

A STUDY OF PLACE-NAMES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN APPLIED GEOGRAPHY

By
C. D. SEKAR

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

MADRAS-600 005

APRIL 1985

A STUDY OF PLACE-NAMES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN APPLIED GEOGRAPHY

By
C. D. SEKAR

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

MADRAS-600 005

APRIL 1985

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that this report on A study of place names in Tiruchirappalli District submitted for the M.Sc., Applied Geography Degree Examination is a record of work done by Mr. C.D. Seker in his pursuance of study during 1984 - 1985.

The subject matter of this project report is his original work and has not formed the basis for award of any degree or diploma.

Madras

April 1985

W. J. Srinivasan
23 April 1985
Supervisor.

STATEMENT BY CANDIDATE

TITLE : A STUDY OF PLACE NAMES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT.

I hereby state that my project report on " A study of place names in Tiruchirappalli district " is being submitted for M.Sc. Applied Geography Degree Examination of 1985, is my original work and it has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree or Diploma.

Madras

April, 1985



(C.D. Seker.)

C O N T E N T S

1. INTRODUCTION
2. METHOD OF PLACE NAME STUDY
3. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA - TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT
 - 3.1. GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND
 - 3.2. HISTORICAL ASPECTS
 - 3.3. SOCIAL STRUCTURE
4. THE DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES
5. THE PLACE NAME PREFIXES
6. THE PLACE NAME SUFFIXES
7. CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. I N T R O D U C T I O N

1.0. The Scientific enquiry of place names and persons names has been given a technical name as 'onomastic' giving the meaning as the Scientific study of names. It is rather an interesting study not only for a person having research conception but also to the common man.

Onomastics comprises Anthroponymy and Toponymy. The former is the study of personel names and the later the study of the place names. The western countries considered this study as the records of the past and this is frequently referred to as 'the representative fossils of an immemorial past'.

The significance of the place names has got a vital importance in the field of Geography, history, language, religion and Sociological - Anthropological studies. Therefore a Geographer, an historian, a linguist and even a philonthrophist will never hesitate to peep inside this particular subject of interest and thus this branch of study has received due recognition from several fields.

1.1. Usually the local geographical features such as mountains, valleys, rivers, low lands, uplands, soil differences and other geogrâphical factors can be easily inferred by the study of place names.

In History, the study of place names helps in identifying the past rulers, social-cultural changes and building up the sequence of past events. It is rather usual custom to name the places after chief personalities in the area. Thus an analytical study leads us to find out the authentic history of the area.

Place names are as important to linguistics as other words in their language, The study of place names helps to find out the evolution of language to determine the geneological connection of other languages and also to come to a decision of the dialectical various of that particular language. The linguists are proud to say 'place names contain old names not otherwise recorded'.

Religious importance and location of temples were responsible for numerous place names in our country. So the study of place names indicates the present or past religious beliefs of the people of an area. Names connected with different schools of Hinduism, such as Saivism, Vaishnavism, are also found to indicate the vital role played by that particular sect in that place at a particular period. In India, there are several place names connected with religious aspects such as names of deities, Godly places, Chariots of Gods etc.

Besides, all these factors the study of place names helps us to locate the antiquities of old monuments, and the status of professions, spread of industry and trade cultural diffusion

and even geological history. The study of toponymy helps to discover the caste system the civilization and the culture followed by the Society at different periods in the Indian context.

Even Zoologists and Botanists have accepted the importance of place names for an authenticative records to establishment of paleozoological and paleo Botanical information.

1.2. Place name studies normally aims at understanding the origin of names, meaning and inferences of names and the geographical distribution. One of basic aspects in all place name studies is a logical (Scientific) classification of place names. With geographical point of view place names are studied in two ways. The most common method is to analyse the place names of a given region. Often districtwise or country wise (past) names are collected, classified and analysed. The other method is to analyse the distribytion of a group of names. For example the names referring 'Telugu' suffixes in Tamilnadu may be able to unearth the routes of this people in the past.

1.3. This study was not new to the Indian Scholars. Early Sanskrit Grammarians have point out the importance of place names as part of the language study and made etymological studies also. Authors of Sathala puranas displayed a sense of significance in place names.

In the modern studies, historical researchers and linguists have taken a lead role in India. So far the study of place names

has been taken to study the place names for the Taluks or districts. The place names of Assam by Barua B.K., place names in Pandinad by S.S. Bharathi, the place names in North Arcot Thanjavur and South Kanara districts by C.M.R. Chettiyar and village names of Chingleput district by S. Jayaprakash, are the remarkable earlier contributions in the field. In Tamil Nadu, The Indian Geographical Journal was pioneered in the publication of place name studies. Tamil Scholars have taken interest in the analysis to place names related with Tamil language, literature and culture.

2. METHOD OF PLACE NAME STUDY

2.0. Formost in the place name study is compilation of names. Place names can be compiled from historical records, inscriptions, revenue records, maps and village records. Indexins is the next step in the place name study. Usually regional identifications followed by place identification is used for indexing.

The various taluk records, electoral rolls, the district gazettters, and manuals and travel records also reveal the place names.

2.1. In the study of place names, place prefixes and suffixes are the important clues for scientific understanding.

The classification of prefixes and suffixes therefore forms part and parcel of place name study.

Most of suffixes of villages in India, refer to the location of places with reference to topographical significance or economic significance or administrative and social order.

The prefixes often bear the historical evidences relating to names of the king or chiefton. Caste names, God names and religious names may also be the prefixes of the places.

2.2. The study of place names with reference to certain names includes number of times it occurs in a given region. This is able to give an idea about the core areas of some place names and their lateral spread. The distribution of place names with reference to castename, religion name or cultural group may be able to bring out the route of the past migrations.

3. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA - TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The present study of place names is confined to Tiruchirappalli district only. Tiruchirappalli district has an area of about 13,750 Sq. km., spread between 10° to 11°-30' of the northern latitude and 77° 45' to 79°-30' of eastern longitude.

The district is divided into two as North and South. This division was done only for the purpose of development. The North consists of Tiruchy, Musiri, Lalgudi, Perambalur, Udayarpalayam, Ariyalur and Thuraiyur taluks and South district consists of Kulithalai, Karur, Alangudi, Kulathur, Thirumayam and Manaparai taluks. According to the district census handbook of Tiruchirappalli the following taluks and villages are found:

<u>Taluks</u>	<u>No. of villages</u>	<u>Taluks</u>	<u>No. of villages</u>
Perambalur	131	Kulathur	159
Ariyalur	92	Alangudi	164
Udayarpalayam	97	Thuraiyur	93
Musiri	72	Lalgudi	116
Karur	94	Tiruchy	78
Kulithalai	79	Thirumayam	145
		Manaparai	85

3.1. Geographical Background:

The district comprises mostly of river plains. The important hills in the district are the Pachaimalai and Kollimalai hills. The average height of the hills is 600 mts. though a few of its peaks rise to about 1300 mts. Other than these there are few scattered isolated hills in the district.

The major rivers are Cauvery and Coleroon. The other important rivers include Amaravathi, Nanganzi, Kodavanar, Ayyar,

Kuruvathur Vummidiyar, Nandhiyar and Vellar.

The climate of Tiruchirappalli is characterized by a high mean temperature and low percent of humidity throughout the year. There is much sun glare reflected and radiated heat and at certain seasons the atmosphere is sultry and enervating. The year has two demarcated seasons, the rainy season prevails between July - October and the rest of year is warm to hot with extreme dry conditions.

The district is essentially an agrarian area, About 54.8 % workers in the district, are engaged in cultivation and 16.39 % in agricultural labour force. Comparatively the people have better irrigation, greater use of commercial fertilizers and they switch over to commercial crops.

Paddy, the staple food crop of South India, is intensively grown in this district. Other than paddy, Cholam, Cambu Ragi and Varagu are the food crops in the district.

Commercial crops cultivated in the district include Groundnut, Gingelly, Sugarcane, cotton and fruits. Most of the cash crops are irrigated and modern methods are used for raising them. Among them, the fruits, plantains, mangoes and citrus are widely grown.

The district is one of the populous districts of Tamilnadu. Population density is fairly high. Different religions, caste

and community groups live in this district. By and large most of the settlements are medium size compact villages. Only in the hilly areas the settlements are scattered and small.

3.2. HISTORICAL ASPECTS

As far as the historical events are concerned, Tiruchy was the capital of Chola Kings that of 3rd Century B.C. According to the inscriptions of Asoka. Uraiyur was mentioned in the history now it is considered as part of Tiruchy town. About the middle of 13th century the district passed under the Hoysala Ballalas of Dhorasamudra and soon afterwards under the Pandyas of Madura. In spite of occasional interruptions the Pandyas of Madura continued in position of the district till the beginning of 14th century, when it was overrun by the Mohammadans under Malik Kafur, the general of Allauddin Khilji the Delhi.

After the downfall of Vijayanagar Empire, during 16th Century this area passed into the hands of Nayak rulers of Madurai. Viswanatha the founder of this line is said to have been built the greater part of fort and town of Tiruchirappalli. About the middle of 17th Century Chokanatha another of the line removed his capital from Madurai to Tiruchy. After the reign of last ruler of Nayak, in 1731, the subsequent disputes as to succession were taken which helped the Nawabs of Arcot to seize the area. Thus Chanda Sahib seized Tiruchirappalli and treacherously

imprisoned Queen Meenakshi the then ruler. One of the she poisoned herself, taking this opportunity in 1741, her rivals called in the Marathas who took Tiruchy and appointed Morari Rao the adventurous Maratha ruler of Gooty.

Two years later Nizam of Mulk the Sardar of Deccan invaded the Carnatak ruler thus Tiruchy was surrendered to him. He appointed Anwaruddin as Nawab of Carnatic in 1744, from that date onwards Tiruchy passed under nominal rule of Nawab of Arcot. Between 1740 and 1761, during the war of Carnatik the famous rock fort of Tiruchy underwent more than one seize.

On the first occasion, Mohammad Ali son of Anwaruddin and his allies the English were besieged by Chanda Sahib, an aspirant to the Nawab of Carnatik and the supporters of French. A number of engagements took place between the two parties chiefly of Srirangam island and in villages bordering on the old road from Tiruchy to Madras. Clive taking a conspicuous part in the operation and in the end Chanda Sahib and French were defeated. Thus in 1753 they claimed Tiruchy as the reward of Mohammed Ali.

By this time the French strengthened reinforcement sent by Dupleix and intended to get Srirangam. They crossed the Cauvery and encamped on the plain close by the present Pakirs rock. Thus the French has blockaded the city on every side. In 1756, the French once again tried to take Tiruchy there last

attempt on rock fort on 1759. In 1763 under the Nawab of Carnatic the long standed conflict was ended. In 1781, the Nawab assigned the revenues of Carnatic including Tiruchirappalli to British.

Soon after the area was ceded to the East India Company in 1801, Tiruchy was placed under the charge of Mr. Wallace, who was appointed the first collector of District. Then the area was comprised a little over 7500 kms. Kattu Mannargudi region was included but later it was transfered to South Arcot District. It remained as a seperate district till then. In 1805, Tiruchy was placed under the control of Mr. Young Subcollector, Karur Taluk was transferred to Tiruchy which was originally in Coimbatore district. During 1910, raising of taluks to Sikhs was done. A new formation of Lalgudi Taluk from parts of Musiri and Tiruchy taluks was formed. In 1948, the Pudukottai taluk was also merged into the Tiruchirappalli district. Three new taluks Kulathur, Alangudi and Thirumayam were added on, thus there are now 13 taluks in Tiruchirapalli district.

3.3. Social structure:

Tiruchirappalli district is historically the meeting place of many cultures. The river Cauvery continued to dominate in many of the historical events. Therefore the northern taluks of Perambalur and Udayarpalayam represent Pallava culture. Karur

on the west has people of Kongu culture. The Pudukottai division on the south is occupied by Kallars, who have Pandya culture. In the middle deltaic region of Kulithalai, Musiri, Tiruchy and Lalgudi have Chola culture. Since these four sets of people live together in this district, a certain blending of culture has taken place, though they remain socially distinct. Apart from this, the repeated and colonial campaigns have resulted in the mixing of European and Islamic cultures. However, by religion Hindus dominate the district and accounted more than 90% of the population. Christians (5.4 %) and Muslims (4.6 %) are the other two major religious groups in the district.

The different cultural groups ended with different caste groups and different castes engaged in the same type of occupation. According to the major traditional occupations the caste groups can be identified into three major communities viz., Agricultural communities, traders and weavers. The agricultural communities comprises of the castes of Vaniyars, Udaiyars, Vellalas, Ambalakarars and Reddiyars.

Vanniyars also known as Pallis, and Padayatchis are found in Peramballur and Udayarpalayam taluks. They settled as agricultural labourers. Udaiyars comprises of three sects called Nathamans, Malayamans and Sutharmans. All these three sects have Udaiyars as title. They are found in Perambalur, Udayarpalayam, Lalgudi and Tiruchy taluks. In religious beliefs they are

Saivaites, some are vegetarians and they are mainly engaged in agriculture. Cattle raising alone is one of the important occupations of this group. 'Vellalas' have many divisions.

Those found in Karur, are called Kongus. In Udayarpalayam and Tiruchy Karkathars are found. To the north western areas

Saiva vellalas are found. Their main occupation is agriculture and raising cash and commercial crops. The Arunattu Vellalas found in Musiri are really Kongu Vellalas though they style themselves as Pillais. There are Vellalas found along the rivers called Uttru vellalas. Ambalakarars are found in Perambalur, Tirumayam and Kulathur taluks. In education they are backward. Reddiyars is a small community in the district and they are found in Musiri, Kulitalai, Lalgudi and Perambalur taluks. They are vegetarians and mostly Vaishnavites.

Gounders are found in Kulitalai and Karur. They are originally a pastoral castes, but now occupied as agriculturists. The other communities are the Thottians the Maravars, the Vettuvans and Kamma Naidus.

The trading communities comprises of Nattukottai Chettiyars, and nontamil speaking Chettiars. Nattukottai chettiyars are found in Thirumayam. They are prosperous of all trading communities and known even in ancient days. Money lending was the main business but now they have taken to other industries and trade. 'Telugu Chettiyars' is a small minority in the district.

They are originally Balajis engaged in weaving fibre. They are engaged in business, money lending to agriculturists on the security of crops. They also go by name of Sadhu Chettyars or Janappars.

Komutti Chettyars is a thriving community of businessmen. The community is broadly divided into two sects called the Gowras and Kallingas. They follow Brahminical customs and they are vegetarians.

The weavers are Sengunthars and Saliyars. Sengunthars are otherwise known as Kaikolars. They are indigenous weavers of Tamilnadu, and could weave only dhothies and sarees of lower counts. They are generally backward economically and educationally 'Saliyars' are a class of skilled weavers and are more skilled than Sengunthars. Usually this class is engaged in weaving sarees of higher counts found in Musiri taluk.

Small other communities are also scattered throughout the district. They are mainly the village artisans and servicing communities. Kammalars or 'Asaris' pursue the occupation gold jewell making, carpentry, blacksmiths, brass vessels making and stone idol making. 'Kusanars' are engaged in mud making. 'Kalloddars and manoddars' are yet another artisan community engaged in well digging and stone breaking and are semi migratory in search of work. Other artisan communities include Vannars and Barbers.

Other communities include Brahmins, who are found in the Cauvery delta, and are in all walks of life from cultivation to Government services. Indian Christians who have been converted from various castes, and continue to have social contacts mostly within each group; and Harijan communities of Parayars, Pallars, Chakkiliyars, Valluvans and Kuravans. The schedule caste population is about 20%.

There are also tribes in the Pachaimalai and Kollimalai areas of the district.

4. THE DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

4.0. For analytical basis the place names are classified according to prefix and suffix terms. Taking into consideration the names are arranged in three fold divisions namely settlement habitat terms, physical features and names related with Gods, persons economic and caste terms. The prefixes refer mostly geographical locations like rivers, tanks, hills and forests. The God names or person names are also the most common prefixes of village names in Tiruchirappalli district. Few names have caste or religious or administrative related prefixes.

By and large the names of the villages start with Gods or persons or person God related names. Wherever the names end denoting the nature of settlement. The ending has common names.

Therefore the suffixes have definite patterns and classes and prefixes are made as classes.

4.1. The prefixes, mean mostly religious, natural features, caste, occupation, Location and Administration. According to the Table 1 given, religion is further subdivided as God, person and God/person Implied names out of this, the Tiruchirappalli district accounts (425) place names under God/person Implied alone and the other division Person prefixes consist of (247) place names and Implied ones have only 74 place names. From the Star diagram (Fig. 1) we can conclude that the taluks Alangudi, Kulathur, Thirumayam and Tiruchirappalli commonly identify under this division (God, person and Implied).

The natural features are again subdivided as Rivers and Land features. The rivers have 25 place names and 319 place names in land features. This shows that land features in Alangudi, Perambalur, Thirumayam and Kulathur, have more prefixes in place names than the other. The prefix which indicates 'caste' exists in very few taluks, it is mostly found in Manaparai and the total number of place names in this is 26. The place names in Perambalur alone has 13 names of the group 'occupation' The total number of place names accounts here is 44. The next group in prefix are 'Location' has 29 place names, where Perambalur taluk has 11 place names in it. The final division as Administration, denotes only 12 place names and Thirumayam alone has 5 in it.

4.2. Mostly the suffixes signify a place as a town or village. It also denotes size of the place. They are Agraharam, Dor, Kurichi, Kuppai, Kombu, Koppam, Seri, Nagaram, Pettai, Palli, Pattanam, Palayam, Padi, Puri, Puram, Mangalam, Vazhi, Vadi, Halli, Hatti Valli as suffixes. Taking into consideration about the suffixes a three fold division has been done. The first fold refers to settlement. Habitat Implied, the second refers to physical features related and the third refers to Forest and water bodies oriented.

From the table and stardiagram, we can identify that, in the first division of settlement Habitat the suffix 'oor and patti' alone has 315 and 215 suffixes of place names respectively in the whole district. Out of this Perambalur, Kulathur, Udayarpalayam, Alangudi and Manaparai accounted large numbers of these names 'ur and patti'. Further 'kudi' is another suffix which has 93 names, where Kulathur, Thirumayam, Lalgudi have more number of names. Puram (51), Kurichi (48), Mangalam (45), Palayam (38) and Nadu (20), are the other suffixes dominated in the district. The taluks of these suffixes include Thuraiyur, Ariyalur, Lalgudi, Karur which more number of place names.

The second division - physical features, are also based on settlements. Padi (33), Viduthi (27), Kottai (20), Koil (9) Pettai (8), Vasal (6), Chathiram (5) and Puri (4) are the suffixes under physical features. From the diagram, Padi, Viduthi, and

Tiruchirappalli District

Table 1.1. Suffix of village names - SETTLEMENT - HABITAT
IMPLIED related.

Taluk	Ur	Patti	Kudi	Puram	Kurichi	Mangalam	Palayam	Nadu
PERAMBALUR	52	5	2	6	-	3	5	-
ARIYALUR	28	-	2	3	9	4	3	-
UDAYAR PALAYAM	34	-	9	2	7	1	2	-
MUSIRI	18	11	3	2	-	3	4	-
KULITHALAI	24	13	-	4	-	4	3	-
THURAIYUR	16	14	1	10	-	2	4	17
KARUR	20	10	-	6	8	5	9	-
LALGUDI	35	1	16	5	3	10	7	-
KULATHUR	41	55	20	3	3	4	-	1
ALANGUDI	17	37	10	4	3	4	-	-
TIRUCHY	23	3	12	2	5	2	-	-
THIRUMAYAM	31	26	16	3	5	3	-	1
MANAPARAI	12	40	2	1	5	-	1	1
Total	351	215	93	51	48	45	38	20

Tiruchirappalli District

Table 1.2. PHYSICAL Features related

Taluk	Pettai	Vasal	Vidu- thi	Chat- ram	Kottai	Koil	Puri	Padi
PERAMBALUR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
ARIYALUR	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
UDAYAR PALAYAM	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
MUSIRI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
KULITHALAI	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
THURAIYUR	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	2
KARUR	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
LALGUDI	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	3
KULATHUR	-	3	-	1	2	2	-	1
ALANGUDI	-	1	26	-	13	2	-	-
TIRUCHY	4	-	-	1	2	-	-	-
THIRUMAYAM	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
MANAPARAI	-	-	-	2	2	-	2	2
Total	8	6	27	5	20	9	4	33

Tiruchirappalli District

Table 1.3. FOREST and WATER BODIES related.

Taluks	Vayal	Kadu	Malai	Samud- ram	Kombai	Kulam	Kuli	Giri
PERAMBALUR	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
ARIYALUR	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-
UDAYAR PALAYAM	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
MUSIRI	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
KULITHALAI	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
THURAIMUR	-	-	1	1	10	1	-	-
KARUR	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
LALGUDI	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-
KULATHUR	4	2	4	-	-	1	-	-
ALANGUDI	6	2	-	1	-	3	-	-
TIRUCHY	-	8	-	2	-	-	-	1
THIRUMAYAM	19	1	1	3	-	-	-	-
MANAPARAI	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
Total	29	14	11	11	10	9	6	2

Thiruchirappalli District

Table 2.1. Prefix of Village names.

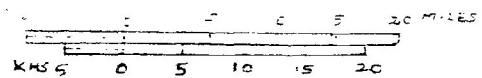
Taluku	Religion related			Natural features related	
	God	Person	Implied	River	Land
PERAMBALUR	8	8	8	2	32
ARIYALUR	6	14	26	1	19
UDAYAR PALAYAM	14	14	19	-	12
MUSIRI	8	9	21	1	10
KARUR	3	23	23	2	18
KULITHALAI	6	16	22	-	22
KULATHUR	6	34	57	1	38
ALANGUDI	7	25	66	1	45
THURAIYUR	7	14	39	-	26
LALGUDI	3	27	39	1	29
TIRUCHY	2	18	34	4	10
THIRUMAYAM	3	26	43	8	37
MANAPARAI	1	19	28	4	18
Total	74	247	425	25	319

Tiruchirappalli District

Table 2.2. Related with

Taluks	Caste	Occupation	Location	Administration	Miscellaneous
PERAMBALUR	3	13	11	-	46
ARIYALUR	2	1	-	1	22
UDAYARPALAYAM	-	7	9	-	22
MUSIRI	-	1	4	2	16
KARUR	-	9	2	-	14
KULITHALAI	1	3	-	-	9
KULATHUR	2	3	-	-	18
ALANGUDI	4	-	-	-	16
THURAIYUR	2	-	1	-	4
LALGUDI	1	-	1	1	14
TIRUCHY	-	-	-	3	7
THIRUMAYAM	3	4	1	5	15
MANAPARAI	8	3	-	-	4
Total	26	44	29	12	207

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT



PLACE NAMES - SUFFIXES - SETTLEMENT RELATED
TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT



1. UR
2. POTTI
3. KUDI
4. PURAM
5. NAMBALAM
6. PALAYAM
7. NADU
8. KURUMI

PLACE NAMES - SUFFIXES

TIRUBIRAPPALLI DISTRICT



Scale - 10 Kilometers



1. PETTAI
2. VASAL
3. VIDUTHI
4. CHATHIRAM
5. KITTAI
6. KOLL
7. PUKI
8. PARI

Scale - 10 Kilometers

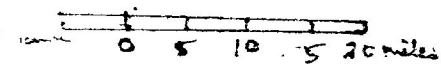
PLACE NAMES - SUFFIXES

NATURAL DIVISIONS RELATED

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT



1. VAYAL
2. KADU
3. MALAI
4. SANDURUM
5. KONSAI
6. KULAM
7. KULI
8. GIRI



PLACE NAMES - PREFIXES - LAND, RIVER, LOCATION RELATED
TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT



1

NATURAL FEATURES

- 1. LAND
- 2. RIVER
- 3. LOCATION
- 4. MISCELLANEOUS
- 5. ADMINISTRATION

Kottai are the main suffixes found in Alangudi and Perambalur taluks.

The third division, refers to Forest and water bodies. They are Vayal (29), Kadu (14), Malai (11), Samudram (11), Kombai (10), Kulam (9), Kutti (6) and Giri (2). The suffixes Vayal, Kadu, Malai, Samudram dominate the Thirimayam, Tiruchy, Kulathur and Thuraiyur.

5. THE PLACE NAME PREFIXES

Introduction:

5.0. The selection of site is an important factor for the origin and growth of settlements. The 'site' refers to specific location where the settlement is located. Site factors in the past were mostly related with safety of the settlements (from floods or droughts or attack) trade advantages (location at river, at the foothill or at cross roads) and cultural positions (temple or fort or princess/ministers' palace). The prefixes mostly refer to the site of the settlements. In the present section some select prefixes are analysed in their context.

5.1. Prefixes referring physical sites:

Topographical, vegetation, directional and administrative

indications were inferred in some of the prefixes.

Village names indicating hills and hillocks include

MEDU	-	METTUPATTI	-	Lalgudi
KUNDRU	-	KUNNATHUR	-	Kulathur

Medu refers to higher ground and Kundru refers to hillocks.

As Tiruchy district has numerous rivers and tanks there are many names one can come across indicating the location at water points.

ATHU (River)	-	ATHUR	-	Karur
KULAM (Tanks)	-	KULATHUR	-	Tiruchy
KARAI (Bund)	-	KARAI	-	Perambalur
SAMUDRAM (Oceanlike/ Biglake)	-	SAMUDRAM	-	Thirumayam
KONAI (Sprink)	-	KONAIYUR	-	Thirumayam

As most of the settlements are related with water sources for irrigation are important sites.

Village names indicating Forest related sites. Since pastoral economy and firewood and timber industry were related with few names emerged forest related.

KADU (Forests) - KATTUPUTHUR - Musiri
 MARUDU (Wood) - MARUDUR - Lalgudi
 MARUDU (Wood) - MARUDHAMPATTI - Kulathur
 MA (Mango groove)- MAMPATTI - Kulathur
 PANAM (Palm) - PANNANGUDI - Kulathur

Many names were after the resource nature of the lands. Names were assigned after the major produces.

VARAGUUR (dry food crop/millet) - Perambalur
 SIRUVAYALLOOR (small lands) - Perambalur

Directions from or to the important locations like the temple, palace or the market town were also given as prefixes.

There are 29 villages in the district, under locattinn. For example the locations can be classified as follows.

ATHIYUR ('Athi' - the Chola Kings symbol located) - Perambalur
 KEELAMATHUR (down or to the east) - Perambalur
 VADAKKALUR (north) - Perambalur
 MELUR (up or west) - Udayar palayam
 VERUR - Karur

Administration was another consideration of the prefixes but the district has only 12 villages identifying administration

related names. Some of them are:

ARANMANAI PATTI	(Royal palace)	-	Thirumayam
ARASAM PATTI	(Royal palace)	-	Thirumayam
ARASA MALAI	(King's)	-	Thirumayam
ARASUR	(King's)	-	Thirumayam
ARASALUR	(King's)	-	Musiri

Thus the name Arasu, Aranmanai are found where representing Government of smaller or larger ones in olden days.

5.2. Prefixes-religion and people.

Religion had played an important part in the selection of the name of the village. Thus the place names have acquired religion prefixes. Here the place names were classified on three ways:

a) Names of villages named after Religious Gods.

SRI RAMAN	-	Udayar palayam	(indicating Vaishnavism)
PERIA ,KRISHNAPURAM	-	,, (,, ,,)	
GURUVALAPPAR KOVIL	-	,, (,, ,,)	
GOVINDA PUTHUR	-	,, (,, ,,)	
SEELAI PILLAYARPUTHUR	-	Musiri	(indicating Saivism)
CHOKKANATHA PATTI	-	Musiri (,, ,,)	
GANAPATHI PURAM	-	Alangudi	

KULANTHAI VINAYAGAR KOTTAI	-	Alangudi	(indicating Saivism)
KAMATCHI PATTI	-	Musiri	(indicating Sakthi worship)
MAHADEVI	-	Musiri	(,, ,,)
UMAYAL PURAM	-	Musiri	(,, ,,)

The worship of mother Goddess as Amman is a prominent worship in South India. Thus names indicating the Sakthi worship works designed, based on rural belief. It is known belief of the rural people that Amman will protect the village and its cattle farm from epidemics and natural calamity.

b) The second division in the religious classification is that most of the villages were named after persons indicating the devine names. According to analysis a total number of 247 villages were found in relation to persons. A few example have been given below:

VENKATACHALA PURAM	-	Lalgudi
KANNAN UR	-	Lalgudi
SARADA MANGALAM	-	Lalgudi
SEEDEVI MANGALAM	-	Lalgudi

However, it may be noticed that selecting of names do not clearly differentiate the prefixes between the persons name and the Gods name, for example : 'VENKATACHALA PURAM' refers either to God VENKATACHALAM or to a persons name.

c) The third type of religion oriented prefixes are related to personalities or Gods but difficult to infer. Because most names are after that particular area. It may be either the peculiar local Goddess or the qualities of the people in those places.

PIDARA MANGAMAL	-	Musiri
VILLANJAR	-	Kulathur
SHOLAMA DEVI	-	,,
KONDAMAN PETTAI	-	,,
NALLAMBAL SAMUDREM	-	,,

In Indian society caste plays an important role. Places were named after castes. The following caste names are few example found in the village names of this Tiruchirappalli district.

Chetti	-	CHETTI KULAM	-	Parambalur
Chetti	-	CHETTI PATTI	-	Manaparai
Nattar	-	NATTAR MANGALAM	-	Perambalur
Naickam	-	LEKKA NAICKAM PATTI	-	Manaparai
Reddiar	-	REDDIA PATTI	-	,,
Naickam	-	KANJA NAICKAM PATTI	-	,,
Vellala	-	VELLALA VIDUTHI	-	Alangudi
Pilla	-	PILLA VIDUTHI	-	Alangudi
Edaya	-	EDAYA KURICHI	-	Udayarpalayam

The caste names in the first element of the village names are mostly found as Chetti, Reddiyar, Vellala, Pillai Naickam etc. However, taking this as the only evidence, the details of the tradition of the castes could not be elucidated. From the caste names assigned to the villages, one can say that the above caste were prevailing in that particular area. However, the frequency of the name chetty occurs more than the other caste names.

There are 44 villages in the Tiruchirappalli district implied with occupations. The following are some example.

PADAL UR	-	Perambalur
KOOTH UR	-	,,
PUDU NADAL UR	-	,,
KALA RAM PATTI	-	,,

6. PLACE NAMES - SUFFIXES

6.0 Place name suffixes have most regular patterns. It is fairly easy to classify them in select names. Most of the place names end with settlement or habitat implied words. Settlement habitat implied names include, Ur, Patti, Kudi, Puram, Kurichi, Mangalam, Palayam, Nadu, Pettai, Vasal, Viduthi, Chathiram, Kottai, Koil, Kuli and Padi. However, there are names ending with suffixes to mean that places are related with

forest, waterbodies resources, hills (eg. Vayal, Malai, Samudrum, Kulam, Kuli, Kombai, Kadu, Giri etc.).

6.1. The suffix which indicates the meaning of settlements and other residential shelters are many in Tiruchirappalli district. The district was under the rule of mostly Dravidian Kings therefore not much influenced by Mohammadan invasions. The place names mostly retain the old tamil wordings.

a) Ur :	MOOVAN UR	-	Thuraiyur
	THIRUTHALAI UR	-	,,
	SIRUNAVAI UR	-	,,
	KOTTAI UR	-	,,
	NADUVALL UR	-	,,

Here the word 'Ur' refers to the Dravidian term, to mean a village. As man settled himself in a particular place according to the natural resources and remained in groups which leads to a family and occasionally a According to their own simplified owned traditions the place of their social group is names as 'Ur'. In Tiruchy district we come across 351 names of villages ending Ur as suffixes. From this we can infer that communal dwelling and the sociological co-operation were prevailing in olden days.

b) Patti : This word denotes a village or a hamlet. Though it comes under the forest (Mullai) and other place names,

this particular word 'Patti' is also related with 'Herd' (either cattle or sheep). These names therefore may be related with Pastoral settlements.

UDAYALI PATTI	-	Kulathur
THENNATHIRAYAN PATTI	-	,,
PALANDAN PATTI	-	,,
KONGUDI PATTI	-	,,
AMBUR PATTI	-	,,

Due to the transformation of pastrolism to agricultural activities the majority of the people from themselves into groups and activities nulleated themselves in a permanent settlement. This type of nomadic settlements is known as Padi. The peasent houses surrounded by temples and few shops are known as Patti.

c) Kudi: This word refers to the tamil term 'Kudi' giving the meaning as 'habitation' - The communal settlement in a specific locality with the minimum facilities are called as Kudi, egs:

KANNAN KARAI KUDI	-	Thirumayam
SIRATHA KUDI	-	,,
KUMAN KUDI	-	,,
VELLUN KUDI	-	,,
MOOLAN KUDI	-	,,

There are 93 villages which are having 'Kudi' as the suffix, Kudi is a compact settlements, thus many places have the names.

d) 'Puram': This word 'Puram' means the suburb of a town, or outside the town, or at the side of temple, community or person. egs.

UPPILIA PURAM	-	Thuraiyur
RENGANATHA PURAM	-	,,
CHOCKANATHA PURAM	-	,,
KAMACHI PURAM	-	,,
VENKATESA PURAM	-	,,

e) 'Puri' : The suffix 'Puri' indicates a town or a settlement, which has got a better economic structure. The following names has got this suffix. There are only four villages which got the name.

MARUNGA PURI	-	Manaparai
ALAGA PURI	-	,,
KOPPAMMA PURI	-	Thuraiyur
ALAGA PURI	-	,,

f) 'Kurinchi': Kurinchi means hillock or rock. The other equivalent tamil words are malai, Kundram, Giri etc. often related with nature of the hills.

ARAVA KURICHI (hills with snakes) - Karur

THOTTA KURICHI (forests of hills)	-	Karur
EDAYA KURICHI (the hill on the way)	-	Udayarpalayam
THATCHAN KURICHI (the hill of the sculptors or store workers)	-	Lalgudi
KALLA KURICHI (the hill of the rivers or hill where the community Kallar lives)	-	Karur

g) 'Mangalam': Mangalam is another suffix which is attached to many villages inhabited by Brahmins. It is known that 'Mangalam' means a gift made to learned Brahmins; by Kings in those days, so that they live in isolation for advanced learning and contemplation. A few of them are:-

MAN MANGALAM	-	Karur
ACHI MANGALAM	-	,,
UPPIDI MANGAMAL	-	,,
EDAYATHI MANGALAM	-	Lalgudi
THIRU MANGALAM	-	,,

h) 'Palayam': 'Palayam' refers to army or war camp. It is also said that this represents to the village surrounded by hillocks. There are 38 villages representing the term 'Oakatan'. The few examples are:-

ATHI PALAYAM	-	Karur
KUPPACHI PALAYAM	-	,,
KARUPPAN PALAYAM	-	,,

KARVDAYAM PALAYAM	-	Karur
MELA PALAYAM	-	,,

1) 'Nadu': Nadu also refers to an area or location of a place especially the potential boundry. There are 20 villages which have suffix Nadu. A few examples are:-

THENPARA NADU	-	Thuraiyur
VANNADU	-	,,

6.2. Some names have been assigned to the villages by giving importance to the physical features of that particular area. These suffixes indicate the physical or cultural environment of the villages Pettai, Vasal, Viduthi, Kottai, Koil, Puri and Padi are few of them.

a) 'Pettai': This word refers to the tamil word Pettai, giving the meaning as area for habitation. egs.

KAMARASAM PETTAI	-	Tiruchy
SOMARASAM PETTAI	-	,,

In Tiruchy district only these suffix Pettai has been dominated.

b) 'Vasal': This refers to open place which can be used for any meetings or for any congregation. The word now has got this semantic change giving the name as open front

yard attached to the resident but we cannot conclude that villages which are having word suffix as vasal has got essentially an open yard. egs:-

CHITHANA VASAL	-	Kulathur
ANNA VASAL	-	,,

c) 'Viduthi': To certain villages the Viduthi as a suffix is attached, it is said that Viduthi means a resting place. No doubt according to historical background that during warfare the soldiers in group used to take rest in a particular place which is named as Viduthi. Usually this resting place is situated between two frontiers especially in the border areas. Viduthi is also a place on the highway where not a big habitation is found. egs:-

THEETHAN VIDUTHI	-	Alangudi
ODAPPA VIDUTHI	-	,,
ADIRAN VIDUTHI	-	,,
KARAMBA VIDUTHI	-	,,

d) 'Chatram': Chatram denotes the meaning as 'Inn' where the travellers and the ongoers can take rest. It has got a historical association, when the kings give their grants at the occasion of their victory. It is usual tradition for them to construct the Choultry and the victorious epitaphs. In some occasions the donors of Choultry provided the people not only

with shelter but also with food and other facilities.

egs.:-

AMMACHATRAM - Manaparai

e) 'Kottai': Kottai means, fort. It is clear that this word is attached to historical events, but as ages pass the great monuments and the forts might have been ruined. So the villages which are attached by this name may be having the fort in the heart of the village or may not have. There are 20 villages names 'Kottai'. egs:-

PACHI KOTTAI	-	Alangudi
KOTHA KOTTAI	-	,,
KOLANTHAI VINAYAGAR KOTTAI	-	,,
VALLATHIRA KOTTAI	-	,,
BANDUVA KOTTAI	-	,,

f) 'Koil': The sacred place of worship is identified the suffix 'Koil' and district has 9 villages ending with suffix Koil. They are:-

BIKSHANDAR KOIL	-	Lalgudi
MADAVA PERUMAL KOIL	-	,,
ESWARAN KOIL	-	Kulathur
KUNNANDAR KOIL	-	,,

g) 'Padi': This word refers to cattle herd. Also it refers to stationing of Army. egs:-

KANNA PADY	-	Perambalur
------------	---	------------

VAYALA PADY	-	Perambalur
VELLAM PADY	-	Karur
OLAI PADY	-	Perambalur

h) 'Vayal': Vayal meaning an agricultural land region
The settlements midst of cultivable fields are referred by these
suffixes. egs.-

SAMMANDAN VAYAL	-	Thirumayam
VELLALA VAYAL	-	,,
VANNIALANDAN VAYAL	-	,,
MELI VAYAL	-	,,
PUDUNILAI VAYAL	-	,,

i) 'Malai': Malai is a tamil word meaning mountain.
The villages with mountain environments have these suffix.
egs:-

NARTHA MALAI	-	Kulathur
VIRALI MALAI	-	,,
KUDUMIAIN MALAI	-	,,
THIRUTHIA MALAI	-	Thuraiyur

j) 'Samudram': Here the word refers to the original
sanskrit term giving the meanings as sea or ocean like water
resources. egs:-

VISALAKSHIAMMAL SAMUDRAM	-	Thuraiyur
RAYA REGUNATHA SAMUDRAM	-	Thirumayam

NALLAMBAL SAMUDRAM - Thirumayam

THIRUMALAI RAJA
SAMUDRAM - Alangudi

k) 'Kulam': The word refers to water storage tanks. According to their social conditions generally these tanks are used for storing drinking water and in temples for bathing purposes. Also there are large tanks which are used for agricultural purposes. egs:-

CHETTI KULAM - Perambalur

NOCHI KULAM - ,,

PILLAN KULAM - ,,

THIRUVARAN KULAM - Alangudi

l) 'Kuli': The original meaning for the word 'Kuli' is pond or well. It is a dravidian term which covers the above meaning but as far as village suffixes are concerned the term Kuli is mentioned as only the measurement, of the agricultural and the whole area is acquired the name as in suffix would have got the cultivable lands as a whole. egs:-

NAGAL KULI - Ariyalur

SULLAN KULI - ,,

UTHU KULI - ,,

m) 'Kombai': There are only 10 village names ending with suffix Kombai. This is a dravidian term meaning

'Wild forest'.

RUTHIRASHA KOMBAL	-	Thuraiyur
PULIANCHOLA KOMBAL	-	,,
KALLATHU KOMBAL	-	,,
PONGALAYEE KOMBAL	-	,,

n) 'Kadu': Kadu refers forest or jungle. A village which is surrounded by forest area may be named after suffix Kadu. There are 14 village names ending with suffix Kadu.

MUTTU KADU	-	Kulathur
ASAVEERANKUDI KADU	-	Ariyalur
CHINNA PATTA KADU	-	,,
ANDI PATTA KADU	-	,,

C O N C L U S I O N

For the present study the data have been collected and analysed by a simple technique. As a first step, the village names were taken from the Tiruchirappalli District Census Hand book 1971, and then they are broadly organised according to the prefixes and suffixes as mentioned. Thus the study has been limited to secondary sources of information. The field work to find the local meaning of the prefixes and suffixes would have supported the study to a great deal. Another limitation is that the 'literature' and 'gramatical' factors involved in the generis of place names are not dealt with.

The study however has shown that place names are by and large related with caste groups and geographical factors. Particular by the suffixes have highly organised pattern and mostly mean the nature of settlements.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---|
| 1. Barna, B.K. | 1933 | Place names of Assam.
Proceedings of All India Oriental
Conference, Vol. 16, pp. 157-159. |
| 2. Bhadri, K.M. | 1979 | Some interesting place names in
Karnataka, F.C.P.S.I. |
| 3. Bharathi, S.S. | 1932 | Place names in Pandinad
I.G.J. pp. 7-13. |
| 4. Bran fill, R.B. | 1879 | On the names of places in Tanjore
MILS, pp. 43-102. |
| 5. Chettiar, C.M.R. | 1943 | Place names in North Arcot
District I.G.J. Vol. V - VII
pp. 18-23. |
| 6. Chilakar Narayana
Rao | 1933 -
1935 | A study of place names in
Anantapur District
JMGA Vol. VIII - X, pp. 22-42. |
| 7. Census of India | 1961 | District Census Handbook of
Tiruchirappalli |
| 8. Devasikhamani, S.K. | 1933 | Place names in Tiruchinopoly
District.
JMGA, Vol. VIII-X, pp. 214-221. |
| 9. Hiremath, R.C. | 1968 | Place names in Karnatak.
pp. 138-158. |
| 10. Hayavandana Rao | 1967 | The place names of Mysore State
JMS, Vol. VI pp. 264-281. |
| 11. Lewis Moore, M.C.S. | 1961 | Manual of Trichinopoly District. |
| 12. Pillay, K.K. | 1968 | This is Tamilnad. |
| 13. Sethu Pillai, R.P. | 1939 -
1941 | Place name suffixes in Tamil
pp. 1-34. |

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

I would like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. N. Sivagnanam, Reader, Department of Geography, University of Madras, Madras, who has guided me all through the project and preparation of this report.

I am thankful to the Research Scholar Mr. Kumaraswamy who has helped me in this work.

