CHAPTER – VI

TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION

Through the ages temples were constructed by the rulers, who granted donations for the maintenance of them also. Landed properties were donated in this regard. Till the advent of the Europeans in the Madras Presidency, the temples of Tamil Nadu were properly maintained by the royal families and also the officials appointed by the rulers.¹

When the English established their authority over Tamil Nadu, the temple administration faced a setback. The western ways and thoughts were incorporated in all branches of administration. The newly introduced Inam Settlement and Permanent Revenue Settlement failed to maintain a proper administration of temples in the state.²

Gradually the tenants and landholders failed to give proper taxes (food grains) to the temple. That resulted in the gradual

degradation of temple administration. Once the state witnessed colorful celebrations in the temples, but there was a setback that resulted in a transition in the temple festivals also.

The temple rituals and *poojas* were not performed by the authorities properly. That resulted in the abandoning of the daily *poojas* in hundreds of temples.³

In the Tirunelveli region hundreds of temples which were constructed by the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas, got popularity due to their separate identity.⁴ Unfortunately, the present position of majority of the temples is very pitiable. There is no proper maintenance of the temples due to various reasons.

The argument leveled by the state government includes non-payment of rent and taxes by the lease holders, and thereby there is no steady income to the temple. Yet, the collections of rent and taxes from the regular paying tenants of the temples are remitted with the Government treasury. But the Government, though it maintains a

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separate department for Hindu temples, fails in its duties to protect and maintain the temples of the state without any prejudice.\textsuperscript{5}

One such temple is the Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at Radhapuram. Though it is significant in many aspects, even now the temple is poorly maintained by the government.

Even now the temple has 4000 acres of landed properties which were donated by the successive rulers like, the Venad kings and the Travancore kings\textsuperscript{6} for the maintenance of the temple, to conduct the daily, monthly and annual \textit{poojas} and rituals without fail. Even for lighting of lamps in the evening hours, land donation was given.

Domestic animals like goats were also donated to this temple which deserves special mention. The lands donated to this temple consist of \textit{nanjai}, \textit{punjai} and \textit{poramboke} lands\textsuperscript{7} for the day-to-day expenses but the respective \textit{poojas} and rituals are not regularly conducted.


\textsuperscript{7} V. Shanmugam, \textit{Arulmigu Varagunapandeeswarar Kumbabishekam Malar} (Tamil), (Souvenir), Raja Achchakam, Radhapuram, 2005, pp. 20-25.
maintained. The tenants and the leaseholders of the landed properties are not paying the taxes to the temple that result in the poor maintenance of the temple.

After the independence of India, just like subordinate temples of Tamil Nadu, this temple also came under the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board's administration. Since then, the Deputy Commissioner of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department of Tirunelveli region is the overall administrator of all temples; and an Executive Officer is directly supervising the affairs of the temple.

Thanks to the efforts of the public and the devotees, now again the temple has restored its hoary past especially in its maintenance and administration.

The Radhapuram *Sthalapurana* speaks about the list of properties including fertile and ordinary lands. It is surprising to say that the landed properties of the temple are located in the nearby villages of Radhapuram like Soundrapandiyapuram, Ezhaya

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8 Personal interview with *N.Ganthimathi* aged 42, Executive Officer of this Temple, Radhapuram on 22.08.2013.

9 Personal interview with *R.Arumughadaran* (Executive Officer) aged 50, Radhapuram on 18.04.2013.

10 Personally visited and witnessed.
Nainarkulam, Shivasankarapuram, Parameswarapuram, Ayan Pandara Perunkulam, Ayan Pattarkulam, etc. In addition to this, plantations, gardens and paddy lands of Uvari region are also the properties of this temple.\footnote{N. Arumugham Pillai, \textit{Thiru Rasai Kovil Varalaru} (Tamil), Raja Achchakam, Tirunelveli, 1944, pp. 26-27.}

The \textit{Sthalapurana} also mentions an interesting reference regarding the temple administration. In A.D. 1944, the total income of the temple was Rs. 6, 922/- The total expenditure of the full year was Rs. 2,155/-.\footnote{File related with income and expenditure during the financial year 1943-1944.}

The temple had the credit of maintaining Rs. 4,767/- as balance in its account in that year alone. In those days the tenants and lease holders paid the rent very promptly. At present, it is a very serious concern that the tenants and lease holders do not pay the rent and tax properly.
Donors and Sponsors of the Poojas

The Saiva Vellalas of Tirunelveli donated 163 acres of *Nanjai* and 99 cent *Punjai* lands at Parameswarapuam, just 4 kilometers from Radhapuram, to perform *Shivarathiri* celebrations.\(^{13}\)

*Vijayapathy Viswamitrar Utchasanthi Kattalai*,\(^{14}\) was sponsored by a philanthropist S.Subburaj (Kanabathy Cotton Mill), and it extends liberal special offerings to Sri Varagunapandeswarar temple. In this respect 665 acres of lands were donated to this temple.

The *vizha pooja kattalai* has been sponsored by its promoter Rajasingesan of Kottaikarunkulam; he extends his supports financially and physically for the successful performance of various types of festivals and rituals.\(^{15}\)

Contributions by the Government

On the occasion of the car festival during the month of Chitrai, the Government allotment is Rs.150 per day, Margali Thiruvathirai

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\(^{13}\) File related with income and expenditure during the financial year 1943-1944.
allotment is also Rs.150 and Thirukarthikai allotment is Rs.150/- which are very meagure and inadequate to conduct the festivals.\textsuperscript{16}

The Government has not raised the allotment so far. Yet, with the financial and moral support of the devotees, the festivals and celebrations are conducted in a grand manner.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Dharmakartha}

As per the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board's direction (3593 dated 12.7.1939), a \textit{Dharmakartha} was appointed\textsuperscript{18} to look after the day to day income and expenditure of the temple since A.D.1939. In addition to that he was authorized to maintain the properties and to collect the dues from the lease holders, to protect the temple properties, to maintain proper accounts,\textsuperscript{19} to administrate the temple servants (50 in number) and also to enhance the temple income.\textsuperscript{20}

W.C.Manickaswami Mudaliar was appointed as the first \textit{Dharmakartha} of this temple. It was in practice till Indian

\textsuperscript{17} Personal interview with K. Veluchchamy (Executive Officer), Radhapuram on 17.03.2010.
\textsuperscript{19} Personal interview with K. Gomathi, Inspector of Temples, Radhapuram on 15.04.2014.
\textsuperscript{20} Personal interview with S. Paramashivan (Ex. Director of Education), Aged 50, Radhapuram on 29.05.2014.
independence. When India got independence, the temple administration was modernised and modified; Instead of Dharmakartha, an Executive Officer was appointed under a Deputy Commissioner of Temples, Tirunelveli region.

**Temple Economy through Inscriptions**

Temples were maintained with royal benefaction and public patronage. One can understand the economy of a village from the inscriptions relating to the sale and purchase of lands, provision of irrigation facilities, conduct of *pujas* and festivals, protection of the properties of the temple, singing of hymns in praise of God, musical performance, the upkeep of the temple premises, doing carpentry work and flower designs, making of ornaments and images, construction of *mandapas*, preparation of dresses and several other similar works.

In Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at Radhapuram also, donations and grants were provided to conduct the

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21 Personal interview with K. Gomathi, Inspector of Temples, Radhapuram on 17.03.2014.
22 Personal interview with N. Ganthimathi aged 42, Executive Officer, Radhapuram on 03.03.2014.
24 T.A.E., Ins No.350
daily, monthly and annual *poojas*.\textsuperscript{25} In addition to that, donations were given to conduct special *poojas* and rituals also.\textsuperscript{26} The inscriptions on the *muhappu mandapa*\textsuperscript{27} (frontal hall), nandhi mandaba\textsuperscript{28} the inner *prahara* bear copious information on the donations given by royal authorities\textsuperscript{29} as well as the public for the systematic conduct of rituals, *poojas* and festivals.\textsuperscript{30}

**Temple as a big Consumer**

The temples are big consumers of milk and milk products, flowers, rice and other consumer items for various services connected with worship. Since *poojas* and festivals in the temples have been elaborated in recent times, there is an ever increasing demand for coconuts, sandal-wood, rice, turmeric, incense, leaves, flowers, lights, ghee, salt, pepper, arecanut, betel leaves, oil, mustard, pulses, sugar, plantain, curd, camphor, etc.\textsuperscript{31} There are a number of philanthropists who donate these articles to the temple regularly. The inscriptions of Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at

\hspace{1cm} 25 T.A.E., Ins No.351  
\hspace{1cm} 26 T.A.E., Ins No.358  
\hspace{1cm} 27 T.A.E., Ins No.359  
\hspace{1cm} 28 T.A.E., Ins No.356  
\hspace{1cm} 29 T.A.E., Ins No.357  
\hspace{1cm} 30 T.A.E., Ins No.355  
Radhapuram mention that there have been generous endowments of paddy, rice, vegetables, edible oil and domestic animals like cow, sheep for nivedhanam, tirupallitanam, tirumanjanam and lighting of evening lamps.\textsuperscript{32}

**Temple as an Employer**

Temples have acted as efficient administrative units. Several families got benefited and depended upon the temple for their livelihood. Several agricultural families earned their livelihood by cultivating the temple lands.

There were multifarious appointments to ensure security of the assets of temples, to maintain proper accounts, to receive taxes and rents in cash and kind, for disbursements of salary to different employees and priests of the temple, to finance various activities like worship and service, and to sponsor cultural activities.

**Temple as Bank**

Temples functioned in a way similar to the banks of today. Munificent donations to the temples have not only made the temples rich institutions but also facilitated efficient administration. Cash

\textsuperscript{32} T.V. Sadasiva Pandarathar, *Pandyar Seppedukal Pattu* (Tamil), Sarathy Printers, Madras, 1972, pp. 5-10.
donations to the temples were kept and safeguarded in the *Sripandaram*, the royal treasuries.\(^{33}\)

Out of cash donations, loans were given to the public for interest at times of need, and due interest was collected. Out of the interest collected, *nivedya*, lighting of lamps, offering of *poojas*, reclamations and other religious works were undertaken.

In the event of the amount falling due to the temple, immediate steps were initiated for its recovery; and hence it is evident that the temple administration in those days was run efficiently.\(^{34}\) At various stages members of the royalty, merchants, officials and pious individuals drawn from several classes of the society donated lands to the Radhapuram temple.\(^{35}\)

All these lands were located in and around Radhapuram. Endowments of lands were classified as *nattam*, *tidal*, *vattam*, *kollai*, *devadana*, *brahmadeya*, *parru*, *kudiningadevadana* and so on.\(^{36}\)


\(^{35}\) S. Gurudhasa Pillai, *Tirunelveli Seemai Charithram* (Tamil), Barani Pathippakam, Tirunelveli, 1931, pp. 15-18.

Income of the Temple

Through the following items the Radhapuram Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple receives its income. Monthly rent collecting from the *devanana* lands (nearly 2500 acres) is the main income of the temple.\(^{37}\) Unfortunately, these 2,500 acres owned by the temple provide only 1 lakh per year.

An old *Chatram* (choultry), situated on the main road of Radhapuram is the property of the temple which was demolished in 2005 and in that place, the Radhapuram Panchayat has constructed a commercial complex through which a considerable income is regular as rent.\(^{38}\)

In addition to these properties there were a number of properties both movable and immovable. They are the following:

*Inam* Shivasankarapperi, Tharumathupattu, Kediyakulam, and Ezhaya Nainarkulam had the *Inam* lands offered to the temple.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{39}\) Personal interview with M. Thillai Nataraja Pillai, aged 65, President, Temple Cars Renovation Committee, Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal Temple, Radhapuram on 12.08.2013.
When the British introduced *Inam* settlement in the Tirunelveli District, the latter attached the *Inam* lands owned by the temple.\(^{40}\)

In addition to it, five big houses with tiled roof, four thatched houses and 10 rented houses are also the property of this temple.\(^{41}\) There are two houses and nine petty shops which belong to the temple. A considerable regular income is there from this head. The auditorium of this temple is let for the public utility, through which the temple receives a guaranteed income.\(^{42}\)

*Thaippusa mandapa* of granite is seen at the north-eastern direction of *Maada* Street. At present, it functions as a shop; and thus it yields a monthly income to this temple. Every year at the time of *Thaippusam* festival, the *Ursavamoortis* are taken to this *mandapa* and special *poojas* and rituals are conducted.\(^{43}\)

In A.D. 1944, Rs.60,000/- was deposited by the temple authorities as fixed amount and at present it has grown into twelve


\(^{41}\) Personal interview with *R.Panneerselvam Chtiyar* aged 71, Member, Thirukkalya Kattalai (Divine Marriage Committee), Sri Varagunapandeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal Temple, Radhapuram on 3.03.2014.

\(^{42}\) K. Krishnansawmiya aged 52, (Temple Accountant), Radhapuram on 01.04.2014.

\(^{43}\) Personal interview with *K.Balasubramania Pillai*, aged 60, Member, Thirukkalyana Kattalai, Sri Varaguanapandeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 11.05.2013.
lakhs. Even now, it has not been touched, but maintained as fixed deposit.\textsuperscript{44} Another solid income of the temple is the income from the \textit{punjai} lands of the temple. The total area is 1500 acres.\textsuperscript{45} Another income is the rent collected from the temple auditorium situated outside the temple in the north.

Another income to the temple is collected from \textit{Pillai Chatram}, situated in the car street. It is a twelve-pillared \textit{mandapa} owned by the Saiva Vellalas of Radhapuram.\textsuperscript{46}

The \textit{Kattalaitharars} (sponsors) of both the \textit{Chitrai} festival and \textit{Ayppasi Thirukalyanam} (divine marriage) remit a fee of Rs.750/- each to the temple during the respective festival.\textsuperscript{47} It is also an income to the temple.\textsuperscript{48}

The devotees offer silk sarees to Goddess Nithyakalyani Ambal with a prayer to redress their grievances. Every year these silk sarees

\begin{itemize}
\item Personal interview with \textit{S.Gandhimathi} aged 50, Executive Officer, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal Temple, and Radhapuram on 24.06.2014.
\item Unpublished Statement on income and expenditure, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram during the financial year 2012-13.
\item Personal interview with \textit{S. Parthasarathi} aged 48, Member, Thirukkalyana Kattalai, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 11.05.2014.
\item Personal interview with \textit{A.Manikandan} aged 52, Rent holder, Pillai chatram, Radhapuram on 09.09.2013.
\item Personal interview with \textit{V.Puskalai Varatharajan} aged 45, Member, Thirukkalyana Kattalai, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 28.10.2013.
\end{itemize}
are sold through auction and a considerable amount is received as income to the temple.\footnote{Personal interview with \textit{K.Chandrasekara Pattar}, aged 50, Sivachariyar, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 05.10.2014.}

This temple is famous for the performance of marriages frequently in its premises; the inhabitants of Radhapuram and neighboring villages perform both betrothal ceremony and marriage function of their wards in front of the presiding deities of this temple. Nowadays they pay the fee Rs. 5000/- per marriage to the temple.\footnote{Personal interview with \textit{S.Gandhimathi} aged 50, Executive Officer, Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 24.06.2014.} It is also a sizeable income to the temple.

**Monthly Expenditure**

Even though there should be two \textit{Shivacharyas} to work in the Swamy and Amman shrines of this temple respectively, at present, only one \textit{Shivacharya} is working.\footnote{Personally verified the Attendance Register maintained in the Executive Officer's Office.} He has to conduct all the rituals, \textit{poojas} and ceremonies in both Lord Varagunanandeeswarar and Goddess Nithyakalyani Ambal shrines and other subordinate
sanctums also. Unfortunately, he gets a very meagre salary of Rs. 2710/- per month and gets \( \frac{3}{4} \) kottai rice per month.\(^{52}\)

In addition to it, two bags of rice are given to him for performing daily poojas and other rituals. The Brahmin who prepares neivedhyam to God at the Madappali draws Rs. 1435/- per month as salary and he gets \( \frac{1}{2} \)kottai rice per year. The caretaker who is maintaining the cleaning work at this temple draws Rs. 835/- per month and gets a small quantity of rice annually. The temple clerk, cashier and the night watchman also receive a very meagre salary below 2000/- per month.\(^{53}\)

During the celebrations, the temple vahanas (vehicles) are taken in the procession along all the streets; and in that context, Rs. 240/- per head is paid to the servants. During the Chitrai car festival, the temple management spends Rs- One lakh every year.

It is the duty of the temple management to conduct periodical repair works in the temple. Recently, the north and southern walls of

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\(^{52}\) Personally verified the salary bill prepared by the Executive officer, Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 13.08.2014.

\(^{53}\) Ibid
the *vasantha mandpa’* have been repaired with cement pasting at a cost of one lakh.\(^54\)

The expenditure of the temple includes the repairing of two temple cars, assembling of the cars, decoration, and maintenance of *Maada Street* and car streets and the special *poojas* to be conducted at the *Theradi madan* temple at the time of car festival.\(^55\)

**Temple Properties**

The landed properties, of the temple are scattered throughout the Radhapuram region. At Shivasankaperi village, nearly 3.24 acres of *nanjai* and 66.37 acres of *punjai land* are the properties of the temple. In addition to that 18.57 acres of *purampokku* lands are also the properties of the temple, in the same village.

At Tharumathupatti village, there are 71.16 acres of *nanjai*, 984.85 acres of *punjai* and 152.80 acres of *purampokku* lands, as the properties of the temple. At Ezhaya Nainarkulam village, the temple has 44.48 acres, 1884.30 acres and 88.17 acres of nanjai, punjai and purampooku lands respectively. At Uthayathur village, the temple has

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\(^{54}\) Financial statement prepared by the Deputy Commissioner’s Office, H.R & C.E., Tirunelveli for the financial year 2012-2013.

\(^{55}\) Personal interview with *V.K.Parvathinathan Chettiar* aged 70, Philanthropist and Member, Chitrai Car Festival, Kattalai, Radhapuram on 07.01.2014.
1.52 acres of *punjai* lands. At Karaichuttu Uvari village, there are 6.32 acres of *punjai* lands attached with to the temple. At Karaichuttuputhur and Samugarangapuram villages, the temple has 29.11 acres and 2.25 acres of *punjai* lands. At Vijayapathi, a celebrated centre for Vishwamitra temple, there are 10.57 acres and 1397.04 acres of *nanjai* and *punjai* lands respectively owned by the Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram.56

In addition to that, Radhapuram and Soundarapandya- puram villages have 33.18 acres and 47.72 acres respectively of fertile lands owned by the temple. In the villages mentioned above, the temple has 148.56 acres and 1687.58 acres of sterile lands also. The neighboring villages like Karaisutru Ovari and Karaichuttruputhur also have 6.32 acres and 28.64 acres of sterile land owned by the temple respectively.

In Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at Radhapuram, there are a number of both gold and silver ornaments. Regarding the gold ornaments, 20 sovereign *Kaasu maalai* with a dollar, 15 sovereign *maangaamaalai*, 30 sovereign *Ottiyaanam* (belt), 10 sovereign *muthumalai*, 10 sovereign *Navarathinamaalai*, a gold

parrot, two sets of anki, and six kanmalar (facial ornament) deserve special mention. These are preserved in the Ambal shrine. In addition to that, 10 sovereign kovi chain, nettippattai (ornament to be used in the forehead), golden greedam (crown), Urchavar greedam (crown) are also preserved in the Swamy shrine. Regarding the silver ornaments, the silver Rishaba vaahana (vehicle) deserves special mention.

In addition to that, silver greedam (crown), silver anki (over coat), five headed cobra greedam (crown) available at the Swami shrine and silver greedham (crown), silver parrot, silver anki, silver greedams (crown) to the ursavamoorthis also deserve special mention. Among them the silver Rishapa vaahana (vehicle) is 4 feet high and 6 feet wide; and its present value is more than Rs.10 lakhs.

Unfortunately, some of the ornaments were stolen in 2001, and those ornaments were recovered and preserved in the Radhapuram court.

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57 Personally verified the stock Register maintained in the Executive Officer’s Office (Unpublished).
Formation of Special Committees

During the ancient and medieval period, temples were perfectly managed by the rulers and royal families. After the transfer of power to the alien rulers, mismanagement emerged in temple administration. When the temples came under the jurisdiction of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board (H.R. & C.E), misgovernance and corruption were removed. When the appointment was made (with political background) in the H.R. & C.E. department for the maintenance of the temples, once again corruption emerged and the net result was mismanagement, misappropriation and mal-administration. The absence of proper maintenance of temples and temple properties led to gradual stopping of routine rituals, celebrations and festivals in the temples in general and Radhapuram Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple in particular.60

Even though Radhapuram Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, possessed nearly 4000 acres of both nanjai and punjai lands, the officials and administrators failed to

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protect the sanctity and spirituality of the temple now. The maintenance of the temple is so poor. Earlier the temple possessed 50 employees to perform various duties.\(^{61}\)

At present, only six employees are there. The posts of musicians, who played the musical instruments like \textit{nathaswaram, thavil, etc.}, fell vacant after their retirement. So far no recruitment has been done to fill the vacancies. It has caused severe problems to discharge the routine duties. So the devotees came forward and organized certain special committees to look after the affairs.\(^{62}\) In this regard, the following committees have been constituted.

1. \textit{Pournami Vazhibhattu Kuzhu}

In order to celebrate the \textit{Pournami} (full moon day) of every month this committee has been organized. The members of the committee extend their support and service to this ceremony both financially and physically.

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\(^{61}\) Personal interview with K.\textit{Veluchamy} aged 45, Executive Officer, Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithiyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 20.01.2014.

\(^{62}\) Personal interview \textit{S. Rajpattar} aged 60, Devotee, Radhapuram, on 01.01.2014.
2. **Shiva Thondar Sabha**

In order to maintain neatness in temple campus and also to maintain a temple *Nanthavanam*, this committee has been constituted. This committee conducts *ulavaarapani* in the temple premises with periodical intervals.

3. **Prathosha Committee**

In order to conduct the *prathosham* ceremony every month, this committee has been constituted. The members of the committee supply all the *pooja* materials at the time of *prathosam* to the temple. The committee co-operates with the *Shivacharya* during the *abishekhas* and other rituals connected with the ceremony.

4. **Thiruvonam Group**

In the Tamil month of *Thai*, on the day of the *poosam* star, the temple witness’s grand celebrations like *poojas*, rituals, *urchava moorthis’* procession along the important streets. On that occasion, the committee members extend their support financially and physically for the successful conduct of the celebrations.

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63 *Nanthavanam* - garden situated within the temple premises from where flowers are collected for *poojas* in the temple.
64 *Ulavaarapani* - cleaning campaign to be conducted by anybody else within the temple premises.
65 *Prathosam* - It is the thirteenth day of a fortnight, provided the *thithi* comes at the time of sunset.
5. Thirunavukkarasar Narpani Mandram

The Chitrai car festival and Ayppasi Thirukkalyanam\textsuperscript{66} are the important festivals in Sri Varagunanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at Radhapuram. On that occasion thousands of pilgrims will throng the temple. In order to conduct the grand celebrations in a perfect manner, this committee has been constituted.\textsuperscript{67}

6. Swami Vivekanandar Izhaignar Ani (Youth wing)

The Chitrai festival, particularly its car festival, is very important in this temple. Pulling the two cars with the help of the common people is an important event on that occasion. So the youngsters of Radhapuram village have organized this committee, and nowadays, the car festival is perfectly conducted\textsuperscript{68} by this committee.

7. Astami Bhairavar Vazhibattu Mandram

All the Shiva temples have a Kaalabhairavar shrine. It is strongly believed that Kaalabhairavar is protecting the people from all

\textsuperscript{66} Thirukalyanam - Divine marriage of Sri Varagunanapandeeswarar with Goddess Nithyakalyani during the Tamil month of Iyppasi.

\textsuperscript{67} Personal interview with S.Gandhimathi aged 50, Executive Officer, Sri Varagunanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 24.06.2014.

\textsuperscript{68} Personal interview with R.Monikandan aged 25, Member Youth wing, Radhapuram on 20.08.2013.
troubles. Nowadays people worship Kaalabhairavar with a prayer to save them or help them to escape from accidents.⁶⁹

In Radhapuram Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple also, there is a Kaalabhairavar shrine. As per Hindu theology, worshipping Kaalabhairavarar on Ashtami thithi coming after the full – moon - day (Theipirai Ashtami) is an important one. Nowadays the spread of spiritual awareness emerged among the people due to fear and due to poor health; hundreds of thousands of people visit the Kaalabhairavar shrine. Unfortunately, no support comes from the government side in this regard. In order to conduct the poojas and lighting of lamps etc., the committee members give their supporting financially and physically.

8. Sangadakara Chuthurthi Bhakta Sabha

Sankadakara Chathurthi is associated with Lord Ganesha. Every month Sangadakara Chathurthi occurs twice.⁷⁰ This day is an important one for Kodimarathu Pillayar at this temple. On that occasion special poojas, and abishekas are conducted. In order to regularize this monthly worship, a committee has been constituted.

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⁶⁹ Personal interview with K.Iyappan aged 40, Auto Driver, Radhapuram on 30.05.2014.
9. Vishakam Vazhibhattu Kuzhu

The day of Vishakam star in the Tamil month of Vaikasi is an important one as far as Lord Subramanya is concerned, because it is the birthday of the Lord.\textsuperscript{71}

The members of the committee look after the poojas both physically and financially. On that occasion, special poojas and abishekams are conducted to Lord Subramania accompanied by Valli and Deivayanai. In order to conduct the function successfully, a committee has been constituted,\textsuperscript{72} and it meets out the entire expenditure.

10. Thiruvasagam Mutrothuthal Sabhai

Thiruvasagam is one among the popular Saiva literature emerged during the 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. It was created by Saint Manickavasagar. Just like Thevaram, it is also very pious, sweety and highly spiritual in character. During the past, it was regularly sung at the temples. Due to its rigidity, nowadays the people are just avoiding to sing in the temples. In order to create awareness once again among


\textsuperscript{72} Personal interview with M.Uma Makeswari aged 45, Member Vishakam Vazhibhattu Kuzhu, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 09.09.2014.
the people, a committee has been constituted; and through which P. Jayanthi Paneerselvam, a pious Saiva devotee periodically conducts the *Thiruvasagam Muthrothuthal*\(^73\) in a sincere manner. Hundreds of children are participating in the spiritual endeavor. To summarize, though Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at Radhapuram possesses nearly 4500 acres of landed properties, the present status and position of it is penurious.

The tenants and leaseholders do not remit the taxes and the rents properly to the temple. The Government of Tamil Nadu has installed *Hundiyals* to collect the offerings of the devotees in cash and the Hundi collection is remitted in the government treasury. It is very unfortunate to say that even the offerings to the temple in cash and kind is not spent for the maintenance of the temple.

As a staunch devotee of Sri Varagunapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple at Radhapuram, the research scholar confirms the pathetic condition of the temple management. He is of the opinion that performing *poojas* and *aarathanas* in the *sanctum*

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\(^73\) Personal interview with *P. Jayanthi Paneerselvam* aged 58, Convener, Thriuvasagam Muthothuthal Sabhai, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 12.02.2014.
sanctorum, it is very essential to have another Shivacharyar. He also adds that conducting the poojas and aaraathanas in the temple, time factor is an important one. All poojas and rituals should be finished within the stipulated time.

Unfortunately, due to lack of assistance, the present Shivacharyar has reduced the routine aaraathana. Normally various types of lamps were utilized during the aarathana. But it has been reduced nowadays. For the lighting of lamps in the sanctum sanctorum as well as in the arththa mandapa and maha mandapa, deepa oil is very essential. The government allotment is very meagre in this aspect; so the Shivacharyar pleads the devotees for support. Truly the devotees are supporting the temple in one way or other for the performance of poojas, rituals and festivals.

There is a general opinion among the devotees that all these type of mismanagement of temples emerged since A.D. 1967 due to the political appointments made in the temples. Instead of God -fearing personalities, politicians are appointed nowadays as the trustees of the temples, so even the people with criminal background

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74 Personal interview with K.S. Chandrasekhara Pattar aged 50, temple priest, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal temple, Radhapuram on 10.08.2014.
can also enter into the temple administration. When the field survey was conducted, almost all the devotees expressed unanimously that temples must be liberated from politicians; and if possible, these temples should be handed over to religious heads. The elders of the village recalled the systematic and prompt performance of the rituals, *poojas, abhishegas* and festivals on those days and they are worried about the poor performance of the present time.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{75} Personal interview with *K.S. Chandrasekhara Pattar* aged 50, temple priest, Sri Varaguanapandeeswarar Nithyakalyani Ambal Temple, Radhapuram on 10.09.2014.