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DETAILED DISCRIPTION ON VELI, KULI AND MA – AREA MEASUREMENTS FROM EPIGRAPHS

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Abstract: The paper intends to calculate the veli which is an area measurement using different measuring rods that are termed as kol in the inscriptions of Tamil nadu. Here we have also discussed about the number of kuli that constitute a ma in different periods of time.

Key words : Veli, Ma, kani, madakku, kil, taram etc.,

Introduction

Area measure is expressed in terms of several units which gives an idea about the land survey undertaken. The area measure not only gives an idea about the extent of area of land donated but also the land brought under cultivation as well the lands irrigated. While assessing the extent of land, the area measures come to our rescue to solve the boundary disputes. It is possible to know the distortion in the boundary on account of natural calamities like flood, etc.,. The area survey is invariably undertaken under the orders of the king to asses the extent of land that suffered from breeches that took place and the reclamation of land that has been done. The ploughing capacity of the land can also be worked out, with the knowledge of area measure. The area measure reveals the survey undertaken by the kings to the minutest fraction.

kuli- an area measurementⁱ

From among area measurements *kuli* is the basic unit of area measure. It is one square rod. A square rod means an area measuring with one rod in length and

Area of a rectangle = length X breadth square units. = 45×81 square $k\bar{o}l$

one rod in breadth, the same came to be called a *kuli*.

Area measurement for a rectangular plot land

The modern formula for calculating the area of a rectangle is length X breadth. This was vogue in 13^{th} century also. It is revealed from an inscription of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya III dated in his 9^{th} regnal year (1311-12 A.D.), hailing from Śrīraṅgam temple. It states that 3645 *kuli* of temple land was made over towards sites for the formation of a colony. The measurement of the place is mentioned as

njd;tly; nfhy; ehw;gj;ije;Jf;F fPo;nky; nfhy; vz;gj;njhd;dhy; Fop 3645...

.... The<u>n</u>vațal kõl 45kku kī<u>l</u>mēl kõl 81nāl ku<u>l</u>i 3645...^ü

It means that in the north-south direction (Thenvatal) it measures 45 $k\bar{o}l$ and in the east-west direction ($k\bar{\imath}lm\bar{e}l$) it measures 81 $k\bar{o}l$, then the area is 3645 kuli (without considering the length of the $k\bar{o}l$).

 $= 3645 \text{ square } k\bar{o}l$ We know that, 1 square $k\bar{o}l = 1 \ ku\underline{l}i$ Therefore, 3645 square $k\bar{o}l = 3645 \ ku\underline{l}i$

The same can also be verified from another inscription at Uttaravedisvarā temple in Kuttālam dated in the reign period of Tribh. Rājēndra Chōla III in his 15th regnal year (1260 A.D.) which is still earlier than the inscription mentioned above. It registers a sale of 2 adjacent house sites measuring $3 \ k\bar{o}l$ and $9 \ k\bar{o}l$ eastwest with depth of $14 \ k\bar{o}l$ on the northsouth direction which is a rectangle with $3+9 = 12 \ k\bar{o}l$ as length and $14 \ k\bar{o}l$ as breadth.ⁱⁱⁱ Hence the area would be as follows.

Area = length x breadth square units = 12 x 14 square $k\bar{o}l$ = 168 square $k\bar{o}l$ Also we know 1 square $k\bar{o}l$ = 1 kuli

168 square $k\bar{o}l = 168 kuli$

It matches exactly the area mentioned in the inscription.

An inscription from Uttaramerūr, dated 923 A.D., which gives the extent of many plots, refers to a plot of 28 *kuli* as measuring 2 rods east west and 14 rods north south.^{iv} If then, one square rod makes a *kuli*; the extent of *kuli* will naturally vary according to the length of the particular rod used. For example a *kuli* by 16-span rod will not be equal to a *kuli* by 12- span rod.

Mā - an area measūrment

In general, hundred $ku\underline{l}is$ make one $m\bar{a}$. Number of $ku\underline{l}is$ that made up a $m\bar{a}$ varies from king to king and from period to period. Though the above values are generalized, the evidences from the inscriptions are being tabulated below.

S.No.	Length of the measuring rod (in <i>aḍi</i> units)	No of <i>ku<u>l</u>i</i> to 1 <i>m</i> ā	Place	Date (in A.D)
1	<i>NM</i> *1	128 ^v	Vasishthēśvara temple, Tañjāvūr dt.	1012
2	NM*	100 ^{vi}	Uttaravēdīśvara temple, Kuttālam, Tañjāvūr dt.	1020
3	NM*	100 ^{vii}	Națarāja temple, Chidambaram, South Ārcot dt.	1070
4	NM*	128 ^{viii}	Națarāja temple, Chidambaram.	1075
5	12	729 ^{ix}	Kailāśanātha temple, Ālambākam,Trichy dt.	1084
6	16	128 ^x	Āpatsahāyēśvara temple,	1105

Length of the rod and number of kuli to 1 mā

¹ NM*- means that the length of the rod is not mentioned in the inscription.

Ālangudi, Tañjāvūr	dt.
Mahālingasvāmi ter	nple
7 12 100^{x_1} Kumbakōṇam tk, T	°añjāvūr 1122
dt.	
8 NM* 100 ^{xii} Umāmahēśvara tem	ple, 1117
Tañjāvūr dt.	1117
0 NM* 520 ^{xiii} Vrishabhapurīśvara	temple, 1175
South Ārcot dt.	1175
10 NM* 24 10 ^{xiv} Vēdāraņyēśvara	1177
10 10 24.19 temple, Tañjāvūr o	dt. 11//
11 AMA* 100 ^{xv} Amirataghastēśvara	temple, 1159
Tirukkadaiyūr, Tañj	jāvūr dt
12 NM* COO ^{xvi} Brahmapurīśvara te	mple, 1186
12 NM 600 Tirumayanam, Tañ	jāvūr dt
12 Agastēśvara temple	1000
13 NM 512 Tañjāvūr dt.	1220
14 12 coxviii Parasurāmēśvara ter	mple, 1220
14 12 50 North Ārcot, dt	1220
Virattānsēsvara shri	ne,
15 9 (12 san) 160^{xix} Kīlūr,	1243
South Ārcot dt.	
Trivikrama temple,	1050
16 16 512 South Ārcot, dt	1252
17 10 100 ^{xxi} Virattanēsvarā temp	ole, 10.7
17 12 100 South Ārcot dt.	1267
10 10 25 cxxii Nellaiyappar temple	e, 10 th
18 18 256 Tirunelvēli dt.	13 cen
Nedungalanātha	
19 NM^* 100 ^{xxiii} śvāmin temple,	14 th cen
Trichy dt.	
Amritaghatēśvara te	emple,
20 NM 6 Tañjāvūr dt	1
12 zazxy Ruined Perumāļ ten	nple,
522 ^m Kadavampatti.	1307
22 16 256 ^{xxvi} Pudukōttai	1253
Kailāśanātha temple	2,
23 NM^* 256 ^{xxvii} Sendamanglam, Tir	runelvēli 12 th cen
dt	
Siganāthaśvāmin ter	mple,
24 16 256 ^{xxviii} Kudumiyān malai, H	Kulattūr 1271
tk.	
25 16 25 exxix Virattanēśvara temp	ole, kīlūr,
25 16 256 ⁻⁴⁴ South Ārcot dt.	1018
Kalvāna prasannā	
Venkatāchalapathi t	emple,
20 18 522^{-10} Tiruvetpūr, Ālangud	di tk. 1252
Pudukōttai dt	
A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A	
27 18 512 ^{mar} Tirukōkarnam, Alar	ngudi tk. 1266

28	18	256 ^{xxxii}	Ēśwaran temple, Perumanāḍu, Kuļatūr tk. Pudukōṭṭai dt	1230
29	NM*	150 ^{xxxiii}	Śivapurīśvara temple, Śivayam, Kulitalai tk, Trichy dt. Pudukōṭṭai dt	1200
30	9	256^{xxxiv}	Pudukōṭṭai	1217
31	24	522 ^{xxxv}	Ēśwaran Temple. Perumenāḍu, Kuļatūr tk. Pudukōṭṭai dt	1258
32	24	256 ^{xxxvi}	Tiruthoṇdīśvaram temple, Erode.	1504
33	Nilamalavu kōl	100 ^{xxxvii}	Amiritaghatēśvara temple, Tirukkadaiyūr, Tañjāvūr dt.	1159
34	NM*	100 ^{xxxviii}	Uttamanāthaśvāmin temple. Kiranūr. Pudukōttai dt	1310
35	Tirumaiyathu kōl	256 ^{xxxix}	Naganātha śvāmin temple, Peraiyūr, Tirumaiyam. Pudukōṭṭai dt	1300
36	22	256 ^{xl}	Naganātha śvāmin temple, Peraiyūr, Tirumaiyam. Pudukōțțai dt	1290
37	16	256 ^{xli}	Varahnīśvarar temple, Olimaṅglam , Tirumiyam tk. Pudukōțțai dt	1261

The above table gives us an idea about the nature of the measuring rod and the number of kuli that is made up into 1 mā. The length of the measuring rod from Kailāśanātha śvāmi temple, Ālambākam, in Trichy district gives an equivalent of 729 kuli for 1 mā while in the case of Mahālingēśvara temple in Kumbakōnam taluk it gives 100 kuli = 1 $m\bar{a}$. In the case of Virattanēśvara temple, the number of kuli did change making 160 kuli for 1 mā. Sometimes for different rods the basic number of kuli did not change. This can be seen from the equivalence seen from 128 kuli that made up 1 $m\bar{a}$ as in the Vasiśhthēśvara temple in Tañjāvūr district and Natarāja temple at Chidambaram. This enables us to infer that each area adopted a

This has been arrived by calculating $11/\sqrt{\pi^2 U} = 20 \text{ m}$

 $1 \frac{1}{2} v\bar{e}li = 30 m\bar{a} + 1 m\bar{a} \text{ (given)}$ $= 31 m\bar{a}$ $750 ku\underline{l}i = 31 m\bar{a} \text{ (given)}$ Therefore, $1 m\bar{a} = 750/31 ku\underline{l}i$

basic linear measure. Perhaps in the fertile areas, the length of the measuring rod was reduced to increase the area of the land. The least unit of measure is 24.19 kuli that made up 1 $m\bar{a}$. In this case the length of the measuring rod is not mentioned. This has been calculated from the total number of kulis and its equivalents given. This was endowed free from taxes fixed bv Rājaniyōgam, nāţţuvivattai (Vyavasthai), ūrvivattai etc., as Tirunadaviļakkupuram by Panganavāyudaiyan of Kiliyūr for burning a perpetual lamp to the deity Tirumaraikkādudaiyār in Umbalanādu. Tirumaraikādu is the Tamilised form of Sānskrit word the Vēdāraņyam. The land endowed comes to 1 ¹/₂ vēli and 1 mā.

= 24.19 *ku<u>l</u>i*

The frequency table for the above data could be a follows.

Frequency table for no. of <i>kul</i> i	i to	1 m	ā
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S.No.	No. of <i>ku<u>l</u>i</i> to 1 <i>mā</i>	Frequency	
1	24.19	1	
2	50	1	
3	100	9	
4	128	3	
5	150	1	
6	160	1	
7	256	11	
8	512	3	
9	520	1	
10	522	3	
11	600	1	
12	729	1	

Now, we find that 100 $ku\underline{l}i$ making a $m\overline{a}$ and 256 $ku\underline{l}i$ making a $m\overline{a}$ have the highest frequency. Hence these two values becomes our prime concern for further

analysis. Therefore, the area of a kuli and area of $m\bar{a}$ for the different lengths of the rods are being calculated and tabulated.

Area of a *kuli* and a *mā* for different length of the rods

	Length	No. of	Area of 1 kuli	Area of mā
S.No.	of the rod	<i>ku<u>l</u>i</i> to 1 mā	(in sq. <i>aḍi</i>)	(in sq. <i>aḍi</i>)
1	12	100	144	14400
2	12	256	144	36864
3	16	256	256	65536
4	18	256	324	82944
5	24	256	576	147456
6	32	256	1024	262144

We can find the range the area of $m\bar{a}$ variying from 14,400 sq. adi to 2,62,144 sq. adi. Also, we could find that the variation in the area of a $m\bar{a}$ is wider. It means that the area measure depends largely on the linear measure that is the length of the rod and number of kulis constituting a $m\bar{a}$. Therefore, area measure

is a dependent variable of linear measure. It is also directly proportional to the linear measure. The area increases as the length of the rod increases. The bar diagram below gives an idea about the relationship between kuli and $m\bar{a}$ for different length of the measuring rod.



From the above discussion and the bar diagram we find that 100 and 256 kulis making a mā need to be addressed to. Also, we can infer that 256 kuli making a $m\bar{a}$ is found throughout the country. But we could also find that 100 kuli making a mā using 12 adi rod is found in Chola country at large. In otherwords this was in practise in the areas which are fertile and also in the areas irrigated by river Kāveri. We could find that 256 kuli making a mā is being practised mainly in the dry areas like Pudukōttai, South Ārcot, Erode districts. It means that the availability of water, fertility of the soil, rainfall etc., contributes to the assessment of the value of the land. It is also noteworthy that 100 which is square of 10 and 256 which is square of 16 plays significant role in the Tamil a mathematics. This implies that the decimal and hexadecimal system was found to be vogue many centuries ago.

Calculation of area of $m\bar{a}$

After arriving at the conclusion that 100 *kuli* makes a $m\bar{a}$ and the length of the rod being 12 *adi*, the area of one $m\bar{a}$ is (12 X 12) X 100 sq. *adi* ie., 14,400 sq. *adi*. We shall suggest a method of measuring

the land whose area is 14,400 sq. *adi* using 12 *adi* scale. The various combinations of factors of 14400 are considered.

12 *adi* rod can be used for measuring both length and the breadth of the above said rectangle. It needs to be measured 10 times on both the ways. It is to be noted that this process may not always result in squares but it may result in rectangles as given below also.

12 *adi* rod can be used for measuring both length and the breadth of the above said rectangle. It takes 20 times to measure the length and 5 times to measure the breadth. The other possible combinations of (L,B) would be (600,24), (160,90), (225,64), (180,80), (12, 1200) for which either 12 *adi* rod or 16 *adi* rod can be used to measure. There are also combinations of rectangles which cannot be measured using any of the standard rod used for measuring the length and breadth. Those combinations are as follows: (360,40), (480,30), (720,20), (1440,10), (320,45).

Similarly, the same area of $1 m\bar{a}$ can be measured using 16 $s\bar{a}n k\bar{o}l$. The conversion is as follows,

(12 X12) X 100 sq. adi = 14400 sq. adi

 $=14400 X (4/3)^2 sq. san$ $= 25600 \text{ sq. } s\bar{a}n.$ = (16 X 16) X 100 sq. sān

The other possible combinations of (L,B) would be (320,80), (1600,16), (800, 32), (128, 200), (256, 100). These rectangles can be measured using16 sān rod. The prime factorization of this number also leads to some combination of rectangles which can be again measured using the standard rod ie., 16 sān kol which is again 12 adi in length. Next,

The area of 256 kuli using 12 adi rod = (12 X12) X 256 square adi

= 36864 sq. adi

= (16 X 16) X 144 sq.adi

= 144 *kuli* using 16 *adi* rod

Hence from the above we find 1). For measuring an area of 14,400 sq. adi either 12 adi rod or 16 sān rod can be used. The number of kuli that is 100 remains the same. 2). Also, the area obtained by measuring 256 kuli using 12 adi rod is equal to the area of 144 kuli measured using 16 adi rod.

Standaradisation and calculation of the breadth of a kuli

So inorder to measure a $m\bar{a}$ of 100 kuli using 12 adi rod one can measure 256 kuli using 16 sān rod. At this stage we shall define the basic length (BL) of the rod as 12 adi or 16 sān. And the basic kuli (BK) as 100 kuli whose basic area (BM) is 14,400 sq. adi.

Now consider 160 kuli making a $m\bar{a}$. (Refer table 3.1 row 15.) Convertion to basic kuli and finding the breadth of a kuli is as follows.

L= 12
$$s\bar{a}n = 9 adi$$
, $ku\underline{l}i / m\bar{a}$ (KM) = 160 BK = 100 sq. adi , BL= 12 adi
Breadth = $\frac{BK X BL X BL}{L X KM}$ units
 $=\frac{12X 12 X 100}{9 X 160} adi$
 $=\frac{14400}{1440} adi$
 $= 10 adi$
Area of 1 $ku\underline{l}i$ = (9X 10) sq. adi
 $= 90$ sq. adi
Area of 160 $ku\underline{l}i$ (9 adi) = (160 X 90) sq. adi
 $= 14400$ sq. adi
 $= Area of 100$ BK
 $= Area of 1$ BM

Hence, converting to BK we obtain a *kuli* is a rectangle of dimension (10 X 9) sq. *adi*. Now consider 512 kuli making a mā. (Refer table 3.1 row 27). Convertion to basic kuli is as follows.

L= 18 adi ku<u>l</u>i/mā (KM) = 512 BK = 100 sq. adi , BL= 12 adi Breadth = $\frac{BK X BL X BL}{L X KM}$ units = $\frac{12 X 12 X 100}{18 X 512} adi$ $=\frac{14400}{9216}$ adi = 1.5625 *adi* Area of 1 kuli = (18 X 1.5625) sq. adi = 28.125 sq. *adi* Area of 512 kuli (18 adi) = (28.125 X 512) sq. adi = 14400 sq. *adi*

Hence, converting to BK we obtain a *kuli* a rectangle with dimension (18 X 1.5625) sq. *adi*. Or (24×2.08) sq. *sān*.

Now, consider 256 *kuli* making a *mā*. (Refer table 3.1 row 28). Convertion to basic *kuli* is as follows.

L = 18 adi, kuli/ mā (KM) = 256 BK = 100 BL= 12
Breadth =
$$\frac{BK X BL X BL}{L X KM}$$
 units
= $\frac{12 X 12 X 100}{18 X 256}$ adi
= $\frac{14400}{4608}$ adi
= 3.125 adi
Area of 1 kuli = (18 X 3.125) sq. adi
= 56.25 sq. adi
Area of 256 kuli (18 adi) = (56.25 X 256) sq. adi
= 14400 sq. adi
= Area of 100 BK
= Area of 1 BM

Hence, converting to BK we obtain a *kuli* is a rectangle of dimension (18 X 3.125) sq. *adi* or (24 X 4.1666) sq. *sān*.

Here the area of 256 kuli = (12 X 12) sq. adi X 256 kuli. L= 12 adi, kuli/mā (KM) = 256 BK = 100 sq adi BL= 12 adi Breadth = $\frac{BK X BL X BL}{L X KM}$ units $=\frac{12 X 12 X 100}{12 X 256}$ adi = 4.6875 adi Area of 1 kuli = (12 X 4.6875) sq. adi = 56.25 sq. adi Area of 256 kuli (12 adi) = (56.25 X 256) sq. adi = 14400 sq. adi = Area of 100 BK = Area of 1 BM

The following diagram shows that 100 kuli whose area is 14400 sq. adi measured using 12 adi rod.



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16 sān scale. Here the area of 256 $ku\underline{i}i = (16 \times 16) \text{ sq. } adi \times 256 ku\underline{i}i$



The same area is measured by rods of different length for the length and the breadth. Hence, the area of a $m\bar{a}$ can be interepreted as 100 $ku\underline{l}i$ using 12 adi rod is equal to 100 $ku\underline{l}i$ using 16 $s\bar{a}n$ rod.

The following table is obtained while standardizing the breadth by assuming the following values of BK, BL.

Breadth1: BK=100; BL= 12; Breadth2: BK=100; BL= 16 Breadth3: BK=256; BL= 12; Breadth4: BK=256; BL= 16

Breadths for dif	fferent length of	the rod and the	corresponding No.	of kuli to a ma
			1 0	-

No.	Length	Breadth1	Breadth2	Breadth3(adi)	Breadth4(adi)
OI Invili	(<i>a</i> ại)	(<i>a</i> ại)	(<i>a</i> ại)		
ки <u>і</u> і					
100	12	<mark>12</mark>	<mark>16</mark>	30.72	54.61333
256	12	4.6875	6.25	<mark>12</mark>	21.33333
729	12	1.64609053	2.194787	4.213992	7.491541
50	12	<mark>24</mark>	<mark>32</mark>	61.44	109.2267
522	12	2.29885057	3.065134	5.885057	10.46232
256	16	3.5156255	6.25	<mark>9</mark>	<mark>16</mark>
128	16	7.03125	12.5	<mark>18</mark>	<mark>32</mark>
512	16	1.7578125	3.125	4.5	<mark>8</mark>
256	18	3.125	6.25	<mark>8</mark>	14.22222
522	18	1.53256705	3.065134	3.923372	6.974883
512	18	1.5625	3.125	<mark>4</mark>	7.111111
256	22	2.55681818	6.25	6.545455	11.63636
256	24	2.34375	6.25	<mark>6</mark>	10.66667

522	24	1.14942529	3.065134	2.942529	5.231162
256	32	1.7578125	6.25	4.5	<mark>8</mark>
160	9	<mark>10</mark>	<mark>10</mark>	25.6	45.51111
160	12	7.5	<mark>10</mark>	19.2	34.13333

The fractions of the breadth can be measured by multiplying it with suitable numbers in order to measure a $m\bar{a}$. For example,

Consider the *kuli* with length = 12, breadth= 1.64, No. of *kuli*=729

To measure 729 $ku\underline{l}i$ (ie., a $m\overline{a}$), one has to break up 729 $ku\underline{l}i$ as 7 hundreds 30 tens (12 X 1.64) X 729 = (12 X 16.4) X 27 X 27

$$= (12 \times 10.4) \times 277$$

= (12 X 1195.56)

$$= (12 \text{ X } 1) \text{ X} (12 \text{ X } 99.63)$$

= (12 X 1) X (12 X 100) app.

Therefore, measuring 1 time the length and 100 times the breadth using 12 *adi* rod gives the result. Similarly, other rectangular *kulis* can be measured.

Next, let us consider 18 as 24 san. Hence,

Area of 512 *kuli* using 18 *adi* rod =
$$(8 \times 8 \times 8) \times 24 \times 24$$
 sq. *san*
Breadth of 1 kuli = $\frac{8 \times 8 \times 8 \times 3}{8 \times 3 \times 4}$ *san*

Next, let us consider 729 kuli as 24 adi. Hence,

Area of 729 *kuli* using 12 *adi* rod = (9 X 9 X 9) X 12 X 12 sq. san Breadth of 1 kuli = $\frac{9 X 9 X 9 X 4}{12 X 3}$ san

From the above table, we also find that in every row there is atleast one value of the breadth which is a whole number. This particular length and breadth can be used as the dimension of one kuli and other standardizations can be neglected. For example, consider the second row, number of kuli is 256, the length and the breadth3 is 12 *adi*.

Also, a $ku\underline{l}i \ k\overline{o}l$ which is in the shape of the wedge can be employed to measure the $ku\underline{l}i$ directly. It is enough to

measure the diagonal using $ku\underline{l}i \ k\overline{o}l$ and thereafter the area of the land can be calculated.

Conclusion: Thus we find that kuli and ma play a major role in the calculation of veli. There seems to be different number of kuli and ma making a veli. There is variations in this number in different period of time and during different parts of the country. This depends on the nature of the land whether it is or wet.

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