CHAPTER III
SOME IMPORTANT TEMPLES AND KSHETRAS DEDICATED TO NARASIMHA
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Importance of Temples and Kshetras:

Among the five fold forms of the Almighty, the last i.e., arca form is the only form easily accessible to its devotees. The first form ‘para’ (transcendental) of the lord is out of reach to the mankind as he manifests in heaven in that form. The second ‘vyuha’ (emanatory) is centered in the milky ocean. The third ‘vibhava’ (incarnatory) form and the fourth ‘antaryamin’ (imment) forms certainly have intimate connection with the common man, but very difficult to get them like the underground water, which can be perceived only by Yogis (seers) as they have single minded devotion. In ‘arca’ form, the God resides in the idols and images. Consecrating and worshipping them is the only means to a common man, for he can invoke them at all times and in all places. With that idea, the temples were constructed in olden times. To create faith in the common mass, some mythological legends (kshetramahatmyam) were woven around those places. No doubt, the temples played a vital role in Hindu tradition and contributed to the enrichment of heritage. The temples are not only religious centers, but are the abodes of a number of fine arts like architecture, art and dance etc.

It is customary for a devotee, after worshipping a deity in a temple to choose a quiet place to meditate. He contemplates the mythological background of the temple and the people, who sanctified the temple in the past. He thinks of the glory of the lord. Thus his meditation comes to an end. This is very easy and practicable for the common man. The

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same idea is expressed several times in the *puranas*. The temples from the ancient times are the places, where the mankind can worship the 'Divine One'. A great Tamil saint 'Avvayar' says that 'one should not stay in a town where there is no temple'\(^2\). The same idea is expressed by several ancient writers. Worship of Gods in temples purifies the hearts, controls passions and enables the devotees to remember the Lord always. Most of the ancient temples have *sthalapuranas*, in which the local history of the temples is eulogized by incorporating the *pauranic* legends. They used to highlight the significance of that particular place and the people of high order who visited them. Each region of India is known after a particular God, all though the temples exist everywhere throughout the country.

A special adoration and attachment to the Lord *Narasimha* is found in southern part of the country in general and in Andhra Pradesh in particular. Probably it may be the reason that the A Hobalam, a popular Narasimhakshetra, is located and it is believed that the manifestation of Narasimha was appeared for the first time at Ahobalam. Here an attempt is being made to study some important temples dedicated to Lord *Narasimha* in India with their legendary background in general and with a special emphasis on the temples of Andhra Pradesh.

**I) ANDHRA PRADESH**

In Andhra Pradesh the Lord *Narasimha* commands more popularity on par with Rama and Krishna. There are a number of ancient *Narasimha* Temples and most of them have their own *'sthalapuranas'*. They claim that they are part and parcel of one or another *mahapuranas or upapuranas*.

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Ramesan, N. *Temples and Legends of Andhra Pradesh*. P. 83

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As per the survey made by M. Narasimha Charyulu, there are 169 Narasimha temples known, where worship is going on even today in Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh itself and Avanca Satyanarayana in his Nrisimhastotramaliika enumerates more than 350 Narasimha temples in Andhra Pradesh. Now among the several Narasimha Temples of Andhra Pradesh, a few important and ancient ones will be discussed along with their mythological legends.

1) Ahobilam (or) Ahobalam

Ahobilam is a shrine dedicated to Lord Narasimha and a centre of great antiquity. It is called 'Singavel Kunram' in Tirumangai Alvar's Pasurams in Tamil. It is one of the 108 divyadesam's of vaishnavas as praised by Alvars. It is situated in the Nallamalai range of hills at a distance of 40 miles from Nandyal Railway station of Kurnool District, A.P. It is also known as 'Tarksyadri'. The Nallamala range of mountains is regarded as the personification of the divine serpent Adisesha, whose head lies at 'Tirumala' middle at 'Ahobilam' and tail is at Srisailam. It has got popularity as "Navanarasimhakshetra" (Ap-II, p.1) as all the nine forms of Narasimha are located within the radius of 5 krosas (10 miles) and hence this place is called 'pancakrosikshetra'. The nine Narasimhas are:

1. Ahobila/ Ugra/ Guha Narasimha
2. Bhargava Narasimha
3. Yogananda Narasimha
4. Chatravata Narasimha
5. Kroda or Varaha Narasimha

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1) Narasimhacharyulu, M. History of the cult of Narasimha in Telengana Pp22-24
2) Satyanarayana, A. Nrisimhastotramaliika, pp 143-169
3) There are 12 Alvars (Vashnavite Saints) who composed Divya Prabhanda between 7th to 9th century A.D. they are 1) Poga Alvar (7th cen ) 2) Bhothathalvar (7th ) 3) Peyalvar (7th ) 4) Tirumala sar alvar (7th ) 5) Kulasenkhar alvar(8th ) 6) Thondaradippodi alvar(8th ) 7) Thiruppan alvar(8th ) 8) Thirumangai alvar(8th ) 9) Namalvar(9th ) 10) Madhura kavi alvar(9th ) 11) Penyalvar(9th ) and 12) Andal(9th )
6. Karanja or Saranga Narasimha
7. Malola/ Lakshmi Narasimha
8. Jvala Narasimha
9. Pavana Narasimha

There are lower Ahobalam and Upper Ahobalam in this Kshetra. Upper Ahobalam is approximately thirteen kilometers from the lower Ahobalam and 2800 feet above sea level can be reached by a foot path or a drive. It is an arduous task to trek to the upper Ahobalam from the foot hills. On the southern slopes of the mountain amidst thick forest along side the river Bhavanashini that flows through several valleys, there is a temple of the Lord Ugranarasimha (1). This is the main temple of Navanarasimhas of this Ahobalakshetra and the Lord manifested here from a cave. Therefore the Lord is also called as Ahobalanarasimha and Guhanarasimha. He is seated in sukhasana with the left leg folded and right leg hanging down with two hands and both the hands are engaged in tearing open the chest of the demon. The Goddess is seen on the chest of the Lord in the form of Srivatsa. There is an idol of Chenchulakshmi in this temple.

At lower Ahobalam, in front of the rajagopuram, there is a temple of Prahladavaradanarasimha seated in sukhasana with left leg folded and the right leg hanging down with four hands. The upper two hands hold the conch and the disc, while the lower two hands are in abhaya and varada postures. The Prahladavaradanarasimha is not the part of Navanarasimhas of this kshetra, however any description of Navanarasimhas begins first with Ugranarasimha of upper Ahobala and continues with the description of Prahladavaradanarasimha at lower Ahobalam and the other eight Narasimhas’ — says Dr. M. S. Rajajee.6

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6 Dr. M.S. Rajajee, Sn Narasimha Avatara Pp 36-37 However, Sri N. Ramesan in his Temples and Legends of Andhra Pradesh considers Prahladavaradanarasimha
About two kilometers from lower Ahobalam, on the top of a hill there is a shrine for Bhargavanarasimha (2). Since this is said to be a place where Lord Parasurama performed penance, the Lord here is called as Bhargavanarasimha. The Lord is seated on a small base with four hands. The upper two hands hold the conch and the disc, while the lower two hands are depicted as actually tearing open the abdomen of the demon carrying a sword in his hand. To the south east of lower Ahobalam, about two kilometers away there is a shrine for Yaganandanarasimha (3). The Lord is in Yoga mudra with Yogapatta going around the Lord, who is seated in padmasana. He had four hands and holds the conch and the disc in upper two hands, while lower two hands rested on his knees. It is believed that the Lord taught several yoga postures to Prahlada in this place. In the same direction at about four kilometers from lower Ahobalam, there is a shrine for Chatravatanarasimha (4). Since the image here below a canopy which looks like a banyan tree, the Lord is called Chatravatanarasimha. The Lord is seated in a cross legged manner with four hands. The upper two hands carries the conch and the disc and the lower left hand rests on his thigh and lower right hand is in abhaya posture.

About two kilometers from upper Ahobalam there are Vadadri and Garudadri hills. There is a shrine for Krodanaraimha (5) otherwise called as Varahanarasimha on a hill. The Lord Varahanarasimha has a head of a boar, a tail of a lion and a human body with two hands. One kilometer from upper Ahobalam there is a shrine for Karanjnarasimha (6). The shrine is under a Karanja tree (kanuga tree). The Lord here holds the disc and the Saranga (bow) in upper two hands and lower two hands are in dhyanamudra. So Lord here is called as Saranganarasimha also. About two kilometers from Ahobalanarasimha, there is a shrine for Lakshminarasimha also called as Malolanarasimha.

among Navanarasimhas by replacing Bhargavanarasimha of Rajajee and also
Karanja Saranganarasimha is treated as Karandanarasimha
who is the touring deity of Ahobalam. The Lord here is in *sukhasana* with the left leg folded and the right leg hanging down. He holds the conch and the disc in upper hands and the lower right hand in *abhaya* posture while lower left hand is around the Goddess. There is a temple of *Jvalanarasimha* (8) at a higher elevation on a top of a hill and about four kilometers from upper Ahobalam. This is said to be place where the ferocity of Lord Narasimha reached maximum. A pillar from where the Lord is said to be emerged can be seen here on this lofty hill. The Lord here is with hands. He holds the demon tight with a pair of hands; a pair of hands are engaged in tearing open the belly of the demon; a pair of hands holds the conch and the disc and the last pair of hands holds the entrails of the demon aloft as a garland. The last and ninth form of Lord Narasimha of this *kshetra* is *Pavananarasimha* (9), which is about six kilometers from upper Ahobalam. Since the Lord of this place can render the world as sacred (Pavana), he is called *Pavanarasanimha*. The image is similar to that of *Lakshminarasimha* shrine but the difference is the Lord here is covered under a seven hooded Adisesha acting as canopy. Thus the Nava Narasimhas are being worshipped in this holy place.

The *kshetramahatmya* of this shrine tells us that Garuda, ordained by his father, meditated upon the Lord *Narasimha* on this mountain in a cave for a long period. The Lord *Narasimha* appeared before Garuda and fulfilled his desires. Hence, it is believed that this mountain had acquired the significant name “Garudadri” or ‘Tarksyadri’. The cave where Lord *Narasimha* manifested before Garuda is called “Guha Narasimha”. Here the Lord Narasimha is said to be ‘Svayambhu’ i.e., Self manifested.

Another legend, which is very popular among the tribal people of this place, is that while Lord Vishnu manifested as *Narasimha*, Goddess *Laksmi* was born in a tribal community. After slaying *Hiranyakasipu*,

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they both got married. This love of Vishnu and Chenchulakshmi is very popular in many folk songs though there is no trace of it in the Puranas. There are many legends about the Tirthas located around this sacred place like the Raktakundam, Lanjakoneru etc. The Raktakundam is a small pond near the temple. It is stated that after killing Hiranyakasipu, Lord Narasimha had cleansed his hands in this tirtham. This is the reason attributed for the reddish colour of the water in this tank. The Lanjakoneru is also a small and beautiful tank near the temple. It is stated that once a courtesan as soon as she had darshan of the Lord repented for her past life and built a tank near the temple. Thence the pond is ‘Lanjakoneru’.

It is known by the inscriptions that the great Vikramaditya of the Western Calukya kings (1076 – 1106 AD) worshipped the Mulavigraha of this temple. Prataparudra of Kakatiya Kings visited this place and desired to cast golden Siva Lingam, but the figure emerged was that of Narasimha only. Perturbed by the experience, he meditated upon Narasimha and presented golden Utsvavigraha. Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar Empire presented a golden plate and a diamond necklace to the Lord.

Once Ahobalam was ransacked by Kutub Shahi forces and the idol of Narasimha of Ahobalam was taken away to Golconda fort by them. According to Farista, the author of Golconda Chronicle, Sultan Ibrahim Ali Qutub Shah began to vomit blood after seeing the idol and died on the same night.

The famous math of Vaishnavites known as ‘Ahobila Math’ is functioning having Ahobalam as its headquarters and the heads of this math are called jeers. It is stated that Lord Narasimha directed Advann

1 Ramesan, N. Temples and legends of AP. Pp 27,28
2 Manohartha Kshetralu (Telugu), Visva Hindu Parishad P 63
3 Nsumha Priya, March, 83 P 12

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Satagopa, the first jeer of Ahobilamath to take the Utsavavgraha from place to place so that the people can get the benefit of his Darshan. Following this tradition, the successive Jeers of the math used to take the ‘Malolanarasimha’ otherwise called ‘Laksminarasimha’ to several places and are propagate the Narasimhatattva or Saranagati. The lord Malolanarasimha has been always on tour as the presiding deity of Sri Ahobilam Math. Besides the main temple at Ahobilam, many Narasimha temples are built at Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi and are being maintained by this math. The annual Brahmostavam, which is the important festival of this place will takes place during Sukla Paksa of Phalguna month. A special attention will be paid on the day of Narasimha Jayanti, which falls on Vaisakha suddha Caturdasi with Svati Nakshatram.

2) Simhacalam:

Simhacalam is located about 18 kms to Visakhapatnam, District Head Quarters well connected with a road from Visakhepatnam. This is also called Simhagiri or Simhadri. This shrine is dedicated to Lord Narasimha and the presiding deity is called Varahanarasimha Swamy and locally known as ‘Simhadri Appana’ (Ap-II,P2). This is a famous and rich temple of the northern circars of Andhra Pradesh. The temple is about 800 feet above the sea level.

The deity Varahanarasimha is sculptured in tribhanga posture, having two hands with the head of a lion and a human torso. Originally the image is of furious, to appear or to pacify him, the image is covered with the tones of sandal paste thrice a year. For this purpose, sandalwood will be specially brought from Villiputtur of Tamilnadu. With this paste, the image appears like a Sivalingam through out the year. The sandal paste will be removed only once a year i.e. on the day of Akshayatritiya during May, which is also celebrated as Chandanotsava
with religious pomp and fervor. Only on this day the original form of Varahanarasimha can be seen by the devotees.

The puranic legend of the temple is connected right from the period of Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada. It is said that the demon king Hiranyakasipu threw his son Prahlada in the ocean and placed this mountain over his head to press him drown. Vishnu in order to protect Prahlada slightly tilted the mountain to enable him to come out safely. Later in memory of the incident, Prahlada has constructed this temple.10

The sthalapurana, which is divided into 32 chapters, narrates the story of Prahlada. The Narasimha myth mainly follows the Vishnupurana and the Bhagavatapurana. The only new information referred here is that Prahlada was a guardian in Vaikuntha in his previous birth and his name then was Sumukha. When the gods headed by Brahma visited Vaikuntha to appraise the atrocities of Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha, they were obstructed by Sumukha. When they met Vishnu and informed not only the atrocities of demons but also make a mention of the misbehavior of Sumukha. Vishnu apart from assuring the destruction of the demon king Hiranyakasipu he also tells them that Sumukha would be serving the cause for his death. When Sumukha pleaded for a pardon, Lord Vishnu says that the will pardon the offence done to him but not the offences done to his devotees. As per the ordain of Vishnu, Sumukha has born as Prahlada.

The remaining story agrees with the other Narasimha myths available in the Puranas. It is in this sthalamahatmyam that Ahobilam is mentioned as a place where Hiranyakasipu was killed by Narasimha.11

The Sthalapurana gives an account of the renovation of this temple which was in disuse and decay for a long period though it was

10 Ramesan. N. Temples and legends of AP pp. 136-137
11 Narasimha Praya, March 1983 P P 14-16
founded by none other than Prahlada himself. The account runs thus:

"Once there was a king by name Purarava of Chandravamsa who acquired a divine air car (puspakavimana) as a boon from Brahma. He saw Urvashi on Kailasa Mountain and both fell in love with one another. While touring, they were pleased by the beautiful flora and fauna of Simhacala Mountain and settled there itself. Urvashi by her divine nature noticed that it was once the abode of Lord Narasimha. They both wanted to unearth the Lord and renovate the temple for the benefit of the common men.

Purarava through his penance at the nearby gangadhara rivulet could identify the exact place where the image was hidden. Accordingly they unearthed the image and renovated and consecrated it. In spite of his best efforts, when Purarava could not find the feet of the Lord, the divine voice consoled him not to worry about his feet and the mere sight is sufficient to get salvation. The voice also instructed that the deity should be covered with sandal paste on all days except on one day in a year viz., on Akshaya Tritiya when the sight of the Lord in his pristine form bestows salvation. Correspondingly on the Akshaya Tritiya day, even to this day, the candanayatra festival is being conducted on sukla paks tadiya of Vaisakha month. On that day the sandal paste, which is applied three times a year on Vaisakha Pournima, Jyesta Pournima and Ashada Pournima is removed and devotees can have the darshan of the original image of the Lord, which is believed to bestow liberation upon the devotees.

The 21st chapter of Simhacalakshetramahatmyam mentions thirty two forms (Vibhutis) of Lord Narasimha among which are found both fearful and peaceful aspects. They are: 1) Kumda Padah, 2) Gopa Simhah, 3) Divya Simhah, 4) Brahmanda Simhah, 5) Samudra Simhah,

The last of these i.e., Varaha Narasimha is the presiding deity of Simhacalam. All the murtis are sculptured on the Kalyanamandapa of the Lord. One of the pillars of mukhamandapa of the temple is named ‘Kappam Stambham’ and the popular legend is that this pillar has the power of curing cattle diseases and also barrenness among women.

The deity here faces west instead of facing east as usual. Generally the deities facing east bestow prosperity and facing west bestows victory.

It can be understood by the inscriptions available that many kings have developed the temple either by donating valuable ornaments or by constructing or renovating the mandapas etc. Sri Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagar emperor visited this temple twice in 1516 and 1519 AD and offered gem-set studded Patakam (pacchalapatakam) and gold ornamented Kavacam, which can be seen even today. It can be known from the inscriptions dated 1099 AD of King Kullottanga Chola; dated 1137 AD of Velnati Chief Gonka III; Eastern Ganga Kings of Kalinga; King Narasimha I; Reddy kings of Rajahmundry, the Vishnu Vardhan Chakravarthy of Panchadharla and others visited this shrine and contributed to enriching the temple. Simhacalam is surrounded by large mountains upon which grow many plants of great medicinal value.
There is a perennial spring called Gangammadhara on this hill and is believed that this spring has medicinal properties that can cure bodily ailments of the devotees, if they take a bath in the spring.

The temple artwork is similar to that of Konark with elephants, flowers and plants carved on the walls and lintels. Kalyanotsavam of the Lord is being celebrated here on the eleventh day of Sukla Paksa, Chaitramasa every year.

Though the presiding deity of this temple is Sri Varaha Narasimha, the Kestrapala is Siva and the guardians of the gate are Anjaneya and Kalabhairava. Chandanayatra and Kalyonatsavam are the important festivals in this shrine. Besides all festivals, Vyasa Pournima and Ashadha Pournimas are also celebrated here.

3) Yadagirigutta:

Yadagiri or Yadagirigutta is situated in the Bhongir Taluk of Nalgonda District in Andhra Pradesh and is about 69 kilometers north of Hyderabad. This temple of Lakshminarasimha is situated at the height of 300 feet from the sea level. The deity of this temple is Lakshminarasimha (Ap-ll,p2). The deity is very popular and powerful. It is believed that the deity Lakshminarasimha fulfills all the desires of the devotees and cures the incurable diseases and protects from the influences of witch crafts, black magic and of planets. The devotees believe if the Lord is worshipped here for 40 days, it will alleviate the incurable diseases of devotees.

Sri Yadagirimahatmyam a modern work, gives the legendary background of the Kshetra says that in Tretayuga, a sage by name Yadava, desiring the sakshatakara of Lord Narasimha performed

14 Mana Yatra Kshetrais (Telugu) pp 71-72
15 Narasimhacharya Govardhanam, ‘Sri Yadagiri Mahatmyam’, Yadagirigutta, 1979
severe penance on this hill. First Hanuman appeared in his dream and informed that Lord Narasimha was in the cave of the hill. Next day Yadava took bath in Vishnupuskarini and found the cave after a search. He performed severe penance there. Lord Narasimha appeared before Yadava and offered a boon. The sage requested the Lord to show his three forms of Jvalanarasimha, Gandabherundanarasimha and Yoganandanarasimha. Accordingly, Vishnu appeared in all these forms. Not satisfied with this, the sage requested the Lord to stay there permanently. It is believed that the Lord settled there in the form of Lakshminarasimha as desired by Yadava with his consort. Thus this hill was named Yadavagiri and in due course changed to Yadagiri. It is believed that Prahlada, when Narasimha manifested and killed Hiranyakasipu requested the Lord to reside there permanently. But lord Narasimha promised him to reside in the cave of Yadagirigutta.

The Kshetramahatmyam of Yadagiri by Sadhu Venkatanarayana Swamy slightly differs from the above. According to it, an eight year old boy of Yadava community was happened to be the disciple of a great sage Ugra Tapasvi a resident of the Himalayas. By the time the boy attained sixteen years of age, the sage taught him all the dharmas and knowing that his life was coming to an end directed the boy ‘Yadava’ to go to south and meditate on a hill, which is named after him. Yadava as advised by his preceptor reached this hill and meditated on Lord Narasimha and got his ‘sakshatkara’. The remaining story runs as earlier one.16

Another legend which is popular among the local people is that the Lord appeared in a dream to a village officer and revealed his presence in a nearby cave on the hill top. He also ordained to arrange regular worship for him. Accordingly the officer found the cave and the

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16 Narasimhacarya, History of the cult of Narasimha in Telangana pp 304-305
Narasimha image therein and appointed a priest to conduct regular worship.

The Kshetrapala of this shrine is Hanuman. Soon after entering into the main entrance of the temple, there is Anjaneya shrine on the right side. Nearby is a horizontal cave with a gap of about 10 inches. It is said to be the exact spot, where Gandabherundanarasimha manifested himself before Yadava. The oil lamp kept there is still burning throughout indicates the importance of the place. (Gandabherunda is a mythological gigantic eagle bird with two heads). The sanctum sanctorum is a cave and this cave is formed with a stooping roof of five feet height. So naturally one who visits this place has to bend down the head and bow to the Lord involuntarily. At the end of the cave passage, two rocks are fastened with each other. On the left side rock, we find Yoganandanarasimha aspect of the Lord and on the right side an image is in the shape of a serpent ending in a tail. This is known as Jvalanarasimha. It is believed that the divine serpent still moves around there. As the two images are not clearly visible to the devotees, the idols of Laksmi and Narasimha are kept near the original images. There are different temples existing at different places on this hill. The principal one is the shrine of Yoganandalakshminarasimha. There are two separate shrines for Rajyalakshmidevi and Godadevi. There is another shrine for Lakshminarasimha. An ant hill found on the top of the hill is called Jvalanarasimha. It is said that 'Svamipuskarini' or 'Vishnukundam' was dug by the sage Yadava with his nails. The water of this tank is considered to be very sacred. The important festivals of this place are Kalyanotsavam which is celebrated for ten days in the month of Phalguna every year from Suddha Dvitiya to Dvadashi and Narsimhajayanti along with all the other important Hindu festivals.

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17 Ramesan, Temples and Legends of A P p 165
4) DHARMAPURI:

This is one of the oldest villages and is about 65 kilometers from Karimnagar District of Andhra Pradesh. It is on the western bank of Godavari which flows southwards. There are two Narasimha temples old and new. However the old temple is very famous and the Lord Yoganandalaksminarasimha is the presiding deity in both the temples. Besides these temples, there are many more temples in this village like Venkateswara, Srisitaramachandra, Dattatreya, etc. However, Narasimha is the presiding deity of this village. There are four tirthas around the temple namely Brahmapuskarini, Cintamanisarovaram, Varahatirtham and Vimalatirtham, where pilgrims used to take bath in those tirthas. A few ghats on the bank of Godavari like Brahmagundam, Cakratirtham, Yagagundam, Vasistagundam, Satyavatigundam, and Gopikathirtham are very popular. Dharmapuri is not only a popular place of pilgrimage but also a centre of Vedic studies.

Two sthalapuranas of same name i.e. 'Dharmapuri Kshetramahatmyam' are available. The first is said to be the part and parcel of the Brahmandapurana dated 928 AD and the other of the Skandapurana, dated 1767 AD. The greatness of this place is described in these kshetramahatmyams. After giving the narration of Narasimha myth, which is identical with the version of the Bhagavatapurana version, the story takes a change after the manifestation of Narasimha. When Narasimha was fighting with Hiranyakasipu, the demon king sought the help of the Lord Siva and Siva who was very kind to his staunch devotee had taken the form of a Sarabha to help his devotee in the fight. Then Narasimha had to exert his full strength to fight with Sarabha, who was none other than Siva.

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18 Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer, Karimnagar p 245
19 Narasimha caryula, M. History of the cult of Narasimha in Telangana p 152
20 Ibid p 153
Finally though Sarabha was killed, Narasimha could not control his wrath and was wandering in this fearful form in the Dandakaranya. All the worlds trembled and Brahma observed penance to pacify the Lord. At the same time a king by name Dhamavarma was doing penance at this place for Brahma and being advised by Brahma, who appeared before him started his penance to please Narasimha. As advised by a divine voice, Brahma sent Prahlada and Narada to pacify Narasimha and finally was able to pacify Narasimha with many eulogies. Pleased by the penance of Brahma and Dharma Varma, Narasimha came to Dharmapuri and settled there in the benign form and the place was named Dharmapuri after the king Dhamavarma²¹.

Among the images of Vishnu, the Narasimha image which is malignant in nature is recommended to install out side the villages or on the hill tops. The yoga posture of Vishnu also should not be in the vicinity of villages. The Agamas prescribe that a benign image (santamurti) should be set up to counter the evil effects or a tank must be dug in front of such temples. Hence here the images of Anjaneya are installed in all the eight directions of Narasimha temple. This aspect is known as 'Hanumadastadigbandhanam' is intended to pacify the Lord Narasimha. An idol of Chenchulakshmi is installed on the left thigh of the Lord Narasimha.

The interesting feature of this temple is that there is an installation of the image of Brahma, which is rather rare. The connection of Brahma to this place is well known by the sthalamahatmyam. It is said that Brahma dug a tank in this place to pacify Narasimha, when the later was in full wrath. Lord Narasimha after being pacified asked Brahma to stay along with him and named the tank dug by him as Brahmapuskarini.

²¹ Ibid pp 166-169
At the entrance of the temple, there is an image of Yama. The legend which connects Yama to this place is this. "To ward off his sins, once Yama travelled from place to place and at last when he had a bath in a tank of Dharmapuri, his sins were washed out. As a mark of gratitude he visited Lord Narasimha and paid his rich tributes. Pleased Narasimha named the tank after the name of Yama and ordained that who ever take a dip in the pond would be free from the troubles from Yama after death\(^2\).

There is Satyavati temple near the new Narasimhaswamy temple. It is said that once Satyavati and her husband Sesha had come to this place and took a bath in the river Godavari. Immediately Sesha transformed into a handsome man by name Citrangada. It is believed that Satyavati constructed a tall pillar to prove her devotion to this Lord. The pillar exists there still now and the tank in which the couple taken bath is named Satyavaligundam.\(^2\)

Besides the normal Hindu festivals, the important festivals of this temple are Kalyanotsavam in Phalguna month; Dolotsavam on Nrsimhajayanti and Rathotsvam of the Lord.

5) Mangalagiri:

Mangalagiri is situated on Vijayawada – Guntur road of Andhra Pradesh. It is about 14 kms from Vijayawada. There are three Narasimha temples in Mangalagiri. One is Panakalanarasimha, who is the presiding deity of this place and the temple is located on the top of the hill (Ap-II,p2). Another one is Laksminarasimha at the foot of the hill and the third is Gandalanarasimha at the top of the hill. This is one of the oldest temples in Andhra Pradesh. The peculiar custom of this temple is that panaka or jaggery-water is offered as oblations to this

\(^2\) Ibid p 181
\(^2\) Ibid p. 182
deity. The *panakam* is actually poured into the mouth of the Lord. People believe that the deity accepts the offering and being satisfied with it he throws out a part of it. This later part is considered as the *prasadam* of the Lord. This aspect of pouring the offering directly into the mouth of the deity is found nowhere. This special phenomenon of this place attracts the pilgrims from different parts of the country. A gargling sound is clearly audible, when *panaka* is poured into the mouth of the Lord as if he is actually drinking. The sound becomes shriller and shriller as long as the Lord is drinking. Whatever the quantity offered either a cup or a drumful of *panaka*, it is said that the Lord throws out half the quantity of the offering. This happens not only once or twice, but continues with each offering made by the devotees. The most surprising fact is that though the jaggery and jaggery water is being used in this place, not even a single ant is found anywhere nearby. Because of the *panaka* being used as offering to this Narasimha, he is called *Panakalanarasimha* and also called as *Pannanarasimham*.

This shrine is said to be referred in the *Brahmavaivartapurana* as one of the eight important *Kshetras* of Vishnu, where the Lord manifested himself. They are 1) *Srirangam* 2) *Srimushnam* 3) *Naimisham* 4) *Puskaram* 5) *Salagramadri* 6) *Toladri* 7) *Narayanarsaram* 8) *Venkatatadri*. *Toladri* is the present Mangalagiri. It is believed that this hill was called ‘Totadri’ in *Krtayuga*; ‘Stotadri’ in *Tretayuga*; ‘muktyadri’ in *Dvaparayuga* and ‘Mangaladri’ or ‘Mangalagiri’ in *Kaliyuga*. The offering to be given to this Lord is said to be *amrta* (nectar) in *Krtayuga*; ghee in *Tretayuga*, milk in *Dvaparayuga* and jaggery water in *Kaliyuga*.

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1. Ramganan, *Temples and Legends of A P* p 95
2. Mata yatra sibhata, (Telugu) p 79
According to the *Sthalapurana* of this temple once, a great devotee *Hrvasrngi*, son of King Panyatra did penance to propitiate Sri Narasimha. The Lord appeared before him and intended to give a boon and *Hrvasrngi* requested him to stay on his head and when the lord agreed, Hrvasrngi took the form of a mountain resembling an elephant and Lord Narasimha stayed on that hill. It is also said that *Hrvasrngi*, who was born with bodily deformities had travelled all the Kshetras in order to get rid of his deformities and finally reached this place and started penance. But Pariyatra, the father was not happy over his son’s penance and tried to dissuade him. To avoid the interference of his father, *Hrvasrngi* had taken the form of a mountain resembling an elephant and offered his body as an abode to Narasimha. Since a true devotee offered his body as an abode of the Lord, this place is considered *mangala* (auspicious) and the place is called Mangaladri or Mangalagiri. Even now this mountain appears in the shape of an elephant from a distance and the temple on the hill appears as the mouth of the elephant.

It is said that once a demon Namuci pleased Brahma by his severe penance and acquired a boon not to die by any thing that is wet or dry. Being adamant with pride, he tortured all the worlds. Then Vishnu gave his *Cakra* (Disc) covered with foam to Indra and he himself entered into the disc in the form of Narasimha. When Indra fought with Namuci and discharged the disc, Namuci entered the cave of Mangalagiri. Soon after the cakra reached the entrance of the cave, the demon Namuci vomited blood and died immediately as a result of the glances of Narasimha, who had entered himself into the cakra. The presiding deity of this place is called *Sricakranarasimhaswamy* apart from *Panakalanarasimhaswamy*. In this temple there is no idol of Lord

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27 Ibid p 26
28 Ramesan, N. *Temples and Legends of A P.* p 97
29 *Nrsimha Praya* March, 1983, p 27
except the mouth sculptured widely opened of about 15 centi meters on
the wall of the mountain into which the devotees pour panaka as
offering.

Another legend says that in Krtayuga, Srilakshmi had come out of
the milky ocean when it was being churned. The gods constructed a
pond by bringing water from all the holy rivers. After she took a bath in
that puskarini Goddess Lakshmi was given to Vishnu as his consort.
That puskarini is said to be on this hill and is called Lakshmipuskarini.

The Lakshminarasimha Temple, which is at the foot of the hill,
traces its origin to the time of Dharmaraja the eldest of Pandavas. It is
said that Dharmaraja installed the deity of Laksminarasimha in this
temple, when Bhima brought the salagrama.

On the top of the hill there is no deity but there is a facility to put a
deepam (lamp). If any one is afflicted with miseries, then they go there
and light the lamp. It is believed that their miseries will be cleared off.
This place is called ‘Gandalayam’. The lamp is visible from many
surrounding villages. Ksheravrksam (milky tree) on the Mangalagiri hill
is a great attraction. It is believed that women would get children if they
worship this tree. A legend popular among the local people is that a
Goldsmith was appointed to prepare Utsavavigrahas with pancaloham
(mixture of five metals) but inspite of his skill and care, the metals kept
separating and could not be mixed. Then it is said that a divine voice
informed him that a human sacrifice was required to complete the mix.
Then his only son came to him asking for water. The goldsmith
immediately threw his son into the molten mixture and was able to
complete his work and beautiful idols were made. After completing the
work, he was gloomy over the fate of his son and called out in agony
'come my son, now I will give you water'. To his surprise the body of his son jumped out of the image and stood before his father.30

On the right side of the steps to reach the temple, there is a stone inscription by Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar Empire. A little further up, there are foot prints of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Midway on the steps there is a temple of Panakalanarasimhaswamy with mouth widely opened. Behind the temple to the west of which is a tunnel believed to lead to Undavelli caves on the banks of the Krishna and sages used to go that way to take a bath in the river. Now the cave is very dark and the way cannot be seen.

Anjaneya is the Kshetrapalaka of this place. It is stated that Anjaneya wished to follow Lord Rama to Vaikuntha, but was advised by Rama to stay at this place only to bestow grace on humanity. It is said that the devotee Prahlada; the sage Mandakarni; Aniruddha, husband of Muklangada; Pandavas; Vaikhanasacarya; Vallabhacarya; Caitanya Mahaprabhu; Balamba etc. have worshipped the Lord Narsimha in this place.31

Sri Panakalanarasimha Swamy's Brahmostavam is a very important annual festival in Mangalagiri. The celebrations were said to be inaugurated by Dharmaraja at the behest of Lord Krishna. At present the festival is celebrated for 11 days in a grand manner commencing from Phalguna suddha shasti to chaturdasi, the marriage of Shantanarasimhaswamy with Sridevi and Bhudevi is celebrated. All other Hindu festivals are also celebrated.

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30 Source of local legend: Mangalagiri prathana yikasa mandali
31 Nrsimha Praya, March, 1983 p.27
6) MATTAPALLI:

Mattapalli is the centre of a cluster of Narasimha temples, which are placed in all the four directions Vedadri, Vadapally, Ketavaram and Mangalagiri. Together the five temples are called 'Panca Narasimha Kshetras.' Mattapalli is a town of Huzurnagar taluk of Nalgonda district. The abode of Sri Lakshminarasimha, who is also known as Yoganandalakshminarasimha is located in a cave beside the river Krishna Ap-II, P2). Other deities installed in this shrine are Rajyalakshmitayar and Chenculakshmitayar.

A local legend\textsuperscript{32} states that this Mattapalli cave shrine of Lord Narasimha was the place where only the Risis headed by Bharadvaj used to worship the Lord daily from the time immemorial. Later in Kaliyuga, the sages wanted to throw open this place for common people to make them to have the grace of the Lord. Once the lord appeared in a dream to Machireddy, the ruler of Thangeda situated on the other side of Krishna river and instructed him to trace his abode located near a tree Vedapatri and construct a temple to him. Since the place was in the midst of a dense and lovely forest Machireddy could not locate the spot, the Lord insisted again to search near an ‘Aare’ tree hidden behind the foliage. Machireddy being led by a monkey found the cave, where the image of Sri Lakshminarasimha was found in a sitting posture under the protection of Adisesha’s hooded canopy, holding sankha, cakra and gada. He then revealed it to the public and constructed Mukhalaya. The sanctum sanctorum of this Lord is inside a cave facing west. Along the wall west to the lord is his consort Rajyalaksmi and on the right can be seen a passage at once leading to the river (passage now is blocked). Sage Bharadvaja and other sages were believed to have used this path. It is said that the lord manifested on a rock, located on the back side of

\textsuperscript{32} Dr. M.S. Rajasek IAS (Retd) Sri Narasimha Avatara pp 71-72
the sanctum sanctorum. Another rock is spread like the hood of a sesa over it. Besides the normal festivals Kalyanotsavam (around May) and Vaikuntha Ekadasi (around January) are celebrated here with much religious fervor.

7) VEDADRI:

The Vedadri Laksminarasimha Temple is located on the river Krishna nearly 10 kms from Chillakallu near Vijayawada. Yoganandanarasimha is the presiding deity of this shrine (Ap-II,p.2). A beautiful form of Narasimha in Yoga pose greets devotees on the entrance of the temple. The other deities of this place are Lord Varaha, Laksmi Devi, Garuda and Hanuman. The utsava idols are extraordinary and impressive. In the waters of the Krishna River the Lord Narsimha can be found in Salagrama form, when the river is not in floods. Jvalanarasimha is on the top of the hill in an ant hill. Lord Veeranarasimha is said to be behind the hill about 5 kms away from this place.

The sthalapurana of vedadri, which is said to be the part of Brahmanda purana33 tells that after the Vedas were restored from the demon Somakasura, who had stolen vedas and was killed by Vishnu in Matsyavatar, the Vedas had taken a human form and requested Vishnu that they should be sanctified by his manifestation there. But the Lord Vishnu asked them to be in the form of salagramas in the bed of river Krishna and he would manifest in an appropriate time. Accordingly they had taken the forms of Salagramas and remained in the river Krishna. Vishnu, after killing Hiranyakasipu in Narasimha form recalling his assurance to the Vedas, had taken the Jvalanarasimha form and resided on the nearby hillock. On the request of Brahma in order to grace the devotees, he had taken Salagramanarasimha form on the bed

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33 Dr. M.S. Rajajee IAS (Retd) Sri Narasimha Avatara p 70.
of river Krishna. Similarly yielding to the prayers of sage Rshyasruga and King Manu, he assumed the Yoganandanarasimha form and manifested in the middle of the hills in this area. Responding to the prayers Vanadevatas (forest goddesses) he manifested there as Laksminarasimha. Again the Lord manifested as Veeranarasimha on the top of nearby Garudadri. Thus this place has Panca Narasimha Murthis (five Narasimha forms) and this place came to know as Vedadri as the Lord manifested there on the pursuant to the assurance given to Vedas.

According to another story at the advent of Kaliyuga, people got frightened and approached sage Vyasa for an easy way to get salvation in Kaliyuga. The sage Vyasa assures them that there is no need to do rigorous penance like in earlier yugas, but simple and sincere worship is enough for the Lord’s grace. When they all set out to find a right place for worship they reached this place on the banks of river Krishna and heard the recitation of the Vedas. They found the recitation was not by any human beings but was coming out from the mountains on its own. Hence it is believed that this place was called ‘Vedadri’. The Telugu poets Errapragada, Srinatha and Sri Narayana teertha of Sri Krishnaleellarangni praised this place in their works.

8) Vadapalli:

Vadapalli Narasimha Temple is situated in a town near Miryalaguda in Nalgonda District at the confluence of the river Krishna and river Musi. The temple with the presiding deity Laksminarasimha was constructed by the Kakatiya rulers in the 12 century (Ap-II.p.3). The local legend prevalent among masses here is that Vedavyasa knowing the sanctity of this place meditated upon Narasimha who appeared in his ugra form. Observing that the Lord’s breath was filled with tremendous anger, Vyasa could realize that the Lord Narasimha came
to him just after killing Hiranyakasipu. He prayed the Lord to manifest there with his ugra form only as per his desire the Lord manifested accordingly to alleviate the sufferings of the devotees. It is said that the deity vibrates with breathing in and out even now. As if to vouchsafe the veracity of the legend, the lamp kept near the face of the Lord, can be seen to quiver as the evidence of Lord breathing in and out, whereas the second lamp below burns steadily.

The mythological legend narrates that once, sage Agatsya was carrying on his shoulders a kavadi (a pole with two baskets on either ends) in which he was carrying the idols of Lord Kesava and Lord Siva. When he came to Vadapalli, which was the confluence of river Krishna and river Musi, he wanted to take a holy dip in the confluence and entrusted the kavadi to a boy, who was there looking after his goats, telling him not to rest it on the ground. The boy waited for some time and called the sage and finally when he was so tired he left it on the ground and went away. The sage returned and tried to lift the kavadi but in vain. A divine voice was heard stating that the Lord wishes to stay there only. Accordingly the sage installed Sri Menaksi Agastesvaram and Lord Laksmi Narasimha at the confluence of two rivers. Over a period of time, the two shrines were covered by ant hills and were recovered by the time of Reddy kings in 16th Century. Here Kalyanatsovam will take place just a day before the Mahasivaratri and indicates non-difference between Vishnu and Siva.

9) Ketavaram:

This is the shrine of Laksminarasimha and one of the ‘Panca Narasimha Kshetras’ situated on the bank of river Krishna and is in Sattenapalli town of Guntur District. Till 16th century it seems that this

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34 Nisimha Dev Temples in A P. Survey by Sun Staff Vadapalli available at www.harekrishna.com
35 Dr M S Rajase, IAS (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara, p 73
temple was a prominent place of worship as Vijayanagar Kings made several donations to this temple. There are three temples on the hillock called Narasimha Konda near this village Ketavaram. At the foot of the hillock, the temple for Lord Laksminarasimha is situated; around 200 feet above there is another temple for Goddess Adilakshmi and on the top of the hill there is symbolic temple with only namam, the Vaishnavite mark on the rock.

10) Antarvedi:

Antarvedi is situated in the East Godavari District. It is 10 kms from Narsapur of West Godavari District connected by a bridge and 24 kms from Razole of East Godavari District. Here the shrine of Laksmi Narasimha is situated at the confluence (sangam) of the sea and Vasista Godavari, one of the seven branches of Godavari. This place is considered very sacred and is called "saptasagarasangama pradesham". This place is said to be the last and most important of the seven sacred bathing places along the river Godavari. On account of the sanctity attached to this place, it is called 'Daksina Kasi'. The temple has some religious importance. The original temple is said to be submerged in the sea water and later the devotees constructed a new temple in 1823 AD.\(^{36}\) at the present location.

Like in Simhacalam, here also the presiding deity faces west instead of the normal east. It is believed that as the Lord Brahma sanctified this place by performing the Rudrayaga and Vedic austerities and the place is named 'Antarvedi'. The legend\(^ {37}\) related to this place runs thus: The Sage Vasista, after joining the Goutami branch of Godavari into the sea, established his Asram and resided with his wife Arundhati. Raktaviloca, the son of Hiranyaksha got a boon from the

\(^{36}\) Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer, East Godavari District P 249

\(^{37}\) Dr M S Rajapet IAS (Retd), Sri Narasimha Avatara, Sri Akshaya Math, Hyderabad, 2002 pp 79-80
Lord Siva through severe penance. The boon is that the number of sand particles of ground that would be drenched by his blood in war could produce equal number of demons as strong as him and assist him in war and they should merge in him after the war would over. Once, on the instigation of Viswamitra, Raktavilocana killed all the hundred sons of Vasistha, when the latter was in Brahmaloka. On his return Vasistha prayed for Lord Narsimha and requested him to prevent Raktavilocana from wreaking further destruction. The Lord Narsimha finding the demons being produced from the blood particles of the demon, created Mayasakti to lick the blood before it touch the ground. The Lord then chopped off the hands of the demon and killed him along with other asura fighters. After killing the demons the place where the lord washed his cakra is said to become cakratirtham, a dip in which is believed to wash away all the sins.

Another legend runs thus: Once upon a time this place Antarvedi became a jungle and the location of Narsimha shrine was lost. A cowherd named Kesavadas who was grazing his cattle nearby found that one of his cow was returning home daily with empty udder. He then secretly followed the cow and found that the cow was emptying all its milk on an ant hill. Being surprised at the incident he saw a dream in which, the Lord Narsimha informed him that he is residing in the ant hill and asked him to build a temple on the same spot. Accordingly Kesavadas with the help of the locals constructed a temple there. The village, where Kesavadas lived was named after him as ‘Kesavadasupalem’. After sometime the temple fell into ruins, but was rebuilt under the patronage of Sri Narendra Laksmi Narasimha Rao as an offering to the Lord for protecting his ships from going down at sea. He purchased timber from Bhadrachalam and all the logs purchased for temple construction were marked with the Lord’s name. But transportation could not take place due to the low water level of
Godavari and unfit for the running boats. Then Narasimha Rao was perturbed and thought that the Lord could not kind enough to help even for the construction of his own temple. Surprisingly, with the heavy rain on that very night, there was heavy flow of the river and all the logs earmarked for construction of the temple automatically reached the Gantaghat of Antarvedi and the temple was constructed.

*Kalyanotsavam* of the Lord is celebrated at this place on the Bhishma Ekadasi day during January / February. In Phalgun, the lord’s chariot procession will take place. All other Hindu festivals are celebrated as usual.

11) Singarayakonda:

Singarayakonda is in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh on Madras – Vijayawada main railway line. A famous Varahanarasimha temple is located on a hill and is known as ‘Dakshina Simhacalam’ as its presiding deity is Varahanarasimha like in Simhacalam. It was built by the King Devaraya of Vijayanagar Empire in the early 15th century and was modified with a beautiful gopuram by his successor, who is none other than Sri Krishnadevaraya. In the same premises, we find Yoganandanasimha in a beautiful yoga posture. It is believed that this town got the name Singarayaknnda (hill of lion king) because of this very temple. There is other the temple of Prassananjaneya, who is said to be in a peaceful form in standing posture and protecting the Lord. On either side of the main idol, there are two small shrines one for goddess Rajyalaksmi and another for goddess Andal. It is believed that Narada had performed penance and got the darshan of the Lord and he himself established this temple on the seashore. It is said that Indra was responsible for the construction of a sacred tank, now known by the

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*Notes:*

[34] *Nrsimha Dev Temples in AP Survey by Sun Staff Antarvedi* available at www.harekrsna.com

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name Bhavanasini. It is said that Rama visited Agatsya's hermitage, when Sita was taken away by Ravana and on the advice of Narada, Lord Rama established a temple for Lord Bhu-Varaha here.

A local story reveals why the Lord is called here as Tata (grand father) by local people affectionately. The members of Parnasala family, who were the poets of Royal Court used to visit Singarayakonda and worship the Lord regularly. On one such occasion, a small boy of that family stranded away from other members. On searching they found the boy on the next day morning in front of the temple and asked how he could spend the whole night alone in such a strange place. The boy told them that he spent the whole night under the protection of 'tala' (grand father). Then the members could guess that the 'tata' was none other than the Lord himself. From then onwards the local people used to call the Lord here as 'Tata'.

Another story says that when the sea was very rough, a ship was caught in the tides and tossed away violently. Then the sailors found the temple tower on the hillock and prayed for the assistance of the Lord for safe reach of the coast and promised to pay the requisite homage to the lord, if the ship reaches the coast safely. Surprisingly the ship without any damage reached the coast. The sailors paid the money to the temple as they promised. Since this was an amount to be paid perpetuity, the East India Company paid this money on their behalf for several subsequent years. Abiding by the tradition, the Govt. of India also is remitting the amount unfailingly every year in the month of Jyesta till now.

There is a tunnel like opening behind the sanctum sanctorum of the Lord, which is believed to lead to the shrine of Lord Narsimha of Malakonda hill, which is also in the same taluk. All Hindu festivals will be celebrated with special emphasis on Kalyanotsavam.

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Dr. M. N. Rajagop, IAS (Rd) Sri Narasimha Avatara p. 77
12) Malakonda:

Sri Lakshminarasimha is the presiding deity of this temple at Malakonda which is also called Malyadri. We find Sri Jvala Narasimha and Goddess Mahalaksmi temples here. Malyadri means garland of hills. This place is called so because to the west of this hill is Ahobilam; northwest Srisailam; south, Vrcchacala; east, Singarayakonda and north, river Krishna and thus it is surrounded by a row of hills.

The local legend states that this holy shrine was established by Lord Vishnu himself at the behest of Goddess Lakshmidevi for the benefit of devotees and Vanamaia was ordained by Vishnu, transformed himself into Malyadri (hill).

13) Korukonda:

Korukonda is about 20 kms from Rajahmundry, East Godavari District and is popular for Lord Narasimha’s shrine. There are two temples of Narasimha here, one on the top of a large hill adjacent to this village and another at the foot of the hill. The devotees have to ascend nearly 650 steps to have the darshan of Laksmi Narasimha on the hill top. The presiding deity of both the temples is Lakshminarasimha only. This place is also as called Parasragiri, Parijetagiri, Suvamagiri and Konagiri and the deity is known as ‘Satvikanarasimha’ as he is accompanied by his consort, Goddess Lakshmidevi in both the temples. The deity on the hill is about nine feet in height.

According to the mythology Lord Narasimha was worshipped here by sage Parasara, the grand son of Vasista. He had obtained all branches of knowledge through the recitation of the Narasimha Moola Mantra. As this place was suitable for meditation, he performed penance and prayed the Lord Narasimha to manifest on the hill. The
Lord agreed to reside over the hill and hence it is also called Parasaragiri.

It is believed that Pandavas have worshipped this deity on the advice of Vyasa. Subsequently the temple seems to have fallen in to disuse and it is Laksmi Dasi, to whom the Lord instructed in a dream to construct a temple on this hill. It was duly consecrated in around 1350 AD\textsuperscript{40}. An inscription of 1443 A.D. found at Laksmaneswaram Village, Narsapur Taluk, and West Godavari District makes a reference to this temple. The Reddy kings ruled their territory Korukonda as their capital during its glittering period. Mummudi Nayaka of Reddy dynasty became Vaishnava follower and invited Parasara Bhatta, a great scholar from Srirangam to Korukonda.

In the temple at the foot of the hill, Lord Laksminarasimha is endowed with four hands and has the Goddess Lakshmi devi beside.

14) Agiripalli / Akiripalli:

Agiripalli or Akiripalli is in Nuzvid Taluk of Krishna District at a distance of 30 kms from Vijayawada and an important \textit{Kshetra} of Lord Narasimha. The Lord here is known as Sobhanacalaswami. It is believed that kiri (boar), one of the incarnations of Vishnu, dug a tank here, which is known as Varaha Puskarini. It is said that this hillock was known as Kalyanadri in Kritayuga, Sobhacala in Tretayuga, Svapnasila in Dwaparayuga and Sobhanadri in Kaliyuga. As in Simhacalam, the presiding deity is in the form of Varahanarasimha. This shrine is considered as ‘\textit{Daksina Simhacalam}’. There are two temples one at the top of the hill and the other at the foot of the hill.
The Sthalapurana of this place is said to be part of Brahmandapurana. According to it there was a king by name Subhavrata of Chandravamsa who has renounced everything and meditated on Narasimhamantra initiated by the sage Sanatkumar. The Lord manifested in the form of Laksminarasimha at the request of the king Subhavrata⁴¹.

Another story says that two persons Acyuta Bhatta and Ananta Bhatta have performed penance and both of them had a dream in which they were directed to find out his shrine nearby and arrange proper worship. On search both of them found out the image on this hill and a holy pond called Varahapuskarini and arranged proper worship there.

There is yet another story relating to the origin of this temple. In a nearby village called Veeravalli, there was a Vaishnavite by name Gopayyacharyulu. The Lord Narasimha in a dream, directed Gopayyacaryulu to locate his image in a near by hill and renovate the temple, which had fallen disuse. While searching, a tiger led him to a cave and Goppayacharyulu boldly entered the cave and found the idol there. Goppayacharyulu being old entrusted the worship to his son Subhanacharyulu, who became a very great scholar by the grace of the lord. One of his poetic works is Sobhanachalasetakom. Once he approached the Nawab of Hyderabad for funds towards the renovation of the temple. The Nawab, who was arrogant asked Subbanacharyulu to show the God. Subbannacharyulu duly agreed and asked them to keep ready for this challenge and butter mixed with sugar to offer the Lord. When Subbannacharyulu prayed the God to take it as Naivedya, surprisingly the Lord Vyaghranarasimha appeared in the form of a tiger and took the butter from the hands of Subbannacharyulu. The Nawab

⁴¹ Ibid p?⁷
wondered and granted Agiripalli village as an endowment in favour of the temple.42

In the temple, at the foot hill, there are separate shrines for Goddess Rajyalaksmi, Goddess Andal and also for Yoganandaranasimha.

15) Kadiri:

Kadiri, the original name of which was Khadri is situated about 90 kms from Anantapur, the District Head Quarters. There are two Narasimha temples, one in the town and the second is on a nearby hill. In the temple on the hill only the footprints of the Lord can be found, which is called as Narasimhapadam. There are images of seven divine sages are on the hill. The temple in the town is with very lofty rajagopurams on all directions and spacious premises.

There are two images in the sanctum sanctorum one having eight hands (ashtabahu) and is in the posture of cleansing Hiranyakasipu, while Prahlada is standing besides him. This particular posture as Vidarananarasimha (tear opening the stomach of the demon) as presiding deity of Narasimha Temple is unique in its nature here and rare we find this form of Narasimha as Moolavirat (main idol) and made Khadri Narasimha as a centre of attraction to the devotees of Narasimha and the second image in sanctum sanctorum is the Lord with Goddess popularly known as Lakshminarasimha.

The legend44 states that the Lord who was in malignant form here after killing Hiranyakasipu at the request of gods headed by Brahma,

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42 Dr M S Rajag, IAS (Rtd.) Sri Narasimha Avatara P 78-79
43 Vihagendrasamhita 4.17 of Pancaratira Agama enumerate 74 forms of Narasimha among them. Vidarana Narasimha is one. Based on arrangements of weapons in hands different postures and other suitable distinctions these forms are described
44 Nirasimhastotramahika compiled by A Satyanarayana Pp 136-137
having gone forward placed his foot on the near by hill and then manifested here again in benign form. It is believed that this place is khadri in olden times because of the abundant of khadri tree in this place so called as khadri. Yet another version explains that ‘kha’ means the foot of Vishnu and since there is the mark of foot of Vishnu on a hill, it is called as khadri. However, in due course, the name is corrupted and has become present kadiri.

16) Pennahobilam:

The Lakshminarasimha temple at Pennahobilam is located on the bank of rivulet Pennar. It is on the way from Anantapur to Uravakonda bus route and 36 K.M. from Anantapur.

According to local myth, this temple has been built on foot prints of the Lord Narasimha found on this bank of Pennar when he was wondering in his awful form after killing Hiranyakasipu. 45 There are sub shrines for Goddess Lakshmi and Chenchulakshmi. This temple is surrounded by very beautiful lush forest. This is a very ancient temple and the renovation work has been taken up recently.

17) Tirumala:

In the north east corner of the second precinct of the main temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, there is an exclusive shrine for Lord Yoganarasimha facing ‘Vimanam’ of the presiding deity. It is said that Lord Narasimha appeared to Sankaracarya on the bank of Puskarini. A shrine is built there, but the Lord was without Goddess and was in ‘ugra’ form. Including Ramananjacarya felt that worship should not be done there and installed the idol in the second precincts of the temple in the north east corner of Prakara and directed the people to offer daily

45 Source: www.holidaysiq.on.pennahobilam
offerings there for the idol. This is being followed since then. There is another exclusive Lakshminarasimha temple on Tirumala hills beside the foot path.

II) TAMIL NADU

Unlike in Andhra Pradesh, there are a few exclusive temples for Lord Narasimha in the Tamilnadu and others have only the sub-shrines in the main Vaishnava temples.

1) Sholinghur (Tirukkatikai):

The place is known by different names as Sholingapuram, Chola Singapuram and Ghatikacalam. It is called Chola Singapuram as this temple of Narasimha is located in Chola Territory. This got corrupted over a period of time as Sholinghur. Since a minute's time (ghatika) worship of the lord bestows liberation (moksha), this place is called 'Ghatikacalam' and 'Tirukkatikai'. This shrine is praised as one of the 108 divyadesams of Srivaisnavas by the Tamil Saint Tirumangai Alvar in his Periya Tirumozhi (8.9.4)⁴⁶. Peyalvar and Nammalvar also praised the lord of Sholinghur. This holy place is situated 27 kms west of Tiruttani. There are two hillocks in the town one small and another big. On the bigger hillock, which may be reached by steps, there is a temple for the Lord Yoganarasimha who is seated facing east (Ap-II,p.3). On the smaller hillock there is a temple for Yoga Anjaneya with conch and disc in its hands. It is a rare of its kind facing west. This temple is famous for driving away the evil spirits.

The Sthalapurana says that after killing Hiranyakasipu, the Lord was still in "ugrarupa" and nobody could approach him. Finally at the prayers of Prahlada, he calmed down and agreed to manifest himself there to grace the devotees in Santarupa as "Yoganarasimha" along

⁴⁶ Dr M S Rajasek IAS (Retd) Sri Narasimha Avatara , p 81
with Amrithavallitayar. It is said that this temple was gold in Krtayuga; Silver in Tretayuga; Copper in Dvaparayuga and amidst rocks in Kaliyuga. The sthalapurana says that the Lord manifested himself on this in the Kritayuga on Tritiyapada of Vaisakhasuklapaksa Caturdasi upari pournima tithi, Bhanuvasara svati Naksatra day.\(^47\)

It is said that both the Vishnupurana and the Padmapurana speak about the greatness of this place and also said that Visvamitra became Brahmarsi by staying at this place for one “kadigai”. According to the legend, the saptarsis, Atri, Vasista, Jamadagni, Gautama, Bharadvaja, Kasyapa and Visvamitra did penance here to have a vision of the Lord Narasimha. Then two demons Kala and Keya started to create hindrance to the penance of rishis. When the Lord in his incarnation of Rama, after killing Ravana wanted to return to his abode, Anjaneya also wanted to follow him. But Rama directed Anjaneya to stay back in this place to protect satparsis. When Anjaneya was unable to destroy them, the Lord gave him his sacred conch and holy discus to slay the demons as well as other demons. This legend vouchsafes the reason for Anjaneya holding the conch and the discus in his hands.

There is a small window opposite Lord Narasimha’s Shrine at bigger hill through which the Lord is believed to give darshan to Yoga Anjaneya at Smaller hill. Lord Narasimha facing east and Lord Anjaneya facing west here are as evidence to this.

Swamy Doddachar, nephew of Saint Ramanuju was sthanacharya and had developed this shrine with the help of kings of Vijaynagar Empire in 16\(^{th}\) Century. The Adi Kesava perumal Sannidhi of the town temple is also a sacred one. Pandava tirtham, Brahma tirtham, Sanjeevini tirtham and Narasimha tirtham are located in this place.

\(^47\) Ibid P 81
There are many inscriptions of 14th & 17th centuries found on the walls of the shrine.

2) Nammakal:

Nammakal is about 50 kms from Salem on Salem-Thirichirpally Road. This place is famous for rock cut sculptures of Lord Narasimha (Ap-II.p.3). Goddess Namagintayar (who is a varaprasadi) and Lord Anjaneya which is about 25 feet high and facing Lord Narasimha here also like in Sholinghur, across the road. Lord Anjaneya is believed to be a very powerful deity.

The Mythology is that after Hiranyakasipu was killed, Lord Narasimha was still in a ferocious form and none could dare to approach him. Finally yielding to the prayers of his devotee Prahlada, he became cool down and assured to stay in his kingdom but in the form of a salagrama.

In the next Yuga, Hanuman set out to Himalayas in search of Sanjeevani herb to revive Lakshmana, who fainted in the battle field. After the purpose was served, Hanuman flew back to Himalayas to replant the hill he had pulled out earlier. He found a salagrama there and carried it with him. On his return by the time he reached Nammakal, it was sunrise and Hanuman descended there and placed salagrama on the ground to perform his morning offerings. After offerings, he tried to take salagrama back, but could not lift it. It had grown into an enormous mountain and the Lord in divine voice said that he wanted to stay there only along with Goddess Lakshmi on whom he conferred so many boons and hence came to be known as Namagiri Lakshmi (great Varaprasadi). The Lord directed Hanuman to proceed to Lanka and
serve Lord Rama and permitted him to return to Nammakal and worship him from across the place after the end of that Yuga. 49

The sanctum sanctorum is a cave and the main idol is that of Lord Narasimha. Sanaka, Sananda, Surya and Chandra are holding "Chamaras" (Chowries) and fanning the Lord. Along side Brahma and Siva are praying the Lord. Due to these Phenomena, this place is also called "trimurtisthalam"

In the panels of the Mandapa, on one side there are beautiful sculptures of Sri Vaikuntanarayana with Surya, Chandra, Siva, Brahma, Sage Markandeya, Bhudevi and Abhaya Narasimha and on the other side there is Ugra Narasimha, who is ripping open the chest of Hiranyakasipu using his nails. On the other side of the wall, an engraved depiction of Lord Trivikrama measuring the worlds with three steps and of Lord Varahamurthi holding the Vedas and Bhudevi are seen. There is a separate shrine for the Goddess Namagiritayar and Lord Ranganatha in a cave, which is a protected monument.

The inscriptions refer to Gunashela of the Adhiyas as the builder of these shrines in 748 AD. 50

3) PARIKKAL:

This Lakshminarasimha shrine is yet another exclusive shrine for the Lord at Pankkal. Three kilometers from a gigantic statue of Sri Anjaneya standing on the Madapattu-gedilam joint road on the Villipuram, Trichy Road, is a famous Swayambhu Laksminarasimha Kshetra. The Goddess is seated on the left thigh of the Lord and has her right hand wrapped around the Lord and similarly the left hand of

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49 Dr. M S Rajagopalan IAS, ‘Sri Narasimha Avatara PP 91-92
50 An article 'Rock Shrines at Namakkal' by K Verma, ‘Karnatakari’, story feature in the Hindu, dt:01-11-2002
the Lord is wrapped around the Goddess. It is stated that since the Goddess embraced him to pacify the ferocious Narasimha, this place is called Pankkal. In the inner prakara, there is a shrine for Kanakavalli Tayar. There are separate shrines for Bhakta Anjaneya, Veera Anjaneya adjacent to Tayar Sannidhi. There are also sub shrines for Lord Varadaraja, Garuda, Varasiddivinayaka and Panchanathamurtis in these temples.

The Sthalapurana states that the Lord killed a demon by name Parasura, who attempted to slay the King Vasantaraja with an axe, when the latter was performing a Yajna to propitiate his family deity Narasimha. Due to the killing of a demon Parasura by Narasimha in Ugrarupa, the place came to be known as Pankkal. On the request of King Vasantaraja, it is believed that Narasimha stayed there with his consort. Visvakarma, the celestial sculptor is said to be the architect of the idol of the Lord and Sage Vamadeva consecrated the idol in the temple.

Yet another story about this place is that the Lord appeared to a devout dumb boy of that place in a dream and ordered him to unearth an ant-hill, where he had been for several hundreds of years. Accordingly, the boy with the help of the villagers found the idol of Narasimha in an ant-hill along with a salagrama of Narasimha and of the idol of Anjaneya. On seeing the idols, miraculously the boy got back his power of speaking. The villagers constructed a temple and consecrated it. The temple had only Moolavirat and the Utsavavigrahas were arranged by the descendant of Madhvacarya on a command of the Lord in a dream.
There is a well inside the temple known as 'Nagakupam' and it is believed that a bath in its water cures many ailments. There are Garuda and Gomukhi tirthas. This shrine is thronged by the people affected with 'Navagrahadosha' and they believe that by lighting lamps with ghee or oil their doshas could be washed out.

4) Pazhaiya Seevaram (Sripuram):

Pazhaiya Seevaram or Sripuram, a lovely village with the temple for Lord Narasimha atop a small hillock is about 15 kms east of Kanchipuram on road to Chengalpattu. The main idol of Sri Laksminarasimha in the sanctum sanctorum is very huge in size measuring nearly six feet. The lord is facing west and has the goddess seated on his lap. It is full of charm.

This place is marked by the confluence of three rivers viz., Palar, cheyyar and vegavathi and the three rivers can be seen merging together at a place from the temple on the hillock known as 'Daksina Prayag'. It is believed that this is much holier than the Triveni Sangama of North (Prayag), because in Prayaga though it is the confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati, the last one can not be seen (antarvarhini), where as here, we can see the confluence of all the three rivers.

It is believed that this hillock was known as Padmagiri in times of yore. The Brahmandapurana mentions that the Lord Narasimha came to this Padmagiri to bless the sages Atri, Markandeya and Bhrgu, who were doing penance on this hillock. It is also believed that this is the place where the Lord Narasimha was pacified after killing Hiranyakasipu by the Goddess Sri Laksmi and hence this place came to be called 'Sripuram' which in due course changed to Seevaram. However it is still
unknown why and how it got the present name ‘Pazhaiya’ as prefix to Seevaram.

The temple must have had been in existence long before Chola period as inscriptions belonging to the 11th century are found here.7

It is said that the Moolavirat (the principle idol) of Lord Varadaraja at Kanchipuram was sculptured out of the rock of this hill, after the original image of athi Varadar got damaged hundreds of years ago. It is said to mark this, Lord Varadaraja is taken to Pazhaiya Seevaram on the following day of Sankranti every year. This ‘Parivettam’ of Lord Varadaraja to this temple had given a fillip to this shrine besides its antiquity.

Lord Varadaraja will be carried in a procession from Kanchipuram accompanied by priests reciting the Pasurams and the Vedas and after reaching this place it is taken round the hillock. He then ascends the 140 steps and halts at the mandapam of Narasimha temple known as Varadaraja mandapam. From there, accompanied by Lord Narasimha he crosses river Palar and goes to Srinivasa Temple there (called Appan Temple) on the other side of the river. Three lords give ‘Darshan’ from there to the devotees. Later Lord Varadaraja returns to Pazhaiya Seevaram along with Lord Narasimha and then return back to Kanchipuram every year as a part of his Parivettam. Parivettai is observed to mark the destruction of evil forces by the Lord in most of the Vishnu temples.

There is a separate shrine for the Goddess knownas Ahobalavalli (as in Ahobalam of A.P.) and there are sub shrines for Andal, Alvars and Desikar.

7 Ibid P 93
5) Singaperumal Koil:

Singaperumal Koil, which is otherwise called Padaladinarasimha Perumal koil (the original name), is about 45 kms to the south of Chennai. The main idol is Ugra Narasimha and the fairly large idol is carved out of a single red coloured boulder (Ap-II,p.5). The lord is stained with the blood of the demon Hiranyakasipu and is therefore called Padaladri Narasimha and the idol is almost eight feet tall with a red face. The Lord is in a cave on the top a small hillock and the lord is carved from a rock within the cave.

The legend is that at the time of the incarnation of the Lord Narasimha there was a huge forest at this place and the sage Jabali, who was doing penance here, prayed the Lord to manifest in the same form as that of the form in which the demon king was killed. The lord granted the boon. The Lord is depicted here in a sitting posture with four hands, with the upper two hands holding the conch and discus, one of the lower hands is in abhayamudra and the other rests on his lap. The right leg is folded and kept on the left leg. Though the presiding deity is Padaladri Narasimha, the utsavavigraha is prahladavarada (as at lower Ahobalam). The Goddess is present on the chest of the Lord and the lord is adorned with a salagrama garland. A unique feature is that the Lord possess third eye and the priest lifts Namam (religious mark on forehead) to show the devotees while giving Arli. There is a separate shrine for Goddess called Ahobalavallitayar. Here two separate shrines are there for Andal and Alvars.

This temple is believed to be 1500 years old and Mudaliandan, the chief disciple of Saint Ramanuja lived here. There is a tank called Sudha Puskarini and a Parijata tree as a holy tree.

Ibid p. XV
6) Yanai Malai:

There are not many temples in South Tamil Nadu exclusively dedicated to Lord Narasimha though he is worshipped in sub shrines in many famous Vaisnavite temples. However, there is one temple dedicated to Lord Narasimha in that part in the cave temple at Yanai Malai eight kilometers from Madurai on the road to Melur. This place though not counted in the list of 108 divyadesams, is situated in between two divyadesams (holy places) i.e. Azhagarkoil in the north and Thirumohur in the east. This temple village is called Narasingam, as the adjoining hill is seen in the shape of an elephant and it is known as Yanai Malai. Lord Yoganarasimha is the presiding deity and it was built by Maran Kari, a minister of Pandya King Jatila Varman known as Komaran Sadaiyan.

The Sthalapurana says that the sage Romasa installed the idol in this cave. He did penance on the bank of Padmalatakam (Lotus Tank) near Gajagiri kshetram (presently Yanai Malai) seeking progeny and wanted the Lord in Narasimha form. The Lord appeared as Ugranarasimha and even celestials could not bear the heat that was emanating from the Lord. Prahlada, who was called to pacify could succeed only to some extent. When Goddess Lakshmi arrived in the form of Narasingavalli, the Lord Narasimha could be pacified fully and had taken the form of Yoganarasimha and blessed the sage by granting the wished boon.

Another myth connected to this place is that the Lord Siva after taking bath in the tank known as cakratirtham could be relieved of his brahmahatyadosha committed by cutting off the fifth head of Brahma. This cakratirtha situated here is said to be capable of clearing of all the sins.
The other legend is that the Chola King, who could not win the battle against Pandya King of this area sought help of Jains and with their mystic power, an elephant was created to kill the Pandya King and to destroy his capital. Then the Pandya King, a devotee of Siva prayed Siva, who sent him 'Narasimhastram' which turned the elephant into a hill. Commemorating this event, a stone elephant was installed in Madurai which is found near Yanai Malai even today.

The inscriptions at this temple are written in ancient Tamil and Brahmi. There are two inscriptions of Sri Vallabha Pandya which speak of the gifts made to this temple. There are some other inscriptions of later Pandyas and one among them is of Sundara Pandya (1216 AD) but the inscriptions are incomplete.54

The Yoganarasimha idol in the temple is six feet high, sculptured on the hill itself. There are Mahamandapam, Garudamandapam, and Mukhamandapam of the Pandya period. The shrine of Goddess Narasingavalli faces south at the entrance. The temple is unique for its utsava idol of Narasimha in a standing posture with discus and conch in the upper two hands and in the left lower hand a mace, while the right lower hand is in Abhaya posture. Similar Narasimha idol is worshipped in Parikkal.

7) Narasimmam:

This Narasimmam temple is situated just on the outskirts of Madurai and 10 kilometers away from it. The presiding deity is Yoganarasimha, seated in Yogapatti covering round the two ankles. The utsava idol is that of a standing Narasimha on a pedestal, which is rare of its kind.

An article by I A Srinivasan, Yannai Malai, entertainment column, The Hindu, 191 Aug 22, 2003
The myth connected to this place is that when the Goddess Meenakshi was attacked by asuras taking three forms, the Goddess could able to eradicate only two forms, but the third form which is that of a huge elephant, she could not vanquish being a young maiden. Then she took the help of Lord Vishnu her brother. Since the lion is the natural enemy of elephant, Vishnu manifested in Narasimha form and overpowered the elephant. The lord then settled there as Yoganarasimha. The idol is very attractive and beautiful.  

8) Kandi Rajupalem:  

This place is about 5 kms to Thanjavur and Lord Narasimha is seen here as Yoganarasimha (Ap-II,p.4).  

The local legend connected to this temple is that there was a staunch devotee, who used to circumulate everything and anyone carrying 'namam' mark. The king of that place once wanted to fool him and sent two donkeys one having the mark of 'namam'. The devotee circumulated the donkey with 'namam' mark leaving the other, the king asked him why he circumulated only one and left the other, the devotee replied that the donkey with namam was representative of Vaishnava, whereas the other one was just like all of them including the king. The enraged king ordered his soldiers to execute him. But when he was being led for execution, the soldiers were caught fire miraculously. The king realized his fault and as a mark, he built this Narasimha temple here.  

9) Denkanikota:  

Gavi Narasimha temple, located on the outskirts of Denkanikota in the Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu, is a unique temple. Located 70
kms from Bangalore and 27 kms from Hosur on a small hill, the sanctum sanctorum of this temple is underground in a subterranean cave below the level of the temple complex. The presiding deity Lakshmi Narasimha with his consort Goddess Lakshmi on his lap is nicely carved on the wall. The sanctum sanctorum is such tiny and low level place that only the priest can sit before the deity and no space for anyone else. The devotees have to descend nearly dozen steps from the entrance to have the dashing of the lord. The Unsaved murky is very beautifully made of panchaloha.56

10) Velachery:

Velachery, originally known as Vedesreni is situated on the road from Saidapet to Tambaram in Chennai. The presiding deity of this temple is the Lord Yoganarasimha with four hands in a sitting posture facing the west. The Goddess Amritavalli is having a separate shrine. The Utsava idol is Sri Bhaktavatsala perumal with Sridevi and Bhudevi.

The place gets its name from Lord Vedanarayana perumal who is enshrined in the Manimandapa and is seen as standing west-faced and ready to discharge cakra to slay the evil doers. This place was called in ancient period as Vedanarayanapuram in Tamil and Vedasreni in Sanskrit. It is said Yogasanas used to be conducted here hence the name Vellvicheri (Vellvi means Yoga in Tami) and gradually corrupted as Velichery.57

11) Perambakkam:

Sri Lakshminarasimha temple is located at Perambakkam at a distance of 55 kms to Chennai on the way to Sri Perambudur. The

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57 T A Srinivasan, an article "Abode of Lord Narasimha, published in Hindu, DT 06.02.2003 available at www.thehindu.com

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presiding deity is Lord Lashmi Narasimha along with Goddess Laksmi on his lap. He is in a sitting posture and the idol is huge and gigantic at about seven feet height and the Goddess is five feet. Both the lord and goddess are so attractive. This Perambakkam is also called Narasingapuram.58

It is believed that whoever worships here continuously for eight swali nakshatrams, he/she would get relieved of all obstacles and prospers in all walks of life.

12) Thiruvellikkeni (Triplicane – Chennai):

Brindavankshetra in Chennai city is one of the 108 Divyadesams praised by Alvars. The presiding deity is Pardhasartahi perumal. Just behind the main shrine, there is a sub shrine for the Lord Narasimha facing west (Ap-II,p.3). Lord Narasimha is said to have appeared on the prayers of sages Atri and Jabali. The lord is seated in Yoga posture59. The saint Thirumangai Alvar had sung ten pasurams on this kshetra and one is dedicated to the shrine of Lord Yoganarasimha.60

While the main idol here is Yoganarasimha, the utsavamurti has one hand in ‘ahvanamudra’ (inviting) as if inviting Prahlada.

13) Thiruneermalai:

This Thiruneermalai is one of the 108 divyadesams and is about 5 kms from Pallavaram in the suburbs of Chennai. The four deities in this shrine are: Neervannan, Narasimha, Ranganatha and Trivikrama in four different postures standing, sitting, resting and walking respectively and represent the lords of four kshetras; Thirunaraiyur (standing), Thiruvali-
Thirunagari (sitting), Thirukkudandai (resting) and Thirukkovalur (walking/striding) at one place. Lord Narasimha has a separate shrine in this prakara and is in yoga posture as Yoganarasimha. Thirumangai Alvar has sung 10 pasurams in his Periya Thirumozhi of this kshetra and four pasurams refer to Lord Narasimha.61

14) Thiruvali and Thirunagari:

These two are two divyadesams separated by about 3 kms. They are about 10 kms away from Sirkazhi. The main deity in Thiruvali is Lord Manavalan, whereas in Thirunagri, it is Lord Soundraraja Perumal. There are separate shrines for the Lord Narasimha just behind the main shrine. At Thiruvali, we find two Narasimhas in two different postures viz., Vidarananarasimha that is the Lord actually tearing open the demon king (as found in Kadiri of A.P) and Yoganarasimha (immediately after killing the demon king). In Thirunagari, Lord Narasimha is depicted with eight hands (ashtabhuja). Thus in these two kshetras, the lord is seen performing both the duties of punishing the wicked and protecting the pious. Though Manavala Muni, Thirumangai Alvar and Kulasekhara Alvar praised these two kshetras in their pasurams, none of them are on Lord Narasimha. These two Narasimhas are part of Pancanarasimha kshetras in a group of the Narasimha temples in Tamil Nadu, the other two being Kuraiyaloor, where the Lord is seen as Ugranarasimha and Thirumangaimadam, wherein the Lord is Veeranarasimha.62

15) Thirukoshtiyoor:

This Thirukoshtiyoor is the birth place of Thirukoshtiyoor Nambi (Koshtipoornar), who initiated the sacred mantra to Ramanuja and one

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61 Thirumangai Alvar, Periya Thirumozhi 2 4.1, 2 4.4, 2 4.7 and 6 8.4 (cf. Dr M S Rajace, IAS, (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara, p 83)
62 Dr. MS Rajace, IAS (Rtd) Sri Narasimha Avatara, pp 86-87
of the Acharyas of Ramanuja. The main temple is in four tiers. Just outside the main temple, in the outer prakara, there are two slightly mutilated Narasimha idols (Ap-II,p.4). It is said that the idols were there inside the main temple in the beginning and due to the luster of the Lord, the people brought them outside. One of the idols is carved as chasing the demon king, who is trying to evade and the other is that the Lord is tearing open the abdomen of the demon king. This is one of the 108 divyadesams, but lord Narasimha had no share in the pasurams of Alvars.63

16) Thanjaiyali Koil (Thanjore):

This is one of the 108 divyadesham. There are three temples within a radius of five kilometers of North of Thanjore, (1) Thanjaimamani Koil; (2) Thanjaiyayil Koil and (3) Maikundra Perumal Koil. At Thanjaiyayil Koil, the presiding deity is Narasimha, while in other two temples Neelamegha Perumal and Manikunda Perumal are the deities. However the Utsavavigraha is Srimannarayana in all the temples. In Thanjaiyayil Koil, the lord is in Yoga posture and hence is Yoganarasimha. It is said that lord Narasimha manifested before the Sage Markandeya at his request.64 Thirumangai Alvar sung on this shrine 65 and also Bhoothathalvar in second Andadi.66

17) Kattu Azhagiya Singar (Srirangam):

Srirangam a very holy place for Vaishnava tradition and is regarded as one of the 108 divyadesam. It contains the Lord Narasimha embracing Goddess Mahalaksmi in one of the walls of the mandapam (Ap-II,p.5) and no special shrine is found for Lord Narasimha. However the posture of the Lord embracing Goddess is a noteworthy one and hence it is touched.

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63 Ibid p 86.
64 Ibid p 82.
65 Thirumangai Alvar, Pernya Thirumozhi 7.3-4 (cf Dr Rajajee, Sri Narasimha Avatara)
66 Bhoothathalvar 2:70 (cf Dr M S Rajajee, Sri Narasimha Avatara)
18) Thirumoghur:

Enroute to Melur from Madurai at about 12 kms, we find Thirumoghur, one of 108 divyadesams and also known as Mohanapuram. The presiding deity is Kalamegha Perumal, who manifested there at the request of the gods when he was in Mohinirupa to distribute Amrutha (nectar). There is a separate shrine for sixteen handed Sudarshana and on the reverse of which is found the four handed Yoga Narasimha (Ap-II,p.5), who is believed to be powerful deity (while discussing Mangalagiri Kshatra of A.P. supra, we find Narasimha entering into discus to kill Asura). It is believed that Lord Narasimha resides in Sri Sudarshana Cakra and even today we find Sudarshana homam being conducted at Narasimha temples in particular. Nammalvar in his Thiruvaimozhi sung on this shrine but not directly either on Lord Narasimha or on his characteristics.

19) Thirukkadanmalai (Mahabalipuram):

This place is 45 kms from south Chennai and on the sea coast and the presiding deity is Sthalasayana Perumal. There is a separate shrine for Lord Narasimha in the outer Prakara. Lord Narasimha is seen here as Yoganarasimha with four hands. Thirumangai Alvar sung 20 pasurams and in one pasuram, we get the reference to Lord Narasimha.

III) KARNATAKA

1) Melkote:

Melkote is located at about 55 kms North from Mysore in Karnataka and is famous for an ancient temple for Lord Tirunayana. It is one of the 108 divyadesams of vaishnavas and known for its long

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18) Dr MS Rajasee, IAS (Rtd), Sri Narasimha Avatara p. 90-91
19) Thirumangai Alvar, Peniya Thirumozhi 23-10.
association with the great saint of Vaisnavite tradition Ramanujacharya. Melkote is also known as Yadavagiri, Yatistalam, Vedadri and Narayanadri. The presiding deity is known as Tirunarayana while utsava deity is Vishnu which goes by the names Selvapillai and Sampatkumara also.

Melkote has two distinct temples. The Tirunarayana temple is located at the foot-hills, while Yoganarasimha temple is on the top of the hill. The legend says that Yoganarasimha image was installed by none other than Prahlada himself.

The Yoganarasimha temple at the top of the hill is at a height of 1,777 meters above sea level. The majestic gopuram of the temple is visible from a distance. This temple is believed to be one of the seven holy centers of Narasimha worship. The Lord's form at the Narasimha temple in Melkote is Ugra Narasimha and is really frightening. According to a few Vaishnava scholars, there are nine Narasimha temples in this area like Saligramam, Thondanur, Padmagiri, Srirangapatnam, Sivasamudram, etc.

Saint Ramanujacarya of 12th century lived in this place for about 14 years to avoid Chola King, who prosecuted Vaishnavites. The Saint stayed at Tondanur Narasimha temple for some time before proceeding to Melkote. These two temples existed even before the visit of the Saint. It is said that the King Bhattideva of Karnataka, embraced Sri Vaishnava way of life being inspired by the Saint Ramanujacarya, while the later was in Melkote and assumed a new name Vishnuvardhana. He built five Narayana temples and renovated the two temples of Melkote when they were in ruins. These temples have been under the patronage of the Mysore Royal family and are endowed with valuable jewelry presented to the Lords of this place.

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69 An article “Mulkote – Sri Vaishnava Pilgrimage centre” at www.vishuweb.in
The special feature of this place is that a cave known as 'pulikugai' and also as 'piladharam', through which one has to crawl with great difficulty, is located around just below the idol of Lord Narasimha. Just passing through this is a divine experience indeed. The cave was kept closed in the past and has been reopened now. 70

2) Hampi:

Hampi is famous for a gigantic monolith of Ugranarasimha carved out of a single boulder (Ap-II,p.7). According to the inscription found here, it was executed in 1525 AD during the rule of Sri Krishnadevaraya, whose tutelary deity is Lord Narasimha with a view to construct temple, but could not be completed. This image is of 6.7 meters height and was mutilated to an extent and the image of Lakshmi carved as sitting on the lords left thigh was entirely damaged and missing from this place when the place was vandalized in 1528 AD by the invaders. With the well delineated mane, large bulging eyes and with broad chest, the Lord Narasimha is seen here as most awesome and the centre of attraction for the tourists.

Lord Narasimha is seated on the coils of Adisesha and covered above his head with the seven hoods of Adisesha, which act as a canopy. The entire statue is covered with in an arch with lion-mask above the hoods of Adisesha. The image of goddess Lakshmi which is recovered later is preserved in Kamalapura Museum. 71

3) Devarayanadurga:

Devarayanadurga is a rocky hill station situated at an altitude of 3940 feet near Tumkur and 68 kms from Bangalore on Bangalore-Pune road. There are three elevations and seven gates leading to the top.

70 An article ‘A great Incarnation by I.A.Srinivasan The Hindu, June, 07, 2007
71 Sources www.hampoonline.com/ugranarasimha
This place is originally known as Anebiddasari and after it was captured by the Mysore King Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar it is named as Devarayanadurga.

The Lakshminarasimha temple is on the lowest elevation. Nearby there are two springs called as Anadote and Jayatirtha, which are the source of streams for Mangali and Jaya, which unite at the foothill as a source for river Shimsha. The most important temples of this place are Yoganarasimha, Bhoganarasimha and Laksminarasimha. The Laksminarasimha temple is at the lowest elevation built in Dravidian style of architecture facing east. It is said that this temple was constructed by Kantirava Narasaraj-I and later was repaired by the Mysore king Krishnaraja Wodeyar III according to the inscriptions. At the foot of the hill, we find Yoganarasimha and Bhoganarasimha temples.

We find yet another Narasimha temple on the third elevation and this temple consists of sanctum sanctorum, mukhamadapa and Navagraha shrine. There are Narasimha Tirtha and Prasara Tirtha. This temple is said to be older than Laksmi Narasimha temple on first elevation.72

Rathotsava is celebrated for Bhaganarasimha and Narsimha Jayanti is another festival which attracts the devotees to this place from all parts of Karnataka. The pilgrims feel that giripradakshina (circumbulating the hill) fulfills all wishes.

4) Karpara Kshetra (Koppara):

The koppara village wherein Karpara Srinarasimha is presiding deity is located on the banks of river Krishna is 90 kilometers from
Gulbarga in Karnataka. The specialty of this ksetra is that the Lord here is Vriksharupi (in the form of Pipal –Asvartha tree). However, all the prayers are offered in the usual manner. The belief that the Lord is abiding in an odd form is very deep and the place has become very popular. The presiding deity of this temple is Ugranarasimha. The pipal tree is adored as the Lord’s form since it embodied several salagramas in its hollow from where Lord Narasimha appeared.

The myth of to this place says that the sage Karpara, a descendent of Sage Bhrgu did penance for lord Narasimha and got his blessings. It is believed that the Lords Brahma and Siva along with other gods descended to worship the lord in the form of water during Karkataka Sankramana every year.

An interesting story connected to pipal tree and a temple for Lord Venkateswara in this place is that the Lord Venkateswara ordered a devotee by name Narappayya in a dream to construct a temple and plant a pipal tree stating that the place would be dearer to him and he himself manifested in the form of an idol along with a asvartha sapling by his side. A temple was constructed and the popularity of this place grew along with the pipal tree.

In due course, the pipal tree grew older and started drying up. Branch after branch fell and finally the whole fell on the ground miraculously on the auspicious day of Narasimha Jayanti i.e. the thirteenth day of bright half (suklapaksha) of Vaisakha. To the astonishment of the world, several salagramas of different dimensions were found in the hollow of the trunk of the tree. One bigger one weighing nearly 5 kgs is identified as ‘Ashtabhuja ugranarasimha salagrama’. The locals installed the salagrama in a temple and a new pipal tree started to grow in the same place where the salagrama found.
A legend popular there is that the king Adil Shah of Bijapur under whose jurisdiction this Koppara Village is situated, being ordained by the Lord Venkateswara in his dream renovated the Lord Venkateswara Temple there and begot a legal heir by the blessings of Lord Venkateswara. Thus The Lord Narasimha gained more popularity as the presiding deity. The temple of Lord Venkateswara, which is instrumental for the popularity of Lord Narasimha and the papal tree from where the lord emerged, is also a place of interest for the pilgrims located adjacent to Narasimha temple.73

5) Kurunagera:

Kurunagera village is situated just 4 kms from Dodda Mallur, Channapattana Taluk, of Kamataka. The presiding deity of the temple is Lord Yoganarasimha stationed on a hillock.

The local legend connects the sage Kanva to this place. The great sage Kanva, while doing penance in Kurunagere found Narasimha bimbam in a pillar on a nearby hillock. At the same time, a settlement of nomads known as ‘Kadugollas’ came to dwell in that forest. They used to graze their cattle near the hillock and one cow used to pour out its milk automatically in a particular bush always. The sage Kanva observing this, determined that there must be the presence of the Lord and in disguise of one Kadugolla told the other Kadugollas about it. The Kadugollas cleared the bush, on the advice of Kanva found the image of Lord Narasimha in a pillar there.

As soon as Lord Narasimha’s appearance, sage Kanva disappeared after making necessary arrangements for his worship. Then onwards the Kadugollas started business making the Lord as their business partner offering some of the portion of their profit to the Lord...
and prospered. Even today it can be seen that on an annual congregation (Jathara), the descendents of those Kadugollas visit and pay their offerings to the lord. 74

6) Tondanur / Tonnur:

Tondanur is situated in Mandya District, Srirangapatnam Taluk of Karnataka and 30 kms north from Mysore. The temple of Yoganarasimha is situated with Narasimha dandam (scepter) and the Goddess Yadavanayaki. It is believed that Prahlada himself installed the idol as in Melkote. It is said that the Vaishnava saint Ramanjacarya, after leaving his home Srirangam when Chola King was persecuting Vaishnavas made this place as his home for some years before moving to Melkote. It is said that a historical lake Tonurkere spread over 2,150 acres was planned and built by saint Ramanjacarya and was named as ‘Tirumalasagara’. Later when Adil Shah invaded, it is renamed as ‘Moti Talab’ because of its crystal clear water. Again in due course, Tippu Sultan of Srirangapatnam repaired the lake. The outflow of water from the lake formed into a waterfall known as Ramanuja Ganga or Tonnur Madaga. Never in the history, this lake dried up at any time so far, it is said.

In and around, in addition to Yoga Narasimha temple three other ancient Hayasala architectural temples (1000 years or more) are located here. They are: 1) Venkataramana/ Srinivasa temple, 2) Nimbinarayana Temple, 3) Parthasarathi / Venugopal temple.

1) The Venkataramana temple is on a top of a rocky hill called Padmagiri and the worship in performed in this temple only on Saturdays. 2) The Nambinarayana / Laksminaraya temple is said to be a Jain temple and Saint Ramanujacarya after the Jain king Battideva’s
conversion as Vaishnava and becoming the follower of Ramanujacarya installed the idol of Narayana in that Jain temple. The deity Lord Vishnu’s idol is tall with Sankha, cakra, gada and padma in his four hands and the utsava idol is a replica of the main idol. The goddess there is Aravindavalli. 3) In Parthasarathi temple, the presiding deity is Lord Krishna with Bhudevi and Sridevi on either side. The goddess is Yadavanayaki. The utsava idol is Lord Krishna with Rukmini and Satyabham. It is believed that Dhramaraja and Sage Bhrgu are believed to have installed the main idol.

As discussed earlier, the presiding deity of the temple is Yoganarasimha and the goddess is ‘Yadavanayaki’. In this temple, a separate shrine is dedicated to saint Ramanujacarya in a preaching pose, where it is said that Ramanujacarya defeated 1000 Jain monks in a debate. All the defeated Jain monks embraced Sri Vaishnavism.

7) Saligrama:

Saligrama is a temple town on the Mangalore-Mumbai National Highway, 22 kms from Udupi in Karnataka. Gurunarasimha is the presiding deity of Saligrama Temple and also family deity of many families of that village and nearby villages. The idol is about three feet high and is carved out in a single salagrama and hence the name Saligrama for this place.

It is believed that the idol was installed by Lokaditya King of Mourya dynasty around 4th century AD, under the leadership of Rajaguru Bhattacarya. Legend says that the Lord Narasimha appeared as Lord Ganesha in Bhattacarya’s dream and asked to install Narasimha idol on Ganesh Yantra in this temple. Though the presiding deity of this temple is Narasimha, the rituals conducted here are similar.
Moreover Lord Ganesha occupies a prominent place in the rituals.\textsuperscript{76}

The resident Kota Brahmins of this place are neither Saivites nor Vaishnavites but consider Narasimha as their Guru and God. They do not have any other Guru, Swami or Math, because they consider Narasimha as their Guru. The deity is known as Guru Narasimha.

8) Bidar:

Bidar is a taluk and an important historical town in Karnataka. The Narasimha Zarna Cave temple is situated in the outskirts of Bidar. The temple is situated in a large cave under Manichola range of hills and about 1 km to city. This temple virtually runs into a cave water body, which is one of the unique features of the place. A perennial stream is said to be flowing continuously for hundreds of years. The water in the cave leads the pilgrims to the idol of Narasimha Jharna cave. One has to wade through the water of waist deep to have the darshan of the Lord Narasimha on the wall at the end of the cave. It will be a thrilling experience to move in the cave where the bats and owls sit on the roof of the cave, but it is said that they will not do any harm to the visiting devotees.\textsuperscript{77}

9) Srirangapatna:

Narasimha temple of Hysala period is an ancient temple situated to the south east of the famous Ranganatha temple at Srirangapatnam. This temple houses a seven feet high image of Ugra Narasimha made of Black stone which is believed to be the best of its kind. Srirangapatnam is on the way to Mysore is about 16 kms away.

\textsuperscript{76} Kontaksha Veda Shashtra Poshaka Sangha available at www.kontaksha.org
\textsuperscript{77} www.karnataka.com/Narasimha_jharna_cave_temple
10) Baburayan Koppal / Turuma Kudalu Narasimpur:

Baburayan Koppal, a small village near Srirangapatnam is situated on the banks of Cauvery and near the confluence of Lokapavani and Cauvery on the road from Bangalore to Mysore before Srirangapatnam. The presiding deity of the temple is Sri Manikamika Gunja Sri Laksmi Narasimha. The deity Narasimha has a small bead (Rudraksha) in his right palm (Bead is called Gulaganji in Kannada) to indicate the sacredness of this Kshetra.

The myth says that Sage Bhrgu did penance and Vishnu blessed him in the form of Sri Laksminarasimha. The sage installed Lord Laksmi Narasimha here, it is believed. The local legend is that the Lord appeared in a dream to a washer man, who used to wash his clothes at the bank of Cauvery and revealed that his idol was under the stone, where he was washing clothes everyday. He instructed the washer man to unearth it and to construct a temple and also arrange regular worship. He also informed him that there was a pot full of gold that can be used for its construction. Accordingly the washer man unearthed the idol and constructed a temple. Finding the bead in the right hand of the Lord, the lord and the place were considered as very pious. It is also said that when once the washer man wished to got to Kasi on pilgrimage, the Lord told in the dream that there is no need to go to Kasi and Prayag since he earned such merits by constructing this temple more sacred than that place.78

In addition to the above temples of Lord Narasimha, it is found that, under the patronage of Hysala, Calukya and Vijayanagar dynasties, several temples of Lord Narasimha were constructed during 11th, 12th and 14th centuries. Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Akkiheballu, Mandya Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Bagur.

78 Source: Mandya Smravastava Sabha, Malleswara, Bangalore
Hassan Dist.; Sri Yoga Narasimha temple at Belagola, Mysore Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Hornahalli, Hassan Dist.; Sri Narasimha temple at Haveri; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Hole Narasimhapur, Hassan Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Javagal, Hassan Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Kunigal, Tumkur Dist.; Sri Narasimha temple at Maddur, Mandya Dist.; Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Nuggehalli, Hassan Dist. etc. are some of very ancient temples and most of them are protected under ancient archeological sites also, but legends are not available.

III) KERALA

1) Anantha Narayanapuram, Alleppy:

This temple is situated at Ananthanarayanapuram (A N Puram) near T.D. Medical Hospital, just 500 meters from NH 47 highway. This is popularly known as New Tirumala temple, wherein presently the main Presiding deity is Sri Laksmi Narasimha. Sanctum Sanctorum has three steps: on the top step in Sri Venkatachalapathy with Laksmi Devi and Bhoodevi; on the next step Lord Narasimha with Mahalaksmi on the left lap and the Utsava deities on the next step. The idols of Hanuman, Garuda and Ganapati are together installed on a single platform in the sanctum sanctorum.

This temple is more known in relation to Cochin Venkatachalapathy idol case. During the Portuguese persecution at Cochin, the idols of Venkatachalapathy and Laksmi of Cochin Gosripuram and Narasimha of Thuruvooor were shifted to Alleppy in 1792 AD and kept in the North Agrasala of Alleppy Venkatachalapathy (old Tirumala Temple) for more than 60 years. During that period Alleppey developed in trade and commerce and became an important sea port. After the governance of Cochin changed, the new king of
Cochin demanded back the idol of Venkatacalapathy, but was denied by the king of Travancore under which jurisdiction Alleppy come under. The king of Travancore immediately constructed a temple in a new location for Venkatacalapathy at about 1 kms to the Old Tirumala temple and the area was named as Anantharayanapuram. The idols of Venkatacalapathy, Laksmi Devi and Narasimha were installed in the new temple. However, within ten days of installation, the Venkatacalapathy idol was clandestinely taken back to Cochin at midnight and the idol was moved beyond the Travancore state boundary by the time the news was spread and hence the shifting could not stopped. The original idols of Laksmi and Narasimha are still in the temple. A new idol of Venkatacalapathy was installed in later days. Along with eight days annual celebrations to Venkatacalapathy, a five day annual celebration in connection with Narasimhajayanti was started in the beginning of 20th century.

A legend related to with the commencement of the five day annual celebrations of Lord Narasimha goes thus: Once after the daily ritual at the temple, payasam was distributed as naivedya and all the devotees consumed it. Later venomous snake was found in the vessel of payasam. All the devotees became panic stricken and the temple authorities requested all of them to stay back and a mass prayer was offered to Narasimha. Surprisingly, all escaped unharmed, except one who did not stay back and left the premises. He died of poison. It is said that after the event, the tip of a finger of Lord Narasimha's leg turned bluish as if the poison was absorbed by him. Then onwards the five day annual celebrations for Narasimha were made a regular feature.

It is said that due to the fierceful vision of Lord Narasimha, the area in front of the temple remained barren and no establishment could come up there. To avoid this, it is said that the position of the idol was
slightly tilted backwards to avoid the direct vision on the area and from then on the area had developed well.

Another legend is told that once a royal dignitary visited the temple late in the evening just before the closure. The flowers to offer the Lord were exhausted and to avoid the wrath of the royal dignitary, the priest took out some flowers already kept on his head (without the notice of the visitor) and offered it to the visitor. The royal dignitary finding hair in the flower asked the priest whether the lord has hair. The priest who was left with no option said yes and when asked to show, he said since it had become dark he would show it on the next day. The royal dignitary said he would visit again on the next day and the priest had to show him hair. The worried priest offered prayers throughout the night to Lord Narasimha and just when he slept in the early hours, the lord appeared in dream and told the priest not to worry and directed him to ask the royal dignitary to witness the idol with a single eye closing the other one. Accordingly when the royal dignitary viewed the lord with his single eye being unable to bear the divine brightness of the lord, he lost the vision of that eye permanently. 79

2) Thuravoor:

Thuravoor is 22 kms south of Cochin on NH 47 national highway to Alleppey. Thuravoor is an important community of Gowda Saraswat Brahmins (GSB). The pratisha is believed to have taken place in the year 1640 AD by Sri Raval Naickan and the present temple was constructed in 1704 AD. In the sanctum sanctorum, on the first step, there is the idol of Venkatacalapathy; on second step, Vishnu Padukam; and on the fourth the Utsava idol. The third step is vacant symbolizing

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79 Temple history posted by Konkan Ambalam Narasimha GSB Temple, Alleppey at www.wikimedia.org 147854 lakshmi-narasimha-temple-anguram Alleppey
the original Ugranarasimha idol, which is now at A N Puram temple, Alleppy.

It is said that one by name Raval Naickan, a young businessman and ardent devotee of Lord Narasimha settled in Thuravoor near Vadakkapan Temple and used to visit the temple and attend deeparadhana everyday evening from outside the temple, since GSBs were not allowed inside the temple on those days. One day the priests intentionally closed the temple early to deny the darshan and prasadam of the lord to Raval Naickan. The worried Raval prayed the lord from outside and heard a voice asking him to move westward. He followed a light moving towards west and when he reached the place of the present temple, the light disappeared. He heard as if he was instructed to do a pratishtha of the lord there. At the same time, he found two sculptors approaching him and requested them to make a Narasimha idol for him. They made an enclosure, having accepted and instructed him not to enter the enclosure till they complete the work. Raval Naickan waited for long and being unable to hear any sounds from within the enclosure, he entered and found two beautiful idols of Narasimha, one in Ugra form and the other in Laksminarasimha form, but not the sculptors there. However, the idol of Ugranarasimha was with an unfinished toe. Raval Naickan believed that those sculptors were divine and constructed a small temple for Lord Narasimha and he himself looked after till he became old. Later he handed over the temple management to Cochin Tirumala Deivosom in 1704 AD102. Originally the idol was facing west and later to avoid the powerful vision directly on the agricultural fields there the pratishtha was again made with the idol facing east.

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* Source at [www.idemple.org/thuravoor](http://www.idemple.org/thuravoor)
As discussed earlier, during the persecution of Portuguese in Cochin, along with many Gowda Saraswatha Brahmins, the Ugranarasimha idol was also shifted to Alleppey. First it was in old Tirumala temple and later installed in New Tirumala Temple in Alleppy. Subsequently Thuravoor became part of Travancore state. After the idol of Venkatacalapathy was clandestinely taken back by the King of Cochin, there was infighting among community members in Cochin and Travancore for the ownership of Thuravoor temple because of its rich properties. The Cochin members filed a case in Quilon Court in 1853 AD. For some time the temple was under a Receiver appointed by the Court. In 1895 AD, the Court decided that both Alleppey and Thuravoor temples belong to the entire community members of eight surrounding villages' viz., Alleppy, Thuravoor, Shertallai, Purakkad, Kayankulam, Quilon, Kottayam and Parur. Accordingly, Alleppey Anantnarayanapuram Thuravoor Tirumala Devasam (AATTD) was formed and managed by elected members of eight villages. The Devasam was very rich and established many educational institutions.

3) Vadakkanappan Temple:

Another temple in Thuravoor is Vadakkannappan, which is the abode of Lord Ugranarasimha and Lord Sudarshana. Twin sanctum sanctorums and flag masts in this temple complex are the specialty of this temple. One sanctum sanctorum dedicated to Lord Sudarshana is believed to have come into existence first. Though no records are available, it is said to be 1300 years old. The second sanctum sanctorum dedicated to Lord Narasimha is said to come into being somewhere in the 7th century AD during the reign of Chera King Keralendan.

The idol of Lord Sudarshana has four arms carrying conch, disc, mace and lotus. The idol of Narasimha is said to have originated from
the holy city of Kasi and unlike most other Narasimha idols, here Lord Narasimha is in a standing posture. The lord Narasimha on northern side is called Vadakkanappan and Lord Sudarshana on southern side is called Thekkanappan. On the extreme eastern side, in the direct vision of Narasimha shrine there is a massive tank and it is believed that this cool, clean and serene water of the tank has calming effect on the lord’s fierce form.  

4) Tellicherry:

Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple in the heart of Tellicherry town, Kannur District in the Northern parts of Kerala is an important centre for GSBs. It is just half a kilometer from the railway station as well as bus stand. The presiding deity of this temple is Sri Lakshmi Narasimha and the sanctum sanctorum has a three tier simhasana. On the top level Lord Lakshminarasimha is flanked by Sri Pattabhinarasimha and Veeravittal; on the second level Lord Kodandarama with Sita and Lakshmana; on the third level Lord Venkataramana with Sri Devi and Bhudevi and on either side Garuda and Hanuman. The Utsava idol is Lord Venkataramana. The Salagramas and the Nagadevalhas are placed on a separate pitha.

In the outer prakara, there are separate shrines for Hanuman, Lakshmidevi, Ganapathi and Vittoba Rukmini. On the south of the temple complex, the sacred temple tank exists.

It is said that GSBs who migrated from Goa built a small shrine for Lord Kodandarama here first. A legend connects the origin of Laksmi Narasimha temple with his ardent devotee Devdas Bhandari. The legend in brief is as hereunder. One night Devadas Bhandari a rich and affluent GSB merchant was instructed by Lord Narasimha in the dream.

www.tdtemple.org/thuravoor
that one Namboodri would approach him with the divine idol of Lord Laksmi Narasimha and a sacred Salagrama and to accept them by offering generous gifts in return. On the same night that Namboodri, a native of Taliparamba, 50 kms to Tellicherry got similar dream instructing him to hand over the idol and salagrama to Bhandari at Tellicherry. Accordingly that Namboodri handed over the idol and salagrama to Bhandari and Bhandari presented gifts to him. Though Bhandari kept the idol and salagrama in his pooja room for sometime, later they are handed over to the king of Tellicherry by the Bhandari family. A proper temple was constructed in the place occupied by Lord Rama and the idols of Laksminarasimha, Lord Rama, and Lord Venkataramana along with their consorts were installed in the temple. 

5) Shooranadu:

Shoranadu is a Panchayat at Kottappuram stop of Kayankulam-Sastamkotta in Kollam District, Kerala. The presiding deity of the temple of this place is Sri Narasimha and is also called Anayadi Pazhayidan Narasimha temple. Anayadi literally means the footsteps of the elephant. The lord in this temple faces east and the deities of sub shrines are Siva, Bhuvaneswari, Nagaraja and Nagayakshi.

A ten day long annual festival is celebrated here in Malayalam month of Makara (January-February). The concluding day is marked by an elephant pageantry in which 80 odd tuskers take part. The procession has the traditional temple orchestras as accompaniment. This is a real visual treat.

6) Thiruvanthapuram/Trivandrum:

Sri Ananthapadmanabhaswamy temple at Thiruvanthapuram (Trivandrum), capital city of Kerala is one of the famous 108 divyadesams praised by the Alvars. The presiding deity is Lord Ananthapadmanabhan (in sleeping posture facing east) and the Goddess Srilakshmitayar. Nammalvar praised this Lord in 11 pasurams, but none of them is on Narasimha. There are separate shrines for Yoganarasimha, Hanuman, Lakshmi, Varaha, Krishna and Srinivasa. The Lord Narasimha here is in Yoga posture and Lord Hanuman shrine is just opposite to this shrine. These deities are said to be very powerful. Matsya, Varaha and Padma tirthas are located here.83

7) Chengannur:

Sastamkulangara Narasimha temple is 500 meters east of Changannur Madhava temple in Kerala state near Pampa River. This very old temple has very beautiful wood carvings such as Gajendra Moksha Data, Dasavatara, Ananthasayana, Sivaparvathi, Hanuman, Seetha, Narasimha etc.84

IV) ORISSA

The very mention of Orissa invariably leads us to the religious of City of Puri for its antiquity and rich architecture in general and Lord Jagannatha, presiding deity of the city itself in particular. No doubt the Jagannatha cult dominates the entire land of Orissa. Due to the inseperable association of Narasimha cult with Jagannatha cult, the Lord Narasimha enjoys much more reverence there. It is believed that there are more than a hundred Narasimha temples with rich endowments in the state Orissa. Some of these temples in around Puri
starting with the Narasimha temple located in the very Jagannatha temple complex are being discussed here.

Lord Jagannatha temple is the primary attraction in Puri. In this temple, the wooden images of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra (brother of Jagannatha) and Goddess Subhadra (sister of Jagannath) are being worshipped. The construction of the temple was done by Raja Anantha Varman Chodagangadev. In this temple town, there are Narasimha temple, Gundicha Mandir, Siddha Mahaveer temple, Loknath temple, Markandeswara Temple, Indradhynana Tank Narender Sarovar, Parbatii Sarovara, Rohini Kunda, Markandeswar Tank and Sweta Ganga Tank.

1) Narasimha Temple:

The Narasimha temple is located in the southern side of the inner enclosure of the Jagannath temple complex of Puri. The temple is built in Sand Stones. The architectural style of the temple dates back to the 10th century AD and most probably to the Somavamsi period of Orissa history. It faces to east. Figures of ten incarnations are sculpted on the outer prakara. The images of Parsvadevatas Varaha, Ananthanarayana and Vamana are on southern, western and northern directions. The image of Laksmi Narasimha is finely carved on the upper door lintel.

The presiding deity of this temple is Lord Narasimha in a fierce form in the actual aspect of tearing open the demon king Hiranyakasipu in the sanctum sanctorum. He has four hands with conch and cakra in upper hands while the lower two hands are engaged in taking out the entrails of Hiranyakasipu.

As many as 61 inscriptions are found here referring to different events connected to this place in different languages viz., Oriya and Sanskrit and the earliest inscriptions are dated in Saka 1035 i.e., 1113 AD. Prof. KS Behera, Department of Ancient History of suggests that
this temple was already there in 1113 AD and it should be long to the Somavamsi period of Orissan history. The archeological design of Narasimha temple also indicates that this must have been constructed prior to Jagannath temple. Some historians feel that this Narasimha might have been in the temple of Purushottama before the present temple was constructed by Ananthe Varman Chodagangadev and later was changed into Narasimha temple once the Purushottama idol was shifted to the new. But this view has not gained support from many scholars and even the Parsvadevatas of present Narasimha temple also indicate that this temple is originally Narasimha temple only from the beginning.85

2) Yagnanarasimha Temple:

It is near Gundicha temple in Puri. There is a temple, the sanctum of which preserves a remarkable image of Lakshminarasimha. The deity was believed to be installed by Chodagangadeva, who introduced the system of Narasimha worship in Puri. The deity is seated in yogasana posture with legs crossed and tied near knees with four hands with conch and disc in upper hands, while lower hands rested over knees. The Goddess is seated on his left lap.86

3) Chakranarasimha Temple:

This temple is at Chakratirtha road in Puri. In sanctum sanctorum there are three Narasimha images. Among the three the middle one is bigger than the other two and is seated inside the Chakra. It is known as Chakra Narasimha and the deity on left is Purushottamanarasimha and on the right is Anathanarasimha.87

85 Prof K S Behera, an article on Narasimha Temple of Puri, Orissa available at www.indianszone.com/temples awaited.
86 Prof Prana Chandra Mohapatra, An article ‘Narasimha Worship in Puri’ Orissa Review, July 2001 pp 85 Rv e-magazine at www.orissa.gov.in
87 Ibid p 86
4) Singada Narasimha Temple:

This temple is located near Lokanath temple in Puri. The presiding deity is four armed Lakshmi-Narasimha sitting on Utkatikasan. A small image of Goddess Lakshmi is sitting on the yogapatra at the left thigh of the lord. She is offering betel in her right hand looking to the god. She has a lotus in her left hand. Four handed Narasimha holds conch and disc in the upper hands and the lower two rest on knees. Seven hoods of the snake cover as canopy over his head, amidst which the face of Balabhadra is seen with plough.88

5) Kanchisasana Narasimha Temple:

Kanchisasana is a brahmana sasana village near Puri. This village is renowned for Narasimha worship. Most of the Brahmins are Atharvavedins and Narasimha is their tutelary deity. The presiding deity is four armed Lakshminarasimha.89

6) Kusunkhuntia Jaga Narasimha Temple:

It is in Harachandi Sahi in Puri. The presiding deity is four armed Saumya Narasimha. The peculiar feature is the absence of any Lakshmi figure. The deity is crowned with seven-hooded Adisesha which forms like a canopy over the head.90

V) MAHARASTRA

1) Nira Narsingapur:

Nira Narsingapur is a village in Indapur Taluk of Pune District, Maharashtra. The confluence of rivers Bhima and Nira is about 3 kms from the temple. There is a famous temple of Lord Narasimha who is

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88 Ibid p 86
89 Ibid p 86
90 Ibid p 87
seated in Yoga posture in the sanctum. The Lord is the family deity for many families of different castes of the area.

It is believed that Prahlada had taken bath in Bhima River and with his own hands made the idol of Narasimha with sand of the river. The idol made of sand is still intact and it is said that diamond powder was smeared in the past, which does not disintegrate the sand. And again it is stated that one by name Mr. Dandavate got this diamond mixture imported from United States and smeared it on the idol to increase the life of the idol.91

In this temple premises, there is one more Narasimha idol, which is believed to be installed by Lord Brahma. Sri Raghavendra Swamy's Brindavan also exists in the temple premises. It is said that the present temple was renovated by Vittal Shiva devdani at the time of Maratha dynasty.

2) Dhom:

Dhom is a village on the north Bank of river Krishna about 5 miles northwest of Wai with which it is connected by a motorable road in Satara District of Maharashtra. The main temple in between the river and village is dedicated to Lord Siva. Around this chief temple, there are four temples dedicated to Narasimha, Ganapathi, Laksmi and Vishnu, the images of which are made of they allow marble brought from Agra.

Out of these four temples, the Narasimha temple deserves mention for its presiding deity is Lord Narasimha in an awful Ugra form. It has a circular basement in an octagonal plinth about six feet high and is surmounted by a terrific structure made of mixed stucco and wood which is supposed to represent an umbrella. These temples were all
built by Mahadev Sivram, a Pune based Money Lender who flourished about 1780 AD.

This place is held in great veneration and it is said that Siva Linga was first set up by the sage Dhaumya. Local celebrations are held here in full moon of Vaisakha (April-May) for Lord Siva and in honor of Narasimha on the bright fourteenth of Vaisakha.  

3) Sadasivpet:

In a temple at Sadasivpet, Pune, Lord Laksmi Narasimha is the presiding deity and the temple is built in 1774 AD. The main idol was brought by a Brahmin of Ratnagiri from Panchavati (Nasik District).

4) Pokharni:

Pokharni is a village located in Pokharni District of Maharashtra State. It is 20 kms from Parbani and has a railway station. A temple is dedicated to Lord Lakshmi Narasimha here in this place.

VI) Goa

1) Ponda:

The temple in Velinga, Ponda of Goa is dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha. It is said that the idol was brought from Sancoale, Marmugao taluk in 1567 and installed on a steep densely wooded forest and surrounded by the coconut trees. This temple is one of the more picturesque one around Ponda.

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Satara District Gazetteer  Department of District Gazetteers, Maharashtra  
www.india.com/india/lakshmiNarasimha_temple
VII) Uttaranchal

1) Joshi Math:

Joshi Math is a pilgrim centre in north India and is believed to be one of the first Maths established by Sankaracarya. When Badrinath temple is closed in winter, devotees throng to worship at the Narasimha temple at Joshimath. The temple is about 1200 years old dedicated to Lord Vishnu and the presiding deity is Lord Narasimha, who is said to be installed by Sankaracarya himself. Like Badrinath, Lord Narasimha also is in a sitting Padmasana posture. The characteristic feature of this deity is that its left wrist is very thin and is getting thinner by the day, it is said.

Lord Vasudeva temple is located at just 30 yards from here, which is one of the 108 divyadesams extolled by Alvars in their pasurams.  

Asia’s highest and longest ropeway connecting Joshimath and Auli (4 kms) is a special attraction of this place.

VIII) Uttar Pradesh

1) Mathura:

On the bank of river Yamuna, Mathura (Brindavan), the birthplace of Lord Krishna is well known, best loved temple complex of Lord Vishnu’s incarnations. This is one of the most sought pilgrimage centre. The most popular and main shrine at Mathura is Lord Dwarakadhish temple to the north of the town dedicated to Lord Krishna.
There are about 25 ghats in Madhura and Visram Ghat is the most important among them and it is said that Lord Krishna rested here for sometime after killing Kamsa.

The Visram Ghat is lined up with eight elegant most important temples of Mathura viz., the Mukut Temple, Radha-Damodar, Murali Manohar, Neela-Kanteshwar, Yamuna-Krishna, Langali-Hanuman and Narasimha temples. In Narasimha temple the Lord is Varaha Narasimha.

IX) Madhya Pradesh

1) Narasinghpur:

Narsinghpur is the district headquarters in Madhya Pradesh. Narsinghpur has a big Narasimha temple and the presiding deity is Lord Narasimha. The lord has four hands with conch, cakra in the upper two hands while the lower two hands actually tear open the demon king.

It is said that this Narsinghpur was 'Gadariya Kheda' village in olden days and Khinwar clan Jat Sardars migrated from Brij and founded this city Narsinghpur, where they ruled for a long period. Khinwars of Narsinghpur were believed to be the followers of the Lord Narasimha and constructed this temple somewhere in 18th Century.

The archeological surveys and excavation undertaken here indicate that this place has a very ancient history. Narmada River flowing through this district has many ghats like Brahmanghat, where it is said that Lord Brahma had done a Yagna. It is said that Pandavas had spent some time here in this place, which supports the existence of Bhimakund and Arjunakund in those areas.

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1 Narasinghpur, Madhya Pradesh available at www.indianetzone.com
2 History of Narasinghpur A district of Madhya Pradesh at www.narsinghpur.nic.in/history
X) RAJASTHAN

1) Amer Fort:

Set in a picturesque location, Amer is a fascinating blend of Hindu and Moghal architecture, built by Raja Mansingh in 16th Century A.D. The old township of Amer situated at the fort hills of the palace has Narsingh temple.97

2) Hassampur:

A temple of Lord Narsingh was established by Swami Vishnudasji about 400 years ago in Hassampur 17 kms to Katputli.98

3) Gudha:

Gudha of Rajasthan is very popular for Sardarsher community, who are staunch devotees of Lord Narsingh. Lord Narsingh temple is situated there in Gudha and celebrations are conducted in connection with the Narasimha Jayanti, which come around April/May every year.99

A few selected temples, whose information is available is only touched upon. It is found that there is more number of Narasimha temples in southern part of India than in northern part with a emphasis on south India in general and the Andhra Pradesh in Particular. All together seventy temples are dealt with.
The statistics of selected temples under the study state-wise is as follows.

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L N Lakshminarasimha, Y N Yoganarasimha, U N Ugrnv/Pradaranarasimha, V N Varahanarasimha, J N Jvanarasimha, S N Sudarshana/Cakranarasimha, K N Kevalanarasimha

Among the Narasimha temples, there are thirteen are of Kevala Narasimha; eighteen are Lakshminarasimha; twelve are Ugranarasimha; twenty one are Yoganarasimha; four are Varahanarasimha and two are Sudarshana/Cakranarasimha temples.

These statistics reveal that there is much popularity for the Lakshminarasimha and Yoganarasimha which are benign in forms.