense monotheism and Bhakti emphasis was systematized into aspect during the 13th C.E. it was initiated by Meykandar, the author of Siva Gnana bōdam,¹⁰

GUHAIS

As in the case of other mathas, the guhais were also preside over by a regular succession of pontiffs well versed in Saiva Tirumurai. They were also centres of feeding and learning. The disciples were taught to recite the Tirumurai and trained in the art of reading Tiruppadiḡam.

An inscription Rajaraja II¹¹ clearly indicate that the matha undertook to preserve Tevaram texts and recite hymns.

SAIVA MATHA AND TEMPLE

The development of the matha was almost parallel to that of the temple. One can see a gradual rise in the position and the status of the matha in the socio – economic and cultural life of the people very much akin to the development of the temple itself. Striking parallels between them have been noticed in their growing prosperity and influence. Like the temples, the mathas gradually acquired more and more resources by virtue of land grants and other benefactions conferred on them by the people of various social ranks from the king to the commoner.

Saiva mathas were very much connected with the contact of temples. Initially, the mathas was a temporary residence of the saints propagating the Sakthi ideology and was indistinguishable from the temple. By about 9th and 10th centuries, they became prominent having their own identity and often supervising the temple. The mathas in most cases, were located in the boundaries or in the vicinity of the temple complex. Periyapurānam states that the mathas were situated by the side of the temple.¹² Their location within the Siva temples is attested to by a good number of inscriptions like this Tiruppalaivanam temple. Besides, some inscriptions refer to the mathas having been located well within the environs (Tirumadaivilagam) of the temples¹³ and in particular streets.¹⁴

The growth of the mathas into a full fledged religious cultural institution is related to the growth of temples into a complex institution with the increasing of temples, rituals and festivals in the Chola period.¹⁵

Tiruppalaivanam temple had three Saiva mathas namely,

1. Danmadavalavan - tirumatha
2. Anbarkkadiyar – matha
3. Gandagopalamanikka – matha

DANMADAVALAVAN - TIRUMATHA

Which had existed during the period or the time of Vikrama – Chola. The donation was made by the Tiruvekambamudaiyan - Narpattennayira – Nambi for feeding the devotee in the matha during the festival time. It is dated back to 1129 C.E (11th regnal year).¹⁶ The village near to the Tiruppalaivanam namely Kammala madam, it may be the place where the original Daṇmadavaḷavaṇ matha located in those days. The Danmadavalavan may have got changed to Kammala.

The Tiruppalaivanam served as a port (Pulicat) in the 11th and 12th century C.E. The place where the trade activities were taken place. The Vaniya group of people may stay in the nearby place around the port city or town. In the 11th and 12th century CE. the Tiruppalaivanam may have acted as a market place for the traders who trade beyond Tamil country. The people who trade the goods namely Vāṇiyas also patronage the mathas after this the mathas named by Danmadavalavan matha. Like that the matha which is

available in the Tiruppalaivanam also patronage by the Vaniya who named Tiruvekambamudaiyan - Narpattennayira – Nambi. This inscription proves that the place namely Tiruppalaivanam had served an inland port for the traders.

ANBARKKADIYAR – MATHA

There is another matha namely Anbarkkadiyar – matha¹⁷ which was maintained by Andars, who also look after the tirukkotti – mandapa, recite the Tirumurai and cultivate the flower – garden called ‘Pattarchitturaivan - tirunandavanam’. The tax free land was purchased from Medukur alias Keralantaka – chaturvedimangalam in Kolar situated in Paiyur – kottam, a division of Jayangondachola – mandalam, by Periyar Tiruchchirrambalamudaiyan - Seliyavelan of Uranur in Avur – kurram, a sub – division of Nittavinoda – valanadu, which was a district of Chola – mandalam.

The village namely Andar matha which is 5 km from Tiruppalaivanam may be the Anbarkkadiyar – matha, which existed during the time of Rajaraja III. The Andar who had taken charge of the Anbarkkadiyar – matha after the long period came to be called as the matha by their name Andars. Now also the place is called by the name of Andar matha.

The very important message relating to the Tirumurai, the temple has the tirukkotti – mandapa, which was used to recite Tirumurai, where the place the Tirumurai used to recite the place was called as tirukkaikotti – mandapa. This is the evident for us to prove the tirukkaikotti – mandapa was existed during the Rajaraja III period. Now the people or the temple priest have started the padasala for educating the students near the complex. But due to insufficient space they changed the padasala to Mudichchur near Tambaram. This tradition is followed by this temple priest.

GANDAGOPALAMANIKKA – MATHA

The third matha namely Gandagopalamanikka – matha,¹⁸ came out of the land was donated by the sister of Sittammadeviyar, a dancing – girl attached to the temple of Manumasiddhisvaram Udaiya – Nayanar at Nallur, for feeding devotees in the Gandagopalamanikka – matha at Tiruppalaivanam and for the maintenance of a flower – garden. The matha which existed during the period of Rajaraja III’s but 15th regnal year really nurtured such pious attitudes.

REFERENCE

1. **Monier Monier-Williams** (1923). A Sanskrit–English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. p. 730.
2. **Tamara I. Sears (2014)**. Worldly Gurus and Spiritual Kings: Architecture and Asceticism in Medieval India. Yale University Press. pp. 4–9.
3. Matha, Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2009
4. **William M. Johnston** (2013). Encyclopedia of Monasticism. Routledge. pp. 681–683.
5. **Austin B. Creel; Vasudha Narayanan** (1990). Monastic life in the Christian and Hindu traditions: a comparative study. Edwin Mellen Press. pp. 7–11.
6. **Olivelle, Patrick** (1992). The Samnyasa Upanisads. Oxford University Press. pp. 17–18.
7. **Hartmut Scharfe** (2002), From Temple schools to Universities, in Education in Ancient India: Handbook of Oriental Studies, Brill Academic, pp. 172-173
8. **V .Rao** (2002), Living Traditions in Contemporary Contexts: The Madhva Matha of Udupi, Orient Blackswan, pages 27-32
9. **Sears, Tamara I**. Housing Asceticism: Tracing the development of Mattamayura Saiva monastic architecture in Early Medieval Central India (c. 8th – 12th centuries AD). PhD. Dissertation 2004. p. 29
10. **K. A. Nilakanta sastri**, Chōlas, p- 679.
11. **ARE** 471 of 1912
12. **ARE** 350 of 1928-29
13. **Periyapuranam**, 28; 1208, kōyil purattoru maḍam
14. **ARE** 116 of 1918 ; **ARE** 58 of 1932-33.



The Tiruppalaivanesvara temple inscription on the adistana portion of main shrine.