CHAPTER - IV

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF TIRUCHENDUR TALUK TEMPLES

The system of worship in a siva temple is governed by the Agamas. Agamas are originated with Tamil culture from ninth century A.D. The Agamas prescribed idol worship in all its details. It has developed an elaborate ritual in the matter of daily worship as well as annual festivals in the temples. The word puja is derived from pucey it means the flower ritual to god. The pujas are classified into the athmartha pujas and the parathuva pujas. The pujas of south Indian temples are generally classified into three categories, nithiam nimithiam, and kamiam.

Nithiya puja is the day to day ceremony connected with the worship. Daily offerings are necessary to preserve the sanctity of the shrine. Nithiya pujas are five kinds of pujas, viz abhisekha, Arichana, Tubhadeepa, Naivaithika, Namaskaras. Puja conducted only on auspicious occasions is called Naimithiyam. The pujas which were conducted only for the individual are known as kamiam. Generally the pujas are performed twelve times a day. But in the Narasinganathar temple Nithiya pujas are performed in the morning, evening and night. A brief account of the pujas are conducted in

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5 Property Register from the temple Devasthanam, p.5.
the Narasinganathar temple at Angamangalam is given below in this table as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Daily Pujas</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kalai Sandhi</td>
<td>6.45 AM - 8.30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Uchchikalam</td>
<td>10.30 AM - 11.40 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Arthasamam</td>
<td>6.30 PM - 9.00 PM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Daily these three times of pujas are performed to Narasinganathar and Avudainayaki Amman. These pujas conducted with tubha deepa offering of flowers and naivaittika made up of rice are offered to the deities. Nitya pujas are performed with music natheswaram tavil music and bells. Recitation of sacred hymns to the deities changed according to the festivals celebrated in the temples.

**Kalai Sandhi**

The doors of the temples are opened in the early morning. Then cleaning of the temple takes place. This will be followed by thiruvanantatal the invoking of almighty southern side door of Mahamandapa suriya statue northern side Chandra statue are appeared. During the time of Sunrise suriya puja is conducted then the Ganesapuja and Karuvarai pujas are conducted. From 6 A.M. to 6.45 A.M. Uthaya marthamdam is performed, during this puja the priest open the door of Artha mandapam and to sing thirumurai Thirupalliyluchi then be sets aside the screen, lights the lamp and remove the old garland to the deity. After this the priest conduct Namakumba puja veda motai homam. Then the abisheka of god and minor deity are taken place with abisheka materials like well water gingili, milk, sugar, honey, turmeric
powder, tender coconut water, sandal, twelve kinds of perfumed fluids and finally with pure water. After that god is decorated with fresh floes garland and other ornaments. The temple priest would recite some hymns from the devaram. The naivedya offered in this puja is plain cooked rice. After the parivara puja Nithya Homam is conducted with paddy, pori, gingili and katuku Nithyahoma ashes are wore to the Mulavar. After this shri palli rounded the prakarams, then sripali reached the mulavar shrine, dupha depa is conducted. Special puja is conducted to the Durga, Saneswarar and Bairavar.

**Uchchikalam (Madhya Puja)** This puja is held between 10.30 - 11.40. Thirumanjanam is conducted to the Avudainayaki Amman. The naivedhya is Annam, porial, Kulambu, ghee, Doll. This kind of Puja is being conducted to deities. Then the temple remains closed from 11.40 P.M.

**Arthasaman**

The temple is opened again at 5 P.M from between 6.30 P.M to 9.00 P.M Arthasama puja is being conducted. At that time abisheka and decoration are made to the main deities of the temple. The naiveidya is sambha rice. Special pujas is conducted to the Narasinganathar, Sandikeswarar, Saneswarar and Bairwar. After this the temple remains closed.

**Monthly Pujas**

Every month pirathosam is conducted two days before the full moon day, and two days before the dark day. On the pirathosam days of every month lord Natarajar and Thayar Avudainayaki amman goes on procession. Sathurthasi is celebrated in this temple, every Monday and full moon day.
Special abishekams are conducted to the sixty three nayanmars on their birthday stars.

**Festivals**

The Hindu festivals are designed by great sages of old. There were several festivals recurring at stated times during the course of the year. There were occasions of public rejoicing and merriment and they served to relieve the people of the humdrum monotony of everyday life. Many of the festivals associated with religion. While others were purely social connected with events like the harvest of corps.

The festivals in this temple are conducted on the basis of Nimitika Puja \(^6\) (occasional puja). The festivals conducted in the temples are not compulsory but they add prestige, wealth and attraction of devotees, pious people to the temples. The festivals throw light on the basis customs and manners of Hindu religion. In addition to these festivals and the other festivals are celebrated in this temple. They are panguni-uttiram, vaikasi-visakam, thirukarthigai, kanthasasti, thriuvathirai and Thaipoosam.

**Chitrai (April - May)**

Tamil New years day (Chitrai visu) is celebrated in this temple. Tirumanjanam is offered to the deities of the Mulavar and decorated the deities then the puja is conducted. In the evening Utsava moorthi and Thayar are well adorned and brought out in procession.

**Vasantha Urchavam (Kodai Urchavam)**

Vasantha Urchavam festivals are conducted in the Tamil month of Chitrai. This festival is celebrated for ten days of Vasantha Mandapam north corner of the temple. In this festival Urchavar and his consort also take part. After this festival is over Urchavar and consorts return to their sannathi.

**Vaikasi (May - June)**

In the visaka natchatram (Vaikasi visakam) Murugan birthday celebrated in this temple.

**Brahmostavam Aani (June - July)**

The deficiency in the Nithiya pujas and Naivatiya Pujas are supposed to be made good by the annual Urchava otherwise known as Brahmostava. During Aani, Brahmostavam otherwise known as Aani festival in Narasinganathar temple is celebrated. Brahmostavam is celebrated once in a year. It is general belief among the Hindus that this festival is conducted by Lord Brahma himself. So this festival is called as Brahmostava. This festival commences in Mahanaksatra with taking puttruman\(^7\) and Thirumulaisathu. In the evening Urchavar and Thayar are well adorned and brought in procession. Every night the various idols are taken out in procession on their respective and related different mounts associated. The Vahanas used for this processions are silver sapparam, Kamala mount, Lion Mount, Kamadenu mount, Horse mount, Bull mount, Indira mount, Swan mount, Palanquin, Ter and Nory mount.

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\(^7\) Najan, op.cit., pp.131-132.
For this seven days the Lord Narasinganathar proceeded on different vahanas. In the seventh day morning Thirukkalyanam of Lord Narasinganathar and Avudainayaki Amman is conducted, in the same day evening car festival is celebrated the Brahmorchava is otherwise called asrothastva. The main object of this ceremony is that thirthavari abiskheka provides blessing by the Lord Narasinganathar to the marine beings.\textsuperscript{8} The Urchavamoorthy is brought to the vashista river. There they offered Thirthavari, thirthavari is called as Maharuthra patha Thirtham.\textsuperscript{9} During this ceremony the Kapukair is let loose in the river and sown seeds of the first day festival are also dropped in the river. Then the lord appear in the Thirthavari mandapa. They offer Thirumankappu in the Narasinganathar sannathi. After this sanda sonugraha Urchvam is conducted. Thus this festivals concludes.

**Audi (July - August) Aadipuram Festival**

Aadipuram festival is being celebrated in the month of Aadi for ten days at Avudainayaki Amman sannathi in a grant score. This festival is commenced in paraninaksatra. Fourth day valaiakappu (wearing bangles and ninth day car festival on the tenth day thayar is brought to the river vashista. There they offer thirthavari. Then the thayar returned to the temple Mulaikuttu festival is celebrated, after this they offered Thirthavari to the asthiradevi to the temple thirukkulam. Abhiseka is performed to the Thayar and Sandhikeswari with milk. Then see mantham festival is conducted to the Thayar. Mulaipari is distributed to the ladies as a Prasadam.

\textsuperscript{8} Najan, op.cit., p.155.

\textsuperscript{9} Arumuganaval K., Indusamya Inaippu Vilakkam, Nagercoil, 2000, p.150.
Avani (August - September)

Avani Mulathiruvila in the month of Avani this temple celebrates various festivals. They are vinayaka chathurthy and Avani mulathiruvila. Vinayaka chathurthy festival is being celebrated every year in the month of Avani in the grand scale people made vinayaka sculpture with the help of sandal, dung, clay and worshipped with grand manner.

Avani mulathirunal festival is commenced in Mahanakshatra and Simha laknam. On the fourth day Lord Narasinganathar goes on procession in bull mount Idabavahana. On the ninth day car festival is celebrated in Kattakahatchatram.

Puratasi (September - October) Navarathiri

The Navarathiri (the holy nine nights) is being celebrated nine days in order to honour the goodness with great splendor Silappathikaram also mentioned this festival.\textsuperscript{10} This festival is based on the story of goddess Durga killing Mahishasura and greeting the devas from the problem of that asura.

Navarathiri is commences in purattasi tingal valarpirai Pirathamai, goddess icons are put down in the somavara mandapam as kolu special pujas and alankarams conducted to Thayar. On the full moon day, laksarchani of Avudainayaki Amman ends with puspanjali.

In the first three days the festival is celebrated to the goddess parvathi, next three days festival is celebrated to Lakshmi and on last three day festival is celebrated to Saraswathi. The last tenth day is being celebrated as

\textsuperscript{10} Silap. 60.
Vijayadasami. The festival is celebrated for ten nights or Dhasharathiri. So it is also called as Dashara in many places.

**Aippasi (October - November)**

In the month of Aippasi’s Kandha shasti and Thirukkalyanam are celebrated in this temple.

**Kandha Shasti**

Kandha shasti is celebrated on sixth day form the full moon day of Aippasi month in a small scale continuously for six days. In the last day, the festival surasamharam is being celebrated. Lord Subramania is decorated and taken out in procession.

**Aippasi Thirukkalayanam**

Aippasi thirukkalyana thiruvila is commenced in barani Thanusu Lakkanam. This festival is celebrated for twelve days in the day and night Urchavar and Thayar are well adonred and brought out in procession. For this twelve days Lord Narasinganathar proceed on different vahanas. In the twelfth day Lord Narasinganathar entered in to the Amman sannathi and marriage took place in Asthanakshatram. After this Unjalurchavam is celebrated in three days.

**Karthigai Deepam (November - December)**

The festival common in the sangam age and eve since is the both fire festival on Kirittigai month of every year. The day on which the moon is in conjunction with the constellation, Krittigai witnesses the celebration of this festival. On this occasion, houses and temples are profusely lighted with rows
of lamps. The karthigai deepam has been described as an peruvila\textsuperscript{11} which shows that it was a festival of some magnitude. Kalvali narpadu describes Karthigai sarthil kaivilakka pontranua\textsuperscript{12} Karthigai festival is celebrated in all Hindu temple of Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{13} Thirukarthatigai Thirunal celebration is done in a palmyrahastem is planted before outside in the entrance of the temple and around which dry palmyra leaves tied. After puja held to deity the light is brought out and fire is lit to the palmyra leaves which are burnt. This is known as firing of chokkappanai. On this festival day night Narasinganathanar temple is decorated with lighting deepas.

**Margali (December - January)**

**Thiruvathirai**

Thiruvathirai festival of margali is being celebrated every year. On that day swami and ambal are decorated with costly jewels dress placed in a unjal in the unjal mandapam. After that deeparatha is being performed to the god. On the fourth day Lord Narasinganathanar brought in Bull mount. On the such day monomani Thirukkanayanam, is celebrated. On the tenth day Aruthira dharshnanam is celebrated. In Narasinganathanar temple Thiruvenbavai of saint Manikkavasagar is recited in the early morning.

**Taipoosa Thiruvila (January - February)**

Taipoosa Thiruvila is celebrated for ten days in this temple. Pathir Deepavali is celebrated on thai Monday thirayothashi and ends in Ammavasai

\textsuperscript{11} Agam 185, 11.
\textsuperscript{12} Kalavali Narpathu - 17.
\textsuperscript{13} Jagadesa Ayyar P.V., South Indian Shrines, Delhi, 1982, p.156.
day. In thread days ten thousands deepas are lightening. Every six years this pathira deepa villa celebrated as Laksha deevila.

**Masi (February - March)**

Mahasivarathiri festival is being celebrated in the month of Masi Krishna patcha sathurthasi every year. On this day, sixth four polivatam sattu vizha is being celebrated a special abisheka with incense oil is also being performed to him.

**Panguni (March - April)**

Pungunithira thirunal commences in Karthigai Natchatram and celebrated in ten days. On the ninth day car festival is celebrated. On the tenth day senkol is given to Lord Narasinganathar. On panguni uttiram day Murugan and Valli thirukkalyanam is celebrated.

On the whole there were quite a considerable number of festivals and ceremonies which provides merriment for the people.

The temple in a Hindu temple, the daily offer of worship to the various duties is of fundamental importance. The day to day ceremonies connected with the worship are called *Nitya-Puja* \(^{14}\). The daily offerings are obligatory and are very essential to preserve the sanctity of the shrine. They represent the basic ceremonial rituals which are governed by the *agamas*.

If the Nitya-Puja denotes the daily offerings to the deity, the *Neimittika*-class includes the various festivals celebrated in particular months of the year not only for the main deity but also for the subsidiary ones. These

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festivals are not compulsory but they add colour and grandeur to the temples. They are great occasions when the devotees from even the distant places gather to take part in the celebration. But their scale and grandeur are determined by the financial resources of the temple and the benefactions of devotees. This temple was richly endowed with provisions for the daily offerings as well as a number of festivals which have, in the course of centuries, became famous for their grandeur and beauty.

`Puja’ means a ritual worship with oblations and floral offerings to the accompaniment of chanting of mantras. It is the core-ritual of the temple worship it has a powerful sensual impact on the devotes. This is enhanced by the sound of musical instrument combined with the ringing of bells and the chanting of the sacred texts. Scented smoke emerging from the burning of incence and camphor, mingled with the heavy perfume of sandal wood, jasmine and roses further entrance the sensual impact. The bright silks and jewels covering the images scintitillate as the priest waves the oil lamp inside the dark chamber. The waving when the devotees forget themselves atlest for a fraction of a second and essentially they cry the name of the God aloud, and will their hands to offer worship. The Universally omnipresent God is welcomed to be present in the icon by means of the prayers. He is visualized as the king of kings, or the ruler of cosmos, ready to accept the offerings and prayers of his subjects present there, listed to their grievances and to bestow

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15 ARE, 1929-30, No.442.
16 Field study on, 23rd July 2013.
17 Nalayiram Perumal Tirumoli 1.7.
his blessing on them then and there. All the royal paraphernalia meant for a
king is shown to the God is the  `garbhagratha’\textsuperscript{18}.

According to the agamas, men can elevate himself to God hood by
means of penance  prayers and austerities. As a preliminary to this ascent of
man, the descent of God becomes essential. The rituals are the methodology
for calling the omnipresent to confine itself in the  `garbhagratha’ for the
benefit of the creature. When once the deity is visualized as a king, He is also
through to be pleased\textsuperscript{19} with offering, with which man is pleased. Thus He is
awakened from slumber, given water four mouth wash, bathed, given food in
the form of sweet meals, offered milk, followed by a coconut and betel leaves
and so on\textsuperscript{20}. In the night the Icon of God is carried to the bed chamber, where
the Goddess in the form of her icon) its awaiting the arrival of God. Both
these Icons are kept on a swing and swung to the accompaniment of music.
All these acts are symbolic and so, not grotesque.

The puja consists of sixteen  `Hospitalities’ (Shodasopachara).\textsuperscript{21} They
are Invocation of the deity (avahana), offering a seat to the deity (asana),
offering water for washing the seat of the deity (padayan), offering water for
washing the hands and body of the deity (argyam), offering water for rinsing
the mouth (achamana), Bathing (abhisheka), dressing or offering a garment
(vastra), putting on the sacred thread (upavita), sprinkling with perfumes
(gandhan), adoring with flowers (archanas), offering food (neivedya), burning

\textsuperscript{19} ARE, 1929 – 30, No.401.
\textsuperscript{20} SII, VOL, XIV, NO.191 PP.105-106.
\textsuperscript{21} Field Study on 26.05.2013.
incense (dhupa), waving the oil lamp (dipam), waving camphor flame (diparadana), prostrating (namaskar) and circumambulation (Pradakshana).

A mirror is held before the deity so that it gazes upon its beauty. This is done after bathing the deity clothing it and decked in jewellery and garlanding with flowers. The deities are offered a meal, ideally of sumptuous splendor. It is entered by music and dancing. Then decorated lamps are waves before it. During such moments, generally it is the priest who chants the `mandras’. Howere at the end of the pujas the assembled devotees express their personal affection in various ways. Some communicate mentally in silence. Some whisper, some cry aloud, some sing the hymns Devaram, Tiruvasakam etc. In short the whole process of puja creates a communication between the God and the worshiper.

It dissolves the difference between the worshippers and worshipped. It is done four times a day and in some temples six times a day. `thirupalliechi’, the rousing of God from sleep, to the accompaniment of music, early, in the morning around 5.30 am, Uchikala (the midday puja) performed at 1.30 am, Sayaratchai the evening puja done mostly around 8.30 am are some of the important pujas of the Siva temple. The Pujas performed to the temple have been broadly divided into three stages. First one is Nitya puja (day to day pujas) the third one is masapuja (monthly puja).

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23 ARE, 1929 – 30, No.419.
24 ARE, 1929 – 30, No.463.
25 ARE, 1929 – 30, No.430.
**Daily Pujas**

The Daily-pujas of the temple comprise of seven times a day. ‘Thiruppanandal puja’ is being conducted at 5.30 am. The second puja called udayamartandam which is performed at 6.30 am. The third puja is being done at 7.30 am which is called Sirukalapuja. The fourth puja Kalachanthi is being conducted at 8.00 o clock in the morning and the fifth puja named uchikala puja is being performed at 11.30 am and after conducting these five Pujas, the temple is being closed\(^{26}\). The temple again opens at 5.00 o clock in the evening. Now, the sixth puja of the day called the Sayaratcahi puja is being done at 6.00 O clocks in the evening and the last puja of the day named the Arthajama puja is being performed at 8.30 Pm\(^{27}\). All the above mentioned day-to-day pujas are conducted on agama basis. Devotional hymns like Tevaram, Thiruvasakam etc being sung temple bells are rung along with musical accompaniment during these pujas. Of these above mentioned pujas, the most important and elaborately done is the early morning services. The morning worship consists of six stages.

The temple priest conducts the worship. The first stage is the mantra stage by which the presence of the almighty is invoked. The second is the snana stage. During which the tirumanjanam or holy bath is performed to the duty. The third is the alankara stage when the duty is clothed and adorned with jewels. The fourth is the Bhoga stage, when food is offered to the deity. The fifth is the mantra, Pushpam stage i.e archana is done by offering Tulasi (basil) leaves and chanting the mantras. This is done for about ten to fifteen

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\(^{26}\) *Interview with*, Puvaneshwarar, Priest, Thironokianathar temple, Thirupachethi, Dated on 27\(^{th}\) July, 2013.

\(^{27}\) *Field Study* Dated on 20\(^{th}\) July 2014.
minutes. Then comes the last stage known as sayana stage, when the deity is believed to go to sleep. The Puja ceremony is closed with this. This last-mentioned service is reserved for the night. Another important feature in the Nityapuja is known as the congregational recitation of the portion of *tirumajanam*\(^{28}\) (Thevaram and Thriuvaskam), which takes places during the entire duration of the puja. This ritual reaches its climax with sathamurai after which the consecrated water (tirtham) and food (prasada) are distributed to the recites and other devotees.

The puja ceremonies at other times of the day are not done so elaborately. In the evening service mantra pushpam and the congregational recitation are again done. During the last Services in the night sweet rice-pudding is offered to God before he goes to sleep. A portion of the consecrated food is taken and offered to Nayanamars and Srimabeswaras in the Temples. There are preset in all the ancillary shrines also, attend to the daily puja and holy bath in their respective shrines. Separate offerings are done to Sowmiya Narayanaperumal (Thriukostiyur) Amman shrine (kannathal Temple at Nattarsankottai.) The holy bath forms an essential daily item in the worship.

The Processional deity is occasionally taken to the abhishaka mandapa where the holy bath is preformed to the accompaniment of chanting of Sanskrit and Tamil verses and the periodical display of the trumpets and drums. In the evening during the festival occasions there would be a procession of the deity in the streets. The endowments for the holy bath became more in the pandiya times.

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\(^{28}\) ARE, 1929–30, No.463.
An inscription on the south wall of the mandapa in front of the central shrine of A.D. 1246 registers the sale of land to the temple tax-free devadana by the uravar of Attur for the money endowed by one Uyyavandan of Kallakudi for offerings and holy bath of the god and goddess during the midnight service. Another inscription on the west wall of the temple of A.D 1138 records the gift of taxes (Kadamai, Urkkalanju, and antarayam inclusive of Kumara kachchanam) due from Tiruchchirirambala-devanallur, which was separated from Korkai-nadu in Kudanadu, for food offerings and holy bath to the deity. An epigraph of Kulottunga I dated A.D 1106 mentions the sale of land by two residents of Tirukkadavur, who made a gift it to the temple for the sacred bath of the deity.

It also refers to the objects used for the holy bath but does not specify them. But usually, on such occasions, various items are used for bathing the deity such as oil, milk, curd, coconut-water, rose-water, turmeric and sandal. After the bath is over, the images are dried with cloth and dressed with fine clothes and bedecked with ornaments and fresh garlands. A salad with the mixture of fruits, coconut, honey (Panchamrutham) and lemon juice (panagam) and betels are offered to the deity and later distributed to the devotees. An epigraph mentions the following items of perfumery and other articles used during the holy bath such as, kasturi (musk), kunkumappu (saffron), pannir (rose-water), chandanam (sandal-paste), karopuram (camphor)parimalam (scented oil) and pitambaram (fine silk clothe). Kasturi or musk is usually placed on the forehead as tilaka before the pundra is

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29 ARE, 1929-30, No.430.
31 ARE 1929-30 No.402.
32 SITI No.372, p.362.
applied Kunkumappu or saffron is mixed with water for the bath as it gives a fine smell. Refined camphor or Pachai-Karpuram is also added. The ordinary camphor is used for the Dipaarati or waving a light in front of God. Pannir or rose water and sandal-paste mixed with water are used for the bath.

**Special Offerings**

Apart from the normal daily offerings, special offerings or services were instituted by kings and other men of note and rank. Such offerings were instituted in large numbers in the 12th and 13th centuries and they were often named after the donors. An inscription on the north wall of the central shrine dated AD 1045 records the gift of money made by one Kandan Ayyanar of Mangalakkal which was invested in the purchase of lands out of the yields of which aganaligai Sivabrahmanas of the temple agreed to provide milk-porridge to the deity and feeding 15 Sivabrahmanas on each new moon day.

The menu is given for the food to be served in detail and the articles to be used in cooking, including pots and vessels, as well as betel and nuts are also mentioned. Another epigraph of Virarajendra dated A:D 1068 on the north wall of the central shrine registers a grant of land, after purchase by one Virasir Muvendavelai, the headman of Karuppur near Attur for providing special worship to the several deities in the temple on the day of Ayilyam the natal star of the king. A record of Virarajendra chola dated A.D. 1067 on the west wall of the temple mentions the special provision made for offerings in the temple every Sunday by one Narayanan Tiruvengadam, the headman of

34 ARE, 1929-30, No. 393.
35 ARE, 1929-30, No. 389.
36 ARE, 1929-30, No. 401.
Attur. Another record\textsuperscript{37} of Maravarman Vikrama Chola Pandya deva dated A.D. 1045 on the west wall of the central shrine registers a gift of paddy for provision of panchagavya on Newmoon days to the deity Pallikonda Perumal. The gift also provides for the feeding of 10 Brahmanas on the same day. It is stated that the brahmanas were to be outsiders with good characters. The donor was one Udayadivakaran Tirumurti of Madevi mangalam near Attur.

An inscription\textsuperscript{38} of Kulottunga I dated A.D. 1092 on the South wall of the temple states that the sale of land made tax-free to the temple by the , urar of Attur to provide for the walking service of the deity. It also mentions about the sale of land by the assembly of Attur for the money endowed by one Kanpuravan Sankaradevan of Koluvanur to provide for the celebration of a festival in the Tamil month of Chittirai (April-May). Another inscription\textsuperscript{39} of Kulottunga I dated A.D. 1118 on a pillar in the aaitarala of the central shrine of the temple registers the gift of land tax-free to the temple by two residents of the village for lamps and other offerings to the deity on the day of Kartigai.

A record\textsuperscript{40} of A.D. 1199 on the wall of the north verandah of the temple mentions the order of the king remitting the taxes on certain lands in favour of the temple at the request of one Kalingarayan for the expenses of the Virapandyan sandi instituted in the name of the king and for a special festival on the day of sadaiyam his natal star. Another record\textsuperscript{41} on the south wall (outside) of the first prakara in the temple registers the royal order issued

\textsuperscript{37} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 192, p.107.
\textsuperscript{38} ARE, 1929-30, No.442.
\textsuperscript{39} ARE, 1929-30, No.422.
\textsuperscript{40} ARE, 1929-30, No.452.
\textsuperscript{41} ARE, 1929-30, No.463.
by the king remitting the taxes on the land granted to the temple by one Siviyan Puvali of Attur for offerings to the deity and for the maintenance of the person reciting the Tirujnanam in the temple. An inscription\textsuperscript{42} on the north wall of the first prakara of the temple states that the nattar of Kudanadu gave effect to an order of the king assigning certain lands to one Pundravardhana Tiruchchirambalam udaiyan Narayanan for reciting the Vedic texts in the temple.

**Food offerings**

Offering of water and food or tirtham and prasadam to the deities on different occasions or specified hours of the day is an important items in the daily pujas. This holy water and food after they are offered to God are distributed among the temple employees and also to the devotees who have gathered for the service. The terms used in the inscriptions for the holy food are Amudu prasadams or taligai. The latter term is peculiar to the Pallikonda Perumal shrine. The food is offered thrice in a day in the morning (udayakalam), mid day (uchikalam) and the early hours of the night (ardhajamam). The offering occurs usually at the end of each of the series of functions in the course of the worship of the deity. During the later Chola and Vijayanagar periods, extensive provisions for the food-offerings are recorded in the inscriptions, not only for the daily routine but also on numerous festive occasions. In fact, most inscriptions\textsuperscript{43} give a long list of details regarding the different proportions of the various provisions and groceries required for different kinds of food-offerings. During the Pandya period, a Maha-

\textsuperscript{42} ARE, 1929-30, No.460.

\textsuperscript{43} SITI,No.346,p.318.
neivedyam, a big special offering was instituted in the temple. While for the
daily routine, only ordinary plain rice was offered and special food
preparations were offered often. The following are the important items of
food offering, offered to the deity.

* Panayam – lemon juice mixed with water and jaggery.

* Vadaparuppu – Gram soaked in water and mixed with salt,
green chilliest.

* Kariarnuthu – cooked vegetables.

* Daddhiyodanam – Rice mixed with curd

* Dosaiappidi – Rice – cake

* Adiraspadi – Sweet – cake

* Appapadi – Sweet – cake

* Vadai – cake made with Bengalgram.

* Sukiyinpadi – made of dried ginger

* Puliyothorai – cooked – rice mixed with tamarind and salt

* Ellorai – cooked – rice mixed with gingelly seed.

* Kodugorai – Cooked – rice mixed with mustard

* Pongal – Rice – pudding

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44 SITI, No. 353, p. 325.
* Iddali – Rice cake

* Akkaravadasil – Sweet pudding with cooked rice and milk.

**Weekly Pujas**

There is a special prayer conducted on every Friday in this temple by the association of Thurgnasambandar divine service. It is a combined weekly prayer. Much important is given to music accompaniment during this prayer and panchapurana, and sivapuraana are being sung and special religious discourses are also conducted in these occasions.

**Monthly Pujas**

From 1995 on words (for the last ten years) every English month’s last Sunday, there takes place the chanting of Thriuvasagam. The first Monday of every Tamil month, there is special puja called Thiruvillakku Pujai is being conducted by the women folk. Most probably, the virgins take part in large number lighting thousand and one lamps during their special occasion.

The day of pratimati pratosam on each month is a special day in the temple. Special offerings and worship are being done to Nandideva during this occasion. Another noteworthy feature of the day of protosam is the rounds of sivili Nayagar on his rishaba vehicle. Lot of men and women have taken part in this special occasions and is being looked after by the committee of protosa worship.

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45 *Interview with*, Mr. Paramasivam, temple accountant on 10.03.2013.
46 *Field Study*, on 21.02.2014.
47 *Filed Study*, on 21.03.2012.
Festivals

*If pujas are daily rituals, festivals are annual.* Every Hindu temple in south India there are two icons for the deity. One is made of stone and fixed in the *grabhagraha* and the other is made of *Panchaloha* (an alloy of five metals consisting of gold, silver, copper, tin and brass).\(^{48}\) The *Panchaloha* idol is called *Utsavar* which means the icon meant for *festival*. This icon will be taken in procession on certain important days. This procession may be confined to the prakaras inside the temple or may be taken outside the temple, once a year. The intra-temple procession will be taken in a small *planquin* in case of small temples with meagre income or on the back of an elephant in case of big temples with rich resources, so that they can maintain an elephant.\(^ {49}\)

In case of extra temple procession, the deity is taken on a huge *Rata* (temple-wooden car). This is called *Ratotsava*\(^ {50}\) or *Brahmotsava*. At the time of procession, it is the king of kings, who is coming out to the shrine to see his subjects and receive their petition. So the icon will be decorated as king, a royal person. In case of annual *Brahmotsava* the pomp and pageantry shows its climax commensurate with the wealth and economic resources of the temple.

The pageantry of the *festival* is not only an indication of its wealth but also the clarity and the presumed power of the deity in the edges of the common man. It must be said here that *festivals* can be taken as an indicator of the popularity of the temple. A popular temple has more festivals and less

popular temple has only one. If it is no festival, it indicates that the temple has the least popularity. It is believed that *pujas and festivals* increase the prosperity of the land. It is thought that the gods and goddesses were pleased when they were honoured with *festivals* and offerings of *abhidekhas* (sacred baths) and *oblations*. The highest propitiation to the gods was the procession in vehicles and *cars*.\(^51\) So it was hoped that good rains poured, good health prevailed and women gave birth to good children in a land where *rathanirmana* (manufacture of cars) and *rathotsava* (car festival) were conducted.

It was also thought that the seven *day festival* to the gods symbolically eradicated the seven *mayas* (illusions) which haunted human life.\(^52\) Of the various festivals the *rathotsava* was the symbolic of the burning of *Tripura* by Siva.\(^53\) So the Hindus celebrated various *festivals* with a view to please the gods and ensure the prosperity of the land. The major festivals in this temple are two. One is Aippasi Skantha Sasti and the other is Pankuni Uttira festivals.\(^54\)

**Aippasi Festival**

In the Tamil month of Aippasi (October-November), flag hoisting ceremony is being done in the Amman shrine. Every day, Somasundari Amman (the goddess) is decorated with pomp and show and goes around the temple on various vehicles. Immediately after this procession, there

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\(^51\) Visvakarmavastu Sastra, Ch. 84, v.v. 1-2.

\(^52\) They were anjanam (ignorance), poy (falsehood), avaiva (exhaustion), moham (inconstancy), cumyam (void), maccaryam (fault finding) and bayam (fear).

\(^53\) Sthalapurana of the Someswarar temple, p. 25.

\(^54\) Interview with Mr. Saravanabhavan, temple maniam on 19.04.2013.
conducted the holy marriage between Somasundari Amman and Someswarar. This marriage ceremony is also conducted by the Sivacharyars on the basis of Saiva Agamas.  

**Skanthasashti Festival**

In every year in the Tamil month of Aippasi, particularly the days of Sashti, there conducted a special festival with pomp and show to Lord Muruga for six days. The observance is to propitiate Lord Subramanya, in his aspect of Kameswara for having overcome and destroyed the asura called Surapadma, and his followers. This ceremony is called Surasamharam held on the sixth day of the festival. The ceremonial holy marriage to Lord Muruga is being conducted on the next day of Surasamharam.

**Panguni Uttiram Festival**

Another important festival in this temple is the Panguni Uttiram festival. It falls on the full-moon day in the Tamil month of Panguni (March-April) and is celebrated for ten days in the Barani star day. The moon is then in the asterism Uttira (Beta Leonis). Hence the day is considered to be specially favourable for the worship of Siva and consequently is dedicated for that purpose. The festival is also called Kalyanavratha for the reason that Goddess Somasundari is said to have wedded God Someswara on such a day of a particular year.  

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55 Filed Study on 22.10.2013.
56 Filed Study on 12.02.2013.
57 Interview with Mr. Ganesan, temple executive officer on 20.05.2013.
It is the belief of the Hindus that the people who observe this Vratha are blessed with all boons, provided the observance is whole-hearted and sincere. Panguni uttiram day is supposed to be the turning point of the season from that of cold to one of hot or in other words the season changes from winter to summer.

Every day Someswarar and Somsundari are taken in procession with devotional hymns and decorations on various vehicles. On seventh day of the festival, the icon of Someswarar is decorated on Rudra shape and is taken in procession around the temple. This day is very much significance throughout Attur and the neighbouring villages. Nearly 50,000 people used to participate in this festival: On the 10th day of the festival there is a car festival in the temple.\(^{58}\) Vinayagar, Someswarar and Amman are taken in procession on the car.\(^{59}\) Amman and Someswarar are combinely taken in procession around the holy tank called Teppotsava, the festival of float for eleven times on the night of the 10th day of Panguni festival. The festival marks the conclusion of the prime annual temple festival and it is celebrated with as much pomp and eclat as the Brahmotsavam.

The lay-out of the temple precincts and the processional pathways are almost identical. The main entrance of the temple faces a rather large tank, square in shape and having on all sides symmetrically laid steps of granite, red laterite rectangular slabs leading down. There is a perfect geometrical symmetry in the four sides and the steps. In the centre of the tank is an islet-like structure which is more an elevated covered platform in granite red laterite slabs.

\(^{58}\) Sriprasnasamhita chapter. 36.
\(^{59}\) Field Study on 30.03.2013.
The belief probably is that the deity having concluded his ceremonial perambulation with all the attendant paraphernalia on land, must have his aquatic sojourn before he returns to the sanctum of the temple to come out only for the next festival. The float is a large raft, on the day fixed for Theppotsavam the image of the deity, elaborately and exquisitely decorated is placed on the raft which is drawn around the water in the tank to the accompaniment of loud chant of Vedic, mantras, hymns and prayers. The float is moved to the mandapam in the middle of the tank. The image of the deity is lifted to a special dais erected in the mandapam and worship in elaborate customary style is then offered to the deity. After the worship, the image is brought back to the temple. The huge congregations of pilgrims watch the Theppotsavam festival.\footnote{Filed Study on 26.02.2014.} It is believed that the idea behind the Theppam festival is that an opportunity to be presented to the aquatic beings also to worship the deity at least once a year.\footnote{Sthalapurana of Someswarar temple, p.24.} The illumination from thousands of lights placed on all sides of the tank and the presence of thousands of devotees enthusiastically watching the ceremonial round of the deity through the tank make it a wonderful sight not to be missed by devout pilgrims.

In addition to the above said main festivals, there are some other monthly festivals also celebrated in the temple. They are Vasantha utsavam in the Tamil month of Chitrai (April-May), Vaikasi Visakam in the month of
Vaikasi (May-June), Brahmotsavam in the month of Ani (June-July), Adipuram in the month of Adi (July-August), Avani_Mulam festival in the month of Avani (August-September), Navaratri festival in the month of Purattsi (September-October), Kartigai Deepam in the month of Kartigai (November-December), Tai-pusa festival in the month of Tai (January-February) and Mahasivaratri festival in the month of Masi (February-March).

**Vasantotsavam**

This festival is celebrated in the month of Chittirai (April-May) in the Vasantha mandapa, an integral part in the general lay-out of the temple. This mandapa is specially and tastefully decorated for the Vasantotsavam, and in the centre, there will be an improvised water reservoir. During the festival the deity is taken round the Vasantha mandapa three times daily. On the last day, there is a ceremoninal procession along the main street similar to the Brahmotsavam procession.

**Vaikasi Visakam**

The festival Vaikasi Visaka is observed on the day when the asterism Visaka (Libra) rules in the month of Vaikasi (May-June). It is the full-moon day of the month and the celebration of the festival consists of offering worship to Dharmaraja, the God of death. The day is also said to be the one on which god Subramanya incarnated in this world when this asterism Visaka was in the ascendant. Hence this festival is said to be double important and

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62 ARE 1929-30, No.442.
63 ARE 1913, No.69.
64 ARE 1901, No.201.
meritorious. Brahmotsavam\textsuperscript{65} is celebrated twice in a year in the month of Ani (June-July) each lasting ten days. Oh the ninth day is the carfestival and the tenth day is the day of 'Nataraja Dharsan'.

On this day Lord Siva is taken outside the sanctum - Sanctorum adorned with the costliest jewels and is taken in the ceremonial procession in the car. In the evening, he is taken to the pillared mandapa. The ceremonial bath commences there in the early hours of the morning and continues for several hours till late in the afternoon. After the abhishekam, the deity is again decorated, deepa aradhana is performed and he is taken out of the mandapa for darsan within the temple premises. It is stated that when the procession reaches the open space, the birds of the sky will be hovering round in worship of the deity. After darsan, the Lord is restored to sanctum sanctorum.

**Adipuram Festival**

It is celebrated in the temple in the month of Adi (July-August) when the asterism Puram(Delta Leonis) is in the ascendancy. The festival is one intended to propitiate the Goddess Somasundari who is said to have come into this world on this occasion to bless the people.\textsuperscript{66} People, therefore, worship her to secure happiness not only for themselves but also for those near and dear to them. If the Adipuram festival happens to fall on Friday, the occasion is considered to be highly propitious and meritorious. The people in

\textsuperscript{65} The term ‘Brahmotsavam’ seems to take its origin from Brahma who according to the stalapurana of the temple is said to have instituted festival to expiate himself from the sins incurred by him.

\textsuperscript{66} Stalapuranam of Attur temple, p.24.
consequence, worship the Goddess then with more than ordinary devotion and enthusiasm.

It is said that there are eight sakties (forces of nature) in the universe and they are under the control of the Devi. The eight magical arts called in Hindu mystic parlance the Ashtamaha Sidhis are derived from the knowledge of those forces.

They are (1) Anima, which is the art of entering into a foreign body, (2) Mahima, the art of increasing the bulk of one's body. (3) Garuna, the art of rendering small things tremendously ponderous, (4) Laghima the art of lifting with ease the largest and heaviest substances, (5) Prapthi, the art of gaining across through a small hole to Brahma's heaven, (6) Prakamya, the art of transubstantiating and entering into various worlds of tenuous matter, procuring all things needful from these and ascertaining the locality of various substances, (7) Isathwam, the art of creating protecting and destroying the world as well as rendering the planets obedient to the will and (8) Vasithwam, the art of bringing under subjection one and all created beings, Indra and various Gods included. The Adipuram festival is observed with great eclat in the temple.

**Avani Mulam Festival**

The Avani Mula festival falls in the month of Avani (August-September). The festival day is said to be under the influence of the asterism

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Mulam (Scorpionis) and its presiding deity is an asura named Nimithi.\textsuperscript{69} According to the Hindu belief there are two forces working in the universe, one favouring the evolution of souls and the other hindering it. There are intelligences working in both these currents of influences. As the universe is governed in strict justice, certain periods are under the control of one force and certain periods under the other. The night hours between midnight and 4.00 o'clock are said to be favourable for the play of forces adverse to human spiritual progress. Similarly this month under the influence of the Asura Nimithi has a preponderable of Asuric tendency, not favourable for the progress of human souls. Hence, to ward off the harm and evil effects resulting from the Asuric tendencies of the Asura Nimithi, human beings are advised to lead a religious life which would enable them to find out and cast off from them the germs of subtle evil influences sown into them by the Asuric influences.\textsuperscript{70}

**Navaratri Festival**

Each year two Navaratri festivals are celebrated in the temple. They are Sharada Navaratri and Vasanta Navaratri. That is the period when the goddess Somasundari in her benign form is worshipped. But some how, the two festivals have been celebrated more faithfully owing to factors unknown. During the celebration Yama sports a scowling face and to protect oneself, one has to offer worship to the goddess Somasundari. This is both a festival and an observance. The goddess assumed a diabolical form and killed the

\textsuperscript{69} ARE 1929-30, No.427.

\textsuperscript{70} ARE 1929-30, No.444.
'Asuras'. She came to this earth on a 'Navami' day. Strong worship is carried out at least on the last three days of the festival and traditionalists on those days give cash and kind to the poor and needy. Shakti upasakes especially symbolic, Lakshmi as Iccha Shakti Saraswati as Kriya Shakti, and Durga(uma) as Gnana Shakti and so ritualistic worship to attain salvation.

These are the Goddesses who confer on us wealth, knowledge and health and ordinary people offer worship to gain these worldly requirements.

The last day is meant for Goddess Saraswati and special worship is done; This is called 'Ayudha Puja' and the workers worship their implements by means of which they earn their livelihood. Saraswati is consecrated on the star mula and the worship is completed when the spherism of Shravan.

Karthigai Deepam

Karthigai Deepam festival is celebrated on the full-moon day in the month of Kartika (October-November) when the moon is in conjunction with the asterism Krittigai (Pleiades). Though, the observance of the Vratha is to propitiate the five elements, greater importance is attached to the propitiation of Agni (fire) and all the houses are profusely lighted and illuminated after sunset, for this purpose.

The reason why fire is given prominence over the other elements is furnished in the allegorical and deeply spiritual myth in which it is stated that Lord Siva, one of the Hindu Trinity, is pillar of fire to teach the creative and

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71 ARE 1929-30, No.411.
72 Stalapuranam of the temple, p.21.
73 ARE 1929-30, No.422.
preservative aspects Brahma and Vishnu the knowledge of infinity beyond time, space and limit, on this particular occasion.\textsuperscript{74} Brahma is said to have assumed the form of a swan and flown upwards to find the top of the pillar, while Vishnu took the form of a boar to dig down and reach its bottom. The flag staff or Dwaja stambam in the temple is intended to symbolic this pillar of fire. The Indian yogis (sages) say that the pillar of fire is nothing but the halo of brilliant light surrounding and interpenetrating the spinal chord within the spinal column in man.\textsuperscript{75}

The peculiar custom of burning heaps of dry leaves, twigs, etc going by the name of Chokkappanai in front of the temple deserves its rational explanation. The custom appears to have originated from the incidents recorded in the myth wherein Siva is said to have burnt the chariots of certain Asuras who were harassing the sages and others on this earth. The Chokkappanai (collection of dry leaves, twigs etc) are symbolical of the aerial cars of Asuras burnt by the fire emanating from the third eye of Siva.

\textbf{TaiPusam}

The Hindu festival which goes by the name Taipusam is observed on the day over which the asterism pushya (cancri) presides, in the Tamil month of Tai (January-February).\textsuperscript{76} The day generally falls on the full moon day of the month. The planet Brihaspati or Guru (Jupiter) is said to be the presiding deity of asterism 'Pushya' and consequently worship offered to the asterism

\textsuperscript{74} Sivapuranam, p.32.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.24.
\textsuperscript{76} ARE 1929-30, No.459.
Pushya is considered to have special merit, since Brihaspati symbolizes wisdom and the Hindus consider him to be the preceptor of the Gods, and one of the most important of the seven planets if not the most important planet. A bath in a sacred river on this day is considered to be very meritorious and people of all sorts, old, flock to the nearest one for the purpose.\(^77\)

**Mahasivaratri**

It is celebrated in the Tamil month of Masi (February-March).\(^78\) The festival is observed only in night. As far as Sivaratri is concerned, there are Nithya Sivaratri (daily), Paksha Sivaratri (fortnightly) Mahasivaratri (monthly) and Yoga sivaratri which are scrupulously observed by the devotees of Siva. This observance to be started closely following the rules laid down in the scriptures and should be performed at the appropriate time. During the night of Mahasivaratri Rudrabhisek should be performed on all the four jamas (three hours duration) with the thousand and eight names of Siva duly uttered each time showing Bilva leaves which are regarded as his favourite even more than the fragrance of the flowers which abounds at that time. This Mahasivaratri festival is celebrated with much enthusiasm.\(^79\)

**Car Festival**

The temple car was not just a monument of architectural and iconographical excellence. It was an institution deep-rooted in the socio-
economic and religious traditions of the Indian society. As an institution, it acquired multi-dimensional character, encompassing the entire fabric of society, only in the medieval period. In the earlier phase of history it was not so. It had an evolutionary process of development, including the prehistoric roots of Indian culture, reaching the zenith under the Vijayanagar rulers around the 15th century AD.

The car festival was known as Rathotsava or Rathayatra\(^{80}\) (Tertiruvila Terottam in Tamil). In inscription the term tiruter-or ‘ter’ itself stands for the car festival. The detailed rules for conducting it are laid down in the Isvarasamhita, Sripasnasamhita and Kumaratantra. The concentration of a newly built car was known as Ratapratisha\(^{81}\) or Rathasthapana.\(^{82}\) The mounting of the idol on the car was known as Ratharohana. Taking the vadam (rope) with a view to pull the car was known as Tirutervada muhurttam.\(^{83}\)

In the Someswarar temple, preparation for the car festival commences since the day of dvajarohana itself. On that day the high priests perform the Kalnattu (pillar planting) ceremony by planting a pillar on the pedestal of the car. It not only serves to arouse the festival spirit but also ensures a festival for the car. The preparations for getting ready the car begin with this. The carved plinth of the car is cleared of dust and washed with a mixture of castor

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80 Jayakhyasamhita, part, 20 and Paramasamhita, ch. 22.
81 Kumaratantra, part. 44.
82 Skanda puranam, ch. 25.
83 Tevarula, v.138.
oil and buttermilk \(^{84}\) to get the cars neat and tidy. Wooden pillars are implanted on the pedestals. From above the pillar the bamboo frame work of the super structure is mounted. The tercilai \(^{85}\) (coloured cloth) is hung over the superstructure. Vadams \(^{86}\) are fitted to the cars.

During the car festival, the car is decorated with golden bells, pearl garlands, tender leaves, curious portraits and clothes. \(^{87}\) Plantain fruits, Kamuho (raw betelnui) and coconut are added here and there Symbolically they proclaim the prosperity of the land. Toranas (ornamental uuarch) of mango and aracu leaves are tied. Such a car having a golden initial and eagle flag were sanctified by sprinkling the holy water upon Garuda who symbolically represents the car and all the gods are offered worship. \(^{88}\)

The deity is to be taken in procession in the car is offered upacharas (formalities) such as seeking the mirror and taking tambalam (betel leaves and areca nuts as a mark of respect). \(^{89}\) Then the processional images \(^{90}\) are

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\(^{84}\) In rare cases it is found painted.

\(^{85}\) Colour pads and papers are used in the cars.

\(^{86}\) Vadams (ropes) are usually made of coconut fibres. Iron chains are also popular. A part of it is tied to the car while a major portion remains stretched infront of the car for the use of pullers.

\(^{87}\) According to Isvarsamhita, the car was decorated with pearls, beads, yellow coloured flowers and flags. They were all auspicious symbols.

\(^{88}\) According to Isvarasamhita (ch. II. W. 284-99) the various parts of the car and their guardian deities were to be adorned.

\(^{89}\) He was offered sandal to put on his feet.

\(^{90}\) Image of Someswarar is taken along with the image of Sakti (Somasundari).
taken in a vehicle\textsuperscript{91} to the car having undergone dvapratistha.\textsuperscript{92} As seated in the car, the deity is to be offered puja. Sugar pongal is offered.\textsuperscript{93} A mirror is shown near his face so as to allow him check up himself. Harati (waving camphor light) is done. All these raja upcharas (royal formalities) are done to please the deity. Then vadam pidittal\textsuperscript{94} takes place. The car is pulled through the four main streets\textsuperscript{95} of the town and brought back to its stand.\textsuperscript{96} Harati is done once again to the image after the car reaches the stand. With this the Rathotsava comes to an end.

The Car Operation

The success of the car festival depends upon the process of taking the cars along the concource. The mechanism of car operation is designed in a very simple manner, involving a difficult mode of operation. Its-success to a great extent depends upon the condition of the car street\textsuperscript{97} and the car wheels.\textsuperscript{98} In the rainy season it is very difficult to move the cars since chances for entanglement of wheels in muddy meshes are frequent.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{91} The procession was conducted to the tune of musical instruments such as conch, tarai (a long flute), tambattam (a big drum) and anka (a small drum) and the recital of the holy verses like vedas. The procession was followed by dance and music recital.

\textsuperscript{92} Sri Prasana Samhita, ch. 36, vv. 93-114.

\textsuperscript{93} A dish cooked with rice, jaggery, ghee and spices.

\textsuperscript{94} Vadam pidittal is an important event Donors to the car festival have to claim to take the first vadam as a mark of honour.

\textsuperscript{95} The rathamarga (car route) for procession was the King's street.

\textsuperscript{96} The procession was to be completed quickly.

\textsuperscript{97} It was usually called 'tervidi' or terodum vidi. It was also called as Mangala vidi (ARE 1911 No. 372, 13:1926No. 116).

\textsuperscript{98} Due to the weight of the car, its wheels easily got entangled into pits while moving on its course.
On the eve of the festival, the wheels and axles checked and minor repairs done. At the time of ratharohana, the car pullers hold the vadam and pull them with all their might. Some men from behind the two outer back wheels apply a wooden lever called ‘tadi’ with a view to push the wheel forward. As a result of both these forces, the standing car gives way and moves slowly. Since there is no automatic mechanism to arrest its movement while moving, some men run along as the front wheels by constantly applying a hurdle called Kudil (literally obstacle) across the wheels. This serves as a break and makes the car move slowly and steadily. The process works out well as long as the car moves in a straight road. In case it is to turn sidewise, trouble comes. Often big ones such as the car at Attur stand at corners for hours together, unable to turn sidewise.\textsuperscript{100}

\textbf{Sacrifices}

The car procession as described in medieval inscriptions and literatures reveals that they were most rhythmic among festivals. The car rattled as accompanied by the festival orchestra included the flute, drum, mattalam and conch.\textsuperscript{101} The Vedas and other sacred verses were sung while the procession was on the move\textsuperscript{102} devadasis presented dances. Thus the ula network was grandiose in its format. Oblations such as adirasapadi and appa padi\textsuperscript{103} were given to the gods when the cars moved infront of their houses. In addition to

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{99} Pattinattar's Tiruppallandu V. 12.
\textsuperscript{100} Field Study on 15.03.2013.
\textsuperscript{101} Tiruranikkaula w. 169-30.
\textsuperscript{102} ARE 1935, No. 104.
\textsuperscript{103} ARE 1903, No. 58.
\end{flushleft}
the provisions gifted to the god himself, the donors considered it a meritorian act to reward the participants also with drinks, fruits, sandal-woodpaste and betel leaves. Sometimes animal sacrifices were also offered. Goats, buffaloes and other animals were sacrificed in large numbers. The Portuguese traveller Domingo Paes (16th century AD) has left a description of animal sacrifices, offered to the car during car festivals. It was a repentence for mistakes and offences. Thus, the temple car is an abode of artistic works. Having been part of the temple, the car is linked with a number of rituals, both of the folk type and the agamic type. It attracts all sections of the society and has sent its roots in both urban and rural cultures.

**Temple Entry Movement**

The temple entry movement was one of the socio-political events in the history of Tamil Nadu. It was a part of the escalating campaign of mass civil-disobedience movement which marked a major watershed in the religious life of the Tamils. The temples and temple authorities became the makers of rules and regulation to control the religious life of the people.

They are closely inter-related with the caste system. It is believed that the hierarchical caste system was the contrivance of the Brahmanical mind which divided the society into two larger sections, the high-castes and the

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104 Such benefactions are narrated in a literary piece called karamadaimalai which is associated with the Ranganatha temple at Karamadai.


106 Robert Sewell, The Vijayanagqr Empire as seen by Domingo Paes, New Delhi, 1985, p.51.
low-castes. The Brahmins, the Kshatrujas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras formed a pyramidical hierarchy with the Brahmins at the apex and the Sudras at the base. All others outside the pale of this system were considered as impure low castes.

The non-caste Hindus were always treated as slaves and a number of basic rights were far away from their reach. They were not allowed to worship in temples and also to walk along the streets. Lack of physical cleanliness, intellectual appetite and economic status prevented these people from entering the temples.

The advent of the Christian missionaries and their educational institutions exposed the mythological concepts that governed the caste restrictions. The spread of English education and the formation of caste associations inspired the non-caste Hindus to bargain for their legitimate status within the fold of Hinduism.

The advent of Gandhiji into the national movement was a great blessing to the marginalized people in India. In 1920, the Indian National Congress at its Nagpur Session adopted a distinct and unequivocal political resolution for the admission of non-caste Hindus into the Hindu temples.

By the Bardoli Resolutions of 1922, Gandhiji brought out a new colour of social content to the Congress programmes by advocating the idea of removing untouchability. At the Congress session at Kakkinadu, the Indian National Congress included the right of temple entry in the agenda. To uplift
the non-caste Hindus (Harijans) with the blessing of Gandhiji, the Harijan Sevak Sangh was formed at the national level with Seth Ghanshyandas Birla and Amritlal V Thakkur as its president and General secretary respectively.

As a sequel to Gandhiji's Harijan tour, temple entry movement gained momentum in Tamil Nadu. Blessed and Solomnised by Gandhiji, surprisingly, the final phase of the temple entry movement was organised and sphere-headed by the caste Hindus who once derived permission to the non-caste Hindus. Of course, the styagraha at Vaikkom was not a great success, it attracted the attention of the people all over India. Nadars, the forerunner of the temple entry movement asserted themselves as the descendents and representatives of the ancient ruling race of Pandya and Chola kings.107

As a matter of fact the protracted struggle at Vaikkom was a triumph of the low castes since it produced a chain reaction and a new awakening and fresh application of mind on the vital social problem of the temple entry. Following the Vaikkom agitation, the satyagraha movement started in many places such as Alleppy, Guruvayur Tiruchendur, Attur, Suchindram etc., to ascertain the right of temple entry some enlightened Hindus of the state held a special meeting to organise a satyagraha campaign under the headship of K.T.

107 G.O.No. 785, Law General Dept. 7th July, 1921.
Kosalram of Arumuganeri near Attur and youngsters from all communal groups became the supporters of the committee.\footnote{110}

The Committee recruited young volunteers trained satyagrahis and enrolled influential supporters. Yet, their preparations for the removal of anomalies and inequalities did not move the Government and they fixed January 29, 1926 for the formal inauguration of the satyagraha agitation at Attur.

The agitators won gradually the sympathy of some enlightened caste Hindus. The procession challenged the caste Hindus and forced to enter the car street of the temple. Alarmed at this, the anti-satyagrahis rose to protect the sanctity of the streets from pollution. In the tussle that ensued the anit-satyagrahis sought to exercise force on satyagrahis. At this critical juncture, the Nair Service Society and Harijan Seva Sangh recommended the Government for the grant of temple entry right to the non-caste Hindus. Gandhiji also carried on anxious negotiations with the Government authorities regarding the matter.\footnote{111} He advised the satyagrahis to carry on non-violent agitation by squatting on the streets until they were allowed by the anti-satyagrahis to enter into the car streets.

By the light of the Vaikkom Satyagraha Settlement in 1926, the Government promised to open the car streets to the untouchables within a


month. Hence, they suspended the agitation and expected voluntary invitation from the caste Hindus to open the temple streets for all. But the streets remained closed as before and they lost their hope for the right of temple entry for some time.\textsuperscript{112} As a result the satyagraha movement had to be revived once again.

On the whole, fearing escalation of the issue, the state authorities preferred to defuse the matter and dilute the tense situation through constructive measures.\textsuperscript{113} Under these circumstances, the ruling Government on 8\textsuperscript{th} November 1932 appointed the Temple. Entry Enquiry Committee under the headship of V.S. Subramania Iyer to examine the question of temple entry.\textsuperscript{114} The committee was mostly represented by the orthodox pandits and representative of the communities to whom the temple entry had not been granted.

**Temple Entry Proclamation**

The temple entry movement gathered impetus in the southern states began to spread the northern parts also. Following this, 25\textsuperscript{th} September 1931 was celebrated as temple entry day all over the state with processions, meetings and bhajans.\textsuperscript{115}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{112}] Mahadev Desai, *The Epic of Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1980, p. 23.
\item[\textsuperscript{113}] Proceedings of the Travancore Legislative Council, Vol. XV, 1930, p. 195.
\item[\textsuperscript{114}] English Records, Trivandrum, Devoswom File R. Dis No. 648, 25\textsuperscript{th} Nov. 1932.
\item[\textsuperscript{115}] Idem.
\end{itemize}
The Bombay session of the Indian National Congress held on 25th September 1932 resolved that hence forth amongst the Hindus no one shall be regarded as untouchables. As the movement spread to other places in the state, the Government soon realised the gravity of the situation and decided to take steps to bring about changes based on popular opinion and to mitigate the sufferings of the depressed in the Hindu society.

The Temple Entry Enquiry Committee submitted its report on 21st April 1934. It recommended to soften the rigour of the social custom which kept the depressed classes away from the temple.\textsuperscript{116} Maharaja Sri Chitra Tirunal, having no faith in half-measures on the advice of the New Dewan C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, made a momentous Temple Entry Proclamation on his 24th birthday, on 12th November 1936 which threw open all the temples controlled by the Government to the worship of all the depressed classes.\textsuperscript{117} The proclamation was warmly received with delight and admiration all over the nation. This was given the shape of law in the Madras Presidency in January 1939 removing most of the ‘religious disparities of the Hindus in respect of their entry into the temple and offering worship in Hindu temples. This measure checked a large scale exodus to Christianity and resulted in the removal of religious disabilities imposed on the untouchables throughout the state.

\textbf{Kailasanather Temples Rajapathi and Cherinthapoomangalam}

At Rajapathi there is no temple at present as a moment a stone is

\textsuperscript{116} Report of the Temple Entry Enquiry Committee; 1934, p. 238.

\textsuperscript{117} The Travancore Government Gazette Extra-ordinary, Trivandrum, 12 Nov, 1936.
installed. In the said the people considered it as eighth one and lit camphor and worship the lord.

At Chenthapoomangalam only are time Puja is being held regularly. Besides Sivaratri is being celebrated every year.

**Sivaratri**

Navaratri is the nine holy nights dedicated to Goppess Sakthi, where as Sivaratri is the only auspicious night devoted to lord siva. It is of different kinds. They are nithya sivaratri, patha sivaratri, yoga sivaratri and Maha sivaratri.\(^{118}\) Maha Sivaratri or the great night of siva is celebrated by the Hindus on the night to 14\(^{th}\) date of the dark half in the Tamil month of Masi. (February – March)\(^{119}\) Maha Sivaratri, called to distinguish it from the ordinary sivaratri, that falls on the thirteenth day of the dark half of every month is a festival of all India importance.\(^{120}\) The important reason to commemorate the day is, on that particular day Lord Siva consumed the deadly poison namely Kalakutavitham to save the world frame destruction.\(^{121}\) The Sivaratri festival is celebrated in all the Nine Siva temples by offering of special Pujas and abhisekams and the people of religions oriented keep and worship to Siva throughout the night. All the devotees observe Sivaratri Viratham, because it has more significance than the siva virathams such as samavara viratham, Thiruvathirai viratham, Ketharaviratham,

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\(^{118}\) Sharma, Sivaratin perumai, Dinamalar, 16.02.1984.


\(^{120}\) Sreevaramenan, A., A Cultural Heritage of Kerala and Introduction (Cochin, 1978), p.69.

Kalyaniviratham, sundara viratham, Uma Maheswara viratham, Chulaviratham, pishaba viratham and pradoshaviratham.

**Dhara Puja**

A special ceremony called Dhara Puja is conducted in all the siva temples. Lord Siva, the cosmic dancer of the universe is a favourite of ablution where as Lord Vishnu is the lover of decoration. Dhara or Dhara Puja is a peculiar temple festival of Lord Siva. It is still existing in Western temples.

The Dhara Puja is being conducted all most in all Siva Temples of interior Kerala. The nature and performance of the Puja is very peculiar one. A big round copper vessel familiarly known as Dhara kidaram is having a small hole under its bottom. Through the hole Darpa leaves are inserted. Inside the vessel, water or Ghee or Milk is powered and it slowly falls in to the head of Linga droply drop, Just like drop irrigation. If the Puja is performed by water the ceremony is known as Jala Dhara, and if it is in by Ghee, it is identified as Girutha Dhara and if it is in milt, it is named as Sheera Dhara. In Sanskrit, one of the flourishing classical languages, Jalam means water, Girutham Ghee, Sheeram-milk.

At Murappanad, fifth out of the nine, the devotees of Lord Siva, recently conducted Dhara Puja for one Mandalam (41 Days). After completion, there was heavy down power in that exactly. Siva is lover of

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122 Pillai, K.K., Sucindram Temple.
123 Interview with Sri. Rajamani Temple, priest on 08.04.2013.
abhisekam or ablution. Hence this kind of Dhara Puja can alone Please Lord Siva, the almightily of the universe and the Head of Saiva cult. Being the favourite, of Ablution, Lord Siva will be much pleased if Dhara Puja is conducted regularly.

All most of all the eight Sivalayams except Rajapathi, Pradosham is regularly celebrated with gay and gaiety. The pradosha worship is to be performed in the evening turlight on the 13th day of each lunar fortnight, either bright or dark. It is the worship of Lord Siva for ultimate victory and great success in all undertakings and the fulfillment of ones hearts cherished desires.

It is believed that Lord Siva the cosmic dancer of the world is dancing in between the tusks of Nandi, the holy vehicle of Lord Siva During the time of “Pradosha Velai” (4.30 pm to 6.30 pm). More importance is to be given to Nandi in this ceremony. Because Nandi is considered as the direct representative of god.

In order to obtain Ambrosia, Devas and Asuras Churned the milky ocean, Mount Mantara and Vasuti one of the Attanagas are changed as churning strick and cord (Churning Rope) respectively and churned the ocean. At that time the snakes vomiting the passion. Devas afraid of its and required the ashuglum of Lord Siva. Lord Siva consumed the passion and safeguard the devas fram the potential danger. It occurred on Ekadasi an Thuvathasi Ambrosia was taken bram the milky ocean, on Thriothasi, Devas had to Kailash to offer the vote of thanks. At that time Lord Siva danced in between
the Turks of Nandi. It occurred on Thriothasi evening (4.30 pm to 6 pm). This Holy orai is known as Pradosham.

Pradosham is classified into three. They are Nithya Pradosham, Matha Pradosham and Maha Pradosham. Again Maha Pradosham can be classified into three namely uthama Maha Pradosham, Mathima Mohapradosham, and Athama Maha pradosham. The pradosham which falls on saturday Thriothasi during the Tamil months of Chithirai, Vaikasi, Iyppasi and Karthikai are known as Uthama Mahapradosham.\(^{124}\)

The Pradosham which falls on saturday Thriothasi during the Tamil months of Chitrai, Viakasi, Iyppasi, Karthikai are called Mahapradosham.\(^{125}\)

The Pradosham which falls on saturday the Tamil months of of Ani, Adi, Avani, Purattasi, Markali, Thai, Masi, Pankuni are known as Athama Mahapradosham.

A very important point to be remembered in this aspect, that during this Holy occasion, all the hosts of celestial beings and gods come down from the heaven and attend to worship in their implied form. Hence everyone should attend in the time of pradosham. Because no god is present in their abode to safeguard the victim. Even a single god leaf (Lead taken from the word apple tree) offered to the Lord at this auspicious time equals hundred Mohapujas.\(^{126}\) The pradoshams of saturday has some more importance. It is

\(^{124}\) *Prasannakara Anthiyan* (1999), *அறிவுக்குறிட்டு கதைகள் விசுவாசிக்க விளக்கம், மலார்*.  
\(^{125}\) Ibid.  
\(^{126}\) Hindu Fasts and Festivals Sri Swami Sivananda, p.128.
popularly called as sanipradosham. If a devotee enters in the premises of Siva temple on the Sanipradosham day it is equal to worship Lord Siva in thousand occasions.

It becomes clear from the said account that festivals are a part and parcel of the Hindus life. They have more societal influence. In Hindu religion these festivals are celebrated with great impetus. They are pressured for individual party and high involvement with the god the almighty.