In the medieval days temples performed multifarious activities in and around of their precincts. They extended their helping hands in various ways to the local people and promoted the preservation of the various arts of the day. They not only catered to the physical needs of the people but also to their mental and spiritual elevation. While the upper castes had a greater say in the spiritual and educational matters, the lower castes had their role in manual labour. Yet, all people united in promoting and preserving the traditions from turning extinct. The temple had a major share as court of justice, centre of learning, library, art and culture, public record office, employer, consumer, bank and feeding centre.

Endowments were made to and renovations carried out in temple by many categories of people. Normally the temple was the recipient of considerable endowments from various quarters and for various purposes. An important occasion for endowments was the temple festival. Endowments were made not only for the older festivals but also for those to be established.

Endowments were made liberally to temple by army generals by providing mandapas, stages and salais.\(^1\) Some endowments were directly related to temple services and some indirectly benefited.\(^2\) The endowments were either straight away granted or in unusual cases acquired as

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\(^1\) SII, Vol. III, No. 108.

\(^2\) ARE 1920, No.103.
mortgages in the first instance and later permanently acquired. This practice of letting out temple lands on lease degenerated into economic drain and this obliged the king to prevent certain temples from indulging in such practices.³ Some devadanas included the tenants on the land and were called Kudiningia devadana.⁴ The type of endowments which consisted in permitting the interest get from trust property to be spent on temple was common.

**Court of Justice**

The Attur temple served as the venue of the court of justice. The temple was the sanctified, preserved and conscience keeper of the people. They had never dared enough to speak untruth or do an evil deed in the temple precincts for fear of punishment. They gathered there to settle many of their disputes. As a result, meetings were held in the *mandapa* of the temple to discuss various matters.⁵

Investigations connected in the tirumandapam are referred to in inscription.⁶ The learned people who were experts in dharmasastras heard cases. They were known as Dharmasanabhattas.⁷ In addition, the priests of the temple also tried certain cases in co-operation with village assemblies.⁸

According to the record, the dispute was adjudicated by a tribunal composed of members of the nadu, samayamantrics (royal priests) and

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³ ARE 1913, No.376.
⁴ SII, Vol. VII, No. 244.
⁵ SII, Vol. XXIII, Nos. 95 and 433.
⁶ ARE 1913, No.349.
⁸ Ibid., p.217.
different priests. In certain cases the trustees of the temple acted as judges.\textsuperscript{9} The temple Sthanattars and Maheswaras too participated in investigations and deliberations of cases which were later decided by the assembly.\textsuperscript{10}

In judicial enquiry, public opinion was sought for.\textsuperscript{11} A typical form is the invitation extended to the pilgrims and people of various places to participate in the deliberations. An inscription\textsuperscript{12} of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I mentions that their judgement was impartial.

The award of any punishment was only after detailed deliberations and the punishment was in tune with the gravity of the mistake committed. The joint sittings of village heads (assemblies), temple authorities and priests were held to discuss important matters affecting temple administration. Several records point out to such joint sittings of the above members of various bodies.\textsuperscript{13}

After a careful hearing and verification of documents and other evidences, the dispute was settled. The assembly which decided the case consisted of the *Mahesvaras*, the *Sathanattars*, the *pilgrims*, the *kaikkolas* and *kaikkolamudalis*. Another record\textsuperscript{14} of the same king registers a dispute between the *chettis* and *vaniyanagarattars* regarding the conduct of a festival in the temple. The Chettis were enjoying the right of conducting festivals. But

\textsuperscript{9} ARE, 1894, No.185.  
\textsuperscript{10} ARE, 1921, No.186.  
\textsuperscript{11} ARE, 1920-21, No.295.  
\textsuperscript{12} ARE, 1920, No.571.  
\textsuperscript{13} ARE, 1920-21, No.571.  
\textsuperscript{14} ARE, 1913, No.432.
the Vaniyanagarattars were not pleased with this arrangement and quarreled with the Chettis. To settle this dispute, the temple authority decided to sell the right in public auction. They found that this was the only proper way in solving the problem.\(^\text{15}\)

Thefts in temple were also detected and punished by the village assembly and the temple authority. When the jewels belonging to the temple of Someswarar found missing the *maheswaras* and other temple authorities met in the *tirumandapa* for investigation.\(^\text{16}\) At last the culprits were traced and punished. In property disputes there existed the practice of verifying the original documents.\(^\text{17}\)

To detect minor crimes and make the thieves confer their crimes, they were made to undergo the ordeal of handling a red hot ploughshare. This is a traditional form of judicial probe in detecting crimes. The offenders were severely punished and punishments were based purely on the nature of their crimes.

Of the offences, the gravest ones were against the temple and the Brahmins. Those who stole money from the temple treasury were punished by confiscating their property.\(^\text{18}\) Those *Sivabrahmanas* who stole away the cash and jewels of the temple were treated as *Sivadrohis*\(^\text{19}\) (traitors of Siva). However, they were not punished according to their crimes. But the

\(^{15}\) ARE, 1913, No.439.

\(^{16}\) ARE 1916, No.188.

\(^{17}\) ARE 1935, No.170.

\(^{18}\) ARE 1907, No.135.

\(^{19}\) ARE 1913, No. 439.
method adopted to detect their crimes was really severe. The lying Sivabrahmanas were directed to handle a red hot ploughshare. It was believed that if they were not guilty, the red hot iron bar will not scold their hands. This was deemed as punishment, for the theft of jewels in the temple, the culprits were put in the prison by the temple authority.

Centre of Learning

An inscription of A.D 1289 of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya III records the prevalence of the vyakhyana mandapa in the Attur temple, where discussions were held. The recitation of sacred hymns was considered an educational qualification for the Brahmin priests. Several records register the step taken by the rulers and the ruled for the recitation of different hymns in the temple. A record of the temple registers the employment of eleven persons by Maravarman Sundara Pandya II to recite Tirujnanam.

Besides these, provisions were made for the recitation of Vedas and puranas Encouragement was given to the recitation of such hymns by giving lands and food. A record of Virapandya of A.D 954 mentions a gift of land to meet the expenses of feeding some Brahmanas chanted certain portions of Vedas in the temple. Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I ordered that the land in

20 ARE 1913, No. 432.
21 ARE 1912, No. 110.
22 ARE 1929-30, No.427.
23 ARE 1916-17, No.644.
24 ARE 1916-17, No.645.
the eastern hamlet of Attur Chaturvedi Mangalam be made completely tax-
free for the recital of *vedas* and *puranas*.

Another record\(^{25}\) of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya registers a gift of
1000 kuli of rent free land for the maintenance of two Brahmins who recited
Vedas. The elaborate arrangement made for the recitation and exposition of
the sacred texts in the temple helped the people to learn the texts for
themselves.

This served as a kind of informal education. In this way, the Attur
temple played a major role in transmitting educational principles.\(^{26}\) The
symbolic representations of mythological stories in paintings and sculptures
in the temple served as visual aids to the uneducated.\(^{27}\)

The establishment of Vedic school at Attur\(^{28}\) records the patronage
given by the temple for learning. Facilities were given to the students to stay
and study. In the Vedic school of Attur, teachers were appointed to teach
*Vedas, Vyagaranas* (grammar) and philosophy.\(^{29}\) Brahmin *brahamacharis*
were alone imparted education in this educational centre.\(^{30}\) Land was set apart

\(^{25}\) ARE 1913-14, No.419.
\(^{26}\) Ragava Varier. M.R., Temple Festivals in Medieval Kerala, Journal of Kerala Studies,
\(^{27}\) Pillai. J.K., Educational System of Ancient Tamils, Madras, 1972, p.73.
\(^{28}\) ARE 1912, No.285.
\(^{29}\) ARE 1908, No.236.
\(^{30}\) Pillai. K.K., *Studies in the History of India with Special Reference to Tamil

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to meet the expenses of the students attached to the temple.\textsuperscript{31}

The matha or seminary attached to the Someswara temple was also the centre of higher learning. It provided systematic training in the sacred lore. Its members were dedicated themselves for the spiritual knowledge.\textsuperscript{32} A record\textsuperscript{33} of Virapandya dated A.D 957 registers a gift of 20 sheep for the maintenance of a \textit{matha}. In this \textit{matha} discussions and discourses on different spiritual themes were conducted.

Tirujnanam, a work of the Saiva Siddhanta School was recited.\textsuperscript{34} A record\textsuperscript{35} of Sundara Pandya refers to the appointment of eleven persons drawn from various \textit{mathas} in South India for reciting \textit{Tirujnanam} in this temple.

Akin to the \textit{matha}, the \textit{agraharam}, the Brahmin settlement, also imparted higher learning to the Brahmins in Vedas and other allied subjects. The Brahmin settlement nurtured young scholars in high learning. Inscription\textsuperscript{36} records their proficiency in different subjects. For instance, a record of Maranjadayan registers a grant of village for some Brahmins who were well-versed in the \textit{shadahas} or the six components of Vedic learning.

In the Vikrama Pandya Chaturvedi Mangalam, 64 Brahmins proficient in Vedas and \textit{sastras}, were made to settle.\textsuperscript{37} Some \textit{bhattars} in the \textit{agraharas}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item ARE 1928-29, No. 75.
\item ARE 1929-30, No. 173.
\item SII, Vol. XIV, No. 88.
\item ARE 1929-30, No.463.
\item SII, Vol. V, No.421.
\item SII, Vol. XIV, No. 61, p.43.
\item ARE 1929-30, No.377.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
were known as *Chaturvedi bhattars*\(^{38}\) (masters in the four Vedas). These scholars were encouraged by giving tax-free lands, house-sites and even the right of cultivation. Specialists in Vedas were honoured by giving separate *pangu* (share) in the village known as *Yajurveda Vriti* and *Purana Vriti*.

This is revealed by a record\(^{39}\) of Virapandya. These scholars were expected to preach and propagate their knowledge. Chances of high learning were denied to the students of other lower castes. As a result, they groaned and groped under the darkness of superstitions.

**Library**

The growth of educational systems and values necessitated the maintenance of library for the easy reference of teachers and the taught. Inscription\(^{40}\) refers to the existence of library in the Attur temple. This library is known as *Saraswatibhandram*. In this library, some twenty scholars proficient in different branches of learning were employed to copy down various *grantas* (books) and *manuscripts*.

A record\(^{41}\) furnishes some information regarding the functioning of the same library. It records the grant of land for the maintenance of several persons employed there. The nature of their work was also referred to in it. Provision was made for writing and comparing works in Sanskrit and Tamil.

\(^{38}\) EI, Vol. XXIV, p.154.

\(^{39}\) ARE 1917-18, No.186.

\(^{40}\) SII, Vol. XXIV, No.279.

\(^{41}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 453.
Among the books, special mention was made of the *puranas, Jyothi Sastra* and *Siddhanta-ratnakara* of Someswarar.

**Public Record Office**

In addition, the temple acted as the record office (archives in the modern sense). Several records found engraved and preserved on the outer walls of the *vimana*, the *mandapa* and *prakara* of the temple prove this. They throw light on the important exploits of the kings, the day to day administration of the kingdom, the economic, social and religious life of the people. The rulers paid due attention to the preservation of these records. Royal orders issued to this effect were communicated to the temple executive.\(^{42}\)

According to the royal orders, their deeds and documents were engraved on stone walls and copper plates.\(^{43}\) The documents related to the purchase\(^ {44}\) and gift of lands\(^ {45}\) to the temple were deposited in the temple. The records engraved on the walls of the temple were long lasting as they could withstand minor natural calamities. This shows the historical sense of preserving the past by way of engraving in the face of stones of ages.

The nature of relations with the neighbouring countries was also referred to in these records.\(^ {46}\) The extensive conquests of the Pandya kings

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\(^{42}\) SII, Vol. XXIII, Nos.111 and 112.  
\(^{43}\) SII, Vol. XXIII, No.109.  
\(^{44}\) ARE 1929-30, No.458.  
\(^{45}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 399.  
were found inscribed on the walls. Maranjadayan's campaign against Gholanadu Was informed by his inscription.\textsuperscript{47} The records carry different details of taxes levied by the government and other agencies.\textsuperscript{48}

The administrative arrangements, the duties discharged by various officials and the effective functioning of the village assemblies were also attested to by these records. The inscription\textsuperscript{49} of Maranjadayan gives details about rules and regulations governing the admission of members of the Sabha. The socio-religious, politico-economic and cultural conditions of the local people were partially referred to in these inscriptions. When this temple preserved the history of the land, it is not wrong to call it as record office.

**Temple as a centre of Art and Culture**

The temple acted as centre of arts where cultural programmes and variety entertainments were held for the sake of kings and the people. They patronised both the time and space arts of dance, music, drama, painting and sculpture and preserved them for posterity.\textsuperscript{50} Music and dance were the inseparable limbs of upacharas offered to gods and goddesses.\textsuperscript{51} The temple had a Rangamandapa (dance hall) where dance and drama were staged and music was recited.\textsuperscript{52} The Nrithamandapa of the temple was probably intended for this purpose. People met in the temple porches and listened to these variety entertainments.

\textsuperscript{47} SII, Vol. XIV, No.26.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., Vol. XVII, No. 143.
\textsuperscript{49} SII, Vol. XIV, No.37.
\textsuperscript{50} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 237, p.143.
\textsuperscript{52} ARE 1929-30, No. 444.
The eastern hamlet of the temple was made completely tax-free for offerings, recital of vedas and puranas and for singing and dancing daily, by Maravarman Vikrama Pandya III. The *devadasis* participated in dramatic shows also. An inscription of Maravarman Vikrama Pandya III from the temple states that a drama was enacted by a dancing girl. The dramas staged were called *tirunatakam* (sacred drama) whose theme was drawn from religious and puranic mythology.

Thus, the dancing girls play a major role in the ceremonial observances of the temple and the preservation of the arts. Besides, a variety of dance-dramas known as *Kuttus* were also performed in the precinct of the temple by troup of male dancers called kuttar or *arayar*. Several inscriptions record the performance of *Sokkakkuttu*, *Santikuttu* and *Vinodakkuttu*. *Santikuttu* induced a feeling of people in the enjoyment of *rasa* and *Vinodakkuttu* imparted a fleeting sense of pleasure. An inscription of Jatavarman Sri Vallabha refers to the performance of *Sanikkuttu* by one Soman, a *Sanikkuttan*.

Apart from these devadasis and the Kuttars, there were a number of instrumental musicians especially the *drummers* (uvachchar) who were appointed to provide music during festivals. They played various kinds of

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53 ARE 1929-30, No. 444.
54 ARE 1929-30, No. 427.
55 Raman, K.V., op.cit., p.64.
56 ARE 1927-28, No.126.
57 SII, Vol. XIV, No. 237.
drums such as *udukkai, kottimathalam* and *sagadai* according to the nature of worship. In Attur, three persons were appointed as *uvachcher* to provide music daily.\(^{60}\) Much encouragement was given to the performance of these arts. As the permanent staff of the temple establishment, the *devadasis*,\(^{61}\) the *Kuttar*,\(^{62}\) and the *uvachchar*\(^{63}\) were provided with quarters in the *tirumadaivilagam*.

In recognition of their service, they were given their remuneration in the form of land, grain or cooked rice balls. An inscription\(^{64}\) of Maravarman Vikrama Chola Pandya of the temple registers a gift of paddy by one Manjan Sadayan of Karuppur in Marugal-nadu, a sub-division of Kshatrugasikhamani-valanadu, a district of Cholamandalam for the expenses of feeding some *Srimahesvards*\(^{65}\) in the temple. A record of Sundara Pandya from the temple registers the gift of tax-free land to provide *bhojanam* (food) for the reciters of *Tirujnanam*.\(^{66}\) These facts indicate, the importance attached to the preservation of fine arts in the temple.

**Temple as an Employer**

The Someswarar temple played a unique role as an employer in providing employment to a number of people for multifarious activities either

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\(^{60}\) SII, Vol. XIV, No.84.

\(^{61}\) SII, Vol. XXIII, No. 121.

\(^{62}\) ARE, 1929-30, No. 439.


\(^{64}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 406.

\(^{65}\) SII, Vol. XIV, p.102.

\(^{66}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 463.
directly or indirectly. The former refers to those servants who were employed permanently as regular staff of the temple establishment. The latter were the casual labourers employed by the caretakers like the *Ponmahesvaras* who sought to cultivate then and there either to cultivate the temple lands or look after the related works. The different categories of staff employed as administrative staff, spiritual functionaries, manual and menial labourers confirm the fact that the temple served a source of employer.

A record\(^{67}\) of Marayarman Sundara Pandya III of Attur registers the appointment of temple servants and the grant, by the king, of land *asjivita* for the maintenance of the temple servants. Qualification and *gotras* were also taken into consideration at the time of appointment. *Bhattars* of certain qualification\(^{68}\) and specific *gotras*\(^{69}\) were alone employed as priests. But, when qualified persons were not found among the descendents, competent persons could be selected from among their relatives.\(^{70}\)

For certain appointments, local people were preferred than others. A *bhatta* should be a native of the village.\(^{71}\) This is one of the qualifications prescribed for appointments in the temple. Moreover, an inscription\(^{72}\) of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I records an order of the king to appoint *ullurar* (local people) to protect the temple treasury. Even for the cultivation of

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\(^{67}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 443.
\(^{69}\) ARE. 1967-68, No.150.
temple lands and breeding of livestock, local people were chosen. This method was adopted perhaps for the employed to be near the temple executives. Besides, many people from distant areas, may not come forward to accept such works owing to their limited returns or share. However, by employing the local people the temple exercised control over the local population.

On certain occasions, people from distant areas were also posted to some categories. For instance, a record 73 of kulottunga I refers to the appointment of one Velan Pattalakkan and some others from kudanadu, a sub-division of Uttama Cholavalanadu, in Rajarajapandi nadu as the temple officials. The non-availability of qualified persons in the local area was probably the reason for such an appointment. Further, the creation of agraharas by inducing Brahmins to settle near the temple is also in support of the above fact.

The temple functionaries were paid some remuneration for their services. But the present day system of paying the monthly salary in cash was not in vogue then. Instead, they were paid in kind by assigning land as jivita 74 or grain or cooked rice. The nature and quantum of remuneration given to the temple staff differed from temple to temple, probably according to the position they held. An inscription 75 of A.D 966 of the time of Vira pandya informs us the varying remuneration given to some categories of temple staff. It states that the Srikaryam (temple executive) was given 7 ma of land,

73 ARE 1929-30, No.398.
74 ARE 1929-30, No. 443.
75 SII, Vol. XIV, No. 95.
Kanakabhandari (treasury accountant) ½ ma of land, Kusavan (Potter) 2 ma of land, Viragiduvan (supplier of fuel) 2 ma of land, tirumelukkuppuram (sweeper) 2 ma of land, Irankkolli (washer) 2 ma of land, for ten uvachchars (drammers) 1¼ ma of land and the architect who constructed the temple was given 10¼ ma of land.

Salary was given on the basis of position and rank. An inscription\(^{76}\) of Maravarman Sundara Pandya II states that the temple servants were granted some land and house-sites for their services. A record\(^{77}\) of Maravarman Sundara Pandya II gives the details of renumeration given to the temple servants and their descendent either in grain or in land. Another record\(^{78}\) of Maravarman Vikrama Pandya III of A.D 1288 states that the remuneration of 2 ma of land to one Tirumenipiriyadal, a maid servant of the temple.

An inscription\(^{79}\) of Vira pandya registers that the Brahmins who engaged themselves in preparing food for the sacred offering to the deity were paid mukkuruni (measurement) of paddy. Another record\(^{80}\) of Maravarman Kulasekhara I of A.D 1275 mentions to the supply of nali of food daily to the servant who tended a flower garden. These instances show the nature of remuneration according to their position in the temple hierarchy.

\(^{76}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 470.
\(^{77}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 444.
\(^{78}\) ARE 1913-14, No.295.
\(^{79}\) ARE 1929-30, No.393.
\(^{80}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 454.
In addition to remuneration, some of the employees were provided with accommodation in the *tirumadaivilagam*. A record\(^{81}\) of the 25\(^{th}\) regnal year of Maravarman Vikramachola Pandya of A.D 1045, refers to the *mania* (house) and food for fifteen *Sivabrahmanas*. Thus, the temple provided employment opportunities to various people which was a striking feature in the socio-economic life of the people.

**Temple As Consumer**

The Someswarar temple as a centre of human activities had to cater to the needs of the people. It required various articles and goods for sacred worship and food for feeding the needy. To meet these, it produced and kept all kinds of articles and commodities in its own establishments. Therefore, it was called one of the biggest consumers of the society. The consumption of such things depends largely upon the *pujas* and *festivals* celebrated, servants attached to the temple, the number of needy to be fed and the population that participated in the various activities of the temple.

Inscriptions of the period record the articles of consumption in this temple. Large quantity of ghee\(^{82}\) and oil was used for burning of the lamps and for cooking food. Oil was also used for the sacred bath of the deity.

A record\(^{83}\) of A.D 1106 of the Ghola king kulottunga I of the temple registers the sale of land by two residents of Tirukkadavur, a *bramadaya* in Talaippanai in Kuda-nadu, a sub-division of Uttamacholavala nadu in

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\(^{81}\) SII, Vol. XIV, No.191, pp.105-06.

\(^{82}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 416.

\(^{83}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 402.
Rajaraja Pandinadu to KuditangiMummudi-Cholan of Arasur, who made a gift to the temple of Someswara for the sacred bath of the deity with oil and water from the river Tamraparni. To get the required supply of milk, buffaloes, cows and sheep were donated to the temple.\textsuperscript{84}

Land was set apart for fetching firewood and produced the required quantity of salt, pepper, cuminseed, coconuts, vegetables and fruits. The tenants of the temple land were asked to supply some quantity of their produce such as turmeric, ginger, betel leaves and sugarcane for temple use.\textsuperscript{85} The supply of arccanuts is referred to in some records.\textsuperscript{86} Lands were given for providing camphors sandal and rose-water to the temple.\textsuperscript{87} The constant need for varieties of flowers to adorn the deity and different pieces of clothes to dress the idols were recorded in inscriptions.\textsuperscript{88} Thus the temple consumed a large quantity of local products which were either purchased or obtained from its lands or donated by devotees.

**Temple As A Bank**

The Someswarar temple functioned as a bank and treasure house. As it had an independent administrative machinery, it had the privilege of having its own treasury. Various kinds of endowments like money\textsuperscript{89} and gold\textsuperscript{90} made over to the temple were deposited in the safe-vault of the temple treasury and

\textsuperscript{84} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 135, p.70.\textsuperscript{85} ARE 1929-30, No. 431.\textsuperscript{86} ARE 1929-30, No. 435.\textsuperscript{87} ARE 1929-30, No. 465.\textsuperscript{88} ARE 1929-30, No. 454.\textsuperscript{89} ARE 1929-30, No. 400.\textsuperscript{90} ARE 1929-30, No. 405.
the gifted lands\textsuperscript{91} were placed under its control. Rarely the penalty amount imposed on offenders and defaulters were also deposited there.\textsuperscript{92} By accepting the deposits, the treasury authorities carried out the wishes of the donors. According to a record\textsuperscript{93} of Jatavarman Srivallabha, the treasury undertook to supply one nali of rice and other food offerings from the grant of 5/38 \textit{palankasu} (coin) paid to the temple. But while money was endowed, the donors instructed the donees to utilize the interest and not the capital for the said service.\textsuperscript{94} An inscription\textsuperscript{95} of Vikramachola Pandya deva of A.D. 1022-23 informs that 10 achchu (coin) was deposited in the temple treasury for \textit{tirumanjanam}, different food offerings including paddy and for feeding \textit{maheswaras} in the temple. The expenses of the above should be met from the interest amount.

By this process, the endowed amount was kept as a permanent asset to the temple. This is like the fixed deposits in the bank of modern times. An inscription\textsuperscript{96} of the 25\textsuperscript{th} regnal year of Maravarman Vikramachola Pandya of 1045 A.D records the gift of money which was deposited in the temple treasury by one Kandan-Ayyanan of Mangalakkal. This amount was deposited on the purchase of some lands, and from the annual produce of these lands, the charity was to be conducted. And also the interest of the amount invested

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} \textit{ARE} 1929-30, No. 409.
\item \textsuperscript{92} \textit{Tirumalai}, R., \textit{op.cit.}, p.47.
\item \textsuperscript{93} \textit{SII}, Vol. XIV, No. 214, p.122.
\item \textsuperscript{94} \textit{SII}, Vol. XIV, No. 202, p.115.
\item \textsuperscript{95} \textit{SII}, Vol. XIV, No. 186, pp.102-103.
\item \textsuperscript{96} \textit{ARE} 1929-30, No.393.
\end{itemize}
in the temple treasury per annum was also utilized for providing *milk-porridge* to the god Someswarar and feeding 15 *Siva brahmanas*\(^97\) in the temple on each *amavasya* day (No moon day) every month.

To fulfill the wishes of the donors, the treasury appears to have lent the endowed money to the needy people for interest. An inscription\(^98\) of Virarajendra chola of A.D 1070 records the practice of lending of money by temple. It states that the *Kaikkolas* and *Kaikkolamudalis* borrowed money from the temple. It is recorded that the interest could be paid in cash or in kind according to the needs and requirements of the temple. A record\(^99\) of Maravarman Sundara Pandya I of A.D 1240 on the south wall of the south *verandah* in the first *prakara* of the Attur temple registers that the treasury of the temple was to measure out nali of rice to the *Sivabrahmanas* for offerings from some amount of money deposited in the temple treasury.

Temple lent money on the basis of sound security. A record\(^100\) of Maravarman Sundara Pandya II of A.D 1247 registers that people borrowed money from the temple treasury by mortgaging their lands. The process of collection of the loan was also recorded in the same inscription. If the parties who borrowed the money were not able to repay, they sold some lands to clear off their debts. Another record\(^101\) of Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya of


\(^{98}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 400.

\(^{99}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 447.

\(^{100}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 429.

\(^{101}\) ARE 1929-30, No. 457.
A.D 1280 records the sale of land to the temple by one Kanninattariyan and Pandyadraiyyan for a sum of 55 Palamudalanai achchu-(coins). It is to be noted that the lands were mortgaged to the temple first in the 13th regnal year of Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya I and again for an additional sum in the same regnal year of the king.

The amount fixed as sale price was made up of the total mortage money together with the interest thereon. In another instance, a record102 of A.D 1213 of Jatavarman Kulasekhara I refers to the sale of land, to the temple by the uravar of Korkai in Kudanadu instead of certain sums of money borrowed from the temple by them previously. Thus the temple recovered the loan money by purchasing the lands of the defaulted borrowers. This was a sort of japti (recovery by means of transferring or confiscating the right of ownership by legal action) of the modern times.

At times of distress and difficulties, the temple came to the rescue of the villagers. The help offered by the temple to relieve the distress of the famine and other natural calamities was noteworthy. A record103 of Virapandya registers that the temple went to the rescue of the nattars (members of the nadu) even by offering the silver tirukolkai (metallic cover exactly fitting the image of a deity) adorning the deity and thereby raising 11,000 kasu which was paid to the king's officers as the aggregate arrears of land dues. It is learnt thus that at times of natural calamities and other

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102 ARE 1929-30, No. 464.
103 IPS, No. 605.
difficulties, the temple extended monetary assistance to the people and the village assemblies. Thus, in those days, the temple served as the people's bank.\textsuperscript{104} Therefore, the treasury was guarded by garrisons,\textsuperscript{105} for it kept in preserve the wealth of the land.

**Temple As Feeding Centre**

Feeding the needy was considered as a dharma of the state. Therefore, temple served as feeding house. The Someswarar temple fed the Brahmins, priests, students, ascetics, pilgrims, devotees, temple servants and the needy like the deserted, the deprived and the disabled. On festive occasions, these people were fed sumptuously. As the students of the salai were to stay in the hostel compulsorily,\textsuperscript{106} the temple had undertaken to feed them. When many were to be fed, these arose the need for the services of cooks\textsuperscript{107} and the establishment of kitchen. Several inscriptions of this period attest to the arrangements made for feeding the people.

A record\textsuperscript{108} of Jatavarman Srivallabha of A.D 1132 registers a gift of money by a brahmana lady named Andamaichchani, the wife of one Sarangapani-Tirunilakanthan of Rajaraja Chaturvedimangalam, a brahmadeyam in Mullinadu; a sub-division of Pandi-nadu for feeding

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\textsuperscript{104} Balasubramanyam, Early Chola Art, part i, Bombay, 1966, p.29.
\textsuperscript{105} EI, Vol. XXIII, p.285.
\textsuperscript{107} ARE 1929-30, No.393.
\textsuperscript{108} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 230, p.133.
itinerant pilgrims who came to the village. An inscription\textsuperscript{109} of Manavarman Vikramachola Pandya of A.D 1022-23 records a gift of paddy by Manjan Sadaiyan of Karuppur in Marugul-nadu, a sub-division of Kshatriyasikhamani-Valanadu, a district of Chola Mandalam for feeding some Srimahesvaras in the temple. Tax-exemption\textsuperscript{110} was provided for the land given as bhiksha-bhojam and feeding the ascetics. From this it is learnt that free feeding houses were sustained by royal patronage and public benefactions. Inscriptions\textsuperscript{111} record the active interest evinced by the members of the royal family and others in this matter. For example, on the request of Ulagamulududaiyal, the queen of Jatavarman Sri Vallabha, land was given for feeding Sivabrahmins.

A record\textsuperscript{112} of Maravarman Vikramachola Pandya of A.D 1045 states that a gift of paddy for provision of Panchagavya (five products of the cow) are enumerated as milk, curd, ghee, gomutra and gomaya to the deity and the gift also provided for the feeding of 10 Brahmanas on the New-moon days of every month. According to another record\textsuperscript{113} of Jatavarman Srivallabha of A.D 1138 the gift of taxes (Kadamai, Urkalanju and antarayam inclusive of Kumaraka-chchanam) due from Tiruchchirambala-devanallur which separated from Korkai-nadu in Kudanadu for food offerings and other requirements to

\textsuperscript{109} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 186, pp.102-103.
\textsuperscript{110} ARE 1929-30, No. 422.
\textsuperscript{111} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 191, p.105.
\textsuperscript{112} ARE 1929-30, No. 402.
\textsuperscript{113} SII, Vol. XIV, No. 214, p.122.
the Someswara temple, Attur in kudanadu. It is learnt that Brahmins alone were employed to prepare food items. The feeding house was conducted by the bhattars, who were the priests of the temple. The temple authority attended to the feeding of ascetics and pilgrims besides looking after the day—-to—day affairs of the temple.\textsuperscript{114} Thus, the temple acted as one of the feeding centres in those days.

\textsuperscript{114} ARE 1929-30, No. 423.