CHAPTER III

SACRED GEOGRAPHY
This Chapter deals with the sacred Geography: The Dargah and its Centres, Clusters and Segments, in detail. It also focusses on the dargah administration and management in respect of Nagore and Nagapatnam sacred zones.
What is a dargāh? The answer lies in its local usage. Dargāh means a Sufī saint’s tomb place. The term is derived from two Persian words Dar (door) and Gah (Place) - door to a sacred place. Because of the myth associated with a saint, his tomb place gets venerated and becomes a pilgrimage centre. To these places pilgrims throng in large number, at the time of annual festival (Urs). In Persian this celebration is termed as Kanduri. In Nagore dargāh, too, the saint’s death anniversary is celebrated as an annual festival (Kanduri).

The term dargāh in Persian also means a royal court (Shariff, 1921). Because of its veneration dargāh becomes a place of religious activities such as prayers and rituals. But saint worship is not approved by Islām and so it falls under folk Islām, where non-Islamic religious activities such as worshipping, singing hymns, vow taking, offering of material goods, etc., go on. Mehadi Raja (1967:27) is of the opinion that the grave of a Sufī saint who had powers to perform miracles, to bring both material or spiritual benefits, is considered a Qabar or Mazar Parasti. So, it is considered holy and also used as a place for community level activities and by all sections of society.

In Arabic, the word wali means a saint i.e., the one who attained the stage of performing miracles (Karamat). Sufism suggests that to reach this stage, one has to follow the
path of Dareega or Tareeka. This kind of path is known as Dareegath or Tareeqah. Hameed (1986:43) opines that these two terms, in due course of time, got corrupted and began to be pronounced as Dargah. In North Indian context, a saint's tomb is called Ziyarat garh - a visiting place, (contrary to the term mosque, which is a place for praying) for people belonging to different sections of society flock together to pay a visit to the saint.

The aforesaid discussion shows that saints' tombs are called by different names in different regions. But all of them convey a single meaning i.e., visitation (Ziyarat). Like wise, saints' tombs have synonyms such as darga, dargah, dareega, durgah, durga, Ziyaratgarh, Qabar and Mazar parasti. They are named after a Sufi saint who lived there and from where he spread the message of Allah. The dargah under study houses the tomb of a saint who lived during 1532-1600 (Hussain, 1967:10). Locally the place is known as Nagore Dargah or Quadir Wali Dargah. The devotees while denoting the dargah, with great reverence, suffix the title Sharief- to the name of the saint and address it as Nagore-e-Sharief, meaning the king of Nagore. The saint is also known as Nagore Andavar in Tamil, meaning the god of Nagore.

As mentioned earlier, we have used a few known analytical concepts such as Sacred Geography, Sacred Performances and Sacred Specialists, which were formulated and used by Professor Vidyarthi (1961) in his study of Hindu
Gaya. We consider it here very essential to explain some of these terms since a sacred place of a Sufi saint is studied in the same parameters. According to Vidyarthi, (1961:131) "A sacred centre is a single spot where a single sacred performance takes place". Thus the smallest unit of worship of a sacred complex at micro level, is termed as a "sacred centre". He further defined those sacred centres which are situated in and around one dominant sacred centre as a "sacred cluster". Because, one can find a number of sacred centres surrounding a dominant centre in a particular area. Thus, he defined the sacred cluster as a place which is surrounded by more than one sacred centres, in one spot. Based on the functional and locational significance, he further used the word "sacred segment", which is the biggest unit of the sacred complex, which in turn comprises a continuous form of sacred centres in a particular locality.

Like this Vidyarthi (Ibid) explained the Sacred Geography of a sacred place in three parameters: Sacred Centre, Sacred Cluster and Sacred Segment, for the clear understanding and convenience of studying the Sacred Complex. According to Vidyarthi (Ibid) a few segments together comprise a Sacred Zone and two or more Sacred Zones together form into a Sacred Ground. Taking these ideas of Vidyarthi (1961:131) into consideration, Sacred Geography of a Sufi saint in South India, is studied. By this it is intended to understand the dimension of Islamic Civilization on one hand
and its role in bringing different faiths at one sacred centre on the other; which is an urgent need of social research in India.

The rituals and celebrations performed by the priests at a holy place are termed by Vidyarthi (1961:131) as "Sacred Performances". The regular prayers conducted by the priests Mutawalli and Peshmam, at any mosque (Masjid) are taken as Sacred Performances of Islamic Great Tradition, in our study. In the same way the daily ritual activities and celebrations performed by the Khalifah, Mujawars, Shahibmars and Faqirs of the dargah are taken as observations of the dargah and of the level of Little Tradition. The activities, viz., observance of audition (Moulud) and reciting the whole text (Quran Khawan) conducted by the dargah are also studied under Sacred Performances. The reciting the first page of the Qur'an (Fatihah), reciting the creed (Darud Padana), sandal anointment (Chandana Koodu) of the Kanduri, flag hoisting ritual (Kodiaticam), Fir installation (Fir Baitana), are also covered under the Sacred Performances of the dargah.

According to Vidyarthi (1961), those persons who conduct the sacred activities are called Sacred Specialists. Under this category we have included the priests, such as the Mutawalli and Peshmam of the mosque as well as the Khalifah, Mujawars, Adhinams and Faqirs of the dargah. Vidyarthi (Ibid) used the term "Sacred Complex", to refer to the three interrelated phenomenon such as Sacred Geography, Sacred
Performance, and Sacred Specialists, of a Sacred place. This interrelated phenomenon of a Sufi shrine is studied and for the first time, by applying these concepts given by Vidyarthi.

The sacred zone of Nagore-e-Sharief includes the residential areas of the sacred specialists who work at both the mosque and dargāh, of the functionaries of the spiritual exercises, of the shrines erected later at the places visited by the saint during his life time, the tombs of saint's son and daughter-in-law, the residence of the saint and his descendants and the residential areas of the Faqīr Jamas. The sacred places such as Vanjore Dargāh, Chilladi Dargāh and the places visited by the saint at Nagapatnam are also brought and studied under the sacred zone.

The secular part of the Nagore city includes the settlement localities of all the residents including the local Muslims and non-Muslims, in and around Nagore and Nagapatnam. The business establishments such as hotels, groceries, market centre, police station, hospital, railway station, sea-port, banks, government establishments, private organizations, stalls owned by cottage industries, beedi rolling centres, educational and transport agencies are included under the secular zone.

Towards the south of the dargāh, about 10 Kms away, at Velangani, there is the famous Christian pilgrimage centre by name Church of Lady of Virgin. During the month of
December every year, the dargāh along with the Church receives a large number of pilgrims. The Hindu devotees who go to Sabari Malai Ayyappa on pilgrimage, also visit the dargāh. Like this the dargāh receives visitors from different faiths and in this respect serves as a meeting place of several cultures and beliefs.

With this background information on the sacred and secular zones of Nagore city, we can now turn our attention to the study of sacred centres, clusters and segments of Nagore.

The dargāh premises for the convenience of our understanding, is divided into four clusters and studied accordingly (see sketch Map.No. 4). Each one has a name and its different institutions too have their name and ritual significance. On the basis of these the classification into four clusters is made (Chart No.3) and they are as follows:

1. Rowla Sharief Sacred Cluster
2. Alankarawasil Sacred Cluster
3. Muthubaq Sacred Cluster
4. Sacred Water Cluster

I ROWLA SHARIEF SACRED CLUSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Sacred Centre</th>
<th>Sacred Cluster</th>
<th>Sacred Segment</th>
<th>Sacred Zone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Dargah of the saint, Ashare Rowla Sharif Muğāwar Khana, Asha Sharif</td>
<td>Alankar-awasil</td>
<td>Dargāh</td>
<td>Nagore-e-Shahul Sharief</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sharif Muğāwar Khana, Upu Kinar Sacred</td>
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<td>Muğāwar Khana, Uyirku Uyir Cluster</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Peria Minaret, Talai Mattu Alankar-awasil</td>
<td>Sacred</td>
<td>Hameed</td>
<td>Kshetra</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Minaret, Sahib Minaret, Arcot Nawab Mosque, Shafi Mosque, Rafai Jama Takyah Khana, Thop Muğāwar Khana, Nadaswaram and Sahinai Nawabath Khana.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Muthubaq Minaret, Khadam Sharif, Malang, Mandal, Jalali, and Bangwa Takyah Khana Jama, Faqir Mazar, Pir Mandapam, Quawwali Wale Khana, Ottu Minarat.</td>
<td>Muthubaq</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Maraikkar Mosque, Madarasa Mosque, Safa Kunda, Hazam Khana.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Chilladi Dargāh, Pīr Gada.</td>
<td>Water</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Aulia Mosque, Kalvath Dargāh</td>
<td>Vanjore</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Meera Mosque, Flag Reception Khana, Kodiatam and Chariot khana, Chandana Koddu Chariot Khana</td>
<td>Kodiattam</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Nagapatnam Festiv</td>
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<td>Chandana</td>
<td>of the Kshetra</td>
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<td>Koodu</td>
<td>Saint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a. Dargāh of the saint

The saint’s body is buried here and so it is the centre of all religious activities at the dargāh. First the saint’s spiritual son constructed a small but temporary structure over the grave and started venerating it. Later, the followers of the saint erected a dome structure Rowla Sharief, over it. This place is treated like the sanctum sanctorum in a Hindu temple and only men are allowed inside this. The dargāh trust collects a fee to admit devotees into this place and those who can not afford this and the women devotees, perform the prayer from outside the entrance itself. The priest at the entrance blesses the devotees by way of whispering Quranic versions in their ears. The devotees who gain entry into the chamber are allowed to touch the wooden foot wear of the saint (Khadam Sharif) kept in a golden box, and to seek the blessings from the saint. They also read the Qurān, recite the creed, light the ghee lamp and also go round the tomb. They touch the sacred lamp (Mazare Dia) with reverence and say the short prayer (Fatihāḥ) and send their respect to the saint.

(b) Ashare Sharif Mujāwar Khana

There is a person in charge of the relics of the saint called Ashare Sharif Mujāwar. These relics are located in the Muthubaq area in the dargāh. (The details on Ashare Sharif Mujāwar are available in Chapter IV).
(c) Asha Mujāwar Khana

A person stands holding a stick (Asha) in front of the saint's tomb chamber and he is known as Asha Mujāwar. (The role of this Mujāwar and the significance of the sacred stick are explained under Asha Mujāwar in Chapter VI).

(d) Thop Mujāwar Khana

The cannons are known as Thop in Urdu and Persian. There are cannons placed near the Rafai Jama Takyah Khana in the dargāh. A person stands near them holding fire in hand and ignites the cannons by showing fire when the saint is honoured. Cannons are also fired when the saint's sacred flags, sandal paste and even the VIP devotees and disciples to the dargāh are ceremoniously received. They are also fired to indicate the opening and closing of the dargāh gates. (For more details about the degree of sounds performed and the significance of the firing, please see the Thop Mujāwar, sacred specialist detailed in Chapter IV).

(e) Uyir-Ku-Uyir Mujāwar Khana

He is incharge of the pigeon poultry, located in the western direction of the dargāh. It is a tradition for the devotees to release pigeons in honour of the saint after getting relief from their health problems. It is also an indication of the relief from the ailment, they had earlier. (The beliefs and practices related to the release of the pigeon are explained in the Chapter on Sacred Specialists).
(f) Uppu Kinar Mujawar Khana

Literally Uppu means salt and Kinar means a well., i.e., the salt well. A person, who is a lineal descendant of the saint, looks after this well. The tradition says that the saint had the miraculous powers to turn iron into gold, whenever there was a great need. The place where the saint sat and converted the metal has become known as Uppu Kinar. After the death of the saint the devotees found only salt and not gold under his bed. It is said that once the saint sent his son on a divine mission to a near by town. The son, while returning, brought only the valuable materials offered by the devotees and not the common salt. This act was not approved by the saint. (It symbolically means the path he took was not righteous). So, the saint while in his death bed did not give him the miraculous power to change the metal, but on the contrary he made him to sit at the place where the saint sat and collect the salt offered by the devotees.

(g) Mazar of Yusuf Sahib

Mazar literally means 'a tomb'. This is the tomb of Yusuf Sahib, the spiritual son of the saint. This is located beside the main gate which leads to the saint's tomb. The pilgrims perform a Fatihah with the help of the priest here and send the respect to the saint. The place gets venerated because there is an iron chain which is believed to have
miraculous power. It is believed that the saint gave an iron chain to his son, to indicate his binding to the divine path. After the death of Yusuf Sahib, the iron chain was attached to the ceiling of the dome of his tomb structure and made to drop down in front of his tomb, to symbolize his bondage to the service of the saint.

The chain is believed to have supernatural powers and touching of that brings a bondage with the saint and cures all ailments. So the pilgrims bring water in some container (now in small bottles) and symbolically touch it to the chain. It is believed that it will venerate the water and if this is administered to a patient he will be cured of his ailments. Ghee lamps are located towards the head side of the tomb and the devotees are allowed to light them as a mark of fulfilment of their vows.

(h) Mazar of Sultan Bibi Amman Sahiba

This is the tomb of the wife of Yusuf Sahib, the spiritual son of the saint. This tomb is located between the tomb of her husband and the main gate to the saint's tomb chamber. Mostly women devotees who come to the dargāh on pilgrimage visit the tomb. Traditionally betel leaves, nuts and flowers are offered to the tomb. The Mujāwar who stands beside the tomb, offers these to the lady and returns them to the devotees as venerated objects and blessings, from Sultan Bibi Amman Sahiba.
(i) Ud-dan Khana (Camphor Hall)

It is located on the opposite side of the main dargāh. Here the devotees who have taken a vow to offer camphor, stand near this camphor stand (Ud-dan) receive the camphor and offer it to the saint. It has been propagated that a person in difficulty if he inhales the fumes of this camphor, will be bailed out of his difficulties by the saint. This is best explained in the following case. A sailor by name Paliniandi Pillai, was caught in a storm in the deep sea and his boat engine also struck to work. He prayed to the saint for help. Immediately he started smelling the fumes of camphor. With this he got assurance of saint’s helping hand and so he reached shore safely. As a mark of respect he paid a visit to the saint and expressed his gratitude by offering camphor. Since then, his descendants have been regularly visiting the dargāh to offer camphor to the saint. During the annual festival of the dargāh they also come on a pilgrimage (For more details, see Appendix No.3). Like them other devotees who are in trouble, come on a pilgrimage and offer camphor before and after the fulfilment of their vows.

(j) Ghee dan Khana

This sacred centre is situated adjacent to the camphor hall. The tradition is that the devotees who come with vows offer ghee to the sacred lamps at this centre. The Mujáwar attached to this sacred centre helps the devotees in lighting
the ghee lamp. They believe that the light is an indication of the active state of the saint. So they want to keep it alive and offer ghee to it. Devotees coming on pilgrimage and lighting a lamp using rectified butter (ghee) is an indication of fulfilment of their vows i.e., over-coming of their difficulties in life.

All the above mentioned sacred centres are located in and around the main dargāh. Hence, these together are treated as one Sacred Cluster by name Rowla Sharief. This is a very important Cluster and so all important rituals and ceremonies are performed here.

II ALANKARAWASIL SACRED CLUSTER

Towards the Western direction of the saint's tomb there is one more cluster known as the Alankarawasil a beautified Sacred Cluster. It consists of eight sacred centres, viz. Arcot Nawab Mosque, Shafi Mosque, Waliullah Ka Phool Bagh, Peria Minara, Sahib Minara, Talai Mattu Minara and Rafai Jama Takya Khana. The Arcot Nawab Mosque is one of the important sacred centres situated in this cluster. Hence, this group of sacred centres are treated specially and referred to as the Alankarawasil of the dargāh.

a) Arcot Nawab Mosque

This mosque was built by Nawab of Arcot in 1801 A.D. (1207 Hijiri) and hence named after him. The mosque was
constructed to commemorate his visit to the dargāh. It is situated towards the western direction of the saint's tomb. Muslim devotees, local as well as visiting, assemble here for the five regular prayers in a day, which are conducted by the Mutawalli of the mosque (A detailed account of the five time prayers is given in chapter I). This mosque is also known as Hanafi mosque because Hanafi School of Islamic law (Shariat) is followed in all activities conducted here.

b) Shafi Mosque

It is believed to be the oldest mosque in the dargāh and also used by the saint to perform his daily prayers. The prayer and its call and timing are according to the Shafi Rahamatulla Islamic School, and so known as Shafi mosque. The daily prayers are conducted as per the Shariat of Islām by the Mutawalli.

c) Waliallah Ka Phool Bagh

This is a garden located besides the Arcot Nawab Mosque. It is considered sacred because the flowers blossomed in this garden alone are spread over the tomb of the saint. (The custom is that the flowers offered by the devotees are not used for this purpose). Hence, this garden is venerated as a sacred centre. Except the priests (Mujāwars) at the mosque and dargāh nobody is allowed into this garden and collect flowers.
d) Periya Minaret

In Tamil *Periya* means big. Since this minaret is bigger in size compared to other minarets in the dargāh, it is called so. This was constructed because of a vow taken by the Maharaja Pratap Simha of Tanjavur, in the year 1769 A.D. (1177 Hijiri) (See Appendix No. 4). This monumental structure depicts both the Hindu Maharastrian as well as Islamic style of architecture. Its height is 131 feet and is the tallest minaret in the dargāh area. It is used for the hoisting of flags vowed by the devotees, during the annual festival of the dargāh. (The sacred performances conducted here are explained in the next chapter).

e) Sahib Minaret (First Minaret)

This minaret is the first one to be constructed in the dargāh premises in the year 1647 A.D. (1055 Hijiri) and also according to the wishes of the saint. Hence, it is known as the saint’s (Sahib) minaret and first minaret. The height of the minaret is 77 feet. This too was constructed as a vow taken by one Ebrahim Khan Sahib, of Jingi. The flag hoisting ceremony of the annual festival is ceremoniously conducted over this minaret.

f) Talai Mattu Minaret

*Talai* in Tamil means head. Since this minaret is located towards the head position of the saint’s tomb, it is
named so. In the chronological order it was the second one to be constructed and nearly 45 years after the first minaret. So it is believed to be the second oldest minaret of the dargāh. Its height is about 93 feet and the construction was financed by Nalla Sayed Maraikkar of Nagapatnam, in the year 1692 A.D. (1100 Hijiri). This too is used for the ceremonial flag hoisting purpose during the annual festival of the dargāh.

g) Shahinai and Nadaswaram Nawabath Khana

These are Muslim pipesmen who play the pipe music at the shrine at the time of worship to the saint’s tomb. This is a Hindu temple custom where playing holy music by Hindu pipesmen is a part of daily ritual activity. Playing and listening to holy music is also a sign of auspiciousness. So, all sacred activities of the Hindus are accompanied by holy music.

There are two pipe musicians attached to the dargāh and they sit outside the dargāh premises and render their services. They claim that this is their hereditary right. Now they are employed by the dargāh management and paid according to the rules. Their services are utilised daily both in the morning and evening and also while receiving dignitaries at the dargāh. When the mendicant disciples of the saint arrive for the annual festival they too are received and brought to the dargāh, accompanied by pipe music.
During the annual festival of the dargāh in addition to these traditional musicians, a few Western Band music troupes are also engaged on contract basis by the dargāh management. But these untraditional groups serve no ritual purpose at the dargāh.

h) Rafai Jama Takyah Khana

This shrine belongs to one of the Faqîr groups known as Rafai. The job of this group of Faqîr is to spread the message of the saint in the country side through, singing devotional songs. The subject matter of their songs is the miracles performed by the saint and the message of Allâh. They play on a drum (Diara) when they come for collecting alms. They also perform a few magical acts to attract masses and later collect alms from them for their livelihood. As the devotees visit the shrine to get the blessing and to perform Fatihâh to the saint during the annual festival and stay in the dargāh for forty days. (Their organisation and performances are detailed in the forth coming chapter on sacred performances).

III MUTHUABAQ SACRED CLUSTER

The third sacred cluster of the dargāh is Muthubaq and it consists of Nine sacred centres. The open place which is unoccupied throughout the year will be mainly occupied by the
Faqīr groups (Takyah Khanas) during the annual festival time. This is considered sacred since the saint lived here during his stay at Nagore. It comprises of a dug well which is considered to be the Zamzam well of Makkah. Devotees believe that its water has power to cure all types of ailments. So they come here to have a holy bath from the water of the well. This sacred cluster consists of centres such as Khadam Sharif, Banawa Jama Takyah Khana, Jalali Jama Takyah Khana, Malang Jama Takyah Khana, Mandal Jama Takyah Khana, Pīr Mandapam, Qwaliwali wale Khana, Muthubaq Minaret, Ottu minaret, and the Faqīr saint Mazars.

a) Khadam Sharif

These are believed to be the foot-prints of the saint and engraved on a silver plate. They are located in the place where the saint lived during his stay. Devotees visit the place and perform the Fatihāh ritual, with the help of a Mujāwar there. As the blessings of the saint, the foot impressions are placed on the head of the devotees during their visit to this place.

b) Banawa, Jalali, Malang and Mandal Jama Takyah Khana

These are Faqīr groups and are the descendants of the saint's disciples. They are four in number and have a customary membership of 404 followers. Number four symbolically represents the numbers of disciple groups who
were with the saint during his journey to spread the message of Allāh. They as a must, flock to the shrine every year during the annual festival. On their arrival they stay at the dargāh for 40 days and after that they go on their mission, for the rest of the year. They are provided with free lodging and board and other facilities by the dargāh. (The organization and roles of the Jama are discussed in the next chapter).

c) Faqīr Saint Mazars

These are the tombs of Faqīr who served the saint as his assistants (Bhandari) and died here, at the dargāh. There are two such Faqīr Mazars viz., Banawa and Malang. (Their role in the life of the mendicants is discussed in the next chapter).

d) Muthubaq Minaret

This was built by Peer Nainar of Malaysia, in the year 1702 A.D. (1110 Hijiri). That is 55 years after the construction of the first minaret. It is the third of its kind among the minarets. As it is located in the Muthubaq area it is known as Muthubaq Minaret. It measures 93 feet in height and used for the ceremonial flag hoisting ritual conducted during the annual festival of the saint.

e) Qwaliwali Wale (singers of devotional songs) Khana

The singers who sing devotional songs in honour of the saint at the dargāh are known as Qwawali wale. They are also
known as Sufi singers. During the celebration of the annual festival, arrangements are made for the singing of these devotional songs, usually at night, after the gates of the tomb chamber are closed. Every year as a custom all the five mendicant groups come with a troupe of singers and perform their services at the shrine. They sit in their respective camping place and sing continuously, and throughout the night, for the benefit of the devotees. They go on singing like this till the call for the early morning prayer is given, the next day. They sing like this daily till the last day of the annual festival. Their songs mainly highlight the life of the saint and the miracles performed by him. Since singing is a form of their service towards the saint they do not expect any remuneration for this either from the shrine or from the devotees. However, they accept alms, both in cash and kind.

f) Ottu Minaret (Brick Minaret)

This minaret is built using bricks, which in Tamil means Ottu; unlike other minarets which are constructed using stone, as building material. So it is called Ottu minaret. It was built by Justice Dawood of Parangi Pettai, in the year 1720 A.D. (1128 Hijiri). It is the fourth of its kind among the minarets in the dargah. Since it is located in the Muthubaq area it is referred to as Muthubaq Minaret. Its height is 93 feet and used also for hoisting sacred flags, during the annual festival of the dargah.
g) Pir Mandapam

This is the structure in which the Pir the spiritual saint for the year, is installed in a ceremony. (Installation ritual of the saint is discussed in Chapter No. IV).

IV SACRED WATER CLUSTER

It consists of four sacred centres such as Safa Kunda, Hazām Khana, Maraikkar mosque and Madarasa mosque.

a. Safa Kunda (Sacred water tank)

The fourth sacred cluster of the dargāh is the sacred water tank. Tradition says that after the funeral bath to the saint’s body, the water which accumulated in this particular place became sacred. The pit where it collected later became a tank. It is surrounded by a few important sacred centres including a mosque. As explained earlier, the five times a day prayers are conducted in this mosques. It is believed that the tank water has miraculous powers and can cure ailments of men. So, devotees who come on pilgrimage take a holy dip in the tank and get cure from skin diseases, hunch back, leucoderma, and the like.

b. Hazām Khana

There is a custom in the saint tradition to offer one's hair tonsure by shaving off the head, as a vow. This is a custom observed to indicate the total surrendering of the
devotees to his mentor. There are barbers who have a hereditary right to give a shave to the devotees who came with vows. They claim their descendance to the barber who served the saint, during his life time and so got this duty by heredity. Now though they are the employees of the dargah management, they collect Rs. 3/- per person from the devotees. Further depending upon their economic conditions the devotees also give them gifts such as new clothes, sweets, and the like, to the barber, for his service. Since offering hair from one's head is a sign of total surrender to the god, it is believed that the saint will accept the offer and bless the devotees of his vowed objects. The devotees mostly belong to the local tradition, take such vows for property and well-being. This brings lot of income to the priest and also the barber.

c. Maraikkar Mosque

It is situated towards the eastern side of the saint's tomb. This mosque is not used by the Muslim devotees because the structure of the mosque is in a bad shape and, hence, daily prayers here are not conducted.

d. Madarasa Mosque

This Mosque is also situated towards the eastern side of the saint's tomb. Here the Arabic classes for children are conducted daily. Hence, it is known as Madarasa (Arabic
School) mosque. Muslim devotees, local as well as visiting, assemble here for the five regular prayers in a day, which are performed by the Mutawalli of the mosque.

The other two sacred centres found here are the Chilladi dargāh and Vanjore dargāh. They are located outside the dargāh area. But they are included in this since they fall under the Nagore sacred zone.

**Chilladi Dargāh**

Chilla in Persian means Forty days. A person who performs meditation in a shrine for forty days will be known as Chilladi. It is believed that the saint performed spiritual exercises on this spot; for forty days. So, a sacred centre was constructed here, and it became known as Chilladi dargāh.

Devotees who come on pilgrimage to the Nagore dargāh also visit the Chilladi dargāh and perform the Fatihāh, with the help of the priest there. The dargāh is known for its rituals connected with the visit of saint’s disciple during the annual festival. The disciple breaks his fast (Rozah) here by symbolically taking little food and drinking water from a well located here. Later on the disciple pays his respects to the Allāh's sea messenger (Khilr) at the shore and finally returns to the dargāh, because this messenger is considered the head of all the water resources in the world. (The role of the Pir and the significance of the Pir Gada are explained in Chapter IV).
Vanjore dargah

It is believed that the saint performed meditation here, sitting in a pit dug in the earth, for forty days. A person who performs such meditation sitting below the surface of earth is known as Kalvath and the saint attained this status on this place and so the place has become sacred. This dargāh is situated in the Vanjore town and, hence, became known as Vanjore dargāh. It is believed that spiritual benefits can be achieved if meditated here for Forty days. (The details on Aulia mosque are available in Chapter IV).

Kodi and chandaha koodu khana

This is the place where the sandal paste needed to anoint the tomb of the saint is ground. This sacred centre is located outside Nagore holy city but falls under the sacred zone of the Nagapatnam town. In Tamil Kodi means flags and Chandana Koodu means sandal paste. Flag hoisting on this minarets is the indication of the ceremonial beginning of the annual festival. These flags are presented by the devotees to indicate the fulfilment of their vows. The flags so collected at the Nagapatnam sacred centre are received by the mosque headman (Khazi) of the Nagapatnam town. Likewise the sandal ointment is prepared and ceremonially brought from Nagapatnam on a chariot (Ratham) in a procession and accompanied by pipe music. The cart which carries the camphor (Ud-dan) also joins them in the procession. Later all these holy carts continue their journey in a procession, to the dargāh.
Like this, the sacred centre and its background are given here in relation to the cultural and traditional importance. All the four sacred clusters mentioned above viz., Rowla Sharief, Alankarawasil, Muthubaq Sacred Cluster and Waliullah's Water Tank form into one Sacred Segment (cf. Vidyarthi, 1961) of Nagore-e-Sharief Dargāh; which is the main destination and attraction of the pilgrims. This segment is ritually very important in the study of the shrine.

**DARGĀH MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Tanjore region is unique, because nowhere do we find such a region where the Hinduism flourished with all its variety and Buddhism and Jainism thrived with all their austerity till very recent times and the foreign religions such as Christianity and Islām got foot holds (Rahim, 1971). This region formed a common meeting place where all these religions acted and interacted and their mutual influences naturally affected the history and culture of the region.

In the past, this region had come under the political influence of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English. In the sixteenth century, Nagapatnam was such a flourishing port that travellers identified it with the Coromandal coast itself. Lodo-vio-de-varthema (1505) an Italian traveller speaks about Nagapatnam and the presence of
Christians there in 1505. Barbosa (1505-1517) speaks about the export and import of goods from Nagapatnam.

Accounts by travellers such as Abul Latif (1303-1304), Abdul Feda (1273-1331), Marcopolo (1292), Friar Jordanus (1328), Vasco-da-gama (1500), Ibn Batuta (1325-1354) Barbosa (1505-1517) suggest about the life of the people and their commerce. They also referred to the Nagapatnam port with different names such as Patan, Manifatan, Malifathan and Fattan (Rahim, 1971:30).

Ghanja-e-Khudrat, a poem composed in Hindustani in 1811 A.D. (1232 Hijiri) by Mohammad Azuddhin Khan Bahadur Musthakhim Jung Nami of the Carnatic family and published by Firdousi Sahib, Madras, speaks about the trade relations of the Arabs with the Coromandel coast.

Coramandel coast was known to the Arabs as Mabar, the key of India. The word Mabar was used for the first time by Yaqut (1179-1229) (Var-water, Ocean. See Apte., Sanskrit English Dictionary, P. 844) in his Geographical Dictionary to denote the east coast of the Indian Peninsula. In Arabic Mabar means the ferry or crossing place.

The Public Consultations (Madras Archives Records, 1606) give about earliest information of Nagapatnam. In 1681 it states a great deal about the condition in the town and also how the China (Jaina) tower was affected by a storm. The ecclesiastical consultation tell about the conflicts of Roman and Catholic priests of early 19th century.
The Batavian grants of Vijaya Raghava Nayak and Ekoji (see plate No. III Quoted in Hemingway, 1906) to the Dutch are informative. For example we come to know about the mint used in Nagapatnam during the Maratha period. An inscription on the wall of Malleswaram Temple at Nagapatnam engraved by the Dutch Governor Van Vlessigen in 1777, proclaims that the temple was renovated by him. It shows the tolerance of the Dutch towards the Hindus and the Hindu religion.

It is an established fact that long before the Muslims settled down in Northern India there were Arabian colonies in Southern India and the history of these colonies goes back to the era of commercial relations (Islamic Culture, 1934:476 Quoted in Rahim, 1971). The Muslims in Tamil region are called by several names such as Sonagas, Rowthers, Choliyas, Maraikkars and Labbaïs and they have their traditional occupations like their Hindu neighbours.

The Tanjore District Records show the revenue records of 1781, the improvement of the port, the disputes between the dargāh trustees and government officials. One can also get data from the tradition and folklore on the origin of the dargāh. The Saraswathi Mahal Library (Tanjore manuscripts) is useful in knowing about the relationship of the Maratha Kings with the dargāh.

The Maratha kings of Tanjore, under whose territory the dargāh came, had great respect for the saint. The king Pratap
Simha (1739-1763) not only endowed the dargah with fifteen villages which belong to an ancient temple on its ground the dargah stands today (Appendix No.5), but also built a big minaret there. It is learnt from the records that as the ruler of the land the king was also considered the chief patron of the dargah (Tanjore District Records, 1785). Earlier to this royal patronage, the dargah was a small structure (No. 6, 293, Annual Reports on Epigraphy, 1963-1964: 124). So the records call the Maratha King the founder of the dargah at Nagore (Tanjore District Records, 11.9.1783). Though Nagore was annexed by the British, the Maratha King had such control over the dargah and its possession, he patronized it as if "The Tanjore flag was still flying at Nagore" (Tanjore District Records 11.9.1783). He continued to appoint the superintendent of the dargah and showed much concern to its welfare.

The records at the Saraswathi Mahal Library too suggest that the Maratha royal family had a devotional attitude towards the dargah. When the British took over the area on mistaken notion and used the minaret as a flag staff (TDR, 7.9.1785), the Maratha ruler condemned this and wished the minaret be used only for the veneration purpose of the Saint. The records also show that the Maratha rulers had a harmonious relation with the Muslims and their religious institutions in Tanjore region (Tanjore District Records, 1785) and also donated gold and silver ornaments to the
The presence of the dargāh was an important factor in the communal amity at the time of the Maratha kings (The Journal of Tanjore Maratha Serfojee, Saraswathy Mahal Library, Vol. XXI, No. 1, P:28). The Muslims and the non-Muslims lived with one another as they do now in their devotion to the saint. The comparative absence of communal trouble in the region might be attributed to the presence of the shrine. It was noted by a British Governor at Madras that the dargāh is one of its kind in this country where people of all classes, castes and races worship as brethren of the same faith. It is remarkable that there have been few misunderstandings of any sort between worshippers at the dargāh (The third tour of Lord Ampthill, 1901:339, Extracts from the Mail). It is no wonder that a Hindu by name Muthuswamy Pillai, was the headman, or overseer of the dargāh, for some time (Tanjore District Records, 1785. Vol-333 1:63). Even now the descendants of Maratha kings play an important role in the annual festival of the dargāh.

Bahar-I-Azam-Jahi (Nainar, 1950) a travelogue tells about the topography and the conditions prevailed of the people of Tamil region, in 1823, was an account of a pilgrimage undertaken by the Nawab of Arcot which took a period of four months from 3rd February to June 1823 to cover from Madras to Nagore (For more details see, Chapter No. 7).
It was recorded that with the growing popularity of the dargāh its income also increased. As a consequence, many persons started claiming their descent to the saint. This caused disturbance in the administration of the dargāh (TDR, 7.7.1798). Of course, the disputes between the saint worshippers and the followers of classical Islam were there. So, in 1802 the British Colonial Government thought it proper to intervene and determine the validity of these claimants and help in the administration of the dargāh (TDR, 23.12.1802).

The TDR Records however show that the later Maratha kings were not well disposed towards the Muslims (TDR, 20.2.1809). Taking advantage of this situation a few servants of the kings who were jealous of the increased income of the dargāh, interfered perhaps without the knowledge of the king, in the administration of the dargāh (TDR, 31.3.1810). But on the receipt of a complaint the abuse was rectified by the Colonial Government. They also appointed committees to look after the dargāh administration (TDR, 15.2.1814).

We have already mentioned that during 1789-1817 the British Colonial Government in Indian Subcontinent, gradually started taking control over the religious institutions in the Tamil area (Board of Revenue Consultations, 12.2.1789, 7.3.1808, 12.1.1815). Its result was the passing of the Regulation VII of 1817, which for the first time gave the
Colonial Government, the powers of superintendence over the religious institutions (Chandra Mudaliar, 1969:27). The collectors were authorized to collect information on endowments (Tajore District Records, 24.10.1833). Between 1934 and 1938 endeavours were made to constitute a separate Board for the Islamic endowment (Government Order, 8-82, Law (Legislature), 17.2.1934, G.O. 30-25 Education and Public Health, 10.11.1938 Quoted by Rahim, 1971:157). The fruits of this attempt were the creation of the Wakf Act in 1954 for the Islamic Religious Endowments (Parliamentary Debates - The House of the people, 12.3.1954, Quoted by Rahim, 1971:159).

The Wakf Act enabled the Government to create a separate Wakf Board for the welfare of the Muslims and the development of Islamic religious institutions like mosques, educational institutions (Madarasa), and dargāhs. As a result, the Nagore dargāh also came under the control of the Wakf Board. The Wakf Board is autonomous and has powers to supervise and collect revenue from the Islamic religious institutions. Accordingly, at the state level the secretary of Wakf is the head of all the organizations under it. At district level, it appoints Deputy Commissioner as the incharge of the law and order and superintendent to collect revenue and to administer the religious institutions. The Wakf Inspector is the last official appointed by the Government to look into the day to-day administration of the religious institutions. In structure the Wakf Board looks like this:
'Wakf' an Arabic term, literally means detention, to prevent and restrain. In the norms of Islām (Shariāt), the Wakf connotes the tying up of community property in perpetuity to prevent it from becoming a private property. It is stated that if a member of the Wakf Board violates the regulations he will be liable for legal action. The State Government is only responsible for supervising the Muslim religious institutions, and that it is the Central Government which is empowered to lay down policies to be adapted by the Wakf Board (Hameed, 1986:33). Further, according to Wakf Act XXIX of 1954, the Wakf Board is empowered to get Six Per cent of the annual net income of the dargāh.

The dargāh under study naturally is administered by the Tamil Nadu State Wakf Board. As of now, the dargāh is very popular and its popularity has spread far and wide, including in a few foreign countries in the region. Of late, devotees from all these countries have started visiting the dargāh on pilgrimage. As a result, its income increased to an enormous size. The accumulation of wealth at the dargāh was described by the French general Lyally as fabulous.
The spiritual descendants of the saint were the hereditary custodians of the dargāh and the income from it were their source of livelihood. With regards to the administration of the dargāh, the Wakf Board had no powers to interfere in its affairs. The dargāh was privately managed by the descendants of the saint for a long time, as a hereditary right. Over the years, its income from public rose to an astronomical level and the traffic also became unmanageable. So, the Indian Judiciary, as a special case, made a special arrangement to administer the dargāh by them.

The tradition says that the first annual festival in 1504 A.D. was conducted by Yusuf Sahib, the spiritual son of the saint of Nagore. In the year 1505 A.D., the Nagapatnam Muslims requested Yusuf Sahib to allow them to join him in the arrangement of the annual festival. Since then the Nagapatnam Muslims have been continuing the tradition of arranging the annual festival of the saint. The expenses for the celebration of the annual festival is collected from devotees as donations (Appendix No.12). The Muslim Jamath of Nagapatnam takes care of the procession of the sacred flags and Sandal Paste. The Muslims of Nagapatnam also arrange for the annual festival of the saint every year. The dargāh trustees and Advisory Committee have nothing to do with these activities at Nagapatnam.

Except, in the celebration of the annual festival, the Nagapatnam Jamath has no role to play in the Nagore dargāh
administration there. As a tradition the Nagapatnam Jamath brings the flags and the Sandal Paste in a procession, placing them in a holy car to the dargāh and hands them over to the lineal descendants. Dargāh premises and the rituals conducted there are their private affairs since the saint is their originator. So, the participation of the Nagapatnam Jamath is of community level, more to honour the saint who is a religious person of the region. Like this we can see two levels of administration of Nagore dargāh at the time of celebration of the annual festival of the dargāh as follows:

1. First, the Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath, assembles, receives the flags and sandal paste at Nagapatnam and brings them in a procession to the dargāh.

2. On receipt of the sacred flags, the same will be hoisted on the dargāh minarets. After the festival they are kept at the dargāh. The second symbolic activity of the Nagapatnam Muslim Jamath is presenting the sandal paste to the dargāh and in turn the same is anointed to the tomb of the saint by the lineal descendants of the saint.

These are symbolic acts more akin to Hindu ritual tradition. So they need to be understood in the context of an annual festival of a Hindu temple in the area.

At present the dargāh administration is conducted as per the scheme framed by the Court of Judicature, at Madras (Appendix No.6). In accordance with the scheme all the
daily routine affairs and properties of the dargah are managed by a Board of Trustees. The Board consists of Eleven members. Out of them, Eight are from among the lineal descendants of the saint. They are represented by only the eldest male lineal descendants of the Six sons and Two daughters of Syed Yusuf Sahib, the spiritual son of the saint. They are selected by the rule of primogeniture. The Eight trustees amongst themselves, elect one person the Managing Trustee. The tenure of the each Board of Trustees and office of the Managing Trustee, is for three years and; they can be re-elected to the post.

The Board of Trustees and the Managing Trustee have full powers to administer the dargah and to arrange for all the ritual activities and festivals of the dargah. The Trustees are also known as Nattmaigars in local paralence. As per the scheme framed by the Madras High Court, the Board of Trustees shall meet once in a month. In special cases, they can meet early. The nature of duties include the passing of the accounts of the previous month, approval of lease conditions on the dargah properties (Hundials), the budget of each year, consideration of audited accounts and reports, repair of dargah buildings and maintenance of other shrines related to the dargah and the like. The Trustees prepare a budget estimate for the year with estimated receipts and expenditure of the dargah. The quorum for the meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be Five.
The Scheme has suggested an Advisory Committee of Eleven members to look into the welfare and development of the dargāh (Appendix No. 8). Of them, three are nominated from the Board of Trustees and another Three are elected from amongst the hereditary descendants of the saint who are also known as the share holders to the income from the dargāh. The remaining Five are nominated by the High Court of Madras, from among the prominent Muslim residents from within the Nagapatnam Municipal area. Their tenure of office is for Three years. They are eligible for re-election or re-nomination as the case may be. One of the members, other than the Managing Trustee, is elected the president of the Advisory Committee.

The meetings of both the Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees are chaired by the Managing Trustee and the minutes are also maintained by him. The decision is taken by a vote by simple majority. The Board of Trustees, prepare the annual budget. The same is verified and revised by the Advisory Committee. If the former fails to present the budget earlier by 30th June of the Year, the budget for the previous year is taken as the current budget. The quorum is as per the bye-laws issued by the court. Three members from the Trustees or Five members from the share holders should vote for it. If they fail to ratify, then the matter will be referred to the High Court of Madras for verification and the court verdict is accepted as final.
Manager of the dargāh

The dargāh office is maintained by an officer known as Manager. He will be appointed by the High Court of Madras and will preside over all the meetings held in connection with the dargāh administration. He collects money offered by the devotees from all the gift boxes (Hundials), daily. He also collects rents for the guest rooms. His another duty is to work out and disburse their share of money to all the share holders of the dargāh. He also works out the percentage of money going to the Wakf Board and remit it.

When the post of Manager falls vacant the Managing Trustee of the dargāh calls for applications from the eligible candidates and also conducts the interview. The name of the selected applicant is forwarded to the High Court for verification and appointment. Like this in the appointment of Manager the final decision lies with the High Court of Madras. The person so appointed has to deposit an amount of Rs.5000/- as security, with the dargāh. The Manager is appointed for a period of Five years. Before the conclusion of his appointment period once again the appointment procedure starts.

The Manager can keep an amount of Rs.5000/- in cash with him to meet day to day needs. Any excess amount should be deposited in the Bank in the dargāh account. He should file all the vouchers and receipts related to the transactions.
made by him. During the annual festival of the dargāh, due to heavy attendance of pilgrims, the dargāh surroundings get dirty and they need to be cleaned. So sanitation facilities are also to be provided. Safety to pilgrims also needs to be provided by appointing additional security personnel. Whenever some purchase is to be made for dargāh, the Manager takes the approval for this from the Board of Trustees and makes the purchase. Here also the lowest rates quoted are taken into consideration for the purchase. Besides the above said expenditure, expenditure on the salaries of the office staff is included to it and this amount too is met out of the income from the dargāh. These bills are verified and approved by the Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee of the dargāh, during the monthly meetings. The Manager shall supervise and control the office staff of the dargāh though they are appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Trustees have full powers to hire and fire or suspend any employee of the dargāh, if they are found not efficient or trustworthy.

The following minor shrines are maintained by the dargāh and come under the control of dargāh administration:

1. Killa Vanjore dargāh at Kila Vanjore where the saint is believed to have sat for forty days for meditation.
2. Ya Hussain Palli (with in the dargāh premises).
3. Sillai (Chilladi) dargāh near the shore where the saint used to take his shave and also meditate.
4. Madar Maraikkar Palli (with in the dargāh premises).
5. Diwan Sahib Palli (with in the dargāh premises).
6. Dargāh Madarasa Mosque.

The maintenance of all these institutions comes under the administrative jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees and in turn to the Manager.

Sources of Income to the Dargāh

The items such as lease of dargāh lands, collection of rent from the stalls located in the dargāh premises and the income from the minor shrines under the dargāh of Nagore, are auctioned annually by the dargāh management. The gifts of cash or material goods given by the pilgrims are recorded in the stock books maintained by the dargāh and later these gift objects are also auctioned in public and converted into cash. The auctions are conducted in the dargāh and earlier to that a wide publicity is given in the local news papers. The Manager conducts the auction in the presence of Board of Trustees. Generally, auction of right for the hundi (gift) collections is conducted once in two months. Other items of the dargāh like business stalls, lands, guest rooms, hotels, toilets, are auctioned once in a year. The Manager is empowered to issue receipts to the auctioned items. Like this the dargāh gets its income from several sources.

The income of the dargāh is used for its administration, and development activities such as salaries, maintenance,
white washing, illumination, repairs, sanitation and security purposes. These activities are undertaken by calling for tenders. The dargāh income is promptly audited every year by the auditors and then a balance sheet is prepared by the dargāh management every year, by the 1st week of July. Earlier to the preparing of the audit report, the portion of the Income due to the share of the dargāh, is separated and paid to them.

Since the women share holders, like any other Muslim women observe seclusion (Purdha), their share of income is paid through a bank cheque and sent by post, to their residence. Because of this custom they also do not attend the meetings of the dargāh committee. If there are any disputes or doubts regarding their income, the same will be brought to the notice of the court and the court in turn will enquire into it.

Foot Notes:

1 Since the Holy city of Nagore is on the way to this Christian pilgrimage centre the devotees belong to the local level Christian tradition, visit the dargāh.

2 Folk Tradition and the Sūfīs view this procession a marriage procession. Those who arrive in the procession are viewed as bridegroom party. The Kanduri is treated as the marriage ceremony. Symbolically it is believed that the saint’s soul is finally merged with God and every year this act is repeated by the devotees and the followers of the saint.
In India whatever be the original reason for venerating a deceased person, his upward move towards deviniition is the same. We have the graves of those who had a name, birth place, and parentage well known in the district. If he died at home, his family often puts up a shrine, install themselves in possession and realise a handsome income at the place as offerings. They become the hereditary keepers of the sanctuary. In the course of very few years as the recollection of the man's personality becomes mistry, his origin glows mysterious, his carrier takes a legendary line, his birth, death both became supernatural (Rahim, 1971:155 - 156).

The chapter on the administration of dargāh is written after consulting with primary source of the scheme framed by the High Court, Madras, besides the empirical data collected from the field.
Devotees at work to install the flag posts on the minarets to celebrate the annual festival of the saint.

Chariot used to carry the sacred flags to the dargah of Nagore Andawar.
The spiritual saint (Pir) during his meditation blessing offerings of the devotees.

Display of fireworks during the annual festival.

The spiritual saint (Pir) during his meditation blessing the offerings of the devotees.
The lineal descendants performing the Fatihah to the holy shawl, before offering it to the saint’s tomb at Palaniandi Pillai’s residence, at Nagore.

Display of sacred sandal paste Chandana Koodu to offer to the saint’s tomb before taking in procession in.
One of the lineal descendants of the saint carrying the holy sandal paste on his way to anoint on the saint's tomb.

The Fatihah ritual marks the completion of the annual festival of the saint.