

THE FEATURES DIFFERENTIATING VĒḷIR, VĒNTAR AND LEADERS AMONG TIṆAIMĀNTAR

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to find features to differentiate vĕḷir, vĕntar and leaders among tiṇaimāntar. U.Ve.Saminathaiyar and A.Sa.Gnaanasampanthan have given a list of features attributed to vĕntar. Mu.Rahavaiyangar points out that vĕḷir are outsiders without records regarding their identity. Though they are often named with a prefix or suffix of vĕḷ; there are instances; a few of which are viz. *vandan*, *pindan*, *muuvan*, *pittan*, *kadalan*, *kazhuvul* etc.; where we are left in a dilemma whether the person is a vĕḷ or tiṇaimāntar. So, we have to extract the features pertinent with each category for finalising the lists. A comparative study of the vĕḷir, leaders among tiṇaimāntar and vĕntar is done with the eight anthologies and the ten idylls as the primary source. *Cilappathikaram*, the statements of the commentators and the scholars serve as the secondary source. vĕntar are unique with their luxury owning four types of forces, a fort with a flag bearing a specific emblem hoisted permanently and a specific garland. References related to paddy cultivation and *eyil* with occasional flag without emblem prove to be the identity for vĕḷir. Associating toddy as the main wealth, occupations like hunting, cattle rearing and cultivation of dry crops prove the identity for leaders among tiṇaimāntar. The fact that the defence tree of vĕḷ Nannan was *vaakai* is ascertained in contrast to the statement of Dr.George L.Hart in his article "Early Evidence for Caste in South India".

Keywords: vĕntar, vĕḷir, leaders among tiṇaimāntar, paddy cultivation in ancient Tamilnad, cultivation of dry crops in ancient Tamilnad, fort and *eyil*.

ஆய்வுச்சுருக்கம்

பண்டைத் தமிழருள் வேந்தர், வேளிர், திணைமாந்தருள் தலைவர் என்ற முத்திறத்தாரை வேறுபிரித்தறிய உதவும் கூறுகளை வரையறுப்பது கட்டுரையின் நோக்கமாகும். உ.வே.சாமிநாதையரும் அ.ச.ஞானசம்பந்தனும் வேந்தருக்குரிய அடையாளங்களை மட்டும் கோடிட்டுக் காட்டியுள்ளனர். மு.இராகவையங்கார் 'வேளிர் வந்தேறிகள்' என முடிபு கூறியும் அவரது அடையாளங்களை வரையறுக்கவில்லை. வேள் என்னும் முன்னொட்டு அல்லது பின்னொட்டோடு குறுநிலமன்னர் காண்ப்படினும் பல வேளைகளில் குறிப்பிட்ட தலைவன் வேளா? அன்றித் திணைமாந்தனா? என்று முடிவு செய்ய இயலாமல் தடுமாற வேண்டியுள்ளது. (எ-டு) வண்டன், பிண்டன், மூவன், கடலன், கழுவுள், பிட்டன் ஆகியோர்; இன்னும் பலர் உளர். திணைமாந்தரினின்றும் வேளிரை வேறுபடுத்த அடையாளங்களைக் கண்டறிந்தால் இவர் வேளிர்; இவர் திணைமாந்தருள் தலைவர் என்று பட்டியல்கள் தயாரிக்க இயலும். எட்டுத்தொகை, பத்துப்பாட்டுகளை முதல்நிலைத் தரவாகக் கொண்டு ஒப்பியல் கோணத்தில் முத்திறத்துத் தலைவரையும் பிரித்து விளக்குகிறது இக்கட்டுரை. இரண்டாம்நிலைத் தரவுகளாகச் சிலப்பதிகாரமும், உரையாசிரியர் ஆய்வாளரின் கருத்துகளும் அமைகின்றன. வேந்தரை அவரது ஆடம்பரமான வாழ்க்கை, கோட்டை, நிரந்தரமாக ஏற்றப்பட்ட கொடியிலுள்ள குறியீடு, நிலையான நால்வகைப் படை, சூடிய மாலை ஆகியன அடையாளப்படுத்துகின்றன. வேளிரை நெல் வேளாண்மை, குறியீடில்லா நாட்கொடி ஏற்றிய எயில் ஆகியன அடையாளப்படுத்துகின்றன. திணைமாந்தரை அவரது பாரம்பரியத் தொழில்களான வேட்டையாடல், கால்நடை மேய்த்தல், புன்செய் வேளாண்மை ஆகியனவும்

கள்ளைச் செல்வமெனக் கருதுவதும் அடையாளப்படுத்துகின்றன. முனைவர் ஜார்ஜ் L.ஹார்ட் கருத்தோடு மாறுபட்டு; வேள் நன்னனின் காவல் மரம் வாகை எனும் கருத்தும் நிலைநாட்டப்படுகிறது.

கருச்சொற்கள்: வேந்தர், வேளிர், திணைமாந்தருள் தலைவர், பண்டைத் தமிழகத்து நெல்வேளாண்மை, பண்டைத் தமிழகத்துப் புன்செய் வேளாண்மை, கோட்டையும் எயிலும்.

Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to find features to differentiate vēḷir, vēntar and leaders among tiṇaimāntar. On the basis of linguistics, archaeology, racial evidence and culture; the research paper "Who are the Dravidians" (Symposium on Dravidian Civilisation, 1971) published by Dr.Andrae F.Sjoberg concludes that the Dravidian society was multifaceted. As a proof for that conclusion the classical literature bears three categories of leaders viz. vēntar, vēḷir and leaders among tiṇaimāntar. Mu.Rahavaiyengar points in his statement that vēḷir who are by then capable of ruling the people of Tamilnadu; are outsiders (vēḷir *varalaaru*, 1913). But the records regarding the identity of these vēḷir haven't been available. *Kaa.Govinthan* in his book '*Kizharp Peyar Perror*' is listing the *kizhars*; but their identity is not dealt with (1954). This hardens the task of providing a list of names who could fall under each category. Though vēḷir are often named with a prefix or suffix of vēḷ; there are many instances like *vandan*, *pindan*, *muuvan*, *kadalan*, *kazhuvul*, *Pittan* etc.; where we are left in a dilemma whether the person belongs to the list of vēḷir or to the list of the heads among tiṇaimāntar. So, we have to extract the features pertinent with the vēḷir and the leaders among tiṇaimāntar for procuring and finalising the lists.

Special features of vēḷir are discussed priorly. Their paddy cultivation and bitter terms with vēntar are dealt in detail. Secondly differences between vēḷir and vēntar are drawn. *Oreyil* of the vēḷir and the fort of vēntar are explained briefly. Flags of vēḷir and vēntar are compared. Army of vēḷir and vēntar are contrasted. Similarities between vēntar and vēḷir i.e. *kudai*, chariot, war drum, defence tree and the Vedic cult are pointed out. Crowns, garlands, *kavari* and other luxuries; the special features of vēntar are brought out. Special features of leaders among tiṇaimāntar are dealt finally.

Literature Review

U.Ve.Saminathaiyar has given a list of features attributed to vēntar of all the three clans in his edition of *puranaanooru* (1894). A.Sa.Gnaanasampanthan describes vividly about the luxury enjoyed by them. (*akamum puramum ilakkiyak katturaikal*, "*Thamizhar kanda arasar*", 1991). Mu.Rahavaiyengar points in his statement that vēḷir; the outsiders are capable of ruling the people of Tamilnadu (vēḷir *varalaaru*, 1913). The records regarding the identity of these vēḷir haven't been available. *Kaa.Govinthan* in his book '*Kizharp Peyar Perror*' lists forty one *kizhars*; but their identity is not dealt with (1954).

Materials and methodology

A comparative study is done with the eight anthologies and the ten idylls as the primary source. *Cilappathikaram* and the statements of the commentators as well as the twentieth century Tamil scholars serve as the secondary source.

Special features of vēḷir: Paddy cultivation of vēḷir

The first and foremost feature to identify a vēḷ is his association with paddy cultivation which needs a large amount of water as mentioned in *akanaanooru* (will be mentioned as *akam*. hereafter). '*pazhampal nellin veluur*' (*akam. Manimidai pavalam*, 2007, p.108, h.166) talks about the large heaps of old paddy found in the town of vēḷir. Another hymn talks about a township that belongs to *velir* in the hills where they have lived for generations. It illustrates how the watchmen of the *velirs*' paddy fields; after enjoying a sumptuous meal of tortoise meat caught in the wetlands supposed for the transplantation of seedlings; broke the shells of the snails they caught on the shell of the tortoise (*narrinai*, 2007, p.346, h.280). The quote from *Puranaanooru* (will be mentioned as *puram*. hereafter); '*velir kuppai nellin muththuuru*' (*puram*. Part 1, 2007, p.69, h.24); elaborates the hamlet *muththuuru* the habitat of the vēḷir. It is described that the land is picturised with the abundant quantity of paddy, thereby symbolizing their wealth.

Bitter terms in between vēļir and vēntar

The vēntar usually ablaze the paddy fields of the vēļir to crush them down so that; they accept the supremacy of the vēntar and fear them. They believed in expanding their boundaries through conquests and acknowledgements. Seed beds, water filled fields for transplantation of seedlings, paddy stalks, sheaves of the ripe paddy and paddy storage container of the vēļir are often referred to during the firing projects of vēntar.

Kumattoor kannanaar describes the fertile lands of those who indulge in paddy and sugarcane cultivation being damaged by *Imayavaramban* in *Pathirruppaththu* (will be mentioned as *pathir.* hereafter). The specific text gives us a glimpse of two scenes. Firstly, the readers are taken into a fertile field of paddy and sugarcane with all its greenery. The fields are nearer to the confluence of the river and the sea. There are coconut grooves nearby and a spacious open-yard where the *thunangai* dance performance took place. An old cow visits to eat the fallen *aambal* flowers which have been worn by the ladies. There are the *neythal* flowers which could be found in plenty on the furrow of the sugarcane field, which blocks the oxen from eating the sugarcane plantation. The oxen fight among themselves in the plots of the paddy field which turns the field into a seedbed fit for sowing. So the farmers sow the paddy without ploughing. The second scene describes the destruction done to that scenic land. The above-said natural beauty has been burnt to become a wasteland during the wars in which the Chera king *Imayavaramban* won. Trees with twisted poisonous pods, thorny black *udai* trees and *nerunji* creepers are seen to grow. It shunned the people to pass the area due to fear. Animals couldn't live there because there is nothing green to feed upon (*pathir.*, 2007, p.16-17, h.13). The victory of a venthan is praised in such a way, that he burnt and collapsed everything to prove his supremacy. There are similar narrations of such actions in the hymns *pathir.*15& 19. His prolonged thirst for elongating his region has resulted in the destruction of the cultivation of vēļir.

The Chozha king *Karikalan* is praised for digging ponds and transforming the forest area into land for cultivation in the song *pattinappaalai* L.283-284. Also his deed of transforming the vēļir's fields of cultivation into a wasteland is picturised in L.240-270. This passage too visualises two different scenes. The first one shows the fertile fields of sugarcane and paddy. The *kuvalai* and *neythal* flowers are entangled between themselves in the large ponds which are the habitats of crocodiles. The second scene shows the dense growth of grasses and shrubs like *aruku* and *korai* grown in the place where once ponds reigned. It is after the conquest of *karikaalan* in the battle against the heads of the cultivators. The destruction is to that extent that even a resident of the place could not recognize where in lies the cultivated fields and where the ponds are. It enabled the wild deer to venture there in groups. Wild elephants occupy the previous places of worship. *Kookai* and *aandalai* (owls) took the place of the parrots. The damage is so large that there is no water left. It has turned the *kazhani* (paddy fields) and the *cheru* (wetlands for transplantation) into wastelands.

Pandiyan *Nedunjezhiyan* indulging in the destruction of paddy fields is praised again and again in *Mathuraikkaanji* (will be mentioned as *mathu.* hereafter); as it is considered as the sign of his valor. '*naadu keda eri parappi*' (*mathu.*L.126) is the precise statement that represents the destruction that has been meted out at the hands of the Pandiyan. The term *naadu* in *Cilappathikaaram* (will be mentioned as *cilap.* hereafter) stands for that part of the land which is beside a river that nurtures the paddy and sugarcane fields (*cilap.*, 1975, *naadukaan kaathai*, p.346-353). By setting it ablaze, he destroys the *naadu* and it is praised. The vast area of the country which has never faced scarcity in any means has been swallowed by the red flames lit by the Pandiyan. Destroying the city has given way to the formation of a forest (*mathu.*L.154-156). This forest has no means to sustain life because of the scarcity of water. *kaadu* according to *cilap.* is the part of the country away from the river i.e. the main source of water as illustrated in *kaadukaan kaathai*.

kuthir; the container in which the paddy would be stored has been set ablaze and charred to look black. The place is then infested by an owl's family which symbolically represents the destruction of peace and prosperity and the sprouting of evil. Owl is considered as an evil omen by the Tamils. The ponds which once served as the natural habitat for the beautiful *kazhuneer* flowers has now been turned barren and the flowers are replaced with the grass species like *vaatkorai* and *champangorai*. They have grown to a height which enables even elephants to hide in them. The fields which once ploughed by the oxen to cultivate paddy are now occupied by pigs (*mathu.*L.169-176). This is the status of the place and the people living in

it after Pandiyan's victory. It is high time for *kudapulaviyanaar* to give him the warning to think about the basic needs of the public i.e. the food and water. *Puram*.18 emphasizes that if he wants to do well to the people and gain his reputation; he has to take care of water management.

Differences between vēḷir and vēntar: Oreyil of the vēḷir and the fort of vēntar

The palace of vēḷir is secured with a strong door and surrounded by a huge and lengthy compound wall. This is recorded as *oreyil* and it's different in the case of vēntar. It starts from the size of the castles and goes along with the security. The castles of vēntar would be a fort with several bastions; surrounded by a moat; or a dense reserve forest called *kaavarkaadu*; or both the moat and the reserve forest.

Vēḷ's palace is described as being amidst paddy fields which have the full grown ripe grains with sheaves that are hard. (*puram*.part II, 2007, p.274, h.338) The palace of *Neduvēḷ Aathan*; resembles a ship afloat in the ocean. The phrase *oreyil mannan* denotes the vēḷir who are mentioned as *mannar* by the poets. But this fort of *Neduvēḷ Aathan* has neither a moat nor a reserve forest as that of vēntar. Instead it is recorded that the palace is amidst a large paddy field which procures evidence to the concept that vēḷir are petty kings who indulged in paddy cultivation.

Paranar describes the *eyil* of a vēḷ as having a strong door made from the wood of the *kanaiyam* tree with frames. It is surrounded by a compound wall made of sand and lime. *Puram*.341 refers to the land fit for paddy cultivation and the abundance of water facilities resulting in the fertile gardens. It serves as evidence to identify the *eyil* as a palace of vēḷ.

The absence of bastions in a vēḷ's palace is prominent in *puram*.343. The eagles flew around the palace of the vēḷ while there was a clash between the vēḷ and his enemies. The birds that have flown for a long time take rest by residing on the compound wall while the soldiers are engaged in the war. They took charge of the palace's safety; guarding the same by standing and watching in between the tricky roads of the large town. So it is clear that in a vēḷ's palace there are no bastions, moat or a reserve forest.

There is a simile in a love song that compares the mental state of the sleepless heroine and the vēḷ who has lost his palace to the vēntar in the war. The vēntar who has conquered the palace of the vēḷ has fought him with the help of his allies as a group against the *oreyil mannan*. It is due to the outnumbered state of the soldiers, the efficient elephant corps and the spear of the enemies that the vēḷ was defeated. The vēntar's army has caught the vēḷ's palace due to the collapse of the threshold by the elephant (*akam.niththilakkovai*, 2008, p.160, h.373). The same situation is illustrated in another love poem *Narrinai*43. The *oreyil mannan* resides in his palace securing it from the hands of enemies and at the same time he is waiting for help from other vēḷir. But the expected assistance has not arrived in time leading to the vēḷ to be assured of his sure defeat. He in his last moments of war feared that the elephants would easily break his compound wall which would lead to a plunder of the palace by the forces of his enemy.

Pandiyan *Nedunjezhiyan*'s castle is described vividly in *mathuraikkaanji* as a fort with bastions and many defence engines, which is secured by a tall strong door with frames and a deep moat (*mathu*.L.348-355). The unique nature of the fort of *Aadukotpaattuch cheralaathan* is pictured with a reserve forest encircling the walls which also possess way for the river to flow into the backwaters of the sea. This architect has enabled the elephant to enter the city without passing through the door or threshold of the fort. (*pathir*.53). In *cilap*. *Pandiyan*'s fort with numerous defence engines is elaborated in *puranjeri iruththa kaathai*.

Vēḷ Nannan's palace is exceptionally surrounded by a deep moat with crocodiles as he lived a luxurious life on par with vēntar. (*malaipadukadaam* L.90-93).

Flags of vēḷir and vēntar

There is a flag hoisted atop the palace of vēḷir which is named as *naatkodi*. It serves as a symbol of the victory over his enemies on a particular day. The line '*araiman inji naatkodi nudangum*' (*puram*.341) shows that the palace of vēḷir has no flag hoisted on its mast permanently except on some specific occasions. There is also no specification of any emblem inscribed on that flag. Instead vēntar had specific emblems drawn in their flags. *Puram*.38 specifies the flag with an emblem carried on the top of the elephant that resembles a hill along with the large troops. The three vēntars are called together as; '*korra venkudaik*

kodithther venthir' (*puram.367*) because of the presence of their flag wherever they go. In *cilap. Pandiyan's* fort is elaborated with a permanent flag atop in *puranjeri iruththa kaathai*.

Army of vēļir and vēntar

All the four divisions of the troops of the vēntar are mentioned in both the *akam* and the *puram* poems. They are infantry, cavalry, chariot corps and elephant corps. *puram.351* narrates the unique features of the four fleets of the vēntar. The elephant corps wearing bells; the chariot corps and the cavalry with high flown flags; and infantry assembled in the battlefield resembles the sea that is widespread. This has brought victory to the vēntar. The troops of the vēntar are called; '*maarrarunthaanaai*' (*aingurunooru*, 2009, p.709, h.451) by the heroine while illustrating him in a love song. It denotes the strength of the troops of the king which is quite hard to overcome by any enemy and it would never rest till it grabs hold of success.

Rich vēļir owned an elephant; but they did not have an elephant corps. *Evvi* and his kins are praised for owning an elephant; which is expressed in *puram.24. Nannan* has had an elephant as a symbol of luxury which is mentioned as; '*Chuuzyiaanaich chudarppuun nannan*' (*akam. Kalirriyaanaai nirai*, 2009, p.50, h.15). But there is no evidence for *Nannan* having elephant corps as illustrated by po.ve.Somasuntharaanar. (*paththuppaattu part II*, 2008, *malaipadukadaam*, p.9)

Vēļir had their employees in the fields fighting for them whenever it is needed. *Puram.353* states about their servants skilled in archery being paid with the paddy cultivated in their fields. Also *Kongaanak Kizhaan* who served under the vēļ of *Kongaanam* fought for his leader; won the vēntar and made them pay the tribute to his vēļ (*puram.156*).

Similarities between vēntar and vēļir: kudai and a chariot

An umbrella and a chariot are the common features; a sign of reputation for both the vēntar and the vēļir. An umbrella could be seen fixed in their chariot; which is their mode of transport. The white umbrella possessed by the vēntar is often referred to as '*venkudai*' (*puram.367*). In the battle of *vaakaipparanthalai; karikaalan* has defeated the combined armies of nine *kurunilamannar*. The victory is recorded in *akam.125*. The message bears the evidence of the vēļir owning *kudai* as a symbol of power and majesty. As they lose the battle with *karikaalan* the author says; they've lost their majestic.

The war drum and the defence tree

Both vēntar and vēļir have their own war drums. According to the belief of the early Tamils the sounds of the war drums is the main cause for the victory of the king and has added glory to him. The drums of the vēntar are mentioned often; e.g. *pattinappaalai L.293* and *puram.351*. The significance of a war drum is illustrated in *puram.50. Mosi kiiranaar* praises the benevolence of the chera king for not condemning him when he mistook the war drum drenched with flowers after worship; for a bed and slept. The drums of the *kurunila mannar* are mentioned in; '*Murasu kondu kalam vetta*' (*mathu. L.129*); as *Pandiyan Nedunjezhayan* has won them in the war and is victorious in seizing the drums. The fact revealed is that there is a close relation between *murasu* i.e. war drum and victory in the war.

The vēļir and the vēntar own a tree i.e. *kaavalmaram* as a symbol of their sovereignty. It is worthy to call it a defence tree. The enemies on attack have to cut off this tree to ascertain their victory. A victorious king cut down the enemy's tree of defence which is highly guarded and once cut down; it is with the wood of this tree the victorious king would make or refurbish a war drum. *Pathir.44* speaks about *Kadalpirakkottiya chenguttuvan* demolishing the neem tree, the defence tree of the king of *mokuur* and making a war-drum out of it. They believe that those souls of the warriors who died in the battlefield attain heaven protecting the tree by doing their duty. Those who have died defending their country earn the eligibility to be worshipped by their offsprings and the society. Those souls are believed to lie in the drums made from the *kaavalmaram*. So the drums are worshipped and special rituals are done to the spirits remembering their sacrifice before each war. The *paanar and porunar* beat their drums to evoke the spirits of those warriors who have died a heroic death in the battle-field to accept the offerings. They feel satisfied if the crows have come and eat the offerings as they believe the crows are their ancestors. This practice is narrated in detail in *pathir.30*.

The defence tree of *Thithiyān* is *punnai* (*akam.45&135*). *Nannan vēḷ*'s defence tree is mentioned more than once in the anthologies. *Pathir.88* relates *Nannan* with his defence tree *vaakai* which has the brightest flowers. *Pathir.40* confirms the same by elaborating the victory of *Kalangaaykkanni naarmudich cheral* over *Nannan*. So associating *Nannan vēḷ* with his mango tree as a *kaavalmaram* by Dr.George L.Hart in his research paper ("Early Evidence for Caste in South India", 1987, p.17) is baseless. That mango tree is just as common as other trees in his garden.

Vedic cult

The very name of *Pandiyān Palyaakachaalai Muthukudumip Peruvazhuthi* reveals the fact that he has followed the vedic cult and performed *velvi* often. He is praised as the one who followed vedic rituals (*puram.15*). Also *Chozhan Iraasa chooyam vetta perunarkilli* (*puram.16*) is recognised as a follower of vedic cult by the epithet before his name. The fact that cheras have followed vedic cult is talked about in the prologues II& III of *pathir*.

Vēḷir doing *velvi* is mentioned in *Pattinappaalai* (L.200-203). They accepted the supremacy of the Brahmins and donated them the green products of their fields only. The hero of a love poem talks about the father of his lovee; who is a *velaalan*; identified by the rice associated with him; feeding the Brahmins first and then giving the rest of the food to other people (*Kurunthokai*, 2007, p.418 h.233).

Special features of vēntar

The vēntar would wear a specific crown and have their own specific garland of specific flowers. They enjoyed the usage of *kavari*; a type of fan; and have led a luxurious life.

Crowns of vēntar

Kalangaaykkanni naarmudichcheral's unique crown is highlighted in his name as; '*naarmudi*' (prologue of the fourth *pathikam* in *pathir*.) which means it is made of palm fibres. '*mudiththalai*' (*puram.26*) is a phrase used in the post-war happenings in which the victorious vēntar is pictured as celebrating his victory by destroying the dead's head with his own crown.

Garlands

The specific garlands of the three vēntar is illustrated in *puram.45 Kovuur Kizhaar* talks to the two Chozha brothers who are in the battlefield ready to attack each other in their fight for the throne. He talks about the *cheran*'s garland made of palm flowers and the *Pandiyān*'s garland made of neem flowers; and both the two Chozha brothers wearing a garland of *aaththi*. The fact is confirmed by *Mudaththaamak kanniyaar* (*paththuppaattu* part I, 2007, *Porunaraarrupadai* p.20-21, L.143-146) *Karikaalan* is said to have defeated and killed the king wearing a palm garland and another king wearing a neem garland in the same warfield. Though he has not mentioned the names of the kings; there is no second opinion about the garland of neem flowers denoting *Pandiyān* and the garland of palmyrah flowers denoting the *Cheran*. *Kalangaaykkanni naarmudichcheral*'s garland is highlighted in his name as; '*kalangaayk kanni*' (prologue of the fourth *pathikam* in *pathir*.) meaning his garland is made of the fruits of *kalaa*.

kavari and cot

Vēntar enjoyed the luxury of *kavari*; a type of fan being flown. It is mentioned as '*venthu veesu kavari*' (*narrinai* 241). The luxurious cot and bed of the queen *paandimaathevi* is described by *Nakkeerar* (*nedunalvaadai* L.115-135).

U.Ve.Saminaathaiyar lists the umbrella, fort, and the yagnaas as the features attributed to the *arasar* in the *vishaya soosikai* of the prologue for his publication (*puram.*, 1894, p.137-140). A.Sa.Gnanasambanthan has mentioned about the *arasar* using *kavari* and leading a luxurious life. (*akamum puramum ilakkiyak katturaikal*, "Thamizhar kanda arasar" 1991, p.171-223).

Special features of tiṇaimāntar

They are hunters, cattle rearers or cultivators of dry crops and associated with toddy as their wealth (*puram.* 177, 258, 316, 329; *akam.* 76).

Tiṇaimāntar as hunter

Ori the leader of the kolli hills is given an epithet *valvil* on the basis of his talent. in using his bow for hunting. He has fed the guests who visited him, with the deer which he hunted himself (*puram.*152).

Tiṇaimāntar as a cattle rearer

Thaamaan the leader of the forest of *thonri* is capable of donating oxen to *Aiyoor Mudavanaar* who has requested him to assist his travel to the Chozha country, because he has been rearing the cattle (*puram.* 399).

Kizhars: Habitat of kizhars and place names

Kizhars living all over Tamilnad are associated with their place names always; e.g. *Chirukudi kizhaan Pannan*, *Kovuur kizhaar*, *Poraiyaarruk kizhaan*, *Konkaanak kizhaan*. Here *Chirukudi* stands for the hamlet he lived in; *Kovuur* states the township he belonged to; *Poraiyaaru* denotes the river he depended on and *Kongaanam* is the geographical area associated with the life of the *kizhaan*.

Karumbanoor kizhaan- kurinji (puram.381)

Valaar kizhaan Pannan- mullai (puram.181)

Chirukudi kizhaan Pannan- marutham (puram.388& akam.177)

Poraiyaarrukkizhaan- neythai (puram.391)

Residence of kizhars and their economy

Kizhars are economically weak and are living in small hamlets called *kurumbu*; which is mentioned in *puram.*177 praising *Valaarkizhaan Pannan*. A vivid picture of *kurumbu* is present in the hymn about *Mallikizhaan Kaariyaathi*. It is easy for his kith and kin to enter in; but not so for his enemies as it had a lock engineered. His residence is amidst many such small houses where his relatives lived. They are so near that they are able to share toddy among themselves (*puram.*181).

Kizhars as leaders of farmers

They are leaders of farmers who indulged in traditional cultivation of dry crops and maintaining gardens. Though *Chirukudi kizhaan Pannan* has lived on the banks of the river *Kaaviri* he cultivated dry crops. (*puram.* 70, 388; *akam.* 54, 177).

Kizhars safeguarding the public

As they have cultivated dry crops they are able to help the public when the monsoon fails and when drought hits the society. On such an occasion *Killi Valavan praised Pannan* as; '*Pasippini maruththuvan*' because *Pannan* was able to feed the hungry public using his products of dry land cultivation (*puram.* 173). The same situation is explained in *puram.*381 by *Puraththinai Nannaakanaar*; in which the hero is *Karumbanoor kizhaan*.

Kizhars supporting vēļir in paddy cultivation

Nakkiirar speaks about *Pidavuur Kizhaanmakan Perunjaaththan* as a cultivator who explicitly work for *Nedungai vēļ* who is a paddy cultivator (*puram.*395). Such relationships are dealt with *Poraiyaarrukkizhaan* who ploughed for *Komaan Periyar* (*puram.*391, *narrinai* 131& *akam.*100) and *Karumbanoor Kizhaan* who has sweated for *Komaan Pulli* (*puram.*381) also.

Kizhars as warriors

Kizhars fought for the vēļirs or vēntar depending on whom they made their living. *Eernthuur kizhaan* was able to feed and donate the bards by indulging in wars helping the ruler he depended on (*puram*.180). The close association of *Pannan* with the Chozha vēntan is due to his valor and courage which brings victory as expressed in *akam*.177. The same reason may lie behind the intimacy between *Kovuur kizhaar* and the Chozha king. *Puram*.181 speaks about *Valaar kizhaan Pannan* getting ready to take part in a fight for his boss.

Conclusion

The prominent feature to identify vēļir is their association with paddy cultivation which needs abundant water. The flag hoisted atop the palace of velir is a *naatkodi* hoisted on special occasions. Their palace is surrounded by a compound wall called *eyil*. Their employees fought for them. Vēntar usually ablaze the paddy fields of the vēļir.

The armies of vēntar have four divisions in it. They are wearing a specific crown and are having their garland of specific flowers. They have enjoyed the usage of *kavari* and have led a luxurious life. They have specific emblems drawn in their flags which are permanently flown atop their fort which had several bastions; surrounded by a moat; or a dense reserve forest; or both the moat and the reserve forest.

Heads among tiṇaimāntar are *kizhars*, hunters, or cattle rearers. They are associated with toddy as their wealth. *Kizhars are always associated* with their place names found all over Tamilnad. They are economically weak and lived in small hamlets called *kurumbu*. They are leaders of farmers who indulged in traditional cultivation of dry crops and are able to help the public when the monsoon has failed. They have supported vēļir in paddy cultivation.

Using the above said criteria one can be able to prepare a list of vēļir; finalise the list of the heads of tiṇaimāntar and identify the vēntar other than the *moventhar* if any. The next step to go forward in this direction is to have a deep study regarding the feature of food habits differentiating vēļir, vēntar and tiṇaimāntar.

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