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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN ETTAYAPURAM AND VILATHIKULAM REGION, THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT: TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

The present study is aims to unearth archaeological sites from Ettayapuram and Vilathikulam Regions of Thoothukudi District in Tamil Nadu. The outcome of the research is brought out about 13culturalremains from different villages.Lithic yielding sites-2, Cup marks locations-2, Grooves yielding site-1, Jain sculpture yielding site-1, Vishnu pillars-5 and Mandapa-1. At this primary level all the materials are individually studied.

Keywords: Investigation, Historic, Archaeological materials

Introduction

The district Thoothukudi is situated in the south east corner of the Tamil Nadu. The initial work is carried out by An Archaeological study was started from the eighteenth century C.E. The initial work is focused by Caldwell 1877, 1982, Rea 1901, 1902-03, 1915; Zeuner&Allchin 1956; Gardener&Martingel 1990; Foote 1916; Selvakumar 2008 and 20017. There are number of sites excavated in different time period sites like, Teri, Korkai, Adichanallur, Sivagalai, Parakkiramapaandithereadu, Agaram, Valappanpillaithereadu, Petmagnagar, Srimoolakkarai, Agaram and Thirukkolor. The overall excavations revealed that the district having the

cultural evidences since the Mesolithic followed by Iron Age, Early Historic, Medieval and later period.

Study area

The present study area is situated in northern part of Thoothukudi District (Fig. 1). It is bounded by Gulf of Mannar on the east, Ottapidaram taluk on the south, Kovilpatti on the west andVirudhunagar and Ramnathapuram District on the north. The regions were partially filled by the seasonal rivers, Vaippar, Kallaru and the rest of the areas focused on the ground water. The area having semi-arid climate. An archaeological and the historical potential of the regions were previously studied by, different Institutions and research scholars. Researchers like,

RasuPaundurair 1998, V. Selvakumar 2009, M. Rajesh 2009, 2017, Vedhachalam 2019, Manikandan 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2023). Though, the area is not thoroughly studied.

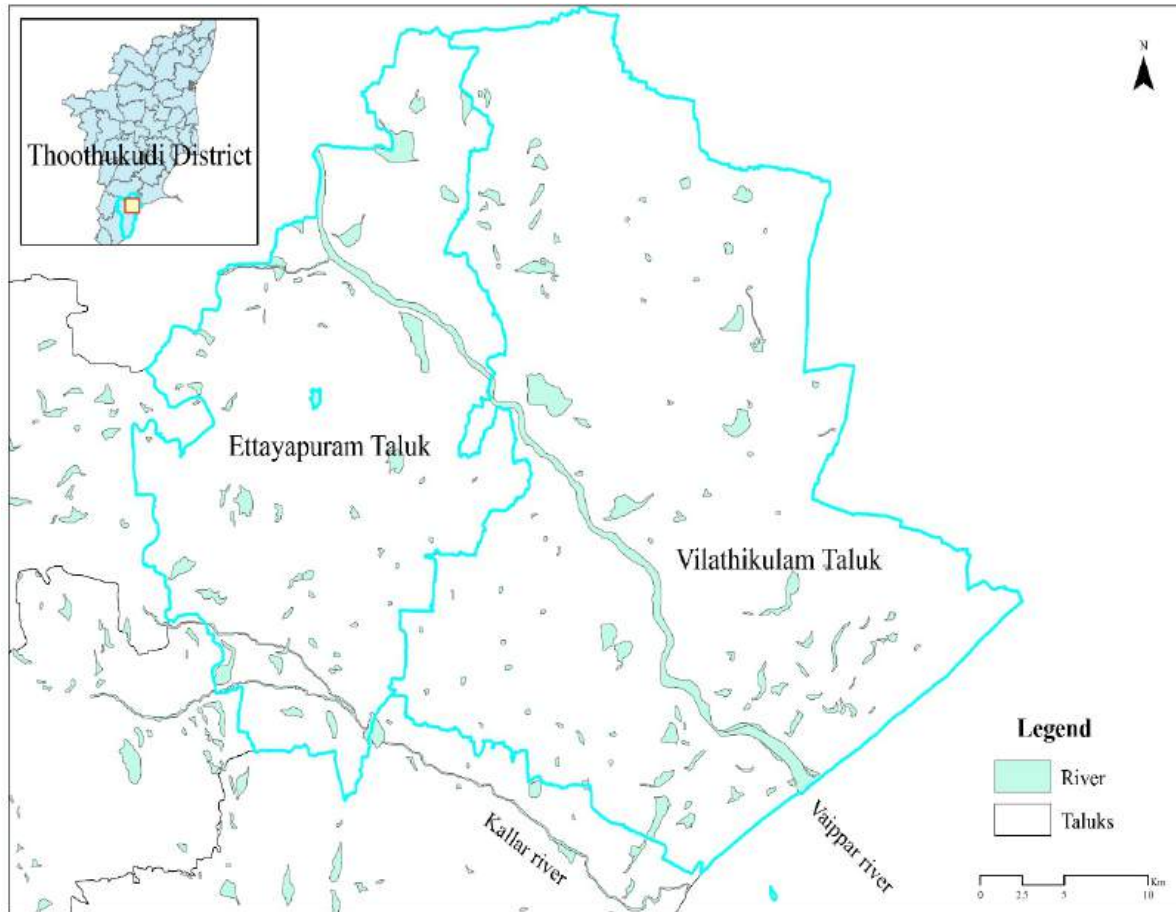


Fig 1. Map Showing Study Area

Previously explored sites and their location map attached here (Fig. 2). All the explored sites and their cultural materials are given below.

Chennampatti

Chennampatti is located about twenty-five kilometers from Vilathikulam on the way to Matalapuram. North of the village, a vishnu pillar identified which is locally known as *Kondimadasamy*. Its height of the pillar is about two meters and its bottom chakra and conch engravings noticed. People

having the local story about how the pillar landed at here. There is no other cultural remains found nearby area.

Chinnamalaikkuntru

Chinnamalaikkuntru is located about six kilometers on the way to Kadalaiyur. A ruin temple located on the north of the village. Temple is having mandapa and garbhagriha, at the top of the entrance where Gajalaxmi placed. Height of the temple is about three meters.

Madhapuram is located about 3.7 kilometers from Ettayapuram near Ilampuvanam on the way to Kuamragiri. Near the bus stand, amandapanoticed which is belongs to Nayak period. The mandapa having 12 pillars in three rows.

Malleswarapuram

Malleswarapuram is situated about 17 kilometers near Vadamalapuram on the way to T.M. Kottai of Ramnadhapuram district. Mannarappan temple is located north of the village. Main idol is made of single pillar which having Tamil inscription on one side. Inscription is partially not visible due to multiple coating of oil applications.

Pattidevanpatti

Pattidevanpatti is located about 23 kilometers from Vilathikulam near Sencottai on the way to Keelakarantai. A linga sculpture was identified near *muniyasamy* temple. Height of the linga is about 45centimeters and its breadth is about 20 centimeters. A chert flake material found near present burial ground.

Virapatti

Virapatti is located about 15 kilometers from Ettayapuram near M.Kovilpatti on the way to Malaipatti. A pillar is identified near Government school at Virapatti. The pillar having the depiction of chakra and chunk.



Fig 3. Jain sculpture

Melapatti

Melapatti is located about four kilometers from Pudur on the way to Vembur. A Jain sculpture noticed on the agricultural land near CSI church (Fig. 3). Broken form of the sculpture only having the remains of Tirtanga head and two attendees. The iconographical characteristic features indicates that belongs to 10-12th Century C.E.

Ayyanbommiapuram

Ayyanbommiapuram is situated about 4 kilometers from Vilathikulam near Karisalkulam on the way to Nagalapuram. A habitational mound known as *Nattamkooru* was identified off the road between Ayyanbommiapuram and Panaiyadipatti (Manikandan 2016). The present research unearths, stone tools and flake materials from the habitation area. All of them are made of chert and quartz materials.

Katturamanpatti

Katturamanpatti is located about nine kilometers from kovilpatti on the way to kadalaiyur. Present study unearths four cup marks on the laterite hill formation in *Ayyamuniyasamy* temple. Measurements of the cup marks are about one to three centimeters and its breadths are about two to four centimeters. According to the locals, urn burials were exposed during mining activity and its location not known.

Malaipatti

Malaipatti is located about 31 kilometers from Ettayapuram near Veerapatti on the way to Kadalaiyur. A small hill formation is extended near the *Petchiyamman* temple.

On the hill formation, four polishing grooves identified. Two cup marks identified on the hill formation and its measurements is about 3 to 6 centimeters and its depth is about 2 to 4 centimeters. One *pallanguzhi* identified in the vicinity of *petchiyamman* temple. It having the cup mark like pattern in two rows about 8.

A Vishnu pillar is kept Infront of the amman temple and it having the engraving of chakra and conch (Fig. 4).

V. Kodangipatti

V. Kodangipatti is located about 28 km north from Ettayapuram near Azhagapuri on the way to Pandalkudi. Stone flake and blade tool found inside the premise of madhucon road construction company, opposite of jayavelu spinning mill company. Those flake and blades are made of chert and quartz. In the study area, previously several sites was identified with stone materials (Selvakumar 2009, Rajesh 2017 and Manikandan 2020), though its cultural context yet to be declared with stratigraphical findings.



Fig 5. Inscription from Nadukattur and M.Kovilpatti

M. Kovilpatti

M. Kovilpatti is a short form of MuttulapuramKovilpatti. It is situated about sixteen kilometers from Ettayapuram on the way to Virappatti. A vinayaga temple is located near bus stop which is having Tamil inscription (Fig. 5). Inscription was multiple time painted therefore its visibility meager. Though the fourth line of the inscription mentions Muthulapurama village near the temple.

Nadukattur

Nadukattur village is located about 28 kilometers from Vilathikulam on the way to Muthupatti. Veyiluvandhamman temple is located north of the village. One of the outside standing pillars having Tamil inscriptions. Inscription mentions “1118 ஸ்ரீசித்திசபானுவருசம்மாசிமாதம்26



Fig 4. Archaeological remains from Malaipatti

தேதிநடுக்காட்டுர்சங்கரவேல்சாமிகுமாரர்
ராமசாமிசொந்தகல்லுஇந்தமண்டபம்இவர்அனும

தியால்கட்டிமுடிந்தா”. The inscription refers that Ramasamy who constructed the mandapa in the premise of the temple.

Conclusion

There is a potential for future research in the study area. Stone tools, cup marks and grooves are the chief materials of prehistoric hunter gatherers. Presence of Jain sculptures in the area indicates that the religion was supported by locals. Alone, standing Vishnu pillars indicates that the original place is changed.

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