

SOCIAL LIFE AND MILITARY CAREER OF REGENT QUEEN MANGAMMAL OF MADURAI NAYAKA- A STUDY

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Abstract

Ranga Krishna Muttu Virappa (1682-1689 A.D) had only a posthumous son was Vijayaranga Chokkanatha. When he was a three months old child he made as king Madurai. By the name of his infant grandson, Rani Mangammal became to regent ruler of Madurai Nayaka from 1689 to 1706 A.D. As women, Regency Queen Mangammal the Madurai kingdom had surrounded around by enemies. All dangers were faced by the Queen Mangammal and able to maintained the prestige of Madurai Nayaka by political wisdom, diplomatic skills, cool, courage and successful military campaign with the help of her General (Dalavay) Narasappayya. She fought war against Travancore ruler Raja Ravi Varma; Maratha King Shaji of Tanjavur and Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad. She was diplomatic cordial relation with Mughal Emperor Aurangazeb's general Zulfikhar Ali. She was visionary queen, always concentrates about her kingdom and constructed a maker of highway roads, avenues, palace, and builder of temple, tanks and festival and recreation with many of her public works. She gave an efficient administration and security to his people. The present paper examines particularly Social Life and Military Career of Regency Queen Mangammal's of Madurai Nayaka – A Study in detail form.

Key Words: *Mughal Emperor Aurangazeb's General Zulfikhar Ali, Narasappayya, Raja Ravi Varma of Travancore, Chikkadevaraja Udaiyar of Mysore Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad.*

1. Introduction

According to Madurai Nayakas tradition, only males were permitted to become rulers. Little importance was given to the women administration. As an exemption, Rani Mangammal (1689-1706 A.D.) was a regent on behalf of her grandson, in the Madurai Nayaka kingdom in present day Madurai, Tamilnadu towards the last quarter of 17th Century and early decade of 18th Century. She was an excellent administrator, popular among the people and a powerful diplomatic ruler in Madurai Nayaka. She was visionary queen, always concerned about the future generation of her kingdom and is still widely remembered as a maker of roads and avenues, palace, builder of temple, tanks and festival and recreation with

many of her public works still in use. She fought war against Travancore Tanjavur and Ramnad Sethupathi. She maintained cordial diplomatic relation with Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's general Zulfikhar Ali and able to success in Military administration in Madurai.

2. Aim of the Study

The Aim of this paper “**Social Life and Military Career of Regent Queen Mangammal of Madurai Nayaka - A Study**” is to encourage our oncoming generation how a women ruler successfully ruled Southern Tamilaham, how she managed petty kings, military generals, feudatory, fought different wars during her military campaign and also how she possessed leadership qualities and had become the most popular in South Tamilnadu is to be discussed. This paper brings out thorough study and broad discussion about the subject to about the full life history of the Queen and to bring the hidden information into light.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this paper are:-

- 3.1. To know about the background of Nayaka system in Madurai.
- 3.2. To analyses Queen Mangammal's diplomatic relation with Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's general Zulfikhar Ali.
- 3.3. To discover the various struggles of Regent Queen Mangammal.
- 3.4. To explore Madurai Nayakas relation with the Marathas King Shaji of Thanjavur, Chikka Deva Raya, King of Mysore and Sethupathi of Ramnad.
- 3.5. To illustrate war achievement of Regent Queen Mangammal.
- 3.6. To validate Social welfare measure of Regent Queen Mangammal

4. Foundation of Madurai Nayakadom

4.1. Kumarakampana the son of Bukka-I disclosed the Madurai Sultanate. He laid the foundation for the Vijayanagar rule in Madurai in 1371 A.D.,[1] and Madurai Sultanate had lasted in 1378 A.D.[2] Kumarakampana appointed as first *Mahamandalesvara* or Governor of Tamil country and came under the indirect rule of the Vijayanagar rajyas.[3] *Mahamandalesvara's* were only appointed by royals of Vijayanagar Emperor. Krishnadeva Raya, the great Vijayanagar Emperor, for easy and better administration, had divided his empire into more than 200 Nayakdom. Nayakas were the vassals of the Vijaynagar rulers, were able to supply troops to Vijayanagar.[4] The Foundation of Madurai Nayaka by Visvanatha Nayaka (1530-1564 A.D.) and an effort with military potential Madurai Kingdom was extended by Krishnappa Nayaka -I (1564-1672 A.D.); Veerappa Nayaka (1572-1595 A.D.); Krishnappa Nayaka-II (1595 to 1601 A.D.); Muthu Krishnappa Nayaka (1601-1609 A.D.); and Muthu Veerappa Nayaka -I (1609-1623 A.D.); Thirumalai Nayaka (1623-1659 A.D.); Muthu Veerappa Nayaka II (1659 A.D.); Chokkanatha Nayaka (1659-1682 A.D.); Regent Queen Mangammal (1689-1706 A.D.); Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayaka's (1706-

1732 A.D.); and Rani Meenakshi (1732-1736 A.D.). Due to internal and external conflict Madurai Nayaka kingdom declined after death of Queen Meenakshi.[5]

4.2. However before Visvanatha Nayaka (1530-1564 A.D.) administration, Madurai Tala Varalaru (Madurai Temple History) gives a list of nine Nayakas who acted as Amaranayakas ruled 131 years from 1404 to 1535 A.D., in Madurai Region[6] under Vijayanagara Emperor.

5. Emergence of Regent Queen by Mangammal

5.1. Mangammal was the daughter of Tupakula Lingama Nayaka, a general of Madurai ruler Chokkanatha Nayaka from 1659 to 1682 A.D. Chokkanatha Nayaka married Mangammal and she became the principal queen of the Madurai Nayaka ruler. When Chokkanatha Nayaka died in 1682 A.D., his (Chokkanatha Nayaka and Mangammal) son Muttu Virappa Nayaka-III became to 10th Madurai Nayaka ruler in 1682 A.D. During Chokkanatha period, the major portions of the kingdom were occupied by Sambaji, the king of Tanjavur and Sethupathi of Ramnad. He tries recovering the peace in his reign because Mysore was soon distracted by a war with the Marathas of Senji and both Sethupathi of Ramnad and Maratahas of Tanjavur were occupied by domestic outbreaks in their own countries. He concentrated less in harem and was involved deeply in the welfare and relief measures of the subject.[7]

5.2. Muttu Virappa Nayaka-III, unfortunately died of small pox in 1689 A.D., at the early age of 22 year. His only wife young widow Mutthammal was far advanced in pregnancy insisted upon committing *Sati* on his funeral pyre. Rani Mangammal, Mother-in-law of Mutthammal has great difficulty persuaded her to wait until her child should have been born. It was agreed by Mutthammal. When she gave a boy being allowed her desire and she put an end to her life.[8] Ranga Krishna Muttu Virappa (1682-1689 A.D.) had only a posthumous son by name Vijayaranga Chokkanatha. When he was a three months old child Vijayaranga Chokkanatha was made king. By the name of his infant grandson Rani Mangammal became to regent ruler of Madurai Nayaka in 1689 A.D.[9]

6. Difficulties around the Queen Mangammal

As women, Regency Queen Mangammal, the Madurai kingdom had enemies all around, the Marathas King Shaji of Thanjavur, Chikka Deva Raya, King of Mysore, Mughal army with Daccan Sulthans and frequent interludes by the Thanjavur Kingdom. Also in the south, the King of Travancore stopped paying the tribute and the Ramanad, Kilavan Sethupathi had raised revolt in a bid of Independence. All these dangers were faced by the Queen Mangammal without any external help and able to maintained the prestige of Madurai Nayaka by political wisdom, diplomatic skills, cool courage and successful military campaign with the help of her General (Dalavay) Narasappayya.

7. Mangammal's Threat from Mughal Emperor

Mangammal's was contemporary ruler of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.). Tiruchirappalli located at 10°49'40.8" North and 78°41'49.2" East was the capital of Madurai Nayaka in her times. Madurai and Dindigul forts are another major vital fort during her times. Mangammal's reign also coordinated with a stage when the Mughal Emperor under Aurangzeb was the master of Deccan. It was only during her reign Madurai first came into direct contact with the Mughal Empire at Delhi. 'In 1693 A.D., when Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's general Zulfikhar Ali'[10] with mighty army planned to attack Madurai. She carefully analysis the situation and avoid the bloodshed losses, because Marathas King Shaji of Thanjavur, Chikka Deva Raya, King of Mysore sent their tribute to Zulfikhar Ali so, she also sent her tribute and saved Madurai.[11] She made friendly relations with Mughals. When Zulfikhar Ali came back to southern region in 1697 A.D., Rani Mangammal sent very costly gifts to him. Also with help of the Mughal general Zulfikhar Ali she recovered some encroached territory from Thanjavur kings.[12]

8. Frequent Tribute failure by Travancore

Visvanatha Nayaka was introduced a new system in Madurai Kingdom with the advice of Ariyanatha Mudhaliyar, his Dalavay and divided his region into 72 bastions which are called Palayams.[13] Each Palayam ruled by the Palayakkarar and acted as petty chieftain or military agent. The total number of the Palayams varied from time to time. 'The Travancore (Veynad) was included as the 73rd Palayam as it was a feudatory under the Vijayanagar rule'.[14] Travancore was under the administrative control of the Vijayanagar rule. But after the battle of Talikota 1565 A.D., Veynad was brought under the administrative control of Madurai. It paid tribute to Madurai Nayakas. When Tirumala Nayaka was the ruler of Madurai, Veynad had left without paid tribute. Tirumala Nayaka sent an army under the command of Dalavay Ramappaiya to Veynad. Tirumala's army met [15] in 1634 A.D.,[16] and agreed tom pay tribute in 1635 A.D.

9. Mangammal Expedition to Travancore

When Mangammal was the regent ruler of Madurai Nayaka, Travancore ruler Raja Ravi Varma also frequently failed to pay tribute. She also frequently sent her troops and collect tribute.[17] Like that, an army was sent by Mangammal for collecting the arrears, the Madurai troops marched upto Kalkulam but was routed.[18] In 1697 A.D., Mangammal sent an expedition to Travancore to punish its ruler, Raja Ravi Varma, who had attacked and destroyed an army sent from Madurai to Veynad to collect the annual tribute which the king had not been paying.[19] The ruler of that country of recent years had been inattentive in sending his homage to Madurai, and it had been necessary in a number of occasions to send an army to collect the amount outstanding. The force dispatched for this purpose was taken off its guard and almost cut to pieces. A disciplinary expedition was organized by Mangammal under Madurai Dalavay Narasappayya in the following year. 'When Rani

Mangammal undertook an expedition to Travancore, the Dalavay Alagappa Mudali at Tirunelveli was called upon to assist the General of Madurai with all the troops he could mobilize. For this, the *Kaval* chiefs of *Kalakad* and *Marudur* provided the cavalry'[20] and after hard fighting Veynad was submissive and an enormous booty was brought home. She proved herself as capable and efficient military leader both in the time of peace and war. The component of that consisted of many cannons, which were mounted, on the ramparts of Tiruchirappalli and Madurai.[21] Also 'Rani of Attingal withheld payment of tribute. Dalavay Narasappayya of Madurai endeavour to collect the tribute from the Rani of Attingal vain, as the Dutch took her off to safety'.[22]

10. Madurai Fort under Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad

Regency Queen Mangammal army under Dalavay Narasappayya engaged war with Travancore ruler Raja Ravi Varma. At the time, by using that opportunity was seized by the Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad (Marava King) in about 1698 A.D., the Marava laid siege to Madurai, captured it and possessed it for some time.[23] However the victory was short-lived. The Nayaks's campaign of the south had ended successfully and the Nayaka Dalavay Narasappayya came to Madurai and recaptured the fort.[24] Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad had considerably strengthened himself and was forward to an opportunity to free himself completely from Madurai Nayaka. Also Regency Queen Mangammal lost Palayakkarars support under Sethupathi of Ramnad.

11. Battle between Marava with Marathas

Twelve years diplomatic cooperation between Marava Sethupathi of Ramnad and Marathas of Tanjavur completed. As per the signed treaty, the Marava king expected the Maratha of Tanjavur to return the territories which they made over to them in 1686 A.D.[25] Tanjavur failed to fulfil the treaty obligations and refused to hand over the territories. Therefore the Marava King invaded the Tanjavur country and captured Arantangi, Tirumayam Kottai, Piranmalai and the entire region of the south of Ambien river[26] and in addition some territory belongs to King of Tanjavur came under Maravas.

12. Mangammal War with Maratha King Shaji of Tanjavur

Madurai Nayaka ruler Queen Mangammal was waiting for an opportunity to punish Maratha King Shaji of Tanjavur because, he had repeated troubles from the time of her regency and encroached her territories with assistance of Marava. In this situation Madurai forces in 1700 A.D.,[27] underneath Dalavay Narasappayya was in charge of the operation of the war awfully. Though the Tanjavur forces initially obtained some gains in war, but they were forced to take legal action to peace. Dalavay Narasappayya defeated the Tanjavur Marathas near their capital, when they suddenly stormed into their capital. The depressed King Shaji of Tanjavur was only pleased enough to buy off the invading Madurai Nayaka

army made the alliance of Tanjavur against the enemies of Madurai[28] and with a massive gifts.

13. Chikkadevaraja Sagara against Madurai and Tanjavur

After Dalavay Narasappayya defeated war against the Tanjavur, Maratha King Shaji of Thanjavur and Madurai Nayaka ruler Queen Mangammal made a peace agreement. Meanwhile, the rulers of Mysore, Chikkadevaraja Udaiyar was erected a huge dam Chikkadevaraja Sagara across the Kaveri river determined ruin the Tanjavur and Madurai and utilized the water a magnificent effort at irrigation canal around Mysore. By the result, Madurai and Thanjavur areas became to dry the tempered both rulers now decided on a joint war against Mysore, but there came heavy rains and the dam collapsed. This averted the war.[29]

14. Conflict with Sethupathi

Queen Mangammal was the contemporary of Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad. He refused to pay the tribute to Madurai and acted independently. Mangammal wants to overcome the difficulties and the Marathas of Tanjavur had joined her. So she decided to attack Ramnad.[30] She sent an army headed by Dalavay Narasappayya. He was the head of the strong combined armies of Madurai and Tanjavur, marched into Marava country. The attack was launched on the southern parts of the Ramnad kingdom. [31] Kilavan Sethupathi could composed collect own people even 30,000 or 40,000 men in course of a week.[32] In the battle both the armies suffered severely, but Queen Mangammal's efficient general lost his life. War came to conclusion with defeat. The result of the battle confirmed that Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad became autonomy from Madurai Nayakas in 1702 A.D.

15. Mangammal Diplomatic Relation with Mughal

As a Hindu ruler of Madurai kingdom, Rani Mangammal was able to success to cordial relation with Mughal Emperor. She paid tribute to Mughal Emperor for some time. She also sent a letter to Mughal Emperor on 20th April, 1702 A.D., requesting Mughal troops to help, for the war against Udaiyar Palayam Prince. She also sent a lot gifts to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Rupees 20,000 equal worth's silver coins to Mughal general and Rupees 10,000 equal worth's coins to Mughal Diwan. Daud Khan sent troops to Rani Mangammal for assistance against her enemies. With additional help of that troops, she managed the military management efficiently.[33]

16. Social Welfare Measures of Queen Mangammal

The life and career of Queen Mangammal and her multidisciplinary achievement, has a lot of primary evidence and are widely available around Tamilnadu. With a short span, 'Queen Mangammal in Madurai Kingdom was paying special attention to irrigation and

maintenance channel Uyyakkondan in 1687 A.D., and 1704 A.D'.[34] So she built a dam across the river Cauvery and adequate supply of irrigation water became possible for Thanjavur and the northern part of Madurai Kingdom. But it unfortunately washed away due to heavy flood in Cauvery. Also she repaired many irrigation canal, avenue trees and constructed highway from Cape Comorin (Kanniyakumari). She constructed Tamukkam Palace which is called Mahatma Gandhi Museum in Madurai; Magammal Chataram (Choultry) in Madurai; Royal entertainment elephant fighting ground Tamukkam Ground in Madurai; Rani Mangammal Palace Darbar Hall in Tiruchirappalli (now it is called Government Museum, Tiruchirappalli). Ramnad old Collectorate was also constructed during the reign of Queen Mangammal.

17. Social Attitude towards Religious Tolerance

Queen Mangammal donated considerable jewels, palanquins to Madurai Meenakshiamman Temple and similar endowments to number of temple in her kingdom. She respected the feelings of all religion people including Christians. According to copper charter of 1692 and Telugu charter of 1701 A.D., confirmed, she endowed mosques and made village grants to Muslim Dargah. She was friendly with Christian missionaries and rendered all possible help to the missionaries.

18. Last Days of Queen Mangammal

Last year histories of Queen Mangammal were not clear. The tradition says that Mangammal's grandson Vijayaranga Chokkanatha came to age; she refused to make a way for him as king, so that she was sent to jail. It was said to as if she slowly starved to death, her suffering being aggravated, with horrible cruelty, by the periodical placing of food outside her prison bars in such a position that she could see and smell, but not reach it. She died in 1706 A.D. 'Another rumour also roaming that she found characterless during her last years at the age of 55. But all are stories only, but there is no confirm evidences are found'.[35] Usually every successful man or women always faced some unwanted propoganda which was dispersed by his intolerant enemies.

19. Conclusion

After the death of Ranga Krishna Muttu Virappa, she took care of the affairs of country in such an excellent spirit that her regency at least strong enough to secure order within the state victory aboard. The visionary powerful female ruler Rani Mangammal proved her efficiency in administration and emerged "Mangammal was one among a million women" and carried on the affairs of state with a remarkable capacity from 1689 to 1706 A.D. As women ruler she ruled nearly 18 years of Madurai kingdom. She was defeated war against Travancore ruler Raja Ravi Varma and Maratha King Shaji of Thanjavur and made concreted the alliance of Thanjavur against the enemies of Madurai. She was also resisted Kilavan Sethupathi of Ramnad guerrilla attacks ware fare and encroachments of Mysore.

Apart from the war activities she involved in so many social activities and repaired many irrigation canal, constructed highway from Cape Comorin, entertainment elephant fighting ground Tamukkam Ground, Magammal Palace, Magammal Chataram (Choultry) in Madurai; and Rani Mangammal Palace Darbar Hall in Tiruchirappalli. She donated considerable jewels, palanquins to Madurai Meenakshiamman Temple and similar endowments to number of temple in her kingdom. She respected the feelings of all religion people including Christians.

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