4.1. The Arts

Art is the expression of creativity or imagination. The word art comes from the Latin word ars, which, loosely translated, means "arrangement". Art is commonly understood as the act of making works (or artworks) which use the human creative impulse and which have meaning beyond simple description. While art is often distinguished from crafts and recreational hobby activities, this boundary can at times be hard to define. The term creative arts denote a collection of disciplines whose principal purpose is the output of material for the viewer or audience to interpret. As such, art may be taken to include forms ranging from literary forms (prose writing and poetry); performance-based forms (dance, acting, drama, and music); visual and "plastic arts" (painting, sculpture, photography, illustration); to forms that also have a functional role, such as architecture and fashion design. Art may also be understood as relating to creativity, asthetics and the generation of emotion.

The art is a broad subdivision of culture, composed of many expressive disciplines. It is a broader term than "art", which as a description of a field usually means only the visual arts (comprising fine art, decorative art, architecture and crafts). The arts encompasses visual arts, literature, the performing arts, including music, drama, film, dance and related media, and by some definitions other areas such as fashion. A more complete list is
given below. There are many more that are not listed above. What are listed above are the major arts.

4.2. Architecture

The word Architecture is derived from Latin, architectura and ultimately from Greek, "a master builder", from "chief, leader" and "builder, carpenter"\(^5\) is the art and science of designing buildings and structures.

According to Hindu tradition, the Temple architecture is a religious architecture which is connected to astronomy and sacred geometry. Normally, the temple is referred to a place of sanctity representing the macrocosm or the universe and the microcosm or the inner space. In modern days, architecture is the art and discipline of creating an actual, or inferring an implied or apparent plan of any complex object or system\(^6\).

4.3. Classification of Indian Architecture

1. Dravidian style
2. Nagara style
3. Vesara style

4.3.1. Dravidian style

This is the style that developed in the south India. The Vimana and the Gopurams are the distinctive characteristics of the Southern style. The Vimana is a tall pyramidal tower consisting of several progressively smaller storeys. This stands on a square base. The Gopuram has two storeys separated by a horizontal moulding. The Prakara or the outer wall envelops
the main shrine as well as the other smaller shrines, the tank. The Pallavas, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Vijayanagar rulers, the Nayaks all contributed to the Southern style of temples⁷.

4.3.2. Nagara style

The Nagara style of architecture developed around 5th century, the Nagara style is characterized by a beehive shaped tower called a sikhara, in northern terminology made up of layer upon layer of architectural elements such as kapotas and gavaksas, all topped by a large round cushion-like element called an amalaka. Even though the plan is based on a square, the walls are broken up so that the tower offers the impression of being circular. Later developments involved the central shaft being surrounded by many smaller reproductions which created a spectacular visual effect resembling a fountain. The best example for this is the Chandella temples⁸.

4.3.3. Vesara style

Vesara is a type of Indian architecture primarily used in temples. The other two prominent styles are Dravida and Nagara. Vesara is a combination of these two temple styles.

Etymologically, the term Vesara is believed to have been derived from the Sanskrit word vishra meaning an area to take a long walk. The quarters of Buddhist and Jain monks who left urban areas to live in cave temples were called viharas⁹.
This is also in conformity with the prevalence of Vesara style of architecture in the Deccan and central parts of South Asia Vis-à-vis Nagara style prevalent in North India and Dravida style prevalent in South India.

4.4. Description of the temple

Thiruvannamalai temple is consisting of all the aspects of Dravidian architecture. A detailed architectural description of the temple is given on the basis of the chronological order of its construction.

4.5. SEVENTH PRAKARAM - GIRIVALAM PATH

The Holy Mountain of Arunachala rises up with an elevation of 2669 feet (800 m). The Road encircling the mountain where devotees circumbulate is 8 1/2 miles which is 14 kms long. On Full Moon days and festival days (like Karthigai, first day of the Tamil month, Tamil New Year day) hundreds of thousands of devotees circumbulate (GIRIVALAM) the mountain and get the blessings of the Lord Arunachala.

There are Eight Lingas, Eight Nandis more than 350 tanks and many mandapas around the hill. The Eight Lingams are

1. Indira Lingam (direction: East) is the first lingam in the girivalam.

2. Agni Lingam (direction: South East) is the second lingam in the girivalam is in the chengem Road near tamarykulum. This is the Only
Lingam situated in the righten side of the girivalam path; other lingams are in the Southern side.

3. Ema Lingum (direction: South). This is the third lingam in the girivalam path. It is 3 k.m. away from the Raja Gopuram.

4. Niruthi Lingam (direction: South West) this is the fourth lingam in the girivalam path. Sani tirtham is nearer to this lingam.

5. Varuna Lingam (direction: West) It is in the Western direction and 8 k.m. away from the Raja Gopuram. Varuna tirtham is situated next to this.

6. Vayu Lingam (direction: North West) is the sixth in the Row.

7. Kubera Lingam (direction: North) is the important Lingam in the Girivalam. People offer coins on this lingam.

8. Isanya Lingam (direction: North East) is the final lingam in the girivalam.

We have a separate chapter on Girivalam. In this chapter we will discusses the significance and other factors of Girivalam.

4.6. SIXTH PRAKARAM – CAR STREET

The sixth prakaram is the outer prakaram which is known as Car Street. The sixth prakaram is used by the temple authorities only at the time
of festival. Rajagopuram, Thirumanjana gopuram, Pei gopuram and Ammaniammal gopuram are located in between sixth and fifth prakarams

4.6.1. Outer most enclosure Wall

This is the big tirruccurrumadil or wall of enclosure. The wall is nearly 30 feet high, 7 feet wide and measuring 700×1500 (that is 700 feet from south to north and 1500 feet from east to west) connecting the four outer gopuras of the temple. Bull images made of bricks and mortar placed on the walls at equal distance make this wall highly decorative. Some outer faced niches of the wall contain certain Vinayaka images. They are historically significant because of their modern origin. The inscriptions found on the wall are illegible and fragmentary. Probably the stones containing them were misplaced or brought from some other ruined temples. On the top of the wall on either side of the eastern gopura, there are many idols of kings. They may be probably the images of the king who might here constructed this outer wall. It is not known if he was a Hoysala or Vijayanagar ruler.11

The southern tower of the outermost court is called Tirumanjna gopuram. Tirumanjnam is the holy water for the bath of a deity.12 Every day in the morning, before opening the gate of the temple, holy water is brought through the southern tower and spilled near the flag post. Hence this tower is called Tirumanjana gopuram. This tower has nine storeys and 157 feet in height.
4.6.2. South outer gopuram base and spire

The base of south outer gopuram is somewhat later than that of the western base. This has a distinctive appearance on account of the way in which it is coloured. Though the pillars, etc., are dark and the walls light, instead of the reverse, the colouring seems to be confined only to the inner side. It is the narrow west of all the gopuras of this court. It differs from the western one in having a yali above the frontal lotus projection of each of the corbel clusters of its upper course. It lotus centres are somewhat more prominent\textsuperscript{13}. Some of the niches are definitely wider than in the western gopuram of this court. The spire is later than the base.

The spire of the south outer gopuram was probably built between those of eastern gopuram. This is the most modern of all the four gopuras of this court because of the heaviness of its plastering and the bursting of its figures out of their background. Its appearance of modernity is due to changes introduced during some restoration of its pilaster. These indicate that it may be older than the western and northern spires.

4.6.3. The base of western gopuram of middle court - Peigopuram

This is called Peigopuram, which is merely an aberration. As its name erroneously indicates, there is neither ghost nor devil in it. It was actually Melgopura or Mela gopuram which means the western tower. The tower was also called Periya gopuram before the other towers were built. But as years
passed, this name got corrupted into Peigopuram. The height of this seven
storeyed tower is 144 feet. It might to have been built a little later than 1340
A.D and the spire about 1516 A.D. The base is much like that of the eastern
gopuram. The lotus projections of its corbels are more prominent. It
suggests that it was the last gopuram of this court to be constructed.

The vase ornaments are surrounded by a pair of corbels only, the
median being absent. The spire of this gopuram is the first addition which
Krishnadevaraya would have taken in hand when he started work on this
temple. Its vertical lines of pavilion ornaments above the niches on the base
are of rectangular type. On either side of these are lines of the square type
of pavilion ornament with niches of the narrow and slit like type of
characteristic of Vijayanagar period. The brick work suggests that it must
have been with the window ornaments of the pavilion roofs comparatively
small and the style generally restrained and severe.

4.6.4. West outer gopuram – base and spire 1516 A.D

The bases of all gopuras of outer court ascribed to Krishnadevaraya,
this one seems to be in accordance with his taste. He built this base while
building the spire of the west gopuram of the middle court\textsuperscript{14}. All the niches of
this base are narrow and empty. The vase ornaments seem to support
pavilions, probably square. The greatest difference between this base and
those of the middle court lies in the presence in its lower course of pillars
and niches. In the upper course too subsidiary niches appear surmounted by
kudu with yali. The vase ornament nearest the gateway is replaced by a pillar supporting a small pavilion ornament.

The spire is said to have been built in 1740 A.D. The Dvarapalakas are taller than the windows they stand beside and are present on each storey from bottom to top together with smaller figures in front of the niches of all the principal rectangular pavilions as well as of all the niches of the bottom storey and the niches of the corner pavilions of other storeys near the bottom. In general appearance of this spire closely resembles the pre–Vijayanagar spires of the much smaller northern and southern gopuras of the middle court from which it differs richly in the presence of empty slit like niches on either side of the principal pavilion ornament of each storey and in the great enlargement of the kudus of the pavilion on the earlier side of this one\(^15\). There is no room on this spire for a pair to the pavilion on its inner side.

4.6.5. North gopuram - Ammaniammal gopuram

The northern gopuram known locally as Ammaniammal gopuram is 171 feet in height and has nine storeys.

4.6.6. North outer gopuram base and spire (1740 A.D)

The base is apparently somewhat later than the eastern one\(^16\). The corbel lotuses are more elaborate than those of the eastern one and the objects surmounting the vase ornaments and the pillar by which these are placed on either side of the gateway are supported by yalis. The bases of
the vase ornaments are flanked by elaborated scrolls and the main niches by elaborate relief decoration. The main niches are surrounded by the rectangular type of pavilion ornaments, the others by kudus.

The spire is said to have been constructed by a bhakta Ammaniammal about 1810 A.D. Ammaniammal was an ascetic. She built the spire with her strenuous efforts. She was trained in yogic practices. It is said that she had a remarkable power of knowing the exact amount that one possessed and was able to get one portion of it. Such amounts had been used in the construction of the spire. There is a mutt in her name in the northern Orravadaip street with a statue of her installed nearby. It is much like the west outer is gopuram but larger with the principal pavilion of each. The storey is flanked on either side by narrower pavilions, and the roofs of which are completely covered and hidden by their greatly enlarged kudus.

4.6.7. The Eastern gopuram or Rajagopuram

The eastern tower of the outer most court is called Rajagopuram which is the highest of all nine towers. It is 217 feet high. It has eleven storeys with a width of 135 feet by 98 feet at the base. The tower of the Tanjore big temple built by the Chola Monarch Rajaraja Chola is 216 feet high. Krishnadevarayar who built the tower, intended it to be at least one feet higher than the tower of the big temple. This tower provides the main entrance to the temple17.

4.6.8. Eastern outer gopuram base
The base is apparently somewhat later than the southern base. The rows of petals in the corbel lotuses of the upper course are more widely separated from the south gopuram. The scrolls on either side of the bases of the vase ornaments are more widely separated. Many of the niches contain images particular in the upper course. According to Dr. Mees “They have been inserted obviously a little or much later”.

The spire is said to have been completed by Sevappa Nayak of Tanjore about 1690 A.D. In its bare severity, it resembles the western spire of the middle court which might to have been erected over 150 year’s earlier. But this resemblance is somewhat deceptive. Both these spires appear to be more or less devoid of pilaster, but very little brick work is actually exposed in this one. Originally the earlier one was plastered in the same severe manner. Inspire of its severity, the decoration of this spire is more elaborate than the earlier one. On the pavilion ornament bases, the narrow niches are flanked by more numerous and elaborate pillars. On the roofs of the forward standing pavilion the kudus are much larger, occupying the whole height except on those at the corners and flanked on the larger rectangular ones by a subsidiary pair. In addition, the spaces between the roofs of these pavilions are occupied by miniature barrel roofs, each with a pair of kudus occupying their full height.

The additional parts, prakaram, which were added to the temple by building enclosure walls, are compared to the bodily sheaths annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya kosas depending
upon the enclosure walls. In the Thiruvannamalai temple there are three open prakaras and one closed court in the centre. If mada veethi, is taken into account the bigger temple will have the usual five prakaras. Accordingly the madaveethi represents the annamaya kosa; the three open courts one inside the other represent manomaya kosa, pranamaya kosa and vijnanamaya kosa; and the closed court represents the anandamaya kosa.

4.7. FIFTH PRAKARAM

4.7.1. Raja Gopuram

The tower located on the eastern side between the sixth outer Prakaram and fifth Prakaram is the tallest of all the towers in this temple. This is widely known as Raja Gopuram. It stands in splendid dignity at the foot of Annamalai Hill over looking the town with its immense height and grandeur. It is 217 feet in height with 11 storeys. It is The Raja Gopuram, built by Krishnadevaraya lavishly with the sculptured art of that period and the second tallest temple tower in South India.

4.7.2. Kambatthu Ilaiyanar shrine

Kambam means pillar and Ilaiyanar refers to Muruga. According to a legend, Muruga appeared in a pillar in response to a song of saint Arunagirinathar. During that time Thiruvannamalai was ruled by Prabudadeva Maharaja. Arunagiri’s fame becomes wide spread. Sambandam being close to the king jealous about the fame of Arunagiri
induced the king to call the latter for a combat. According to it he should call Lord Muruga appear before the court of the king. Sambandam a devout devotee of Sakti prayed Her not to leave her son to appear before the king. Arunagiri's devotional song made the Lord appear in a pillar of the temple and thus Muruga came to be known as Kambatthu Ilaiyanar.

Sambandandan was so angry that he hatched another scheme. By the glorious sight of Lord Muruga, the king lost his eye sight. Sambandandan requested the king to send Arunagiri to Svargaloka and bring back a Parijata flower; a few drops of the nectar from the flower squeezed in to his eyes could resume his sight. Arunagirinathar persuaded by the king and in order to go to Svargaloka, had to enter in to the body of a parrot which had recently expired. He moved his life force into the body of the parrot and left his own body quietly in the gopura and then proceeded to collect the Parijata flower, Sambandams showing the lifeless body to the king announced that Arunagirinathar was dead and asked the king’s permission to cremate it according to custom. When Arunagirinathar returned with the flower he found that his body had been burnt and he no longer had human body. Realizing that he had been tricked, Prabudadeva Maharaja was grief stricken knowing that it would be impossible for the saint to resume human form again. Arunagirinathar untroubled by these events, rested on the gopuram in the form of a parrot, composed his famous Kandar Anubuti as well as other famous hymns.
The shrine of Kambatthu Ilaiyanar had originally three chambers – a square garbhagraha, a rectangular arthamandapa and a square mukha mandapa. A rectangular hall and a front piece supported by two pillars at the outside were added to the main structure. There was a gap between these two structures, but it was joined later. The adhistana of garbhagraha, arthamandapa and mukha mandapa exhibit the following parts from the base: upana, padmam, kanta, pattiyal, kanta and vedhi while the latter structure has kapota between pattials and vedhi. The exterior walls of the garbhagraha has one niche on each side. The other parts have two niches on either side.

The front mandapa was exceptionally beautiful with a very fine sculpture over the entrance which emulates the history of the temple. On the extreme left the figures of Narada, Arunagirinathar, Prabudadeva Maharaja; on the right the sculptured figures of Sambandandan and the last figure is of Thirububar on horse face. On the walls of this chamber, there are pictures of Murugan of Tirupparankundram, Tiruchchendur, Tiruvavinankudi, Swamimalai, Tiruthani, Alakarkoil and the court of Prabudadeva Maharaja and Kambatthu Ilaiyanar. In the mukha mandapa there is a large Shatkonam symbol of Muruga on the south wall. On the right was a big photograph of Seshadri Swamikal, who came to Thiruvannamalai in his early age and lived there for over forty years. He used to sit and meditate in this shrine. In the Cella, there is the sculpture of Kambathu Ilaiyanar.
4.7.3. Valaikappu mandapa

This mandapa is used during the Adipura festival for the bangle wearing ceremony of the Goddess Unnamulai Amman. This is an open sixteen pillared mandapa on a high plinth. This is facing west with a flight of four steps. This is attached to the back of the garbhagriha of Kambatthu Ilaiyanar shrine. The outer square is supported by 12 pillars. The inner raised platform is supported by four pillars. The adistana of plinth resembles to that of the Kambatthu Ilaiyanar shrine.

4.7.4. Sivagangai tirtha

Sivagangai tirtha is the name of the river in Kailayam, the abode of Lord Siva. The tirtha is named after the river Sivaganga. This water is used for sacred ablutions to the deities in the temple. Inscriptions reveal that water to this tank was provided by digging a canal called Tirumalai Amman Devi Samudram. There is a verse which proclaims that Sevappa Nayak, the ruler of Tanjore, a tower dug a tank in 1572 A.D.22 To the south of the Kambathu Ilaiyanar shrine, there is the sacred tank, called Sivagangai tirtham. This is rectangular in size. It has a flight of steps leading to the tank on the east the west, each one and two on the northern sides just at the corners. It is being fenced by a row of small pillars on all sides leaving the passages. In the south – east of this prakara, there is the Adiyar vidhuti (devotee’s rest house). To the west of the Sivagangai tank is the Tirthavari mandapa.
4.7.5. Sivagangai vinayakar sannathi

Close to Sivagangai Tirtham stands Sivagangai Vinayakar Sannathi. This is situated at the rear side of Kambathu Illayanar Sannathi and opposite to Thousand Pillared Mandapam. The Vimanam of this shrine is colorful covered with a profusion of deities.

4.7.6. Sarva Siddhi Vinayaka shrine

The shrine is situated at the north – west corner of the Sivagangai tirtha. This shrine is within a rectangular open mandapa on its four sides supported by fourteen pillars. It faces east. The cella is square with a frontal mandapa supported by two pillars in the front. The deity is in a seated posture with the usual features. The roof of the mandapa encircling the sanctum sanctorum is painted with various pictures of later Nayak period such as Veerabadhirar, Mushikam, Dandayuthapani, Nagar, and nandi.

4.7.7. Rudrakcha mandapa

Rudrakcha is (its botanical name is ‘eloeocarpus) nuts are worn as sacred beads and are used in rosaries by saivites. The mandapa is an open four pillared mandapa on the ground and is situated to the north of Sarva Vinayakar shrine and in the axial line of the Annamalaiyar sanctum sanctorum. The roof of this mandapa is covered with rudrakcha beads; hence the name. Normally the devotees would not pass through this mandapa.
4.7.8. Nandi mandapa

Nandi is the bull which is the mount of Lord Siva. According to saivagamas, Nandi is the most important feature in the structure of Siva temple. The statue of a bull called Periya nandi is in the four pillared nandi mandapa on a raised platform and is situated to the north of Sivagangai tirtha and in front of the Rudrakcha mandapa. The raised platform exhibits the adhistana parts in line with the Kambatthu Ilaiyanar shrine. The nandi is six feet long and is facing the Moolasthana. Its head is slightly turned towards north while the heads of all other nandis in the temple are turned slightly south. It was erected by Vallala Maharaja*

4.7.9. Kalyana Sundreswarar shrine

This shrine facing east is a square cella situated on the south side of the base of Vallala Maharaja gopuram. It has a small antarala which is reached by four steps. The southern side of the wall of the cella has three pilasters and one niche between the corner pilaster and the middle in front. The frontal part of the shrine is converted into an open mandapa supported by five rows of pillars in north – south direction with six pillars in each row. On the northern and southern side, after the last row of pillars, there are walls. The northern wall of the mandapa leads to the stairs leading to the Vallala Maharaja gopuram. The shrine can be reached from a rather small aperture on the stairs or from the arched entrance within the fourth prakara. A small Ganapati can be seen set on the back wall close to the small
aperture that leads out into stairs of Vallala gopuram. This Ganapati is called Ucchi Pillaiyar. There are fourteen Naga – stones – a small sculpture of Surya, a very beautiful carving of Krishna playing flute and Bhairava sculpture. All these rest at the foot of the right wall. During Sivaratri a great abhishekam is performed to the Linga of this shrine, filling the Linga with rice.

4.7.10. Tirtha mandapa

This mandapa is south to the Kalyana Sundareswarar shrine and is attached to the enclosure wall. The mandapa has a back portion with a plinth and a front portion, both facing east. The back portion is supported by four rows of pillars each containing nine pillars. They divide into four and five pillars on the south and north respectively leaving a central passage.

The front portion is supported by seven rows of pillars, each row containing four pillars on the southern and northern sides respectively. It is in a dilapidated condition. The central passage is on the line of the western steps of Sivagangai tirtha. To the south of this mandapa, there is a closed vahana mandapa and in the south west corner of Sivagangai tirtha, there is a small Vinayaka shrine. The Vinayaka is known as Indra Vinayakar. The shrine faces east. Tonsuring by the devotees is done under a tree near this shrine.
4.7.11. Gopurathilaiyanar shrine and Arunagiri mandapa

These two structures are situated at the base of the Vallala Maharaja gopuram on its northern side. These structures are reached by the flight of the steps. Gopurathilaiyanar shrine consists of a cella and an antarala both are rectangular in shape. Inside the shrine there is the most magnificent statue of Muruga with Valli and Devasena. There is also a copper image of Arunagirinathar praying at His feet. To the left and right side of the walls Vinayaka and Muruga sculptures are erected.

The Arunagiri mandapa is in front of this shrine and it extends nearly half of the size on the northern part, and it is supported by two of pillars each of which contains five pillars on the northern side, and one row of five pillars on the southern side, leaving a central space for the devotees to worship Lord Muruga in that shrine.

The walls of the Arunagiri mandapa contain some beautiful diagrams and pictures. One diagram is in the shape of a chariot with peacock flag on the top. The chariot is divided into many squares. At the side of this are some of Arunagirinathar’s songs. To the left of the chariot, there is a plaque of bold Tamil ‘AUM’ containing the spear of Muruga inside. There are some prayers written by Bampan Swamikal on this wall with a photo of this Swamikal. Another picture depicts the scene of Muruga blessing Arunagirinathar.
There is an anecdote relating Muruga and Arunagirinathar. Arunagirinathar was brought up by his sister. In his youth, Arunagiri was lustful licentious. Once when he had no money to pay for a woman, his sister came forward to offer her to appease his lust. Immediately, Arunagiri realised his fault and sorrow stricken, decided to die by falling from the Vallala gopuram. Accordingly, he climbed over the spire and attempted to throw himself to the ground. Lord Muruga appeared before him and saved his life. Lord Muruga on the right of the base of this gopuram came to be called Gopurathilaiyanar.

4.7.12. Vannimaraththu Vinayaka shrine

There is a small door in the right wall of the Arunagirinathar mandapa which leads one through an enclosed small hall, and out passing the gardens and into the area of Vanni trees and the Vannimaraththu Vinayakar shrine. Though a small modern shrine, it contains a number of deities. Vinayaka site resplendent in the center of the group with Goddess Lakshmi on her left and Sarasvathi above. In front, there is Shanmuka and to the left of the latter there is Linga and Sakti, and to the right Vishnu reclines. A mushika the vehicle of Vinayaka, sits facing the shrine.

Nagalinga stones and Muruga’s weapon Vel repose under the tall Vanni tree. Vanni tree is said to be not only very old, probably the oldest in Thiruvannamalai. An interesting story relating to the history of the Vanni tree and the region has been disclosed. This account reveals that the ancient
Pallavas were once in retreat from that place, they laid down their arms, burying them for safe keeping under the Vanni tree. Looking like snakes the arms remained untouched for centuries.

There are three small Nagalinga shrines near the Vannimaratthu Vinayaka shrine. Two are under the peepul trees; one to the south and another to the east of Vinayaka shrine. The third one is under a neem tree. The Nagalinga shrine situated at the east of the Vinayaka shrine contains four or five hooded Naga statues.

4.7.13. Thousand Pillar mandapa

This mandapa is square in shape and is situated to the eastern side of the enclosed hall where the Vannimaratthu Vinayakar shrine and Nagalinga shrines are housed. Though this enclosed hall is rectangular in north–south direction, it becomes a square when it is jointly perceived with the garden grown in between this hall and 1000 pillared mandapa. The 1000 pillared mandapa has 16 rows of 32 pillars each on either side on the south–north direction leaving a central passage. The inner most pillars on the northern side has the aniottikkals forming a rectangular space with two aniottikkals on either side. The southern side lacks one row of pillars on each side adjacent to the central aniottikkal column the excess of 24 pillars. The entire mandapa is on a very high plinth and the adhistana shows two sections with parts similar to that of the adhistana of Kambatthu Ilaiyanar shrine. Every pillar of this mandapa is engraved with figures and the roof with numerous nandis.
The basement of this mandapa is adored with the designs of girls playing kolattam, warriors, and sports and so on. The pillars are carved with sculptures of Nayak period and some divine images of sages. Vishnu’s incarnations too find a place with floral designs.

This mandapa is used for deities ablutions during Ani Thirumanjanam and Tiruvatirai. The copper plate of saka 1435 reveals that the land site of 275 feet and 295 feet north south was sold to Krishnadavaraya for 500 sovereign of gold by the members of a grand mutt in Thiruvannamalai.

4.7.14. Patala linga shrine

A portion beneath a row of 11 pillars on east west and seven pillars on south – north of the south – west corner of the 1000 pillared mandapa form an underground hall. In this underground hall is housed the Patala linga shrine of miniature size. This is very famous for Sri Ramana Maharishi. In his youth he meditated in this chamber for many years in front of the Linga before he attained the state of trance.

4.7.15. Masappirappu mandapa

This is a modern building and is situated on the northern – eastern of the enclosure wall of this prakaram. On every first day of the Tamil month, Lord Chandrasekarar is brought here for ablution, aradhanas, etc.

4.7.16. Vallala Maharaja Gopuram

This is the direct entrance and exit between the Fifth and Fourth Prakarams. The Vallala Maharaja Gopuram was built by the Hoysala King
Ballala between AD1318 and AD1343. Two stories are associated with this Gopuram one is Vallala Maharaja being humiliated by Lord Siva and the other one is Saint Arunagirinathar saved by Lord Muruga. The fame of this ardent devotee king Vallala Deva soars high as Lord Arunachaleswarar himself performs the King’s funeral rites which are supposed to be done by King's son.

4.8. FORTH PRAKARAM

4.8.1. Kalabhairavar shrine

Kalabhairavar is the God of time. His mount is dog. The main duty of this deity is to determine time. The shrine stands between the left of the Vallala Maharaja gopura and on the north eastern bank of the Brahma tirtha. The shrine has a rectangular cell and a square open mandapa supported by eight pillars. Inside the recess stands the eight armed Bhairava holding the sulam, created by Siva to remove the fifth head of Brahma. Bhairava presents a terrific appearance in a standing pose with a halo round his head. The eight arms hold udukkai, kapala, sword, shield, parrot, bell, pasa and sula. Tongues of fire shoot out from the halo. He has a ferocious look with protruding teeth. He wears anklets and possesses the third eye. His height is three and half feet. The utsavamurti of this deity belongs to 13th or 14th century A.D.

The eight images of Bhairava adore the top of the eight pillars in the open mandapa. The eight images of Bhairava are Niru Bhairavar, Kapali
Bhairavar, Bhisna Bhairavar, Krothana Bhairavar, Asitharga Bhairavar, Samkara Bhairavar, Unnathu Bhairavar and Sandai Bhairavar. Of these Samkara Bhairavar has ten hands and Kapali Bhairavar has eight hands, the other Bhairavar have four hands.

On the roof of the open pillared mandapa four pictures are painted. They refer to the legend of the origin of holy hill. The first of these pictures depicts the argument between Brahma and Vishnu with many celestial beings looking on. The second picture portrays the creation of Bhairavar by Siva to remove Brahma’s fifth head after he had told the untruth that he had seen the top of the effulgence. In the third picture, Bhairava is seen entering Brahma-loka, wherein a fighting mood, he nicks the tuft of Brahma’s fifth head with his finger nails. In the fourth picture, Brahma realizes his error and falls at the feet of Bhairava, begging for forgiveness. Brahma is spared by Siva and blessed by Bhairava.

4.8.2. Brahma tirtha

This holy tank is in the south – eastern part of this prakara. It is square in shape and on the northern side there are flight of steps leading to the tank and at the beginning of the steps there is a four pillared mandapa called Tirthavari mandapa. During the holy dip the utsavamurtis are placed in this mandapa for darshan. This tank was dug by king Venudaiyan, the son of the glorious Kadava King Koperunsinga in 1230 A.D. The tank was
primarily called Perumal tirtham. On the banks of the pool there is a flower garden\textsuperscript{32}.

4.8.3. Yanai thirai konda Vinayakar shrine

This Vinayaka came to be known as Yanai Thirai Konda Vinayakar (the Vinayaka who got ransom of elephants)\textsuperscript{33}. This shrine is attached to the base of the parrot tower partially. It has a garbhagriha and a bigger mandapa. In front of this stone mandapa there is an open mandapa supported by four pillars. The adhistana exhibits the following parts – upana, padman, kumudam, kapotam, yali, frieze, kanta and vedhi. On the sides of the garbhagriha, there are devakoshtas. On either side of the devakoshtas, there are kumbha panjaras. On each side there are pilasters at the corner. The vimana is a replica of the Ekambareshwarar shrine. Six small steps lead upwards to the raised stone platform of the shrine. The shrine is of great age and has a fascinating tale attached to it.

4.8.4 Naleswarar shrine

This shrine is situated to the right of the Yanai Thirai Konda Vinayakar. King Nala worshipped Saniswarar (Saturn) at Tirunallaru to be absolved of the effects of Saturnic influence in his life. Siva absolved all evil effects of Saturn from Nala. Hence, the king has earned the name Naleswarar\textsuperscript{34}. This shrine has a square cella and an open mandapa in front supported by two pillars at the outside. The plinth shows kanta structure on
each side of the wall surface. There is a devakoshta without recess and has three pilasters vimana of Dravida type.

4.8.5. Vigneshwarar shrine

This is locally called Vinai Tirkkum Vinayaka. It has a square cella and rectangular arthamandapa. At corners, there are pilasters. The vimana is of Nagara type. It is situated between the Naleswarar and Vidyadhareshwarar shrine.

4.8.6. Vidyadhareshwarar shrine

This shrine is situated next to the Vigneshwarar shrine. It consists of a square cella and antarala which is smaller than the cella. An open mandapa is attached to antarala and is supported by two pillars in front. The wall surface has devakoshtos with corner pilasters and a plinth similar to that of Vigneshwarar vimana with six sides.

4.8.7. Brahma Linga shrine

This shrine is situated in between the Vidyadhareshwarar shrine and the southern Kattai gopura. The shrine is on a high plinth with kanta structure. It consists of a square cella and an open courtyard supported by 12 pillars totally on all sides. It has Nagara vimana. The Linga inside the cella has four sides representing fire, air, earth, and water.

4.8.8. Kosala (cow shed)

The entire space of the southern prakaram from kattai gopuram to the west corner of the second enclosure wall is occupied by Kosala. There is a
cowshed attached to the wall of the third prakaram facing north. The cows which are used for pujas are brought up in this place. The milk of those cows is used for abhiseka purpose.

4.8.9. Amavasai mandapa

This mandapa is situated just adjacent to the southern enclosure wall of third prakaram, and the south west corner of this prakaram is attached to the western enclosure wall. This is an open square mandapa supported by 20 pillars on the outside square and 12 pillars in the control square. The mandapa is reached by flight of steps. There are many statues carved on the pillars of the mandapa. On every new moon day, the Lord Chandrasekarar is brought here. There is a small but rare five leafed Vilva trees near to this mandapa.

4.8.10. Adimudi kana Annamalaiyar shrine

There is a small Vinayaka shrine next to the Amavasai mandapa. Adjacent to this shrine is the important shrine called Adimudi kana Annamalaiyar. The image inside the cella is very rare. The upper part contains both Lord Siva and Parvati and the lower part has the image of Adimudi kana Annamalai. This image is unique in the Annamalaiyar temple.

4.8.11. Annamalaiyar padam

A little further north, there is a small shrine, where the two feet of Lord Siva are found. The carving of the feet of the Lord seems to be of recent origin.
4.8.12. Karthigai mandapa

This mandapa is situated on the north – west corner and the structure of this is very similar to that Amavasai mandapam. There is Vinayakar statue in one of the pillars. Lord Muruga is the presiding deity in this mandapa. On every Karthigai day, Lord Subramaniya is brought here for darshan. Nearby this mandapa, there is a small shrine dedicated to Nagadevata. A well supplies water perennially to the nearby gardens.

4.8.13. Kuttarici mandapa

It is at the extreme north – east portion, adjoining the enclosure walls of the third prakaram. This is supported inside by six rows of pillars each consisting of 19 pillars. The outer row of pillars on all the four sides is embedded in the walls. The front portion covering 12 pillars from north to east is vacant. The Kuttarici mandapa and the vacant site have been converted into an orphanage. From the vacant site on the southern side, is the Puravi mandapa. That portion covered on the southern side from 13th pillars is converted into Sakti Vilasa mandapa.

4.8.14. Puravi (horse) mandapa

There is a rectangular hall with a front mandapa. The inner side of the rectangular hall is supported by eight rows of pillars, each consisting of 13 pillars and is divided into four rows on the north – south side leaving a rectangular space in the middle. The back portion of this space is supported by six pillars in two rows. The rectangular hall has walls on to a certain
extent of three pillars on north and the south sides. The hall opens on the southern side into the square mukha mandapa, which has openings on the east west side. The space in front of the rectangular hall containing the mukha mandapa forms a open pillared mandapa and it is extended up to the flight of steps of Brahma tirtha. It is supported by two rows of pillars each consisting of eight pillars on the east side of the mukha mandapa, while the front portion of the mukha mandapa is supported by four rows of pillars, each consisting six pillars. While the open pillared mandapa is on the ground, the rectangular hall stands on a plinth.

The Puravi mandapa contains some ornamental and interesting pictures of Nayak’s period. The paintings are found on the roof. Most of the murals are in black pigment. The scenes of churing the milk from the ocean are painted in series\(^37\). The mandapa might have been used for sheltering the horses. Hence the name Puravi. It is said that it was built by the Kadva King Kopperunsingam. The images of Kopperunsingam and his son Venu Udaiyan have been carved in one of the pillars of the puravi mandapa facing north. During their period this mandapa was called Perumal mandapa. The temple elephant is seen standing in the place. There are some shops selling tickets to the devotees, ghee, camphor, Vilva leaves and food packets.
4.8.15. Nandi mandapa

There is a four pillared Nandi mandapa situated axially to the gopura and the main sanctum and in front of the puravi mandapa on the western side.

4.8.16. Pitchai Ilaiyanar shrine

Pitchai means begging mendicant and Ilayanar refers to the younger brother of Lord Vinayaka that is Muruga. To the north of the base of the parrot tower this shrine is located. Lord Muruga with Valli and Devasena preside this shrine. This shrine is a modern structure. It has a square cela and an antarala of a smaller size. On the surface of the wall, there are four pilasters in the cela and three pilasters in the antarala. In front of the antarala, there is an open mandapa covering a portion on the northern side too. While there are three pillars of two rows in the front portion only four pillars on the northern side support this open mandapa. The southern side of this shrine is attached to the steps of the parrot gopuram.

4.8.17. Eastern, northern and southern gopuras of third prakara

Of the bases of these three gopuras the animal frieze has developed and the small lowest course remains plain, but in the upper course a niche is added on either side to the decorations. While the lotus form of the corbel projections is somewhat more developed than the corbels, and the vase ornament base fluted with a plain raised band round is the widest part. In the small northern and southern gopuras of this court, the corbels over the
pillars and at the corners have all three of the usual lotus projections, but the others have the lateral pair only. They are leveled off in the front, as they are also in those over the vase ornaments of the eastern one. There are no vase ornaments on the northern and on the southern one. Each is surrounded by a pavilion ornament instead by corbels.

All the gopuras of the middle court of Thiruvannamalai temple are small and the chief niche alone is present. In the northern and southern gopuras, the pavilion ornament surmounting this niche is of the square type. The northern and southern gopuras of this court are small; the main decorative court on their bases has the simple plan: the frontage on either side of the gateway is set forward a little immediately beside it but extending in a single plan beyond this with pillars and when present vase ornament in simple relief upon it. The niche of all the gopuras with a strip of wall on either side of it and pillars flanking this stands forwards while the portions of the wall bearing vase ornaments are correspondingly sunk back.

As this gopura is built by Vallala Maharaja, it is called as Vallala Maharaja Gopuram. The spire of the eastern gopuram of middle court is modern. Rectangular pavilion ornaments alternate with more slender ones presumably derived from the square type. It bears three figures. Though the figures have burst out of the their niche their head dresses reach above the basal part of the pavilion, except in the case of the Dvarapalakas on either side of the external line of windows. All niches are completely hidden by means of plaster figures except the right at the top, a second row of these
being introduced on each storey along the bases of the pavilion ornament roofs. All kudus are very large and extremely ornate\textsuperscript{38}.

4.8.18. Sakti Vilasam

Sakti vilasam and on orphanage run by temple administration are located in this prakaram. At the western side of Brahma Tirtham Tank the following shrines are located Brahma Lingam, Vidyadhareswarer Lingam, Ganapathy shrine, Nakeswara Lingam, Yanai Thirai Konda Vinayagar, and Pichai Illaiyanar.

4.9. THIRD PRAKARAM

4.9.1. Katchi mandapa

This is a vast sixteen pillared mandapa situated in between the Kodimara mandapa and the parrot gopura. This mandapa is called Katchi mandapa where the Panchamurtis give darshan on the Karthigai Deepam day. Ardhanarisvarar too gives darshan from this place that day. This is also called Deepa darshna. This mandapa was built by Mankayarkkarasi, a devotee in 1202 A.D. Hence, it was originally named as the Mankayarkkarasi mandapa\textsuperscript{39}.

4.9.2. Tiruccurrumalikaipatti

The southern, western and northern enclosure walls of this prakaram have the pavement mandapa with two rows of pillars at the outer side. This is called the tiruccurrumalikaipatti. This structure is a many pillared, highly impressive and extremely beautiful gallery, running around the walls of this
prakaram. It is impossible to give an account of the pillars, as many of them have been incorporated into mandapas and some even beyond recognition. The south – east corner of this tiruccurrumalikaipatti has been converted into madappalli or the temple kitchen with additional pillars and walls. The south – western corner is occupied by the wedding hall and Bhimeshwara shrine. The north – west corner and entire portion on northern side is obliviated by the Amman shrine and vahana mandapas.

The outer portion of the madappalli has nine pillars on the northern side, and two rows of pillars each with eight pillars on the western side the madappalli, there are numerous pillars leaving a central rectangular space on the east – west direction.

In front of the madappalli in the southern prakara there is a four pillared called Panneer mandapa. During the spring festival Lord Siva is brought here. Flowers are offered to the Lord at same time\(^{40}\).

**4.9.3. Sacred makizha tree**

In between the enclosure wall of the beginning of the first prakaram on the eastern side and tiruccurrumalikaipatti, there are three makizha trees on the southern second prakara. Vinayakas are seen under the makizha trees on the raised platform of the eastern side. Four round pillars and four statues of Dakshinamurti stand close to a flat linga. During the Vasantha utsava the Linga is filled with water and flowers.
Boon cradles hanging from of cloth, and weighted with a small stone, these pieces of cloth swing from the branches like miniature baby cradles. They had hung there with great reverence by devotees asking for the blessing of Lord Annamalaiyar. When the grace of the Lord is obtained, the infant is taken to the temple. Then the cradle is removed and an offering is made.

4.9.4. Kalyana mandapa

There is magnificent wedding hall (Tirukkalyana mandapa) in the south – west corner of the second prakara. This is generally locked and kept open in Panguni for Panguni Uttiram for the celebration of divine marriage of the Lord and Amman and during Karthigai Deepam and Navaratri festivals. This mandapa contains numerous ornate pictures of the Vijayanagara art and a number of beautiful wooden statues. Being the biggest hall, this mandapa may be called one of the magnificent art galleries of Tamil Nadu.

Beautiful pictures have been drawn on the roof of this hall. Navagrahas are drawn with vehicles. The historical narratives of Arunachala Purana, twenty five deities, fighting of an elephant with a lion, deer and tiger, cock fight, goat are drawn wonderfully. An elephant rolling a ball, the movements of a boar, and episodes from Mahabharatha such as the removal of the dress of Draupati and dicing after drinking poison and the figures of sapta matrikas have been drawn with eternal artistic beauty. In this glorious mandapa, there is a small Vinayaka shrine in the east.
4.9.5. Bhimeshwarar shrine

This is the very ancient shrine situated at the extreme south – west corner of the tiruccurrumalikaipatti. The Mahabharatha explains the life and exploits of Bhima, whose name adorns the Sivalinga of this shrine. Bhima was the son of Kunti Devi and Vayu Deva and one of the five sons of Pandu through the incartation that the sage Durvasa taught to Kunthi. He was born on the sameday as Duryodana, the eldest son Gandhari and king Yudhistra. Bhima was gifted from the birth with the strength of over fifty thousand elephants and lightning speed of his father. It is said that the entire Kurushetra battle for the destruction of the evil depended on Bhima’s strength and on Arjuna, and their uncle Lord Krishna. The Bhimeshwara shrine has been there for centuries. Some devotees genarally accept the belief that Bhima worshipped Lord Siva on this sacred spot.

4.9.6. Arunagiri Yogiswarar shrine

This shrine is situated in the western part of the second prakara in between the Peigopuram and the western enclosure wall of the first prakara. A four pillared mandapa adorns this small shrine. It is erroneously construed to be the tomb of Saint Arunagirinathar. It is actually Lord Siva who has assumed the Yogic form here. A Vinayaka and an image of Yogiswarar are also found in this shrine facing east.
4.9.7. The Unnamalai Amman shrine

This shrine has been erected in the north – west corner of the second prakara touching the tiruccurrumalikaipatti on both sides and on the north side of the Annamalaiyar shrine. On the south wall of this shrine, at about 10 feet high, the emblem of Hoysala rulers, the Kandaperanda bird is found and nearby a statue of a man with anjali pose is found standing. He is identified as king Ballala and this indicates that the outer walls of this shrine was originally constructed by this King. This shrine contains a garbhagraha and antarala on a high plinth and is encompassed by a closed mandapa. The mandapa is supported by nine pillars each in front of the northern and southern sides and two pillars on the frontal part. There are five pillars each on northern and southern sides of the garbhagraha and the antarala, and two pillars on the western side.

The front portion of the mandapa is locally known as Ashta Lakshmi mandapa. Glorious ornate pillars represent the Ashta Lakshmi and other aspects of the mother. These pillars are of exceptional beauty and the robes superb. The aspects of the mother are flanking on the aniottikkal and face towards the centre. The images are found on these pillars are Dhanyalakshmi, Vijayalakshmi, Aiswaryalakshmi, Santanalakshmi, Gajalakshmi, Dhanalahshmi, Rudra, Durga, Mahasakti, Sarasvati, Kalanthakara, Markandeya, Veena Tharani and Veera Pathirar.45.
The sanctum is approached by the flight of steps on the northern and southern sides. Two Amman statues are found on either side of the wall of the garbhagaha. Unnamlai Amman in the sanctum is three feet tall radiating peace and joy. The Amman holds in her right hand a kumuda and in the left is Lola hasta. Similar figures ornate the three devakoshtas. They are of one and half feet high. Chandikeswar shrine is found on the northern side of the garbhagaha. On the western part of the antarala Lingodbhavar, utsavamurti of Vinayakar, Chola Linga, Chera Linga and Brahmi Lingam are found.

The entire Amman shrine was renovated in the twentieth century by the Nagarattars. It displays only recent day architecture. The architecture of the sanctum sanctorum and sculptures found there belong to the eleventh century. The stones containing inscriptions have been altered during the renovation work of the shrine. An inscription of the Chola king Kulottunga III of 1179 A.D. indicates that the Amman shrine was built during the 12th century A.D. But some scholars have come to the conclusion that Kulottunga I, a pious devotee of Lord Siva should have built the temple46.

The huge structure in front of the Amman shrine is called the kodimara mandapam. It is supported by three rows of pillars on either side of the central passage leading to the Amman shrine, each row consisting of 12 pillars. In the central passage between the fourth and fifth pillar from the shrine stands the flag staff. In front of the flag staff, there is a nandi. The gateway of the Amman shrine is guarded by Dvarapalakis one on each side. On the left gate way, there is a shrine dedicated to Vijaya Raghava
Vinayakar. On the right side a row of nine statues Vinayaka, Lingodbhavar, Ganapathi, Bhairava, Linga, Valli, Subramaniya, Deivananai and Dakshinamurti, sit for giving darshan. The Navagrahas stand on a square stone platform on the northern side of the Kodimara mandapa in between the seventh and eighth pillars of the second and third row of pillars from the Amman shrine. A small shrine dedicated to Chitra Gupta, the account keeper and the principal secretary of Yama, the God of death is found on the northern side of Navagraha attached to the wall surface. The central passage has two central pillars on each side corresponding to the entrance of this mandapa.

4.9.8. Kalahasthiswarar shrine

In front of the Kodimara mandapa and at a distance of a few yards stands the Kalahasthiswarar shrine facing west. It has a garbhagriha and antarala. A small mandapa is in front of the antarala supported by four pillars. The adhistana exhibits the following parts – upana, jagati, kanta, tripatta kumuda, patti and Kapota. The exterior surfaces of the walls contain pilasters at the concerns both on the antarala and garbhagriha. On the garbhagriha, there is the Nagara vimana. Nandi is placed in the front pillared mandapa, besides one in the antarala.

4.9.9. Yagasala mandapa

This mandapa is situated in the southern side of the Kalahasthiswarar shrine. It begins at half a distance of the Kalahasthiswarar shrine. It has also
an open mandapa supported by four pillars. The plinth shows upapitha, kanta and kapota parts. The mandapa has eight pilasters on the northern, eastern and southern sides. At the centre of each side there is a window of holes

**4.9.10. At the Northern side of Third Prakaram the followings are located**

The temple office is located at Vasantha Mandapam. Adjoining to Vasantha Mandapam Kalahasthiswarar Sannathi and Yaha Salai are seen. Adjoining to Temple office Mandapam famous Pidariamman Sannathi is located and in front of this Sannathi stands a majestic huge stone tirulam (Trident) which is rare to find in other temples. And next to this sannathi, Chidamareswarar, Jumbukeswarar and Ekambareswarar sannathi are located

**4.9.11. Vasantha mandapa**

This is also called Kolu mandapa. This mandapa has walls on the rear and in the front. It stands on a plinth. The rear portion is supported by four rows of pillars, six pillars in each row in east – west direction forming a rectangular part in the middle and is supported by one pillar on each side in the centre. The central enwalled portion is supported by six rows of pillars each containing six pillars leaving a central passage in north – south direction.
The frontal walled portion and a small pillared mandapa in front of it is reached by a flight of steps. There are four pillars in these parts in four rows. The mandapa faces south and it is found attached to the enclosure wall of the second prakara on the north side. This mandapa was used for the darshan of Lord Siva during the spring festival (Vasantha vizha) in Chitrai (April) month. Now this mandapa has been converted into the administrative office of the temple.

In between the Vasantha mandapa and the enclosure wall of this prakara on the eastern side upto the entrance to this prakara, there is a group of shrines dedicated to Ekambareshwarar, Jumbukeshwarar, Chidambareshwarar, and Pidari Amman.50

4.9.12. Ekambareswarar shrine

This shrine is situated on the north east corner of this prakara. It is facing west. It stands on a high plinth containing garbhagraha and antarala. The adhistana parts are upana, padma, kanta and kapota. The exterior walls show pilasters at the corners. In the devakoshtas Brahma, Lingodbhavar and Lakshmi are found. The vimana is Nagara with circular kalasa.51

4.9.13. Chidambareshwarar shrine

This shrine is very similar to the Ekambareswarar shrine except in the adhistana which exhibits upana, jagati, yalivari, kanta and vedhi. Vimana is the Vesara type. This is situated on the south of the Ekambareshwarar
shrine. In front of this shrine, there is a Vilva tree sacred to Lord Siva. This shrine might to have been built in the ninth century.  


This shrine is situated in between the Chidambareshwarar shrine and the eastern entrance of this prakara. It has a four pillared mandapa. The adhistana parts are upana, jagati, tripatta kumuda, kanta, pattiyal and vedhi. Nagar vimana has kirtimukha kudu on each direction and a round kalasa and stupid. There are no images in the devakoshtas.

The Kalahasthiswarar, Ekambareshwarar, Chidambareshwarar, Jumbukeshwarar shrines together with Annamalaiyar shrine represent the five elements (panchabhutas) of the universe. All these five shrines found in the Annamalaiyar temple, represent the five faces of Lord Siva.

4.9.15. Pidari Amman shrine

This shrine is situated in between the Jumbukeshwarar shrine and the Vasantha mandapa. It faces north. It is a walled mandapa. The second day festival of the grand Karthigai Deepam is dedicated to Pidari Amman. The images of the Sapta matrikas are chiseled in separate stones and are placed inside this mandapa. At the centre, Nidamba Sudani with eight hands gives darshan. The head of Renuka Devi in a stone is also found inside. Its height is two and half feet. It wears karanda makuta, patra kundala and at the back there is Siracchakkara. It is of exquisitive beauty. Further, the images of
Naya, Kannappar worshipping Siva, an eight armed Pidari are also found inside the shrine. In front of the shrine there are Balipeedam, sulam and Dipa medai.

**4.9.16. Kili gopura**

Kili (parrot) gopura or the parrot tower is the inner most gopura of this temple. In a niche in that tower, a mortar image of a parrot is seen. It is believed that resting on this gopura in the front of a parrot Saint Arunagirinathar composed his famous Kandar Alankaram as well as other hymns. That is reason the tower is being called Kili gopura.

In a niche on the left side of Kili gopura base the images of Vira Rajendra Chola and his minister who constructed the basement of the temple, are found. The spire is said to have built by Bhaskaramurti whose statue along with his wife is still found in the tower. Through this gate, all idols are taken from the temple for procession. The parrot tower leads to the third prakara.

The innermost gopuram was built about 1063 A.D. by Vira Rajendra. Its corbels retain the geometrical simplicity of the early Chola corbels with median projection of an unmodified right angled triangle. The median projection becomes more of a cube thus formed is constructed by a horizontal band just above the middle, while its free horizontal tower surface bears lotus ornamentation. The projections show the beginnings of the curve of their later characteristic form.
The swollen base of the vase ornament is smooth. The top of the vase bears a capital surmounted by corbels with the usual pair of general lotus projections but without the usual forward one. No niche is present in the wall between in each pair of pillars. The lower course is still further reduced in height and its decoration to a series of Wright flattened bands in moderate relief.

The spire of this gopuram is recently built. This is elegantly decorated. The roofs of the pavilion ornaments are concretly obscured by the enlargement of the row of figures and by then age and elaborate kudus.

4.9.17. Deepa Darshana Mandapam

At the inner side of third Prakaram facing Kili Gopuram is 16 pillared Deepa Darshana Mandapam. During Karthigai Deepam day Pancha Murthis (Five deities) give darshan from this Mandapam. Passing through this Mandapam one can get into Arunachaleswarar Sannathi. At the left side of Kili Gopuram Panneer Mandapam and Madapalli (temple Kitchen) are located.

4.9.18. Sambanda Vinayakar Sannathi

Sambanda Vinayakar Sannathi is located at the front side of Arunachaleswarar sannathi facing east. Similarly on the northern side is Palani Andavar Sannathi. In front of Arunachaleswarar Sannathi facing the Lord Arunachaleswarar is Goldan Flag staff with Pali Peetam.
4.10. SECOND PRAKARAM

The second Prakaram circuited the outside of the inner Sanctum Sanctorum of Lord Siva. Against the walls around the path are statues of 63 Nayanmars, lingas etc... Passing through this Prakaram we can worship the following deities Somaskandar, Venugopalar, Lingothbavar, Mother Durga, Sandeekeswarar, Gajalakshmi, Arumugaswamy, Dhakshinamoorthy, Swarnabairavar, Natarajar and Palliyarai.

4.10.1. Shrine of Venugopalaswamy

The shrine of Venugopalaswamy, deity of Vaishnavite is located at the back side of the Sanctum of Annamalaiyar. This show both "Hari" and "Sivan" are same. This kind of structure is rarely available in other places. Northern side of this prakaram consist an exit which leads us to Arulmigu Unnamulaiamman temple\textsuperscript{58}.

4.10.2. Second enclosure

While circumambulating this prakara on a raised platform can be seen Sanakesvarar, Sananteswarar, Sanatanesvarar, Sanatkumarar, Kowsikesvarar, Kutcarisvarar, Valmi, Visvanadar, Naradesvarar, Kasilingam, Vaisambadanesvarar and sixty three Nayanmars like Sundarar etc. Thambureswarar also is here. Adjoining it are Sapta Mathas chiseled in stone. Goutamar (2ft) and Durvasa (4ft) are here in a standing pose. In the west row, are the festival idols of Somaskanda, Venugopala Sannathi and
sanctum of Arumuga. To the left side are several Lingas. In the north now are Bhiksadanan, Shanmugar, festival idols of 63 Nayanmars etc.

4.10.3. Kalasankara

The image of Kalasankara 3ft high armed with Mazhu, pasu, sula and kapala is in the act of killing yama. This is a very beautiful image.

4.10.4. Bhairava

The image of Bhairava of 3 ½ high (105 cms) is armed with Uddukai, pasa, sula and kapala. This image of dog is nearby. The fire halo and a necklace are his ornaments.

4.10.5. Sthala Vinayaka

The sanctum of this vinayaka is in the south west corner of the southern end in the west of the second prakara. This was erected by Sembian ma devi of Kandaraditya Chola

4.11. FIRST PRAKARAM

The first prakara is a closed court with two openings – one on the east and other on the north enclosure wall, enclosing the garbhagraha and arthamandapa, or antarala, mukha mandapa, mahamandapa and a rectangular pavement on all the sides of these three structures.

4.11.1. Garbhagraha, antarala and mukha mandapa

Lord Annamalaiyar is personified in the form of Linga in the sanctum - sanctorum of the temple. The Linga is a Suyambu, because it has emerged on its own accord, from the protrusion of Aruna hill from underneath. The
Linga is an upright stone, square at the bottom, octagonal in the middle, then cylindrical with a rounded top. The base is embedded in a circular or over plinth. The base of the Linga has a thick gold band around. Its middle is resting in the auvudaiyar with immense beauty. While the auvudaiyar is round, the Rudrapagam is covered with golden plate. The Linga is considered to be a living divinity filling the entire space\textsuperscript{60}. On the exterior surface of the garbhagaha wall, on the right side, there is Meru chakra, the bed room idol in a recess. To the left of Meru chakra, in a recess of the wall, there is a sculpture of Vinayakar.

Before the daily services commence to the prime deity of the temple, first puja is performed to this Vinayaka. On a recess in the wall, on the left side, there is an idol of Yokasakti Amman. She is called Vaibhoga Nayaki. Mount Meru is made up of five precious metals (Panchalokaka) and has the imprint of Siva’s foot prints on top. It is really Siva Chakra of a very special design and has a very special function.

The adhistana ornamentation is entirely sunk under the raised platform on all the sides of garbhagaha and antarala. Dakshinamurti is housed in the southern devakoshta. This sculpture is decked with snake, fire, rosary and a book in his hands. He is in a sitting posture. Beneath him are Muyalakan and the four sages. Lingodbhavar is enshrined in the western devakoshta. He is the most important deity of Thiruvannamalai whose holy sport has resulted in the magnificent Aruna Lingam and in the majestic Annamalaiyar temple. Lingodbhavar is seen with Vishnu in the form of a
boar digging the earth and Brahma as a swan. Usually, the swan will be seen in a flying pose. But here it is found seated on the top of Lingodbhavar. Brahma is found on the northern side of the devakoshta of the garbhagraha in a standing pose holding rosary, kamandalam and bestowing in the devakoshta of the antarala or the same side she is standing on the buffalo’s head. Abhaya and Katyavalampita are the poses of her hands. Chandikeshwara is housed in a small shrine facing south just opposite to the sculpture of Durgadevi on the raised platform.

The Dvarapalakas on the exterior walls of the antarala facing east have two hands. The right hand holds a snake and the left is placed on the gatha and exhibits tarjani mudra. The Ganas found in the vimana are seen supporting the structure, some playing the flute, some drumming, some dancing, same clapping, etc.

The mukha mandapa, a square structure bigger than the sanctum-sanctorum is found detached from the antarala. It has a nandi in the centre called Pradosha nandi and there are sculptures of Surya and Chandra on the walls. The spaces in between the antarala and mukha mandapa on the north and south sides are used as passages to and front in the antarala.

4.11.2. Dhakshinamurthi

Dhakshinamurthi is enshrined in the ghosta of the sanctum in the first prakara. This deity dacked with Snack, Fire, Rosary and Book and is in a seated pose. Beneath him are the Muyalkan and the four sages.
4.11.3. **Lingodbavar**

Lingodbavar is seen with Vishnu in the form of a Boar digging the earth and as a Swan. Usually the Swan will be seen only in a flying pose. But here, peculiarly it is found seated on His head\(^{61}\).

4.11.4. **Brahma**

Brahma with rosary, Kamandala in two hands and bestowing Abaya by the other hand is seen standing.

4.11.5. **Durga**

Durga Devi is standing on the head of a Buffalo, Abaya and Katyavilambita are the poses featured by Her hands\(^{62}\).

4.11.6. **Chandikesvarar**

As seen in all other temples Chandikesvara is present in a separate shrine.

4.11.7. **Friezes of Buta (Ganas)**

The Ganas found in the Vimana are seen some supporting the structure, some playing the flute, some drumming, some dancing, some clapping etc.

4.11.8. **Dvarapalakas**

The two dvarapalakas in the first Prakara is 10 ft high (3mt). He is adorned with Jata Mukada, Mazhu, Danda and displays Tharjani, mudra, leaning on the Danda. The Dvarapalaka on the left has a snake. The Dvarapalakas in the Sanctum has only 2 hands. Holding a snake in his hand, he has a Gadtha and exhibits Tharajani mudra\(^{63}\).
4.11.9. Mahamandapa

The mahamandapa is an open square mandapa supported by four rows of pillars of six pillars in each row. While the exterior rows are at the ends of the mandapa, the interior two rows from a passage leading to the main structures. There are two pillars at the entrance of the main structure forming a rectangular space in the middle in which situated the Balipeedam and nandi. On the eastern side also there are two pillars one on each side in between the rows. All the pillars supporting the mukha mandapa are aniotikkals with rampant yalis facing each other and an elephant beneath. At the top of these pillars there are lion faces supporting the beams of the mandapa. On the front eastern side there are lamps called rathavilakku (lamps in an order of a ter). The Dvarapalaka is adorned with jatamakuta, mazhu, danda and displays tarjani mudra leaning on the danda. On the left side of the Dvarapalaka, there is a snake. The entrance of the mukha mandapa is called Utthama Cholan Vayil\textsuperscript{64}.

4.11.10. Tiruccurrumalikaipatti adjoining the enclosure wall and the shrines

On all the sides of the enclosure wall of the first prakara there are Tiruccurrumalikaipatti on a raised platform. Excepting the eastern portion where there are many rows of pillars, the southern and northern tiruccurrumalikaipatti are supported by twenty pillars each. The western tiruccurrumalikaipatti has fourteen pillars. The eastern side is supported by
four rows of pillars. The eastern most row has 16 pillars. The other three rows have 14 pillars each. All the rows leave a central passage by dividing them equal half of the numbers of pillars facing the garbhagraha, ardhamandapa, mukha mandapa and mahamandapa and the reciprocal side of pillars of the main structure are of the same type to that of the central pillars of the mahamandapa.

The tiruccurrumalikaipatti adjoining the enclosure wall on the southern, western and northern sides has statues, Lingas and little shrines. Starting from the south – east side, there are the figures of Tirugnanasambandar, Tirunavukkarasar, Sundarar and Manickavacakar glowing in their shrines. Next to them are the sculptured images of sixty – three Nayanmars, together with some Lingas. The south – west corner of this Patti has the shrine of Sthala Vinayakar. It is said that it was erected by Sembaliyan Madevi, the queen of Kandaratirtha Chola. The shrines cover 4 pillars on the western side. In the centre of this western Patti there is the shrine of Venugopala. Venu is the flute, a musical instrument. The Lord is found with his two consorts Ratha and Rukmani. Hanuman and Garudaalwar are also in this shrine worshipping the Lord. This shrine was built by Kulottunga I.

Lord Arumuga with six faces and twelve hands along with His consorts Valli and Devasena adorn the shrine situated on the north – west corner of this patti. In northern side, there is a passage leading to the Unnamalai Amman shrine. The passage is called Vaikuntha Vasal and it is
located between the tenth and eleventh pillars. The north western row consists of the utsavamurtis of various deities, sixty three Nayanmars, Pichadanar and Shanmuka. On the north eastern side, there are the shrines Kala Sankarar. Bhiravar, Bed chamber and the shrine of Nataraja. The image of Kalasankarar is three feet high. He is armed with mazhu, pasa, sula and kapala. He is in the pose of killing yama, who is called Kalan. This beautiful image dates back to thirteenth century A.D. The image of Bhairava is three and half feet high. He holds damaru, pasa, sula and kapala in his hands. The image of dog is nearby. The fire halo necklaces are his ornaments. The bed chamber is situated next to Bhairava shrine. The idol of the Goddess is small. The Lord is represented by Meru chakra. Besides the bed chamber, there is a well from which water is drawn for ablutions to the deities.

4.11.11. Lord Natarjar shrine

This shrine is situated on the north – eastern part of the northern tiruccurrumalikaipatti facing the east corridor. The Lord is in dancing posture. Goddess Sivakami is on his left side. The utsavamurtis of these images and of Manickavacakar in anjali posr are also in this shrine. The Lord’s dance represent the Panchakrityas namely creation, sustention, concealment and bestowal of grace. The damaru represents the principle of sabda and hence akasa (ether) which immediately proceeds from the Atman and is responsible for creation. The fire which is in the left hand represents
Pralayagni; the fire that destroys at the time of destruction of the universe and symbolizes the process of destruction. Damaru and destruction. The lower left hand which points to the raised left leg indicates the need to take refuge at the feet of the Lord, and the lower right shows abhaya mudra which represents the protection and bestowal of grace. The right leg is placed on Apasmarapurusa who symbolizes the ignorance which makes us lose our real nature. This is concealment.

4.11.12. The eastern tiruccurrumalikaipatti

In the north – eastern part of this broader tiruccurrumalikaipatti there are the utsavamurtis of Somaskandar, Sivakami, Subramanyar, Vinayakar, Chandrasekarar together with Sivakami and Astradeva all facing south. This part is fenced with iron rods. Dress chamber is also within this part. The south western part is vacant and is used by temple priests for their spiritual activities.

4.11.13. Venu Udayiyan Vayil

The main entrance to the first prakara has huge wooden doors called Venu Udayiyan Kathavukal and the entrance is called Venu Udayiyan Vayil. On either side of this entrance Dvarapalakas stand watching the devotees carefully. As one enters through the open doors one could see the lion – faced statues that are hanging suspended from the ceiling close to the entrance. The tower which is directly on the main entrance is called Rishi gopuram. This tower is not generally counted with the other nine gopuras. It
is stated that this court was started by Rajendra Chola I and was completed by the Kadava King Kopperunsingan.

4.11.14. Kodimara mandapa

The Kodimara or flog staff mandapa is a rectangular open mandapa adjoining the western side to the enclosure wall of the first prakara and is supported by four rows of pillars, each row containing 5 pillars each, leaving a central passage. The Nandi locally called Adhikara Nandi is in the central eastern part. It is housed in the four pillared mandapa. Nandi being the holder of all powers over the Siva Ganas, it is called Adhikara nandi. Nandi is the first Guru. In front of it, in western side, there is Balipeedam where the devotees are expected to kill their egoism, ahamkara.

The flag staff is on the back of the Nandi and in front of the mandapa. The flag staff has 32 strips. It represents the back bone of the human being which has 32 bones. It is also divided into six oarts representing the six adharas muladhara, swathisana, manipuraka, visddhi and ajnai. In another aspect, the flag staff is Lord Siva, the coir is bestowal of power, the cloth is the self, and the dharba grass is pasa. The Dhavajarohana or flag hoisting represents the taking up of the prana from susuma nadi through the six chakras to sahasrahara⁶⁹.

4.11.15. Sambanda Vinayakar shrine

This shrine is located in the area to the south of the Kodimara mandapa. The intervening space between the Kodimara mandapa and this
shrine is connected by 4 pillars adjoining the north side of this shrine. There
is a small passage between the back of this shrine and the enclosure wall of
the first prakara. The statue of Sambanda Vinayakar looks crimson smeared
with saffron. Hence, it is called Sennira Vinayakar\textsuperscript{70}.

4.11.16. Palaniandavar shrine

This shrine is situated to the north of the Kodimara mandapa and
adjoining the enclosure wall of the first prakara. It consists of a square cella
and a square arthamandapa. In front of it there is an open mandapa
supported by two pillars on the eastern side. The adhistana shows upana,
jagti, tripatta kumuda, kanta pattiyal, kanta and vedhi, and the Nagara
vimana has a circular kalasa. The deity in the garbhagraha is similarly to that
of Palani Dhandayuthapani Swamy temple. Hence, the deity is called Palani
Andavar. Though the above description is made under the first prakara, the
archaeologists do not consider it as a prakara since it has no open count.
They consider the temple as having only three courts. Tradition treats even
the so called first prakara as comprising two prakaras, one the pavement
along the main structure, and two the Pradakshina patha in between the
pavement and tirucchurumalikapatti adjoining the enclosure wall, and hence
it believes that the temple has five prakaras. Architecturally, only when the
mada veethi is treated as a prakara, the total comes to five courts.
Traditionally people believe that the car street and Girivalam path are also
the prakaram of the temple\textsuperscript{71}. 