CHAPTER II

Sources
The topic is selected for study comprises of nine different Navagarahā temples in which eight temples are located with in the Thanjavur district and another one is located at Thirunallar, Karaikal, falling under the union territory of Pondicherry. Hence, there arise a complexity of exploring and studying the relevant sources for the study of these temples at various levels. Anyhow, the available principal sources have been tabulated under two broad categories namely (i) Epigraphical sources and (ii) Literary Sources. Another problem involved in the study is that, that most of the temples are not basically temples exclusively built for the installation and worship of the Navagrahās. All the nine Navagrahā temples have a variety of sources and they have to be incorporated with the sources available with those temples where these Navagrahās have been installed.

**Epigraphical Sources:**

The Epigraphical sources are considered to be more authentic and primary sources of information. The Navagrahā temples, though most of them were not independent or exclusively built for the worship of the grahas, have been housed in the saivite temples. These temples, which belong mostly to the chōla period have many inscriptions of the Chōḷās, Pāṇḍiyās, Nāyaks, both in Tamil and Skraṃṭhā. They have been studied, copied and cataloged by the Department of Archaeology. They also have been published the Archaeological Survey of India. The Nāganātha Swāmy temple at
Thirunāgēswaram, which is noted for the worship of the Grahā Rāgu, has as many as sixteen inscriptions and their summaries have been published in the A.R.E. for the years 1897 to 1911. Those inscriptions copied down in 1897 have been registered with the numbers 81 to 84\textsuperscript{1}. The other inscriptions have been copied down in the year 1911 and assigned the numbers 211 to 222\textsuperscript{2}. Most of these inscriptions are intact and a few of them have been damaged. All the sixteen inscriptions of this temple belongs to the chōla period and most of them belong to the donative type of inscriptions describing various kind of donations offered by the kings and queens. They also furnish the names of the king and queens. These inscriptions are valuable in nature and help researchers to understand the nature of donations granted by the kings and queens.

There are stone inscriptions in the Darbhāranyēswarā temple at Thirunallaru, which is noted for the worship of the grahā sani. On walls, five inscriptions have been engraved. Of these, the first two belong to Chōla Rājadhirāja I, the third belong to Chōla Kulōṭṭungal and the fifth to Jatāvarman Sundara Pāndiyan III. The author of the fourth inscription is not known. The first two inscriptions have been assigned to Rajādhiraja I to his thirty first and thirty fourth regnal years respectively. Both are donative type of inscriptions mentioning the donations of lands, performance of dances (Aivagai Kūṭṭru) and the purchase of paddy for daily Naivēdayam to Lord Darbhāranyēswarā. The third one belongs to Kulōṭṭunga Chōla I,
which narrates of the maintenance of a Saiva Mandapa out of an endowment of 560 Kalams of paddy. The fourth one refers to a grant of land entitled Nelvāicherry Anabhāya Mangalam by one Ponnāzhvan Nachiṅarkiṇiyan of Dēēpandgudi to make food offerings for the Lord on the Bharani day in the month of Aipasi and Chittiṛai. The fifth one dated to Jatāvarman Sundara Pāndiyan, refers to the sale of community service by the temple administration to Saiva Brahmans for 50 panams. There is another inscription on the seat of Thiagaraja, which also does not bear the name of the king.

On the northern wall of the mandapa, infront of the Darbhāranyēwarā shrine, there are two incomplete inscriptions in Tamil with a few Grantha characters. One is ascribed to Rājākeśarivarman, dated to his eleventh regnal year. This inscription, running to four paragraphs, open with an invocation to Bhūdēvi, Saraswati, Durga and Lakshmi. The other one is ascribed to Chōla Thirubhuvan Chakravarti Kulōtuṅga Chōla Dēva III, the conqueror of Madurai, dated to the last quarter of the 12th century.

Sri. Swēthārṇyēswara Swāmy temple at Thiruvēṅgadu is the holy place for the worship of the Graha Puthan. This temple is an ancient one and should have built during the Chōla period, which can be inferred as a result of the Chōla period inscriptions ascribed to Rājarāja Chōla I. There are as many as 93 inscriptions on the temple complex belonging to various dynasties from the Chōlas to the Marāṭhās. All these inscriptions have been copied down by the
Archaeological survey of India. They have been registered and dated as per the rules. In the year 1896, 13 inscriptions have been registered and in the year 1918, as many as 80 inscriptions have been registered. All these inscriptions belong to the 10th century to the 17th century.

These inscriptions furnish details about Rājarāja I, Rājendra I, Virarājendara, Kulōtuṅga Vikrama Chōla, Kulasēkarapāṇḍiya, Gaumara Pāṇdiya, Vikrama Pāṇdiya, Jatāvarman Suṇḍara Pāṇdiya, Parākīrama Pāṇdiya, Sri Vallabādēva, Viruppanṇa Udayār, Krishna Dēva Rāya, Tukkōji etc., Apart from the names of the kings, the following names of the queens also have been mentioned. Rājarāja Nambiraṭṭiyar, Kōothan Vīra Nārāyaṇiyar, Parāṇṭhagan Māhādēviyar, Sembiyān Mahā Dēviyar, Thirailōkkiam udayār, Vānavan Mādeviyār, Nakkan Uloōka Mādēviyar, Panchavan Mādēviyar, Villan Mādeviyār etc., These inscriptions also furnish details about the Deities, certain components of the temple, poojas and festivals, donations offered for charitable purposes.

**Literary Sources:**

Literary Sources constitute both primary and secondary sources, hence they are taken into account as source materials to study about the temples, Deities, holy tanks, pōojas, festivals, modes of worship etc., Though none of the literary works is particularly intended to depict the history and growth of the temples, they may be generally used as sources for the study of these nine Navagrahā
temples. As the study on the Navagrahā temples in and around Thanjavur district depends mainly on these literary works. In spite of the absence of any authentic historical work on these temples particular, the literary works relating to the temple and their Deities serve incidentally the purpose of reconstructing the history of the temple. The main sources of information about these temples prior to the time of the Chōlas have been collected only from these literary works.

The following nine Navagrahā Temples have their abodes in the following temples, hence, the study of the Navagrahā temples have to be studied along with the main temples.

1. Sōrīyanar temple at Thirumaṅgalakūdi - independent temple exclusively built for the Graha Sōrīan or Sun.

2. Thingalur temple at Thīŋgalūr attributed to the Graha Thīŋgal or the moon is also an independent temple exclusively meant for the worship of the moon.

3. The temple for the worship of the Graḷā Seyyai or Ankāragan has been housed in the Vaithēeswaranātha Swāmy temple at Vaithēeswaran Koil.

4. The temple for the worship of the Graḥā Puthan has been housed in the Swēthāranyā Swāmy temple at Thiruveṅgādū.

5. The Guru temple has been housed at the temple at Ālangudi

6. The temple for the Graha Sukkiran is at Kanjanūr.
7. The temple for the Grahā Sani or Saturn has been housed in the Dharbāranēswarā temple at Thirunallar.

8. The temple at Thrināgēswaram is the abode of the Grahā Rāgu.

9. The Grahā Kēthu has been housed in the Nāganātha Swāmy Temple at Kīlapерumpalālam.

The above-cited holy shrines are not only noted for the main Deities but mainly for the particular Navagrahā installed there in. These temples have been built and renovated during the periods of the Chōlas, Paṇḍiyās, the Rāyas of Vijayanagar, the Nāyakṣ and even the Marāthās. Hence, these temples have been visited by the Dēvaram trios namely Thirunavukkārasar, Thirugñanasambaṇḍar and Suṇḍarar and they have sung devotional hymns in praise of these deities. Thiruvachagam sung by Manikavasakar also have sung devotional hymns in praise of the deities.

Saint Thirugñanasambaṇḍar sung a hymn in praise of the sun god and it has been advised to recite and repeat it everyday so as to earn the blessings of the Lord Sun or Sōrion⁴. Poet Bhārathiār also have glorified the Sun god by means of a poem⁵. St. Thirunavukkārasar had close association with Thiṅgalūr and have sung the Thiṅgalūr Padigam on the eve of the death and resurrection of the son of Appōothi Adigal who had been a staunch admirer of the Saint⁶. Saint Thirugñanaṇasambaṇḍar had exalted the manifold glories of the Lord of Vaithēēswaran Kōil through his famous Vaithēēswaran Kōil Padigam
otherwise known as Thirupullirukku Vēłur Padigam. The same saint after visiting and worshipping Lord Akōramōorthy at Thiruveṅgādu, glorified the nature, power, beauty and blessings of the Lord through the Thiruveṅkāṭṭu Padigam. Alangudi Padigam is yet another devotional hymn sung by the same saint. Saint Thirunavukkarasar had glorified the Lord of Kanjanūr and have sung the Kanjanūr Padigam. Saint Thirugnaṇāsambaṇḍar have sung two holy hymals namely the Pachchai Padigam and Thirunallāṟṟu Padigam. Saint Thirugnaṇāsambaṇḍar sang the celebrated Kōlaru Padigam.

Apart from these holy hymnals sung by these saints, there are other literary works both in Tamil and Sanskrit of which some of them are worth mentioning. Arulmigu Sanisuvara Bhagavan Vāzhthu or Sā yaputhirar Thuthithi, Thirunāgēswarar Pathigam Vol.1 and Vol.II, Sōriya Ashtagam in Sanskrit, Ādiṭṭya Struthayam in Sanskrit, Navagrahā Kēṭṛthaṅkaikal composed by Muthuswāmy Thīṭchithar, Navagrahā Gāyatri in Sanskrit, Navagrahā Sthōṇṭhirangal in Sanskrit, Navagrahā mōsla maṇṭhirangal in Sanskrit, Navagrahā Pātha Vaṇakkaŋgal in Tamil. All these literary works are closely associated with the Navagrahās mentioning their nature, power, actions, afflictions, relief etc.,

The next category of literary works are the sthala varalaru of the shrines and books written by different authors. Some of them are worth mentioning here. Agaramuthalvan’s Arulmigu Nāganātha Swāmy Thirukōil Kēthu Sthala Varalāru, and Thiruveṅkāṭṭu Sthala
Varalāru throw light on the temples and the two Navagrahās Kēthu and Puthan⁵. C. Arunkumar’s Puthan Sthala Peṟumai and Ālangudi Sthala Varalāru describe the nature and powers of the Graha puthan⁴. S. Vaithianāthan has written a detailed book entitled Thirunallāṟru sthala varalāru along with the legend of Nalā and Damayanṭhi. T.S. Kōthandaram has written a book called Kadan thollai nēkum Seyvai Vaḻhipadu²⁰. Śrīvalar Śir Sivaprakāśa Dēśika Paramācharya Śrīmūrti Nāmuvi Pranava has written a book on Sōōriyanar Kōil Sthalavaralāru²⁷. M. Bālu’s Thingalūr Sthalavarāḷaru gives some idea on the Thingalūr temple and the associated graha Thingal or moon. Dr. Sekkizhar Dāsan has written a detailed book Arulmigu Nāganātha Swāmy Thirukkōil Thiruḻthala Varalāru²⁹. Dr. N.K. Mangalamurugesan’s Navagrahā Thiruḻththalaṅgaḷ³⁰, Mēṇāṭchi Sūndaram’s chōlanattu Navagrahāth thalaṅgaḷ³¹, Viswanātha Sivāchariar’s Navagrahā Vaḻhipadu³², K.V. Jaganāthan’s Navagrahāngal, S. Senthikumar’s Navagrahā Vaḻhipāṭṭumurai³³, R. Śrāminathan’s Navagrahā Sthalaṅgaiṅ Thirumurai Thiraṭṭu³⁴, V.C. Kirubanandam’s Nalam Tharum Navagrahā Vaḻhipadu³⁵ are other books to understand the history of the temples and the nature of the Navagrahās.

From these works, a detailed account of the legendary episodes associated with the temples, the sanctity of the holy shrines, the visits paid to it by Gods, Saints and devotees who obtained the bliss of the Deities have been inferred. Though the sthala puranams lack in
historical sense, it is mainly aimed to exact the religious significance and sanctity of the Deities. All these literary works furnish varied information including a few historical facts.

In addition to the cited literary works, certain books, journals and articles appeared in dailies also provide certain materials. The Sthala varalaru of the temples provide the basic details of the temples in brief. A note on the Saiva Saints of the temple has been provided by K. Veḷḷaiyāranaṇ in his Paṇṇiru Thīrumurai Varalaru. S.R. Bāla Subramanian make reference about some of the Navagraha temples in his book Early Chōla Art. Ā dinañkañkal by S. Dāndapāṇi Desikar throws light on the administration and other allied aspects of the two Navagraha temples. K.A.N. Sāstri, in his classical work the cōlas mentions some of the inscriptions of the temple.

Among the Sastras and books on the Indian and south Indian temple architecture, mention must be made of the following books namely Architecture of Mānasāra, studies in the south Indian temple complex, The elements of Hindu Iconography, The Development of Hindu Iconography, Dravidian Architecture, Indian Architecture – Buddhist and Hindu, Introduction to the study of Temple Art, A study on the cultural Developments in the Chōla Period, Indian Sculpture south Indian images of Gods and Goddess, Temples of South India, south India shrines, The Vijayanagara Art, Sīrpa Señul have been referred to for this study.
The Executive officers, Priests and the elders of the temple area, reputed persons in the field of Astrology have been consulted to collect valuable details of the administration, pūrṇajas, festivals and other allied aspects of all the nine Navagrahā temples. As only three of the nine Navagrahā temples are under the control of the Dharmapuram Adiṇām (Vaithēēswaran Kōil Sevvai Temple) and Madurai Adiṇām (Kanjanūr Sukkiram Thiruṭṭhalam) and Thiruvāvaduthurai Adiṇām (Sōōriyanār Temple) the authorities have been consulted so as to ascertain the nature of administration, finance and other allied aspects, the remaining five temples of directly under the control of the Hindu Religious and charitable Endowment Board, Government of TamilNadu and the Pondicherry Government in Collaboration with the Dharmapuram Adiṇām.

Apart from the cited sources, the following books of Astrology also have served as source material so as to understand and bring about factors of the Navagrahās on astrological base. Some of them are: “Jāthā Alangaam”, “Jāthaga Pārijātham”, “Māruṭhu Yogam”, “Thāndavamalai”, “Pōōrva Parāchaḥrīyam”. 
Foot Notes


2. 81-84 OF 1897 – 191


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   (Dharmapuram Ādinam, 1963) VS 586, PP 484 – 85.

6. Bhārathiyar, Bhārathiyar Kavithaigal, Ed. E. Sundaramuthy,
   (Pāvai Publications, 2000) VS 51, PP 164-6

7. Thirunavukkarasar, Dēvaram Nānkam Tirumurai Thingalūr
   Padigam Eds. E. Arunai Vadivel

8. Thirugnasambandar, Dēvaram, Thiruppuḻirukku Vēlur Padigam,
   Nānkam Thirumurai, eds. Arunai Vadivel Mudaliar and Sōmasundara Tambiran, (Dharmapuram Ādinam, 1967),
   VS 86, P104-106.


12. Thirugnanasambandar, Dēvaram, Kolaru Padikam, Āram Thirumurai, eds. Arunai Vadivel Mudalair and Sōmasundara Tambirān (Dharmapuram Ādinam, 1966) VS 84, PP.33-34.


16. Ibid,


19. ibid,

20. ibid.,

21. ibid.,


27. Śīr Valar Śīr Sivapprakāsa Dēsika Paṟamāchārya Śvāmigal, Sōōriyanār Kōil Sthala Varalāru, (Chennai: Sri Namachivaya Offset Printers, 2000)


32. Senthil Kumar, S, Navagrahā Vazhipāṭṭu muṟai (Kumbakonam: Balaji Publications,2001)

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38. Dandapaṇī, S, Ādinākkōilkal, (Dharmapuram: Āthinam
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45. Percy Brown, Indian Architecture-Buddhist and Hindu Periods,
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