CHAPTER - IV

PILGRIM CENTRES OF KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Religion has been major force motivating tourism from ancient times to
till date. Every religion has cast upon its followers, some duties that involve
travel. The people wanted to visit religious places that are considered as holy.
In India, the domestic tourism is almost related to a religious tourism.
Likewise, Kanyakumari District also attracts more religious tourists towards it.
Here, again it can be divided into pilgrimages to Hindu temples, Jain temples,
Christian churches and Muslim mosques. Kanyakumari District is an
embodiment of major pilgrim centers in the form of Hinduism, Christianity and
Islam. Almost all the deities included in the Hindu pantheon are worshipped in
the District. The prominent Hindu ‘Gods’ worshipped are Vishnu, Siva, Sakti
or Bhagavati, Subramoniya and Sastha.¹ Hence, they are the most important
deities or the presiding deities in the temples of Kanyakumari District. There
are a few Jain temples also in the District. Temples are the foremost centers of
religious activities.²

The Vishnu temple of Thiruvattar is popularly known as
Adikesavaperumal temple.³ The deity Adikesavaperumal is in a sleeping
posture and facing westwards. The Sreekoil consist of a Garbhagraham, having

² Ibid., p. 156.
three door-ways and a *maliga* and of an *ottakal mandapam* in front, and is built in granite and provided with a copper-sheeted roof.\(^4\) This temple is one of 108 shrines sacred to the Vaishnavites in India.\(^5\) The great antiquity of this place has been described by the Tamil poet Mankudikil in a verse of Purananuru.\(^6\) It is believed that this temple was worshipped by Chandra and Parasurama.\(^7\) Nammalvar has sung a few poems in praise of Adikesava.\(^8\) One Pillai Perumal has also sung many songs in praise of Adikesavaperumal. In the 16th century, Sri Krishna Chithanya of Bengal visited Thiruvatar. The surroundings of the temple attracted him so much that he was inspired to write ‘Sri Brahma Sambita’ an outstanding contribution to Hindu Philosophy.

Like Thiruvattar, Parthivakesavapuram is another Vaishnava centre. The deity Vishnu of the Parthivakesavapuram temple is facing westward. The Sreekoil is composed of a Garbhagraham, a front room and *mukappu*, all of which are built in granite.\(^9\) The Garbhagraham is roofed with a *sikharam*, and the other two structures also terraced. The *Mukamandapam* consists of a granite basement and a Dutch-tiled roof with wooden scantlings. It is seen from inscriptions that this temple was very famous even during the later period of the Ays. The Ay King Ko – Karunanthadakkan donated lands to this temple

---

\(^4\) File No.316, P.W.D, the condition of the Major Devaswom Buildings in the Kalkulam Taluk, Devaswom Board, Trivandrum, 1914


\(^7\) Padmanabhan, S., *op.cit.*, p. 106.


and a university like Nalanda was attached to this temple namely Sanskrit University.\textsuperscript{10} Inscriptions reveal that students from different parts of India came to this university to receive higher education.

Another famous centre of Vaishnavism is Suchindrum. The deity of the Vishnu temple of Suchindrum is called Perumal. Perumal represents Vishnu. The Perumal Sreekoil is a granite structure with a \textit{Sikharam} on the Garbhagraham and terrace on the front mantapam.\textsuperscript{11} In front of the Perumal coil there are two \textit{mukhamandapams} which are built in granite. On the south eastern side of the Perumal Mukhamandapam is the Garudhancoil.\textsuperscript{12}

Kariyamanickapuram is another centre for Vishnu worship. The Vishnu temple here is called ‘Kariyamanickapuram Alwar temple.’\textsuperscript{13} The Sreekoil consists of a Garbhagraham with two front rooms one after the other, and an open Mukhappu. The whole structure is built in granite. The Garbhagraham has a wooden ceiling with a Sikharam over it.\textsuperscript{14} The other rooms and the \textit{mukhappu} (portico) are terraced.\textsuperscript{15} The Pilgrims who go to Suchindrum temple usually, visit this temple as they consider that the deity is more powerful.

Puravaseri, a village situated at a distance of a kilometer from Nagercoil, is a reputed Vaishnava centre. The Puravaseri Vishnu temple

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{10} T.A.S. Vol.VI, Part, p.100.
\item \textsuperscript{11} File No. 16, P.W.D. Devaswom, Trivandrum, 1914.
\item \textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Pillai, K.K., \textit{op.cit.}, Nagercoil, p.27.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Immanuel, M., \textit{op.cit.}, Nagercoil, p.33.
\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p.37.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
consists of Garbhagraham. Ardhamandapam and Garudhamandapam, all built in granite.\textsuperscript{16} The garbhagraham has a sikharam, and the other mandapams are terraced. On the three sides of the sreekoil, there is an ambalam. The garudhamandapam serves as the mukhamandapam attached to the garudhamandapam is another mandapam, which is a terraced granite structure serving as the eastern ambalam.

In front of this mandapam is a mukhappu, built in granite and terraced. Several inscriptions reveal that this temple was very famous even during the time of the Cholas. Four miles to the south – west of Nagercoil there is a village called Parakkai. This is famous for its temple to Lord Vishnu, called Madusudhana. A Vatteluthu inscription of the 10\textsuperscript{th} century AD is the earliest record in the temple.\textsuperscript{17}

Therefore the temple of Madhusudhana may be assigned to a period of 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Lord Madhusudhana, the presiding deity and exhibits marvelous skill of workmanship. It is made up of black stone with 4 1/2 feet in height.\textsuperscript{18} In his right hand the Lord holds the chakram and the conch in his left hand. His lower right hand is in the pose of abaya hastha. The shrine of Garudha is facing west on the right side of the main deity. Pilgrims from different parts of the District often visit the temple for worshipping Lord Madusudhana.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., Vol. VI, p.108
\textsuperscript{18} Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.27.
The role of the Thiruvathankodu temple as a centre of Vishnu worship, through the ages is remarkable. The Sreekoil of this temple consists of a Garbhagraharam and a room in front built in granite.\textsuperscript{19} The former has a \textit{sikharam} and the latter is terraced. The \textit{garudhamandapam} is also a terraced granite structure. There is a \textit{pradakshina vazhi} round the Sreekoil and the \textit{garudhamandapam} have a terraced roof.\textsuperscript{20} The floor is paved with granite. This temple is considered as one of the most sacred Vaishnava centers of pilgrimage.

Krishnanacoil, a superb of Nagercoil, is famous for the temple of Balakrishna. Lord Balakrishna holds balls of butter on both his hands. He is daily smeared with sandal paste or butter. In the night he is placed in a silver cradle, to sleep. Garudha is in standing pose facing the main shrine. This temple was a famous centre of Vaishnava pilgrimage in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century AD and attracted pilgrims even from North India.\textsuperscript{21} An inscription of this temple registers the gifts of some money by one Dirgha Bhatta who is stated to have been a Koaradesi of Antarvedirajya, which is an old name of the tract of land between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna.\textsuperscript{22} It is recorded in the Travancore Archaeological Series, that a copper plate dated 1770 AD containing the Vaishnavite temple emblem was exhibited in the Napier Museum at

\textsuperscript{19} File No. 316, P.W.D. Devaswom, Trivandrum, 1914.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.},
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 125
Trivandrum.\textsuperscript{23} From this copper plate we learn that two Brahmin ladies gifted certain lands to the shrine of Krishna. It is said that His Highness Sri Moolam Thirunal Maharaja used to visit this temple frequently for worshipping Lord Krishna.\textsuperscript{24} The place in which he stayed during his visit in Krishnancoil.

One of the Vishnu temples in Kanyakumari District enjoys a very wide reputation even across the borders of our country and evokes sentiments of fervour and piety to an astonishing degree is the temple of Thirupathisaram. It draws votaries from all parts of India and from all classes and denominations of the Hindu population. Its virtues have been sung by Aiyenger saints in melodious verse. One among them is the great Vaishnava saint Nammalvar who lived in the 9\textsuperscript{th} century AD.\textsuperscript{25} He had glorified the Lord of Thirupathisaram in his verse as ‘Vanparisarathy iruntha en Thiruvaalmarbar’.\textsuperscript{26} Inscription refer to this place a ‘Thiruppathisaram’, but the Vaishnavite works invariably call it as ‘Thiruvenparisaram’.\textsuperscript{27}

The Lord of Thirupathisaram temple is called ‘Thiruvaalmarbar’ which means the Lord who holds Goddess Lakshmi on his chest. It is said that the image Lakshmi has been enshrined in the heart of the Lord. The Lord holds a golden necklace with a beautiful locket containing the image of Lakshmi. He is Prasannamurthi with four arms, the upper holding the conch and the chakra.
The lower right arm is in the Abhayahastha pose and left is placed on the knee. The Lord who is made of *kadukusarkarayogam*, a compound of lime and granite, is seated on a high pedestal measuring about 9 feet from top to bottom.\(^{28}\) He is surrounded by Saptarishis, Pilgrims from various places visited and donated gifts to this temple. This is proved from inscriptions dated 1613 AD and 1785 AD.\(^{29}\) Another inscription registers the facts that one Natesan Chetti of Vizhingam made some gifts to the God of Thiruppathisaram.\(^{30}\) Thus the temple attracted many Vaishnava devotees from very ancient times.

In the Neelakandaswamy Koil at Padmanabhapuram, one Sreekoil is dedicated to Siva. The main deity of the Melancode temple is Shiva. The Thirupannicode temple is dedicated to Siva which consists of Sreekoil, Vrishabhamandapam, Nalambalam and Madapalli.\(^{31}\) The Sreekoil has a copper sheeted roof. There are wooden vigrahams and ornamental designs round the Sreekoil.

The Siva deity in the Pannipakam temple is placed in a square structure with an inner square Garbhagraham.\(^{32}\) In the Ponmanai Temple, the Sreekoil is a circular structure built in granite and provided with copper sheeted roof. There is an inner square chamber for the deity Shiva with a dome. In the Thirpparappu temple, the Sreekoil of the Shiva consists of a circular granite

---


\(^{31}\) P.W.D. File No. 316, Year 1914.

wall with a copper sheeted roof. The Siva Sreekoil in the Thirumalai temple consists of a Garbhagraham and room in its front, wholly built in granite. The Sreekoil of the Shiva in the Thiruvikramapuram temple is a square granite structure with a sikharam on the top.

The Siva Sreekoil in the Suchindrum temple consists of a Garbhagraham, Edanazhi and Muhamandapam. In the Siva temple at Puravaseri, the Sreekoil consists of Garbhagraham, an Ardhamandapam and a Vrishabhamandapam built in granite. In the Vadiviswaram temple, the Sreekoil of the Siva deity consists of a Garbhagraham and Edanazhi, a Vrishbhamansapam and a Mukhappu, all in one structure.

The Bhuthalingaswami Sreekoil consists of a Garbhagraham, two front rooms and a Vrishbhamandapam. The Sreekoil of the Thuvarangad temple is located on the top of a hillock and is dedicated to Umeswaramudaya Nainar. The Siva Sreekoil of Thalakudi temple consists of a Garbhagraham and Ardhamandapam built in granite.

The only shrine dedicated to the trinity is Thanumalayawamy at Suchindrum. Thanu is a synonym for Siva. The Siva temple popularly known as Cholarajacoil situated at Vadasery, a part of Nagercoil, is of great historical

---

33 File No. 316, P.W.D., Devaswom, Trivandrum, 1914.
34 Edanazhi – Aisle between Garbhagraham and Muhamandapam.
35 Ibid., p. 73.
36 Ibid., p. 21
37 Padmanabhan, S., Sivalaya ottam, Nagercoil, 2005, p.16
interest. The great Saivaite Saint Thirugnānasambandar who lived in the middle of the 7th century AD. has glorified the place and its Lord in his verse as ‘Poompozhir Kottail aravaneel Chadayan. He has also sung in praise of the Devi of the temple as ‘Kolavaarkuzhalal’. It can be surmised from these lines that this Shiva temple had attained importance even during the time of Thirugnānasambandar. The Siva temple of Buthalingam at Bhoothapandy is an ancient one. This is authenticated by an inscription dated 754 ME (1578 AD) found in this temple.

The Neelakantaswamy temple at Padamanabhapuram is dedicated to Linga, called Kalkulam Mahadeva in the inscriptions. The shrine at Thirumala, Thikkurichi, Thirupparappu, Thirunandikkarai, Ponmana, Pannippagam, Kalkulam, Melankodu, Thiruvidaikkodu, Thiruvithankodu, Thiruppanikodu and Thirunattalam are considered to be the twelve sacred Sivalayas in Kanyakumari District. From the inscription on the Munchirai wall of the Siva temple at Vadasery it is seen that the temple of Mahadeva must have been consecrated in the 10th century AD during the reign of Raja Raja. The Lord of Thiruppanikodu temple at Thiruppanikodu is locally called ‘Thiruppanikodu Mahadevar’.

---

39 Ibid., p.29.  
41 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.82.  
42 Ibid., p.47.
Darisanamcope near Bhoopathandi, the head quarters of Thovalai taluk, is another centre of the worship of Siva. The main deity Siva, here is popularly known as ‘Raghaveswara’. The temple of Raghaveswara and the other one is to his consort Ulaganayaki. The central shrine is erected on a platform and is granite upto its top. The temple is mentioned as ‘Big temple of Sri Mulasthanathar Alwar’ in an inscription of Raja Raja. The temple is very sacred and people from different localities of Kanyakumari District often visit this temple to worship Raghaveshwara.

Like Saivism and Vaishnavism, Jainism also flourished from a very early date in Kanyakumari District, Nagercoil, the capital of the District, became a religious centre for Jainism. The temple here is popularly known as Nagaraja temple. The five - headed Nagaraja is the main idol from which the name of the temple has been derived. The outstanding feature of the temple is that the sanctum sanctorum is surrounded by walls of mud and has over it a simple roof thatched with coconut leaves and bamboo sticks. Though one cannot exactly date the origin of the temple, it can be inferred from the writing of Thirugnanasambandar (9th Century AD) that it was originally a Jain temple.

---

46 Ibid., p.34.
The story is being told that while harvesting the crops, the sickle of a farmer hit a granite stone and to the shock of all, blood oozed from the stone. Expert counseling established that the stone was Vasuki, the serpent king. Soon a temple was built on the spot for the serpent king who even attracts thousands of devotees today. The township named as Nagercoil, meaning temple of the serpent itself is indicative of the popularity of the temple. It is said that there are many serpents living around the temple. Strangely enough, within a radius of one mile from the temple there has not been any fatal case of snakebite. Every visitor to the temple takes a pinch of earth from the temple as the prasadam. It is said that still the earth in the place has never diminished in quantity. Near the shrine of the serpent – god, there are also temples enshrining Lord Krishna and Lord Siva.

It is seen from inscription that Kottar, Chitaral and Thirunandikarai were the main places of Jain worship in Kanyakumari District. The temple at Kurandi is dedicated to a Jaina monk, Korakkar.\textsuperscript{47} The temple at Chitaral is situated on a hillock at a height of about 300 feet and faces westwards. The Sreekoil consist of three Garbhagraham partitioned from each other and dedicated to three deities namely, Bhagavathi, Matanga Mahamuni and Kasyapa Muni.\textsuperscript{48} It seems that Jainism found royal support upto the end of 18\textsuperscript{th} century when possibly it declined.

\textsuperscript{47} Ramachandran, S., Little Known Jain Temple in Ruins, \textit{Indian Express}, dated 08.01.1981.
In most of the temples dedicated to Siva there is always an image of his consort Parvati or Durga installed for worship. The Goddess Durga is worshipped in different localities under different manifestations. The Goddess is supposed to rule over the minor divinities worshipped by the lower orders of the Hindus. Her presence in a village is believed to protect the people from the epidemics and other disasters and from the evil influence of devils. She is worshipped by the villagers periodically. Special offerings are performed whenever cholera or small box breaks out in the village.

In Kanyakumari District Durga is worshipped under the name of Bhagavathi. It is to be remembered in this context that Kanyakumari, one of the most sacred centers of pilgrimage, got its name from the virgin Goddess Bhagavathy to whom the ancient and reputed temple in the place is dedicated.\textsuperscript{49} The Goddess of Kanyakumari is mentioned even in the Upanishads.\textsuperscript{50} The image of Kanni Bhagavathi facing east is a fine piece of marvelous sculptural skill. She stands with a garland in her right hand. Her left hand is placed on her thigh. The image of Bhagavathy with a smiling face is a combination of innocence, purity and beauty.

Mandaikad, a coastal village nearly two miles south–east of Colachel, is another reputed centre for Bhagavathi worship in Kanyakumari District. It is on record that there are nearly 3205 Bhagavathi temples in the taluks of


Kalkulam, Thovala and Vilavankodu. The Bhagavathi temple here is built in the traditional Kerala style of tiled roof and triangular gables. The image of the deity worshipped in these temples is in the form of a big ant – hill. It is believed that the incurable diseases like leprosy are cured by regular visit to this temple.

It is well known that Murugan has been the favourite deity of the Tamils for ages. Apart from the numerous references to Murugan, Velan and Kottarai Chelvan are found in the Sangam classics, Subramonya is equally popular in Kerala also. He is the God of war and the leader of the celestial hosts. He is the second son of Siva. He is regarded as a most benefical deity, conferring boons, protecting the helpless and avenging the wronged. He is worshipped in the name of Subramoniyra in the temples at Marunkur and Velimalai.

Marunkur is situated at a distance of three miles from Suchindrum. The temple is situated on a hillock. The Sreekoil consists of a Garbhahraham with an edanazhi next to it. The whole is built in granite and the former has a sikharam and the latter is terraced. Mayil Mandapam is a terraced granite enclosed by wooden azhies. The presiding deity Subramonya is with his consorts Valli and Deivayanai. In front of the Sreekoil there is a shrine

---

52 Velu Pillai, T.K., *op.cit.*, p.635.
53 Pillai, K.K., *Studies in the History of India with Special reference*. Tamilnadu, Madras, p.71
54 File No. 316, P.W.D, Nagercoil.
housing a metallic image of Shanmugha with Valli and Deivayanai facing the south. The temple attracts large crowds of pilgrims on all days.

The other sacred place which manifests the glory of Lord Subramoniya or Muruga is Velimalai in Kalkulam taluk, two miles north east of Thuckalai. The Sreekoil of the Kumaracoil at Velimalai consists of Garbhagraham, Edanazhi and a Mukhamandapam. These are built in granite. The Garbhagraham has a *sikharam* and the other two are terraced.56 The floor is made of granite. There is a passage for the Abhisheka Theertham.

There is a Kalyanamandapm and a small shrine of Valli on the slope of the hill, nearly two miles from the main temple. Near the mandapam are the places called Vallicholai, Vattacholai and Kilavancholai. There is also a place known as Thinaipuram.57 All these places are reminiscent of the marriage of Lord Muruga and Valli. For getting the blessing of Lord Muruga innumerable pilgrims quite often visit this temple.

Ganesa or Vigneswara is the most popular God worshipped by the Saivites. He is the eldest son of Siva. Small images of Ganesa may be seen in temples, dedicated to Siva, while there are many specially erected for him.58 Vigneswara means ‘remover of obstacles’. His blessings are invoked for success in the performance of religious acts and in fact, before beginning any

---

undertaking. He is looked upon as an embodiment of sagacity, shrewdness, patience and self reliance all the qualities lead to success in life. Ganapathi is otherwise known as ‘belly – God’.  

Homage is paid often by the Hindus of Kanyakumari District to Vinayaka in different places. Two types of idols of Ganapathi are worshipped in Kanyakumari District and they are red and white Ganapathis. Red Ganapathi is worshipped to get some desires and wishes fulfilled. He is also worshipped to get issues. White Ganapathi is worshipped for acquiring wealth and to avert the anticipated dangers. Further in families, devotees offer vadamarai to Ganapathi. Plenty of coconuts are offered daily to Ganapathi or Pillayar. Keralapuram, a small village nine miles north – west of Nagercoil is one among them. The temple of Keralapuram is famous for the image of Vinayaka changing its colour half – yearly. The image of Vinayaka is placed under a Peepul tree in the south – east corner of the second prakara.

There is no vimana over the image and it is exposed fully to the hot son and heavy rain. The peculiar feature of the image is that it is black for six months from Avani, and white for the remaining months of the year. Devotees daily come and worship Vinayaka to get His blessings fort Padmanabhapuram, the ancient capital of the erstwhile Travancore-State. It is believed that the temple was constructed by Maharaja Marthanda Varma of Travancore. The presiding deity Sri Rama is five feet in height, which is carved out of granite.

59 Ibid., p.52.
60 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p. 90.
Sri Rama holds a *dhanush* in the left arm and an *asthra* in the right hand. The images of Sita on the left side of Rama and Lakshmana with Anjaneya on the right side are made of *panchaloha*. The most striking part of the Ramaswamy temples is the complete story of the *Ramayana* depicted around the exterior portion of the inner *prakara* in forty five wooden panels.\(^{61}\) Pilgrims from different parts of India visit this temple.

Auvvai worship is also popular in Kanyakumari District. It is said that Auvvai, an eminent Tamil poetess, lived in this area. Auvvai temples are found at Alagiyapandipuram, Thalakudi and Muppandal.\(^ {62}\) Auvvaiyar has temples only in these places and not anywhere in Tamilnadu.\(^ {63}\) It became a custom among the inhabitants of these villages to name their children after this deity. Every Tuesday Auvvai is worshipped by the people believing that this kind of worship might increase their wealth and health.\(^ {64}\) Devotees go to Tadakamalai to worship her occasionally.

Besides these superior divinities named above, there are many others allied to them, to whom unquestioned homage is paid by the high caste Hindus. They are Sastha or Ayyappan and Hanuman. The Palugí temple is dedicated to Sastha. They are held in great veneration and regularly worshipped by the

---


\(^{64}\) *Ibid.*
whole people. Inferior divinities, including; Pidari Marudappan, Sattan and Bathrakali are also worshipped. Animals and plants because of their association with Gods and Goddesses too come in as objects of veneration.

Of importance among these are the bulls, the monkey, darbha and a plant of the genus borage, arasu or fig tree, the thulasi or ocymum sanctum. Devil temple of Muttaramman at Agasteeswaram is said to have been built ten days with the aid of demons. Besides the idols of the gods some other things are also worshipped in some temples of Kanyakumari District. They include sulam and khadham (sword) both the weapons are of Siva. Besides the above mentioned weapons certain yanthras like Sreechankaram are also worshipped.

Religion has been a major motivating force for tourism from ancient times to till date. Every religion has cast upon its followers some duties that involve travel. The people wanted to visit religious places that are considered as holy. Likewise, Kanyakumari District also attracts more religious tourists towards it. In the Christian religion, churches are a building or structure. Its primary purpose is to facilitate the meeting place of the Christians. Traditional church buildings are often in the shape of a cross and frequently have a tower or dome. Most of the modern church buildings have variety of architectural styles and layouts. All traditional have a wonderful historical background.

Once Kanyakumari District was a Hindu dominated area where every village had a guardian deity, in this land Christianity came in the midst of great opposition. Schools hold different views regarding the origin of Christianity in India. Tradition attributes to its origin to St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. His tomb at Mylapore bears witness to his advent. The origin of Christianity in the southern District of Tamilnadu began with the arrival of St. Thomas in 52AD. He was one of the disciples of Christ who came to India and neighboring countries to spread Christianity and to establish Christian churches in various places. Following the Catholics, the Protestants came to South Travancore in 1806. Ringeltaube came to Mylaudi and established a small church at Mylaudi. Rev. Charles Mead, Rev. Singlair and many other missionaries came to south Travancore following Ringeltaube.

These missionaries, both Catholics and Protestants, constructed churches in various places. These churches stand as monuments and were testimony to christianity. St. Mary’s Orthodox church Thiruvithancode, St. Xavier’s church at Kottar, Our Lady of Ransom church, Kanyakumari, Kattadimalai, Devasahayam church, Aralvaimozhi, Home church Nagercoil, Ringeltaube-Vedhamanicam Memorial church, Mylaudi and CSI church, Marthandam are very conspicuous christian monuments.

---

69 Alasiar, J., *Christianity in South India*, Tirunelveli, 2006, p.9…
70 Fifth, C.B., *Indian church History*, Bangalore, 1961, p.3.
St. Thomas Orthodox church, Thiruvithancode was the first church founded by St. Thomas in India in 52AD. Thiruvithancode is situated 30 kms east of Thiruvananthapuram.\textsuperscript{74} It is believed by the Christian communities in Kerala that the historic Thiruvithamcode Arappally’ (Royal Church), also called \textit{Amalagiri} church as named by the then Chera King Udayancheral. This is the first Christian church of Kanyakumari District and this church is famous among the Christian followers.

There is a strong tradition among the people of Kerala that the origin and influence of Christianity in the strips of the sandy track stretching from Kodungallore to Kanyakumari and was due to the visit and evangelistic work of the apostle St. Thomas.\textsuperscript{75} The old church at Thiruvithancode is considered to be one of the most ancient churches in the District. It was consecrated by St. Thomas. As per tradition, the small Syrian church of St. Mary was consecrated as Thiruvithancode considered as a half-church while the other seven churches are in Kerala.\textsuperscript{76}

The half church was 25 feet length, 16 feet breadth and 10 feet height, which was built with black stone. Even now the church has 2 doors and 2 windows which give the feeling to anyone that he is in a palace.\textsuperscript{77} The roof

\textsuperscript{76} Gopalakrishnan, P., \textit{History of Kerala} (Malayalam), Trivandrum, 2000, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{77} Vikraman Thambi, G., \textit{Thekkan Pattukal} (Malayalam), Trivandrum, pp. 137-149.
above the church looks like the roof of Jerusalem Church. The inscriptions about this church can be seen in the books of Udhayamperur Synagogue in 1599.\textsuperscript{78} Also we can find the descriptions of this church in the books of the missionaries like Francis-co-Diaosia, Antonia Devia, and Dovaethae Berbosn. The council prepared the plan of providing food and place of to those who go there for studies.\textsuperscript{79} This church was erected in 63 AD during the Chera period. St. Thomas came to Thiruvithancode from Chinna Muttom.

In Udayagiri, the Amalagiri Amman family got baptism at first from St. Thomas. Here is St.Thomas garden. Kottavadukan Aasan and Iran Kodukan Aasan who lived in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century and 5\textsuperscript{th} century got the ‘presthura’ title from Cheran King.\textsuperscript{80} Above the old steps we can see their names in the stone crusae in Chinna Muttom. This is called as St.Thomas Crusae. Here people sit together and offer prayer. There is a well called as ‘St.Thomas well’. At first, the water of this well cannot be used for drinking. After St.Thomas blessed this well, people used this water. There is a church in Muttom, Manakudy and Chinna Muttom called the Tharisa church. The street is called ‘Tharida Street’ and the people are called Tharisagaar.\textsuperscript{81} The term ‘Tharisa’ originated from a Syrian word.

\textsuperscript{78} George Mathew., \textit{St. Mary’s Church}, Thiruvithancode, Nagercoil, p.1
\textsuperscript{79} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{Arivu Kalangiyam} (Tamil Journal), First Christian Church in Tamilnadu, Nagercoil, December 2003, p.44.
\textsuperscript{80} Chellam, V.T., \textit{op.cit.}, p.74.
The front door of the Church is 5.5 feet high and 2.5 feet width. Bread and fish, two pictures describing the suffering of Jesus are drawn there. There is a wooden box which dried by giving the last drop of the people. We can also see the picture of Kiniks parrot which was turned to ashes by fire and a new image of the bird emerging. It reminds of the resurrection of Christ. Inside the box, there is a symbol of Kurusu. Under the big Kurusu, two pictures of skulls can be seen. The meaning of the words inside the box still remains a mystery.

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

We know this from the inscriptions of Veera Raghava Patinam. Those who are baptised are in the right side of the church. Thiruvalluvar lived in Ahale Thirunayanar next to Thiruvuthancode. It is said in Thirukural. The Council in Thiruvuthancode pilgrim centers codes ‘Rules of Administration to make arrangements for the pilgrims to stay there’.

---

Kottar had the credit of being the sole commercial town of South Travancore. With the establishment of the St. Xavier’s church of Kottar, the place became a commercial cum religious centre.\textsuperscript{85} Today the church is a Cathedral, where the Bishop of Kottar Disocese conducts the Holy Mass. The Church is situated at Kottar, north-east of Nagercoil town.\textsuperscript{86} To many a people, it is a pilgrim centre which has proposed the title ‘Second Goa’ where the body of St. Xavier is kept.\textsuperscript{87} On 17\textsuperscript{th} January 1603, Buccherio started the construction work of the church with the help of the Nadar Christians of Pallam. It is said that the construction work of the church, the priest house and the shrine were started simultaneously.\textsuperscript{88} Local opposition was also there for the construction of the church. But in the teeth of opposition a part of the church was completed on 19\textsuperscript{th} January 1603 and on the following Sunday the new church was dedicated.\textsuperscript{89}

Buccorio, the founder of the first church at Kottar died on 24\textsuperscript{th} January 1617, in the Jesuit house at Madurai.\textsuperscript{90} In 1622 the Jesuits again assumed the management of the church land. In 1640 sainthood was awarded to Xavier.\textsuperscript{91} To commemorate this occasion the people demolished the old clay church and

\textsuperscript{86} Padmanabhan,S., \textit{Kanyakumari is a Paradise for Tourists}, October, 2004, p.9.
\textsuperscript{87} Thinamalar, \textit{Thahaval Kalangiyam}, Nagercoil, 13.4.2009, p.12.
\textsuperscript{88} Venacius, S., \textit{Thiruthalam Kottar} (Tamil), Nagercoil, 1998, p.27.
\textsuperscript{90} Venacius, S., \textit{op.cit.}, p.43.
\textsuperscript{91} Alex Khurush Malhiah., \textit{Then Pandi Madalamana Veeranadh} (Tamil), Azhakappapuram, 1995, p.257.
in its place built a new stone church called St. Xavier’s church.\textsuperscript{92} Every year the number of devotees grew in number. So the first church appeared insufficient to accommodate all the devotees at a time.

To overcome the difficulty in 1698, the Jesuits priests,\textsuperscript{93} constructed a huge church of stone with titled roof on the side of the small church built by St. Xavier.\textsuperscript{94} Extension work of this church was carried out in 1713 as per the decision of the Jesuits. In 1865 the Kottar church was again enlarged by transforming it into a Cruciform building, with new wings and a sanctuary.\textsuperscript{95} The old tiled roof was removed and a dome was raised straight above the altar.\textsuperscript{96} On either side of the church arches and small domes were constructed.\textsuperscript{97} The Chapel of Our Lady, standing on the spot, where Xavier used to after the holy sacrifice was also renovated and vaulted over.\textsuperscript{98}

In the nineteenth century, the front portion of the church was extended with the construction of stone mandapam.\textsuperscript{99} The whole edifice consisting of floor, wall and roof was built out of stone.\textsuperscript{100} In 1930, the area from Kanyakumari to Neerodi was separated from Quilon Diocese and a new

\textsuperscript{92} Thhina Thanthi, Thahaval Kalangiyam, Nagercoil, 5.3.2009, p.22.  
\textsuperscript{93} Thina Thanthi, Christmas Malar, Nagercoil, 2003, p.22.  
\textsuperscript{94} Venacius, S., \textit{op.cit.}, p.20.  
\textsuperscript{95} Thinamalar (Daily Tamil), Nagercoil, dated 02.12.2009, p.14.  
\textsuperscript{97} Thinamalar (Daily Tamil), Nagercoil, dated 02.12.2009, p.14.  
\textsuperscript{98} Villayarayan., \textit{op.cit.}, p.35.  
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p.36.
diocese in the name of Kottar was formed with the Kottar church as the Cathedral church. The church spots have many styles of architecture. The painting of the church is artistic and a good masterpiece. The Travancore royal family was greatly attracted by the paintings of this church. The artist Raja Ravi Varma painted the portrait of St. Mary and presented the same to the church. The extension with high painted arches is Gothic art and the fine stone mandapam in front purely Indian. Thus, the Kottar church stands even today as a monument for the Christians.

It is believed that our lady of Periyanayagi remains in this historical church and miracles of her people. It was recorded that the Mariya Devasagayam Pillai was imprisoned in the secret tunnel inside the church. It was also told that St. Xavier, patron of the Diocese of Kottar, stayed here and continued his missionary works for a few days in the year 1545. In AD 1860 Fr. Adrianus died at Thirukkangodu and was buried in the Thiruvithancodu church.

101 Inscription on the floor of altar, St. Xaviers Church, Kottar.
102 Desopakari (an official organ of the Church of South India of the Kanyakumari Diocese in Tamil), April 1991, p. 1.
103 Personal interview with Sekar, Joint Secretary of Kottar Parish, dated 07.01.2009.
105 Mariya Devasagayam Pillai is the wife of Devasagam Pillai. He was newly converted Christian, He was assassinated in Aralvaimozhi Kaatadi Mound.
107 He was a Madrid Missionary. He born in 1818. He took Holy orders in AD 1848 and had joined the Quilon Apostolic Mission AD 1855.
There is an old church called Thommai Palli or St. Thomas Church at Chinna Muttom about two kms north–east of the Kanyakumari. It is now in a ruined condition and only the foundations of the old church are now visible beside the present Chapel of St. Sebastian.\textsuperscript{109} It is said that at the beginning of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the Portuguese sailors who passed through the place made their offerings here for a safe voyage. From the Royal Edict issued in 1494 AD, it is known that the church at Chinna Muttom enjoyed certain grants from the harbor dues for lighting the lamps in the church.\textsuperscript{110}

Kanyakumari is situated in the southernmost tip of the District of Kanyakumari, of the Indian subcontinent. The Kanyakumari Parish almost coincides with the civil village of Kanyakumari.\textsuperscript{111} It is closely associated with the mainstream Catholic faith in India.

There are archeological evidences suggesting that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ visited this soil. The tomb stones unearthed at Kumari Muttom, near Kanyakumari contain evidences to show that Catholics had lived there for many centuries. The tomb stones dated 1496 AD contain the edict of the local ruler granting exemptions to the residents of Kumari Muttom and authorizing levy of access from the fishermen in Kumari Muttom. The aggregate income thus generated had to be used to keep the lights of the church

\textsuperscript{110} Report from the Collector of Kanyakumari District, dated 31.05.2008.
\textsuperscript{111} Personal interview with D. Merlin, Church Member, Kanyakumari Renson Church, 24.03.2009.
burning. The second inscription dated 1526 AD reads on the twentieth day of the month of Panguni, King Siraval Muttambiranar was pleased to order Muttakangan and Illaykangan and others among the subjects living at Muttom. We being pleased to put a stop to riots, quarrels, injustice, tyranny, blackmail and confiscations of fish, they shall hereafter live here as in an asylum for the oppressed.

In 1542 when St. Francis Xavier came to Cape Comerin (Kanyakumari) he was delighted to find ‘our Lady of Delights Grotto’ at Kanyakumari. Then it became a center for mission activities of the Jesuits from Thoothoor to Ramanathapuram. It is believed that Our Lady of Delights Grotto, in which St. Francis Xavier worshipped, later became the church of Our Lady of Ransom. Our Lady of Ransom is the patron of the congregation in Spain which redeemed the Christians from the Muslim invasion in the year 1218 A.D. The people of Kanyakumari were delighted to combine the name Ransom with delight and call their Patron as Alangara Upakara Matha.

The wooden alter elegantly depicts the artistic style of Roman Art. This church remains part and parcel of the new church. The foundation stone for the new church was later laid on 31st May 1900 by Rev. Fr. John Consolvez. Mr. Pakiam Pillai of the Vadakkankulum region was the architect of the new

---

112 Inscription at St. Thomas Church, Chinna Muttom.
113 http://www.ransomechurchkanyakumari.org
church.\textsuperscript{115} It is the model of ancient Gothic art and culture. The length of the new church is 153 feet, breadth 53 feet and height is 153 feet. All these depict the breads of the Holy Rosary.

In 1862 Kanyakumari church was established as a separate parish and many eminent priests have served as parish priests of the church. In 1914 Msgr. Vincent Fdo celebrated the First Mass in the newly built church. In 1956 Rev. Fr. Josaphath Maria completed the front elevation and the pinnacles. In 2006 the parish celebrated the golden jubilee of the erection of the golden cross and 106\textsuperscript{th} year of laying foundation of the church.\textsuperscript{116}

The church of Our Lady of Ransom is built in the Gothic style of architecture with a strong Portuguese influence. The church slightly half white in appearance has three massive towering spires and stained glass windowpanes contributing to the overall grandeur. Another attraction of the church is the central tower. It is 153 feet high and is crowned with a cross of pure gold.\textsuperscript{117}

As per the order of the King of Thiruvithancode on 14\textsuperscript{th} January 1752, the newly converted Christian, Devasahayam Pillai was killed in Aramboly Kaatadi mount and he died as a martyr.\textsuperscript{118} Hence from 18\textsuperscript{th} century onwards this place is being a pilgrim centre. The people who inhabited the nearby places

\textsuperscript{116} http://www.ransomchurchkanyakumari.org.
\textsuperscript{117} Personal interview with Mr. Antony, Church Member, Kanyakumari Renson Church, 28.04.2014.
\textsuperscript{118} Muthukumar, R., \textit{Devasahayam Pillai}, (Tamil folk), Yalpanam, 1974, p.23.
constructed the Mother Mary’s church. The small church was constructed here on 1862, was the sub-parish from Kottar Diocese and then it was made the sub-parish for Rajavoor Diocese. Later the place was called Kurusady. In 1961, it became the main parish. This St. Mary’s church was blessed on September 15, 1975. Out of the 2500 people living here 2450 are Catholics. The people in the surroundings are engaged in tile work. Some of them are engaged in small scale business, construction work, carpentry, spinning work and agriculture. Forty five percent of the people are literates.

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

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

---

121 Personal Interview with Fr. Felix, D Evasahayam Mount Church, dated 08.09.2011.
122 *Golden Jubilee Magazine*, St. Mary’s Church, Colachel, p. 245.
November 1969 and blessed on 21st October 1985. This Parish is the first one constructed among the seashore area. This is a natural sea port area. In the region of Travancore-Cochin Maharaja Marthanda Varma defeated the Dutch army and De Lannoy was imprisoned in Puliyoorkurichy Kottai. He preached Gospel in the warrior memorial pillar in Colachel, constructed in 1741, and it remains a symbol of victory. Ships from various countries come here to export things from Colachel harbor.

During 1752 AD a stone cross was kept in memory of St. Devasahayam Pillai. The writings on this cross and the writings on the tomb of De Lannoy are of the same type. In the reign of the King Marthanda Varma, efforts were made to take the cross but in vain. After 100 years when a bridge was constructed in Kuzhithurai a small chapel was erected near the cross and then it became people’s prayer centre. The family of Pullankuli Asan and the people nearby came there to pray. The parish priest of Puthukadai, Rev. Fr. Varghese modified the chapel, blessed and placed there St. Antony’s idol. In 1872, Rev. Fr. Thanislas modified the chapel and Rev. Bishop Arockiaswamy blessed it. Every Tuesday Mary’s prayer and mass are conducted. From 1980 onwards the Sunday mass started.

In 1984, 12 ½ cent of land was bought in the surrounding around this pilgrim centre. On 4th April 1989 in order to conduct mass, the construction
work was made with the measurement of 20’35, in the period of Rev. Fr. Yugin Kulanthai, this was made as a sub parish by Rev. Bishop Leon Tharmaraj. The present church was constructed on 4th February 1997 during the period of Rev. Fr. Robert by Mr. Veludhas and blessed by Rev. Bishop Leon Tharmaraj and was recognized as a pilgrim centre in the 2000 Jubilee Year.¹²⁶

Ringeltaube Vedhamanickam Memorial C.S.I church, Mylaudi was the first protestant church founded by Rev. W.T. Ringeltaube in South Travancore. This church is situated at Mylaudi. According to sources, Mylaudi was once part of a virgin forest and was favorite haunt of peacocks and hence the name Mylaudi. The place is graced by peacocks. Located about nine kms from Nagercoil, Mylaudi houses the ancient Protestant church built in 1810 during the erstwhile Travancore era by W.T. Ringeltaube in Kanyakumari District.¹²⁷ It is believed by the Protestant christian communities in Kanyakumari District that the origin of the other churches started from here.

Ringeltaube was a good preacher and the first protestant missionary of South Travancore.¹²⁸ He has constructed seven churches. They are Mylaudi, Pitchaikudierupu, Puthalam, Kovilvilai, Athicadu, Eathammozhi and Thamaraikulam respectively.¹²⁹ At first he constructed a church in Mylaudi.

¹²⁷ The Hindu, Nagercoil, 17th October 2009, p. 3.
¹²⁸ The Bicentenary Celebration, 1806-2006, Souvenir, C.S.I.Church, Mylaudi, p.15.
Rev. Ringeltaube on his way back to Travancore for the third time visited Col. Munro, the then British Resident and secured permission for the construction of a church at Mylaudi. The long awaited permission arrived after much delay. The local government officers received instructions to render all necessary help in the execution of the work. Magistrate Munnen Annavy and Tahsildar were sent by Royal order given to start church construction work. Stones from the ruined Punarkkulam fort nearby were used and timber was given free of cost. The help rendered is not an indication of the changed attitude of the native government. This was done just to conciliate the British Resident who had established his superiority. Being aware that in Mylaudi there would be difficulties in getting lands for the church, Vedhamanickam and Gnanamuthu gave their own lands for the church and for a Christian settlement as free gifts to the ‘Mission’.

To avoid future complications, Ringeltaube bought these lands from its owners for a nominal cost. The foundation stone to the first protestant church in South Travancore was laid at Mylaudi on the land of Vedhamanickam in the month of May. While the work was vigorously preceding the non-christain Tahsilder hindered the work in various ways.

---

130 Circular order of Colonel Muntro, Dewan, dated 7th Edavam 989, 1814 A.D.
131 Ringeltaube’s Journal, Palayamkottai, dated 19th June 1808.
133 Inscription on the wall C.S.I. Church, Mylaudi 2006.
Vedhamanickam fearing the complaint against him would delay the work, gained his friendship by his usual mode of dealing enemies, by giving him presents.\textsuperscript{134} Within four months the construction of church work continued day and night. The length of the church is was 40 feet and width 12 feet.\textsuperscript{135} The church wall was made of a black stone and clay of sand soil. The roof of the church is palm stem and palm leaves.\textsuperscript{136} It was dedicated on 10\textsuperscript{th} September 1809, a day of great Rejoicing to the Christians in and around Mylaudi.\textsuperscript{137} The Lord’s Supper was administrated on that day and a few were baptized.

Vedhamanickam was formally made a catechist and appointed as the agent of the London Missionary Society.\textsuperscript{138} Till the end of the year 1809, the church at Mylaudi was the only church of this mission. From here the Gospel began to spread to the nearby villages. Ringeltaube traveled from village to village and at certain fixed centers helped to conduct baptizing services and administrated the Holy Sacramends.\textsuperscript{139} Having been thus made a Catechist at end of 1809 Vedhamanickam started working with all cheerfulness and zeal. He was thankful for being privileged to labour in the vineyard of Christ.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{134} John A, Jacob, \textit{History of London Missionary Society in South Travancore}, 1805-1956, Nagercoil, 1956, p.35
\textsuperscript{135} Inscription on the Mylaudi C.S.I. Church, 1810.
\textsuperscript{137} Inscription on the Dedication stone of Mylaudi C.S.I. Church, 1810.
\textsuperscript{138} Inscription on the Memory Pillar of maharasan Vedhamanickam C.S.I. Church Mylaudi, 1995.
\textsuperscript{139} Agur, C.M., \textit{Op.cit.}, P 533
\textsuperscript{140} Inscription on the Memory Pillar of Maharasan Vedhamanickam C.S.I. Church, Mylaudi, 1995.
He first directed his attention to convert his friends and others who were worshippers of ‘Elankamanyan’ and he went to Trichencode and other places of pilgrimage every year. He traveled from place to place, carrying the Gospel message.\textsuperscript{141} More than all others, Shanars listened to him and more readily accepted the truth which he preached with such earnestness. Finding their hearts were open to convention the catechist frequented their houses, the strength of the Mylaudi Church increased to forty six.\textsuperscript{142}

It was the first church of South Travancore. Now, the Mylaudi church is the District church.\textsuperscript{143} The renovated and expended Mylaudi church was dedicated by Rev. John A. Jacob, the then District Minister on 17\textsuperscript{th} December 1932.\textsuperscript{144} About thousand families came to worship in Malaudi church. Several organizations also function in Mylaudi church.\textsuperscript{145} In the year 2006, April, 17 Mylaudi churches celebrated the Bi-century celebration in the presence of Rt.Rev. Bishop G.Devakadatsam.\textsuperscript{146}

In 1809 Ringeltaube built a church in Mylaudi, along with that in the south he built a mission house too.\textsuperscript{147} The length of this house was 10 feet and width was 6 feet. Then he extended this house to 26 feet length and 4 feet

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{141} William Robinson, W., \textit{Ringeltaube the Rishi}, Madras, 1968, p.30.
\item \textsuperscript{142} John A Jacob, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.36.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Personal interview with p. Gunamony, aged 80, residential at Mylaudi, dated 02.06.2011.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Inscription on the foundation Stone of the expanded C.S.I.Church, Mylaudi, dated on 17.12.1932.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Personal interview with N.Gnanaraj, Koil Pillai of Mylaudi Church, aged 81, dated 02.06.2009.
\item \textsuperscript{146} \textit{The Bi-century celebration, Souvenir}, p.16.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Agur, C.M., \textit{Op.cit.}, p.553.
\end{itemize}
width, there was also a bath room near it. For the bath room Ringeltaube has used 61/2 * 3 square feet black stone. As days passed, this mission house got destroyed. This mission house was discovered by Rev. John A Jacob with the help of the Archaeology Department.

Now this mission house of Ringeltaube is a convention stage in memory of him. The black stone found in bathroom is taken and kept in the northern part of the convention stage. This convention stage was dedicated by Rev. I.R.H. Ganadasan on 25th April 1963. Maharasan memory Pillar is erected in the church compound at Mylaudi. In April 25, 1995 Rt. Rev. G. Christudhas, the Bishop was the founder of the memorial pillar of Maharasan Vethamanicam.

The construction was completed within five months August 27, 1995 Rt. Rev. G. Christudhas dedicated the Maharasan Vedhamanickam Pillar. Maharasan Vedhamanickam was a dedicated, selfless missionary and also a social worker. This memorial pillar speaks the glory of Vedhamanickam’s loving heart and untiring effort.

---

149 Inscription on the Foundation Stone at Mylaudi, 1809.
151 Inscription on the Dedication Stone for the convention stage, April 25, 1963.
152 Inscription on the Foundation Stone of Memory Pillar of Maharasan Veda Manicam, C.S.I. Church, Mylaudi, dated on 24.05.1995.
154 The Bi-century Celebration, Souvenir, p. 81.
Ringeltaube memorial Belfry was built in front of Mylaudi on his memory. This Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry was dedicated on November 28, 1954. The bell inside Ringeltaube memorial Belfry was brought from England. Mr.D.Devadhasan granted the Ringeltaube memorial Belfry. The total cost of this Belfry is Rs.20,000.

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

Dr.Samuel Dhasan, the former Head of the department of Tamil N.M.C.C. Marthandam visited Mylaudi church and he saw the damages in the house of Vedhamanickam. He took keen interest to renovate the house and

---

155 Inscription on the Dedication Stone of Ringeltaube Memorial Belfry, C.S.I.Church, Mylaudi, dated 24.05.1953.
156 The Bi-century Celebration, Souvenir, p.78.
161 Souvenir, The Bi-century Celebration, p.79.
162 Personal interview with Dr.Samuel Dhasan Kottaram, aged 70, dated 3.7.2010.
he collected One Lakh Rupees. Then he started the reconstruction work. On August 30, 1979, Vedhamanickam memorial house was dedicated by the then bishops Rt. Rev.G.Christudhas and Rt. Rev. Samuel Amirtham. Later on Ringeltaube memorial house was dedicated by Rt.Rev. M.I. Kesari. Now two memorial houses are built in one compound and looks very beautiful with a garden.

Maharasan Vedhamanickam was the first Protestant Christian disciple in with Travancore. In the year 1942 September 18th, Mr. Sathu Kunju laid impaction stone for the Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall. In the year 1958 April 25th, Rev.J.A.Jacob MA., BD., opened this memorial hall. The Diocese conventions are conducted in Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall on his memory. The convention based gathering functions and convention quests and made to stay in this hall. Vedhamanickem memorial hall is very big with beautiful artistic designs.

Till the end of 1809, there was only one church in Mylaudi for the Christians and the converts from other places had to walk a long way to Mylaudi for worship, especially to receive the sacraments. But in the beginning of 1809, Ringeltaube obtained permission from the Travancore government and

---

163 Foundation Stone for the Vedamonicak Memorial House, Mylaudi, dated 18.2.1996.
166 Personal interview with Mr.R.S.Jeolin Dev, C.S.I Church Member, aged 22, dated 22.3.2010
167 Inscription on the Foundation Stone of Vedhamanickam Memorial Hall, Mylaudi, 1942.
169 *The Bi-century Celebration, Souvenir*, p.78.
build churches in six other places. Though these houses of worship were very modest buildings, they became centers from which the light of Gospel spread around. Ringeltaube was able to build a church at Mylaudi and the other six places quickly and completed them in 1810 because his friend gave one thousand rupees for this purpose. The people were too poor to contribute anything to build these churches.

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

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

---

170 John A Jacob., *op.cit.*, p.35.
172 Letter from Ringeltaube to Anna, dated 1-11-1810.
175 Inscription on the Foundation Stone of C.S.I. Home Church, Nagercoil,1819.
‘Islam’ is an Arabian term, means surrendering to God. They built mosques and minarets for their worship. They have darghas too. Mosques are places of worship. Dargha is a holy place where those who loved God were buried. In Islam they are called as dargha.\textsuperscript{176} They are found in various places. People come to the darghas to redress their complaints and wishes to be fulfilled. Due to this not only the Muslims but also people belonging to other religions come to visit the darghas.

Minaret is a tall tower forming a part of a Mosque which Muslims are called to worship. The high towers of minarets have a significant part in the construction work of mosques and darghas. Minarets are erected straight from the bottom till peak or it becomes smaller when it goes to the peak. These kinds of pillars were first used properly in mosques by ‘Khalita musuvia’ in Kanyakumari District, where there are many mosques.\textsuperscript{177}

Once when the son of the king of Kerala, Chreman Perumal, Kolesa was hunting in the forest, suddenly he heard ‘Allahu Akbar’. The king went towards the place where he heard the sound. In one place some men stood humbly and bent down and did their prayer service. When the king enquired, they told that they had come to see the king from Arabia. As the time for prayer came, they did their prayer in their style.\textsuperscript{178}

\textsuperscript{176} Seak Thampai., \textit{M.Islam in Kanyakumari District}, Thiruvithancodu, 2008, p.2.
\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Ibid.},
They were sent by Malik Ibn Dinar who belonged to the Islamic religion. The king helped the Arabians. The place where the king heard the sound of Muslim prayer was then called ‘Thirupaangu Ketta Edam’. This place was called ‘Thirupangodu’ and later as ‘Thiruvangodu’.\(^{179}\) Jum-Aa- Mosque is the first mosque situated in Thiruvithancode. Beside the mosque is the tomb of Mahan Rali. Even today we can see the symbol of government as shell symbol. The king has written a will as grant for this mosque, Islam had spread in the late 7\(^{th}\) century and in the beginning of the 8\(^{th}\) century.\(^{180}\)

Colachel is the only natural harbor in Tamilnadu. The Greeks stepped in Colachel harbor for trade even before 3000 years. It has a great significance not only in the history of Islam but also in the history of south India. This place has high historical value as Cochin in Kerala and Caveripoompatinam in Tamilnadu. It is a very ancient land. Here the cultivation of paddy is high. People in large number come here for buying paddy. So the name ‘Colachel’ is derived from a Tamil word ‘Kozhi’, which means ‘get’ and the paddy variety ‘Colachi’ is cultivated more and so the place is called as Colachel.\(^{181}\)

Here Islam spread in the beginning itself. Islam had its deep root in the period of Malik Ibn Dinar. He and his family built 40 mosques both in Kerala and Tamilnadu. His brother’s son had built the last mosque called ‘Kallu Mosque or Juma Mosque. Near the door of the mosque, it is carved as

yaabathaah in the pillar the total number according to the Abjath calculation is 498. According to this, this mosque was built in 1498.\textsuperscript{182}

There are four entrance mosques here. In the Juma Friday prayer is conducted only in ‘Kallu pazhi vaayil’. Ribai mosque ‘Muhyideen mosque’ and Meernia mosque are there. Many wealthy merchants and men come here from Arab countries through this harbor. The place which is called as Thingal Nagar Muslim Janaath was once called Naalaaru Mooty chanthai. Again it was renamed as Thingal Nagar. Malik Ibn Dinar who spread Islam in south lived in Naalaaru Mooty Chanthai. Then the population of muslim families increased.

Now 500 muslims families are living there.\textsuperscript{183} The famous Velu Thampi Thalavai from Travancore brought up a social revolution for the welfare of the farmers. We can see that the Thingal Nagar muslims also participated in the struggle of social revolutions. This shows their helping nature towards others.\textsuperscript{184} There is a beautiful entrance in the mosque. In 1865 AD, the great Janab Mamunachi Ummal sold an area of 58 cents in Thalakulam village and later on she gave the area surrounding it to the muslims.

After many years, due to generosity and donation of Janab R.M Mohammed Ali Hajiyar and due to the effort of the Jamaath people the mosque was built in a large size. In 1982, the management has constructed a

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{182} Personal interview with Committee member of the Mosque, dated 28.03.2011.
\textsuperscript{183} Personal interview with insaf Rasif, M. Mosque Rabu, Thingal Nagar, aged 53, dated 5.4.2011.
\end{flushleft}
‘Matharasa’ and many children do prayer service.185 Here, every year Rabiyul Avval crescent is celebrated the remembrance of ‘Mouloothum Muthiyetheen Abdul Kaathar Jeelani and Nabigal Nayagam.

There is a Dargha named ‘Peer Mohammed Oliyullan Dargha’ at Thuckalay, named after the great philosopher Mohammed Appa, who was born in Tenkasi of Thirunelveli District.186 The place where Dargha situated is called as ‘Dargha Road’. Being a Tamil poet of great eminence, he wrote many books on philosophy. He had intimate relationship with the kings of Chera dynasty.187 It is said that he laid foundation stone for the Padmanabhapuram granite fort. The anniversary of the great philosopher poet is celebrated every year on a grand scale on the full moon day in month of Rajap Both the people of Kerala and Tamilnadu attend the celebration in large numbers, irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.

Thuckalay Peer Mohammad Sahib was a contemporary of Mayalpattinam Sadakathullah Appa. He is the author of a large number of books on ‘Gnanam’ or supreme knowledge. His tomb is found in Thuckalay in Kanyakumari District. His works are highly noted for religious tolerance and deep theological ideas. His writings owned much for the cause of religions unity and communal harmony of the Tamil country.188

---

185 Inscription on the Mosque at Thingal Nagar, 1982.
187 Syed Mogdooom Sahib, O.M.S., Megnana Karuvoolam (Tamil) Malaysis, 1972, pp. 4-5.
Maathavalaayam is the place of natural beauty where more than 3000 Muslims live. This place is surrounded by many coconut groves and paddy fields. It is situated six kilometers away from Nagercoil. Before 400 years many people of various creeds lived there. They were looking after the horses of the royalty of Travancore Kingdom. Later on this service was transformed to Thiruvanandapuram. A place called ‘layam’ in Tamil means the stable where horses are kept. From that time onwards the name ‘layam’ is used. The people who live in ‘layam’ of Kanyakumari District inhabited ‘Trivandrum ‘layam’ For about 100 years Kanyakumari ‘layam’ was left unnoticed and in course of time it disappeared. The horses which were transported to Thiruvananthapuram died, as they were not looked after properly because they did not have proper grazing place and water.189

Once again a ‘layam’ was made to look after horses. Many experts were brought to look after the horses. Many Muslims from Kerala and Tamilnadu occupied this area to do this service. Vallakkaadu settled here with his four children, a brother and a cousin. And also Hussaina’s family settled here coming from Ramanathapuram. Both of these families made a marriage bond among themselves.190

Moreover, many families from Chetikulam, Pannaiyur and Thiruvananthapuram areas settled here. ‘Maathu’ in Tamil means woman ‘layam’ means the place where horses were kept. So this place is called as

189 Personal Interview with Neceer, Maathavalaayam, Mosque, aged 49, dated 10.04.2011.
Mathavalaayam. This ancient cultured place is 300 years old and more than 300 Muslims live here. The Jummaa mosque ‘Sheikuna Sheiku Sahu!

Hammed Nayagam is 250 years old. This mosque was re-modified many times and in 1989 it was opened with new modifications. The majestic Jumah mosque of Kottar Elankadai Muslim Society was a small one made by Bava Kasim Appa before 1250 years. The construction work of Kallu mosque was remodified and completed before 700 years by the people of that place with the help of the Delhi Sultan Alauddin Malik Kapoor, General of the Delhi Sultan Alauddin Gilfi and in front of Shiek Noor Deen Musliaar.

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

Again the south of tiled mosque was removed and thanks to Moosi Jiyavudeen Haajiyaar’s big donation and with the cooperation of the society people a storied building with a high minarate was constructed. Any way there is a scarcity of place during prayer service. After coming with the forces

---

towards the south in 1311 AD, Malik Kapoor came to Kerala. More than 20,000 Muslims lived there. Malik Kapoor and the historian Ameer Kusru were surprised to see Muslims conducting prayer service by reading Quran. The people told them that many great men from Arabia had come here to guide them towards the right path of Islam.\footnote{Seak Thampai, M., \textit{op.cit.}, p.38.}

The great man who was living along them was Sehu Noorutheen Musaliar. His family stayed there and married and lived there itself. They used ‘Musaliar’ as their family name. They were the great pious people. Malik Kapoor got blessings from them and requested them to come to the south. They came there in 1314 AD and stayed in Kottar. The Kutha mosques and Kallu mosque were erected with their effort. The stone carvings are found there even now.\footnote{Personal interview with Muhaideen Committee Member of the Mosque, aged 52, dated 15.4.2011.} Malik Kapoor erected an earth stage and a minarate. People gather there for prayer service during festivals. This Eatha tower constructed here resembles the Qutab Minar in Delhi, which seems to be its mini-model. The damaged parts of the upper stairs are re-modified and now it is the unique tower.\footnote{Personal interview with Mr. M. Abdul, aged 45, dated 10.4.2011.}

The Malik was called as ‘Maruthanyagam’ and was born at pannaiyur in Leayankudi. He was a wise man born in Vellalar caste. He changed his name as Mohammed Yusuf and then married a French Lady Masha. He had a son. As he was talented Arcot Nawab Muhammad Ali appointed him in his army.
Small kings were in mutiny often. In order to control this Khan Sahib was made as a Governor of Madurai in 1756. He got the love and support of the people by eradicating the mutiny.\(^{196}\)

The foundation for Periyaar irrigation was laid by Kahan Sahib. He came to Kanyakumari. The king of Travancore, Marthanda Varma conquered the south of Thrunelveli District in 17th century. Khan Sahib entered the Nanjilnad and defeated him. Then Marthanda Varma and Khan Sahib made a peace treaty. Khan Sahib was arrested by the forces of.\(^{197}\)

Muhammad Yusuf Khan Sahib was hanged by Arcot Nawab. Khan Sahib’s house was destroyed and the street where he lived Khan Sahib Mettu Street. During the war between Khan Sahib and the Dutch in Aralvoimozhi, the valiant Malik Khan died. His dead body was taken to Kottar and buried in Maaiyavadi. Therefore that garden is called as Malikkhan Garden.\(^{198}\) The town Thittivilai is located near the road from Nagercoil to Palmore, at a distance of 10 marks kms form Nagercoil. It is situated at a distance of 80 kms, from Thiruvananthapuram airport. The mosque is situated on the eastern side of the road about 100m, from Thittuviali junction.\(^{199}\) There is an old mosque, constructed only by stones, dressed architecturally to function as pillars, lintels,

\(^{196}\) Pettaham., *op.cit.*, p.257.

\(^{197}\) Seak Thampai, M., *op.cit.*, p.43.

\(^{198}\) Personal interview with Mr. Muhammed Ishakhon, aged 67, dated 15.4.2011.

\(^{199}\) Personal interview with Mr. Shyad Ali, aged 34, dated 25.4.2009.
cornicles, beams, slabs, etc to from the structure. It is called ‘Stone mosque’.

It is said that this mosque was constructed 400 years ago. The size of this mosque is 6.50ms, 12.00m. Adjacent to her ‘Stone mosque’, there is a continuous mosque constructed using bricks, R.C. beams and slabs. It is said to be extended 30 years before.

The size of this mosque is 6.50ms, 12.00m. It is called ‘Old mosque’. The minaret above the mosque is 30 feet in height and it is constructed only with brick without iron bar and concrete. When a strong wind blows many people realize the shake in the minaret. There are chances that the minaret may fall when storm or earthquake occurs. So it was decided to take away the minaret from there.

---

200 Mosque was constructed by stone.
202 *Ibid*.
203 Personal interview with Prof. Abdul Naser, aged 61, dated 25.4.2011.