CHAPTER XIII

Conclusion
“Faith” is the basis of any higher religions. The advancement of Science and Technology did not have any check over the rapid spread of religious practices and observing the rites and rituals as per their religious dogmas and doctrines. The existence of temples, a sacred place of veneration and worship at every nook and corner, rural or urban areas and almost in all places bear witness to this faith. The rulers of the ancient past, right from the Pallavas, the art of construction of temples gained momentum. The style of temple structures and architectural components have gone through periodical changes. Building of temples, donating in the form of cash and kind, proper maintenance, periodical renovations of these temples were the magnificent contributions of the rulers of the post. Religious tolerism was yet another noteworthy aspect followed by these rulers. Hence, both Saivisra and Vaishnavism flourished in the soil along with the holy shrines. Both Saivite Nayanmars and Vaishnavite Alwars played a vital role in propagating “Bakthi” in terms of their holy hymnals. Hence, Tamilnadu in general and Thanjavur district in particular has been an important area where exists massive as well as tiny temples attributed to various Gods and Goddess. After the 7th Century, Came into practice. The installation of the Navagrahas within the temple proper and offering worship to them as per the agamic rites and rituals.

In and around Thanjavur district, there are temples, though they were not exclusively built for the Navagrahas, exact the exception of
the Sooriyanar temple at Thirumalangudi, others got familiarity as temples of the Navagrahas or Navagraha Sthalas. The Navagrahas which are known in Tamil as Sooriyan, Chandran, Sevai, Puthan, Guru, Sukkiran, Sani, Ragu and Kethu. Each of the first seven grahas are also known by the days of the week as Gnayiru (Sun), Thingal (Moon), Sevai (Mars), Puthan (Mercury), Viyazhan or Guru (Jupiter), Velli or Sukkiran (Mars), Sani (Saturn). The last two grahas, Ragu and Kethu do not represent any days of the week. These Navagrahas are housed at the Sthalas of Thirumangalakkudi, Thingalur, Vaitheeswaran Koil, Thiruvengadu, Alangudi, Kanjanur, Thirunallar, Thirunageswaram and Keelaperumpallam.

As cited earlier, the study has been extensively carried over covering the relevant details of all the Navagraha temples. In the foregoing chapters, all the relevant details of each Navagraha temple have been dealt in detail. Although, almost in all the Saiva temples that exists in and around Thanjavur district, the images of the Navagrahas have been installed and offered worship. But, in course of time, the cited Siva temples have become popular, not only for the main deities, but, because of the presence of a particular Navagraha. Hence, they came to be known as “Navagraha Sthalas”. An abstract of details of each Navagraha Sthala has been described to present a comprehensive idea of the gist of the details dealt in each chapter.

Sooriyanar temple at Thirumangalakkudi is the one and only temple exclusively built for the Navagraha Sooriyan, in the Thanjavur
district. This temple is more older than the sun temple at Konark. The presiding deify of the temple is Sooriyan itself. He is present along with his consorts Usha Devi and Saya Devi with in the temple complex, the images of other Navagrahas have been installed. The agamas mentions about the installation and mode of worship of the Navagrahas. There are two types of installation of Navagrahas in Saivite temples called “Agama Prathishtai” and “Vaithiga Prathishtai”. In the Sooriyanar temple, the Navagrahas have been installed. The agamas mentions about the installation of Navagrahas in Saivite temple called “Agama Prathishtai” and “Vaithiga Prathishtai”. In the Sooriyanar temple, the Navagrahas have been installed as per the Agama Prathishtai having sun in the centre and other Navagrahas as per the same. The Sthala Viruksha of the temple is Vellerukku. The holy tanks are called Sooriya Pushkarani and Cauvery. The following saints namely Parichithu Maharaja, Sidhrangathan, Pruvarasu, Indira, Thoomakethu and Nala. According to inscriptional sources, during the 12th century A.D., this temple was converted into a granite structure by Kulotunga Chola. The consecration of the temple was held on 20-11-1988 by the Thiruvavaduthurai Athinam. The temple is also otherwise known as “Kulotunga Chola Marthandalayam”. This temple is the one and only temple in the whole of South India to have separate shrines for all the Navagrahas.

The Navagraha Chandran (Moon) has been housed in Sri Kayilayanathar temple at Thingalur. The presiding deify of the temple
is Sri Kayilayanathar and the Amman of the temple is Sri Periyanayaki Amman. The holy tanks of the temple are Chandra Thirtham and Cauvery. The Sthala virukshas of the temple are plantain tree and vilva tree. The Sthala has the reputation of having the Devara Pathikam of Saint Thirunavukkarasar, and Seikhizhar. Saint Thirunavukkarasar did a miracle at this place by giving life to the dead son of Appoothi Adigal by singing the pathigam, starting with “Onru Kolam”. The consecration of the temple were held on 6.6.1962 and 25.2.1996. The Sthala has become a Chandra Sthala and devotees used to visit the temple, particularly on Mondays and offer worship to chandra as per the agamic rites and rituals. Those who are afflicted by the “Chandra thosha” used perform archanas so as to get relieved from the thosha.

Sevai or Angaragan is a “fire graha” and the day favourable for worship of Sevai is Tuesday. This Navagraha has been housed in the Sri Vaithianatha Swamy temple at Vaitheeswaran Koil. The place has been referred to as “Pulirrukku vel ur” as per puranic sources. The puranic personalities of “Jadayu”, “Rigveda”, “Lord Muruga” and “Sooriyan”, all have visited this temple, offered worship and have obtained the grace of the Lord. The presiding deify of the temple is Sri Vaithiyanathar and the Amman is known as Thaiyalnayaki. Neem tree is the Sthala jViruksha and Sivakami Thirtham is the reputed holy tank. The Sthala has the reputation of being visited and sung holy hymnals by Thirugnana Sambandar, Thiruvavukkarasar,
Kumaragurubarar, Padikkasu Thambiran, Chidambara Munivar and poet Kalamega. The Sthala also has the reputation of obtaining mukthi to Jadayu, Kamadenu, and Sevai. The temple is under the administration of Dharmapuram Athinam. “Sevai Thosham” is an important affliction of one’s horoscope which used to cause several problems to those individuals. Hence, those afflicted with that thosha used to visit the temple and offer worship as per the rites and rituals so as to appease the graha and also to get relieved from the thosha.

The sthala has been known as the “Puthan Sthala”, because Puthan offered worshipped at this place and obtained the status of being one among the Navagrahas. The puranas referred to this place as “Swetha Vanam” and Thiruvengadu. Lord Indira and the white elephant Iravatham and also Brahma offered worship at this Sthala and obtained the grace of the Lord. The Devaram Trios namely Thirugnana Sambandar, Thirunavukkarasar and Sundarar have visited the temple and have sung holy Devaram hymns in praise of the Lord and the Sthala. The Sthala has the reputation of having three major deities namely Swetharanyar, Agoramoorthy and Natarajar. Also, three major Ammans namely Pirma Vidyambiga, Ashta Puja Durgai and Kali. There are also three holy tanks namely Agni Thirtham, Sooriya Thirtham and Chandra Thirtham. There are also three Sthala Virukshas namely Banyan tree, Konnrai and Vilvam. The day favourable for offering worship to Puthan is Wednesday. Those with the affliction of Puthan Thosha, visit the temple on Wednesdays.
and offer worship to the Navagraha Puthan. The consecration of the temple was performed on 13.7.1986.

Sri Abathsahayeswar Temple at Alangudi has been otherwise known as the Guru Sthala. The Sthatha has been known by other names, such as “Kasi Aranyam” and Alangudi. Devarama hymns refers to this place as “Irumpoolai”. Since Lord Siva consumed the “Alakala Vizham”, the place came to be known as “Alangudi”. The favourite day of Guru is Thursday. Special Poojas can be offered to Guru and Thursdays and can obtain his blessings. There are two holy tanks in the temple known as Brahma Thirtham and Amirtha Pushkarni. Saint Viswamitra, Agastiya, Musukunda and Virapathira have visited this temple, offered worship to the Lord and have obtained his grace and mukthi. Saint Thirunanasambandar and Poet Kalamegam have visited the place and have sung holy hymns. The place is noted for getting relief from “Nagathosha”. This Sthala is one among the “Pancha Aranya Sthalas”.

Kanjanur is the 36th Saivite Shrines located to the north of the river Cauvery. The presiding deity of the temple has been known as Agneeswarar and the Amman is known as Kargagambigai. The sthala is noted for the worship of the Navagraha Sukkiran, hence, came to be known as the Sukkirran Sthala. There are two holy tanks in the temple called the Agni Thirtham and Parasara Thirtham. Saints Parasasarar, Brahma, Agni, Chandra, Kalikamar, Manakkanjara Nayanar and Harathatha Sivacharyar have visited the temple, offered
worship to the deifies and obtained the grace of the Lord. Saint Thirunavukkarasar have praised the deify and the Sthala through Devaram hymns. Friday is the favourite day for Sukkiran and those who want to obtain his favour and also relief from the Sukkiran thosha visit this temple of Fridays and offer worship to the Navagraha as per the agamic rites and rituals.

Thirunallar is the only place outside the Thanjavur district where exists the Sthala for the Navagraha Sani. Although, the presiding deify of the temple is Lord Dharbaranyeswara and the Goddess is Pranambigai, the Sthala is noted for the worship of the Navagraha Saneeswaran. The Sthala is closely associated with the puranic episode of Nala and Daraayanthi. Saturday is the favourite day for Sani and devotees used to visit the temple on every Saturday, have a holy dip in the “Nala thirtha” and offer worship as per the agamic rites and rituals. The Sthala has a separate shrine for Saneeswaran. Lord Thirumal, Brahma, Indira, Agasthiya, Pulasthia, Arhcuna and Nala have visited the temple and offered worship to the deifies and obtained the grace of the Lord. Sani has the unique feature of being called as “Eswara” among all the Navagrahas. Saint Thirunavukkarasar, Thirugnana Sambandar and Sundarar have visited Thirunallar and have praised the Sthala and the deifies through the Devaram hymns. Thirunallar is one among the seven “Sabtha Vidanga Sthalas”. It is the 52nd Saivite temples located to the south of the river cauvery. “Sani thosha” has been regarded as an acute one, hence, thousands of
people visit this shrine and offer worship to Saneeswara, to get relieved from the thosha and also to obtain his favours. "Sani Peyarchi", the transition of Sani from one Rasi to another has been regarded an important event, for which, throughout the country visit the place and worship Lord Saneeswara.

The holy shrine for Lord Nageswarar, Naganathar and Shanbakaranyeswarar at Thirunageswaram has been noted for the worship of the Navagraha Ragu. Ragu has been called as the "ascending node of the moon". In this temple also there is a separate shrine for Ragu. The Sthala Viruksha of the temple is the "Shanbaga tree" and the holy tank is called the "Sooriya Thirtham". The temple has the Devara Pathigangal sung by Saint Thirunavukkarasar, Thirugnanasambandar, Sundarar and Seikhkizhar. The temple is closely associated with Saint Seikhkizhar who performed the renovatory works in the temple. The unique feature of the temple is that, when milk abhisha has been performed to Ragu alias Nagaraja, the white colour of the milk turns into "blue". So far as Ragu is concerned, there is no specific day is attributed, hence, the devotees offer worship to Ragu at any day as per their wish. Ragu Sthala at Thirunageswaram has become a Sthala for performing poojas, archanas and abhishekhas for those who have been afflicted with "Ragu thosa". The holy shrine is the 29th Saivite temples located on the southern bank of the river Cauvery.
The original name of the temple is Sri Naganatha Swamy temple and the Presiding deify is Sri Naganatha Swamy. His consort is known as Sowndiranayaki. The Sthala Viruksha of the temple is the bamboo tree and the holy tank is called Nagathirtham. The temple has the reputation of being visited, worshipped and sung holy Devara hymnals by Saint Thirunavukkarasar, Thirugnanasambandar and Sundarar. The name of the Sthala has been found in the inscription issued by Vikrama Chola where the name of the Sthala has been referred to as “Rajarajanattuth Thalaichengattuth Thiru Valampupam”. Astrologically, Kethu has been known as “the descending node of the dragon”. Moreover, there is no specific day attributed to Kethu. Hence, those who wish to offer worship to Kethu, select a day according to their wish and offer worship as per the agamic rites and rituals. The noteworthy aspect of this sthala is that, only in the recent past, the sthala gained popularity as kethu sthala and hence, with in a short period of two or three years, the sthala has gained popularity and hence, devotees, all over from Tamilnadu visit the place and offer worship to the Navagraha “Kethu”.

A detailed study of the puranas and legends associated with all the Navagraha temples have been discussed in each chapter attributed to each Navagraha. The puranic sources throw light on the relevance of each Navagraha with those of the temples where the Navagrahas have gained importance and came to be known as Navagraha Sthalas. The devotees visit and offer worship to the deifies of these temple on
“general ground” and the Navagrahas “on specific ground or purpose”. In this study, attempts are being made to present the architectural features of the temples. At the end of each chapter, the plan of the temple has been appended with illustrations.

Though, a detailed study of the sculpture and iconography of the images of the Navagrahas cannot be attempted, the general features of the images of the Navagrahas have been discussed. The details of poojas and festivals associated with the main temples along with the Navagrahas present in the temple. Moreover, the Navagrahas are said to have the power to cause both good and bad fortunes, hence, they are worshipped with the specific Agamic rites and rituals either to appease them or to obtain their grace.

“Graha” means “to attract” something like a magnet. The Navagrahas are closely associated with the science of Astrology. There are a number of vital aspects associated with the Navagrahas and astrology. As the Navagrahas are nine in number, the Rasis are twelve in number. The horoscope of a person is so calculated taking into account of the time of birth and the position of the Navagrahas present in the houses of the Rasis. For each Navagraha, there are as many as twenty three astrological and other associated components. As per the science of astrology, each graha moves from one rasi house to another as per the prescribed or the calculated period. This transition of grahas from house to house of the rasis, is believed to cause good and bad fortunes. The science of astrology speaks vividly
about all these things. The vitas aspects, such as Dasai, thosam are viewed very seriously and they need to be relieved through Parihara. Parihara constitute the method of appeasing the grahas by offering poojas, archanas and abhishekas as per the prescribed agamic rites and rituals. These factors have been discussed in detail in each chapter attributed to each Navagraha.

**Findings:**

As a result of the study, there ought to arise a striking contrast between two "poles" namely "faith" and "the advancement of science and technology". Any higher religion based on faith has no logical base, whereas science and technology is logical oriented. But, the advancement of Science and Technology do not have any major impact over the religious oriented life of the people. As J.S. Mill rightly observed that the life style of people of the oriental part of the world comprises of the three basic characters namely "(i) Passive (ii) meditative and (iii) Spiritual", hence, religion and religious practices such as worship, poojas, offerings etc, have become part and parcel of the Indian people. The people belonging to the three major religions of India in general and the district of Thanjavur in particular namely the Hindus, the Christians and the Muslims are very much religious minded and show keen interest in keeping up their religious practices. The Navagraha Sthalas for the Hindus, Veilankanni Basilica for the Christian, Nagore Durgah for the Muslims are the major places of pilgrimage and sacred places of worship.
In the recent past, astrology comprising of horoscope, Vastu Sastra and the like have gained momentum and accelerated the religious fervour among the people. The recent “Sani Peyarchi” function Thirunallur and the “Guru Peyarchi” function at Alangudi are the typical examples to substantiate the truth that Navagrahas and their worship have taken deep root in the day life of the Hindus.

**Suggestions:**

It has been observed through the study, that almost all the Navagraha temples have lot of properties in terms of lands, ornaments and Hun dial offering, but in terms of their maintenance, a lot of improvements have to be made. The serenity and the sanctity of the shrines should go hand in hand along with the cleanliness of the temple complex, holy tanks and executing of the necessary renovatory works then and there. More facilities like lodges, transport, healthcare, food and water can be made available to the devotees so that they can enjoy solace and comfort along with the divine bliss.