Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters endeavours have been made to have an estimate of the historical facts as available in Thiruvarutpa of St. Ramalingar. and the following facts are brought to light.

St. Ramalingar, who lived during the period between 1823 and 1874, was a religionist, philosopher, poet, reformer and Siddha. On the basis of the impacts and influences of Thirugnanasambandar, Thirunavukkarasar, Sundarar, Manickavasagar, Thirumular and Pattinathar, St. Ramalingar evolved his own individualistic, philosophy called Suddha Samarasa Sanmargam. The mission proposed by him was known for it simplicity, kindness, compassion, compromise and pragmatism. He possessed a divinie golden, physical body, which was deathless, indestructible, shadowless and sleepless and full of light. He was an Author, Commentator, Editor, Journalist, Preceptor, Interpreter, Siddha Doctor, Social Reformer and Philosopher.

Even though it was a period of British bureaucracy, without confining to any political issues he maintained his own individuality and invited others to follow suit. He established institutions like Dharamasalai, Samarasa Veda Sangam, Samarasa Veda Gnana Sabai to promote his ideologies. Through
his Satya Peru and Ciru Vinnappam, Satya Gnana Vinnappam and Sathya Vinnappam he made appeals to all.

He produced 5818 songs which are compiled as Six Thirumurais. His prose works, interpretations and commentaries, notes on medicines, preachings, letters, invitations and appeals proved his worth as a scholar. Being a versatile genius and multidimensional personality he took efforts in all possible ways to achieve an egalitarian society.

The Tamil society of his period was a tradition oriented one fraught with all flaws such as superstitions and caste disparities. He had described his contemporary society. By his deep and keen observations The Tamil society was amendable to the political conditions controlled by the alien British rule. His lamentations over the miserable and unlawful way of life compelled him to approve his ways of life which would lead to a deathless life or Maranamilla peruvalvu. He condemned the murderous nature of the people and others, who were engaged in gambling, consuming intoxicating liquor, child marriage etc. He was against Vedas, Agamas, Puranas, which according to him, were things which misguided the public. He had his own principle of food habits, dress materials, custom of burial etc, and stood for an austre life. He attacked the social disparities and attempted to offer an education which was practical and pragmatic. He was not in favour of miserable, horrible and treacherous life and led a life in the outskirts of cities. He never acknowledged the life which was partly under an alien rule.
The saint had his own unique character, qualities and activities. His Gnanamarga commenced from his 12th year itself. As he was not greedy of money, he had no fascination either for women or for earth. His aversions to the worldly life encouraged him to be a social reformer. He trembled at the sorrows, miseries and unlawful measures like blood sacrifices. His period was one of Indian Renaissance, owing to the efforts of personalities like Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Dayananda Saraswathi, Kesab Chandra Sen, Eswara Vidhya Sagar and others. St. Ramalingar was also one among them. He was aware of the different disparities which prevailed then and the attitude and outlook of people. He compelled the adoption of Sanmarga or righteous path for the attainment of embodied immortality. Through his highly mystical principles and preachings enunciated in his Thiruvarutpa. As he was a humanist Sanmarga and Arutperumjothi were treated by him as vehicles for achieving an enhanced status of life. His concepts of spiritualism offered an opportunity for him to serve as a medium between God and people.

He advocated monotheism, vegetarianism, avoidance of blood sacrifices, rituals, Anmeneya Orumaippadu, Jivakarunya Olukkam, monogamy and burial of the dead. His life was an unattached and unaffected one. Thiruvarutpa shows that Arutperum Jothi will erase Kamam, Vehuli and Madam.
He never tolerated not bore with the sorrows and miseries of living beings. Thiruvarutpa portrays Vallalar as a personality who endeavoured to reform the society by the adoption of specific ways of life. He himself was a role model for others. His principle of serving food to the needy exposes the nature of the society.

The period in which Thiruvarutpa was written by Vallalar was a unique one in the history of India. It was also a period of political significance. Though the powers were transferred from the hands of East India Company directly to the British crown. Vallalar, without confining himself to such aspects, stood for divine rule. Kingship was the approved form of Government and that too was to be based on pure righteousness. In his Thiruvarutpa Vallalar had pointed out that only men of confidence in Sanmarga should rule, in order to maintain a compassionate and just rule. His equation of God with King enabled him to consider God as the ruler of all living beings. According to Arutpa, merciless rule should disappear. Only the gracious people of righteous path should rule. The good should receive what all they expected. All should lead a harmonious life. There must be the flag of justice and the rule which could avoid fear and terror. He was unable to tolerate the newly emerged alien western political trend. He insisted on a perfect way of life without disparities of dogmatic
rituals pertaining to any religion, philosophy, caste, colour, creed, clan, sex or nationality.

His complicity with the grace of light, his deep insight and intention compelled him to stress integration, unity and solidarity. His political philosophy was integrated with spiritualism. This work had revealed the political tradition of a ruler accompanied by Vediyar, Tarkkikar, Sodidar, Vedantiyar, Puranikar and others. Thus Thiruvarutpa serves as a historical source.

Thiruvarutpa reveals the aspirations of St. Ramalingar in liberating the creations of God and enhancing their economic status. He languished whenever he saw crops wither for want of care and felt miserable for the poor. He also felt sorry for the people who were not able to get anything inspite of their begging. The Tamil society of the contemporary period of Thiruvarutpa was known for its economic inequalities and ups and downs. The role of fluid money was not accepted by Vallalar. The Tamil Society of his period was known for its occupational variations, which were undertaken by different groups and he condemned those who approached the wealthy for money. The thriving business activities of that age were not at all impediments for agrarian pursuits. Equitable distribution of wealth was encouraged and it is suggested that wealth should not be in the hands of a few Money lending was
also there and those who engaged in that business were always harsh, selfish and ruthless.

Greater attention shown towards economic pursuits was considered to be a hindrance to the attainment of the blessings of God. The economic status was given a great regard in those days. Extravagant feasts were also unapproved as they caused economic disparities and disorderliness. Materialistic approach was also treated as a despicable act. As God was above all such economic pursuits one should devote on God without any materialistic approach. The transitory nature of economic pursuits was an obstacle for eternal bliss, joy and happiness. Slavery, a black mark in an affluent society, was condemned.

Since those who venerated wealth and materialism had no peace of mind, the saint never liked to be in their company. Being a saint, he had no fascination towards dresses of modern nature and he avoided attending the rituals and ceremonies which were arranged extravagantly. The saint’s lamentations and repentances were the outcome of his inability to feed those who approached him for food with hunger. The hunger of many compelled him to open a Dharmasalai in 1867. The work points out that the saint, due to intolerable nature, isolated himself from the busy city life. It is depicted that the unpalatable economic disorderliness was not only a jeopardizing menace
to the society but also was a curse due to the Karma of the inhabitants: He wished only to be a slave of God. Thiruvarutpa revealed the harmonious blending of economic activities with spiritualism.

Being a pragmatist, he suggested that virtuous economic order be practised. Though he failed to convert the society to his line of Sanmarga he left no stone unturned to promote his economic principle.

Thiruvarutpa, a devotional work, discloses the attitude and religious outlook of Saint Ramalingar. Like the Bhakthi marga adopted by the Saiva trio and the concept of emotion by Manickavasagar, St. Ramalingar stressed on the policy of compassion and mercy, which could be commonly practised by each and everybody. His reform measures and religious activities centred on the principles of the early Tamil saints and philosophers. All the songs, in his Six Thirumarais are testimonials for the religious views of the saint. The saint gradually evolved himself to the higher plane above the worldly life by avoiding practices of worshiping minor deities, and image worship. The autobiographic touches available in Thiruvarutpa and other works serve as directives or principles of life for the followers of St. Ramalingar.

Thiruvarutpa is a historical source material for the history of Tamil Nadu during the 19th century, because the author has highlighted how he was
able to achieve a higher status by isolating himself from the socio, political and economic conditions of his age by constant practice.

**Thiruvarutpa** like other devotional works such as Devaram, Thiruvvasagam, Thirumandiram etc, had its own individualistic approach towards the life of the Tamils of the contemporary period. Though it is a devotional work of a saint, the social, political and economic, ideas are harmoniously blended in Thiruvarutpa.