Chapter-IV

Management and Temple-functionaries

Sri Bhramarambha Mallikarjuna Swamy

Devasthanam is one of the ancient shrines in Bharata

Desam. It is the second Kshetram in Dwadasa Jyothirlingas

and Bhramarambhika is one of the Astadasa peethas in

India. Not only in Iythihasas but also in all Puranas

the importance of its management find place. During

the East India Company rule the worship and management

of the temple was given over to the Pushpagiri-Pitha.

In the year 1929, the management of the temple was

taken over by the Ex-H.R.A Board Madras State. And

1.1985 Manual by the Chief Commissioner of Endowments,
Govt. of Andhra pradesh, Hyderabad, pp12-13.
When Shri Paidi Lakshmaiah, the then Trust Board Chairman was the Commissioner of Endowment Department of Andhra Pradesh with his devotion and zeal laid ghat road at a huge cost paved way for its present growth.

At present, there is a Trust Board is nominated by Government of Andhra Pradesh and the Board is headed by an experienced Luminary of Rayalaseema Region, who had the experience of heading Endowment Department as Commissioner for 7 years. There are 10 other trustees also appointed by Government of Andhra Pradesh.

2. Ibid...
Now, I shall briefly mention the other staff, who work in this sacred-complex here. In the past, most temple-functionaries were hereditary and most of them had been granted inam-villages (agraharams) like the ritual-specialists, although some had only minor payments. Now-a-days, temple's regular staff were not hereditary, but were instead employed by independent body, namely, Endowments of Andhra Pradesh Government.

The most important category under this heading was the group of cooks, artisans and temple-servants. Other servicing staff were employed regularly by Devasthanam to provide specific-services at festivals.

or other occasions at which they were required. Since
the abolition of inam-estates, all these staff have
been paid salaries by the Devasthanam and cannot be
dismissed except for serious misconduct according to
their Union's contract. However, large number of formerly
hereditary personnel have given up their rights in
the temple, mainly since the abolition of inam
estates. Various other personnel formerly employed
by endowments are also the administration employees
to-day at Srisailam. Animal-keepers and a host of
peon,s, sweepers, barbers etc., have also been taken on

5 Ibid...
6 Ibid...

since the Independence. For most personnel, in all categories, the salary paid by the Devasthanam is reasonable. The supervisory-clerical staff of temple administration itself, as well as garland makers plus shopkeepers, who ply their trade within the sacred complex precincts, Devasthanam's main duty to-day generally to oversee the priests and other officials working in the temple, and to make themselves available to any devotee, who may have a genuine complaint.

I am attempting to locate my inquiry into them in the context of the study of their

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7. Ibid....
interrelationships and such an effort requires at least a provisional outlook of their works as functional-community, which they maintained and transformed by into an organised-pattern. The respondents were asked to choose one of the four given answers for the question of handling temple's management. This reveals their adjustment in the work like to share at festival-time; an equal percentage have supported the statement that the temple-work is meant for them. Nearly, 14.3 per cent respondents along with its Executive-officer are agreed that there is nothing wrong in helping the
pilgrims during the festive-season. A noticeable feature is that the temple-functionaries have more flexible attitude in the matter of sharing temple’s work.

Saiva-stories, their attitudes and beliefs that are acted out in rites, dramas and festivals. It shapes and is shaped by the feelings, ideas and behavior of those who practice it. It is essential for us to recognize the multifaceted character of the data and their complex-interconnections among its various components. For example, business-links are frequently seen here on ritual occasions and presented as explanations for why rites are performed according to certain-patterns. In this
festival-process in honor of these temple-functionaries, the celebrants participate in a symbolic and social sequence of episodes that takes them through phases of interrelative-understanding, which is marked by public dancing, parading and the relaxation of ordinary social hierarchical behavior toward reintegration and the reassertion of normal-social roles with traces of feelings at having passed through the Ugadi-festival process together as their annual-festival, who are migrated from Kannada-desa, socio-historically looking into it's facts.

Formal and non-formal aspects: The private-property by

the temple-personalities is still immense and a much

greater management of their resources according to the

local-incometax officer's information, whom I had met

him in my recent-trip to the above place. In the past,

most people informed me that these temple-officials

were hereditary and most of them had been granted

inam lands like the priests here, although some had

only minor-estates and a very few had not lands at all.

These functionaries, too, only continued legitimately to

hold their inam-lands if they discharged the associated

duties in the temple, and virtually everything stated
above category-specialists, who equally applied, mutatis-
mutandis to other personnel lands as well. The present
contemporary situation is very different due to their
links with the devotees or pilgrims. Especially rich
castes of this area, namely, reddys always take the
advantage of low rate of these temple-lands to make
their permanent-assets. Purchasing-power will lies with
these people and they try to divert the legal-norms
due to their strong political-influence at state as
well as at National-level. There are many cases in this
context, who misused the position of sacred-farms and

temple-lands. However, a large number of formerly

9. From Challa Kondayya Commission Report, Govt. of A.P.
   1963-87. HyD.
hereditary personnel have given up their rights in the Temple, mainly since the abolition of inam-estates.

Temple and in others they quit after the disputes due to politics and rampant-corruption in the Devasthanam's administration. Some of them have been replaced by the above caste for capturing cheap rated lands of this temple. They try to establish their own lobbies with sophisticated machinery and keep on taking the advantage of low-prices here. It ultimately generates a negative direction towards innocent devotees here. The local communists exposed these manipulation, but later collaborated with them.

10. Ibid...
Devasthanam's Executive-Officer along with his subordinates will take an initiative-step in all matters, licenses of shops will be pertained only with his/her seal and this will help the growth of organised-business and solve the problem of high-rates, which are charged by private shopkeepers here.

This will also stop the exploitation by the crooked commercial monopolists at this place. Depending on the market and the situation of the shop besides the rental value amounting to from rupees one hundred seventy to Rs. 1,700 per month, the charges will go high according to festive-season.

At present, nearly 81% of the total expenditure of the temple is met out by the donations. With the growth of the market-complex, it will also becomes the focal-point for pilgrim and shopkeeper to interact in terms of economic-needs. Outside devotee also look more for their personal-interest as well as interest in sacred-unit here. The State Government for which it pays to purchase the ration for temple-needs. It cost Rs.1,79,000 per annum according to 1991 Manual which is recently released by the Chief Commissioner of Endowments, Hyderabad, A.P. At present, the temple has 21 storage-rooms in the different-comers of its main

12. Ibid...
complex. It is known as 'godams' or 'godowns'. They are used for the emergency-needs according to the legal-advice by these functionaries. Anually the contributions comes from life-donors, maths, trusts, monasteries, dharma salas to conduct the main-ritual functions. Both the priests and these functionaries are self-custodians of deities like Bhramarambha as well as Sri Mallikarjunaswamy and the exact origin of these two groups professionally is much known in their ajmany-units. It was mentioned that the records, which processed by them are authentic for providing full-information about clans with their gotrams. The income of these groups has exceeded Rs. 750 per annum

from the known pilgrims. But they are not satisfied due
to their hunger for money and other luxuries. It is
true that in recent years economic need and that
there was a band of temple-functionaries, who prayed
for growth and well being of its Devasthanam. Rituals
are the soul of all cultures and the basic art of it
within this main-complex. They can be so complicated
that even a learned priest would have to devote his
life time to master them. The attention to ritual—the
different ways in which one cooks, when one washes,
whom one can engage in conversation and how one drapes
one's sari or dhoti is traditionally solely attributed
to it.
Here, then, is a powerful nexus of socio-economic and other cultural-mores. The artists, the poets and the writers owe the pilgrims an idiom, which is comprehensible to a larger section of them, everyone is encouraged by the above functionaries. The main-stream should aim at bringing culture within easy reach of the pilgrims. They have a powerful impact on the spiritual-material well being of the society and at the same time they also significantly shape the perspectives and influence the religious-ethos here. Several functionaries in the past have employed it as a powerful instrument and this requires attention to the organizational aspects of

14. From my field-data.
15. Ibid...
temple here. They continue to be confined to the more positive-aspects of sacred-culture and exposed sufficiently to the tradition of Shaivites here and such a culture is so vital within temple-complex to glorify their maturity. One of the major objectives is to promote creativity in the fields of literature, music and visual and graphic-arts as well as other important cultural units from a social-purpose. It has been said that functionaries are great at planning and in implementing it. The temple-bureaucracy has been singularly flexible in responding to our changing social and sacred environment. The generalist-administrator is

16 Ibid....
17 Ibid....
obviously interested with the implementation of new
policy for temple's development at regional and
national level, respectively speaking.

The professional-formations are

in a well constituted executive-body of this temple. It
is an essentially a category of different class emp-
loyees structurally defined according to Endowments Act
of Andhra Pradesh Govt.'s. Class-III and Class-IV jobs
are reserved for socio-economically deprived castes and
tribes of Srisailam, who are actually employed here. The
interests of these functionaries are closely tied to
the income as profitability of temple's existing-
economy.
Clearly a culture of myth and ritual is seen as part of their entire cultural heritage. Indian temple-functionary need a fresh look, and a great deal of normative-thinking is needed to modify our sacred structure. In this context, we shall have to assess our existing sacred-cultural perspectives and refashion them to suit the changed circumstances. Naturally, the staff (especially these functionaries) had to tread very carefully. The final Report of Justice Challa Kondayya Commission made new recommendations to improve their conditions. It arrived at good conclusions, which were betterment of specific duties by them at these sacred complexes. These efforts to rationalise temple-policy

making illustrate some significant features of sacred cum economic relations within the complex. The socio-

economic autonomy (which Justice Challa Konda Yoga Commis-
sion 1983-87 had conceded to this temple) did indicate that the state control was being substantially seen and

Srisailam temple was moving into the position of bala-

ced stage. Fiscal-autonomy and special-protection were techniques to reconcile a sacred-complex wide

range of pilgrim interests and to gather support in

Kumool district as its milestones in the coming 90's.

This does mean that the Indian-temples, especially those that did interact with sacred-interests, did gain

from it. It must also be noted that the sacred-economy's
monetary and financial policies tended to limit the gains from State's protection as well. Further, let us come to some of an important structural changes in the above temple's economy. The sacred-complex of Srividya carried substantial weight and retained its capacity to influence Andhra Pradesh's Government policy, which is the next to Tirumala-Tirupathy sacred-complex. Throughout the 1980's, temple-functionaries strove to find a way to accommodate its interests within the framework of fiscal-autonomy and wanted protection. In the 1990's, the temple-functionaries and Devasthanam members attempted to reorganise its economic interrelationships between State's treasury
and this sacred-complex to accommodate the changes
brought by the acting-bodies here.

Medical, welfare and infrastructural facilities: Devasthanam

is running a Allopathic dispensary to attend on the
pilgrims as well as local-people here. Free medicines
are being supplied by Devasthanam. There is an M.B.B.S
doctor and adequate staff under him and a clinical
laboratory and also E.C.G. equipment recently provided.

It is a 15 beded hospital. There are proposals to increase
the bed strength to 25 by appointing a Lady Doctor also.

The Deputy Director of Health & Medical Services (Malaria)
is in consultation with these temple-functionaries.

19. From the Notices on income-distribution and
expenditure from 1951 to 1989 of Srisaila-
Devasthanam A.P.
The income of the temple has exceeded 2 crores per annum. There are 120 furnished cottages and 8 choultries consisting of 250 rooms constructed and managed by Devasthanam. Devasthanam provides free-feeding also to the pilgrims daily. Besides these there are 400 rooms constructed by private associations. An unique feature of Srisailam is that almost all the castes existing in Andhra Pradesh have constructed their own choultries with the donations collected mostly from their community people who are working here as temple's main-functionaries. They are thrown open to all the pilgrims irrespective of caste or communal-feelings.

Kalyana Mandapam has been completed at a cost of 9

20. Ibid...
21. Ibid...
lakhs. Prasadam is also distributed freely in the morning and evening to the pilgrims here. Maths and trusts are doing liberally good services along with voluntary cum private-agencies to construct their own choultries to provide free accommodation to the pilgrims particularly to the poor-section.

The Devasthanam is running transport service to all corners of the State with 26 buses covering a distance of 7000 kilometers per day. Besides Devasthanam transport, A.P.S.R.T.C., Karnataka Transport Service, Maharashtra Transport and private transport systems are being run daily bringing about 3,000 pilgrims on ordinary days and 8,000 pilgrims on festival-days like Karteekam.

22. Ibid...
23. Ibid...
Navaratriulu and other functions. During Ugadi and Sivaratri more than a lakh of pilgrims will visit. The pilgrims are now taking holy dip in river Krishna at Patalaganga, which is at a distance of this main-complex. To avoid this trouble to the pilgrims, Devasthanam has taken up new bathing-ghat near Pushkarini through its own water Supply Scheme at a cost of one lakh rupees.

The recent construction of Srisailam Hydro Electric project about a kilometer down Patalaganga has brought about many changes including roads and project colonies with the modern amenities. Consequently, the once impenetrable hill forests on both sides now present a totally different view.

24. Ibid....
25. Ibid....