CHAPTER - V

OTHER IMPORTANT TOURIST CENTRES

Kanyakumari district witnessed much more than other tourist attraction. The district has a fragrance of architecture, culture and customs of neighbouring Kerala mixed with the rich deep traditions, culture architecture of Tamilnadu.¹

Tourism potential of a country is mainly depends on its climate, scenery, historical monuments, art, tradition, festivals and the people. If any place possess all these above-mentioned potentials or any one of these potential we may call it as a tourist centre. In fact, Kanyakumari district provides all the above mentioned characters and it became one of the major tourist centers in India. It attracts people from all over the country throughout the year.²

Kanyakumari is a popular tourist centre because of its prime geographic location of having confluence of an ocean, a bay and a sea. This place has been a famous pilgrim centre from the very early times. Peri plus (1st century AD), Ptolemy (2nd century AD) and the Sangam works like the *Purananuru*, *Silappathikaram*, *Manimekalai* and *Tholkappiam* refer to this place.³ Historically this place has been associated with great men like Swami Vivekananada and Mahatma Gandhi.⁴

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³ *Purananuru*, 341.5.
“The sun sets only to rise again” goes a Latin saying. Nowhere is this
more beautifully showcased than in the quiet tip of the Indian Peninsula known
once as Cape Comorin and today rechristened as “Kanayakumari”, after the
temple of the Virgin Goddess that stands on the shore washed by the waters of
an ocean, a bay and a sea. A fine day to visit is during Chitra Pournami – full
moon day in the month of April. Gaze at the moon sitting on the sands that are
coloured red, black and white in a unique mixture stay on the beach till the
golden sun appears over the horizon and soon blazes forth in brightness.
Known as the Alexandria of the East, Kanyakumari has been a cradle of
civilization. The Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas and the Nayaks contributed to the
growth of temple culture and traditions in this part of the country.

The Tamilnadu Tourism Development Corporation declared
Kanyakumari, Vattakottai, government fruit farm near Kanyakumari,
Padmanabhapuram Palace, Suchindrum temple, Nagercoil Nagaraja temple
Petchiparai dam and Udayagiri fort as major tourists spots in this district. Apart
from the above mentioned tourist spots Thiruvattar Adikesava Perumal temple,
Sanguthurai beach and Olakkuvi waterfalls are the other minor tourists spot in
this district.

Situated overlooking the shore, this temple is dedicated to the Virgin
Goddess, Devi Kanyakumari. She is a symbol of sanctity. According to a

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6 www.tn.gov.in.
7 Shathi, V.P., *Tourism Development in India*, New Delhi, 2001, p. 48
legend, Devi did penance to marry Lord Siva. However, owing to some misfortune, the wedding did not take place. She vowed to remain virgin (kanya). One can even see the footprints of Devi Kanyakumari on a rock called “Sri Paada Paarai” in the Vivekananda rock memorial complex. The male tourists enter the temple should remove their upper garments.\(^8\)

Vivekananda rock memorial is another place in Kanyakumari which attracts large number of tourists. This great Indian spiritual leader and philosopher who stunned the World in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, preached the religion of the mind and the power of meditation. As its name implies, it is essentially a sacred monument, built by the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee to commemorate the visit of Swami Vivekananda to “Shripada Parai” during 24\(^{th}\), 25\(^{th}\) and 26\(^{th}\) December 1892 for deep meditation and enlightenment.\(^9\)

From very ancient times, the rock has been regarded as sacred place. In puranic tradition, it has been known as “Sripada Parai” meaning the rock, that has been blessed by the touch of Shripada feet of the Goddess. On the rock, is a projection similar in form to a human form and a little brownish in complexion, which has traditionally, been reserved as a symbol of Shripadam. According to legend, it was on this rock that Goddess Kanyakumari did meditation. The memorial consists of two main structure, Vivekananda mandapam and

\(^8\) Shungoonny Menon, P., *History of Travancore from the Earliest Times*, New Delhi, 1878, p. 11.

\(^9\) The tale of Vivekananda Rock Memorial Kanyakumari, Published by Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee, Madras, 1972, p. 6.
Shripada mandapam.\textsuperscript{10} This 180’-11 1/2 x 56 mandapam consists of (1) Dhyana mandapam, (Meditation Hall with six adjacent rooms) (2) Sabha mandapam, the Assembly Hall including \textit{pratima mandapam} (statue section) two rooms, a corridor and an open Prakaram round the Sabha mandapam. (3) Mukha mandapam (portion) and (4) the Front Entrance steps with two rooms and a corridor below the steps.\textsuperscript{11}

Shripada mandapam square hall consists of Garbha Graham (Sanctum Sanctorum) and the inner Prakaram outer platform all around. Both the mandapams are so designed that the vision of Swamiji in the statue would be seen direct towards the Shripadam.\textsuperscript{12}

The statue is an embodiment of the essence of Tamil classic \textit{Thirukkural} authored by Saint Thiruvalluvar. \textit{Thirukkural} is a precious gem among the classics, unique in the deliverance of code of conduct to the mankind to follow for all the time. This classical work written in Tamil, has been translated in over 66 languages of the World. The statue located at the confluence of the three great seas, also depicts the great tenets of the \textit{Thirukkural} namely, Virtue, Wealth and Love. The imposing 133 feet high statue is created on a minor rock in mid – sea by Dr. Ganapathy Sthapathi and his team of around 500 sculptors and other technical people.\textsuperscript{13} The statue is fully made up of granite stones,

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{12} Kanyakumari Land’s End. A Booklet Published by the Dept of Tourism, Govt of Tamilnadu, Madras, 1989.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Thina Thanthi}, Thahaval Kalangiam, Nagercoil. 5.3.2009, p.12.
\end{footnotes}
weighing 7000 tonnes and comprising 3681 pieces of granite boulders, each weighing 7000 tonnes and comprising 3681 pieces of granite boulders, each weighing 3 – 8 tonnes. The statue proper stands 95 feet tall on the pedestal of 38 feet height and the whole structure has been designed based on the essence of great work of the poet, titled *Thirukkural*. In the design of the statue, the 38 feet high pedestal depicts the first 38 chapters which deal with virtue 95 feet depicts the rest of the 95 chapters which deal with wealth and Love height of 150 feet. In this scaffolding work no steel fabrication was used by only the traditional Casuarina posts were employed right from the beginning to the end. The ferry goes to Thiruvalluvar statue. After seeing Thiruvalluvar statue tourists go to Vivekananda rock by the next ferry. The ferry services is operated between jetty and the statue from 8.00 AM to 4.00 PM all the days.

The government of Tamilnadu is observing Thiruvalluvar year in all official proceedings. During Tamil month *Thai* on second day (January) Thiruvalluvar day is observed by the government with holiday. Some details about the statue of Thiruvalluvar given by its Chief Sculptor- Dr.V.Ganapathy Sthapathi, height of the statue-95 feet of Thiruvalluvar, total pieces of stones utilized-1283, for the statue weight of the statue-2000 tons, height of the athara-38 feet peedam, total pieces of stone utilized-672, weight of the stones, in the peedam-1500 tons, total height of the monument-133 feet, height of the

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15 Personal interview with Mr. Sathasivan, member K.K. Municipality, dated 15.03.2012.
17 *Brochure Thiruvalluvar Statue*, Kanyakumari Published by the District Collector, K.K. Dist.
alangara, mandapam-38 feet, total pieces of stones utilized for the mandapam-1726, weight of the stones in the mandapam-3500 tons, total weight of the whole structure-7000 tons, number of steps upward and 70 number of steps downward-70.

The place has been associated with great persons like Swami Vivekhananda and Mahatma Gandhi in whose names memorials have been here. They are very beautiful and add to the attraction of this place. The beautiful Gandhi Memorial completed in 1956, is situated as a memorial to the father of the Nation.¹⁸

An urn of Mahathma Gandhi was kept here for public to pay homage before immersion. Mahathma Gandhi visited Kanyakumari twice in 1925 and 1935. In 1948 his ashes were immersed in the sea waters in Kanyakumari. In commemoration of this event a beautiful monument has been constructed here. Its central shape is 79 feet high representing the age of the Mahatma, at the time of the sun at Mid day on 2nd October would fall on the peedam through a whole in the root. The memorial was transferred to the administrative control of the Public (Information and Public Relations) Department from Public Works Department of Government of Tamilnadu in the Year 1978.¹⁹

This is a 1000 year old temple and is said to have been built by the king Raja Raja Chola. The architecture style of the Cholas is quite apparent in this

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temple. It is located near Railway Station. There are 16 inscriptions found in this temple that date back to the years 1038 AD, 1044 AD and 1048 AD\textsuperscript{20}

Regarded as the “king maker of India”, Kamaraj influenced many political events in the country. From a humble background he rose to become the chief minister of Tamilnadu through sheer hard work and political acumen. As a tribute to the freedom fighter and “Perunthalaivar” (meaning great leader) this memorial was constructed where his ashes were kept for public to pay homage before immersion in to the sea.\textsuperscript{21}

Located in the Kanyakumari Town, the terracotta design depicting Swami Vivekananda Bharat Parikkrama pictures with description in English, Hindi and Tamil is an education for oneself.\textsuperscript{22} The Government Museum, situated on the beach road offers a good collection of sculptured artifacts and crafts of South Indian temples and is one of the “mustsee” places in Kanyakumari.\textsuperscript{23}

The holy complex of Vivekananthapuram is one km from the Kumari Amman temple also attracts the tourists. The life history of Vivekananda has been displayed in a pictorial manner at the complex. It is the Headquarters of Vivekananda Kendra. It is spread over 100 acres and is a natural spiritual retreat. It also has lodging and boarding facilities for up to 100 people at a

\textsuperscript{20} Rangacharya, \textit{op.cit.}, p.3.
\textsuperscript{22} Inscription on Kamaraj Manimandapam, Kanyakumari, 1960.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Tourist Broacher of Kanyakumari}, p. 4.
given time. Library, Beach and Vivekananda pictorial exhibition etc are the Vivekananda Kendra which play a superior role for tourist promotion. We can see the Vivekananda rock, the sunrise and sunset from the Kendra.¹⁴

The Government Fruit Farm is located 2km from Kanyakumari. It was established in 1922 by His Highness Shri Moolam Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore. After the reorganization of States, this farm’s maintenance was entrusted to the Tamilnadu State Agricultural Department from 1979, the farm came under the newly formed Department of Horticulture and Plantation Crops. Mango the king among the Indian fruits is the crop occupying major area of the farm.²⁵

It is a water theme amusement park, which is located at a distance of 2km on Kanyakumari - Kovalam road. It is very near to sunset point. It opens from 10.00 AM to 07.30 PM. The Bay Watch Project is worth of Rs. 30 crores. It is a prospective step to increase Kanyakumari’s visibility in the Indian subcontinent.²⁶ It is located at a distance of 1 km from Kanyakumari near the new bus stand on Kovalam road.

Panoramic view of the landscape, sea-shore, Vivekananda rock memorial, Thiruvalluvar Statue, can be seen at view tower and through telescope. Vattakottai, a granite fort six kilometers north - east of Kanyakumari cape, forms the terminal of a line of ramparts known as the South Travancore

²⁶ *Kanyakumari Tourism Booklet*, p.8.
lines built by Marthanda Varma to serve as defence for Nanjil nadu. It is rectangular in shape and covers an area of about three and a half acres. The fort is enclosed by walls 25 to 26 feet height, including the parapet, 29 feet thick at the front 18 feet at the corners and 6 feet at the rear. The portion running into the area is the most strongly built under the orders of De Lannoy during the reign of Marthandavarman (1729-58). About 1810 A.D the British forces under the command of St.Leger marched into Nanjil nadu through the Aramboly Pass and demolished the defense lines. The small river by the side of the fort, and the green vegetation all around add to the scenery of the fort and has now become a holiday resort and picnic centre.

It is said that there is a subway or tunnel about four feet width, supposed to connect the Padmanabhapuram palace with the upper part of the parapet of the fort. There is well about six diameter. The whole wall around the fort is repaired and fresh mortar is being applied. Literary or epigraphical evidences are not in store to know much about Vattakottai. However, from the evidence left by the fort itself, it may be presumed that this fort was the military base to protect the Kumari port which was a rich pearl harbour. Since the emblem of the Pandya Kings was “Fish” and we find this emblem in some of the places of the fort, it can be safely concluded that the Pandya kings had control over this fort for sometimes.

30 Gupta, S.P., Tourism Museums and Monuments in India, Delhi, 1974, p.18.
Next to Vattakottai, the traces of a light house in Leepuram being called so after Colonel Lee who has destroyed most of the Kadukkarai Kanyakumari fort in 1806. This is a picnic spot, the sea is calm and suitable for bathing.

Suchindrum is a small village about 12km from Kanyakumari and about seven kilometers from Nagercoil. This holy place is located on the back of the river Pazhayar, adjoining fertile fields and coconut groves, the temple is dedicated to Sri Thanumalayan. The word denotes Siva, Vishnu and Brahma as, Thanu represents Siva. Mal represents Vishnu while Ayan represents Brahma is “One Form”.32

Suchindrum means the place where Indra attained Suchi means purification.33 The Sthalapurana has said that Indra suffered a curse from sage Gowthama, when he stealthily cast amorous glances at Ahalya the wife of Gowthama. Not able to suffer the mortification brought about by the curse. Indra had to seek immediate redemption. He came to “Gnana Aanya” as this place was then called offered worship to Lord Siva. Relieving Indra of his curse, Lord Siva granted him of his wish that the place where he attained purification should henceforth be called “Suchindrum”.34

Another story goes to say that the Trimurthys Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, cajoled by their divine consorts came down to the earth to test the chastity

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31 Personal interview Mr. Rajasekar Chartered Accountant, Vattakottai, dated 23/02/2010.
34 Ibid., p. 157.
of Anusuya, wife of sage Athri at Gnana Aranya. The Gods for this
misadventure had to suffer a curse from the Rishipatni and to undergo the
purification process, before they could be restored to their former glory.\(^{35}\)

It is said that Thanumalaya Swamy temple is the only Shrine dedicated
to Trinity in India. The present structure of the temple is the work of a number
of persons spread over a number of centuries. It is a complex of many beautiful
structure constructed at various times and is one of the best specimens and a
stone of the Dravidian style of art and architecture.\(^ {36}\)

The Nagaraja temple is situated here. Though Nagaraja (serpent God) is
the presiding deity, the images of Lord Siva and Anantha Krishna are also
enshrined here. The image of the Jain Theerthangaras, Mahavira and
Parsvanathar are found on the pillars of the temple.\(^ {37}\) The Nagaraja is installed
on the ground where it was originally found and the sands are scooped out and
given as *Prasadam* to the devotees.

The entrance to the temple is reminiscent of Chinese architecture of
Buddhist Vihara. It is 19km from Kanyakumari, Nagercoil is the headquarters
of Kanyakumari District. This city is also equipped with fine Hotels and
Restaurants and help the tourist easily. There are also excellent travel agencies
and transport facilities to visit Kanyakumari.\(^ {38}\) The east west coasts of


Kanyakumari district have beautiful beaches. The Vattakottai beach, Rasthakadu sea shore, Leepuram and Chinnamuttam fishing harbour of east coast and Sothavilai, Sanguthurai, Thekkurichi, Muttam, Colachel fishing sea shore and Thengapattinam beach centres of west coast are a natural gift to the district.

Vattakottai beach it is in Agastheeswaram taluk. The green vegetation, dense coconut grove on the shore side and shallow sea waves in fine sand beach make the site an ideal picnic spot. Accommodation, dress changing, toilet facilities are provided. Mini bus service, city bus service, cars etc, are available to see this spot. Chothavilai Beach is about 10kms from Kanyakumari and it is one of the best natural beaches of the district. It lies in Puthalam town panchayat. Soft waves of shallow water with lovely and dunes attract domestic tourists. It is one of the best beaches for holiday lovers. The district administration has provided basic infrastructure facilities like drinking water, shadow shelters, view tower, Children’s play equipments and rest rooms.

It is a fine picnic spot. Frequent bus services are available from Nagercoil. The tourists can reach the beach through the newly laid west Coast road which is a very beautiful drive along the sea - coast. Sanguthurai Beach it is a beautiful beach which is very convenient for the local population of Nagercoil. The beach lies in Rajakkamangalam Panchayat Union. It is 13kms from Nagercoil and 15kms from Kanyakumari through west coast road.

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40 Personal interview with M. Jeya Pon Malar, Teacher Puthalam, aged 36, dated 16.05.2011.
41 Fine Beaches of Kanyakumari District, Article, Nagercoil 2008, p. 44.
It is developing beach centre. The district administration has now sanctioned a project for putting up of a children’s park, seating facility, open huts (kudils) with terracotta roofs and lighting facilities at the beach at a cost of Rs 6.00 lakhs. It is also proposed to put up a few shops for women self help groups at the site, which can provide eatables to the on coming tourists at beachside.42

Thikkurichi, a tiny village with lovely calm seashore lies near the west coast road. It is a lesser known sea - beach of the Kanyakumari District which lies in Rajakkamangalam Panchayat Union. It is an excursion seashore tourist centre. Coir making is a major small scale business of the villagers. It is at a distance of 10 km Nagercoil (via) Rajakkamangalam and 29kms from Kanyakumari. City bus services are available from Nagercoil.43

Muttom is a delightful place on the coast of Kalkulam taluk, attracting people desirous of having a seaside holiday. The seashore looks majestic because of huge beautiful rocks and create a mystic atomosphere. Muttom beach is a famous shooting spot for both Tamil and Malayalam movies. Muttom is famous its beautiful landscaping and high rocks dipping into the sea at the beach side. The seashore is having a rich heritage value for its ancient light house, which was originally established by the British in 1875 and subsequently improved in 1909.44 The sunset view point here is one of the most

42 Personal interview with A. Chandran B. Counsellor, Muttam, aged 50, dated 15.03.2012.
panoramic view points in the district. The district administration has developed basic infrastructure facilities like shady benches, car parking, solar lighting, risk fee fencing on the rock. It is 16kms from Nagercoil and 32 kms from Kanyakumari. Frequent bus service are available from Nagercoil.45

Thengapattinam situated on the west coast near Painkulam village in Villavancode Taluk is having a fine beach adorned with coconut grove. As coconuts are abundant in this place, this might have derived the name Thengapattinam (Coconut is called Thenga in Tamil). This village had in ancient times, trade relations with foreign countries like Arabia. There was direct cargo route service between Thengapattinam and other foreign maritime towns. Copra, dry fish, coir and shark fin were the main products that were exported. Thengapattinam is having the estuary of the lovely river Thamiraparani with its non – salty water entering the sea. The back waters is really an enjoyable one. It is 35 kms from Nagercoil 12 kms from Kuzhithurai and 54 kms from Kanyakumari, bus services are available.46

Ulakkai Aruvi is a natural waterfall situated in Azhagiapandipuram village of Thovalai Taluk. Water is available in this water falls in the summer season, many tourists come here for bathing and to enjoy the nature. The pathway to this waterfall lies in the reserve forest.47 Mukkudal this is a natural dam constructed by T. Chitirai Maharaja. It supplies water to Nagercoil

46 http:/ en. Wikipedia.org/Kanyakumari tour is beaches.  
47 Personal interview with Mr. Ramanthan, Electrician aged 25, dated 25.07.2012.
Municipality and it is also proposed to get water for Suchindrum and Kanyakumari. It is very picturesque spot and ideal for picnics by groups.\textsuperscript{48}

The Kodayar makes its descend at Tirparappu and the water fall at this place is about 13km from Pechiparai dam. The river bed is rocky and about 300 feet in length. The water falls a height of nearly 50 feet and the water flows for about seven months in a year. The whole bed above the falls is one rocky mass which extends up to a distance of about quarter of a kilometer upstream where the famous Thirparappu weir has been constructed for supplying water to the paddy fields. On either side of the river, on the left bank of the river in between the water falls and the weir, there is a temple dedicated to Siva enclosed by strong fortification. The District Administration has recently constructed a swimming pool for children over here which is very popular among the children.\textsuperscript{49}

About 43km from Nagercoil Pechiparai dam in Kalkulam Taluk, was built during the days of the Maharaja Sri Moolam Thirunal across the river Kodayar. The construction of the dam was designed on the pattern of the Periyar dam in the Madurai district. The length of the dam is 425.1mts. It has a attachment area of 204.8sq.km. There is a camp shed provided at the dam side for the visitors. The weather is very pleasant and hence attracts a large number of tourists.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{48} G.O. MS No.61/ MAWS/ 1. Water Supply Improvement Scheme details of Administration Section.
\textsuperscript{49} Kumara Pillai, S., \textit{Irrigation of Kanyakumari District.} Article., Nagercoil, 2003.
\textsuperscript{50} Dinamalar, Thahaval Kalangiam, Nagercoil, 13/04/2009 p. 82.
The reservoir is surrounded by dense forests which are famous for their valuable trees and rich wild life such as tiger, elephants, deer etc. A hill tribe, small in number known as “Kanikars” dwell in the dense forests around the lake.\textsuperscript{51} Kalikesam, the “Kodaikanal of the Kanyakumari District” is situated at the centre of Western Ghats and 23kms from Nagercoil. The Kalianman temple is situated at the entrance of this place.

The tourists who visit this place only to take bath in chill water and take rest in the midst of medicinal herbs. There is a pottanic cave in this place which protects the visitors during raining season and help them to cook foods. There is natural park on the top of this place, where farm houses thatched with bamboos and flower gardens are found which attracts the tourists.

This place is a picnic spot to this district.\textsuperscript{52} The Maruthuva Malai also known as the Marunthu Vazhum Malai the abode of medicinal herbs, forms part of the Western Ghats. According to tradition, the Maruthuva Malai is a fragment of the Sanjeevi mountain, a piece of which fell down here and it was carried by Hanuman from Mahendragiri to Srilanka for healing the fatal wounds of Lakshmana, the brother of Rama, the epic hero.

It stretches for more than a km, realling a height of 800 feet at the highest point. It is about 11km from Nagercoil.\textsuperscript{53} Thiruvattar was 60kms from Kanyakumari temple there is one of the finest of temple architecture. The


\textsuperscript{52} Kanyakumari Tourism Booklet, Dept of Tamilnadu Tourism, 2006, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{53} Paulsoe, C., Advaita Philosophy of Brahmastri Chattampi Swamigal, Pothaiyadi, 2002, p.13
painting on the walls of the temple are worth sight. This temples also attract the tourist at night. During at festival time they glow small lamps which are fixed on the wall. There are thousands of such lamps which cannot see elsewhere. The body of which was covered with gold plates. There is a running river near the temple. Chitaral is a village situated 39km from Nagercoil. It is a Jain centre of pilgrimage. There is a natural cave formed by an overhanging rock. A rock locally called “Urinchiparai” situated on the north of the shrine. Pure water comes from a small hole in the rock if anyone suck it attracts every visitors. It is under the control of ASI (Archaeological Survey of India).

Easily accessible from Thiruvananthapuram 55km south on the way to Kanyakumari the land’s end of India, lies Padmanbhapuram. This old palace of the Rajas of Travancore (1500 to 1750AD) is renowned for its magnificent and elegantly designed edifices built according to Kerala’s traditional style and architecture named after the sacred lotus coming from the navel of God Vishnu (Padma – lotus – Nabha – navel, Puram – town). It is a largest palace in India with intrinsic carving and wonderful wood work.

Here we can see musical bows in mahogany, windows with coloured mica, royal chairs shines carvings, thaikottaram or the mother palace with painted ceiling, rose wood and teak carved ceilings with 90 different floral designs, Durubar Hall with a shiny black floor, specially made out of a

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54 Inscription found in the temple of Adhikesava Perumal (Balipeda corner).
combination of egg, white, jaggery, lime, burnt coconut, charcoal and river sand, granite tubs to cool cured and butter milk, secret underground passage, the kings bedrooms with four poster medicinal bed, wall frescoes of deities pictures of Lord Krishna, hanging brass lanterns lit continuously since the 18th century, hanging cage through which eagles tore criminals of death, open air swimming bath, courtyard open to the sky, overlooking ladies bedroom, the kings dressing room, toilet and bedroom, granite dance hall, Saraswathi temple, large earthen Urns, room for scribes and accountants, carved figure on columns holding oil lamps, puja (worship) room with jack fruit tree columns, fish carvings on the ceiling enormous teak beams, Belgium mirrors and an outer cyclopean stone wall fitted together without mortar.\textsuperscript{57}

*Poomukham* (entrance hall), *uttapura* (Dining hall), the clock tower *thaikottaram* (Mother palace), *Upirika Malika*, and the *Navarathiri Mandapa* are the important features of Padmanbha palace. It is today an ancient monument jointly maintained by the Government of Kerala and Tamilnadu under the administrative control of the Kerala government.\textsuperscript{58}

There is a durha named “Peer Mohamed Oliyullah durgha” at Thuckalay named after the great philiosopher Mohamed Appa, who was born in Tenkasi of Tirunelveli District. After spending sometime in spiritual pursuits in Peermedu of Kerala State he came and stayed at Thuckalay. Being a Tamil poet of great eminence, he wrote many books on philosophy. He had intimate


relationship with the kings of Chera dynasty.\textsuperscript{59} It is said that he laid foundation stone for the Padmanabhapuram granite fort. The anniversary of the great philosopher poet is celebrated every year on a grand scale on the full moon day in the month of Raja. Both the people of Kerala and Tamilnadu attend the celebration on large numbers irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.\textsuperscript{60}

The fort was rebuilt in the reign of Marthandavarma, the Venad king, during 1741 - 44. Under the supervision of De Lannoy, the Belgain General, who served as the chief of the Travancore army East India company’s troops were stationed there till the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{61} Foundry for the manufacture of guns, mortars and cannon balls were also established within the fort under the supervision of the General. In the early days, the fort was of strategic importance. Prisoners captured in the campaign against Tippu were confined in this fort. Kanyakumari district is a wondrous tourist centre that provides scenic beauty and enthusiasm to all the travelers.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{60} Syed Mogdoo Sahib, M.S., \textit{Megnana Karuvoolam}, (Tamil) 1972, p.4.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{A short Note on Udayagiri}, Vol. I, p. 335.