CHAPTER- 3

CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS CENTERS

Religion has been a major motivating force for tourism from ancient times to till date. Every religion has cast upon its followers some duties that involve travel. The people want to visit religious places that are considered as holy. In India, the domestic tourism is almost related to a religious tourism. Likewise, Kanyakumari District also attracts more religious tourists towards it. Here, again it can be divided into pilgrimage to Hindu temples, Jain temples, Christian churches and Muslim mosques.

3.1. Kumari Churches

In the Christian religion, churches are a building or structure. It’s primary purpose is to facilitate the meeting place of the Christians. Traditional church buildings are often in the shape of a cross and frequently have a tower or dome. Most of the modern church buildings have a variety of architectural styles and layouts. All traditional churches have a wonderful historical background.

Once Kanyakumari District was a Hindu dominated area where every village had a guardian deity, in this land Christianity came in the midst of great opposition. Scholars hold different views regarding the origin of Christianity in India. Tradition

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3 Agur, C.M., *op.cit*, p.469.
attributes its origin to St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. His tomb at Mylapore bears witness to his advent.\textsuperscript{4}

The origin of Christianity in the southern district of Tamil Nadu began with the arrival of St. Thomas in 52 A.D.\textsuperscript{5} He was one of the Disciples of Christ who came to India and neighboring countries to spread Christianity and to establish Christian churches in various places.\textsuperscript{6} Following the Catholics, the Protestants came to south Travancore in 1806. Ringeltaube came to Mylaudy and established a small church at Mylaudy.\textsuperscript{7} Rev. Charles Mead, Rev. Singlar and many other missionaries came to south Travancore following Ringeltaube.\textsuperscript{8}

These missionaries, both Catholics and Protestants, constructed churches in various places. These churches stand as monuments, and were testimony to Christianity. St. Mary’s Orthodox Church Thiruvithancode, St. Xavier’s Church at Kottar, Our Lady of Ransom Church Kanyakumari, Kattadimalai or Devasahayam Church Aralvaimozhi, Home Church Nagercoll, Ringeltaube - Vethamanicam Memorial Church Mylaudy, CSI Church Marthandam, are very conspicuous Christian monuments.

\textsuperscript{5} Firth, C.B., \textit{Indian Church History}, Bangalore, 1961. p. 3.
\textsuperscript{6} Joy Gnanadhason, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Ibid.}
3.1.1. Thiruvithamcode Arappally St. Thomas Orthodox Church

St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Thiruvithamcode was the first church founded by St. Thomas in India in 52 A.D. This church is situated at Thiruvithamcode in Kanyakumari District. Thiruvithamcode is situated 30 kms east of Thiruvandapuram. It is believed by the Christian communities in Kerala that the historic ‘Thiruvithamcode Arappally’ (Royal Church), also called Amalagiri church as named by the then Chera King Udayancheral. This is the first Christian church of Kanyakumari District and this church is famous one of Christian followers.

There is a strong tradition among the people of Kerala that the origin and influence of Christianity in the strips of the sandy track stretching from Kodungallore to Kanyakumari was due to the visit and evangelistic work of the apostle St. Thomas. The old church at Thiruvithamcode is considered to be one of the most ancient churches in the district. It was consecrated by St. Thomas. As per tradition, the small Syrian Church of St. Mary was consecrated as Thiruvithamcode is considered as a half-church while the other seven churches are in Kerala.

The half church was 25 feet length, 16 feet breadth and 10 feet in height, which was built with black stone. Even now the church has 2 doors and 2 windows

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10 Alasiar, J. *op.cit.*, p. 10.
which gives the feeling to anyone that he is in a palace.\textsuperscript{12} The roof above the church looks like the roof of Jerusalem Church. The half church means Rajahinm. The king was Arasan. The inscriptions about this church can be seen in the books of Udhayamperur Synagogue in 1599.\textsuperscript{13} Also we can find the descriptions of this church in the books of the missionaries like Francis-co-Diasia, Antonia Devia, Dovaethae Berbosn. The council prepared the plan of providing food and place of stay to those who go there for thesis.\textsuperscript{14} This church was erected in 63 AD during Chera’s period. St. Thomas came to Thiruvithancode from Chinna Muttom.

In Udayagiri, the Amalagiri Amman family got baptism at first from St. Thomas. Here there is St. Thomas garden. Kottavadukan Aasan and Iran Kodukan Aasan who lived in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century and 5\textsuperscript{th} century got the ‘presthura’ title from Cheran King.\textsuperscript{15} Above the old steps we can see their names in the stone crusae in Chinna Muttom. This is called as St. Thomas Crusae. Here people sit together and often pray. There is a well called as ‘St. Thomas well’. At first, the water of this well cannot be used for drinking. After St. Thomas blessed this well, people used this water.

There is a church in Muttom, Manakudy, Chinna, Muttom called the

\textsuperscript{12} Vikraman Thambi, G., \textit{Thekkan Pattukal} (Malayalam), Trivandrum, 1974, pp. 137-149.
\textsuperscript{13} George Mathew, \textit{St. Mary’s Syrian Church}, Thiruvithancode, Nagercoil, p.1.
\textsuperscript{14} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{Aaivu Kalangiyam} (Tamil Journal), First Christian Church in Tamil Nadu, Nagercoil, December 2003. p. 44.
\textsuperscript{15} Chellam, V.T., \textit{op.cit.}, p.74.
‘Tharisa Church’. The street is called ‘Tharida Street’ and the people are called ‘Tharisagaar’.\textsuperscript{16} The term ‘Tharisa’ originated from a Syrian word.

The front door of the Church is 5.5 feet high and 2.5 feet width. Bread and wine and praying hands are carved in it. Both sides of the Alter have painted pictures.\textsuperscript{17} Two pictures describing the suffering of Jesus is drawn there. There is a wooden box which has pictures of St. Pathrose, who lifts key and sword and the pelican which died by giving the last drop of blood to its young ones and this reminds that Jesus gave the last drop of blood for the people. We can also see the picture of Kiniks parrot which was turned to ashes by fire and a new image of the bird emerging. It reminds of the resurrection of Christ. Inside the box, there is a symbol of Kurusu. Under the big Kurusu, two pictures of skulls can be seen. The meaning of the words inside the box still remains a mystery.

Before the invention of electricity people did prayer service by lighting up thick thread in the oil. There is a trub for the purpose of baptism. In the north side of the church, there is a tub to wash legs. The royal people from Chera king Imayavaramban Nedumcheralathan’s family got baptism with the consent of the king. Udaya Santor was the first to get baptism. His children are Santaman Yaakobu Kaseesa, Santaman Antharirose Kaseesa who were Brahmins.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{17} Personal interview with Anderson, N., Aged 57, Kanyakumari, dated 24.3.2009.

\textsuperscript{18} Chellam, V.T.,\textit{op.cit.}, p.75.
We can know this from the inscriptions of Veera Raghava Patinam. Those who are baptised are in the right side of the church. Thiruvalluvar lived in Ahale Thirunayanar next to Thiruvuthancode. It is said in Thirukural.\textsuperscript{19} The Council in Thiruvithancode pilgrim centres codes “Rules of Administration to make arrangements for the pilgrims to stay there”.

3.1.2. Kottar St. Francis Xavier Church,

Kottar had the credit of being the sole commercial town of south Travancore. With the establishment of the St. Xavier’s Church of Kottar, the place became a commercial cum religious centre.\textsuperscript{20} Today the church is a Cathedral, where the Bishop of Kottar Diocese conducts the Holy Mass. The church is situated at Kottar, north-east of Nagercoil town.\textsuperscript{21} To many a people, it is a pilgrim centre which has proposed the title ‘Second Goa’ where the body of St. Xavier is kept.\textsuperscript{22}

On 17\textsuperscript{th} January 1603, Buccerio started the construction work of the church with the help of the Nadar Christians of Pallam. It is said that the construction work of the church, the priest house and the shrine were started simultaneously.\textsuperscript{23} Local opposition was also there for the construction of the church. But in the teeth of opposition a part of the church was completed on 19\textsuperscript{th} January 1603 and on the


\textsuperscript{20} Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p.211.

\textsuperscript{21} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{Kanyakumari is a Paradise for Tourists}, October, 2004, p.9.


\textsuperscript{23} Venacius, S., \textit{Thiruthalam Kottar (Tamil)}, Nagercoil, 1998. p. 27.
following Sunday the new church was dedicated.\textsuperscript{24}

Buccorio the founder of the first church at Kottar died on 24\textsuperscript{th} January 1617, in the Jesuit house at Madurai.\textsuperscript{25} In 1622 the Jesuits again assumed the management of the church and in 1640 sainthood was awarded to Xavier.\textsuperscript{26} To commemorate this occasion this people demolished the old clay church and in its place built a new stone church called St. Xavier’s Church.\textsuperscript{27}

Every year the number of devotees grew in number. So the first church appeared insufficient to accommodate all the devotees at a time. To overcome the difficulty in 1698, the Jesuits priests\textsuperscript{28} constructed a huge church of stone with titled roof on the side of the small church built by St. Xavier.\textsuperscript{29} Extension work of this church was carried out in 1713 as per the decision of the Jesuits. In 1865 the Kottar Church was again enlarged by transforming it into a Cruciform building, with new wings and a sanctuary.\textsuperscript{30} The old tiled roof was removed and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Mondadan, S., \textit{Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle of Autonomy}, Bangalore, 1984. p. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Venacius, S., \textit{op.cit.} p.43.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Alex Khurush Malhiah, \textit{Then Pandi Madalamana Veeranadu} (Tamil), Azhakappapuram, 1995. p.257.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Dhina Thanthi, \textit{Thahaval Kalangiyam}, Nagercoil, 5.3.2009. p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Dhina Thanthi, Christmas Malar, Nagercoil, 2003. p. 22.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Venacius, S., \textit{op.cit.} p. 20.
\end{itemize}
a dome was raised straight above the altar. On either side of the church arches and small domes were constructed. The Chapel of Our Lady, standing on the spot, where Xavier used to often the holy sacrifice was also renovated and vaulted over.

In the nineteenth century, the front portion of the church was extended with the construction of Stone Mandapam. The while edifice consisting of floor, wall and roof was built out of stone. In 1930, the area from Kanyakumari to Neerodi was separated from Quilon Diocese and a new diocese in the name of Kottar was formed with the Kottar Church as the Cathedral Church.

The church spots has many styles of architecture. The painting of the church is artistic and a good masterpiece. The Travancore Royal family was greatly attracted by the paintings of this church. The artist Raja Ravi Varma painted the portrait of St. Mary and presented the same to the church. The extension with high painted arches is Gothic art and the fine stone mandapam in front is purely

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33 Villayarayan, *op.cit.*, p. 35.
34 Villayarayan, *op.cit.*, p. 36.
36 Inscription on the floor of Altar, St. Xavier’s Church, Kottar.
38 Personal Interview with Sekar, Joint Secretary of Kottar Parish, dated 7.1.2009.
Thus, the Kottar church stands even today as monument for the Christians.

3.1.3. Shrine of Our Lady of Periyananayahi Church at Thiruvithancode

Thiruvithancode is a small town in Kanyakumari District. It is well known for its historical importance in the then Princely State of Travancore. St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, came to this land in 52 A.D. Here a church was built a thousand years back by king of Venad at Thiruvithancodu has become the church of our Jesus of Ancension.40

It is believed that Our lady of Periyanayagi remains in this historical church, and miracles of her people. It was recorded that the Mariya Devasagayam Pillai was imprisoned in the secret tunnel inside the church. It was also told that St. Xavier, patron of the Diocese of Kottar, stayed here and continued his missionary works for a few days in the year 1545.42 In AD1860 Fr. Adrianus was died in Thirukkangodu and was buried in the Thiruvithancodu church.44

39 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., pp. 11-12.
40 Personal interview with Parish priest, aged 57, Thiruvithancodu, 23.5.2009.
41 Mariya Devasagayam Pillai is the wife of Devasagam pillai. He was newly converted Christian, He was assassinated in Aravaimozhi Kaatadi Mount.
43 He was a Madrid Missionary. He born in 1818. He took Holy orders in AD 1848 and had joined the Quilon Apostolic Mission AD 1855.
3.1.4. Chinna Muttom St. Thomas Church

There is an old church called Thommai Palli or St. Thomas Church at Chinna Muttom about two kms north – east of the kanyakumari. It is now in a ruined condition and only the foundations of the old church are now visible besides the present Chapel of St. Sebastian. It is said that at the beginning of the 16th century, the Portugese sailors who passed through the place made their offerings here for a safe voyage. From the Royal Edict issued in 1494 AD, it is known that the church at Chinna Muttom enjoyed certain grants from the harbor dues for lighting the lamps in the church.

3.1.5. Kanyakumari Our Lady of Ransom Church

Kanyakumari is situated in the southernmost tip of the District of Kanyakumari, of the Indian subcontinent. The Kanyakumari Parish almost coincides with the civil village of Kanyakumari. It is closely associated with the mainstream Catholic faith in India.

There are archeological evidences suggesting that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ visited this soil. The tomb stones unearthed at Kumari Muttom, near Kanyakumari contain evidences to show that Catholics had lived there for many centuries. The tomb stones dated 1496 A.D. contain the edict

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47 Personal interview with D.Merlin, church member, Kanyakumari Renson church, 24.3.09.
of the local ruler granting tax exemptions to the residents of Kumari Muttom and authorizing levy of access from the fishermen in Kumari Muttom. The aggregate income thus generated had to be used to keep the lights of the church burning.\(^{48}\)

The second inscription dated 1526 AD reads \(^{49}\) “on the twentieth day of the month of Panguni, King Siraval Muttambiranar was pleased to order Muttakangan and Illayakangan and others among the subjects living at Muttom. We being pleased to put a stop to riots, quarrels, injustice, tyranny, blackmail and confiscations of fish, they shall here after live here as in an asylum for the oppressed”.

In 1542 when St. Francis Xavier came to Cape Comerin (Kanyakumari) he was delighted to find ‘Our Lady of Delights Grotto’, at Kanyakumari. Then it became a center for mission activities of the Jesuits from Thoothoor to Ramanathapuram. It is believed that Our Lady of Delights Grotto, in which St. Francis Xavier worshiped, later became the Church of Our Lady of Ransom.\(^{50}\) Our Lady of Ransom is the Patron of the congregation in Spain which redeemed the Christians from the Muslim invasion in the year 1218 A.D. The people of Kanyakumari were delighted to combine the name Ransom with Delight and call their Patron as Alangara Upakara Matha. The wooden alter elegantly depicts the artistic Roman Art. This church remains part and parcel of the new church. The

\(^{48}\) Inscription at St. Thomas church, Chenna Muttom.


\(^{50}\) Personal interview with Rev. Fr. Leon S. Henson, Priest, Kanyakumari, dated 26.4.2009.
their Patron as Alangara Upakara Matha. The wooden alter elegantly depicts the artistic Roman Art. This church remains part and parcel of the new church. The foundation stone for the new church was later laid on 31st May 1900 by Rev. Fr. John Consolvez. Mr. Pakiam Pillai of the Vadakkankulam region was the architect of the new church.\textsuperscript{51} It is the model of ancient Gothic Art and culture. The length of the new Church is 153 feet, breath 53 feet and height is 153 feet. All these depict the breads of the Holy Rosary.

In 1862 Kanyakumari Church was established as a separate parish and many eminent priests have served as parish priests of the church. In 1914 Msgr. Vincent Fdo celebrated the First Mass in the newly built Church. In 1956 Rev. Fr. Josaphath Maria completed the front elevation and the pinnacles. In 2006 the parish celebrated the golden jubilee of the erection of the golden cross and 106\textsuperscript{th} year of laying foundation of the church.\textsuperscript{52}

The Church of Our Lady of Ransom is built in the Gothic style of architecture with a strong Portuguese influence. The church slightly half white in appearance has three massive towering spires and stained glass windowpanes contributing to the overall grandeur. Another attraction of the Church is the Central Tower. It is 153 feet high and is crowned with a Cross of pure gold.\textsuperscript{53}


\textsuperscript{52} http://www.ransomchurchkanyakumari.org.

\textsuperscript{53} Personal Interview with Mr. Antony, church member, Kanyakumari Renson church, 24.3.09.
3.1.6. Devasahayam Mount

As per the order of the king of Thiruvithancode on 14th January 1752, the newly converted Christian, Devasahayam Pillai was killed in Aravaimozhi Kaatadi Mount and he died a martyr.\textsuperscript{54}

Hence from 18th century onwards this place is being a pilgrim centre. The people who inhabited the nearby places constructed the Mother Mary’s church. The small church was constructed here on 1862, was the sub-parish from Kottar Diocese and then it was made the sub-parish for Rajavoor Diocese. Later the place was called Kurusady.\textsuperscript{55} In 1961, it became the main parish. This St. Mary’s church was blessed on September 15, 1975. Out of the 2500 people living here 2450 are Catholics. The people in the surroundings are engaged in tile work. Some of them are engaged in small scale business, construction work, carpentry, spinning work and agriculture. Forty five percent of the people are literates.\textsuperscript{56}

Here R.C. High School, St. Annes Society College, Milk Society, St. Annes Noviciate are functioning in the institutions in the parish. Children’s organization, St. Mary’s Catholic Service Organisation, Youth Boy’s Club, Child’s Path Organization, Self-confidence Organisation, etc, are there.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54} Muthukumar, R., \textit{Devasahayam Pillai} (Tamil folk), Yalpanam, 1974. p. 23
\textsuperscript{55} Saviour, M.R., \textit{Devasahayam Pillai}, Thirunelveli, 1986. p. 86
\textsuperscript{56} Muthu Kumar, R., \textit{Kanyakumari Tourist Pilgrims}, Theni, 1978. p. 2
\textsuperscript{57} Personal interview with Fr. Felix, Devasahayam Mount church, dated 07.09.2009.
3.1.7. Our Lady of Presentation Church, Colachel

Colachel parish is the main centre in the Diocese of Kottar. When St. Francis Xavier was preaching the Gospel of God in Kanyakumari to Kollam, many people got baptism from him. In 1600, a church was erected and the holy guardian is St. Mary and it became a separate parish. The sub-parishes Puthoor, Kottilpadu, Kalimaar, Kodimunai, Vaniyakudi, Kurumpanai have became the main parishes later.\textsuperscript{58} On 3\textsuperscript{rd} June 2004, Simon Colony became a separate, parish from Colachel. The present church building originated on 16\textsuperscript{th} November 1969 and blessed on 21 October 1985.\textsuperscript{59}

This parish is the first, constructed among the seashore area. This is a natural sea port area.\textsuperscript{60} In the region of Travancore – Cochin Maharaja Marthanda Varma, defeated the Dutch army and De Lannoy was imprisoned in Puliyoorkurichy Kottai. He preached Gospel in the warrior memorial pillar in Colachel, constructed on 1741, and it remains a symbol of victory. Ships from various countries come here to export sand from Colachel harbor.

3.1.8. St. Antony’s Church, Vettuvenni

During 1752 AD a stone cross was kept in memory of St. Devasahayam Pillai. The writings on this cross and the writings on the tomb of De. Lannoy are of the same type. In the reign of the king Marthanda Varma, efforts were taken to take

\textsuperscript{58} Golden Jubilee Magazine, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 245.

\textsuperscript{59} Inscription on St. Mary’s Church, Colachel.

\textsuperscript{60} Personal interview with Durai mony.S., aged.69, dated- 15.05.2010.
the cross but in vain. After 100 years when a bridge was constructed in Kuzhithurai a small chapel was erected near the cross and then it became people’s prayer centre.61 The family of Pullankuli Asan and the people nearby came there to pray. The parish priest of Puthukadai, Rev. Fr. Varghese, modified the chapel and blessed and placed there St. Antony’s idol. In 1872, Rev. Fr. Thanislas modified the chapel and Rev. Bishop Arockiaswamy blessed it. Every Tuesday Mary’s prayer and mass are conducted. From 1980 onwards the Sunday mass started.

In 1984, $12^{1/2}$ cent land was bought in the surrounding around theis pilgrim centre. On 4th April 1989 in order to conduct mass, the construction work was made with the measurement of 20”35, in the period of Rev. Fr. Yesudhas Thomas. On 18th February 1991 in the period of Rev. Fr. Yugin Kulanthai, this was made as a sub parish by Rev. Bishop Leon Tharmaraj. The present church was constructed on 4th February 1997 during the period of Rev. Fr. Robert by Mr. Veludhas and blessed by Rev. Bishop Leon Tharmaraj and was recognized as a pilgrim centre in the 2000 Jubilee year.62

3.1.9. Mylaudy Ringel Taube Vedhamanickam Memorial C.S.I Church

Ringeltaube Vedhamanickam Memorial C.S.I Church, Mylaudy was the first protestant church founded by Rev. W.T.Ringeltaube in South Travancore. This church is situated at Mylaudy. According to sources, Mylaudy was once part

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61 Inscription at St. Antony’s Church, Vettuvenni.

of a virgin forest and was favorite haunt of peacocks and hence the name Mylaudy. The place is graced by peacocks. Located about nine kms from Nagercoil, Mylaudy houses the ancient protestant Church built in 1810 during the erstwhile Travancore era by W.T.Ringeltaube in Kanyakumari district. It is believed by the protestant Christian communities in Kanyakumari district that the origin of the other church started from here.

Ringeltaube was a good preacher and the first protestant missionary of South Travancore. He has constructed seven churches. They are Mylaudy, Pitchaikudierupu, Puthalam, Kovilvilai, Athicadu, Eathammozhi and Thamaraikulam respectively. At first he constructed a church in Mylaudy.

Rev. Ringeltaube on his way back to Travancore for the third time, visited Col. Munro the then British Resident and secured permission for the construction of a church at Mylaudy. The long awaited permission arrived after much delay. The local government officers received instructions to render all necessary help in the execution of the work. Magistrate Munnen Annavy and Tahsildar were sent by Royal order were given to start church construction work. Stones from the ruined Punarkulam fort nearby were used and timber was given free of cost. The help rendered is not an indication of the changed attitude of the native government. This was done just to conciliate the British Resident who had established

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63 The Hindu, 17th October 2000, Page.3.
64 The Bicentenary Celebration, 1806-2006, Souvenir, C.S.I. Church, Mylaudy, p.15.
66 Circular order of Colonel Muntro, Dewan, dated 7th Edavam 989, 1814 A.D.
his superiority. Being aware that in Mylaudy there would be difficulties in getting lands for the church, Vedhamanickam and Gnanamuthu gave their own lands for the church and for a Christian settlement as free gifts to ‘Mission’. To avoid future complications, Ringeltaube bought these from for a nominal cost. The foundation stone to the first protestant church in south Travancore was laid at Mylaudy on the land of Vedhamanickam in the month of May 1809. While the work was vigorously preceding the non-christian Tahsilder hindered the work in various ways.

Vedhamanickam fearing the complaint against him would delay the work, gained his friendship by his usual mode of dealing enemies, by giving him presents. Within four months the construction of church work continued day and night. The length of the church is was 40 feet and width 12 feet. The church wall was made of a black stone and clay of sand soil. The roof of the church is palm stem and palm leaves. It was dedicated on 10th September 1809, a day of great Rejoicing to the Christians in and around Mylaudy. The Lord’s Supper was administrated on that day and a few were baptized.

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67 Ringeltaube’s Journal, Palayamcottai, dated 19th June 1808.
68 Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, Madras, 1903, p.552.
69 Inscription on the Wall C.S.I.Church, Mylaudy, 2006.
71 Inscription on the Mylaudy C.S.I. Church, 1810.
72 Agur, C.M., *op.cit*, p.519.
73 Inscription on the Dedication stone of Mylaudy C.S.I. Church, 1810.
Vedhamanickam was formally made a catechist and appointed as the agent of the London Missionary Society. Till the end of the year 1809, the church at Mylaudy was the only church of this Mission. From here the Gospel began to spread to the nearby villages. Ringeltaube travelled from village to village and at certain fixed centers helped to conduct baptizing services and administered the Holy Sacraments.

3.1.9.1. Vedhamanickam made a Catechist:

Having been thus made a Catechist at end of 1809 Vedhamanickam started working with all cheerfulness and zeal. He was thankful for being privileged to labour in the vineyard of Christ. He first directed his attention to convert his friends and others who were worshippers of ‘Elankamanyan’ and he went to Trichencode and other places of pilgrimage every year. He travelled from place to place, carrying the Gospel message. More than all others, shanars listened to him and more readily accepted the truth which he preached with such earnestness. Finding their hearts were open to convention the catechist frequented their houses. The strength of the Mylaudy Church increased to forty six. It was the first Church of south Travancore. Now, the Mylaudy church is the district church.

The renovated and expended Mylaudy church was dedicated by Rev. John

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74 Inscription on the Memory Pillar of Maharasan Vedhamanickam C.S.I. Church, Mylaudy, 1995.
75 Agur, C.M., op.cit, p.533.
76 Inscription on the Memory Pillar of Maharasan Vedhamanickam C.S.I. Church, Mylaudy, 1995.
78 John A Jacob, op.cit, p.36.
79 Personal Interview with P. Gunamony, aged 80, residential at Mylaudy, dated 02.06.2009.
A. Jacob, the then District Minister on 17th December 1932.\(^{80}\)

Now about thousand families come to worship in Malaudy church. Several organizations also function in Mylaudy church.\(^{81}\) In the year 2006, April, 17 Mylaudy church celebrated the Bi-century celebration in the presence of Rt. Rev. Bishop G. Devakadatsam.\(^{82}\)

**3.1.9.2. Mission House of Ringeltaube:**

In 1809 Ringeltaube built a church in Mylaudy, along with that in the south he built a mission house too.\(^{83}\) The length of this house was 10 feet and width was 6 feet. Then he extended this house to 26 feet length and 4 feet width, there was also a bath room near it.\(^{84}\) For the bath room Ringeltaube has used 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 3 square feet black stone.\(^{85}\) As days passed by this mission house got destroyed. This mission house was discovered by Rev. John A Jacob with the help of the Archeology Department.\(^{86}\) Now this Mission house of Ringeltaube is a convention stage in memory of him. The black stone found in bathroom is taken and kept in the northern part of the convention stage. This convention stage was dedicated by Rev. I.R.H. Gnanadasan on 25\(^{th}\) April 1963.\(^{87}\)

\(^{80}\) Inscription on the Foundation Stone of the expanded C.S.I. Church, Mylaudy, dated on 17.12.1932.

\(^{81}\) Personal Interview with N. Gnanaraj, Koil Pillai of Mylaudy church, aged 81, dated 02.06.2009.

\(^{82}\) The Bi-century celebration, Souvenir, *op.cit.*, p.16.

\(^{83}\) Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.553.


\(^{85}\) Inscription on the Foundation Stone at Mylaudy church, 1809.

\(^{86}\) Inscription on the Wall of Convention Stage Mylaudy C.S.I. Church.

\(^{87}\) Inscription on the Dedication Stone for the convention stage, April 25, 1963.
3.1.9.3. Memory Pillar of Maharasan Vedhamanickam

Maharasan Memory pillar is erected in front of the church compound at Mylaudy. In April 25, 1995 Rt. Rev. G. Christudhas the then Bishop was the founder of the memorial pillar of Maharasan Vethamanicam. The construction was completed within five months on August 27, 1995. Rt. Rev. G. Christudhas dedicated the Maharasan Vedhamanickam Memory pillar. Maharasan Vedhamanickam was a dedicated, selfless missionary and also a social worker. This memorial pillar speaks the glory of Vedhamanickam’s loving heart and untiring effort.

3.1.9.4. Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry:

Ringeltaube memorial Belfry was built in front of Mylaudy church on his memory. This Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry was dedicated on November 28, 1954. The bell inside Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry was brought from England. Mr. D. Devadhasan granted the Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry. The total cost of this Belfry is Rs. 20,000.

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88 Inscription on the Foundation Stone of Memory Pillar of Maha Rasan Veda Manicam, C.S.I. Church, Mylaudy, dated on 24.05.1995.
90 The Bi-century celebration, Souvenir, op.cit., p.81.
91 Inscription on the Dedication Stone of Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry, C.S.I. Church, Mylaudy, dated 24.05.1953.
92 The Bi-century celebration, Souvenir, op.cit., p.78.
93 Dedication Stone for the Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry.
3.1.9.5. Memorial Houses of Vedhamanickam Desikar and Ringeltaube

In 1805 Vedhamanickam Desikar met Ringeltaube and called him to Mylaudy and they went to Mylaudy. In Mylaudy, Vedhamanickam Desikar helped him in many ways. Ringeltaube stayed for many days in the house of Vedamonicam. He loved, respected, and gave food to the deserving people. In the house of Vedhamanickam Desikar, Ringeltaube arranged the first Gospel meeting. Many people from Mylaudy came to his house meetings and become close to Ringeltaube. In course of time Vedhamanickam house got damaged and many parts were destroyed.

Dr. Samuel Dhasan, the former Head of the department of Tamil N.M.C.C. Marthandam visited Mylaudy church and he saw the damages in the house of Vedhamanickam. He took keen interest to renovate the house and he collected one Lakh Rupees. Then he started the reconstruction work. On August 30 1979, Vedhamanickam Memorial House was dedicated by the then Bishops Rt. Rev. G. Christudhas and Rt. Rev. Samuel Amirtham. Later on Ringeltaube Memorial House was dedicated by Rt. Rev. M.I. Kesari.

94 Joy Gnanadasan, op.cit., p.53.
95 Christudas, G, op.cit., p.32.
97 Souvenir, The Bi-century celebration, op.cit.,p.79.
98 Personal interview with Dr. Samuel Dhasan, Kottaram, aged 70, dated 3.7.2010.
100 Inscription on the Dedication Stone of Vedamonickam Memorial House, Mylaudy.
101 Inscription on the Foundation Stone of Ringeltaube Memorial House, Mylaudy.
Now two memorial houses are built in one compound and looks very beautiful with a garden.\textsuperscript{102}

3.1.9.6. Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall:

Maharasan Vedhamanickam was the first protestant Christian disciple in south Travancore. In the year 1942 September 18\textsuperscript{th}, Mr.Sathu Kochu Kunju laid foundation stone for the Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall.\textsuperscript{103} In the year 1958 April 25\textsuperscript{th}, Rev. J.A. Jacob M.A., B.D., opened this memorial hall.\textsuperscript{104} The Diocese conventions are conducted in Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall on his memory. The convention based gathering functions and convention guests are made to stay in this hall. Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall is very big with beautiful artistic designs.\textsuperscript{105}

Till the end of 1809, there was only one church in Mylaudy for the Christians, and the converts from other places had to walk a long way to Mylaudy for worship, especially to receive the sacraments. But in the beginning of 1809, Ringeltaube obtained permission from the Travancore government and build churches in six other places.\textsuperscript{106} Though these houses of worship were very modest buildings, they became centers from which the light of Gospel spread around.\textsuperscript{107}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{102} Personal interview with Mr. R.S. Jeolin Dev, C.S.I church Member, aged 22, dated 22.3.2010.
\textsuperscript{103} Inscription on the Foundation Stone of Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall, Mylaudy, 1942.
\textsuperscript{104} Inscription on the Dedication Stone of Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall, Mylaudy, 1958.
\textsuperscript{105} The Bi-century celebration, Souvenir, \textit{op.cit.}, p.78.
\textsuperscript{106} John A Jacob, \textit{op.cit.}, p.35.
\end{flushright}
Ringeltaube was able to build a church at Mylaudy and the churches in the other six places quickly and completed them in 1810 because his friend gave one thousand rupees for this purpose. The people were too poor to contribute anything to build these churches.108

3.1.10. C.S.I Home Church in Nagercoil

Home Church, Nagercoil is one of the oldest churches in South India built during the British reign in India. It currently has the most number of members of all the churches in South Asia.109 This is an outstanding example of the architectural achievement of the missionaries. With the permission of the queen of Travancore, Rev. Charles Mead, utilized the elephants of the Nagaraja Temple and the prisoners in the construction work of the church, which has been called as ‘Kalkoyil’ (stone church) as it is built with huge stones.110

The church construction was started earlier in 1819 and the building imposing Greek style is 140 ft long and 70 ft wide.111 This is one of the oldest and biggest of the protestant churches in South India. The edifice can provide accommodation for nearly 2500 people at a time.

108 Letter from Ringeltaube to Anna, dated 1-11-1810.
111 Inscription on the Foundation Stone of C.S.I. Home church, Nagercoil, 1819.
3.2. Islamic Religious centres

‘Islam’ is an Arabian term, means surrendering to God. They built mosques and minarets for their worship. They have Darghas too. Mosques are places of worship. Dargha is a holy place where those who loved God were buried. In Islam they are called as Dargha.\(^{112}\) They are found in various places. People come to the Darghas to redress their complaints and wishes to be fulfilled. They render their offerings happily when their wishes are fulfilled. Due to this not only the Muslims but also people belonging to other religions come to visit the Darghas.

Minaret is a tall tower forming a part of a Mosque form which Muslims are called to worship. The high towers of minarets have a significant part in the construction work of mosques and darghas. Minarets are erected straight from the bottom till peak or it becomes smaller when it goes to the peak. This kind of pillars were first used properly in mosques by ‘Khalita Musuvia’ in Kanyakumari District, where there are many mosques.\(^{113}\)

3.2.1. Mosque at Thiruvithancode

Once when the son of the king of Kerala, Cherman Perumal, Kolesa was hunting in the forest, suddenly he heard “Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar”. The king went towards the place where he heard the sound. In one place some men stood humbly and bent down and did their prayer service. When the king enquired, they

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\(^{112}\) Seak Thampai, M. Islam in Kanyakumari district, Thiruvithancodu, 2008, p.2.

\(^{113}\) Ibid.
told that they had come to see the king from Arab. As the time for prayer came, they did their prayer in their style.\textsuperscript{114}

They were sent by Malik Ibnu Theenar who belonged to the Islamic Religion. The king helped the Arabians. The place where the king heard the sound of Muslim prayer was then called ‘Thirupaangu Ketta Edam’. This place was called ‘Thirupangodu’ and later as ‘Thiruvangodu’.\textsuperscript{115}

Jum- Aa- Mosque is the first mosque situated in Thiruvithancode. Beside the mosque is the tomb of Mahaan Rali. Even today we can see the symbol of Government as shell symbol. The king has written a will as grant for this mosque, Islam had spread in South India in the late 7\textsuperscript{th} century and in the beginning of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{116}

\subsection*{3.2.2. Mosque at Colachel}

Colachel is the only natural harbor in Tamil Nadu. The Greeks stepped in Colachel harbor for trade even before 3000 years. It has a great significance not only in the history of Islam but also in the history of south India. This place has high historical value as Cochin in Kerala and Korkai and Caveripoompatinam in Tamil Nadu. It is a very ancient land. Here the cultivation of paddy is high.


\textsuperscript{116} Golden Jubilee Magazine, Thiruvithancode, dated 16.3.208.
People in large number come here for buying paddy. So the name ‘Colachel’ is derived from a Tamil word ‘Kozh’, which means ‘get’ and the paddy variety ‘Colachi’ is cultivated more and so the place is called as Colachel.\textsuperscript{117}

Here Islam spread in the beginning itself. Islam had its deep root in the period of Malik Ifnuthenaar. He and his family built 40 mosques both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. His brother’s son had built the last mosque called ‘Kallu Mosque’ or ‘Juma Mosque’. Near the door of the mosque, it is carved as ‘Yaabathaah’ in the pillar. The total number according to the Abjath calculation is 498. According to this, this mosque was built in 1498.\textsuperscript{118}

There are four entrance mosques here. In the Juma Friday prayer is conducted only in ‘Kallu pazhi vaayil’. Ribai mosque Muhyideen Mosque and Meernia Mosque are there. Many wealthy merchants and men come here from Arab countries through this harbor.

\textbf{3.2.3. Mosque at Thingal Nagar}

The place which is called as Thingal Nagar Muslim Jamaath was once called as ‘Naalu aaru mootu chanthai’. Again it was renamed as ‘Thingal Nagar’. The family which followed Malik Ifnu Thenaar who spread Islam in South lived in ‘Naalaaru Mooty Chanthai’. Then the population of Muslim families increased.

\textsuperscript{117} Pettaham, \textit{op.cit.}, p.12.

\textsuperscript{118} Personal Interview with the Committee member of the Mosque, dated 28.03.2009.
Now 500 Muslims families are living there.\textsuperscript{119} The famous Velu Thampi Thalavai from Travancore brought up a social revolution for the welfare of the farmers. We can see that the Thingal Nagar Muslims also participated in the struggle of social revolutions. This shows their helping nature towards others.\textsuperscript{120} There is a beautiful entrance in the mosque. In 1865 AD, the great Janab Mamunachi Ummal sold an area of 58 cents in Thalakulam village, and later on she gave the area surrounding it to the Muslims.

After many years, due to generosity and donation of Janab R.M. Mohammed Ali Hajiyar, and due to the effort of the Jamaath people the mosque was built in a large size. In 1982, the management has constructed a ‘Matharasa’ and many children do prayer service.\textsuperscript{121} Here, every year Rabiul Avval crescent is celebrated the remembrance of ‘Mouloothum Muthiyetheen Abdul Kaathar Jeelani and Nabigal Nayagam.

3.2.4. Peer Mohammed Oliyullah Dargha at Thuckalay

There is a Dargha named ‘Peer Mohammed Oliyullah Dargha’ at Thuckalay, named after the great philosopher Mohammed Appa, who was born in Tenkasi of Thirunelveli district.\textsuperscript{122} The place where Dargha situated is called as ‘Dargha

\begin{itemize}
\item Personal Interview with insaf Rasif, M. Mosque Rabu, Thingal Nagar, aged 53, dated 5.4.2009.
\item Pettaham, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 209.
\item Inscription on the Mosque at Thingal Nagar.
\end{itemize}
Road’. Being a Tamil poet of great eminence, he wrote many books on philosophy. He had intimate relationship with the kings of Chera dynasty.\textsuperscript{123}

It is said that he laid foundation stone for the Padmanabhapuram granite fort. The anniversary of the great philosopher poet is celebrated every year on a grand scale on the full moon day in the month of Rajap Both the people of Kerala and Tamil Nadu attend the celebration in large numbers, irrespective of their caste, creed, and religion. Thuckalay Peer Mohammad Sahib was a contemporary of Mayalpattinam Sadakathullah Appa. He is the author of a large number of books on ‘Gnanam’ or supreme knowledge. His tomb is found in Thuckalay in Kanyakumari District. His works are highly noted for religious tolerance and deep theological ideas. His writings owned much for the cause of religions unity and communal hanwony of the Tamil country.\textsuperscript{124}

3.2.5. Maathavalaayam Mosque

Maathavalaayam is the place of natural beauty where more than 3000 Muslims live. This place is surrounded by many coconut groves and paddy fields. It is situated six kilometers away from Nagercoil.

Before 400 years, many people of various creeds lived there. They were

\textsuperscript{123} Syed Mogdoom Sahib, O.M.S., \textit{Meggana Karuvooolam (Tamil)}, Malaysia, 1972, pp. 4-5.

\textsuperscript{124} Dhina Malar, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 42.
looking after the horses of the royalty of Travancore Kingdom. Later on this service was transformed to Thiruvanandapuram. A place called ‘Layam’ in Tamil means the stable where horses are kept. From that time onwards the name ‘Layam’ is used. The people who live in ‘Layam’ of Kanyakumari District inhabited ‘Trivandrum Layam’. For about 100 years Kanyakumari ‘Layam’ was left unnoticed and in course of time it disappeared. The horses, which were transported to Thiruvanandapuram, died as they were not looked after properly because they did not have proper grazing place and water.\(^\text{125}\)

Once again a ‘Laayam’ was made to look after horses. Many experts were brought to look after the horses. Many Muslims from Kerala and Tamil Nadu occupied this area to do this service. Vallakkaadu from Kerala settled here with his four children, a brother and a cousin. And also Hussaina’s family settled here coming from Ramanathapuram. Both of these families made a marriage bond among themselves.\(^\text{126}\)

Moreover, many families from Chetikulam, Pannaiyur and Thiruthuvapuram areas settled here. ‘Maathu’ in Tamil means woman ‘Laayam’ means the place where horses were kept. So this place is called as Mathavalaayam. This ancient cultured place is 300 years old and more than 300 Muslims live here. The Jummaa

\(^{125}\) Personal Interview with Naceer, Maathavaalam Mosque, aged 49, dated 18.04.2009.

\(^{126}\) Pettaham, op.cit., p. 217.
mosque ‘Sheikuna Sheiku Sahu! Hameed Nayagam’ is 250 years old. This mosque was re-modified many times and in 1989 it was opened with new modifications.\textsuperscript{127}

### 3.2.6. Guthba Mosque

The majestic Jumah Mosque of Kottar Elankadai Muslim Society was a small one made by Bava Kasim Appa before 1250 years. The construction work of Kallu mosque was remodified and completed before 700 years by the people of that place with the help of the Delhi Sultan Alauddin Malik Kapoor, General of the Delhi Sultan Alauddin Gilfi and in front of Shiek Noor Deen Musliaar.

When the population increased the front of the Kallu Mosque was extended with coconut straw and people did prayer there. Then Janab Mohammed Thaseem Ssahib, the father of a rich man in Kottar Elankadai removed the straw hut and constructed a concrete building. Again when the population increased, Vavar Baker Mohammed Haajiyaar, and few other great men donated money to construct a tile roofed building of south of Kutha Mosque, which was extended till the tomb of Ashaihu Abdu Rahman Sahib.\textsuperscript{128}

Again the south of tiled Mosque was removed and thanks to Moosi jiyavudeen Haajiyaar’s big donation and with the coopreation of the society people a storeyed building with a high minarate was constructed. Any way there is a scarcity of place during prayer service.

\textsuperscript{127} Inscription on Maathavaalayam Mosque.
\textsuperscript{128} Pettaham, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 241.
2.2.7. Sehu Noorudeen Mussliar

After coming with the forces towards the south in 1311 AD, Malik Kapoor came to Kerala. More than 20,000 Muslims lived there. Malik Kapoor and the historian Ameer Kusru were surprised to see Muslim conducting prayer service by reading Quran. The people fold them that many great men from Arabia had come there to guide them towards the right path of Islam.129

The great man who was living along them was Sehu Noorutheen Musaliar. His family stayed there and married and lived there itself. They used ‘Musaliar’ as their family name. They were the great pious people. Malik Kapoor got blessings from them and requested them to come to the south. They came there in 1314 AD and stayed in Kottar. The Kutha Mosques Kallu Mosque was erected with their effort. The stone carvings are found there even now.130

Malik Kapoor erected an Earth Stage and a minarate. People gather there for prayer service during festivals. This Eatha tower constructed here resemble the Qutab Minar in Delhi, which seems to be its mini – model. The damaged parts of the upper stairs is re-modified and now it is the unique tower.131

130 Personal Interview with Muhaideen Committee member of the Mosque, aged 52, dated 10.4.2009.
131 Personal Interview with Mr. M. Abdul, aged 45, dated 10.4.2009.
3.2.8. Malik Khan Garden – Maiyavaadi

The Malik was called as ‘Maruthanayagam’ and was born at Pannaiyur in Elayankudi. He was a wise man born in Vellalar caste. He changed his name as Mohammed Yusuf and then married a French Lady Masha. He had a son. As he was talented Arcot Nawab Muhammad Ali appointed him in his army. Small kings rose in mutiny often. In order to control this Khan Sahib was made as a Governor of Madurai in 1756. He got the love and support of the people by eradicating the mutiny.\(^{132}\)

The foundation for Periyaar Irrigation was laid by Kahan Sahib. He came to Kanyakumari. The king of Travancore, Marthanda Varma conquered the south of Thirunelveli district in 17\(^{th}\) century. Khan Sahib entered the Nanjilnad and defeated him. Then Marthanda Varma and Khan Sahib made a peace treaty. Khan Sahib was arrested by the forces of English and Arcot Nawab Muhammad Ali, because of the two traitors merchant and Seenivasarao.\(^{133}\)

Muhammad Yusuf Khan Sahib was hanged by Arcot Nawab. Khan Sahib’s house was destroyed and the street where he lived is called Khan Sahib Mettu Street. During the war between Khan Sahib and the Dutches in Aralvoimozhi, the valiant Malik Khan died. His dead body was taken to Kottar and buried in Maaiyavadi. Therefore that garden is called as ‘Malikhan Garden’.\(^{134}\)

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\(^{132}\) Pettaham, *op.cit.*, p. 257.

\(^{133}\) Seak Thampai, M. *op.cit.*, p.43.

\(^{134}\) Personal Interview with Mr. Muhammed Ishakhon, aged 67, dated 15.4.2009.
3.2.9. Thittuvilai Jumaa Pazhzh

The town Thittivilai is located near the road from Nagercoil to Palmore, at a distance of 10 kms form Nagercoil. It is situated at a distance of 80 kms. from Thiruvanandapuram Airport. The mosque is situated on the eastern side of the road about 100m, from Thittuviali junction.\(^{135}\)

There is an old mosque, constructed only by stones, dressed Architecturally to function as pillars, lintels, cornicles, beams, slabs, etc to form the structure. It is called ‘Stone Mosque’.\(^{136}\) It is said that this mosque was constructed 400 years ago.\(^{137}\) The size of this mosque is 6.50 ms 12.00 m.

Adjacent to the “Stone Mosque”, there is a continuous Mosque constructed using bricks, R.C. beams and Slabs. It is said to be extended 30 years before. The size of this mosque is 6.50 ms 12.00 m. It is called ‘Old Mosque’.\(^{138}\)

The minaret above the mosque is 30 feet in height and it is constructed only with bricks without iron bar and concrete. When a strong wind blows many people realize the shake in the minaret.\(^{139}\) There are chances that the minaret may fall when storm or earthquake occurs. So it was decided to take away the minaret from there.

\(^{135}\) Personal Interview with Mr. Shyad Ali , aged 34, dated 25.4.2009.

\(^{136}\) Mosque was constructed by stone.


\(^{139}\) Personal Interview with Prof. Abdul Naser, aged 61, dated 25.4.2009.
3.2.10. Pazhzhhi Vaasal in Tehngapattanam

The Pazhzhhi Vaasal in Tehngapattanam, in Kanyakumari District is 1250 years old. The King Cherman Perumal ruled over Kerala. During his period, the Arabian traders came for trade in Kerala through sea. Those traders preached the preaching of Nabigal. The holy land of Muslims Mecca was called as ‘Pakka’ during that times.\(^\text{140}\)

King Cherman Perumal, who herad about ‘Pakkas’ honour (pride) through the traders under the leadership of the Arabian traders Malik Dhinar, summoned the ruling responsibility to his younger brother and went to Mecca with Malik Dhinar.

One day a letter from Cherman Perumal was delivered to his younger brother through Malik Dhinar’s son. In that Cherman Perumal asked his brother to do necessary favour for the Arabian traders. His brother agreed. Malik Dhinar’s son asked permission to builds a Mosque in the place which belonged to the Kerala Government.\(^\text{22141}\)

The first Pallivasal was built in Kodungallur in Kerala. The Thengapattanam Malik Dhinar Jum As Pazhi Vassal was the last built one. It makes the people of Kanyakumari to feel proud. From the foundation to top lay with granite stones. The architecture of Arabian country can be seen in this Pazhi Vasal. Now this has been expanded spacially.

\(^{140}\) Seak Thampai, M. *op.cit.*, p.43.

\(^{141}\) Pettaham, *op.cit.*, p. 277.