CHAPTER-2
THE EVOLUTION OF SRIRANGAM TEMPLE
IN THE PRE-VIJAYANAGARA PERIOD
(CIRCA 1000-1371 A.D.)

The earliest of the lithic records at the Sriranganatha temple at Srirangam takes us back, on grounds of their paleography, to the period of the early Chola Kings Rajakesarivarman (Aditya I) and Parakesarivarman (Parantaka I). During the centuries after circa 1000 A.D., secular donors, Brahmanas and kings added to the growing network of temple administration and land control by more gifts of land in places within the temple villages and outside the boundaries of temple villages in more extended networks of temple estates.

At the public level, when the king manifested himself as the supreme donor and the protector of religion in his kingdom, he legitimized his role as the upholder of the cosmic order in the world –a role that required outstanding demonstrations of the devotion to the God. From the standpoint of the donors, then, the donation was a means of obtaining the status, recognition and spiritual benefits associated with the rulers of a large regional kingdom. The strictly administrative transactions at the temple enabled this effusion of honour or grace from the God.

There was a continuum of authority stretching from the king down to the village leadership. The basis of this authority clearly rested on the ability to mobilize resources and labour at the local level, but recognition of authority relied on a complex array of honourable actions and the collections of titles emanating from
kings. In fact, the concept of the ritual polity has proved valuable in reminding us that participation within the network of temple donations originated in the desire of local leaders to establish contact with the king and to share in his divinely ordained charisma, while kings used religious donations to establish their legitimate claims to overlordship. The collection of honours, the giving of gifts, the assumption of titles were goals common to kings and intermediate authorities, and were modes of achieving legitimacy. 

It is important to note that by the time we reach 7th-8th centuries, there emerges a completely new picture in this region. A complex phenomenon develops with several interrelated aspects. Among the more important of these were (i) the opening of the fertile river valleys in a big way for agriculture (ii) the covering of the landscape by a network of big or small Brahman settlements (iii) the studding of the territory with a large number of temples commanding vast extracts of land as their property and all the entailing privileges and (iv) the emergence of monarchy that anticipated the Chola state in the centuries to come.

These developments were extremely complex and to a great extent, interrelated, especially the (i) creations of vast agrarian corporations, (ii) the emergence of the Brahman settlements and (iii) the rise of temples. It is important to remember that the temple received its patronage from many quarters – royalty, political chiefs, landlords of all varieties, trading groups—in short, all those who were of any consequence in society. This patronage included gifts of substantial resources
including land and gold, protection of those resources and those who managed it including the premises, and other kinds of services. Naturally, all these groups also benefited from this patronage tremendously.

The emergence of the Chola power from obscurity, its rise to an imperial position forms the dominant features of the history for the next four centuries (circa 849—1279 A.D.). The whole country south of the Tungabhadra was united and held as one state for a period of two centuries and more. They were one of the longest-lived imperial lineages in the history of south Asia. However, the real greatness of the Chola Empire dates from the succession of Arumolivarman who crowned himself as Rajaraja in the middle of circa 985 A.D. The thirty years of his rule constitute the formative period of Chola imperialism. A relatively small state at his accession, hardly recovering from the effects of the Rashtrakuta invasion, Chola kingdom grew under him into an extensive and well-knit empire. By the time we reach the reign of Rajaraja III early in the thirteenth century, Chola sovereignty had shrunk to a small portion of what was held by his namesake and the real founder of the Chola Empire at the time of his death in circa 1016 A.D. The old core area of the kingdom—Cholamandalam—was no longer under Rajaraja III’s control. North of the Kaveri, power had passed to several families of landed magnates. One claiming descent from the ancient Pallavas ruled a territory from the Kaveri to the Pennar river, near modern Madras; to the north of that was another chiefdom claiming descent from the Cholas themselves and ruling the delta of rivers Krishna and Godavari; while yet another line of rulers—the Kakatiyas—claimed hegemony over most of interior Telugu country. In the south
of the shrunken Chola area was a revived Pandyan kingship. To this epoch of political reordering and drawn by it, came a new and vigorous Karnataka kingship i.e. the Hoysalas. Its fourth king, Vira Narsimha (reign circa 1220-1238 A.D.) established himself in the heart of Chola-Pandya country, at a place called Kannanur near Kaveri.

One must remember that the main reason behind donations to the temples or even to the barhmanas was the strong urge for the legitimation of authority, kingly or otherwise, where gifts to the Gods or their representatives on earth were sought to transfer divine sanction and merit to the donors. Later, it was intended to be demonstrated to the society at large as well to get further legitimation. The inscriptions were themselves an integral part of the donations, providing proof of the wealth and authority of the donors. Besides, it is undoubtedly true that the Chola inscriptions are the earliest sizeable and datable body of data, found mostly in situ at places of origin and intimately describing multifaceted relationships among various individuals and groups in society. It would be important to note here that through these relationships and processes, there developed a kind of ‘Incorporative kingship’ as was mentioned by A. M. Hocart many years ago. As a matter of fact, in brahmanical ritual kingship, incorporation is a transactional and redistributive process involving priests, kings, Gods, and a multiplicity of ranked groupings capable of being replicated at the broader level. It is in this context that one would try to understand the embedded meanings of various inscriptions at the Srirangam temple.
Let us hear some important voices concerning the evolution of power and patronage structure in this period. Burton Stein, in response to the view by K.A. Nilkanta Sastri that Chola state was highly centralized and bureaucratic, put forward a segmentary model of ritual kingship in which the king presided over a highly decentralized, segmentary peasant state in which the effective power was dispersed among numerous chiefs and the dominant peasants of well-defined localities (nadu), each encompassing numerous villages. While commenting on Stein’s model, Karashima observed that while the nadu was indeed important, Stein’s categorical denial of ‘a lack of state administration was farfetched’. Rather, in Karashima’s view, the Chola state in its strongest phase—’especially in its middle period which coincided with the reigns of such powerful kings as Rajaraja I, Rajendra I and Kulottunga I—was bureaucratic, centralized and vigorously intrusive with respect to localities of the hinterland. In that period of imperial strength, Karashima argued, ‘efforts were made by these kings to build up a centralized administrative network to integrate the state politically by destroying the barriers between nadus and incorporating them into the imperial administration’. According to him, feudalism could not have arisen, at least in the Tamil country, prior to the late 13th century at the earliest. While Kesavan Veluthat insisted that the Chola state, along with its contemporaries in the south, was feudal, Karashima restricted the term to a more narrowly defined period during the late phase of Vijayanagara rule. Another historian G.W. Spencer believed that the inscriptions were basically an ‘instrument to hide the very uncertain power of the Cholas’. Cholas used rituals in temples to ‘enhance a very
uncertain royal power’, and effect centralization through ritual sovereignty. Paradoxically, one may point out that David Shulman believed that the inscriptions were meant to hide the structural weakness of medieval polity. He discarded the rich corpus of inscriptional material of the Chola period as not expressive of the inner reality, that is, the real linkages and motivations of the ritual of *dana*. At the end of his analysis, he submitted a curiously paradoxical thesis of the king as clown and the Brahmana as clown as well, with their roles often being interchangeable. However, this is one view and the rich corpus of inscriptions carries a huge weight for a historian to overlook them in any context. In fact, Karashima believed that in the Chola period, the king’s deeds of collecting or exempting taxes from the locality by giving orders to the intermediaries responsible in the local administration always occupy the chief position among the matters recorded in inscriptions. All the same, the relation between the king and the local people assumed different forms in accordance with the change in social formation, particularly with the change of the intermediary between the king and locality, such as *nattars* in the Chola period and *nayakas* in the Vijayanagara period, and also with the change of ideology in the rule. R. Champakalakshmi’s examination of the epigraphic records of the brahmadeya in the Chola heartland sustains Karashima’s characterization of the aggressive Chola polity. She pointed to the transition of brahmadeya to *taniyur* (*tan-kuru*) stature in the 9th through 12th century era as an example of local restructuring that demonstrates Chola ‘institutionalization and regularization of local loyalties under the royal ideology of legitimacy’.
Parantaka I (A.D. 907-955) taniyur came into existence as royal officials consolidated older and more important brahmadeya and created new ones in the Tondaimandalam region that was the former Pallava heartland. These new administrative initiatives were associated with the initial demands for revenue collection by the Chola state elite. Later, Rajaraja I and Rajendra I carried forward and perfected these patterns in the next century, when they extended taniyur administrative units into the Cholamandalam and Pandimandalam regions to the south. Taniyur were regularly named and renamed in honour of royal patrons who endowed and patronized local temples. In her view, there was a progressive passage of control over taniyur temples and their extensive resources from the brahmadeya-sabha assemblies and their community of brahman land holders to collective temple-based management committees that were composed of priests and other important members of the community—brahmanas and non-brahmanas. Eventually, the temples superseded the taniyur as the institutional center of local authority, and the temple management committees displaced the old institutions as the community’s collective voice 14.

Let us now look into the inscription of this period. During the reign of the Chola king Aditya I (circa 871-907 A.D.), there was an instance of a decision of members of the Perungurisabha of Srirangam disqualifying persons who were not residents of the village from holding the devadana and other lands from the 5th year onwards of the king’s reign and stipulates a fine of 25 pon on the pandaravariyam and the karanattar who violated this decision 15. From this, it is clear that by this time there was already a consciousness or understanding of
limiting the access to the temple for those who were considered outsiders by village communities or people in general. Agricultural resources were being increasingly viewed as scarce and precious and there were strong injunctions from the ruling establishment in this regard. It is proven in another instance during the Chola king Kulottunga I when the original tenants of the devadana village (name lost) in Mipilaru in Pachchil-kurram, a subdivision of Kulottungachola-valanadu were unable to pay the taxes; this village was renamed Rajanarayananallur and redistributed among new tenants 16. Thus, it was a slow but sure extension of the authority of the king that was getting accepted at the broader levels of the empire and his authority was considered legitimate beyond doubt. The king and his men would increasingly intervene in the local affairs—though it was within his territorial jurisdiction in any case 17.

It was in this period only that we come across many instances when the temple authorities had their own domain of exercising power which was done through either the Srikaryam officer of the temple or through a general consent among the Srivaishnavas of the temple 18. The Srikaryam officers were appointed by the king and thus, the royal presence was obvious. For example, in this instance during Kulottunga I’s reign, an inscription registers the sale of 4 veli of fallow land made tax-free and belonging to the temple in Vilattturnadu in Rajamahendravalanadu by the Srivaishnavavariyam to Virudraja-bhayankara Vijayapalan stipulating payment of 32 kalam of paddy at the rate of 8 kalam per veli to the temple for 220 diramam which was utilized towards a jewel to the God in the name of Panaiyurudaiyan Valavan Vilupparaiyan. Another inscription registers a
sale of tax-free *devadana* land in Vilattur-nadu in Keralantaka-valanadu to Ponparri-udaiyan Araiyan Senan of Tirumilalaikkurram in Rajarajap-Pandinadu by the executives of the temple on the orders of Vira Vichhadira-Muvendavelar, the *Srikaryam* officer of the temple, stipulating that the endowed land be named Tirumallinadi-vilagam and a specified quantity of paddy measured to the temple.

In fact, patronage as well as legitimation came from various quarters though not unexpected. The king, queens, ministers, assemblies, temple executives, individuals etc all came forward in this regard that went a long way in extension of king’s authority along with growing importance of the temple and the social, political, economic networks around it. The Chola kings provided for several offerings to the God in order to seek blessings as well as legitimacy for themselves. Interestingly, in one of the instances during the Chola king Kulottunga II, an order by the king purports to be an order issued by the deity, leasing the temple lands to the *Kovanavar* who were to plant coconut and areca palms thereon and to pay a specified portion of the yield to the temple year after year.

The patronage to the God or the main deity also came from village assemblies which could also be seen as an act of legitimation as well. The royal household needed it and the local assemblies too had no problems with it as long as their interests were safeguarded by the various plans and policies from the top. The great ritual and political importance attached to the local temple was one of the interests that were in their favour. It implied huge resource allocation as well which generated from multiple sources including the royal household in terms of
gifts to the deity and those who served it. Special occasions were chosen to spread the message of God and the king to the community at large. Besides, special provisions were made for the temple and it was patronized in all possible manner.

The queens were also not behind in this regard. Queen Rajarajan Arumoliyar alias Tennavan Madevi, queen of Rajendradeva i.e. Kulottunga I, is said to have endowed a land for the feeding of bhahavar (bhagavar). In another instance during the reign of Vikram Chola, an inscription clearly suggests that a gift of land bounded by Jayangondasolan-tirunandavanam on the west, Rajadhirajan-tirunandavanam on the north, Alappirandan-tirunandavanam on the east and Kaveri in the south was made by Tillaiyalagiyar, the mother of queen Araiyanulagudaiyar alias Ologa (Loka) Mahadeviyar to Kandadai Tiruvarangnarayan narayan Sridegopan for a flower garden in her name and for her own welfare, at the instance of Kalivalam-udaiyan Tiruvayikkulam-udaiyan, the Srikaryam officer of the temple. The queens were not at all averse to sharing the endowment with others in order to get blessings from the deity. In an inscription during the reign of Rajaraja III, an endowment of 100,000 kasu to the temple by Deviyar-Somala-deviyar for a lamp and a flower garden was made. Out of this endowment, 50,000 kasu is said to have been contributed from the treasury of the queen Somaladeviyar and the balance by Padinenvishaya-Brahmachakravarttigal of Vangippuram and Tannantulaydasar, a dasa-nambi, in equal shares of 25,000 kasu. The former amount was kept apart for the supply of ghee for the lamps and out of the latter, two plots of land 8 ma in extent for a flower garden for 20,000
kasu and 3 veli for 30,000 kasu for maintaining four gardens for the upkeep of the garden were purchased 27.

One comes across several instances of ministers of the Chola kings who patronized the Srirangam temple in various ways 28. In one instance during Rajaraja III, his mahapradhani named Changadevannangal made a gift of 840,000 kasu for offerings during service (sandhi) instituted in the name of his son 29. The temple executives were extremely conscious of their roles as not only custodians of the temple in its day to day affairs, but also about the maintenance and sustenance of the temple in its daily proceedings. There were agreements or contracts made in this regard as and when the temple authorities sought the need to make it. In one of the inscriptions during Kulottunga I, an agreement (kaitittu) by the temple executives (nivandakkarar) was made to Senapatigal Virachola Munaidaraiyar alias Ayarkolundu Chakrapani of Kottur for 50 kalanju of gold paid towards purchase of lands to provide for the recitation of the Tiruppallicluchchi and Tiruvaymoli in the temple 30. There are several inscriptions that record the sale of land by temple authorities to raise flower gardens for supply of flowers to the temple 31. Many times, special efforts were made to extend patronage by granting uncultivated land for some use for the benefit of the temple and the deity. One inscription from the time of Rajendra III clearly mentions a gift of two veli of land lying uncultivated on the banks of the river Kaveri by the Srivaishnavas of Periyakoyil to Olaimangalamudaiyan Ponnambalakkuttan and Arulalan Alagiya Manavalappermal, merchants of Kulottunga-Cholapattanam, for supply of aval-amudu to the God 32.
Individuals were not behind in patronizing either the brahmanas or the deity. This could also be read as their attempt to legitimize themselves and their families or the communities as well as providing legitimation for the evolving power structure at the time. There are numerous inscriptions that testify to this. It was a period when the learned Brahmana or the Brahmana well-versed in Vedas were seen with awe and respect. The individuals or the local community members almost vied with each other in providing for the special offerings to the deity in the temple, more so on special occasions.

In one of the inscriptions during Kulottunga I, a gift of land by purchase from the temple authorities was made by Rajarajan Madhurantakan alias Vatsraja for worship and offerings to God Alagiyamanavalap-Perumal on the day of his natal star Mrigshira and for feeding Srivaishnavas in the Madhurantakadevan-matha during certain specified festivals. It must also be noted that sometimes there was a deep fear among the individuals about their gift to be misutilised or unutilized. In such cases, they tried their best to put it under the protection of officials. The sense of belongingness and affection to the deity was so strong that in one case during the reign of Rajaraja III, an endowment of money by Periyapiratti, the wife of Rayappalli Kandan-Govinda-Chettiyar, the Olaikkarar of the Srivaishnavas of the Periya Koyil, was made in return for her maintenance out of offerings to God. The endowed amount is stated to be her share of gold left by her husband as her Jivanasesha. His own share of the amount of gold having already been endowed by Govinda-Chettiyar himself to the deity for an ornament.
We come across many inscriptions in the Chola period that give us enough evidences regarding legitimization by individuals, communities, assemblies, temple executives etc. It was important in a context where it was not only the king’s person that needed it; it was individuals who needed it; it was the assemblies and the temple executives who needed it as well. Thus, legitimization was sought by each and every individual or group that was of some significance in the society. It was an interconnected process that aligned the royal establishment, the temple, the deity and the various groups and individuals in the society for the interests of all. In one of the inscriptions during kulottunga I, gift of a Chauri (fly whisk) called Ayiravan with a golden handle was made to the God named as Aananta-Narayanaswami at Srirangam through the assembly of the village, by Malaiyalar of both Perundanam and Serudanam. It also mentions the name of the person Sridanappillai-mangal-alvan of the Rajasraya-charuppedi mangalam appointed to serve the lord with the chauri. There was also a case in the period of the same ruler of a sabha repaying the loan raised from the offerings to God as it legitimately believed in the case. For example, this inscription registers the repayment of a loan of 400 kalanju by sale of 6 veli of tax-free land by the sabha of Chandralekhai-Chaturvedimangalam which had raised this amount from God Anantanarayanasvami at Srirangam in the 10th year of Madurai-konda (Parantaka I) having paid the interest thereon regularly.

The srikaryam officer of the temple, appointed by the ruler, had a huge responsibility in all matters regarding management of the temple affairs. This officer also considered it legitimate to manage all resources from all quarters for
the efficient management of temple works. There are many instances of individuals seeking favours or blessings and providing legitimacy to the authorities—whether it was spiritual or temporal. Sometimes the individuals used to give money to the sabha or assembly for a certain specified work in the service of the deity and the sabha would thus perform the task on a specified occasion. Sometimes the individuals were so spirited that they would not only buy the land from the temple workers but also donate the same later for more honours.

A group of Gopalas were also in the forefront for providing as much for the deity as possible. Women sought merit for their husbands and daughters for their fathers through such offerings in the service of the God. Even otherwise, women were quite forthright in making gifts as and when they could do it. It really did not matter as to what caste or community one belonged to. There were instances of people or groups from lower communities making offerings to got seeking patronage and at the same time widening the base for legitimacy for the deity as well as patrons of the deity. In an interesting case during the period of Rajaraja III, there was the gift of a garden by purchase for 20 pon as per the prevailing rates by Somakkan, son of Machchavai, an attendant (tadi) of Somaladeviyar in order to serve the lord with garlands for his own merit and for the merit of his parents. In another interesting case during Rajaraja III only, a person named Ilai–Alvan-bhattan gifted two hundred and two kuli of land in the brahmadeya village Pudanur to shrine of Senapati Alvar for a lamp. It clearly indicates the urge of the common people to seek blessings and legitimacy from everybody who was in close proximity to the main deity.
From 13th century onwards, there emerged contending authors of a new political integration in the south viz, the Pandyas, the Hoysalas, the Kakatiyas besides a host of other chieftains from whom little could be expected except political disorder as each sought to expand against his neighbours. The prospect of victory by any of the principal actors around this time was thwarted by divisions within each of them; brother fought brother among Pandyans (Sundara versus Vira Pandya) and Cholas (Rajaraja III versus Rajendra III), and the two princely brothers of the Hoysala Somesvara (reign circa 1233—1267 A.D.) divided Hoysala authority between themselves, Ramanatha in Kannanur and Tamil country and Narsimha III in Karnataka with his capital at Dwarasamudram, 200 miles away.

Right at the beginning of the Pandyan rule, we come across an inscription recording the victory of Jatavarman Sundara-Pandya (circa 1251 A.D.) over Hoysala Somesvara and the conquest of Srirangam and refers to the gifts made to the temple there. This was a time when the Pandyan king was asserting himself and with every victory the patronage of the temple deity was increasing many folds. These were definitely the times of insecurity and royalty was at stake. The best possible way in these circumstances was not only to garner military support from all corners but also seek blessings of God through patronage and legitimation. In one instance the king patronized the deity through various gifts and the gilding of several parts of the temple from out of the gold of the second Tulabhara ceremony performed by the king Sundara Pandya and alludes to his victories over Simhana and Rama of the Hoysala dynasty, the Cheras and the Cholas. The king
may be identified with Jatavarman Sundara-Pandya I who bore the epithet Pommeynda-Perumal or Hemachchadanaraja 53. Another inscription is also a case in point in this regard. It purports to be an order issued at the request of the king by the God. It states that the administration of the temple was hitherto conducted by a body of ten persons belonging to the Kovanavar kottu. Sundara-Pandya (king) is said to have defined the activities of the temple, made gifts as adukkalaippuram for maintenance of the kitchen, instituted services, gilded the vimanas like the Sriranga-vimana as also Sundara-Pandiyan-madil and the gopura, made duplicate sets of ornaments for the God, constructed a palanquin (sivigai) and presented several other articles made of gold. A representative committee from all the groups (kottus) was constituted, two from Kovanavar, two from Srirangamaraiyor, one from Todavattut-tumaraiyor, two from Talaiyiduvar, one from Vasa-ariyar and two from Arattamukki-anukkar for managing these benefactions. The inscription is attested by the royal secretary Kunnudaiyan Pallavan Vilupparaiyan of Puduchcheri and is said to have been engraved at the instance of Sriranganarayanadasan Matturkilavan Kurukulattaraiyan, the manager of the temple, the Kovanavar and the Kuduvar 54. The kings also would not hesitate to exchange lands with a sabha in the village near the temple in order to provide services to the God in the simplest and best possible manner 55. The common people also tried their best to provide patronage to the main shrine or the deity in the best possible manner as they could manage. In an instance, provisions were made in terms of land and goods for conducting important festivals in the temple 56.
This was also the time when the prevailing circumstances warranted the king to interfere in the administration of the temple in a more aggressive manner. It must be noted that this was done owing to existence of group tussle in the temple. In one of the inscriptions during the time period of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I, it is clearly mentioned that the king passed an order issued to Vanadaraya that the management of the temple which was hitherto vested with one group (kottu) of officials should now be extended to members of the other groups and that the Ariyar and Ullurar be appointed to guard the treasury (porkaval) of the temple from the month of Avani in 10th (circa A.D. 1261) year of the king. It distinctly implied the emerging power of the king that witnessed increasing interference in the temple matters. In another instance, there is an order purported to be issued by the deity while seated on the throne called the ‘Sundara-Pandya’ in the abhisheka-mandapa in the temple on the day of Karttigai festival, in respect of house-sites granted to the 32 bhattas in the newly formed colony the order to take effect form the month of Chittirai in the 10th regnal year of the king. Such instances very clearly indicate the growing power and concern of the king or royalty in increasing his stake in the affairs of the realm in general and the temple in particular. Many times the king and his staff would insure that remittances were offered to the community or individuals in order to offer worship to the deity but defaulters would be seriously punished if proved guilty of non-compliance. The residents of the village had to furnish an undertaking in this regard. The queens were also eager to share the blessings from God, thus providing for Him in no small measure as well.
The temple authorities were also not behind in the exercise of power, though it is certain that their jurisdiction and range were limited as compared to the deity or the royalty. In an inscription during Maravarman Sundara Pandaya-I, it is recorded that the temple managers colluded with the Ottar in misappropriating the temple funds and thus a large assembly comprising of all the administrative bodies met at the West Triruvidi of Rajamahendran Tiruvidi and resolved that the executive functions in the administration of the temple must be entrusted to individuals carefully selected, excluding the defaulters responsible for the misappropriation of temple funds, by rotation. Each individual or body may perform the function for one year. The individual must be selected on the occasion of Sripushpayagam.61 In an interesting inscription during Pandyas, though the name of the ruler is unclear, an order is purported to have been issued by the deity. It is an order issued by God Ranganatha directing a council of 23 members of whom ten are to be selected from out of the kottu of the temple, four from the sanyasins and desantris, five representing the 18 mandalas and four representing the Chera, Chola, Pandya kings and the Kshatriyas of the north, to appoint a sanyasin versed in the Vaisnava lore and with the interest of the temple at heart and belonging to either Pangayachchelviyur alias Vellarai or Parantaka-chaturvedimangalam alias Salagramam or the Nalayiravar-Brahmadeyam in Pandi-mandalam, to took after the properties of the temples situated in several places, with provision made for his maintenance mentions the appointment of armed Velaikkaras to help the sanyasin in discharging his duties.62 There are many instances of individuals legitimizing the authority of the king or the deity.
by vigorously participating in the sale and purchase of the lands for setting up of colonies etc in the name of the king 63.

The Hoysala period witnessed serious interventions in temple administration as it was growing in both power and wealth, not to speak of influence and bearing on the people attached to it. In one of the instances during King Ramanatha of Hoysala dynasty, there is an order purported to be made by the deity where there are clear specifications with respect to the temple management. It purports to be an order of the deity ratifying the proposals made in the 9th year of reign of Vira-Ramanathadheva by Echi-Bhattan of Kausika gotra, the Kudinir-savasi of the palace (araimanai) who, along with the other temple servants made a representation to the God in respect of the Lakshminarayap-purumal temple situated in Bhadrakara-chaturvedimangalam that (1) as a protective measure, a row of house sites all around the temple be given to deserving Brahmanas, (2) that some more lands from endowed to the temple to augment its income from the existing endowments which was found to be inadequate for maintaining worship and offerings in it, for which purpose Echi-Bhattan deposited 7500 kasu in the temple treasury 64. In another inscription from the Hoysala period, though the name of the ruler is unclear, there is clearly a grand celebration and donations to learned men in the wake of a territorial acquisition in Kerala and marriage with a Pandyan princess 65.

These kinds of actions were seen during the Hoysala dynasty too as witnessed by the establishment of a salai by the pradhana of the king Ramanatha. It records the
founding of a salai on the west side of the gopura enshrining the god Eduttakai-Alagiya-Nayanar in the Ranganatha temple and an endowment of land for its upkeep by Chingadeva Singanna-Dandanayaka, a pradhana of the king. The salai was entrusted to the care of Garudavahana-Pandita who was styled the rakshaka of the donor 66. These acts of patronage by the ministers and officials during the rule of this dynasty abound. In another instance, it registers a gift of land for a gosala (tirukkosalaippura-iraiyili) by one of the palace officers (araimanai-pradhani) of Puttur in Tulumandalam (name lost), for the welfare of the chief queen (pattattup-periyarasi) Vijvala-Mahadevi. The gift is said to have been approved by Jatavarman Vikrama Pandyadeva at the instance of Annan Vanadhirajar and the gift land seems to have formed part of Vikramapandya-chaturvedimangalam in Pandimandalam evidently named after the Pandya king. The title Jatavarman is obviously a mistake for Maravarman since no Pandya king bearing the title Jatavarman and the name Vikramapandya is known to have existed during this period. On the other hand, a Maravarman Vikramapandya is known to have commenced to rule from circa 1249 A.D., with whom this Vikramapandya may be identified 67.

The only inscription from the Kakatiya dynasty at Srirangam comes from the king Prataprudradeva Maharaja though it is largely damaged. It appears to register some gift (details lost) by Devari-Nayaningaru, son of Machaya Nayaningaru, whose achievements against the Pancha Pandya and Kerala Kulasekhara etc. in his southern expedition are enumerated. Devari-Nayaka is described as the Nayaka of
King Pratapa- Rudradeva-Maharaja and is given the epithets Kakataraya-sthapanacharya and Svamidrohara-ganda.

Similarly, the Gajapati dynasty had only a couple of inscription at Srirangam and they are from the king Hambira Kumara Mahapatra who made a gift of one thousand cows towards milk and ghee offerings to the deity in one of the inscriptions. As witnessed earlier, during this period as well, there were many instances of individual donations and patronage that poured in. Some individuals would be even willing to buy the land first from the Srivaishnavas of the temple and then donate it to the same with a number of exemptions. In the process, there was legitimacy for the temple and the royalty coming from individuals and the community by all means.

In the end, it is clear from the evidences provided by the inscriptions on the walls of Sriranganathasvamy temple at Srirangam that the pre-Vijayanagara period was extremely formative for the evolution of this temple in terms of power, patronage and legitimation. By the end of this period in 14th century, it was clear that any political dispensation in south to reckon with had to secure access to this temple to secure legitimacy for its rule. Different individuals and groups- social, political, religious- vied with each other in extending patronage to the temple and deity and sought sanction or blessings for their actions. No matter what merits accrued to which individuals or groups, there was no doubt that through these extended networks of bonds, the ultimate beneficiaries were both the temporal and transcendental powers who worked together for enhancement of their power and prestige at this point in history.
Endnotes


2 Ibid., p. 181.


4 Ibid.


6 Ibid.


14 Ibid.

15 Appendix-1, no. 1/1.

16 Ibid., no. 2/5.

17 Ibid., no.2/9.
45 Ibid., no. 3/27.
46 Ibid., no.3/24; no.3/32.
47 Ibid., no.3/32.
48 Ibid., no.3/30.
50 Ibid.
51 Appendix-4, no.1/2
52 Ibid., no.1/3; no.1/4
53 Appendix-5, no.1/1.
54 Ibid., no.1/2.
55 Ibid., no.1/8.
56 Ibid., no.6/2.
57 Appendix-4, no.1/5.
58 Ibid., no.1/7.
59 Ibid., no.1/11.
60 Ibid., no.5/1.
61 Ibid., no.4/1.
62 Ibid., no.6/1.
63 Appendix-6, no.1/4.
64 Appendix-7, no.6/1.
65 Ibid., no.1/1
66 Appendix-8, no.3/2
67 Ibid., no.3/1.
68 Ibid., no.3/4.
69 Ibid., no.1/2.
70 Ibid., no.6/1; no.6/2; no.6/3.
71 Ibid., no.6/2.
72 Appendix-9, no.1/2.