

CHAPTER IV

PLACES OF TOURISM IMPORTANCE

IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

This chapter carries a brief account of places of tourism importance in Tirunelveli District.

The Tirunelveli District has many interesting places like Courtallam which is famous for its waterfalls and health resort, large ancient temples and cultural institutions. About 2400 temples were listed by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments of which about 1500 are assessed by the Department. More than 50 per cent of these temples are located in the taluks of Tirunelveli, Ambasamudram and Tenkasi. Out of the total of 2400 temples, village deities account for 1300; Vinayagar 500 and the rest by Murugan, Siva, Vishnu and deities. Important temples of this district are: 1.Tirunelveli Sri Nellaiyappar and Gandhimathi temple 2.Courtallam Sri Courtalanathaswamy temple 3. Sankarankovil Sri Sankaranarayanaswamy temple 4.Tenkasi Sri Kasiviswanathaswamy temple 5.Veerakeralam - Sri Navaneethakrishnantemple Pudur. Sri Nellaiyappar and Ganthimathi temple of Tirunelveli is one of the biggest and famous temples in the Tamil Nadu State. The name of the district is said to be called after the name of the presiding deity of this temple. The remaining temples are also famous and the annual income of these temples is

more than a lakh. Courtallam is the main place of tourist importance of this district. Waterfalls area in Courtallam is a famous health resort. The water falls from a height of 91 meters. The season for the falls is from June to September every year, where there will be drizzles and a bath at the falls is said to be very good for the body.

A pilgrimage is a significant aspect in religion and spirituality or search of great. Sometimes it is a journey to a shrine of importance. Members of major religions undertake tours and pilgrimages to satisfy their spiritual aspirations. Tirunelveli offers a lot in such religious tourism.

4.1. NELLAIAPPAR TEMPLE IN TIRUNELVELI

The town tirunelveli also known as Nelveli, Saaliveli and venuvanam is situated 150km. from Madurai. Sri Nellaiyappar – Gandhimathiamman Temple is situated in the heart of Tirunelveli Town and measures 850 ft in length and 756 ft in width.

Tirunelveli had been called in the past as “then Pandiyanagaram” (Southern Pandiya City). The temple of swami Nellaiyappar and Sri Gandhimathi Ambal is situated in the heart of the city. The river Thamirabarani referred to by poets as “Porunai” flows round the town. In the distant past the town was a bamboo forest hence it was known in those days as “Venuvanam”, according to the Sthalapuram “Venuvanam” came to be called “Tirunelveli” on account of a

miracle performed by Lord Siva by protecting the paddy crops of a devotee named Vedasarma from being washed away by rain water by building a hedge around it (Nelveli). With the addition of the adjunct 'Tiru' to 'Nelveli' the town came to be known as 'tirunelveli'

4.2 CAR FESTIVAL

Car festival in the Gandhimathi Nellaiyappar temple is a grand celebration in Tirunelveli. The festival also known as 'Anai festival' and this festival falls the month of June-July, and is celebrated for 10 days with great splendor. The festival commences with the flag hoisting and on the 9th day a grand procession with the idols of swami Nellaiyappar and Gandhimathi Ambal kept on the chariot is conducted. The chariot used for the procession is the 3rd largest one in Tamil Nadu and is 450 ton in weight. 20 feet in width 28 feet in length with a total height of 35 feet this chariot is followed by other small in length with a total height of 35 feet. This chariot is followed by other small chariots with the idols of other gods, such as Vinayaka, Murugan and Chandikesvara. The chariots with the idols are pulled by thousands of devotees through the all four main roads around the temple. This is a grand sight to devotees and tourists of India and foreign countries.

4.3 SRI VENKATACHALAPATHY TEMPLE IN KRISHNAPURAM

The Venkatachalapathy temple at Krishnapuram village on the Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur main road which is 12 km from Tirunelveli town is one of the few

specimens depicting the architectural marvel and grandeur. Buses plying between Tirunelveli and Tiruchendur touch this Village. It is indeed a treasure house of stone Sculptures. Many are intricately carved sculptures made of granite stone and they are fine exhibits of architectural skills of the medieval artists and craftsmen.

4.4. TEMPLE OF LORD VENKATACHALAPATHY

The Vaishnavite temple is dedicated to Lord Venkatachalapathy with his consorts Sri Devi and Bhu Devi on either side. The fine idol of lord Venkatachalapathy is in a standing posture in the sanctum. Though small, this temple is complete in itself, since it was constructed according to the temple agamas.

4.5 HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

The temple was built during the reign of the King KrishnappaNayak of the Nayak dynasty during the latter half of the 16th century. Which is confirmed by an inscription in this temple (1565 AD).The village is known as Krishnapuram after krishnappaNayakBhupathi. It is said that krishnappa Nayakar had commissioned some famous sculptors from Vijayanagaram and they have left behind a wonderful collection of sculptures that tell us tales of heroism and spiritualism.

4.6 TENKASI KASIVISWANATHER TEMPLE

Tenkasi means South Banaras which is famous for its beautiful temple. TenkasiKasiViswanather temple is located on the northern banks of a river Chitaru at Tenkasi. It is 53 kms from Tirunelveli to Tenkasi and just 7 kms from Courtallam.

4.7 HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

The story of the temple is narrated in an inscription on a four sided pillar set up in front of the Gopuram (Tower). It is said that Lord Viswanatha appeared in the dream of ArikesariParakramaPandiya who was living in the fort constructed by him at Vinthankottai which is in the east of Tenkasi and he frequently visited Banaras after some hazardous journeys to worship Lord Viswanatha, and so the Lord ordered him to build a new temple near this place, Tenkasi. The king started the work and in 1446 A.D. the central shrine, the arthamandapam and the mahamandapam were finished and the deity was placed in this shrine. Ten years later building of the nine storied Gopuram began and in six years it was completed. In the Same year 1463 A.D the kingdied. The temple contains many Pandiya inscriptions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is believed that if a person dies in Banaras he will attain salvation. But if a person is born, and if he lives and dies in Tenkasi he will gets alvation and this is stated in puranas.

4.8 FESTIVALS

Generally, Festivals of India attract large number of tourists, both Indian and Foreign. Many festivals are conducted in this temple in a grand manner. In the months of June-July Tamil month (Ani) Sangabhishekam is celebrated. In July-August Tamil month (Avani) float festival is conducted and in the month of Tamil Purattasi. (September-October) Navarthri festival takes place. Thousands of people assemble here in this temple to witness the cosmic dance of Lord Nataraja. During all these festivals ParakramaPandiya's statute is honoured with poojas and covered in the sandal paste and even to-day car festival is conducted with the performance of rituals on king. This is the only temple where the founder of the temple is always honoured first. Champak is the Sathala Viruksha of this temple.

4.9 SANKARANKOVIL

Another important place of religious and tourist importance is the Sankara Narayanar Kovil situated 50 kms, from Tirunelveli, or around 75 Kms from Madurai. The place takes its name from the temple and is called Sankarankovil and is the second largest town in Tirunelveli District.

4.10 HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

The lingam in this temple is the personification of earth. This temple was built by UgraPandiyar who ruled this area in the early part of the 11th century

A.D. It was his early routine to go to Madurai on elephant's back to worship Lord Somasundarar and Meenakshi. On one particular day his elephant dug a pit with its trunk, fell and rolled over the earth, and refused to move further. Manikreevan one of the king's watchmen rushed to him and informed about a Siva lingam and a cobra coiling it in Punnai forest. When the king came there to witness this an oracle was heard at that time which instructed the Pandiya king to construct a temple and worship Him with utmost devotion which the king obliged. Consequently, UgraPandiya constructed a temple for worship.

4.11 FESTIVALS

Festivals are celebrated every year in this temple in a grand manner. Adi Thapasu celebrated in the Tamil month of Adi (July-August) is considered to be very important. This festival is witnessed by thousands of pilgrims, devotees and tourists. Chitrapournami festival (April-May) and Theppam festival in Tamil month of Thai (January-February) also attracts large crowds.

4.12 UVARI

Uvari, a small fishing town with 3200 people is situated 40 kms away from Nanguneri in the south east direction of Tirunelveli and it is 70 km away from Tirunelveli town. Buses are plying from Tirunelveli to Uvari. The people here are mostly engaged in fishing and in the export of fishes to other parts of our country. In the, Biblical literature this place is described as ophir. Here we find the famous

St.Xavier's church, a few meters away from the seashore and Kappalmatha church on the seashore itself. It is said that the St.Xavier church belongs to 16th century A.D. It was a thatched shed earlier where people used to congregate for worship. As the time passed by, on seeing the increasing population, Fr.Rayappar constructed a beautiful church in 1908. In 1917, when the new church reached the finishing stage, an unexpected calamity that took place caused the collapse of the roof of this church. Also many conflicts and disturbances that took place between the rival groups and between people of Uvari and its neighbourhood caused some unpleasantness in the place, but later normalcy was restored in Uvari. With missionary zeal coupled with untiring efforts, Father Antony Bernard succeeded in completing the construction of this church on 26th January 1929. Decorated with beautiful ornamental colour glasses, the church is very spacious.

A beautiful gaby (Stone edifice)for mother Mary designed by the people of this town, was constructed and opened on 28th February 1954, mainly due to the initiative taken by A.S.Bernard who could collected sufficient amount through donations. Pastor priest Bubalarayar with the help of skilled masons constructed this gaby. Pilgrims and tourists or visitors to this place pray Mother Lurdhu Mary in this gaby which is surrounded by beautiful green garden. Many festivals are celebrated in honour of the Mother.

Another small church for St.Mary which was under the control of pastors of Goa mission existed here. In course of time, in 1903, this church was converted

into a school. On important occasions as per the wishes of the people, festivals had been conducted and prayers were offered to the mother.

There was a custom among the young maidens to go to the nunnery in the night and sleep there. On one such occasion they saw a bright light surrounding this Selvamatha statue even though nobody lit a candle. Many people witnessed this light which was there for over an hour. This incident occurred on 18th September 1919. After this incident this day 18th September celebrated as a great festival. People used to keep this statue in a chariot and come around this down to bestow the blessing of Mary to the people of uvari. Due to sea erosion this old church got damaged. Therefore the people decided to construct a new church for which the foundation stone was laid down by Fr.Thomas on 25thJanuary 1970 and was finished in 1974. This church, designed as a ship, is called Kappal Matha Church after this design. It is a beautiful church facing the blue sea. The waves rolling near this church give us an impression that this ship shaped church is smoothly sailing on the sea which is really a feast to our eyes.

The most important aspect about this church is the annual feast of St.Antony which falls on the third Sunday before Ash Wednesday and this quite often coincides with the Thai Poosam festival of the Hindus(January-February).This festival is celebrated for thirteen days and the flag hoisting function takes place on the first day. On the 12th and 13th day of the feast more than 50,000 people assemble here to seek the blessings of St.Antony. This feast is

conducted in a most pious way and so there are no facilities made for entertainment or for merry making. There is also a Siva temple in this fishing town. It is an old temple with Suyambulingam. On Thiruvathirai day and on MahaSivarathri day local people used to throng to this temple for worship.

4.13 POTTALPUDUR DARGHA

Pottalpur is another important place of interest in Tirunelveli area. The centre of attraction of this place is the oldest Dargha built around the year 1670. Tourists have lot of attractive aspects here. It is so secular and it attracts besides the Muslims, Hindus, Christians and other religionists as well. This has been built adopting Hindu Temple pattern. If the prayers of the pilgrims are answered, they pay their offerings, to the Dargha in large numbers during Kanthuri festival with great reverence. In this Dargha where the labbais act as priests, customs almost are similar to that of Hindus and are followed with all the rituals. Here, holy ash is prepared from various sources like tamarind bark, ghee, and flowers called nersa and is distributed to the devotees. For this Andavar, sheep, sweets, fruits and flowers are offered by all the classes of people and sheep are sacrificed before Him as they practice before the local Amman deities. But this practice is stopped by government intervention and people offer fruits for their worship rather than fowl and sheep. Sandal paste is prepared in a pot on a large scale during the time of the Kanthuri festivals and is sent to the Hindu village of Ravanasadram,

from where it is brought back to this Dargha with great pomp. This is offered to the awaiting crowd of people without discrimination of caste, creed or religion. This stands as an example of communal harmony and secularism. This Dargha is considered as a pious and sacred one equal to the NagoreDargha.

4.14 ECO TOURISM

All the gifts of God, bestowed by nature, mountains, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, landscapes, flora and fauna represent natural heritage. Ecotourism is derived from two words 'Eco-system' and 'Tourism'. Together it is made Ecotourism.

Tirunelveli is a large and ancient city in Southern Tamilnadu. The climate of Tirunelveli is usually tropical generally hot and humid, but it is enriched by the perennial river "Tampirarani". Tirunelveli had many ecotourism destinations. Some of the important developing and developed eco-tourist destination are Courtallam, Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuaries, Manjolai and Papanasam.

4.15 COURTALLAM

Nestled in the Western Ghats, Courtallam has exquisite surroundings. The charming hillocks which dominate the scenery disappear into the blue mist of Agasthiarmalai, the mountain bearing the name of a sage who made immense

contributions to Tamil literature and is believed to have lived in the area. The closest towns to Courtallam are Shenkottai and Tenkasi at 5 km respectively. The closest airport is Tuticorin Airport (TCR) 90 km away and the nearest railway station is Tenkasi 5 km away.

Courtallam has nine waterfalls:

- Peraruvi (main falls) the biggest falls in courtallam, is about 60m high. The flow of water is interrupted by the Pongumakadal, a 19m deep crater and comes down with greatly reduced impact, making a bath safe.
- In Chitraruvi (small falls), the flow is thin. Here naturally separate places for men and women are there to bathe. Chitraruvi leads to other waterfalls such as Shenbagadevi and Thenaruvi and the herbal farm.
- At Shenbagadevi falls, the water flows through shenbaga (*Michaelia champak*) trees. There is also a temple there, dedicated to Shenbagadevi Amman.
- About 3 km from this is Thenaruvi (honey falls), 40m high and cascading between two large stones. In places where there is no water, one sees big honeycombs.
- Aintharuvi (five falls) is one where one thoroughly enjoys being in a crowd of bathers. Five separate cascades of water form this waterfall.
- From the orchard above flows Pazhathotta Aruvi, the 'VIP falls'.

- The Pazhaya Courtalla Aruvi (Old Courtallam falls) used to fall into a valley from between two rocks. The valley was closed and the rocks were broken to change the course of water and make bathing easier. It was reopened later.
- The artificial Puli Aruvi (Tiger Falls) has a moderate flow of water which collects in a lake and is diverted for irrigation, sometimes tigers visit this place for water.
- There is another small falls inside the Government Horticulture Park above Five Falls, but it is off limits to the public.

The three major waterfalls reachable by road are the Main Falls, Five Falls, and Old Courtallam Falls. Other waterfalls like Shenbaga Devi Falls and Honey Falls are reachable only by trekking on the mountain.

4.15.1 Places to visit

1. Therkumalai Estate will be reached from Honey falls in an hour, which is 2000 ft above mean sea level.
2. Boat Houses near the Five Falls and Old Kutraalam Falls.
3. Snake Park near Main Falls
4. Aquarium near to the Main Falls.
5. Children's Park.

4.15.2 Nearby Tourist Places

Tenkasi is a town located in the foothills of the Western Ghats near the Courtallam Waterfalls, close to the Tamil Nadu - Kerala border in Tirunelveli District. The Paliaruvi Falls is near the inter-state border in Kerala.

4.15.3 Religious

- Courtallam is not just waterfalls; its temples too attract visitors. The most important among these is the Chitra Sabha, one of the five sabhas with Nataraja, Shiva in the dancing posture as the main deity. The paintings at the Chitra Sabha were renovated about 100 years ago. The others are the Rathna Sabha at Thiruvallangadu, the Kanaka Sabha at Chidambaram, and the Velli Sabha at Madurai and the Thamira Sabha at Tirunelveli). The temple at the foot of the hill is conch-shaped which has special significance in Hindu tradition.
- The Tamil poet Thirukudarasappa Kavirayar sang about the beauty of this place in his "Kutraala Kuravanji" standing on its highest point at 1565m.
- The temple at the foot of the hill is conch-shaped which has special significance in Hindu tradition.

4.15.4 Nearby temples

- Thirukutraalanaadhar Kovil near Main falls. During the Thamizh month of Chithirai a ten day festival is celebrated which ends on Pournami (Full Moon Day) in the special prayers.
- Thirumalai Kovil in Panpoli, 8 km from Courtallam.
- Kumaran Kovil in Ilanji, 1 km from Courtallam.
- Kasivishuwanathar Kovil in Tenkasi, 6 km from Courtallam.
- Dhakshinamoorthy Kovil at Puliyarai, 12 km from Kutraalam.
- Papanasam Ulagaambihai Kovil in Papanasam, 35 km from Kutraalam.
- Ariyankavu Iyappan Kovil in Kerala, 35 km from Kutraalam.

4.15.5 Resorts

There are numerous resorts, hotels and lodges in Courtallam. Some of the resorts are maintained in International Standards. Most of the luxurious hotels are located near the main falls and Old Courtallam.

4.15.6 Transport

Roadways

Courtallam is well connected by road transport with the nearby towns of Tenkasi and Shenkottai. Buses are operated to Courtallam from Madurai, Trichy and Tiruchendur. During the peak season period that is June, July and August more buses are operated by TNSTC to all the water falls.

Railways

The nearby railway station is at which Tenkasi five kms. From Courtallam. Thenkasi is well connected by the following trains:

1. Pothigai Express which runs between Chennai Egmore to Shenkottai daily.
2. Shenkottai to Madurai passenger train which runs daily.
3. Shenkottai to Tirunelveli passenger train runs every day.

4.16 OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

4.16.1 Koothankulam Bird Sanctuary

Koothankulam Bird Sanctuary, is situated 35 km south of Tirunelveli as a favorite spot for migratory birds. Migratory birds arrive here in the month of December and lay eggs. After hatching and growing the newborns, it flies back in the month of July to its destination with the younger ones. The bird observers found around 35 species of birds in this sanctuary. Some Painted Storks come

from East European countries. To create a friendly environment to migratory birds, the Department of Forest takes effort to protect the migratory birds and also facilitated the circuit of tourist without affecting the environment.

4.16.2 Sivasailam

Sivasailam is a small Temple named after Sivasailappar and Paramakalyani amman Parvathi. This temple is situated on the banks of the river Karunai, on the way of Ambasamudram to Thenkasi.

4.16.3 Manimuthar Waterfalls

Manimuthar Falls is a natural water falls flowing throughout the year situated above the Manimuthar dam. The falls nearby has a pond which has a depth of 90 feet. It is really a picturesque place. It is just in 35 km from Tirunelveli city. There is no public transport service to go to this water falls.

4.16.4. Palayamkottai

Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli are twin-cities. Palayamkottai is regarded as the “Oxford of South India” with its educational institutions of academic eminence and intellectual excellence. It is a fast developing urban center with mostly Christian outlook and modern ways of living.

A number of Churches, Temples and Mosques are found in Palayamkottai. One can easily find a 'cultural mix' here. There is an old fort built by the Nayak kings which should be preserved.

**4.16.5. District Science Centre, Tirunelveli
(National Council of Science Museums, Government of India)**

The district science centre is unique institution situated on the banks of Tamiraparni. Popularizing science, inculcating the spirit of enquiry, fostering creative talents and infusing scientific temper in life, are its objectives. This autonomous body is a unit of the National Council of Science Museums, attached to the Department (HRD) Government of India. This is one among the 124 centres in the country. The centre has 3 permanent galleries on ocean, a semi permanent gallery on popular science and a six acre science park where numerous exhibits help create awareness of scientific development among the people.

A good collection of films and video cassettes on nature, wildlife computers given face lift to the centres. It organizes video and planetarium shows (a planetarium shows the night sky during day time).

The centre gives heart-beat demonstration at the planetarium, has a sky observatory to view heavenly bodies through telescope and science demonstration and lectures on everything from electronics to salts. Kits are also lent to school for effective classroom communication.

In addition to the above facilities the District Science Centre is also organizing the following programmes Mobile Science Exhibition, Planetarium, Film Show, Temporary Exhibitions, Science Drama and Science Fair.

4.16.6 Papanasam

Papana`sam is a noted pilgrim center with temples, rivers, dams, waterfalls, reservoirs, a hydro-electric power station and a textile mill. Papanasam is 48 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. Hindus of all parts of the country who visit Rameswaram and Kanyakumari visit Papanasam also. The name ‘Papanasam’ implies eradication of sins.

The 500 year old temple of Lord Siva (Papanasar), the Agasthiar Temple, the Sorimuthaiyanar Temple and the holy spring, Banatheertham are all situated on the mountains of Western Ghats. The temples and places have been richly blessed by the chill and pure waters of the holy Thamiraparni and tourists enjoy the ‘Kisses of Nature’ here.

The ups and downs of Papanasam hills provide a virtual feast to the visitors. The famous Mundanthurai Tiger Sanctuary, the only one in South India is just five kilometers away from Papanasam. It is now an integral part of the Kalakkadu Mudenthurai Tiger Reserve which is popularly known as KMTR.

4.16.7. Mundanthurai

The Mundanthurai Tiger Sanctuary is another prominent tourist attraction of Tirunelveli district. Located on the Western Ghats at a distance of 53 kilometers from Tirunelveli, this sanctuary and thrilling hill-slopes provide the status of an international tourist center to this place.

4.16.8. Manjolai

Manjolai is 57 kilometers away from Tirunelveli and is situated at an elevation of 1162.81 meters. There are many tea plantations in and around this place.

Manjolai is noteworthy for its climate, scenery and calm atmosphere. This place can easily be compared with Udhagamandalam, the Queen of Hill Stations as far as the pleasing climate and the peaceful natural atmosphere are concerned.

Just above Manjolai, there are places like Kakkachi and Nalumukku and Kothayar which are real gifts of nature.

4.16.9. Koonthakulam

Koonthakulam is a small village just 38 kilometers away from Tirunelveli on its southern side. It is in the nearby Nanguneri taluk. Koonthakulam has been the sweet home for many domestic and foreign migratory birds for a long time.

These rare birds find a paradise in the big tank there and they normally live there for about six months from December-July every year. About 35 species of birds mainly pelicans visit this calm but congenial village for breeding. There are plans to promote Koonthakulam soon into an international bird sanctuary

4.16.10 Upper Kodaiyar

Upper Kodaiyar is located on the southernmost tip of the Western Ghats bordering the Kerala State. It is a beautiful area where nature is at its best around the year. The verdant forests of Upper Kodaiyar are capable of promoting adventure tourism. Tea, rubber and cardamom are grown on a large scale in this area.

4.16.11 Kadayam

Another small town lying between Ambasamudram and Tenkasi having interesting tourist spots is Kadayam. Kadayam is famous for lime fruits of a rare varieties.

Kadayam is the birth place of Parimel Azhahar, the famous author who wrote prose explanation for the great Tamil literary master-piece, Thirukkural and also of Thirumathi Chellammal, wife of the revolutionary poet Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathiyar. The Siva Temple at Kadayam is ancient and full of fine statues.

4.16.12 Pottalpuḁur

Pottalpuḁur is near Kadayam. This small town houses a famous Mosque built in A. D. 1674. The several festivals (Kanthuries) celebrated at Pottalpuḁur pull crowds from the four directions of the state. This is more than a pilgrim center.

4.16.13 Shenkottah

Shenkottah or Senkottai is a town that was in Kerala State for a long time before the linguistic reorganization of States in 1956. it is 63 kilometers away from Tirunelveli.

This town bears all the traits of a typical Kerala city. People speak Malayalam also in addition to Tamil and English.

Rich with a beautiful natural surrounding, Shencottah has many temples, a good park and modern farms.

The coconut and mango trees of this place persuade one to call it the ‘Garden City’ of Tirunelveli district.

The festivals of Sakthi (Devi Nithyakalyani Amman) Temple here attract large crowds every year.

4.16.14 Panpozhil

A beautiful 400 years old temple dedicated to Lord Muruga (Thirumalai Kumaraswamy) is on the top of a hillock at Panpozhil on the north western side of Tenkasi – Courtallam. It is 72 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. This is a very popular temple of this part of the State.

Saint Arunagirinathar had sung in praise of Lord Muruga here. A number of festivals are celebrated in this place and a large number of devotees throng the Murugan temple annually. Pilgrims from the neighboring States also come to this famous place.

4.16.15 Melagaram

Melagaram is just three kilometers away from Tenkasi on the way to Courtallam. This small village gains tourism importance as the birth place of the famous Tamil Poet Thirikooda Rasappa Kavirayar who wrote the ‘Kutrala Kuravanji’. This is an ideal place for rest and relaxation.

4.16.16. Abhishekapatti

Abhishekapatti is having the Government Cattle Breeding Farm. It is four kilometers away from Tirunelveli on the way to Tenkasi. Cows, sheep, hens and pigs are provided with independent sections here.

Those who are interested in seeing different races of cattle will find this place very interesting .

4.16.17 Thalaiyuthu

Thalaiyuthu is seven kilometers away on the northern part of Tirunelveli. The large India Cement Factory is, located here. This industrial town has many industrial complexes like India Cements, Carbide factory, modern rice mill , limestone mines and related service industries to be seen.

4.16.18 Kallikulam

This is a small village about 58 kilometers away from Tirunelveli in southern direction.

The Panimayamatha Church at Kallikulam is very popular. It is a major Christian Pilgrim Centre.

4.16.19 Gangaikondan

Gangaikondan is a town 15 kilometers away on the northern side of Tirunelveli. It was established by the great Chola King Rajendra Cholan I. It has many monuments and small temples which are historically important. A Special Economic Zone has been developed by the government of Tamil Nadu and it is the nerve centre of information technology development of Tirunelveli.

4.16.20 Sepparai

Sepparai is a small village situated 15 kilometers away from Tirunelveli on the north eastern side. The Siva (Azhagiya Koothar) Temple is one of the many noted centers of pilgrimage in the district. The temple festival in the month of December is a major annual function attracting large numbers of devotees. Surrounded as it is by lush green paddy fields, Sepparai offers the best scenic feast to the eyes.

4.16.21 Reddiarpatti

Reddiarpatti is 15 kilometers away on the southern side of Tirunelveli. This the birth place of Krishnapillai, the author of Rakshanya Yaathreagam (Pilgrims Progress) a great Christian Tamil literary work.

4.16.22 Ariyakulam

This is a small village 13 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. There a bird sanctuary. A variety of birds congregate at Ariyakulam in large numbers from March – June every year for breeding. They come from various countries. The river and tanks here attract birds from far away places also.

4.16.23 Puliampatti

Puliampatti is a popular Christian Centre of pilgrimage. The Roman Catholic Church here is big in . Thousands of people irrespective of religion come and stay at Puliampatti during the months of August and December every year.

4.16.24 Kallidaikurichi

Kallidaikurichi can be called the ‘Thanjavour’ of Tirunelveli district. The beautiful town is come 33 kilometers away from Tirunelveli on the way to Papanasam. The Siva (Manenthiappar) Temple, the Parvathy (Aramvalarthanayagi) Temple, the Vigneshwara (Selva Vinayakar) Temple, the Agasthiar Temple, the Roman Catholic Church and the number of big and small Mosque of this place strengthen the social fabric to provide a more attractive interest to the visitors. River Thamiraparni, Kannadian canal and the fertile soil make this place the ‘granary’ of Tirunelveli district.

4.16.25 Ambasamudram

Ambasamudram is fast growing town on the way to Papanasam about 37 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. There are Siva Temples and an Agasthiar Temple at Ambasamudram. The Thorana Murugan Temple is near Ambasamudram. With the ancient name, ‘Ilangokudi’ Ambasamudram offers a number of indicators for the growing historical trends and turns of this part of the

state. Tourists interested in historical evidences and monuments will discover a paradise in Ambasamudram.

4.16.26 Ilanji

Ilanji is another small village on the northern side of Tenkasi full of natural beauty. There is a five hundred year old beautiful Temple dedicated to Lord Muruga. It was built by King Adiveera Rama Pandiyan. Sung in praise by Saint Arunagiri Nathar, this temple is a center of tourist attraction for people of other states too.

4.16.27 Ayikudy

Ayikudy is a small village on the way to Shencottah and 59 kilometers away from Tirunelveli by road. The Lord Muruga Temple of Ayikudy is a famous destination for Hindu pilgrims. It houses many rare architectural works. Currently this village assumed great impotence as it offers rehabilitation facilities for the disabled through a charitable organisation named as Amar Seva Sangh.

4.16.28 Sambavarvadakarai

Sambavarvadakarai, another calm village, is 54 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. There is a big Temple of Lord Siva and Parvathi here. This Temple enjoys epic importance and thousands of devotees and tourists throng here quite

often. The Srimoolanathaswami Temple Chithirai Pouranami festival is a popular religious event in this area. Many tourists visit the temple every year.

4.16.29 Achanpudur

Achanpudur is a small village on the western part of Shencottah. It has been popular due to the Lord Ayyappa Temple. During the months of November, December and January every year, thousands of Ayyappa Swami devotees visit this temple as an integral part of their holy trip to Sabarimalai Lord Ayyappa Temple. Natural beauty adds to people's divine gaiety at Achanpudur.

4.16.30 Sivagiri

Sivagiri located on the northern border of Tirunelveli district, is nearly 80 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. The Subramanya Temple on a small hill attracts many tourists to this part. There are many small Temples also at Sivagiri.

4.16.31 Nanguneri

Nanguneri is on the way to Kanayakumari. It is 38 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. Nanguneri is the headquarters of the Vanamamalai Math which has a large following among the Vaishnavites. There is Vanamamalai Swami Temple. People all over India come to this Temple.

4.16.32 Eruvadi

At a distance of 42 kilometers from Tirunelveli and on the northern side of Valliyur is Eruvadi. A town with small hills, a river, perennial canals and orchards. Eruvadi has a Siva Temple, a number Mosques and a Church. Thousands of people visits Eruvadi during Muslim festival days.

4.16.33 Thirukkurungudi

Thirukkurungudi is a small town on the Valliyur-Kalakkad route. It is nearly 42 kilometers away from Tirunelveli. The very popular Vaishnavite (Nambi) Temple is on the south western side of Thirukkurungudi. This place also is eminently attractive from the tourist point of view.

4.16.34 Kalakkad

Kalakkad is 47 kilometers from Tirunelveli. The Wildlife Sanctuary of Kalakkad is located on the Western Ghats. This has been declared as Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary. Bisons, elephants and many other animals are found here. This is a popular tourist attraction. There is an 'Island of Peace', 'a charitable institution run by a foreign based trust at Kalakkad.

4.16.35 Dohnavur

It is a small village near Kalakkad bordering the Western Ghats. This place is famous for an orphanage established by a European lady missionary for the welfare of particularly unwanted girl children from all over India. It is currently known as Dohanavur Fellowship. The hospital attached to the organization was once the medical centre of the entire district of Tirunelveli.

4.16.36 Valliyur

Valliyur is another busy town about 48 kilometers away from Tirunelveli on the way to Kanyakumari. It carries a mixed culture. There are Temples, Churches and Mosques. The Subramanya Swamy Temple here is historically significant. The 'Thai Poosam' festival in January every year is very popular.

4.16.37 Panagudi

Another small town on the southern side Valliyur at a distance of 57 kilometers from Tirunelveli is Panagudi. There is a famous Vaishnava (Ramalinga Swami) temple at Panagudi. It is one of the few places in the world where Harmonium is produced.

4.16.38 Edaiyankudi

A village on the southern side of Valliyur at a distance of some 15 kilometers, Edaiyankudi is historically important. Bishop Caldwell, a foreign Tamil Scholar lived here and spread Tamil literature along with his mission.

4.16.39 Athankaraipallivasal

Athankaraipallivasal is on the southern part of Valliyur. It is a pilgrim center for Muslims. There is a very popular Mosque. People of all religions visit this celebrated Mosque.

4.16.40 Radhapuram

Radhapuram is on the south eastern side of Valliyur at about 15 kilometers. The Nitya Kalyani Amman Temple here is very popular. A large number of people visit this temple during festivals in August-September every year. The naturally beautiful character of this place attracts many tourists.

4.16.41 Thiruvankatanathapuram

Thiruvankatanathapuram about 7 km away from Tirunelveli city, is a village with a famous Perumal Temple. A large number of persons visit this ancient place periodically.

4.16.42 Sengaltheri

On the high lap of Western Ghats, there is a hill resort, Sengaltheri 14 km from Kalakkad, with a water falls, dense forest around and an enchanting climate, nature smiles lovingly at this enthralling and majestic marvel. Naturally, tourists throng this place to rejuvenate themselves.

Above all, the people of Tirunelveli District are modern, progressive and willing to mingle with tourists. A congenial socio-political syndrome prevails.