"Theories date rapidly, but documents, like diamonds, are forever"¹. Temple structure deals with the documents which man has created in the visual arts. Literally it means 'writing in images'. To study temple is to begin to 'read' the meaning of the structures of the temples. It is concerned with the subject matter, with the content rather than the form of art. The architecture of religions consists of images, symbols, teachings and narratives related to religious belief and practice.

Temples have triple-dimensional outlook, viz., Historical, aesthetical and religious. The reason for the evolution of temple is purely religious. Contribution of religion through art is immense. Historians and the Philosophers of art may argue that the 'religious sense' is secondary. But throughout the world, the temples of Hindus, the Churches of Christians and the Mosques of Muslims have their significance only of religious, not for their history or aesthetics. In essence, temple is the light-house of religion.

1. THE STUDY OF RELIGION THROUGH TEMPLES

Temples are puzzled by certain symbols which is meaningful, but impress the feeling that the temples are 'closed-book'. Study on
temples can help the viewer or reader by making identifications, bringing certain satisfactions in mind: Pleasure in the temple structure depends indirectly perhaps, on knowing what it represents knowledge in this sense, offers no bar to appreciations; whereas unsatisfied intellectual curiosity may greatly reduce one's capacity for aesthetic response”.

First, it is evident that most of religions have found expressions in visual imagery. In the history of mankind man could draw long before he writes and in the history of ancient religions there were images, visual symbols and pictographs before written texts were produced. Even in religions such as Hinduism with a large corpus of scriptures, the use of temples and images have been developed as a parallel tradition only partly related to texts.

Secondly, the visual expressions challenge the observer of another religions and cultural tradition to understand them. Despite his initial puzzlement and ignorance, the tourist or the reader or the visitor to the temple or an art museum may find himself drawn into a deeper quest for the meaning of it.

Thirdly, the study of temples provides a mode of understanding of not only one religious tradition but many which are accessible now
to modern man through, travel, study and the mass media. Often the visible art, the temple architecture and rituals are the most immediate aspects to be encountered in all their strangeness; they are therefore suitable avenues of approach to understand the religious meaning which they express.

Modern man has to live in a pluralistic society. There are many 'worlds of the sacred'. He must learn to come to terms with them, to understand them by switching imaginatively from his own world-view to others. Thus he can empathize with some at least of the religion on his horizon, as well as the ways of life and thought in religion of the past. The study of temple helps him in this venture.

We must now examine what exactly the 'religion on temples' is. Though these two are separate disciplines, none can deny their interdependency. Temple without religion is impossible. Here in this context this study analysis the contribution of religion to the development of temples.

Applying this to the realm of art, temple architecture and iconography, regard them as 'religious'. Those works are known to be related to the transcendent religious goal by people using these media of belief and practice. This is sufficiently clear in the case of
the traditional religions. Their long established conventional symbols readily identify the religious goal of a Hindu temple image.

The Hindu tradition goes back to Pre-Aryan times and blends Dravidian with Aryan elements in a long-lasting and still living tradition⁴. Ancient Indian symbols and themes recur in the varied religious movements in India as well as in the Hinduized legacy of South-East Asia⁵. The iconography of the major sectarian gods, Siva, Vishnu and the goddess Devi received classic definition after a process of merging with local deities, along with the influence on worship of Bhakti, puja and tantra and the building of temples under royal patronage⁶. Characteristic of Hindu temples and the images of Gods are the synthesis of the worldly and ascetic, body and spirit. The cultic use of the temples shows a corresponding ambivalence – the temple is worshipped as the presence of the God in the ritual, yet it is not indispensable and can be spiritually transcended⁷.

2. FACTORS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF IMAGES AND TEMPLES

2.1. THE EMERGENCE OF BHAKTI

The emergence of Bhakti as a popular mode of piety is that of loving devotion to a particular deity. This relation between the lord Krishna and his worshipper is a constant refrain of the Bhagavatgita.
The Bhakti movement must have gathered strength already in the centuries immediately proceeding. Upanishads provided a basis in the concept of Isvara. He was the personal form of God manifesting the otherwise impersonal Brahman. In Saivism lord Siva is the supreme Being. At the level of worship rendered whole-heartedly to a single God, required images to mediate the presence of the God and help the devotee to visualize Him. Thus the from of worship developed puja by means of offerings, and ritual honouring of the image, expressing personal devotion.

2.2. HINDU PANTHEON

Secondly, the changes in the dominant pantheon and the increased number of Gods required an explicit iconography. Vasudeva-Vishnu found a succession of incarnations and Siva's consorts with mother-goddess figures who became alternative forms of His Sakti or female essence. All this were subject matter for vividly expressed myths and images. It also stimulated the construction of temples and errection of images. One sect seeks to outshine the other, and depicts the superior power of its chosen deity.

2.3. STIMULUS OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

The third factor might be the stimulus of external influences. The heterodox system of Buddhism and Jainism are relevant here.
They provided a challenge and an example. Although they confined themselves to aniconic forms of their supreme guides, they had begun to use stone for religious monuments. Hence, the earliest surviving religious monuments in India are Buddhist. The use of stone for their masonories, Viharas and images was probably due to Persian and Hellenistic influences. These influences also helped to shape the anthropomorphic image of Buddha. Then it was developed in the Gandhara school of Northwest India. The growing importance of Buddhist monuments stimulated the efforts of the Hindu sects to produce images and construct abodes to their gods.

2.4. THE ROYAL PATRONAGE

Fourthly, the royal patronage is to be considered. The influence of political power for the development in religion and art can be traced from the dawn of our history. Kushan emperors were the staunch devotees of Siva and Lingam. The Gupta rulers of the fourth to fifth centuries were devout Bhagavatas; i.e., devotees of Vishnu in his form as Krishna with other incarnations of Vishnu

Rulers made it a matter of prestige to build great temples and shrines and to endow monastic establishments. All these now had images in the inner sanctorum and subsidiary paintings and sculptures were decorating the walls. The rulers themselves were
increasingly identified with the power of the Gods symbolized in their images. This resulted from the alliance of king's and priests by which medieval Hindu rulers were accorded the religious aura of being agents of the state deity within an aristocratic-theocratic complex.

2.5. DEVOTIONAL PIETY AND ROYAL INFLUENCE

Fifthly, Hindu worship of images in temple or home, the way of worship or puja brings together the factors of devotional piety and royal influence. Originating as a hospitality ritual for honoured guests such as Brahmins in family ceremonies, it is a 'sequence of acts of service and respect' rendered to the deity as if honoring a person. Thus the deity is invoked and farewelled, He is offered a seat, bathed, anointed, given a fresh garment and sacred thread. In addition to offerings of incense, flowers and food, the deity is praised in verse and by circumambulation. These are external acts involving purification of the worshipper as well as of the image. But the spirit is intended to be the Bhakti, holy-minded devotion.

Temple worship of the image brings out the kingly aspects, for many aspects of the temple reproduce the life of the king's palace. The temple tank comes from the miniature lake providing a cool place for the king; and the umbrella to shade him, the royal palanquin to transport him, the finery to cloth him, and the retinue of servants to
tend him are all transferred to the care of the deity's image. In the temple, he graciously makes Himself available for viewing, darshana by his worshippers and this extended to a wider public when at festivals the image is carried through the streets in His car or palanquin. It is a 'spectacle' in both the devotional and king-celebrating senses. "Thousands of pilgrims flock to have a look at the form of the Lord on such occasions when it is royally attired, for it is really an achievement in the art of decoration with flowers, clothes and jewels; a lovely figure kingly and saintly\textsuperscript{11}.

2.6. THE INFLUENCE OF 'TANTRA'

Sixthly, here the term 'Tantra' is generally associated with esoteric teachings and practices. It is dealing with spiritual disciplines and the cult of Sakti, the Mother Goddess. The latter element has certainly pervaded Indian popular religion. Tantra may well have been a wide-spread form of religious practice. It has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the writings of Hindu orthodoxy. In its developed form Tantra can be seen as a "special manifestation of Indian feeling, art and religion, a cult of ecstasy, founded on a vision of Cosmic sexuality\textsuperscript{12}. The Tantric texts teach ritual practice, that pointed inward. The Tantric initiate all to worship activities without caste, creed and sex differentiation. But they used mantras, meditation and images to apply the symbolism to himself as the deity
within. When puja was directed outward 'Tantra' emphasized internalization of the image and identification of the worshipper with the divine powers represented by the image and its symbols\textsuperscript{13}.

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Man is essentially a religious being. Man without religion is unthinkable. Religious faith and practices give new dimension of way to life. The present study contribution of religion to the development of temple with special reference to saivism exposes the importance of religion, development of religion and saivite temples in this land.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is consisting of the following objectives

1. To study the religion through temples
2. To make historical changes and factors for evolution of images and temples
3. To expose the religious behaviour and activities
4. To study the Architectural features of the ancient temple
5. To bring out the implication of Saivism in temples.
6. Descriptive and analytical methods are followed.
5. HYPOTHESIS

India is land of temples especially South India is fully enjoying the unique credit of being the land of temple. From the ancient society to the modern world it fully based on religious oriented principles. The temples are the centers of educating religious rites and practices. Saivism occupies the predominant role on Hindu temples. A humble attempt has been made to bring out the contribution of religion to the development of temples in Saivaite point of view.

6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher is concentrating on Silpastra, Agamas, and relevant materials related to the temples and religious study.

7. PLAN OF THE STUDY

We have six chapters in this thesis. They are as follows, the first chapter gives the introductory remark to the thesis. The second chapter explains, the religious behaviour and activities. The third chapter contains the Development of Hindu temples. The fourth chapters deals with the symbolism of Hindu religious rituals and temple structures. The fifth chapter depicts the traces of Saivism in temples. The sixth chapter ends with concluding remarks as the findings of the researcher.
8. DELIMITATION

This thesis contribution of religion to the development of temples with special reference to Saivism - a study for the award of the Ph.D. Degree covers the entire concept of religion, temple and Saivism.

9. SOURCES OF THE STUDY

The primary sources of the research consist of the Vedas, Agamas, Upanisad, Meykandasastras and Panniruthirumurai. The secondary sources are the relevant books, articles, views and comments which appeared in journals, Magazines that have enormously helped the scholar for this work.

10. METHODOLOGY

The question of Methodology of research in temple studies assumes importance, because temple studies analyse and elucidate religious behaviour and activities of Hindu temples development and the symbolism of their rituals and structures. Methodology of research in temple studies needs detached objectivity, for the research in the area of religion oriented study, researcher must be committed to finding the rigorous analysis of religious beliefs and practices with their symbolic nature. So, it needs a certain degree of self-involvement. It is noted that
researcher of temple study has to talk about religious ideas with special reference to saivite temples.