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Interactions between Northern Sri Lanka and South India: A Study Based on the Yalppana Vaipavamalai

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Abstract

Sri Lankan and Indian literary as well as archaeological evidence indicate that the relationship between Sri Lanka and India extends back to antiquity. Geographically, the northern region of Sri Lanka lies in close proximity to South India, particularly Tamil Nadu, fostering long-standing interactions between these two areas. Recent archaeological findings suggest that such connections date as far back as prehistoric times. However, Pali and Sinhala literary sources, which predominantly narrate the history of Sri Lanka, focus primarily on relations between North, South India and Southern Sri Lanka, often neglecting the historical ties of the Northern region. In this context, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai*, composed in the 18th century, emerges as a crucial text that attempts to chronicle the history of the Tamils in Northern Sri Lanka. Despite certain historical inaccuracies, this work provides valuable insights into the arrival and settlement of South Indian Tamils, the propagation of Hinduism, and the formation of political entities in the North from ancient times through the Dutch period. Nonetheless, contemporary Sri Lankan historiography has largely overlooked the historical narratives contained within this text, resulting in a gap regarding Northern Sri Lanka's early political, economic, and socio-cultural relations with South India. This study aims to re-examine and highlight the historical significance of Northern Sri Lanka by utilising information from the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai*, supplemented by Pali, Sinhala, and Tamil primary sources, archaeological evidence, including architectural and inscriptional data, as well as secondary literature comprising scholarly books, research articles, and digital resources. Employing historical methodology, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the region's interconnected past.

Keywords: Hinduism, Jaffna, Northern Region, South India, Tamils

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka and India are both multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, and their geographical proximity has fostered close interactions since ancient times. Literary sources from both countries have long attested to these historical connections, and recent archaeological research has further substantiated them. In particular, early Sri Lankan literary works written in Pali and Sinhala, such as the *Mahavamsa* and related chronicles, emphasize the formation of the Sinhala ethnic identity, the establishment of royal lineages, and the cultural development of the Sinhala community, primarily through contact with North India during the early stages of Sri Lankan history[1]. South Indian connections are also acknowledged in these texts, though typically in relation to political incursions or dynastic interactions linked to South Indian history. However, these sources offer limited insights into the northern regions of Sri Lanka or the specific historical relationships between Northern Sri Lanka and South India. Consequently, the historical narrative of Sri Lanka has predominantly centred around the Sinhala ethnic group, often marginalising the historical experiences and contributions of the Tamil community, particularly in the North.

Given that Sri Lankan historiography has been largely shaped by Pali and Sinhala literary traditions, the Sinhala ethnic group has traditionally been regarded as the island's most ancient and continuously recorded community. This emphasis has, over time, overshadowed the long-standing presence and historical significance of the Tamil ethnic group in Northern Sri Lanka. In response to this historiographical gap, Tamil literary works such as *Kailayamalai*, *Vaiyaapadal*, and *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* were composed in later periods.

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These texts aimed to document and assert the historical roots, royal traditions, and cultural developments of the Tamil community in Northern Sri Lanka.

Among these, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* holds particular significance. Composed during the Dutch colonial period, it chronicles the history of the Jaffna Peninsula from ancient times up to the 18th century[2]. This text provides valuable information on the enduring connections between South India, particularly Tamil Nadu and the Tamil ethnic group in Northern Sri Lanka. It highlights key aspects such as patterns of settlement, the introduction and growth of Hinduism, the establishment of royal lineages, and the socio-cultural evolution of the region. While certain accounts within the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* may lack verifiable historical accuracy, the text nonetheless offers crucial insights into the cultural and political development of Northern Sri Lanka, including the etymology of place names and the consolidation of Tamil identity.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, narrative-based historical approach. Specifically, it adopts the historical research methodology, which involves systematically collecting, analysing, and interpreting data from both primary and secondary sources to reconstruct and understand the historical interactions between Northern Sri Lanka and South India. Primary sources utilised in this research include key Sri Lankan chronicles such as the *Mahavamsa* and *Culavamsa*, Tamil literary works including the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai*, *Kailayamalai*, *Cecaracacekaramalai*, and *Konesar Kalvettu*, as well as accounts by foreign travellers. In addition, archaeological evidence such as inscriptions, epigraphic records, and architectural remains is critically examined. Secondary sources consulted for this research encompass a wide range of scholarly books, research articles, journals, and reputable online resources. These materials serve to complement and contextualise the primary data. The study further applies analytical and comparative methods to cross-examine the information gathered, enabling a nuanced interpretation of the historical ties between the two regions.

3. Aim and Contribution of the Research

This research is driven by several key objectives. The primary aim is to elucidate and document the historical relationships that existed between South India and Northern Sri Lanka. Specific sub-objectives include the identification and analysis of archaeological remains that serve as tangible evidence of these bilateral interactions, as well as the documentation of their historical significance. A further objective is to foster an awareness regarding the preservation and protection of the archaeological heritage that testifies to these longstanding connections.

Moreover, this study seeks to address a noticeable gap in the current body of scholarship. Despite the wealth of information provided by the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai*, there has been a lack of focused academic inquiry into the historical relationships between Northern Sri Lanka and South India based on this text. By addressing this lacuna, the research aims to contribute to the broader understanding of the region's interconnected history. Additionally, by highlighting the antiquity of the relations between the two regions, this study aspires to reinforce contemporary cultural and historical ties, thereby encouraging continued dialogue and collaboration between the two societies.

4. Historical Background of Northern Sri Lanka

The northern region of Sri Lanka has long been recognised for its distinctive cultural traditions and historical significance. Ancient literary sources in both Pali and Tamil refer to this region by various names, including *Naga Nadu*, *Nagadipa*, and *Nagabhumi*, indicating the association of the area with the Naga community and its cultural heritage[3]. Geographically situated close to South India, particularly Tamil Nadu, this proximity fostered continuous interaction between the two regions. Early theories suggest that indigenous tribes such as the Yaksha and Naga inhabited Northern Sri Lanka during prehistoric times. However, literary sources like the *Dipavamsa* do not fully embrace this perspective, often depicting these groups marginally[4]. In contrast, archaeological evidence, especially the findings from the Iranamadu formation, confirms that prehistoric man in Northern Sri Lanka dates back approximately 125,000 years[5]. Additional archaeological discoveries at sites like Kantharodai, Velanai, Karainagar, Anaikottai, and Delft further substantiate the early cultural development and settlement patterns in the region[6].

Archaeologists have identified the prehistoric inhabitants of Northern Sri Lanka as belonging to the

South Indian Megalithic cultural sphere[7]. Excavations in areas including Kantarodai, Delft, and the Vanni region reveal the prevalence of Megalithic practices, alongside material evidence of Hindu cultural traditions[8]. Moreover, inscriptions and other artefacts suggest that Buddhism also exerted influence over the region at various historical junctures, particularly when Northern Sri Lanka came under the sway of Sinhalese monarchs from the south. Historically, the northern region functioned as both a political stronghold for these southern kings and as a gateway facilitating communication, trade, and migration between Sri Lanka and South India. Within this complex socio-political framework, the Tamil ethnic group maintained a continuous presence in Northern Sri Lanka, distinguished by their adherence to Hindu culture and their unique social identity.

The Tamil community's connections with South India are deeply embedded in historical records, particularly those dating back to the Sangam period. References in Sangam literature, such as the mention of the poet Ezathuputhanthevanar, attest to the close ties between the Tamils of South India and Northern Sri Lanka[9]. Over time, although Hindu-Buddhist traditions coexisted within the region, the influence of the South Indian Bhakti movement spanning several regions resulted in the consolidation of Hinduism as the predominant religious tradition[10]. The expansion of Chola rule further reinforced Tamil cultural dominance in the north, both demographically and politically[11]. Subsequently, the rise of the Jaffna Kingdom, following Pandya influence, marked the crystallisation of a distinct Tamil identity in Northern Sri Lanka. In this historical context, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* emerges as a vital literary source, documenting the region's ancient past and providing valuable insights into the enduring relationship between Northern Sri Lanka and South India.

5. Yalppana Vaipavamalai

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* stands as a key historical chronicle that documents the evolution of Northern Sri Lanka, particularly the Jaffna region, from ancient times to the Dutch colonial period. The name *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* is derived from the meaning of its components: "Yalppanam" refers to the place (modern-day Jaffna), "Vaipavam" means events that took place there, and "Malai" signifies a compilation or series. Written in the 18th century by the Tamil poet and scholar Mayilvagana Pulavar, the text was produced under the patronage of the Dutch, specifically at the request of Jan Maccara, the Dutch Governor of Jaffna[12]. Following the Dutch conquest of Northern Sri Lanka after the decline of Portuguese rule, the Dutch authorities maintained favourable relations with the Tamil community and supported efforts to record and preserve the region's historical and cultural identity. As such, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* not only served as a literary work but also played a role in asserting the historical continuity and significance of the Tamils in Northern Sri Lanka.

A distinctive feature of the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* is its incorporation of earlier Tamil literary sources, including the *Kailayamalai*, *Vaiyapadal*, *Pararacacekaran Ula*, and *Racamurai*[13]. While modern scholars have critiqued the text for certain historical inaccuracies, mythological embellishments, and narrative inconsistencies, it nonetheless offers valuable insights into the socio-political and cultural landscape of the northern region. Notably, the chronicle sheds light on the early connections between South India and Northern Sri Lanka, particularly in relation to the migration patterns, cultural exchanges, and the development of place names rooted in South Indian influence. Furthermore, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* underscores the significance of the political, economic, and religious ties between the Tamil population of Northern Sri Lanka and South India, highlighting how these interactions facilitated the growth and consolidation of Tamil identity in the region. Despite its limitations, the text remains a crucial source for understanding the historical trajectory of Northern Sri Lanka and its enduring connections with the Tamil cultural sphere of South India.

6. Interactions between Northern Sri Lanka and South India

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* serves as a valuable literary source in tracing the interactions between Northern Sri Lanka and South India, though much of its early narrative content may be anecdotal. However, interdisciplinary research, particularly in archaeology, has substantiated the existence of cross-regional connections dating back to prehistoric times. Excavations at Megalithic cultural sites such as Kantharodai and Anaikottai in Northern Sri Lanka, alongside Adichanallur and Tamiraparani in South India, have revealed striking cultural parallels, suggesting sustained interactions between these regions[14]. Furthermore, literary sources like the Sangam literature

corroborate the continuation of these relations into the historical period, emphasising not only geographical proximity but also shared socio-cultural elements. While the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* blends myth and history, the political, economic, and socio-cultural exchanges it describes align with broader evidence, affirming that Northern Sri Lanka and South India were deeply interconnected across multiple dimensions throughout antiquity.

6.1 Political Interactions

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* presents a narrative of northern Sri Lanka's history by drawing from sources such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahavamsa*, offering details that trace the region's political developments and its early connections with India[15]. While parts of this account are interwoven with myths, superstitions, and historically unverifiable elements, the text nonetheless reflects the diffusion of Hindu and Buddhist cultural influences across northern Sri Lanka in antiquity. Significantly, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* sheds light on the political dynamics preceding the formation of the Jaffna Kingdom, particularly emphasising the role of South Indian interactions, and proceeds to describe the establishment of the Jaffna Kingdom itself alongside the emergence of the Vanni chieftaincies. Although concrete evidence remains limited regarding the earliest stages of the Jaffna Kingdom's history, there is sufficient corroborative source, both literary and epigraphic, to affirm the kingdom's formation and the rise of the Vanni states. Thus, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* serves as a valuable resource for examining the political relations between South India and northern Sri Lanka, both in the before the Jaffna Kingdom and during the kingdom's subsequent development.

6.1.1 Political Interactions before the Jaffna Kingdom

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* provides considerable information regarding the involvement of South Indian powers, particularly the Chola and Pandya dynasties, in the political landscape of Northern Sri Lanka prior to the establishment of the Jaffna Kingdom. It emphasises that these interactions laid the groundwork for the eventual rise of a Tamil polity in the region. Although concrete historical evidence supporting some of these accounts is limited, the text nonetheless reflects the early political linkages between the two regions. Prominent figures such as Kulakkottan, Vanniya settlers, Pandu, Ukkiracinkan, Thondaiman, Marutappuravikavalli, and Yal Paadi are frequently mentioned as key actors from South India contributing to Northern Sri Lanka's political evolution.

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* commences its narrative by highlighting the figure of Kulakottan and his connection to South India's influence over northern Sri Lanka. According to the text, Kulakottan is portrayed as a scion of the Chola dynasty who visited the Konesar Temple in Trincomalee with the objective of renovating it[16]. Supporting this identification, S. Pathmanathan correlates Kulakottan with Cholakankadevan, referencing the *Trincomalee Sannasa* and the *Sri Takshinakailasa Purana* as key sources[17]. Furthermore, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* records that Kulakottan facilitated the migration of Vanniyars from Tamil Nadu, settling them in the region to ensure the temple's economic sustenance. Following Kulakottan's death, additional Vanniyars from the Pandya territory are said to have settled in northern Sri Lanka, leading to the establishment of local Vanni chieftaincies[18]. Concurrently, the text also mentions the arrival of a ruler named Pandu from the Kandy region to the north. Sitirambalam, in *Jaffna - Ancient History*, identifies this figure as a Pandya king[19]. This narrative reflects the intertwined political relations between the Chola and Pandya kingdoms and northern Sri Lanka, which played a crucial role in shaping the formation and development of the Vanni states.

Further, the text introduces Ukrasinghan as the earliest ruler of Northern Sri Lanka, connected to South India, and Marutappuravikavalli, who is tied to the Chola region. While elements of these accounts are mythologised, they highlight the continuation of South Indian contact and the origins of place names and settlement patterns in the northern region. Katiramalai, cited as an early capital, is identified by Mudaliyar Rasanayagam as Kantharodai, which archaeological findings suggest was a significant centre during ancient times[20]. Complementary evidence, including Paul E. Peiris' observations, reinforces the prominence of Kantharodai as an ancient urban settlement[21].

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* further enriches the historical narrative of northern Sri Lanka by detailing the contributions of Marutappuravikavalli, who is described as arriving from the Chola region and undertaking the construction of the Mavidapuram Kandaswamy Temple. The text notes that the Murukan statue for this temple was transported from the Chola region, arriving at the

Kacha port and later brought ashore at Kangesanthurai[22]. Additionally, it mentions the arrival of Thondaiman, the ruler of Thondai Nadu (Kanchi), and records that during his period of influence, the river in the northern region was named Thondaimanaru[23]. The text also introduces the figure of Yal Paadi, linking him to the origin of the place name Jaffna, and attributes the subsequent establishment of the Jaffna Kingdom to Pandya patronage following Yal Paadi's rule[24]. Collectively, these accounts illustrate how early political and cultural ties with South India not only facilitated the migration and settlement of South Indian rulers and communities in northern Sri Lanka but also contributed to the naming of key regions and the establishment of royal traditions. While corroborative historical sources remain limited regarding these early phases, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* nonetheless suggests that interactions with the Chola and Pandya dynasties played a pivotal role in fostering the growth of Tamil settlements and ultimately laid the groundwork for the emergence of an independent Tamil polity in northern Sri Lanka under South Indian influence.

6.1.2 Jaffna Kingdom and South Indian Relations

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* provides significant insights into the establishment of the Jaffna kingdom and its enduring ties with South India. According to the text, following the political instability after the rule of Yal Paadi, a figure named Pandimalavan travelled to Tamil Nadu and sought assistance from the Pandya king to stabilise the northern region of Sri Lanka[25]. It is within this context that Cinkaiyariyan, with the endorsement of the Pandya monarch, is said to have founded the Jaffna kingdom. The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* describes how Cinkaiyariyan established his capital at Nallur, constructing administrative halls, palaces, water ponds, and shelters for elephants and cavalry, accompanied by the establishment of temples in all four cardinal directions for the kingdom's protection[26]. Archaeological remains such as ruins in the Nallur area, ponds, and temple structures correspond with these descriptions, providing tangible support to the literary account. It is generally accepted that the Jaffna kingdom emerged in the 13th century CE, persisting until its decline following Portuguese conquest in the early 17th century.

Further corroboration of Pandya influence in the establishment of the Jaffna kingdom can be found in Pali sources such as the *Culavamsa*, which records the invasions of the Arya Cakravartti, identified as representatives of the Pandya polity[27]. Inscriptions and sasana such as Sundara Pandya, Veerapandya, Maravarman Sundarapandya, and the Kudumimalai Sannasa offer additional evidence of Pandya military involvement in Sri Lanka[28]. These records collectively confirm that the formation of the Jaffna kingdom was closely linked to Pandya incursions into the island. Moreover, Tamil literary sources like *Cekaracacekaramalai* provide detailed accounts of the Arya Cakravarttis, identifying them as Brahmins originating from Rameswaram, who initially served as military commanders and ministers under the Pandyas before establishing dominion in northern Sri Lanka[29].

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* further lists the successive rulers of the Jaffna kingdom, tracing their lineage to the Arya Cakravarttis. Kings such as Vijaya Kulankai Cakravartti, Kulacekara Cinkaiyariyan, Kulotunka Cinkaiyariyan, Vikkrama Cinkaiyariyan, Varotaya Cinkaiyariyan, Marttanta Cinkaiyariyan, Kunapusana Cinkaiyariyan, Virotaya Cinkaiyariyan, Ceyavira Cinkaiyariyan, Kunavira Cinkaiyariyan, and Kanakacuriya Cinkaiyariyan are named, though the text does not present them in strict chronological order[30]. Throughout these reigns, the text records continued interactions with the Pandya and later Nayak administrations. A notable instance includes the episode where Pandya king Chandrasekaran (identified by scholars such as Rasanayagam Mudaliyar and S. Pathmanathan as Sundara Pandyan)[31] sought refuge in Jaffna after losing his kingdom, subsequently regaining it with assistance from Virotaya Cinkaiyariya. Similarly, the text records how Jaffna king Ceyaveera Cinkaiyarya, with Pandya support, overcame the Yapahuva king Bhuvanekabahu I and temporarily ruled the island, before his successor Parakramabahu reclaimed the southern throne with Pandya backing[32]. Such accounts underscore the Jaffna kingdom's strategic alliance with South Indian powers, particularly the Pandyas.

Political engagements between the Jaffna rulers and the Nayak dynasties of South India are also evidenced in the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai*. During the reign of Kunavira Cinkaiyariyan, the text notes Jaffna's assistance to the Nayaks, possibly indicative of the increasing influence of the Nayak polities over the region[33]. Additionally, the text records that Kanakacuriya Cinkaiyariyan fled to Tamil Nadu amid the invasion led by Senpakaperumal, the representative of Kotte king Parakramabahu VI. Kanakacuriya's family reportedly received support from the Thirukovalur royal family and, with the aid of minor kingdoms in Madurai, he later regained the Jaffna throne[34].

Furthermore, Kanakacuriya's son, Pararacacekaran, solidified ties with South India by marrying women from the Chola and Pandya lineages[35]. These alliances through military cooperation and marital relations reveal the deep political and cultural entanglements between Jaffna and South India.

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* also touches upon the formation of the Vanni chieftaincies during the period of the Jaffna kingdom. While their early presence is linked to figures such as Kulakkottan, the text emphasises the role of Cinkaiyariyan I in settling Tamil groups in the Vanni region, where they ruled as subordinate chiefs under Jaffna's authority[36]. This indicates that South Indian migration and influence significantly contributed to the socio-political landscape of the Vanni territories. Additionally, in the later period of Portuguese dominance, individuals such as Ulagukavala Mudali, a Chola descendant, are noted to have fled to the Karainagar region to escape retribution for rebellion, later assisting the Dutch in their capture of Jaffna fort, further evidence of South Indian involvement in northern Sri Lanka's political affairs[37].

Thus, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* underscores the persistent and multifaceted interactions between northern Sri Lanka and South India, particularly through the formation and sustenance of the Jaffna kingdom. From its establishment under the auspices of the Pandya dynasty to its continued engagement with both the Pandya and Nayak rulers, the kingdom's political stability and expansion were inextricably linked to its South Indian connections. The emergence of the Vanni states, as well as later episodes involving South Indian figures and alliances, further demonstrate the formative role of South Indian influence in the political, cultural, and social evolution of the Tamil kingdom in northern Sri Lanka.

7. Economic Interactions

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* offers valuable insights into the economic interactions between northern Sri Lanka and southern India, particularly during the early periods. One of the significant references pertains to King Kulakkottan, who is credited with bringing the Vanniyar community from South India to engage in agricultural activities in the northern region[38]. These agricultural efforts were primarily aimed at generating revenue for the Konesar temple, indicating the importance of agrarian-based income to both religious institutions and regional economies. This account highlights the role of South Indian communities in shaping the agricultural landscape of northern Sri Lanka. Additionally, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* mentions the visit of Thondaiman, who became aware of the quality salt produced in the coastal areas of Karanavai and Vellaparavai[39]. His interest in procuring this salt suggests the existence of local salt production and trade, facilitated by the geographic advantage of the northern coastal belt. Through these references, it becomes evident that trade and economic exchanges between northern Sri Lanka and South India were well established, particularly in agriculture and resource-based industries.

Furthermore, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* provides information regarding the continuation and evolution of economic relations following the establishment of the Jaffna kingdom. Notably, it refers to a conflict over pearl fishing rights between Jaffna King Cinkaiyarian I and the Southern Sinhala King Bhuvanekabahu I, wherein the support of the Pandya dynasty was instrumental in resolving the dispute[40]. While the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* does not explicitly elaborate on the pearl trade, historical records confirm that Mannar pearls were renowned in global markets at the time, underscoring the economic significance of this resource. The involvement of the Pandya dynasty in assisting the Jaffna king likely points to strategic economic alliances aimed at facilitating bilateral trade. Additionally, the text notes military and possible financial support offered by Varotaya Cinkaiyariyan to the Pandyas, suggesting reciprocal relations based on mutual economic and political interests[41]. Similarly, assistance extended to the Nayak of Madurai by Jaffna King Kunavira Cinkaiyariyan may reflect an adaptive response to the growing influence of South Indian powers[42]. Complementing these accounts, external sources such as Ibn Battuta's travelogue provide further evidence of trade activities, documenting interactions between Jaffna rulers and South Indian traders dealing in textiles and cinnamon[43]. Collectively, these references underscore the role of northern Sri Lanka as an active participant in regional economic networks with South India, as preserved in the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* and corroborated by other historical sources.

8. Socio-Cultural Interactions

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* provides critical insights into the socio-cultural exchanges between northern Sri Lanka and southern India, emphasising the migration

and settlement of South Indian Tamil communities in the Jaffna Peninsula. The text particularly highlights the arrival of the Vanniyars during the reign of King Kulakkottan, whose efforts in establishing agricultural settlements were pivotal not only for the economic development of the region but also for the consolidation of Tamil socio-cultural identity[44]. This migration contributed significantly to the spread of Hindu religious practices and the establishment of temples, which became centres of both spiritual life and social organisation. The arrival of the Nambis, who accompanied the Vanniyars and later integrated into the caste hierarchy of northern Sri Lanka, is also documented, reflecting how caste structures from Tamil Nadu were transplanted into the region[45]. Furthermore, references to the arrival of Marutappuravikavalli and accounts concerning the construction of the Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple underscore the role of South Indian influence in shaping the religious and cultural landscape. Place names such as Maviddapuram and Kangesanthurai, along with the etymology of Yal Paadi (Jaffna), are indicative of the deep-rooted Tamil presence that emerged through continuous interaction and settlement.

The consolidation of the Jaffna kingdom further intensified socio-cultural ties with South India, fostering a distinct Tamil Hindu identity in the region. The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* reveals the role of successive Jaffna kings, beginning with Cinkaiyariyan I, in the promotion of Hinduism and Tamil culture, evident through references to temple construction and the shaping of the kingdom's capital[46]. The relationship extended beyond cultural exchanges into religious diplomacy, as illustrated by Kunavira Cinkaiyariya's alliance with the Nayaks of Madurai. While the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* does not explicitly mention all aspects of these relations, other sources, such as Mudaliyar Rasanayagam's work, record the establishment of a temple in Rameswaram by a Jaffna king, reflecting a shared religious affiliation[47]. Additionally, the pilgrimage undertaken by the Mahamaka ritual group to Kumbakonam during Pararacacekara's reign further demonstrates religious interconnectivity[48]. Thus, through the building of temples, participation in South Indian religious traditions, and active engagement with South Indian Hindu polities, the Jaffna kingdom maintained and reinforced its socio-religious ties.

In addition to religious and cultural relations, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* reveals an enduring educational tie between northern Sri Lanka and South India. The text notes that Kanakacuriya Cinkaiyariyan's sons received their education in Thirukkovalur, demonstrating early patterns of cross-regional scholarly exchange[49]. This tradition flourished during the reigns of Pararacacekara and Cekaracacekara, when educational activities in the North reached their zenith. According to the text, Cekaracacekara played a prominent role in importing South Indian literary works and scholars, contributing to the intellectual and literary growth of Jaffna. Notably, Pararacacekara's son-in-law, Arasekesari, translated the Sanskrit epic *Raghuvamsa* into Tamil and staged it in Tiruvarur, reflecting not only cultural but also linguistic exchanges[50]. The frequent visits of Cekaracacekara to Sethukarai to bring scholars and missionaries from the Pandya region further highlight the sustained educational relationship between the two regions, resulting in the enrichment of Tamil literature and scholarly traditions in northern Sri Lanka[51].

Lastly, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* documents the migration and settlement of various social groups from South India into northern Sri Lanka during the Jaffna kingdom period. Cinkaiyariyan I is said to have brought Brahmin families to serve in temple worship, elevating their social status and integrating them into the kingdom's socio-political structure[52]. This migration not only reinforced religious practices but also contributed to the consolidation of caste hierarchies similar to those of Tamil Nadu. Additionally, the text records administrative migrations from Tamil Nadu, leading to the establishment of Tamil settlements across the northern region. During King Cankili's reign, further waves of migration occurred, including the settlement of Vanniyars in Kantharodai and the arrival of Nambis, who became part of the local caste system[53]. The arrival of Maravas from Ramanathapuram, some of whom settled in Maravanpulavu[54], and the eventual settlement of Muslim traders from Kayalpattinam, highlight the diversity of social groups that migrated and integrated into Jaffna society[55]. These migrations not only increased the Tamil population but also contributed to the formation of a pluralistic society shaped by continuous socio-cultural exchanges with South India.

9. Conclusion

The *Yalppana Vaipavamalai*, despite its limitations when measured against contemporary historiographical standards, remains a pivotal literary work in understanding

the historical trajectory of Northern Sri Lankan Tamils. This chronicle not only sheds light on the early history of the Tamil populace in Northern Sri Lanka but also underscores the longstanding and multifaceted connections with South India, particularly Tamil Nadu, which significantly influenced the political, economic, and socio-cultural development of the region. The text illustrates how these trans-regional interactions contributed to the consolidation of a distinct Tamil identity and Hindu cultural tradition in the north. Furthermore, it highlights the culmination of these ties in the establishment and flourishing of the Jaffna Kingdom during the medieval period, marking the zenith of bilateral relations with South India. Thus, the *Yalppana Vaipavamalai* stands as a crucial historical source that not only documents the evolution of Northern Sri Lankan Tamils but also illuminates their enduring interactions with South India, shaping their unique place within Sri Lankan history.

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