

Kalingarayan, the Great and Kalingarayan Canal

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Thanks to Dr. C. PALANIVELU
MS, M Ch, DNB, FRCS (Hon) Ed.
Chairman
GEM Hospitals and Research Centre
Coimbatore

On behalf of Paventhan Memorial Trust, we thank Dr. C. Palanivelu, the Chairman, GEM Hospital and Research Centre, Coimbatore for sponsoring to print 2000 copies of this book titled “Kalingarayan, the Great - Kalingarayan canal” which is being given to day (31-7-2016) as compliment to all the dignitaries and members of Chennai Kongu Nanbargal Sangam who attend the Annual Kongu Family Function at Kamarajar Arangam, Chennai.

Dr. C.Palanivelu is also Professor and Director of the Institute of Gastroenterology and Minimal Access Surgery and Managing Trustee of GEM Digestive Diseases Foundation. (Charitable Trust).

Some of the Highlights of Dr. C. Palanivelu’s Achievements:

- ❖ **First Surgeon in South India to introduce Laparoscopic Surgery.**
- ❖ **Best Doctor Award by Government of Tamilnadu in 2011 for developing Laparoscopic Surgery.**
- ❖ **Dr.BC Roy National Awardee in 2008.**
- ❖ **First Indian to perform Laparoscopic Whipple Surgery for Cancer Pancreas.**

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- ❖ Won International Best Video Award in American College of Surgeons for stomach cancer, US 2007.**
- ❖ Published surgical text books in many languages including English, Spanish and Chinese.**
- ❖ Laparoscopic Surgery Award from President of India, 2006**
- ❖ Gold Medal for development of surgery by Kazhaskhan National Association of Medicine.**
- ❖ Life time Achievement Award, ASI, 2007.**
- ❖ Life time Achievement Award, District Rotary, Coimbatore, 2012.**
- ❖ Vocational Excellence Award of Rotary International, 2011.**
- ❖ 'For the sake of Honour Award' 2009 by Mount Rotary, Chennai.**
- ❖ 'Bheeshmacharya Award' by AMACI, 2012, Coimbatore.**
- ❖ The award of 'Brand Ambassador of Coimbatore' by ICCI, Coimbatore, 2012.**
- ❖ Best Technique Award in 2010 from World Congress of Gesogus, Japan.**
- ❖ Conducted Cancer awareness programs to fight against cancer.**
- ❖ Founder of GEM Institute and International Training Center.**
- ❖ Teacher par excellence in Laparoscopic surgery and visiting professor to many Universities across the Globe.**

- ❖ **Conducted in GEM Hospital the first total web conference.**
- ❖ **Founder President - AMASI, ISES, President ASI and Chairman, Fellow in MAS.**
- ❖ **Published over 140 articles in International journals and presented over 250 papers in various International Conferences.**
- ❖ **Authored many books in Gastroenterology and Laparoscopic surgery. Innovated over 20 new operative techniques.**
- ❖ **As a social Activist, conducted many programmes.**
- ❖ **Received Kongumaamani Award from Chennai Kongu Nanbargal Sangam for his achievements.**
- ❖ **His son Dr. P. Praveen Raj, also a Bariatric Surgeon who is being given 'Kongu Saadhanaiyaalar Award' into day's function, may soon excel and overtake his father in the medical field. He specializes in Obesity and Diabetes Surgery.**

Dr. Palanivelu is associated with Chennai Kongu Nanbargal Sangam for over 40 years and he was the President of Kongu Students wing in Chennai in yesteryears. The Kongu Students procession in Coimbatore demanding backward class category for Kongu Vellallar was a big success and it attracted the attention of the Government. Dr. C. Palanivelu was one of the organizers of the procession.

Once again, we thank Dr. Palanivelu for the sponsorship of the book "Kalingarayan, the Great - Kalingarayan Canal".

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PREFACE

Paventhan Memorial Trust was established in the year 2002 in memory of Selvan P. Paventhan, who left for heavenly abode in 1999. The Trust has been giving cash prizes and certificates to rank holding students from Government Schools in Pappireddipatti and scholarship to deserving college students . Essential materials worth Rs.five lakhs were distributed to the worst affected families in Chennai in the recent floods.

The Trust has so far published more than 18 books which include “கொங்கு வேளாளர் திருமணச் சடங்குகள்”, “Kongu Vellalar Marriage Rites”, “தருமபுரி மாவட்டத்தில் கொங்கு வேளாளர்”, “கொங்கு மாவீரன் தீரன் சின்னமலை”, Kongu Warrior Dheeran Chinnamalai”, “தமிழில் ஒற்றுப் பிழையின்றி எழுத மிக எளிய விதிகள்”, “சித்திரச் சிலம்பின் சிதறிய பரல்கள்”, “தருமபுரி மாவட்டம் கொங்கு வேளாளர் கூட்டங்கள் – சென்னை முகவரிகள்”. All these have been authored by Dr. Manimegalai who is the Secretary of Paventhan Memorial Trust, Silamboli Chellappanar Silappathikara Trust and E.C. member of Chennai Kongu Nanbargal sangam for the last 20 years.

“He came, he conquered and left an indelible impact”. This statement may at best capture only a part of the life of Kalingarayan, an illustrious son of Kongu soil whose praise continues to be sung by one and all.

The construction of the Kalingarayan Anicut and Kalingarayan canal linking Bhavani river and Noyyal river was an amazing, wonderful and excellent achievement by Kalingarayan, who was the pioneer in linking of rivers in India.

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The life history and the great achievements of Kalingarayan are not fully known to many people even in the Kongu belt of Tamilnadu . It is therefore not surprising that most of the people in Tamilnadu and elsewhere are not aware of the amazing and excellent work done by Kalingarayan for irrigating the dry lands in Erode region by constructing an anicut in Bhavani river and digging a canal to link Bhavani river and Noyyal river. The irrigation experts and technocrats who visited the anicut and the canal had praised the well planned and meticulously executed work of the Kongu chieftain Kalingarayan 730 years back when construction technology was in the initial stage.

Padmashri Periasami Thooran, Kavignar Baskara doss, writer A.S. Velsamy and a few others have written books on Kalingarayan.

(Pulavar) Dr. S. Rasu, former Head of the Department of Archaeology and Epigraph in Tanjore Tamil University and an authority on Kongu culture, has done very extensive research on the history, life and achievements of Kalingarayan and based on many evidences, he has written and published the famous book, “Kalingarayan Kaalvaai” (காலிங்கராயன் கால்வாய்).

The books “கொங்கு வேளாளர் திருமணச் சடங்குகள்”, “கொங்கு மாவீரன் தீரன் சின்னமலை” written by my wife, Dr. Manimegalai Pushparaj, were translated by me and the translated books “Kongu Vellalar Marriage Rites” and “Kongu Warrior Dheeran Chinnamalai” received very good response. Arutselvar Dr. N. Mahalingam, to whom, a copy of the book ‘Kongu Warrior Dheeran Chinnamalai’ was presented, asked me and my wife to write on Kalingarayan also in English. These words inspired and encouraged me to write this book on Kalingarayan, the Great and Kalingarayan Canal.

Though the book is not a literal translation of the Tamil book by Dr. Rasu, this book is mostly based on his book and certain valuable materials such as a Reprint of an extract from "The Ruling chief Nobles and Zamindars of India", given by him to me. I am very much thankful to Kongu Maamani, Dr. Rasu, who has been doing great service to Kongu Society, for his help and encouraging words in bringing out this book on Kalingarayan in English.

Though it may not be traditionally appropriate to thank my wife for all the help in bringing out this book as well as the other books, it is to be recorded here that but for her help and involvement, things would have been very difficult and different.

I thank Mrs. Indragandhi Ravi and Mr.Ravi for designing and printing of this book very nicely.

I also thank the Trustees of 'Paventhan Memorial Trust' - Dr. Silamboli Chellappanar, Thiru. N.Kuppusamy, Thiru. K. Ramalingam, Thiru. C.Konguvel, Thiru.Kirupa Pushparaj, Tmt. Vasuki Manivel, Dr.Emaya Kirupa and Dr. Manimegalai Pushparaj- for the help, assistance and cooperation in the Trust activities.' I also thank Dr. C. Palanivelu for his monetary contribution to the Trust for printing 2000 copies of this book to be presented to all the members of Chennai Kongu Nanbargal sangam.

This book is to pay respects and tributes to the great son of Kongu Soil, Kalingarayan, for his pioneering work, great sacrifice and services to the people and also to spread his great work among non- Tamil speaking communities around the world, apart from Tamil youth and students.

Any suggestion on improvement or correction to the contents of the book may kindly be sent for incorporating in the next edition of the book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I N.Pushparaj, the author of this book, was born in the year 1947 in Pappireddipatti in Dharmapuri district. His father, late Thiru. Narayanasamy Gounder, was the Chairman of Pappireddipatti High school Building Committee and President of Village welfare Committee. Mother's name is Tmt.Pappammal (late).

He did his school studies in Board High School in Pappireddipatti, PUC in St. Joseph's College, Tiruchi, B.E. (Mech.) in PSG College of Technology, M.E. (Industrial Engineering) in College of Engineering, Guindy, M.A. (Public Administration) in Madras University and BGL in Madurai Kamarajar University.

He joined TNEB in the year 1970 and worked in Ennore Thermal Power Station, North Chennai Thermal Power Station, Headquarters Offices at NPKRR Maligai at Anna Salai and finally at Mettur Workshop before taking voluntary retirement in the year 2000.

He married Manimegalai, the daughter of Tamil Scholar Dr. Silamboli Chellappanar. Mrs Manimegalai and Mr.Pushparaj are engaging themselves in the charitable activities of Paventhan Memorial Trust, formed in memory of their beloved son, Paventhan who passed away in the year 1999. They are also involved in the activities of Silamboli Chellappan Silappathigara Arakkattalai.

Dr. Manimegalai has authored more than 15 books and she is actively involving herself in social service, literary works apart from the activities of Silappathikara Trust, Paventhan Memorial Trust and Chennai Kongu Nanbargal sangam.

Their younger son Mr. Kirupa Pushparaj is a leading Patent Attorney in USA and his wife Dr.Emaya, daughter of Dr. K.Anbalagan and Tmt. Senthamarai, works in USA as a Psychiatrist .

Pushparaj has authored 8 books so far, out of which 3 are in English.

1. KONGU NADU

Pulavar Kuzhanthai in his book “ Kongu Nadu” has stated that ancient Tamilnadu was divided into five regions as indicated below.

Chera region

Chola region

Pandia region

Kongu region

Thondai region

However, only three regions namely Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu and Paandia Nadu are used to be referred to in practice and considered as divisions of ancient Tamilnadu. The Kings who ruled these three regions are called “ Mooventhar”, meaning three kings. Eventhough Kongu region and Thondai region were ruled by certain kings and chieftains as separate countries, the duration of their kingdom was very short and for most of the periods, the Kongu region and Thondai region were under the control of Chera, Chola and Paandia Kings only. In view of the above, Kongu Nadu and Thondai Nadu are not counted separately but considered part of the above three regions.

The existence of five provinces in Tamilnadu in the past is evident from an old reference which is indicated below.

- ❖ Chola Nadu famous for rice;
- ❖ Paandia Nadu famous for pearls;
- ❖ Chera Nadu famous for elephants;
- ❖ Kongu Nadu famous for cows;
- ❖ Thondai Nadu famous for poets, learned and noble persons.

From the above, it is obvious that Kongu region was considered as a separate province in ancient Tamilnadu.

The rhetorical work Thandiyalangaram contains a very old poetic quotation which states that there were five provinces in Tamilnadu including Kongu Nadu.

The King Chera Senguttuvan had treated the Kongu Nadu ruler Elangosar with due respect and given him equal status. A verse in the epic 'Silappathikaram' contains a reference that the King Chera Senguttuvan was as friendly with the Kongu King Elangosar as he was with the other kings-Nootruvar Kannar, Elangai Kayavaagu, Maaluva Vendhan, Cholan Perunaarkilli.

Pulavar S. Rasu, in his book 'Kizhaampaadi Kannan kula kaaniyalar varalaaru', has mentioned that Varaagamithirar had specified in his book that Kongu Nadu was a separate province. It has been specified in Ashoka stone inscription that Saayaputhirar ruled a separate kingdom. Dr. M. Rajamanickam, in his book 'Ilakkia Varalaaru', has indicated that Sayaputhirar was none other king Athiamaan who ruled Kongu Nadu, as confirmed by Jambai stone inscriptions

Kongu Nadu was later annexed by the descendents of Chola, Oyisaalar, Vijaya nagarathuvar and Mysore kings for different periods. Eventhough Kongu Nadu was attached

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to various kingdoms during these periods, it did not lose its individuality. Not only was the structure of Kongu Nadu not changed, but also the habits and customs of the Kongu people remained the same as they were in ancient days. On deep analysis of various facts and details available, it can certainly be said that Kongu Nadu was a separate province by nature, as mentioned by Thiru. C.M. Ramachandran Chettiar, in his book 'Kongu Naatu Varalaaru'.

From researches undertaken by various persons, conclusion can be drawn to the effect that Kongu Nadu had always separate boundaries, history, art, culture, customs and habits.

The Name 'Kongu Nadu'

The countries ruled by Chera, Chola, Paandia and Thondai kings were called Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu, Paandia Nadu and Thondai Nadu respectively. The above countries got their names from the ruler's names. However, it is not the case with Kongu Nadu which was ruled by Velirs during Sangam age. After Velirs, Kangars ruled Kongu Nadu for some period. Some people had concluded that the region ruled by Kangars was initially called 'Kanga Nadu' and with passage of time, it began to be called 'Kongu Nadu', as mentioned by Thirumathi T.K. Sakthi Devi, in her book 'Kongu Vellalar Varalaaru'.

Kangu means edge, corner or end. The country situated at the edge of Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu and Paandia Nadu was called 'Kangu Nadu' and the people living in that country were called Kangars. With the passage of time, Kangu Nadu and Kangar became Kongu Nadu and Kongar respectively. Hence, Kongu Nadu got its name from the word 'Kangu' which means edge. The above conclusion

has been put forth by some people, as indicated by Thiru.K. Vellimalai in his book 'Sanga Kaala Kongu Nadu, Kongu Katturai Manigal'.

The word 'Kongu' has many meanings such as honey, fragrance, pollen of flowers. The word 'Kongu' has been used to mean 'pollen of flowers' in a poem in Kurunthogai, fragrance in the epic Manimegalai and honey in certain lines in the epic 'Ainkurunooru'.

Pulavar Kuzhanthai has mentioned in his book 'Kongu Nadu' that the major area of Kongu Nadu has hills and mountains. Since there was plenty of honey in the mountains and fragrance in the flowers, the Kongu Nadu can be said to have got its name from the word 'Kongu' meaning honey as well as fragrance. Honey was abundantly available and fragrance of flowers of various trees and plants was felt everywhere and hence people named it 'Kongu Nadu', the country which is full of flowers, fragrance and honey as mentioned by Thiru.A. Venkateswaran in his research paper 'Vennandhur Vattaara Kongu Vellalar Vaazhviai'. The conclusion that Kongu Nadu got its word 'Kongu' meaning pollen of flowers, fragrance and honey is more convincing and it can be considered acceptable.

Boundaries of Kongu Nadu

There are a number of occasional verses and poems which specify the boundaries of Kongu Nadu. The Kongu Mandala Sadhagam (a poem of hundred stanzas) written by Kaarmega Kavignar also gives details of boundaries of Kongu Nadu.

The boundaries of Kongu Nadu are as indicated below:

North - Thalaimalai or Perumpaalai

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South	- Vaikaavoor
East	- Kulithalai
West	- Vellimalai

Pulavar T.P. Chinnasami has stated in his book 'Kongu Vellalar Thirumana Sadangugal' that the above boundaries of Kongu Nadu are mentioned in an occasional verse.

Kongu Nadu- the geographical spread

Thiru.Nal.Natarajan, in his book 'Kongu Vellalar Varalaaru' has stated that Kongu Nadu accounts for one third of the total land area of Tamilnadu. Kongu Nadu is spread over the following areas.

- 1, Erode District
2. Coimbatore District
3. Salem District
4. Dharmapuri District
5. Nilgris District
6. Namakkal District
7. Karur District
8. Kulithalai in Tiruchi District
9. Palani Taluk in Dindukal District
- 10 Krishnagiri District

Divisions of Kongu Nadu

Thiru. Nal. Natarajan has further stated that Kongu Nadu was divided into two regions called 'South Kongu Nadu' and 'North Kongu Nadu'. The South Kongu Nadu comprised the southern portions of Coimbatore and Palladam Taluks, Pollachi, Udumalpet, Dharapuram, Karur,

Kulithalai, Palani and Dindukal Taluks. The North Kongu Nadu comprised the northern portions of Coimbatore and Palladam Taluks, Avinasi, Gopi, Bhavani, Erode, Salem and Namakkal Taluks.

The Noyyal river and the Cauvery river (after the Noyyal river joins the Cauveri river) were the boundaries for North Kongu Nadu and South Kongu Nadu.

Apart from South Kongu and North Kongu, it is seen from poet Sundarar's Dhevaaram and poet Sekkizhaar's Periapuranam that there was a Division called 'Mel Kongu' (Mee Kongu) as mentioned by Pulavar S. Rasu in his book 'Amukkayam Porul Thandha Varalaaru'. Sekkizhaar has also indicated in his poem that Porur near Coimbatore was also part of Kongu Nadu.

It is not known whether there was any division named 'Keezh' Kongu like the existence of Melkongu Division.

However, researchers say that 'Mazha Kongu' specified in the charters inscribed on copper plate, actually refer to Keezh Kongu. One such inscription states that Paandia King Nedunchezhiyan crossed the Cauvery river and conquered 'Mazhakongu'. From this, it is inferable that Mazhakongu refers to Mohanur area in Namakkal District.

The ancient Kongu Nadu was ruled by many Kongu Chieftains. The Chera, Chola and Paandia kings surrounding Kongu Nadu wanted to conquer the Kongu chieftains and attach Kongu Nadu with their respective countries. Hence wars were waged individually by the Chera, Chola and Paandia kings against Kongu Nadu. However, the Kongu chieftains did not give in easily. They fought bravely and fiercely against the invading kings and opposed the aggression to the maximum extent

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possible. Many such wars had taken place in Kongu Nadu among the Kongu chieftains and other kings.

Finally, the Chera King 'Andhuvan Seral Irumporai' conquered Kongu Nadu. In this war, the Chera King was assisted by his brother's son Palyaanai Selkezhukuttuvan' and this fact is mentioned in a poem in 'Pathitru Paththu', as pointed out by Thiru. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasamy in his book 'Kongu Nadum Thulu Nadum.'

Later, Chola kings and Paandia kings had also ruled Kongu Nadu by attaching the same with their respective countries.

Kongu Nadu- Sub divisions

Kongu Nadu was divided into 24 sub divisions for purpose of administrative convenience as indicated below.

1. Poonthurai Nadu
2. Thenkarai Nadu
3. Kaangeya Nadu
4. Pongalur Nadu
5. Aarai Nadu
6. Thiruvaavinam Kudi Nadu
7. Mana Nadu
8. Thalaiya Nadu
9. Poovaania Nadu
10. Araiya Nadu
11. Thattaya Nadu
12. Oduvanga Nadu
13. Vadakarai Nadu

14. Kizhangu Nadu
15. Nallurukka Nadu
16. Vaazhavanthi Nadu
17. Anda Nadu
18. Vengaala Nadu
19. Kaavadikka Nadu
20. Aanaimalai Nadu
21. Rasipura Nadu
22. Kaanjikoil Nadu
23. Kuruppu Nadu
24. Vaarakka Nadu

The leader of the subdivision was called 'Naatu thalaivan' or Naattaar. People under each division respected their leader and lived as per his guidance and advice.

Kongu Nadu is surrounded by mountains and hills on all the sides and the people living in Kongu Nadu had always been brave and courageous and effectively tried to protect the country to their best of their ability. In view of the above, even though the other parts of Tamilnadu were subjected to frequent war and aggression and consequent cultural changes, Kongu Nadu did not suffer much and the impact was considerably low. Kongu Nadu has therefore got a special place for glorious tradition and rich culture.

The important rivers of Kongu Nadu are Bhavani, Noyyal, Amaravathi and Manimutharu. The river Cauvery flows through the middle part of Kongu Nadu.

The old divisions of Kongu Nadu and the present areas of each division are as indicated below.

Sl. No.	Old division of Kongu Nadu	Present area in Tamilnadu (Taluks in full or part)
1.	Poonthurai Nadu	Erode, Tiruchengodu
2.	Thenkarai Nadu	Dharapuram, Karur
3.	Kangeya Nadu	Dharapuram, Kangeyam
4.	Pongalur Nadu	Palladam, Dharapuram
5.	Aarai Nadu	Kovai, Avinasi
6.	Vaarakka Nadu	Palladam, Pollachi
7.	Thiruvaavinam Nadu	Palani, Udumalpet
8.	Mana Nadu	Karur
9.	Thalaiya Nadu	Karur
10.	Thattaya Nadu	Kulithalai
11.	Poovaania Nadu	Omalur, Dharmapuri, Harur, Pappireddipatti
12.	Araiya Nadu	Erode, Namakkal
13.	Oduvanga Nadu	Gopi
14.	Vadakarai Nadu	Bhavani
15.	Kizhangu Nadu	Karur, Kulithalai
16.	Nallurukka Nadu	Udumalpet
17.	Vaazhavandhi Nadu	Namakkal
18.	Anda Nadu	Palani
19.	Vengaala Nadu	Karur
20.	Kaavadikka Nadu	Pollachi
21.	Aanaimalai Nadu	Pollachi
22.	Rasipuram Nadu	Salem, Rasipuram
23.	Kanjikoil Nadu	Gobi, Bhavani, Erode
24.	Kuruppu Nadu	Erode

The mountains of Kongu Nadu are 1) Oodhi malai, 2) Kurundha malai, 3) Siravanampatti malai, 4) Marudha malai , 5) Rathinagiri malai, 6) Paala malai , 7) Perumal malai, 8) Aanai malai, 9) Pon malai, 10) Thirumoorthi malai, 11) Thencheri malai, 12) Azhagu malai, 13) Kumara malai, 14) Oodhiyur malai, 15) Sivan malai, 16) Sennimalai, 17) Thavalagiri malai, 18) Kunnathur malai, 19) Ooraatchikottai Malai, 20) Madheswara malai, 21) Sankagiri malai, 22) Morur malai, 23) Tiruchengodu malai, 24) Kongana malai, 25) Servarayan malai, 26) Yercaud malai, 27) Kandhagiri malai, 28) Kolli malai, 29) Kabilar malai, 30) Nainaa malai, 31) Thaanthonri malai 32) Vennai malai, 33) Pugazhi malai, 34) Aivar malai, 35) Kondalthingi malai and 36) Palani malai.

Chieftains were ruling various parts of Kongu Nadu from the forts built in the following places.

1) Coimbatore, 2) Sathiyamangalam, 3) Kollekai, 4) Koduveri, 5) Thenaaykkam, 6) Pollachi, 7) Aanaimalai, 8) Dindukal, 9) Dharapuram, 10) Ponnapuram, 11) Perunthurai, 12) Ezhumaathur, 13) Erode, 14) Kangeyam, 15) Karur, 16) Vijayamangalam, 17) Aravakurichi, 18) Paramathi 19) Bhavani, 20) Meganur, 21) Nerinjipettai, 22) Saampalli (Mettur), 23) Krishnagiri, 24) Kaveripuram, 25) Salem, 26) Thagadur, 27) Raayakottai, 28) Adhaman Kottai, 29) Omalur, 30) Kaveripattanam, 31) Thenkani kottai 32) Pennagaram 33) Perumpalai , 34) Sozhapaadi, 35) Thoppur, 36) Harur, 37) Thenkaraikottai, 38) Aathur, 39) Sendhamangalam, 40) Namakkal, 41) Sankagiri, 42) Sadhuragiri, 43) Kanagagiri, 44) Magaraaja kadai, 45) Thattaikal Thurgam, 46) Veerapathira Thurgam, 47) Hade Thurgam, 48) Rathinagiri 49) Soolagiri 50) Kiyaarana Thurgam, 51) Anjatti Thurgam.

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Of the above, forts at Dindukal and Namakkal alone have not been destroyed. All the other forts have been either ruined or destroyed due to aggression from outside.

Kongu Nadu was ruled by Kalapirar (who spoke languages other than Tamil) for some period after Cholas and Paandiyas. Then Kongu Nadu was ruled by Rattars for about 180 years, Kangars for about 715 years, again Cholas for about 110 years, Oysaalars for about 200 years, Vijayanagara yadhu lineage for about 180 years and Thuluva lineage for about 150 years. After this, Kongu Nadu was ruled by Naayakkars, Mohalayars and British people.

During the above periods, eventhough Kongu Nadu was attached to various regimes, it did not lose or change its individuality and unique life style.

Kongu region was ruled by some chieftains during certain periods and among all the chieftains, Kalingarayan made a mark in the history of Kongu Nadu by his remarkable achievement in constructing a canal connecting Bhavani river and Noyyal river, for providing irrigation to the dry lands. A major portion of the canal runs through Melkarai Poonthurai Nadu and a small portion of the canal runs through Melkarai Araya Nadu.

The Poonthurai Nadu is surrounded by Cauvery river in the east, Noyyal river in the south, Sennimalai in the west and Bhavani river in the north.

Poonthurai Nadu is very fertile and hence, paddy is cultivated through out the year. Vellodu was one among the 32 villages in Poonthurai Nadu, apart from being the second capital of Poonthurai Nadu.

2. KONGU VELLALAR

Vellalar

Vellalar means one who donates; one who helps others; a philanthropist.

A Thirikadugam verse says that a Vellalan will not take food with out feeding the guest.

At the beginning of human history, man was just a nomad. When he had learnt the use of stones and weapons, agriculture was started and man formed his own family. Families turned into communities. Each community had its own occupation. The ancestors of Kongu Vellalar community took to agriculture.

Agriculture is considered to be the foremost and the most important profession. An agriculturist produces food grains which are vital for the existence of mankind and with out which man can not survive. Thiruvalluvar says that exercising benevolence towards the worthy is the purpose for the whole design of labouring and acquiring property. Agriculture, though laborious is the most excellent form of labour. Even though people go about in search of various other employments, they can not neglect agriculture to which primary importance has to be given.

Agriculturists are the linchpins of the world considering the fact that they support all other people who can not till the soil. Giving food to others who direly need it is the best help one can do, as outlined in the epic 'Manimegalai'.

Though 'Vellalar' means those who help others, it has become the tradition to call as Vellalar only those who offer the best help to others by taking to agriculture and producing food grains. Hence, in practice Vellalar refers to only those who have taken to agriculture as their profession. Paripaadal, which is one of the Sangam anthologies, refers to agriculturists as Vellalar.

Some people say that the word 'Vellalar' should have got its name from the word 'Vellam' which means water, taking into consideration the fact that Vellalar handle mainly water for agriculture.

Thiru. Nagasamy says in his book 'Undi Koduthor Uyir Koduthore - Varalaatril Velaan Kudigal' that the word 'Vellalar' should have been coined from the word 'vel' which means soil. The potter who handles the soil in his profession is referred to as 'Velco' in many stone inscriptions. Similarly those who handle and control the 'vel' meaning soil, should have been called Vellalar.

Maraimalai Adigal, in his book, 'Velaan Kudigal', says that those ancient Tamils who took to agriculture and led a glorious and rich cultured life were called Vellalar. Pulavar Kuzhanthai has mentioned in his book 'Kongu Nadu' that those who took to agricultural profession and helped others in getting food which is very vital for man's survival, are called Vellalar.

Quality and nature of Vellalar

Kadialoor Uruthiran Kannanar, in his Sangam classic 'Pattinappalai' has mentioned about the good nature and high qualities of Vellalar living in Pugaar (Kaviripoom pattinam) as given below:

Vellalar will not harm or kill others.

Vellalar hate theft

Vellalar will respect learned people and noble persons.

Vellalar will feed and protect cows and bulls.

Vellalar who are known for hospitality will receive the guests warmly, feed them nicely and treat them with love and affection.

Vellalar will take only farming for livelihood with high standards of living and peaceful domestic life.

It has already been mentioned that Vellalar means those people who help others. In keeping with and true to the above meaning, Vellalar used to liberally help the beggars and those who need and ask for help, with out any hesitation and with out refusing. This fact has been highlighted in all classical literary works.

Just like Kodialur Uruthiran Kannanar, Elango Adigal, in the epic Silappathigaram has praised the Vellalar of Pugaar as those who help the kith and kin of beggars and safeguard and support the victory of the king through successful farming. Elango Adigal has further mentioned that the Vellalar are sons of mother Cauveri, the river which was running full of water.

Life of Vellalar

Information and details regarding the life of Vellalar are available in Sangam literature. The houses of Vellalar were of peculiar type and had no parallels. The houses were thatched with plaited coconut leaves. Turmeric yields were seen in front of their houses. There were flower gardens around the house.

There were many pegs deeply rooted in the soil near the house and these pegs were having long ropes which were used to tie the calves of the cows. There were

earthen receptacles in the houses to store the grains produced in the farm fields.

Big jack fruits, tender coconut, plantain, tender Palmyra fruit, sweet potato and other vegetables were available in plenty in the housing colonies of Vellalar.

Sirupaanaatru Padai mentions that Vellalar women , in spite of their having busy work in the house in addition to looking after the children, will treat the guests with warmth and affection, insist on them staying for some more time and serve them tasty food consisting of white rice, sponge gourd and crab.

From the above, it can be seen that Vellalar are those people who take to farming as their profession and help others as much as possible.

Kongu Vellalar

Vellalar are those who are engaged in agriculture. Hence Kongu Vellalar are those people in Kongu Nadu who are engaged in agriculture. Those who have taken to agriculture in Kongu Nadu include more than hundred categories of Vellalar such as Kongu Vellalar, Agampadia Vellalar, Aaru Naattu Vellalar, Karuniga Vellallar, Veerakudi Vellalar, Kaarkaatha Vellalar. However, the word 'Kongu Vellalar' means only Kong Nadu Vellala Gounders.

Aboriginal or Migrated

There are two different views on the origin of Kongu Vellalar in Kongu Nadu. One view is that they are aboriginals and the other view is that they are migrants.

Migrated from Kudagumalai - A view

A historian by name Vaal House has stated that Kongar belong to the race of people who lived in Kudagumalai country. In support of his view , Vaal House

says that there are similarities between things such as burial urns which were obtained during archaeological excavation in some parts of Kongu Nadu and Kudagumalai Nadu. Further, a Kannada historian, called Chittal says that both the words 'Kongar' and 'Kodagar' emanated from a single word and that even among the aboriginals living now in Kudagumalai region, there is one division called 'Kongar- Kudumban'. The above facts have been mentioned by Vidhwan V. Ramamurthy in his book 'Kongu Naattu Goundergal'. Hence there is one view that Kongu Vellalar are those who have migrated from Kudagumalai region.

Migrated from Chola Nadu - A view

There are two different views regarding the origin of Kongu Vellalar. One view is that Kongu Vellalar are those who have migrated from Thondai Nadu to Kongu Nadu. The other view is that Kongu Nadu itself is the motherland of Kongu Vellalar.

Thiru. Nal. Natarajan, in his book 'Kongu Vellalar Varalaaru' has stated that a section of Kongu Vellalar migrated from Thondai Nadu to Kongu Nadu through Chola Nadu according to certain literary works and copper plate inscriptions.

There is also a note stating that the ancestors of Kongu Vellalar had come from Thiruvaalur (Thiruvaarur) area of Chola Nadu and established the Kongu regime. As an evidence to the above statement, there is a song in praise of Goddess Kaaliamman, the family Goddess (Kuladeivam) of Kongu Vellalar hailing from Vagurampatti of Namakkal Taluk and belonging to Perunkudi Kulam. The temple for the above Goddess is near Kondichettipatti.

Apart from the above, Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi has stated in his book 'Ponnar Shankar' that there are two notes — one note mentioning that Kongu Vellalar came from Thirupaathur of Chola Nadu and the other note mentioning that Kongu Vellalar came from Nellai area- made available to us through research articles, old songs and palmyra leaf texts.

Gangai Race

There is also an ancient legend regarding the origin of Kongu Vellalar. The story as mentioned in 'Kongu Vellalar Puraana Varalaaru' is as follows:

The son of Gangai in God Sivaperuman's matted hair and the daughter of Gangai in God Vishnu's feet got married and gave birth to Vellalar. Since Kongan was the first in Gangai race, the Vellalar were called Kongu Vellalar."

The above narration is found in Vellalar Puranam. Hence the statement that Kongu Vellalar are sons of Gangai is based on the ancient legend.

Aborigins

Abithaana Chinthamani written by A. Singaravelu Mudaliyar, states as follows:

"Velir are aborigins of Tamilnadu. These people are the Vellalar. They were called by different names such as Vel Aavi, Vel Aay, Vel Paari. Vel Began. These people were in Tamilnadu even before the arrival of Agathiar in Tamilnadu. They were called 'Kizhaar' which means owner."

Sons of soil

Dr. A. K. Arangasami in his book, 'Vidudhalai Veeran Chinnamalai' says that Kongu Vellalar are living in this land (Kongu Nadu) for a very long period. 'The existence of the race of Kongu Vellalar was found even during the

prehistoric period. This is evident from the fact that the wide mouthed clay lamps, kept in pots traced and obtained from Kodumanal archaeological excavation, were found to have marks mentioning the individual's actual name as well as the name of the Koottam (Kulam) to which the person belonged' says Dr. K. Arangasami.

Pulavar Kuzhanthai while mentioning in his book 'Kongu Nadu' that there is no evidence - either literary works or other documents - to prove that Kongu Vellalar migrated to Kongu Nadu from any other place, puts forth the following reasons to show that Kongu Vellalar are sons of soil.

1. There is no kulam name for Vellalar of other countries.
2. The title ' Gounder' is not found in other places.
3. Many names of noble and learned men of 'Sangam' age are found in the list of names of the Koottam. The names of 24 koottams are those of Sangam age.

Professor K.K.Pillai, in his book ' Tamil Varalaaru' has pointed out that Dravidians, aborigins and Kongu Vellalar lived in the southern area.T.M. Kaliappa, in his foreword to the book 'Kongu Vellalar Varalaaru' written by Tmt. Sakthi Devi, has pointed out a statement made by K. Arunachala Gounder to the effect that Kongu Vellalar alone are from the lineage of Tamil people of Sangam age.

Taking into consideration all the above aspects and the points put forth, it can certainly be concluded that Kongu Vellalar are the original inhabitants and that they belong to Tamil ancestral line only.

Gounder

Apart from engaging themselves in agriculture, Kongu Vellalar had been keeping good relations and close contact

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with Chera, Chola and Paandia kings and worked under their control as chieftains and army generals to look after the welfare of the people and protect them. The kings used to confer special titles such as Mandraadiyar, Vaanavaraayan, Kamindan on Kongu Vellalar. Of these, 'Kamindan' means one who is very able and strong in defence war. Kamindan' also means one who protects cultivated plants, cattle, citizens and the country. Kamindan has become 'Gounden' in the course of time and the word 'Gounden' refers to Kongu Vellalar.

Some people say that 'Kamindan' means one who has successfully returned after converting forest waste land into fertile land.' Gounder' is only a title and not a caste name.

Vellalar - Gounder

The word 'Vellalar' got its name from the profession. Kongu Nadu is surrounded by hills and mountains. Those people who lived in the plains took to agriculture and those who lived in the mountains and hills used to go for hunting of animals for making their livelihood. These people were called 'Vettuva Gounders'. The book, 'Kongu Vellalar Puraana Varalaaru' gives details of 19 categories of Gounders as indicated below:

1. Vellala Gounder
2. Vettuva Gounder
3. Narambu katti Gounder
4. Naattaa Gounder
5. Okkilia Gounder
6. Agamudia Gounder
7. Palli Gounder
8. Padayaachi Gounder

9. Modavandi Gounder
- 10 Padaithalai Gounder
11. Civiyaa Gounder
12. Senthalai Gounder
13. Pavala Vellala Gounder
14. Paala Vellala Gounder
15. Sangu Vellala Gounder
16. Malayaala Gounder
17. Thirumudi Gounder
18. Thonda Gounder
- 19 Thozhuva Gounder

Even though there are different categories of Gounders as shown above, 'Gounder' means only Kongu Vellala Gounder traditionally as well as by custom.

Koottam-Kulam

Kongu Vellalar have a distinct social structure. They comprise people belonging to many koottams. The Koottam is also called kulam or Kudi which means a family lineage. By tradition and custom, people belonging to one particular Koottam will have marriage relations with people belonging to a different Koottam only. People belonging to the same Koottam are called 'Pangaaligal' which means agnates or brothers by relation. Pangaaligal are those who will share among themselves joy, sorrow, wealth, property, success, failure and such other things. People belonging to the other koottams will be considered brother- in-law or mother's brother or father- in- law- category relationship (Maamani- Maithunan Murai). A male ancestor's lineage forms one particular Koottam in Kongu Vellalar community.

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Marriage is prohibited between a boy and a girl of the same Koottam. Men and women belonging to the same Koottam are called brothers and sisters. A boy of one Koottam can marry a girl of a different Koottam only.

Naming of Kulams

There is a specific name for each and every kulam. Each kulam was named after a bird, fish, tree, parts of body, jewels, plant or occupation. A list of 142 kulams had been specified in Odhaala Azhagumalai Kuravanji. In practice, details are available for around 80 kulams only. Details of Kulam and Kuladeivam are indicated in Chapter - 12.

Kula Deivam and Kudipaattu Koil

For each Koottam, there is a specific God called 'Kuladeivam' to be worshipped in a temple located in a specific place. This temple is called 'Kudipaattu Koil'. The kulam mark is very helpful in identifying Pangaaligal and arranging marriages in accordance with the customs and practices followed in the Kongu Vellalar community.

Kalingarayan, the great man of Kongu Nadu, belonged to Saththanthai kulam.

Even though the anicut and the canal connecting Bhavani river and Noyyal river were constructed as a historical wonder by Kalingarayan of Saththanthai kulam, the amazing matter of great interest is that people belonging to the above kulam did not use the canal water for irrigation of their lands.

3. RISE OF LINGAIYAN AND KALINGARAYAN AWARD

Lingaiyan, was borne in the year 1235 AD in a small village called 'Kanagapuram' a hamlet near Vellodu of Erode region. His father, Nanjian was an agriculturist .The family followed Veera Saiva tradition. Lingaiyan was very smart, wise and brave even in his younger days of life. He learnt Tamil, Mathematics and History and also developed various skills.

Erode was under the regime of Chera king in 850 AD. There after, Erode was ruled by Chola kings with headquarters at Dharapuram. Subsequently , it came under the control of Pandias and only during this period, the ruler, by name Sadaiyavarman Veerapandian came to power in the year 1265 AD with headquarters at Madurai. When the Kongu region was under the rule of Sadaiyavarman Veerapandian, Lingaiyan joined the army of Pandia kingdom as a soldier at an early age and rose to the level of commander and administrative officer at the age of 30.

Within a short period of time, Lingaiyan attained the chieftainship by virtue of his exemplary ability and wisdom. His performance was so good that he was made the 'Uthara Mantri' by the Pandia King. Soon after this, the Pandia King who was very much impressed with the leadership qualities of Lingaiyan, conferred the title of 'Kalingarayan' and

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provided him the powers to rule the northern part of Kongu region as a representative of the Pandia Kingdom.

After award of this title, people used to call him as Kalingarayan only, with out mentioning the original name, Lingaiyan. He became a political leader and ruled the northern part of Kongu Nadu for almost 40 years, acting as a representative of the three Pandia Kings, Sadaiyavarman Veerapandian, Sundarapandian and then Kulasekarapandian.

Kalingarayan, a man of great courage, wisdom and extraordinary knowledge was respected by both the Pandia kings and the people. He also possessed innumerable traits and special qualities of high caliber. After getting the power to rule the northern part of the Kongu region, Kalingarayan desilted several ponds and lakes and laid new roads in the region. He was always respected by all the people in the region including his Pangaaligal from Saththanthai kulam and he, in turn, respected them. He paid special attention for his relatives belonging to Saththanthai kulam and helped them in all possible ways.

Poonthurai, one of the 24 divisions of Kongu Nadu consisted of 32 villages and Kalingarayan was made chief of that area, with Vellodu as his capital. Vellodu is 14 KM from Erode on the road to Sennimalai. He constructed a temple there and dedicated it to Padagavalli Nachiar.

The 32 villages of Poonthurai Nadu were as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Poonthurai | 2. Vellodu |
| 3. Nasiyanur | 4. Ezhumaathur |
| 5. Pidariyur | 6. Eengiyur |
| 7. Perunthurai | 8. Sathanur |

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 9. Kalamangalam | 10. Kolanalli |
| 11. Kizhaampadi | 12. Modakurichi |
| 13. Anumanpalli | 14. Pazhamangalam |
| 15. Kulavilakku | 16. Kagam |
| 17. Arachalur | 18. Vilakkethi |
| 19. Eenjampalli | 20. Sathimangalam |
| 21. Semur | 22. Mangalam |
| 23. Erode | 24. Sithodu |
| 25. Thindalpudur | 26. Elavamalai |
| 27. Thiruvachi | 28. Panayampalli |
| 29. Odanilai | 30. Veeraganallur |
| 31. Perodu | 32. Murungaithozhuvu |

4. CONSTRUCTION OF KALINGARAYAN CANAL

Kalingarayan was a patriotic citizen of Kongu Nadu and he was very much concerned and worried to see Poonthurai Nadu very dry and unsuitable for agriculture, especially for cultivating paddy, sugarcane and turmeric. Even though Kalingarayan desilted many ponds and lakes in the region, the water availability was too small in quantity that only a very small portion of the land could be irrigated.

The fact that the river Cauvery was running with limitless water in Poonthurai country through out the year without giving any benefit to Poonthurai country, made him more worried. The agricultural lands in Poonthurai Nadu were not flat, but were full of ups and downs whereas the river Cauvery was running at a lower level and hence, it was not possible to utilize the Cauvery water to irrigate the lands in Poonthurai Nadu which were mostly at higher level.

Kalingarayan thought over it and came out with a very well thought out plan to construct an anicut in Bhavani river, one of the tributaries of Cauvery river, and a canal to the extent possible to make Poonthurai country fertile and rich.

He then proceeded to Madurai to meet the King Veerapandian for obtaining approval to the proposed plan, advice in general pertaining to the execution of the project

and assistance regarding money, men and materials wherever required .

The Pandia King who was very much impressed and already very happy about the ability, administrative capacity, technological skill, wide knowledge and the earnest desire of Kalingarayan to make the region fertile, readily approved the plan and promised to render all assistance required in the course of execution of the project. Based on the above, Kalingarayan worshipped God Sivalingeswaran and commenced the project work, which was not only challenging, but also the first of its kind in the entire area from Kanyakumari in the south to the Himalayas in the north.

It is believed in Kongu Nadu that there was also another reason which prompted Kalingarayan to take up the massive work of constructing the anicut across the river Bhavani and linking the rivers Bhavani and Noyyal. The widely believed reason was as follows:

Kalingarayan wanted his son to get married. As was the custom and practice during that period, Kalingarayan went to his brother- in -law's house at Karur and proposed for marriage of his son with the daughter of his brother-in- law, who belonged to Pannai kulam. After mutual discussions and agreement, the betrothal was arranged and celebrated grandly on an auspicious day. However, an unfortunate and undesirable incident took place which caused postponement of the marriage.

During the stay of Kalingarayan in his brother- in-law's house at Karur, the cook of the bride's party asked his master whether coarse rice or fine rice should be cooked for the guests. The master replied in jest, "What matters if you cook coarse rice or fine rice for the people living in

dry lands.” On hearing these words, Kalingarayan got offended and retired to bed with a strong vow that he would not take food in his brother- in law’s house unless and until the dry lands in his village and surrounding areas were converted into wet lands suitable for yielding fine rice.

Kalingarayan also vowed a life of penance till his task was completed somehow or other. He prayed God Sivalingeswarar to give him the strength and show ways and means for taking up and completing the work, and left his beard to grow as a token of his vow.

While Kalingarayan was asleep, God Sivalingeswarar appeared in his dream in the form of an old sage and said, “Why are you dejected? Do not be disheartened; Construct an anicut at Bhavani river and dig a canal; The object will be realized” . Kalingarayan asked, “Oh! Swamy, I am perplexed; I do not know where to construct the anicut and in what course to dig the canal.” The sage replied, “A peacock has run chasing a snake from a certain point to the bed of the river Bhavani and the traces of the same are left there. Take the course.”

Kalingarayan woke up and immediately went to the point indicated in the dream and to his surprise and joy, saw the traces of the snake having been chased by a peacock.

Kalingarayan began the work to dig a canal and construct a dam with stones brought from Ooratchikottai Hills. But the work was obstructed by Vellai Vettu Poligar on the ground that the land in question where the dam was proposed to be constructed, belonged to him. However, Kalingarayan fought with Vellai Vettu Poligar and won the case, thereby clearing the hurdle for the construction work.

For the purpose of construction of the anicut and the canal, Kalingarayan purchased a hill located in Ooratchikottai near Bhavani. He also purchased the pathway connecting the hill and the place of construction of the anicut. Stones required for the construction work of the anicut were cut in the hill area and the stones were brought to the anicut place through many buffalo carts. The construction works were carried out with focus on quality and strength. Kalingarayan also participated in the work personally and brought stones from the hill in a cart driven by two buffalos which were named as Raman and Lakshmanan.

In order to ensure that the workers traveling from the hill area to the anicut area took proper rest, rest stations were established at various places with water and plenty of eatables. For linking the stones without getting washed away by the water leaking from the dam, steel rods and lead were used to keep the joints strong and permanent.

The place where water from Kalingarayan canal joins Noyyal river is called Kooduthurai. At this place, the width of the Kalingarayan canal is only one metre approximately. Kalingarayan built the anicut and the canal from the anicut point to a place near Kodumudi. The cost involved in the task was enormous.

After completion of the work which involved a long time period ((1270 AD—1282 AD) and high cost, both the anicut and the canal were named after Kalingarayan, who achieved the successful completion of the project involving linking of the two rivers by virtue of his strong commitment and vision. All the dry lands of Poonthurai Division were eventually converted into wet and fertile lands.

The village near the anicut is called Kalingarayan village. The paddy produced using the canal water is called

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Kalingarayan paddy. The peacock had become the emblem of Kalingarayan family.

Even though, it has been widely believed and stated in ancient records such as Vamsavali Keifeit and the English book, "The ruling Chiefs, Nobles and Zamindars of India" that the motive for construction of the anicut and the canal by Kalingarayan was the humiliation suffered by him at his brother in law's house, Pulavar S. Rasu, the authority on Kongu history, Kongu culture and who had done extensive research on Kalingarayan canal based on literature, stone inscriptions and copper plate inscriptions had categorically stated in his book 'Kalingarayan Kaalvaai' (காலிங்கராயன் கால்வாய்) that Kalingarayan constructed the anicut and the canal only for the improvement of the country by irrigating dry lands by proper planning. More over, he did not take action to irrigate the lands in his native place, Vellodu, using the above canal water. However, the alleged humiliation of Kalingarayan by his brother - in- law, as the motive for construction of the canal, has come to stay in the history.

Kalingarayan then returned to Karur and celebrated the marriage of his son since he accomplished what he vowed.

5. SPECIAL FEATURES OF KALINGARAYAN ANICUT AND KALINGARAYAN CANAL

“He came, he conquered and left an indelible Impact”. This statement may at best capture only a part of the life of Kalingarayan, an illustrious son of Kongu soil whose praise continues to be sung by one and all.

Kalingarayan transported large rocks from Ooratchikottaimalai on buffalo drawn carts. This was one of the main reasons for the long construction period of 12 years. The work was commenced in the year 1270 AD and completed in the year 1282 AD. Further, in the construction of the canal, he roped in all the people irrespective of caste, by levying tax to meet the construction expenses. A decree of Kalingarayan contains the list of communities and the wealth tax to be paid by each community for the construction work. He donated a major portion of his wealth including his mother's hard earned savings, for the above purpose. Funds for the project were also collected by way of donations from people, especially his relatives.

Though Kalingarayan collected tax naming it as 'Kalingarayan viniyogam' from all classes of the society, he exempted certain people from the lower strata from paying the tax. After completion of the work, Kalingarayan passed an order to the effect that the descendents belonging to

his sect 'Saththanthai' kulam shall not have the right to use the water from the canal.

The fifth day in the Tamil month of Thai is an epoch-making day in the annals of Kongu and Erode history, in particular and Tamilnadu in general. For, it was on this day of Tamil Calendar 734 years ago, that Kongu Chieftain Kalingarayan finished construction of the anicut and canal, and water was released for irrigation for the first time.

The canal was designed with a meandering route to maximize the area of the land to be benefitted. Kalingarayan began the work in the year 1270 AD with the construction of a small barrage across the river Bhavani. It was in the year 1282 AD when he took the canal to the banks of river Noyyal at Aavudaiaaparai.

Even though the distance between the start of the Kalingarayan canal and the end of it is only 32 miles, Kalingarayan designed it in a circuitous way with as many twists and turns as possible that it measured 56.5 miles. There were two reasons for Kalingarayan to extend the length of the canal. By extending the length of the canal as much as possible, the chieftain wanted to irrigate larger areas of land and in doing so, he made the best use of the natural gradient.

Kalingarayan canal has three sub canals viz. Malaiyampalayam Division sub canal, Periapattam Division sub canal and Aavudaiaaparai Division sub canal. The great efforts of Kalingarayan in having successfully completed the construction of the canal had benefitted over thousands of families. The 90.6 km long canal at present caters to 15743 acres of land. Every year, water is released from Kalingarayan anicut through the canal usually from 16th of June up to 30th of April continuously for 10 months.

The maintenance works of the anicut and canal are carried out during the rest of the days.

The important villages located on the banks of Kalingarayan canal are Anai Naasuvampalayam, Ramanathapuram, Peria Agraharam, Erode, Sathanur, Savadipalayam, Kalamangalam, Paasur, Palani goundan palayam, Vattakal Valasu, Malaiyampalayam, Kolanalli, Kuttapalayam, Kaaranampalayam, Karukkampalayam, Unjalur, Kolathu palayam, Panapalayam, Kalvettupalayam, Vengampur, Vadakku pudupalayam, Ganapathipalayam, Kodumudi, Varundhiya palayam and Cholakkali palayam.

The important channels which come across the Kalingarayan canal are Sunnambu Oodai, Pichaikaran palayam Oodai, Perumpallam Oodai and Kurangan Pallam Oodai. It is a matter of fine planning and meticulous execution to note that the Kalingarayan canal had been dug in such a way that the water from the channels (Oodai) does not mix with the water of Kalingarayan canal. The Kalingarayan canal links the two main tributaries of river Cauvery - river Bhavani and river Noyyal. The anicut constructed by Kalingarayan is across Bhavani river at a very small distance prior to joining the river Cauvery. This drains water in Kalingarayan canal of length 90.6 km. This canal meets the river Noyyal at Aavudaiaaparai. The Kalingarayan Canal gets its water from Bhavani river about one km before it flows into the Cauvery river.

The river Bhavani meets the river Cauvery in the northern region of Erode. There is a temple known as Shri Sangameswarar temple at the convergence of the two rivers.

The canal supports one of the largest ayacut in the State. It irrigates vast stretches of turmeric, sugar cane and paddy fields.

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As Kalingarayan constructed the canal with several curves like the crawling of a snake at elevated places, an oral tradition in the Kongu region maintains that Kalingarayan constructed the canal as directed by the snake.

There is a traditional belief among a section of the people that after water was released for irrigation from the canal, there was a comment by certain people who were jealous of Kalingarayan, that he constructed the canal with the selfish motive of benefits for him and his Pangaaligal belonging to the Saththanthai kulam, by way of irrigation to their lands in the ayacut. On hearing these comments, Kalingarayan categorically declared that people belonging to Saththanthai kulam would never use the canal water, not only for irrigation purpose, but also for drinking purpose and that all others could use the canal water for irrigation.

Whatever might be the reason, the fact is that even after more than 730 years, people belonging to Saththanthai kulam have not used the canal water for irrigation. It was really a great selfless act on the part of Kalingarayan and an amazing sacrifice by him in having made such a historic declaration. In this connection, it is appropriate to mention a recent statement by Viswanathan, a farmer belonging to Saththanthai kulam, that even though he owned three acres of land near the canal, he used the well water only for irrigation of his land and not the canal water.

The mean sea level (MSL) at the point where the canal begins is 534 feet and at the end, it is 412.48 feet. The chieftain wanted to extend the canal further, to take it to the river, Amaravathi. Soon after the construction of the canal, on seeing good flow of water into the Noyyal river, Kalingarayan decided to extend the canal up to Amaravathi

river by building another barrage at Athipalayam, a place near the southern bank of Noyyal. The work was taken up and some progress was made. However, he did not complete the work due to some inevitable reasons.

As an evidence to the unfinished extension work, and as proof of the innovative efforts taken by Kalingarayan to link Noyyal river and Amaravathi river, even today, the barrage by the name 'Ootai Anai is present at Athipalayam. Dr. Bhuchanan, a foreigner who visited the canal, had mentioned in his report dated 7-11-1800 about the Kalingarayan canal extension scheme. Further, a technocrat by name Wedderburn, had submitted a project report on 27-3-1872 wherein it was proposed to store water in Noyyal and irrigate 13000 acres of land on the southern bank of Noyyal at an estimated cost of Rs. 8,71,000/.

From the above, it could be seen that after Kalingarayan linked Bhavani river and Noyyal river, he also initiated steps to link Noyyal and Amaravathi rivers, but the work could not be completed. However, taking into consideration the fact that he planned to link Bhavani, Noyyal and Amaravathi in the 13th century itself, Kalingarayan is undoubtedly the pioneer in linking of rivers.

There is a false belief among a section of the people belonging to Kongu Vellalar community that people belonging to Saththanthal kulam did not offer any help at all to Kalingarayan in the construction of the canal and in view of the above, after completion of the construction work, he had reportedly told them angrily that they should not use the water from the canal either for irrigation of their lands or for drinking purpose.

But it is definitely not true and there was no chance of any rift between Kalingarayan and his Pangaaligal since

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the aim and intention of Kalingarayan was to ensure that the benefits of the project reached all the people. Since the requirement of water for irrigation of all the lands near the canal was more than the availability of water from the canal, Kalingarayan decided that people of Saththanthal kulam would not use the canal water. This is one of the reasons why Kalingarayan is hailed by one and all. The fact that even now Kongu Vellalar belonging to Saththanthal kulam feel very proud in stating that they belong to Kalingarayan lineage clearly shows that there was no rift or misunderstanding between Kalingarayan and his Pangaaligal.

Moreover, Kalingarayan himself was very keen to ensure that people did not have even a bit of doubt that the construction of the Canal was to irrigate his own lands. After construction work of the Canal was over, Kalingarayan made a vow that he would not drink even a drop of water from the Canal and left for Uthukuli with his family. It is really a great matter about which people can be very proud of him and pay respects to him.

6. DEEDS AND SERVICES OF KALINGARAYAN

When Kalingarayan was the political head of Poonthurai Nadu with its headquarters at Vellodu, he carried out many good deeds and rendered valuable services for the benefit of the people of Kongu Nadu. Digging of ponds, desilting and renovation of damaged ponds, building of temples, renovation of old temples, creating of new villages, delegation of rights to people were the important deeds and services carried out by Kalingarayan. He also laid many new roads in the region.

When Veerapandian was in the fifth year of his ruling in the year 1270, Kalingarayan went to Vagaiputhur, which was a part of Vijayamangalam of Kongu Kuruppu Nadu. He ordered immediate renovation of Vagaikulam which was in deteriorated condition for a long period of time, by Kuruppu Nadu Sabai. He also ordered that the cost for the above renovation and for future maintenance should be borne by Vijayamangalam village Sabai.

Kalingarayan repaired a damaged pond in the village Tiruchitrumbala Nallur in the year 1271 and named it as 'Vellaikulam' in memory of the ancestors of Pandias.

Kalingarayan arranged for digging and construction of tanks and ponds in Vellodu and Kanagapuram in the

year 1275. He also renovated a leaked tank in Elathur of Gopi taluk in the year 1279 and a tank in Sarkar Periapalayam in the year 1289, which was the 24 th year of Veerapandian rule.

Kalingarayan also renovated the Siva temple in Vellodu and conducted the Purification ceremony in the above temple at the time of consecration of the deity. Further , he built a Perumal temple in Thingalur and named it as ‘ Sundarapandian Vinnagaram’.

Kalingarayan donated substantive amount to the temple of Arthanareeswarar in Tiruchengodu and carried out many development works in the temple.The Palamadai Amman temple in Goundachi palayam near Vellodu was built by him even before the construction of Kalingarayan canal. Also, the Agathur Amman temple in Uthukuli was constructed by him . Agathur Amman is even now the Kuladeivam of Kalingarayan lineage.

Kalingarayan created a village called Kachirayanallur, in memory of Kachirayan who was a political officer of Pandia and who helped him in various ways in planning and execution of innumerable welfare activities. He also established a new village called ‘ Velliraveli’ near Kunnathur of Kuruppunadu. Navidhampalayam which was originally called ‘Kalingarayan palayam’ was also created by him. The interesting incident leading to the creation of ‘Navidham palayam’ was as follows:

Kalingarayan had made a vow that he would not get his beard shaved until successful completion of the canal work. After the completion of the entire work in the year 1282 and after water was released into the canal for the first time which was on fifth of Thai month of that year, one day he was in sound sleep at his home. At that time,

his family barber came and with out waking up Kalingarayan, shaved his face which was with long beard all over, in deep slumber. He also kept a mirror in front Kalingarayan to enable him to see his shaved face as soon as he woke up.

After some time Kalingarayan woke up , saw his face in the mirror and realized that his face was fully shaved beautifully.He was immensely pleased with the barber's timely action in removing his beard after realization of the vow made by him. Kalingarayan lauded the barber for his thoughtful act and asked him what he wanted as a favour or present for the good work done by him. The barber replied that he did not want any materialistic present, but wanted something to be done to commemorate his name.Kalingarayan readily accepted to fulfil his wish and accordingly, founded a village near the Kalingarayan anicut and named it as 'Navidhampalayam . The above village was granted to the barber as a freehold.

Uthukuli near Pollachi was created and developed beautifully and artfully by Kalingarayan. Many parts of Kavidikka Nadu, where Uthukuli is situated, were arranged to be given to the people of Saththanthai kulam by Cheraman Perumal Nayanar. The cowsheds of Kalingarayan were already there.

Apart from being known for valour, Kalingarayan introduced many social changes which were considered as revolutionary in those days. He found that in some areas where dominant and influential people of so called high class category lived, it used to be the practice then that people belonging to backward classes should not walk with chappals. Also, during any festival or function, they should not use auspicious musical instruments and kettle drums etc. Kalingarayan who valued human rights, cancelled all

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the restrictions of the above kind and gave equal rights to all. He permitted the lower caste persons to wear foot wear, plaster their houses on the outside ,blow conches and play musical instruments during good and bad occasions.He issued orders to this effect and in order to spread the message to all the people all over Kongu Nadu, he established stone and copper inscriptions to the above effect at many places across the region.

Kalingarayan was a devotee of God Siva and he worshipped Sarvalingeswarar in Vellodu. He was rich enough to bear the expenses related to temple functions and celebrations and he did it along with activities such as feeding of poor people. He was rendering help to temples of all Gods in his country without any prejudice which showed his secular mind. He was blessed with a son, by name, Nanjian.

The name of Kalingarayan became very famous in Kongu Nadu because of the marvelous and incredible achievement and he grew in power as time went on.Because of this development, the Pattagars of the other 23 Divisions of Kongu Nadu became very jealous of Kalingarayan and as a result, they declined to bestow equal honour and grant equal seats to him, on the score that only Kavidikka Nadu was given to him and not Poonthurai Division.In view of the bad treatment rendered to him, Kalingarayan felt disgusted with them and decided to leave Vellodu and settle in Kavidikka Nadu to live in dignity and peace.

After leaving Vellodu, he went straight to his place in Kavidikka Nadu near the Anamalai hills and created the village where springs were dug for the cows to drink water.The above village where beautiful huts were built was

called Uthukuli and Kalingarayan lived there with family and cattle.

The exact year of his departure to heavenly abode is yet to be ascertained, but what is certain is that before departing, he made the Kongu region a heaven of peace and prosperity, apart from establishing his name as the pioneer in linking of rivers.

Because of the great achievement, good deeds and humanitarian services by Kalingarayan for the benefit and welfare of the people of Kongu Nadu, he was in later years and even now worshipped as God, not only by the people belonging to Saththanthai kulam, but also by many people belonging to various kulams of Kongu Vellalar community.

7. APPRECIATION AND COMMENDATION BY FOREIGN EXPERTS

The Kalingarayan anicut and the canal which were constructed 730 years back have attracted the attention of many foreign experts and won great appreciation and commendation , especially for the wonderful design, quality of construction, special features, provision for optimum utilization of water for irrigation purpose.

The notable foreign experts and technocrats who visited the Kalingarayan anicut and the canal include Father Swartze, Dr. Bhuchanan, Lt. Colonel Colin Meckanzle, Wroughton, Hannan, Colonel Wedderburn, Arundels ICS, Colonel Montgomerie, Mead Penny Cuick, Awdry, General Morgan and Sir Arthar Cotton.

The reports of these experts are useful for tracing more historic news, apart from making everybody happy and proud to go through the commending words about the extraordinary achievement of Kalingarayan.

Father Swartze visited the canal on 7-8-1779 and registered his high praise of the work. Lt.Colonel Colin Meckanzle had made a report on Kalingarayan canal and also on Kalingarayan. The document titled 'Calingo Ray Gounden Pattagars of Vootocoolie in Malabar' and being appreciative of the work is available in Government Records in the form of old palm leaves with writings on them. The report by Wroughton who visited the canal in the year 1845 gives many details of the pioneering work, anicut and the canal.

The report by Hannan being highly appreciative of the work, also suggested certain improvements for irrigating more area of land. Colonel Wedderburn who visited the canal and did extensive study, had given a project report dated 27-3-1872 on Kalingarayan extension Scheme at an estimated cost of Rs 8,71,000/-. The report which was considered to be an excellent one by all experts on irrigation, had suggested to irrigate 13000 more acres of land by extending the canal up to Karur Amaravathi. The approval for the scheme was accorded by the then Government, but the work was not taken up citing financial problems.

Arundels who was the Collector of Coimbatore District had suggested strengthening the sluice gates to withstand the high flow of water, especially during rainy seasons. In the year 1800, the canal irrigated only about 3500 acres, as mentioned by the historian and traveller, Francis Buchanan in his diary which was published under the title 'A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar.'

Buchanan's journey was performed under the orders of Mr. Marquis Wellesley, Governor General of India, for the specific and express purpose of investigating the state of agriculture, arts, commerce, the religion, the history, natural and civil and antiquities, in the dominions of the Raja of Mysore and the countries acquired by East India Company in the late and former wars, from Tippu Sultan.

Buchanan toured the region from 23-4-1800 to 15-1-1801, during which he was in Erode, as Erode was then known, for two days. Erode was then part of Noyyal South district, the headquarters of which was Dharapuram.

On November 7th 1800, he entered Erode from Perinduru (now Perunthurai) and visited Kalingarayan

canal. After seeing and closely examining the whole thing, he termed it 'an excellent work.' Further, he had reported as given below:

"The canal coming by Erode from the Bhavani river is an excellent work and waters a narrow space of ground, fifteen Malabar hours journey long of various breadths. (Malabar hour refers to the time taken by Bhuchanan to traverse the region.)

At this place, the canal is carried over a small rivulet by means of an aqua duct. It is said that formerly, it extended all the way to Karur, and was carried over to Noyyal river by means of an aqua duct which must have been a great work.

The whole thing is said to have been made by a Vellalar farmer, named Caling Raya (Kalingarayan), who being a rich man and of great influence, raised from among the people of his caste a sum sufficient for the purpose. This was 400 years ago. His family never seemed to have received any reward in the lands on account of the great work that he completed. The lands watered by it at present amount to 1045 may or canda cars (traditional land measure) which have been found to measure from 2 to 3 Chers each, and taking into account the medium, the whole thing will be 3459 acres, of which only 83 acres are waste."

Even now, experts in water management who visit the canal are wondering about the excellence of the work done by Kalingarayan 730 years ago. Certainly, he was a great visionary, able planner in water management, a good administrator and successful leader who executed the work as per his plan.

He was the first man who linked rivers for providing irrigation to all the available lands. Kongu Nadu is very proud of its son, Kalingarayan, the pioneer in linking rivers.

8. POLLUTION CONTROL AND RENOVATION WORKS

The president of Kalingarayan Aayacut Farmers Association, Mr. Velayutham says that the water in the canal was crystal clear 30 years back. However, for the last 25 years, untreated effluents were discharged into the canal by tanneries and dyeing units. Some years back, the Central Pollution Control Board had carried out a study in order to evaluate the water quality status of the canal. As per the study conducted, about 150 dyeing units and 20 leather tanneries which were in operation in the catchment areas were frequently discharging the trade effluents through the drain. This had resulted in the pollution of the canal water and consequent low yield of the crops which were irrigated with the canal water. The health of the people using the canal water for drinking and domestic purpose was also affected.

The report recommended that industries should be provided with proper and efficient effluent treatment plant and that in dyeing units, advanced waste water treatment technology should be adopted for recycling of textile dyeing waste water.

The farmers and various Association of farmers had protested for long against the discharge of untreated effluents from textile processing units and tannery units. The Associations had stated that the agriculture sector had suffered a lot on account of the untreated effluent

discharge into the canal. The farmers affiliated to the Kalingarayan Paasana Sabai had made demands to the Government to construct a wall on the right bank of the canal and lay a motorable track from the first to the fourteenth mile to arrest pollution.

As a result of the representations for preventing pollution of the canal water, the Government allotted a sum of Rs 90 Crores for laying concrete platforms in the canal up to the point where the canal crossed Erode. These works were carried out by PWD during annual maintenance period. Also, several measures were taken by the Government to prevent discharge of untreated effluents into the canal by tanneries and dying units. The erring factories were sealed and strict actions against polluters of the canal were taken.

As a result of these measures taken by the Government, the discharge of effluents into the canal by the tanneries and dying units had been controlled to a large extent.

An amount of Rs. 87.8 Crores has been allotted by the Tamil Nadu Government in 2016 for carrying out renovation works and taking pollution control measures. The PWD has taken up the works to strengthen the banks of the canal to prevent leakage of water. Also the works for strengthening the inner wall of the Kalingarayan anicut and laying of concrete on the top have been taken up by the PWD.

9. KALINGARAYAN POLIGARS

The records relating to the history of Kalingarayan and the subsequent Poligars of Uthukuli were gathered by Muthu Ramasami Kalingarayar who was the 13 th Poligar of Uthukuli from old writings and other accounts, and the history titled 'Vamsawali Kyfeit' was written on Cadjen leaves.

After completion of the construction of the canal, Kalingarayan moved to Kavalikkanadu, built some huts and lived there with his family and cattle.

The origin of Uthukuli palayam has been mentioned as below:

After Vellai Vettu Poligar was driven away from his country by Kalingarayan, he went with his followers and settled near the Aanaimali hills. His descendents began to harass the people of the adjacent countries when an enquiry was made by Devarayar, then ruler of Penukonda pattanam, as to the person who subdued Vellai vettuvan. When Nanjia Kalingarayan, the son of Kalingarayan who built the canal, went and saw Devarayar at his court, the latter commanded him to go to Aanaimalai side, subdue Vellai Vettuvan's descendents, take possession of all the places occupied by them, convert the forests into villages and become the Poligar of that place.

Accordingly, he drove them away, cleared the forests, founded a village called 'Uthukuli' and established himself as the Poligar of Uthukuli.

The first Poligar of Uthukuli, Kalingarayar, made a pilgrimage to all the sacred places in the South and distributed gifts. He built a temple and consecrated it to the Goddess Agathuramman. He reclaimed all the lands in his Palayam, dug up wells and channels for irrigation purposes, and ruled over his country with glory and happiness. The country at that time extended forty miles from east to west and twenty miles from north to south and was bounded on the north by Ellaipallam, on the east by Thalakkarpallam of Ponkulikkanadu, on the south by Nallurkanadu Palar and on the west by Kampalaturai Manali river.

Little or nothing of importance has been mentioned about the Poligars from the second to the eighth in the line as they ruled peacefully under the authority of the Rayars.

At the time of the ninth Poligar, Nanjia Kalingarayar, Viswanatha Naick was reigning as the King of the Pandia country. All the Poligars attended his court and paid respects to him. But five Rajahs built five forts in Tinnevely and defied his authority. At the command of the Naick, Nanjia Kalingarayar went against them, besieged their forts, and brought their heads as a sign of his victory and placed them before the Naick. He was much pleased with his valour and bravery and called him as the valiant (Parakrama) Nanjia Kalingarayar, appointed him as the commander of the 51 st Kothalam (fort) , and assigned the Palayam as a free Jaghir. This state of affairs continued till the 18 th Poligar.

The Poligars from 19 th to the 23 rd were obliged to guard the country below the ghats, which was under the sway of both Madura and Mysore Samasthanams. When it was entirely brought under the control of the Mysore

Samasthanams, the 23 rd Poligar, Nanjia Kalingarayar paid a visit to Immudi Raja Wadiyar, it's ruler. As Coorg(Kudagu) was then opposing Mysore, he commanded the Mysore army and subdued the Ruler of Koorg. Raja Wadiyar was delighted with his heroism, gave him a gold gilt palanquin and other presents, and fixed a peishcush of 750 pons for the nine villages of the Palayam. The Poligars had then under them 5000 foot men and 5000 horse men and one Kadagam of elephants.

They stationed themselves at Aanaimalai, captured elephants and supplied them to the palace and were also guarding Aanaimalai and Marchinaiken Palayam. In consideration of these services, the Poligars were allowed to levy tolls on goods passing through their country. Changes in the Samasthanams brought on troubles to the Poligars, when the 26 th Chief was deprived of half of his Kaval (guard). He was also defeated in a battle with the Rajah of Kalikota (Calicut) at Ellapalli, but the toll was levied till the time of the 28 th Poligar.

The 29 th Poligar who assumed charge of the estate on the 4 th Masi of the year Virodikrudu, Kaliyuga 4891, was much harassed by Tippu Sultan and his army. In view of the disturbing situation, he sent all the members of his family to Bombay and remained alone. After East India Company came into existence, the problem was sorted out and the Poligars were in peaceful possession of the Palayam on payment of seven- tenth of the revenue to the East India Company.

Muthukumaraswami Kalingarayar, the 31 st Poligar, who was born in the year 1832, directed his attention towards improvement of the estate. He acquired large tracks of land in Aanaimalai and Marchiinaickenpalayam villages and bought two villages in the Cochin territory viz.

Thaniapadam and Meenatchipuram, and made some additions to the palace to make it more comfortable, attractive and self- sufficient.

When he was young, his mother, Nanjia Ammal had a large terraced building constructed in Ambarampalayam out of her pocket money and made it a chatram for the weary travellers to take rest and relax.

The 31st Poligar, Muthukrishnasami Kalingarayar died on 23-4-1874, when he was 42 years old, leaving behind him two sons. The elder son, Sivasubramanya Thirumurthi Kalingarayar was born in 1852. He succeeded his father in 1874 as the 32nd Poligar and remained in charge of the estate for seven years only, as he died in the year 1881. He left no heirs. Hence, Muthu Ramaswami, the second son of Muthukrishnaswami Kalingarayar, who was born on 24-1-1864, and who had a narrow escape from the attack of small- pox in his childhood, assumed charge as the 33 rd Poligar. He held the position in the year 1881 when he was only 18 years old.

Muthu Ramaswami Poligar was a great lover of music and had great love for horses and dogs. He loved hunting, wrestling, horse- riding and gymnastic exercises. He mastered English language and also made many additions to his ancestral palace, apart from laying out gardens, play ground and building a bungalow with play grounds and a billiard room and called it 'The Golden Grove'. The management and control of the Samathur Palayam was also entrusted to him in 1902, based on the request of Samathur Poligar.

After the demise of former Zamindar of Mywadi, the estate was entrusted to the Poligar of Uthukuli, who managed the estate efficiently and effectively, apart from

taking much interest in public affairs He donated liberally to public causes. He also took an active part in the Non-Brahmin conference which was held in Coimbatore on 20-8-1917, the first of its kind in South India. He was also chairman of the reception committee for the conference.

He contributed a lot for public charities. He made numerous contributions for the public fund. The Poligar maintained a number of religious institutions and every year, he celebrated the Dasara festival and held a Dharbar.

The Poligar had retired from public life in 1918. He had purchased two properties, one at Kodaikanal and the other at Coonoor, and spent most of his time in these two places, leading a quiet and pious life. He passed away in the year 1931.

Shri Agathur Muthu Krishnaswami Kalingarayar, the eldest son and heir of the Poligar managed the affairs of the Poliem after the retirement of his father. He took a leading part in the year 1919 in the recruitment of men for Field Service in meso potamia. He recruited the largest number of men from Coimbatore district, especially in Pollachi Taluk. He was awarded a certificate of merit and a medal by the Major General and the Secretary to Government of India for the valuable services rendered in the recruitment of men for field service.

The Kumara Poligar took a keen interest in the Non-Brahmin movement. He attended all the Non- Brahmin conferences held in Madras and was a member of the Reception Committee. In January 1922, the Kumara Poligar was present in Madras during the visit of H.R.H., the prince of Wales, and took part in all the functions connected with the visit.

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M.R. Nataraja Kalingarayar was the younger son of Muthu Ramaswami Kalingarayar, the Poligar of Uthukuli. On 15-4-1922, Nataraja Kalingarayar sailed for England to study for ICS at the Oxford University and to qualify himself for the Bar. He returned with laurels and enhanced the reputation of the aristocratic family to which he belonged.

Sathyaraj, the famous film actor is one among the hereditary successors of Kalingarayan family. N.R. Nataraja Kalingarayar had two daughters, Tmt. Nadhambal and Tmt.Indrani. Sathyaraj, the inimitable film actor with ability, extraordinary talent and entertaining style and who gave excellent performance in the role of Thandhai Periyar in the Tamil film 'Periar', is the son of Tmt. Nadhambal and grandson of Nataraja Kalingarayar.

Agathur Muthu Krishnaswami Kalingarayar became the 34th Poligar in the year 1931. He was respected by all the people for the services rendered for the welfare of the people. He was made Honourary Judge of Coimbatore in recognition of his services. He also received many awards and titles. A street in Coimbatore has been named as Kalingarayan street, which is an ample evidence of the popularity earned by the Kalingarayan family.

The following list, from the earliest founder to the 37th Poligar shows the ancient origin of the family of the Poligar of Uthukuli.

Sl. No.	Relation	Name of Poligar	Period of rule in years
1.	Founder	Kalingarayar	50
2.	Son	Nanjia Kalingarayar	40
3.	Son	Agathur Kalingarayar	26
4.	Son	Nanjia Kalingarayar	20

5.	Son	Kalingarayar	19
6.	Son	Nanjia Kalingarayar	21
7.	Brother	Agathur Kalingarayar	12
8	Son	Kalingarayar	23
9.	Son	Parakrama Nanjia Kalingarayar	27
10.	Son	Agathur Kalingarayar	16
11.	Son	Kalingarayar	9
12.	Son	Nanjia Kalingarayar	28
13.	Son	Virumanda Kalingarayar	30
14.	Brother	Agathur Kalingarayar	19
15.	Son	Kalingarayar	20
16.	Son	Iswaramurthi Kalingarayar	6
17.	Son	Kalingarayar	15
18.	Son	Agathur Kalingarayar	31
19.	Son	Virumanda Kalingarayar	23
20.	Son	Muthu Kalingarayar	13
21.	Son	Sinnia Kalingarayar	19
22.	Son	Kalingarayar	20
23.	Son	Nanjia Kalingarayar	30
24.	Son	Kalingarayar	26
25.	Brother	Nanjia Kalingarayar	12
26.	Son	Kalingarayar	29
27.	Son	Nanjia Kalingarayar	2
28.	Brother	Agathur Kalingarayar	4

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29	Brother	Kumaraswami Kalingarayar	30
30.	Son	Muthukumaraswami Kalingarayar	19
31	Son	Muthukrishnaswami Kalingarayar (1832 to 23-4-1874) (life period)	34
32.	Son	Sivasubramanya Tirumurthi Kalingarayar (1857 to 1881) (life period)	7
33.	Brother	Muthu Ramaswami Kalingarayar (24-1-1864 to 1931) (life period)	50
34.	Son	Agathur Muthukrishnasami Kalingarayar (1894 to 1936) (life period)	5
35.		Agathur Muthu Ramaswami Kalingarayar (1918 to 1969) (life period)	33
36.		Agathur Krishnaraj Kalingarayar	
37.		Agathur Abhiram Vishnu Kalingarayar	

The history of Kalingarayan family will be incomplete without an insight into the family at present. Siddarth AMR Kalingarayar, son of Mr.Arunkumar and Mrs. Seetha, is part

of the 37th generation and one of the descendents of the Kalingarayan lineage. He is the youngest grandson of AMR Kalingarayar, the Zamindar of Uthukuli. His mother Seetha is the granddaughter of the doyen of the Murugappa Group - AMM Murugappa Chettiar

The Uthukuli Zamin came under the East India Company after the death of Tippu Sultan and the rulers were granted a Zamindari Saned by the British Monarch during the 19 th century. The Uthukuli Zamin possessed 10000 acres of land initially. The family moved over to Coimbatore during the time of Agathuramman Muthu Ramaswami Kalingarayar. (AMR Kalingarayar) and had made substantial contributions to several institutions in the field of Industry and Education.

The sprawling palace of the Zamindars of Uthukuli is, it is learnt, now vested with Mr. Siddarth, his cousin Mr.Vishnu and their relatives. The palace is spread over four acres of land. It has several bed rooms, a library, sheds for bullock carts and cars, a large granary, a Kutchery (the place for court in yesteryears) and a large garden which produces vegetables, fruits and flowers..

The palace is located in Pollachi region which is close to Kerala and therefore, the design of the palace has its influence. The palace has a Kottaram as in Kerala. A lot of wood and tiles are found in the palace. The second phase is a few hundred years old and has Indo- Saracenic influence in it. This was the residential portion until the modern wing was added in the twentieth century.

Mr. Siddarth's wife, Mrs. Shrinidhi is the daughter of Ramraj Vanavarayar from the ancient Samathur Zamindari. Their daughter is Selvi Alankrutha who likes to be at Uthukuli whenever time permits. The late generations of

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Kalingarayan had built a Kali temple in Uthukuli and named the deity as Shri Agathuramman and worshipped her as their tutelary God.

Mr. Siddarth Kalingarayar has been taking various steps to preserve the 750 years old rich heritage which can be traced back to 37 generations. He is preserving artifacts and monuments that speak volumes of the rich history and life style of people in Uthukuli and surrounding areas.

10. TRIBUTES TO KALINGARAYAN

Kalingarayan canal project is the forerunner for all projects for linking of rivers. Every year, the fifth day of Tamil month Thai, the day on which water was released for the first time into the canal for irrigation, is being celebrated as 'Kalingarayan Canal Day' by the farmers of Erode district, as a mark of respect to Kalingarayan who converted dry lands to wet lands in Erode district by his determination, meticulous planning, fine execution of work, hard work, fund raising capacity and able administration. Accordingly, this year also, on the fifth day of Thai, the farmers in large numbers paid respects to Kalingarayan by garlanding his portraits at various places between Kalingarayan anicut and Aavudaiyaa Paarai near Kodumudi. The portrait of Kalingarayan was unveiled by Tmt. Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, former Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment.

Only a few books have been written and published on the history of Kalingarayan and the details of these books (in Tamil) which pay rich tributes to the Kongu Stalwart, Kalingarayan, are indicated below:

S.No.	Title of the book	Author
1.	Kalingarayan kodai	Padmashri M.P. Periasami Thooran
2	Kalingarayan Kaalvaai	Pulavar (Dr.) S. Rasu
3.	Kalingarayan Kaavium	A.S. Velsamy
4.	Kalingarayan. Kadhai	Baskaradoss

Kalingarayan is not only known for his engineering skills in spite of his being a farmer only, but also for his vision, forethought and administrative skills. It is really a wonderful and remarkable achievement by a farmer in the thirteenth century, in having linked two rivers and paved the way for irrigation of many acres of land which were dry and unsuitable for raising crops till then. His selfless and excellent work was very well praised and highly appreciated by all the people including eminent Engineers and irrigation experts from foreign countries.

Members of various Associations and people of Erode region pay respects by garlanding the statue of Kalingarayan at Vellodu. People of Erode region have been urging the Central and State Governments to declare the Kalingarayan canal as a historic monument, apart from celebrating the Kalingarayan canal day, in view of the fact that at a time when people at all levels are discussing linking of rivers, Kalingarayan, the pioneer in linking of the rivers, made it 730 years back.

Kalingarayan statue had been erected near his native place, Vellodu in recognition of the exemplary services rendered by him. The statue was unveiled in the year 2007, marking the occasion of completion of 725 years from the date of release of water into the canal for the first time.

The anicut and the canal constructed by Kalingarayan in the 13th century when there were no material handling equipments and the technology was in the initial stage, are seen to be very remarkable achievements even now by all standards. Highly qualified and experienced experts who visited the canal have praised the work as excellent and wonderful.

With a view to honour Kalingarayan and to spread his fantastic achievement among the people, the Kongu Nadu Trust founded by 'Kongu Maamedhai' Dr. N. Mahalingam, and now headed by Dr. M. Manickam, have been giving awards in the name of 'Kalingarayan' for the past four years to distinguished persons of Kongunadu.

The Federation of Kongu Sangangal, headed by K.C. Kaliyannan, has been giving scholarships to poor and meritorious students hailing from Kongu community under a scheme called 'Kalingarayan Students Scholarship Scheme' with a view to create awareness among students about the amazing and wonderful work done by Kalingarayan.

The Chennai Kongu Nanbargal Sangam, which was established in the year 1961, and which has been doing many useful services to people of Kongu Vellalar community, has been paying respects to Kalingarayan on all important occasions from the beginning. Portraits of Kalingarayan are being exhibited in all Kongu Family Functions and pictures of Kalingarayan invariably find a place in all the invitations for functions. Kalingarayan Galaxy has been opened in the Sangam's Velli Vizhaa Illam. The Sangam, now headed by K.A. Ganapathi, leaves no stone unturned to spread the glory of Kalingarayan.

The Kongu Vellala Goundergal Peravai, now headed by Tiruchi R.Devarajan, has also been taking various steps to honour and to pay respects to Kalingarayan.

The Kongu Research Centre at Erode founded by Pulavar S. Rasu had carried out extensive research on the life of Kalingarayan, with focus on the construction of anicut and the canal, his achievements, welfare deeds and services, the problems faced etc. Based on the research

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and study of various documents, stone and copper inscriptions, literature and authentic information from various sources, and after putting in lot of efforts spread over many years, Pulavar Rasu has written and published the book titled 'Kalingarayan Kaalvaai' which has been very well received by one and all. The fourth edition is expected shortly. This book in itself is meant to be a rich tribute to Kalingarayan.

The Inspection Bungalow of PWD in Erode has been named as 'Kalingarayan Illam' by PWD of the Tamilnadu Government. Thiru N.Kolandasamy, who was a leading member of the committee for installation of Kalingarayan statue at Kalingarayan Illam, wanted to erect a name board in front of the Kalingarayan Illam so that all the people can easily see it and remember the name of Kalingarayan. However, S.K. Mayilantham, who had taken many steps to protect the Kalingarayan canal from pollution, arranged for the installation of the name board and opened the same on 31-7-2006 at his own cost.

N.T. Kannuswamy, the President of Thenmugam Vellodu Saththanthal kulam Ramaswami Charitable Association and other office bearers of the Association had installed an artful and beautiful statue on 19-1-2007 (Thai, fifth) at Vellodu, the native place of Kalingarayan.

With a view to commemorate the services of Kongu Chieftain Kalingarayan, who was a pioneer in interlinking of rivers for enhancing irrigation facilities in Erode District, Honorable J. Jayalalithaa, the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, made the following statement on 19-9-2013 regarding installation of a statue in honour of Kalingarayan.

"Kalingarayan has been credited with laying the longest canal to connect Bhavani river with Noyyal river -

a distance of 56.5 miles in Erode region about 730 years ago. And even to this day, the canal known by Kongu chieftain's name Kalingarayan, serves to irrigate about 15743 acres in the district.

Even though it was sufficient to lay a 56.5 km canal to connect the Bhavani river and Noyyal river, Kalingarayan built the canal for a stretch of 90.6 km in order to ensure that a large extent of land could get irrigation facilities and damage to the canal could be prevented due to seasonal floods in the rivers. Since the banks of the canal had been built with kaarai (lime plaster) and have many curves, local people use to call this canal as kaarai Vaikkaal and kona Vaikkaal.

The canal runs parallel to Cauvery river. It meanders to provide water to far -flung areas. The canal supporting one of the largest ayacuts in the State, irrigates vast stretches of turmeric, sugarcane and paddy fields.

Kalingarayan built the anicut and the canal with the intention of helping the farmers of Erode District by irrigating many areas of land. The canal can be said to be a beautiful ornament of Erode District. The entire credit for construction of the anicut and the canal belongs to Kalingarayan whose original name was Lingaiyan. After becoming the Head of Kongu Nadu, he planned to convert the dry lands under his control to wet lands and with the help of the people of Kongu Nadu, he accomplished the task of constructing the anicut and the canal connecting Bhavani river and Noyyal river.

The local people had requested for installation of a statue for Kalingarayan, who undoubtedly was the pioneer in linking of rivers in India. Acceding to the request made

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by local people and in a fitting tribute to this great chieftain who had carried out historical development works in the region, a statue of Kongu chieftain, Kalingarayan would be set up in Nasuvampalayam area in Erode District and also, Kalingarayan anicut built by him would be converted into a tourist spot.”

The statue is expected to be installed soon.

This book is also a tribute to Kalingarayan, the uncrowned king of Kongu Nadu 700 years back.

11. KALINGARAYAN ANICUT AND CANAL IMPORTANT DETAILS / YEARS

1. Year of commencement of work - 1270
2. Year of completion of work - 1282
3. Date of release of water from anicut - சை மாதம் 5ஆம் தேதி
4. Height of the anicut from MSL - 534ft
5. Height of the place where the canal water touches Noyyal river - 412.48ft.
6. Straight length of the canal - 32 miles
7. Actual length of the canal - 56 miles, 5 furlong, & 350ft
8. Total length of the dam - 3000ft (app.)
9. Depth of dam - 10ft
10. Area of Ayacut - 15,743 acres
11. year of birth of Kalingarayan - 1235 AD
12. Year of award of Kalingarayan title - 1265
13. Veerapandian coming to power - Year 1265 AD
14. Year of demise of Kalingarayan - Yet to be assessed
15. No. Of Sluice gates - 1840
(All on the left side of the canal)

12. LIST OF KONGU VELLALAR KOOTTAMS

Aandai (ஆந்தை) —> (குலதெய்வம்) **Arulmigu Annamar swamy** (near manikkampalayam Namakkal), **Pon Azhagu Naachi Amman**, Valli Arachal, Muthur, **Arulmigu Kootham poondi Annamarswamy Thirukovil** (near Manickam palayam), **Sri Veera Kumaraswamy** (வீரக்குமாரசாமி), Vellakovil, **Sri Periyanyagi Amman**, Palangarai, Tirupur & **Sri Sellandiyamman**, Elur Akaram (near Puduchatram, Namakkal), **Agastheeswarar**, Agilandapuram.

Aadai —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliamman**, Parenchervazhi, Kangeyam)

Aadhi —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Selvanayaki Amman**, Keeranur, Kangeyam), **Aatheeswarar**, Keeranur.

Adhitreya Kumban

Aavan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliamman**, Parenchervazhi, Kangeyam)

Adhirai

Akini

Aavan

Anangan

Andhuvan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Selvanayaki Amman**, Keeranur, Kangeyam, **Sri Sellandiamman**, Kadambankruchi, near Cauvery River)

Ariyan

Alagan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Sellaandi Amman (Sri Selvanayaki Amman)**, Podanur-Chettipalayam, near Coimbatore)

Bharatan

Bramman

Chellam

Cheran —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Selvakumaraswamy & Kuppanna swamy**, Muthur & **Thangamman**, Kodumanal, Kangeyam)

Devendran —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Goundichiamman** - Araneer Sullipalayam, **Ponkalamman** - Perunkurichy of Paramathi Velur, Namakkal, **Sri Selvanayaki Amman**, Keeranur, Kangeyam)

Dananjayan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Veerakumara swamy**, Vellakovil)

Danavantan

Dhanancheyan [Kurukathi]

Dhanancheyan [Ilupaikinaru]

Eenjan, Madhukarai, Sellapandian

Elumathur Kadais [Aka panangadan]

Ennai

Indran

Kaadan

Kadai —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Konnayar - Selliyamman Koil Malayai Maruthai, Muthusamy Kovil**, Palamalai, Karur, **Sri Selvanayaki amman** - Keeranur, **Thanga Nayagi amman** - Arasur, **Sri Angala Parameswari Amman** - Avalpoondurai, **Padai vetti Amman** - Pillur) **Agatheesar** - Kangeyam.

Kaari —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliyamman**, Anangur, Sankari & **Ponkaalamman**, Unjanai, Trichengode)

Kaavalar

Kadunthuvi

Kalinji

Kambakulathan

Kanakkan

Kanavaalan

Kannan (கன்னங்குலம்) —> (குலதெய்வம் : “**Sri Nallapulli Amman**”, Morpalayam, Tiruchengode. **Sri Apathal swamy** - Nasiyanur, **Sri Ponkalamman** - Irayamangalam,

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Tiruchengode, **Kulavilakamman** (குலவிளக்கம்மன்) - Kalamangalam & **Annamaar Kovil**, Maniyanoor, Paramathi Velur, Namakkal, குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliyamman**

Kannandhai —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Manalur Siva selva nayakiamman (Sellandiyamman)** (Kannivadi), **Madukkarai Sellandiamman** (Mayanur) Pappini, **Aariyur Muthusamy**, **Sri Navaladiyan** - Mohanur, **Sellandiyamman** - Ooduvandhur.)

Karunkannan

Kauri

Kavalan

Kiliyan

Keeran —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Selvanayaki Amman**, Keeranur)

Kodarangi

Koorai —> (குலதெய்வம்: **Sri Ponkalamman**, Sivagiri, Erode)

Kuruppan

Kotrandhai

Kottaarar

Kovar

Koventhar—> (குலதெய்வம் : **Thai Nalli Amman**, **Choleeswarar**, near to government school, Gudimangalam, Dharapuram T.K.Tripur Dt.)

Kumarandhai

Kundali

Kungili

Kuniyan

Kunnukkan

Kuyilan

Kuzhlaayan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariakali Amman** (கரியகாளி அம்மன்), Kothanoor, Dharapuram)

Maadai

Maadhaman

Maathuli

Maavalar

Maniyan (மணியங்குலம்) —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Mohanur Navaladi Periyasamy, Sri Selvakumaraswamy & Kuppanna swamy**, Muthur)

Maruthurai Kadais

Mayilan

Mazhluazhlagar

Medhi

Meenavan

Moimban

Moolan

Mooriyan

Mukkannan

Munaiveeran

Muthan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Selvakumaraswamy & Kuppanna swamy**, Muthur)

Muzhlukkadhan —> (குலதெய்வம் - **Sri Vellai Amman / Kadayeeswarar** - Kaadayur - Kangeyam)

Naarai

Nandhan

Neelan

Nettai maniyan

Neerunni

Neidhali

Neriyam

Odhaalar —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliyamman - Parenchervazhi** - Kangeyam, **Sri Kandiamman/Kandeesh warar** - Kandiankovil,)

Ozhukkar

Paaliyan

Paamban

Paanan, Pannaiamman - Yezhoor

Pandian —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Kodumanal Sri Thang amman Thirukovil**, Kodumanal, Tirupur)

Paadhari

Padhuman

Padukkunni

Paidhali

Panaiyan

Panangadan, Paravathiamman - Pillur, Soliamman
- Karur, **Ponkalamman** - Ezhuvathur.

Panjaman

Pannai —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Sadayappa Swami**, Thandampalayam; Sendraya Perumal Kovil, Rakkipatti, Salem), **Pannaiamman** - Ezhur

Pannan

Paamaran

Pavalan, Kaliyamman

Payiran —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliyamman**, Parenchervazhi, Kangeyam), **Aanooramman** - Kangeyam.

Periyan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Rathna Moorthy** (ரத்தினமூர்த்தி), Sankaradampalayam, Dharapuram)

Perunkudi —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Ellai Arasu, Pavuliyamman** (பவுளியம்மன்), **Vangalamman** (வாங்கலம்மன்), **Karichikumaraswamy (Chittode), Kaliyamman** - Kondichettipatti)

Pillan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Natrayan & Nachimuthu swamy**, Mettupalayam, Kangeyam), **Theerthagiri Eeswarar** - Theerthamalai.

Podiyan

Ponnan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kandyamman**, Pongalur, Palladam (TK), **Ponnamman, Neelakandiamman** - Pongalur.

Poochadhai

Poodhiyan

Poosan

Porulthantha —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Malaiappasamy/ Malaiamman** facing North, other Gods along with this are **Pukkarandi** facing West & **Karuppanasamy** facing East)

[in Thootakurichi (5 km from Aranattarmalai), Karur], **Sri Selvakumaraswamy & Sri Murungai Amman & Kuppanna swamy**, Muthur and **Kaaliamman**, Unniyur)

Pulathini —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Angala Parameswari Amman**, Kolappalur, Gobichettipalayam)

Punnai

Puthan

Saakadai or Kaadai

Sathandhai, Sathandhiamman

Sathuvaraayan

Sanagan

Sedan, Kaadaiyur Koil

Sellan (செல்லங்குலம்,) —> (குலதெய்வம்: செல்லியம்மன், கொன்னையர், எளச்சிபாளையம். (திருச்செங்கோடு - ராசிபுரம் வழி) and **Azhagunachi Amman**, Anjur, near Muthur), **Periyanchiamman** - Kunnathur, **Neeliamman** - Gopi, **Azhagunachiamman** - Parithipalli.

Semponn —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Kariya Kaliyamman** (கரியகாளி ஆம்மன்), Peria Manali, Rasipuram & **Sri Muthusamy**, Ramadevam, Tiruchengode, **Ayei Amman**, Nasianur, Erode), **Karumalaiyandavar** - Poonthurai, **Sembapuriamman** - Kulithalai.

Sempoothan —> Ettukai Amman, Namakkal district, Keerambur, **Periyanchiamman** - Kangeyampalayam.

Semvan/ semban

Sengannan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Podari ayyan**, Nathakadyur, Kangeyam, Kadampankurichi sellandi amman, Karur).

Sengunni —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Pudhu Vengarai amman**, Vengarai, Paramathy, Namakkal)

Seralan

Sevadi

Sevayan

Silamban

Soman

Soolan

Sooriyan

Sothi

Sowriyan

Sevanthi —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Ponnatchi Amman**, Ilupuli)

Surapi

Thanakkavan

Thavalayan

Thazhinji —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Sri Veerakumaraswamy**, Vellakoil)

Themaan

Thodai(n)

Thooran, **Suriyakaliamman** - Modakurichi, **Angalamma** - Kumaramangalam

Thorakkan

Thunduman

Uvanan

Uzhavan

Vaanan or **Vaani**

Vannakkan (குலதெய்வம் : **Arul migu Pon Alagu nachi amman**, valli araichal, Muthur, near Kangeyam)

Veliyan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Kakkaveri Annanmar Swami**, Namakkal)

Vellamban

Vendhai

Vendoven (வெண்டுவங்குலம்) —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Kaali Amman** (kolaram), **Arulmigu Kathaanganni Aayee Amman**, oothukulli, **Arungarai Amman** - Chinna Dharapuram)

Viliyan —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Chelliamman**, Malla samduram, Namakkal), **Sellapandiamman**

Villi —> (குலதெய்வம் : **Pon Azhagu Naachi Amman**, Valli Arachal, Muthur)

Vilosanan

Viradhan

Viraivulan