
Sāgara Brahmin Settlements and the Medieval Swarūpam Polity of Kōlattunāṭu, North Kerala: A Historical Reading of Sāgara Granthavari

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Abstract: *Sāgara Granthavari* is a palm leaf record of medieval period of Kerala gives details of 237 Brahmin households at the Perumba river belt of Kōlattunāṭu in the present Kannur District of Kerala. These households were developed in the backdrop of the conflict between the dominant Brahmin settlement of Periñcellūr and Kōlattunāṭu rulers. The details of the conflicts are referred to many other contemporary documents like Kēraḷōlpatti Granthavari Kōlattunāṭu Vazhakkam, Udayavarma Caritam and Brahma Pratishtha. The record furnishes the name of the 237 households and its distributions in the Perumba river belt. The political supremacy of the Brahmin Sankētam over the medieval political system called Swarūpam is evident in the Sāgara Granthavari.

Keywords: Sāgara Granthavari, Periñcellūr, Sankētam, Kōla Swarūpam, Kōlattunāṭu, Añjudēśam, Brahmin Settlements

Introduction

The present paper tries to historicize the *Sāgara Granthavari*, a palm leaf record in the old Malayalam script and language discovered from *Cērrūr Illam*, located at Kānāyi near Payyannūr in the present Kannūr district of Kerala. The term *Sāgara*, as per *Kaṭapayāti* system of writing, stands for 237. The *Sāgara Granthavari* gives details about 237 Brahmin households distributed in the erstwhile Kōlattunāṭu. This record is discovered and edited by N.V.P Unithiri (2008: 37-57). I also have got a chance to read the original palm leaf records from the *Cērrūr Illam* in 2008 (Rajesh 2011:326-332). The *Jambudvīpōlpatti*, a version of *Kēraḷōlpatti* tradition from Kōlattunāṭu edited by M.R. Raghava Varier also refers to the story behind the formation of 237 Brahmin households (1984).

The story behind the Brahmin settlement is depicted in the *Udayavarma Carita* (Sastri 1938: No. CXXXIII, Aiyer 2015:362-363) and *Brahma Pratishtha* (Joseph. ed. (1997: 135-145) as well. This paper has two sections; first part introduces the text of the *Granthavari* and second part deals with the historical milieu of the text.

Table 1: Three main fractions of *Sāgara* (237) Brahmin Households (Unithiri 2008:38-39)

1. Sṛīkrishṇapurattambalakkārāya Añjillakkār (Five households associated with Sṛīkrishṇapuram temple) total 93 <i>Illam</i>		
Sl. No.	Name of the Brahmin Household	Number of Settlements
1.	Sarvātitya Perumana Grihasamjitanmār	41 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
2.	Añikāḷa Grihasamjitanmār	16 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
3.	Annappalli Grihasamjitanmār	16 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
4.	Kodaluvalli Grihasamjitanmār	10 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
5.	Mānkuḷa Grihasamjitanmār	10 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
2. Sṛībhadrapurattambalakkārāya Nālillakkār Four households associated with Sṛībhadrapuram temple) total 82 <i>Illam</i>		
1	Koṭalumana Grihasamjitanmār	40 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
2	Appuḷi Grihasamjitanmār	16 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
3	Aṭṭamankala Grihasamjitanmār	16 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
4	Natti Grihasamjitanmār	10 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
3. Sṛīharipurattambalakkārāya Anjillakkār Five households associated with Sṛīharipuram temple) total 62 <i>Illam</i>		
1	Vetiramana Grihasamjitanmār	16 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
2	Nīlamana Grihasamjitanmār	16 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
3	Tōṭṭa Grihasamjitanmār	10 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
4	Chandramana Grihasamjitanmār	10 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)
5	Velliyōṭu Grihasamjitanmār	10 Residences (<i>Illam</i>)

Sāgara Granthavari

According to the *Jambudvīpōlpatti* tradition, the Kōlattunāṭu ruler Karippattu Udayavarman Kōlattiri brought 237 Brahmin households belonged to three *Gōtrās*; *Guṇavanta*, *Viḷakkūr* and *Iṭukunja*, of the *Gōgaṛṇṇa* region to Kōlattunāṭu. The settlements of these Brahmins were distributed in the five villages- Aṟattil, Ceṟutāzham, Kunneru, Kōṟōm and Atiyadam and locally these settlements known as the *Añjudēśam* Brahmins (the Brahmins of five regional units) (Varier. ed. 1984: 67-68). The *Jambudvīpōlpatti* tradition does not mention about the name of these Brahmin households and the details of the household distribution is found in the *Sāgara Granthavari*. Accordingly, these Brahmin households were belonged to the *Sabha* and *Yōgam* of Sṛīrāghava Puram of Perīñcellūr Grāma, the archaic Brahmin settlement of Kerala, and they were distributed in the surrounding locale of the three temples; Sṛīkrishnapuram (near Sṛīrāghavapuram, Ceṟutāzham), Sṛībhadrapuram (Arattil) and Sṛīharipuram (Pēriyāṭṭu Vishnu temple) (Unithiri 2008:38-39) (Table 1). The distribution pattern of the 237 households are recorded in the *Sāgara Granthavari*. Ninety-three households were distributed in the surroundings of the Sṛīkrishnapuram temple. Sṛībhadrapuram temple had eighty-two and Sṛīharipuram temple had sixty-two settlements. Udayavarman Kōlattiri made arrangements to construct temples, ponds and *llams* (residents) for these Brahmins. Sṛīrāghavapuram temple was granted as the *Grāmakshetra*.

According to Unithiri, about thirteen households were disappeared and all other 224 households are remaining (Unithiri 2008: 55). I have conducted field survey in these area in 2008 and found that most of the households were in dilapidated condition or abandoned. The remaining 224 households' names are mentioned in the *Granthavari* (Table 2).

Table 2: List of the remaining 224 Brahmin households mentioned in the *Granthavari* (Unithir 2008:40-55)

1. Sṛīkrishṇapurattambalakkārāya Añjillakkār (Five households associated with Sṛīkrishṇapuram temple)	
1.1 - Brahmin Households belonged to the Sarvātithya Perumana Grihasamjitanmār (remaining 87 out of 93)	
1. Ceṛutāzham Dēśattu Sarvathidhya Perumana	22. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Nīraṅgāṭṭu Bhaṭṭatiri
2. Kunnariyattu Cēppāykkōṭu	23. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Periyāṭṭu Nakkazhi
3. Aṛattil Cēppāykkōṭu	24. Kolapṛattu Thammanāṭu
4. Kunnariyattu Kaṭukkaśṣēri	25. Mannakkazhi
5. Kolapṛattu Tālivāḷi	26. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Paṭanapṛattu Appakkōṭu
6. Vararucimangalam Dēśṭu Tōṭṭāśṣēri	27. Ceṛutāzhattu Tennāṭṭu Perumana
7. Ceṛutāzhattu Mīttalēṭattu Perumbaykkāṭu	28. Kolapṛattu Tekkinēṭattu Tennāṭṭu Perumana
8. Tāzhēṭattu Perumbaykkāṭu	29. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Tennāṭṭu Perumana
9. Kizhakkēṭattu Māṅgāṭu	30. Kunnaryattu Tēvaṇāṅkōṭu
10. Paṭiṇjarēṭattu Māṅgāṭu	31. Vararucimangalattu Tēvaṇāṅkōṭu
11. Pērkkuṇṭiyil Kizhakkinnēṭattu Perumana	32. Aṛattil Kārāṭṭu Vāḷakkōṭu
12. Paṭiṇjarēṭattu Perumana	33. Kolapṛattu Vāḷakkōṭu
13. Kunnaryattu Ārrupuram	34. Kunnaryattu Tekke Bhāgattu Tekkēṭattu Perumana
14. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Periyāṭṭu Mīttalēṭattu Moṭakkāñjiram	35. Vaṭakkē Bhāgattu Tekkēṭattu Perumana
15. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Tāzhēṭattu Moṭakkāñjiram	36. Kunnaryattu Tekkinēṭattu Mūttēṭattu Perumana
16. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Paṭanapṛattu Ārrupuram	37. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Mūttēṭattu Perumana
17. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Cīttayil Perumana	38. Ceṛutāzhattu Naripparra
18. Kolapṛam Dēśattu Paṭanapṛattu Moṭakkāñjiram	39. Kunnaryattu Bilvapati
19. Kolapṛattu Piḷikkīzh	40. Ceṛutāzhattu Errikkāṭa Nambūtiri
20. Ceṛutāzhattu Erumaykkāṭu	41. Ceṛutāzhattu Inṭoṭi

21. Kolapṛattu Tekkinēṭattu Nīraṅgāṭṭu
Bhaṭṭatiri

1.2- Brahmin Households belonged to the Aṇikāḷa Grihasamjitanmār

1. Ceṛutāzhattu Aṇikāḷa Nambūtiri	13. Aṇattil Dēsattu Kārāṭṭu Kallampalli
2. Kunnaryattu Tekke Bhāgattu Aṇimangalam	14. Ceṛutāzhattu Mūttēṭattu Uppiliśēri
3. Vaṭakke Bhāgattu Aṇimangalam	15. Ceṛutāzhattu Mūlayil Kallampalli
4. Kunnaryattu Ūtrapalli	16. Kunnaryattu Uppiliśēri
5. Aṇattil Dēsattu Cīrṇānūru Varakkal	17. Kunnaryattu Tekkēṭattu Kallampalli
6. Kolapṛattu Aṇimangalam	18. Kunnaryattu Talakkoḷam
7. Kolapṛam Dēsattu Periyāṭṭu Tekkinēḍattu Aṇimangalam	19. Aṇattil Dēsattu Kārāṭṭu Koccūru
8. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Aṇimangalam	20. Kārāṭṭu Perumana
9. Pullūru Aṇimangalam	21. Aṇattil Dēsattu Pazhaccayil Mūttēṭattu Perumana
10. Ceṛutāzhattu Kunnattu Kallampalli	22. Eḷēṭattu Perumana
11. Kunnaryattu Vaṭakke Kallampalli	23. Ceṛutāzhattu Varaṇakkōṭu
12. Aṇattil Dēsattu Poṛaccēri Kallampalli	

1.3 Annappalli Grihasamjitanmār

1. Aṇattil Cīravalli Nambūtiri	1. Aṇattil Dēsattu Kārāṭṭu Cērrūru
2. Aṇattil Dēsattu Poṛaśēri Candṛamana	2. Aṇattil Kaṇṇampēru Bhaṭṭatiri
3. Aṇattil Cērrūru	3. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Ālakkāṭṭu Vellakkāṭu

1.4. Koṭaluvalli Grihasamjitanmār

1. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Paḷittara Koṭaluvalli Nambūtiri	3. Aṇattil Dēsattu Pazhaccayil Koṭaluvalli
2. Paḷittara Koṭaluvalli	4. Kolapṛam Dēsattu Atiyiṭattu Koṭaluvalli

1.5 Mānkoḷa Grihasamjitanmār

1. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Paḷittara Tekkinēṭattu Mānkuḷam Nambūtiri	4. Aṇattil Dēsattu Pannikkāṭu Mānkuḷam
2. Paḷittara Karyāśēri Mānkuḷam	5. Aṇattil Dēsattu Pannikkāṭu Mānkuḷam
3. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Kōṛōṭṭu Mūlayil Mānkuḷam	6. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Kūrvēli Mānkuḷam
4. Kizhakkinēṭattu Mānkuḷam	7. Aṇattil Dēsattu Pazhaccayil Tekkinēṭattu Omanyankara
5. Padiṇjaṛēṭattu Mānkuḷam	8. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Omanyankara
6. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Ālakkāṭṭu Kāśi Mānkuḷam	9. Kunnaryattu Nilakara
7. Ālakkāṭṭu Padiṇjaṛēṭattu Mānkuḷam	10. Kunnaryattu Karuvangānam

2. Śrībhadrapurattambalakkārāya Nālillakkār (Four households associated with Śrībhadrapuram temple) (Remaining 63 out of 82)

2.1 Koṭalumana Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Aṟattil Mūttēṭattu Koṭalumana Nambūtiri	18. Pazhaccil Karakkadu
2. Elēṭattu Koṭalumana	19. Kizhakkēṭattu Kārakkāṭu
3. Vaṭakkēṭattu Koṭalumana	20. Aṟattil Ōṇattān Kārakkāṭu
4. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Koṭangara	21. Tāvam Kārakkāṭu
5. Thekkinēṭattu Koṭangara	22. Kuriyaṭattu Kārakkāṭu
6. Aṟattil Dēsattu Pazhaccil Koṭangara	23. Aṟattil Dēsattu Poṟaccēri Kārakkāṭu
7. Aṟattil Koṭṭakkāṭu	24. Aṟattil Elēṭattu Kārakkāṭu
8. Kāñjarappalli	25. Ceṟutāzhattu Kūlayil Kārakkāṭu
9. Aṟattil Dēsattu Poṟaccēri Pālattumkara	26. Aṟattil Dēsattu Pannikkāṭu Eṭamana Bhaṭṭatiri
10. Koṭapṟam Dēsattu Atiyiṭattu Tekkinēṭattu Paḷḷam	27. Aṟattil Dēsattu Poṟaccēri Eṭamana
11. Vadakkinedathu Pallam	28. Aṟattil Dēsattu Pazhaccayil Kallantāṟṟil Gurukkaḷ
12. Aṟattil Kāra Bhaṭṭatiri	29. Aṟattil Tekkinēṭattu Eṭamana
13. Aṟattil Dēsattu Poṟaccēri Kāra Bhaṭṭatiri	30. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Eṭamana
14. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Kōṟōttu Kāra Bhaṭṭatiri	31. Koṭapṟam Dēsattu Atiyaṭattu Eṭamana
15. Aṟattil Mūttēṭattu Karakkāṭu	32. Tātiyēri Eṭamana
16. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Kōṟōttu Karakkāṭu	33. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Kōṟōttu Eṭamana
17. Aṟattil Karinkoḷam	
2.2 Appuḷi Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Koṭapṟam Dēsattu Atiyaṭattu Nambūtiri	5. Koṭapṟattu Aryannūnu
2. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Paḷḷittara Tekkinēṭattu Appuḷi Nambūtiri	6. Koṭapṟam Dēsattu Paṭanapṟattu Connūru
3. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Appuḷi Nambūtiri	7. Aṟattil Dēsattu Ciṟṟannūru Tekkinēṭattu Mākkara
4. Ceṟutāzhattu Analēṭattu Appuḷi	8. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Mākkara
2.3 Aṭṭamangalattu Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Koṭapṟattu Veḷayākkōṭṭu Nambūtiri	11. Vararucimangalam Dēsattu Kōṟōttu Mūttēṭattu Kuṟiyiṭam
2. Kaṇiśṣēri	12. Elēṭattu Kuṟiyiṭam
3. Aṟattil Dēsattu Pannikkāṭu Inciyūru	13. Ceṟutāzhattu Pōṟkkoḷangaracerukuṭal
4. Koṭapṟattu Kāḷakāṭu	14. Kunnaryattu Mannil Ceṟukuṭal
5. Aṟattil Dēsattu Ciṟṟannūru Madhunapalli	15. Kunnaryattu Teekkēbhāḡattu Koṟṟamvaḷḷi
6. Koṭapṟattu Niṭupṟattu Nambūtiri	16. Vaṭkkēbhāḡattu Koṟṟamvaḷḷi
7. Koṭapṟattu Krhinnilaccerukuṭal	17. Koṭapṟam Dēsattu Periyāṭṭu Ceṟukuṭal

8. Aṟattil Yāyujūka Analēṭattu Ceṟukūṭal	18. Aṟattil Dēśattu Poṟaccēri Ceṟukūṭal
9. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Kōṟōttu Pullēricerukūṭal	19. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Kōṟōttu Ceṟukūṭal
10. Aṟattil Dēśattu Kārāṭṭu Ceṟukūṭal	
2. 4. Natti Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Ceṟutāzhattu Konnamangalam	3. Kunnaryattu Nathikkāṭu
2. Ceṟutāzhattu Udayapurattu Varaṭakkam	
3. Sṛīharipurattambalakkārāya Anjillakkār Five households associated with Sṛīharipuram temple) total 62 <i>Illam</i>	
3.1. Vetiramana Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Ceṟutāzhattu Azhikkal Nambūtiri	13. Kizhakkineṭattu Hōrakkāṭu Vetiramana
2. Kizhakkēṭattu Vetiramana	14. Ceṟutāzham Dēśattu Udayapuram Marangāṭu
3. Kunnaryattu Vetiramana	15. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Kōṟōttu Pālayil Marangāṭu
4. Tekke Bhāgattu Pālakkīzhu	16. Koḷapṛam Dēśattu Periyāṭṭu Pālayil Marangāṭu
5. Vaṭakke Bhāgattu Pālakkīzhu	17. Aṟattil Kizhakkēṭattu Marangāṭu
6. Tekkinēṭattu Pālakkīzhu	18. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Kōṟōttu Tekke Bhāgattu Marangāṭu
7. Vadakkinēṭattu Pālakkīzhu	19. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Paḷḷithara Marangāṭu
8. Aṟattil Dēśattu Poṟccēri Kizhakkineṭattu Vetiramana	20. Koḷapṛam Dēśattu Periyāṭṭu Tekkinēṭattu Haḷḷiyūru
9. Paṭiṇjaṟēṭattu Vetiramana	21. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Haḷḷiyūru
10. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Vetiramana	22. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Kuṟvēli Tekkinēṭattu Aṭṭōḷi
11. Koḷapṛam Dēśattu Cittayil Tekkinēṭattu Hōrakkāṭu Vetiramana	23. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Aṭṭōḷi
12. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Hōrakkāṭu Vetiramana	24. Kunnaryattu Belu Vetiramana
3.2. Nīlamana Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Koḷapṛam Dēśattu Peryāṭṭu Nīlamana Nambūtiri	9. Koḷapṛam Dēśattu Atiyēṭattu Tekkēṭattu Nīlamana
2. Kaṭavaśra Nīlamana	10. Vadakkedathu Nīlamana
3. Cīrakkāṭu	11. Aṟattil Nīlamana
4. Aṟattil Dēśattu Cīṟannūru Kocciyūru	12. Aṟattil Dēśattu Kārāṭṭu Nīlamana
5. Aṟattil Munṭayūru	13. Kunnaryattu Vilvamangalam
6. Aṟattil Dēśattu Pannikkāṭu	14. Vararucimangalam Dēśattu Ālakkāṭṭu Vilvamangalam
7. Koḷapṛam Dēśattu Atiyēṭattu	15. Koḷapṛattu Periyāṭṭu Panniyōṭu

Kizhakkēṭattu Nīlamana	
8. Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu	Munṭayūru
3.3. Tōṭṭa Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Periyāṭṭu Tōṭṭam	6.Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu Anallūru
2. Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu Kāvil Tōṭṭam	7.Kunnaryattu Tekkinēṭattu Cēdamangalam
3. Aṟattil Dēṣattu Kārāṭṭu Tōṭṭam	8.Vadakkineṭattu Cēdamangalam
4. Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu Hādi Kūṭal	9.Aṟattil Cēdamangalam
5. Vāraṇāsi	10.Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu Cēdamangalam
3.4.Candramana Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Ceṟutāzhatthu Mūlayil Candramana Nambūtiri	6.Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Periyāṭṭu Talakkōṭṭu Candramana
2. Vaṭakōṭu Candramana	7. Kunnaryattu Tekkinēṭattu Candramana
3. Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Periyāṭṭu Vaṭakōṭu Candramana	8. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Candramana
4. Ceṟutāzham Dēṣattu Pēṟkkunṭiyil Candramana	9.Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Atiyidattu Candramana
5. Vaṭakkēṭattu Candramana	10.Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu Candramana
3.4.Velliyōṭṭu Grihasamjitanmār	
1. Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Periyāṭṭu Tekkinēṭattu Velliyōṭu Nambūtiri	9.Edattārṛil Tekkinēṭattu Velliyōṭu
2. Tekkēṭattu Velliyōṭu	10.Vaṭakkinēṭattu Velliyōṭu
3. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Velliyōṭu	11.Vararucimangalam Dēṣattu Kōṟōttu Kizhakkinēṭatthu Velliyōṭu
4. Vaṭakkēṭattu Velliyōṭu	12.Paṭiñjārēṭattu Velliyōṭu
5. Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Cīttayil Tekkinēṭattu Velliyōṭu	13.Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Periyāṭṭu Aṭikamana
6. Paṭiñjārēṭattu Velliyōṭu	14.Aṟattil Dēṣattu Poṟaccēri Aṭikamana
7. Vaṭakkinēṭattu Velliyōṭu	15.Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Dummannūru
8. Koḷapṛam Dēṣattu Atiyaṭattu Velliyōṭu	

Period of the *Granthavari*

There is no mention about the date of the document. The historical context of the text seems to have belonged to the medieval period of Kerala, especially in connection with the formation of medieval Nāṭuvāzhi Swarūpam after 12th century CE. According to

Jambudvīpōlpatti, *Brahma Pratishṭa* and *Udayavarman Caritam*, Udayavarman Kōlattiri appeared as the patron of these Brahmins. Traditionally Kolattiris received three royal titles like Udayavarman, Ravivarman and Ramavarman (Mahalingam ed. 1972 Manuscript No.4:8). Certain Udayavarman as Irāmaghaṭamūvar, a title to the Kōlattunāṭu rulers, refers to Kuṟuvakkāvu inscription of 12th century CE (Nair.ed.1972:68-71) and Karumpattu Irāman Iravi appears in the 12th century CE Perīñcellūr inscription (Veluthat 2006:75-82). It does not mean that the king Udayavarman and the household Karumpattu (Karippattu) of these inscriptions and the *Sāgara Granthavari* were the same; instead they have alluded to the historical entity of the title of the King Udayavarman as Iramaghaṭa mūvar, a title inherited by the *Mūshika* lineage of early medieval time, and his matrilineal households (*Tāvazhi*) Karippattu. The royal names of the Kōlattiris in the later pre-modern period as well. One old royal lady named Rajamani Tampurāṭṭi of the Kaviñiśseri Kōvilakam, located in the Ceṟukunnu area of Perumba river belt, mentioned that Udayavarman, Ravivarman, Ramavarman and Rajarajavarman were the traditional *Kshatriya* titles of *Mūppu* (Chief) of the *Kola Swarūpam*¹.

Karippattu Kōvilakam of Kōlattunāṭu also occurs in the *Kēraḷolpatti* traditions. But it does not appear in the list of *Kōvilakam* found in the later part of *Kēraḷolpatti* text (Varier. ed. 1984:75) and *Mackenzie Manuscripts* (Mahalingam ed. 1972: Manuscript No.4:5). Therefore, it is difficult to fix the date of *Sāgara Granthavari*. Since this records mentions the name of the households that migrated towards south Kerala during the time of Mysore invasion under Tipu Sultan, Unithiri assumed that this record must have compiled before the invasion (Unithiri 2008:55).

To sum up, since the reference of 237 Brahmin households occurred in the *Jambudvīpōlpatti*, *Udayavarman Caritam* and *Brahma Pratishṭa*, the content of the *Sāgara Granthavari* can be placed between 12th and 18th century CE. The arrival of Brahmins might have occurred in the beginning of 12th century CE. The list of the 237 settlements seems to have compiled in the later phase, probably in the first half of 18th century CE.

Context of the Text

The medieval period of Kerala witnessed the formation of two important socio-political systems called *Swarūpam* and *Sankētam*. “The origin of the term *Swarūpam* is obscure and it indicated the autonomous region controlled by the secular authority of the ruling joint family, and often the term was applicable to both the family and the region controlled by them” (Ganesh 1999: 222). Kōla Swarūpam was the ruling power of the northern most *nāṭu* named Kōlattunāṭu of medieval Kerala which developed in the surrounding catchment multi-crop agrarian areas of Perumba, Kuppam, Valapattanam and Pazhayangāṭi river belts of the present Kannur district of Kerala (Rajesh 2011). The *Swarūpam* was supported by the Brahmanical institution under the temple called *Sankētam*, which provided the necessary legitimation for the medieval political structure (Ganesh 2009:1). *Sankētam* was a quasi-autonomous consisting of several villages organized around a brahmanical temple (Narayanan 1987, Ganesh 1999:226-

227). Many *Sankētams* were governed by an assembly of Brahmin called *Yōgam*. The *Sankētam* of Cellūr Brahmins, where the *Sabha* and *Yōgams* had considerable role to design the functions of the *Periñcellūr Brahmaswam*, was the important one in Kōlattunāṭu. *Swarūpam* had limited control over the *Sankētam*. In several occasions, the quarrels were occurred between the ruling household and the *Sankētam*. The conflict between the *Karippattu Kōvilakam* and the *Periñcellūr Sankētam* was a serious one, which resulted to the decline of *Karippattu Kōvilakam*. As *Karippattu Kōvilakam* broke the *Sankēta Maryāda*, the *Yōgam* and *Sabha* of *Periñcellūr* jointly decided to stop all ritual performance on behalf of the ruling power and also burned and demolished the *Kōvilakam*. This was resulted into the severe conflict between Kōla *Swarūpam* and *Periñcellūr Sankētam*. The frequent conflict between Kōlattiri and the *Periñcellūr Sankētam* was the reason for the arrival of *Sāgara Brahmins* to Kōlattunāṭu. In order to realize the context of the *Sāgara Granthavari*, there should be a discussion on the nature of Brahmin settlements of Kōlattunāṭu and the political importance of *Periñcellūr Brahmins* over the Kōla *Swarūpam*.

Periñcellūr Sankētam

Kōlattunāṭu had witnessed the formation of Brahmin settlements from the early historic period. *Periñcellūr* settlement was the ancient settlement and sustained until the pre-modern period as the predominant Brahmin settlement and enjoyed ritual supremacy over the early medieval and medieval socio-political system of Kōlattunāṭu. *Cellūr Grama* was located in the *Kiḷḷa* (Kuppam) (Nair 1996:46) river belt of the present Talipparamba in the Kannur district (Veluthat 1978:12-18). The archaic entity of the *Cellūr* settlement is testified to the 220th song of *Akanānūṟu*, one of the Early Tamil literatures and it refers to the ritual functions conducted by the Brahmins (Nair. ed.1983:329-332). The same settlement appears in the *Mūshikavamsa Kāvya*, a Sanskrit court chronicle of *Mūshika* lineage, of 11th century CE as *Cēlēra Grama* (*Cellūr grama*) and the *Mūshika* rulers like Śatasōma and Vallabha II visited this settlement and paid their obeisance (Pilla. ed. 1977: Canto XI:26, XIII:51). Accordingly, Śatasōma installed lord Siva and constructed a temple at *Cellūr*. The *Mūshikavamsa Kāvya* portrays the splendor of the *Cellūr* which formed in the multi-crop agrarian area where a sumptuous amount of coconut, areca, betel, banana, sugarcane and various fruits were grown (Pilla. ed. 1977: Canto XIII:52-62). Such references have shown that this settlement was formed in the elevated garden area in the nearby area of Kuppam (*Kiḷḷa*) river, probably in the slope of the present Kōṭṭakkunnu area near to Rājarājēsvara temple². An inscription in *Vaṭṭezhuttu* script from the *Tiruvaṭṭūr* temple is also mentioned the name *Cellūr* as *Ceyyūr* (Nair 1972: 72-74). In the *Kēralōlpatti Granthavari* and *Cellūr Nāthōdayam Cambu* (1968)³ it appears as the dominant settlements of the region in the medieval time. All these references have indicated that, the *Cellūr* appeared in the early historic context as a Brahmin settlement and in the early medieval time it developed into as *Sabha* (assembly of Brahmins) and in the medieval time it transformed into as a *Sankētam*, which was controlled by the *Yōgam* and *Sabha*. Then all the decisions were jointly taken by *Sabha* and *Yōgam*.

Prior to the discussion on the historical context of the conflict between Kola Swarūpam and Periñcellūr *Sankētam*, there should be a mention on the Tiruvaṭṭūr settlement. The two sets of 11th century CE inscriptions from the Tiruvaṭṭūr temple refer to the creation of Brahman settlements at Tiruvaṭṭūr, a region located in the Kuppam river valley. About 24 Brahmins from the five old settlements from Central Kerala⁴; five from Vaikkam, two from Paravūr, six from Āvaṭṭiputtūr, four from Iringāṭikkūṭal and seven from Peruvanam- were brought to Kōlattunāṭu and constituted a fresh settlement (Veluthat 1978:70, Narayanan 1996: 109). Kesavan Veluthat has put forward certain hunches on the context of the emergence of this settlement. He says that “it is curious why Brahmins from central Kerala should have been chosen to constitute this settlement in the North, especially so considering the proximity of Tiruvaṭṭūr to prosperous settlements likes Periñcellūr and Payyannur. It may be that the local feudatory chieftain of the *Mūshika* kingdom was persuaded by his overlord, the Cēra king, to patronize Brahmins around capital or that the *Mūshika* chieftains, who was not on good terms with Brahmins already existing in his kingdom, invited new Brahmins from central Kerala to form a fresh settlement” (Veluthat 1978:70-71) Some of the source materials have hinted at the occurrence of such contexts in the region. As the name Iraman Jayamani and Srikanta (the 113th and 115th ruler the *Mūshika* lineage respectively refers to the *Mūshikavamśa Kāvya*) appears in the first set of Tiruvaṭṭūr inscription, the Tiruvaṭṭūr settlement must have developed with the support of *Mūshika* rulers. The medieval documents of the Kōlattunāṭu also mentioned that the conditions were not fine between the Periñcellūr Brahmins and Kōlattunāṭu rulers.

The *Kēraḷōlpatti Granthavari* tradition clearly refers to the quarrel between Periñcellūr Brahmins and Karippattu Udayavarman Kōlattiri at several occasions (Varier 1984:61-62). Accordingly, Karippattu Udayavarman has desired to conduct a *Yāga* or sacrifice at Periñcellūr *Grāma* and became the patron of the *Yāgaśāla* (hall where *Yāga* is performed). Udayavarman, the ruler of Kōlattunāṭu, sent his representatives to seek consent from the Brahmins of Kuṟumattur, who belonged to the Periñcellūr *Grāma*. In response, the *Yōgam* and *Sabha* of Periñcellūr *Grāma* assembled at Talipparamba to take a joint decision against the proposed sacrifice and also declared that they did not conduct the ritual on behalf of Kōlattiri. And emphatically stated that they were only loyal to the Perinṭrikkōvilappan (the lord of Periñcellūr) and never admit political intrusion over the *Sankētam*. As Udayavarman ruptured the *Sankēta Maryāda*, the Taliparamba *Yōgam* and *Sabha* jointly decided to demolish the Karippattu Kōvilakam, the residence of Udayavarman’ (Varier 1984:61-62). The story obviously indicated that the Kōlattiri made an attempt to become the overlord of the settlement or incorporate the Periñcellūr *Grama* to the *Kōla Swarūpam* and thus violated the *Sankēta Maryāda* (traditional code of conduct of *Sankētam*).

The *Sankētam* maintained martial groups of the Brahmins, known as *Kshatra Nambitis*. They were the integral part in getting the dominance of the *Sankētam* over the political body of the Kōlattunāṭu. Thus, they were powerful both ritually and martially. In the case of the above mentioned quarrel, the Brahmins were prepared to fight by wearing

war cloths, gave up their sacred thread and took weapon to destroy the *Karippattu Kōvilakam* (Varier 1984:62). They commenced martial action after paying their homage to the *Perintriikkōvilappan*, the chief deity of the *Sankētam*, and received garland and ashes of camphor (*mālayum bhasmavum*) from the temple (Varier 1984:62). They convened at Koṭṭumpuram, seems to be the present Koṭṭakkunnu, nearby hill of Rājarājēsvaram temple. Koṭṭumpuram was another meeting place of the Brahmins of Periñcellūr (Varier 1984: 89-fn 22). They entered into the *Kōvilakam* and killed two guards and burned it. After this incident Udayavarman Kōlattiri brought the members of the Karippattu *Kōvilakam* to the Kaviñiśśēri *Kōvilakam* at Ceṟukunnu (Varier 1984:61-62). Then Kōlattiri decided to renovate the burned Karipoattu *Kōvilakam*. This act was provoked the Brahmins of Periñcellūr and they convened another meeting at Talipparamba and a verdict was taken again by the *Yōgam* and *Sabhai* jointly to protest the Kōlattiri's action. They decided to quit from the ceremonial functions of the Kōlattiri and declared their hindrance to practice all rituals associated with Kōla Swarūpam. This was actually created political crisis in Kōlattunāṭu. The presence and blessing of the Periñcellūr Brahmins was obligatory for the coronation ceremony of the Kōla Swarūpam. But both the Kōlattiri and the Periñcellūr Sankētam was not ready to settle the dispute.

In this context the Kōlattiri was forced to bring another group of Brahmins to Kōlattunāṭu to perform the rituals. Udayavarman Kolattiri invited the *Sāgara* Brahmins to Kōlattunāṭu to perform the rituals of the *Swarūpam*. Kōlattiri Udayavarman entrusted *Tekkan Kūrṟil Kāisham* (official in charge) to distribute the settlement areas to these Brahmins (Varier 1984:65).⁵ According to *Kēraḷōlpatti* and *Sāgara Granthavari*, due to the disagreement with the Cellūr Brahmins, , Udayavarman Kōlattiri brought 237 Brahmins from Gokaṟṇṇam to Kōlattunāṭu and granted considerable amount of land as *Dēvaswam* along with all accessories including the forces and means of production, houses, temples and rights over all rituals related to the *Kōla Swarūpam* (Varier 1984: 57, 76). These settlements were mainly distributed in the present Payyannur area in the Perumba river belt of Kannur district. However, even after the arrival of the *Sāgara* Brahmins the Kōlattiri was unable to overcome the traditional privilege of the Periñcellūr Brahmins over the rituals connected with the *Kōla Swarūpam*. The *Sāgara* Brahmins were reminded that they were helpless if the Kōlattiri was not getting consent from Periñcellūr. Then he was forced to bring a few Brahmins from *Triśśivapērūr* and *Tirunāvāya Yōgam* (Varier 1984: 68), the two major traditional settlements among the 32 settlements, to Valapattanam fort and staged the ritual functions, which was also failed. Meanwhile the Periñcellūr *Sabha* and *Yōgam* had taken another decision jointly against the ritual function of the *Sāgara* Brahmins. Finally, Udayavarman Kolathiri had to compromise with the Periñcellūr Brahmins and after getting their consent the *Sāgara* Brahmins performed the rituals of Kōla Swarūpam (Varier 1984: 73-74).

All these have shown the prominence of the Periñcellūr settlement, which had a considerable role in the ritual functions including the coronation ceremony, and ritual

supremacy over the political power of the Kōlattiri. As they had the right to conduct the coronation ceremony of Kōlattiri, the *Periñcellūr Sankētam* was too dominant in medieval Kōlattunāṭu, probably powerful than the *Swarūpam*.

Conclusion

The *Sāgara Granthavari* and other contemporary literatures have revealed that the coronation ceremony of Kōlattiri was not possible without the presence or blessings of Periñcellūr Brahmin. Their presence was inevitable to elevate the position of the senior most male member of the *Kōla Swarūpam* to the Kshatriya status. They had the exclusive traditional right over the ritual rites of the *Kōla Swarūpam*. After the conflict between *Periñcellūr Grāma* and *Kōla Swarūpam*, Kōlattiri was compelled to bring another traditional Brahmins from Gokaṇṇa. But the joint decision made by the *Yōgam* and *Sabha* of Periñcellūr Sankētam to stop their part in the ritual functions of Kōlattiri further created obstacles and political crisis. Kōlattiri was failed to overcome the crisis and finally he had to compromise with Periñcellūr Sankētam. With the consent of the Periñcellūr Brahmins, the newly arrived *Sāgara* Brahmins were performed ritual for the ruling power of *Kōla Swarūpam*. Thus, the *Sāgara* Brahmins were incorporated into the Periñcellūr tradition. In fact, the historical background of the *Sāgara Granthavari* has pointed out that the *Sankētam* had substantial ceremonial power or control over the *Swarūpam* through their dominant rights over various ritual performances of the ruling matrilineal households. The political motives behind the formation of *Sāgara* Brahmin settlement in north Kerala during medieval period is also evident in the historical milieu of the *Granthavari*. It also revealed that the Brahmin settlements were developed with the support of ruling authorities and such action facilitated the ruling class to legitimate their political power over the matrilineal households as well as the Nāṭu, the ruling territory.

Notes

- ¹ Rajamani Tampurāṭṭi, *Kaviñiśṣēri Kōvilakam*, Personal Interview, *Cerukunnu*, Kannur district, 23/10/2008.
- ² A number of terracotta models along with early pottery sherds were discovered from the region while conducting field explorations in the region. This seems to have represented the formation of early settlement units in the region. However, this region requires more systematic surveys.
- ³ Cellūr Nāthodayam Cambu praised the majesty of Cellūr Brahmins and the Cellūr grāma established by Śatasōma, one of the Mūshika rulers who installed a Siva linga at Cellūr. It refers to the term *thuṅgādhikāra* (autonomous power) of the Cellūr settlement. Accordingly, the village rule or administration was completely under the sway of the Brahmins, which shows the prosperity and greatness of settlement.
- ⁴ *Iṛuvacēri*, *Kaluvali*, *Kaicēri*, *Irunkurataya*, *Karkorpurattu*, *Vaikkattu* *Pāṇṭikarpallī*, *Ilantazhacēri*, *Akazhmangalattu*, *Tuaiyurpallī* *Mampallī*, *Mangalattu*, *Āvaṭṭiputhur*

Perunkavur, Pīccappalli, Kuṭippalli, Karpakacēri, Kuzhippallikkirittan, Irunkaṭikudar Kartipallikkandan, Pullancippalli, Ulakkaiyūr, Karimukkittēvan veedu, Peruvonathu karayur, Ceyyur, Ruttiram, Pallimanrathu, etc.

- ⁵ *Kōlathiri entrusted the Tekkan Kūrṛil kārisham and Mammālikkāvu, probably the supervisor of the masonry works, to do the further step in the construction of the pond and also send Tekkelam kūru and Vaṭakkēlam kūru (nephews of the Kolathiri belonged to the junior lineage) to invite and bring the Brahmin within ninety days to Kōlathunātu. (Varier 1984:65).*

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