Tradition and History

Music and dance have been a part of the life of people of the Tamil country long before the history was written. *Tholkkpaiyam* (500 BC - 200AD), a text of Tamil grammar and poetics mentions dance in many places.

The Tamil epic *Silappadikaram* (500 AD) deals with the arts of dance and music and provides some examples. The story is that of a loyal house wife whose husband *Kovalan* has an affair with the dancer *Madhavi* but comes back to his wife. Madhavi's royal award winning performance is described in detail in the epic.

The ancient Tamils called both dance and drama *Koothu*. Dancers and theatre persons were called *Koothar*. Dances were classified according to the space they were danced in:

- Dances performed as a ritual in the temple precincts.
- Dances performed for the Kings in the court.
- Dances performed for important people in small assemblies.
- Dances performed for social occasions like weddings and other celebrations.
- Dances performed by the community as a ritual in the fields and in life cycle rituals and in festivals outside the temple.

Rituals and Religion: The Devadasis

Dance has always had a special place in the life of Tamils. Ritual and celebration always included dance. A practice in the medieval ages was that of the *Devadasi* system. The dance in the temples as a ritual was performed by the specially trained *Devadasis* or *servants of God*. These were young girls who were dedicated to the temple and were married to the God in a ritual. They were not allowed a regular family life but were highly trained in music and dance which was denied to women of the kitchen. The role of the Devadasi was to dance in the temple as a part of the ritual of worship. The temple gave them housing and land and a regular income. Because of their
proximity to temples, their education, their sexuality and the fact that they were married to the God and not a mortal human being in the regular manner, The Devadasis were considered auspicious and were invited to take part in the life cycle rituals of households. Many Devadasis were chosen as companions by some dignitaries of the society. The Devadasis bore them children. These children took on their mother's name and had no right to the name or inheritance from the father. Society accepted this arrangement as a legitimate one. The Devadasis were held in awe by the society for their knowledge and art. The male children became dance teachers and Nattuvanars (conducting a performance with hand held cymbals and reciting the Sollukkattus (dance syllables). The dance of the Devadasi was called Dasi attam or Chinna Melam or Sadir. In the beautiful Natya-Mandapas (dance-halls) of the magnificent temples, the Devadasis used to perform ritual dances as votive offerings to the presiding Deities.

The Devadasi system was abolished during the British rule of India through the efforts of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, a pioneering Indian medical doctor and a social activist. Her western education and her social activism made her flinch at the practice of dedicating young girls to the temple. She felt the girls had to have had some choice to pursue any profession. She founded educational institutions and homes for poor women who had no access to education.

**Dance forms in Tamil Nadu**

There are many forms of dance in Tamil Nadu. The dance inside the temples was dasiattam or sadir and was normally a solo form unless a dance drama was specially commissioned while dances outside were ritualistic in propitiating nature and the Gods that represent them and community oriented with groups of men and women dancing them. The Kavadi, the Devarattam, Oyilattam, the Karagam and Poikkal Kudirai are danced in social and religious occasions in the villages. Some forms like the Devarattam are very abstract in nature and can teach the modern dancer quite a few things. They are not spontaneous as generally believed but require long years of training. Kummi dance is the dance of women and young girls with clapping hands danced in circles around the pot of new rice during the Pongal festivities celebrating the new harvest in January.
Dance education has mainly been with the different families carrying style names with the place of the family origin like Pandanallur style, Thanjavur style, Vazhuvur style etc. The male members of the Devadasi families became dance teachers. Many creative dancers learnt from these teachers and adapted them to suit their audiences and presentation forums and students.

**Bharathanatiyam and Western dance forms**

The basic difference between western classical dance and Bharathanatyam is in the challenge posed to the dancer. While the western classical dancer faces the challenge of moving away from the earth and creating sculptures in the air trying to conquer the forces of gravity and space, the Bharathanatyam dancer is rooted to the ground and uses the earth as a partner in dance, in fact as nature is perceived as the manifestation of the divine in Hinduism, so does the dancer recognize the divinity of mother earth by first acknowledging it by offering obeisance to her. Many dancers keep a figure of dancing Nataraja as a reminder of the times when dance was a ritual offering to the Gods in the temples. But often it becomes a decoration on stage.

Many western dancers have been inspired by Bharathanatyam. In the early days it was *Ruth St. Dennis* who danced the oriental dances and took the west by storm.

**History of Pudukkottai Kingdom**

The Thondaimans of pudukkottai came to rule with full sovereignty over the pudukkottai area from the middle of the 17th century till it’s amalgamation with the rest of India after Indian Independence in 1947.

The ancestors of the Pudukkottai ruling line of Thondaimans are migrants from Thiruppathi region in the Thondaimandalam, the northern stretch of the ancient Tamil Kingdom, along with the vijayanagar army, which was in engagement in this part of territory in the early 17th century. It is probable that one among them got some lands assigned to him by the local palaver chieftain and settled down at karambakudi and Ambukovil area and became the chieftain of the area later came to be called as the progenitor of Thondaimans of pudukkottai ruling house. According to the legendary
account found in a telugu poem, ‘Thondaiman vamasavali’, the Thondamins belonged to Indravamsa and the first ruler was Thondaiman. 

Avadi Raya Thondaiman, the successor of pachai Thondaiman with the favour of Venkata Raya – III (1630-1642 A.D) he got extended the land in his possession in the region and he was also conferred the title Raya. The Avadai Ray a Thondaiman inherited Vijaya Nagar tradition and the Thondaimans of later Period adopted it. 

His son Ragnatha Raya Thondaiman came close to the Nasak of Thanjavur and Rangkrisna Nasak of Tiruchirappalli. He was appointed as the arasu kavalar of Tirurappalli. Vijaya Raghunatha Kilavan 5 ethupathi (1673 – 1710 A.D) the Sethupathi ruler of Ramanatha puram married kathali Nachiar the sister of Thontaiman. This marriage strengthened the ties between these dynasties. The Sethupathi presented the tract of land of the south of vallar of the Thondaiman. This account is called the Sethupathi origin of Pudukkottai country and expansion of Thondaiman rule. The Thondaman’s rule was established south of velar and Ragnatha Raya Thondaiman was in estimation to the status of a bigger territory by about 1686 A.D. and he ruled upto 1730 A.D. 

About the time that Ragnatha Raya Thondaiman because the ruler of Pudukkottai, wamana Thondaiman, his brother became the chief of Kulathur palayam (present Kulathur Taluk area) with the blessings of the Nayak king Ranga Krishna Muthuvirappa of Tiruchirappalli (1682-1689 AD) and Kulathur continued as separate “principality – with its ruler known as kulathur. Thondaiman till about 1750 AD when it’s ruler was announced to Pudukkottai. Regunatha also got some territories by victory, consolidating Pudukkottai rule roughly constituting the for men Kulathur, Alanguid and Thirumayam taluks. 

The tract contained in these taluks, Late came to be known as Pudukkottai stude (Pudukkottai samasthanam). 

Vijaya Raghunatha Raya Thondaiman (1730 – 1760 AD was the second in the line of Thondaimans. During his period the whole of India come under the umbrella of the Mughals.
The Nayakdoms of Givjee, Thanjavur and Madurai were subjugated and became tributaries of the Mughal rule. So the smaller palayams which were under them. The nizam of Hydrabad was appointed as the Mughal representative of south India. In turn the Nizam entrusted the Tamilnadu region then known as carnatic, to the Nawab of Arcot. Many of the tributary saties did not remit the tributes regularly and such provinces were invaded by the Nawab’s forces. Nothing like this happened in the case of pudukkottai and was left undisturbed by the Nawab.

The famous war of succession to the office of Nawab of carnatic between Mohamed Ali and Chanda Sahib, became in due course a war of supremacy between the English and the French in south cause of Chanda Sahib and the English were on the side of Mohamed Ali. The was lasted for many around Tiruchirappalli. The Thondaiman was firmly on the side of the English at his time while the rulers like Thanjavur Marathas wavered. At last the English emerged as the masters of this land. This firm help of the Thondaiman to the English was rewarded by the exemption of tribute by the victorious Nawab and later this was continued by the English.

The Thondaiman’s act of friendship towards English continued by the next ruler Raya Raghunatha Thondaiman (1769 – 1789 AD) Because this the Thondaiman had to encounter the strong forces of Hyder Ali.

Vijaya Raghunatha Thondaiman (1789-1807 AD) helped the English and the Nawab. The Nawab Mohamed Ali conferred up on the Thondaiman the title Raju Bahdur. The Political wind was in favour of English. The entire carnatic region was taken over by the English by 1800. during the process of consolidation of the English rule, the Thanjavur Maratha Kingdom was taken away. Ramanathapuram was reduced to a Jamindari but Pudukkottai was on the firm grounds and it was allowed to be separate principality (not as a part of British India) with honours and was high in British favour.

Pudukkottai was treated as a state and the Raja was quasi-independent ruler with full powers of administration.

It was during the time of this ruler Vijaya Ragunatha Thondaiman, the poligar war took place between the English and the rebellious palayakars of Tirunelveli the most significant of whom was veerapandia Kattapomman or kattabommu Naya. Kattabomman defined the authority of English in collecting revenues on the scar lands and also in
remitting the tribute regularly. Hostilities commenced against him and panchalamkuruchi fort was attached. Kattabomman escaped and was proceeding to sivaganga through the forest in the Thondaiman country. At the request of English administration Kattabomman was captured near Thirumayam by the soldiers of Thondaiman and handed over to the English at Madura later kattabomman was hanged at Kayattar. The defiant valour of kattabomman came to be better appreciated with the passage of time. While kattabomman has risen in general estimation as a hero, the image of Thondaiman as reflected in the events of the time, has suffered a fall because capturing and handling over of kattabomman and come to be regarded as betrayal and as an unpatriotic act. Seen however in the political background then prevailed in the context of Thondaiman’s fidelity to the English in prosperity ad adversity and to the fact that kattabomman never sought asylum with Thondaiman and hence the Thondaiman’s role may objectively summed up as the reflex action of the ally and doesn’t amount to betrayal.

The next ruler Raja Vijaya Reghuntha Raya Thondaiman (1807 – 1825 AD) was crowned when he was a minor and the British Government appointed Major John Black Burn, to of Pudukkottai. Since he was the former resident of Thanjavur he brought to pudukkottai good deal of Thanjavur administration of Maratha mystique and marathi was the language of administration of pudukkottai for about seventy five years. Revenue and judicial administration of same method and complexity were introduced in pudukkottai. A palace with citadels and broad moat was constructed for the Thondaiman (the old palace in the centre of the town). The town was planned with straight roads bis acting each other in the four directions of the palace and thus Balade Burn laid the foundation for modern town of pudukkottai (This palace, “The old palace” has disappeared completely, we can see the remains of the high wall in a few place in the vicinity of the present west main street and south main street (Rajaveethi).

Raghunatha Thondaiman (1825 – 1839 AD) was conferred with the title “his Excellency” by the British Government. He planned in 1830 to bring the cauvery water to pudukkottai through a new canal but could not succeed due to pacity of funds. Raghunatha Thondaiman was succeeded by his son Rama Chandra Thondaiman (1839 – 1886)
His long tenure of office was marked by extravagance and gross mismanagement. An administrator seshaiya sastri arrived at the scene as dewan in 1878 and carried out many reforms. Among them was the remodeling of pudukkottai town incorporating the principles of town planning which were title followed in the country at that time. The towering administrative office building in red bride colour in pudukkottai was constructed under the supervision of seshaiyah sastri. The pudukkulam, the big lake in the town was another creation of seshaiyah sastri. Ramachandra Thondaiman has renovated many temples in the state. He was succeeded by Marthanda Bhairava Thondaiman.

Marthanda Bhairava Thondaiman (1886 – 1929) Become the ruler of the state at the age of 11. the administration was looked after by a council with the approval of the British Government he toured in Europe extensively. He married an Australian lady. A son was born to him though marriage (later known as Sydney marthan public. The British administration also refused to recognize the marriage. Hence the Raja abdicated his throne and settled in pairs and died in 1928 and cremated at London.

Raja Rajagopala Thondaman (1928-1948) the last and ninth in the line of Thondaiman rulers was selected by the British Government and was crowned when he was six years old. The administration was looked after by English administrators, among them Alexander Totenham was not worthy. The important architectural contribution of this period is the new palace – which was built in 1930 in indo serasenic Dravidian architecture. This beautiful granite structure now houses the District Collector’s Office. After Indian Independence in 1947, the pudukkottai princely state was amalgamated with Indian on 04/03/1948 and became a division in Tiruchirappalli district. The long history of the Thondaimans rule came to end.

(http://pudukkottai.nic.in/history.htm.)

**Study Area**

Pudukkottai was organized as a separate district on 14th January 1974, comprising the former Pudukkottai Division of Tirchirappalli district with some additions from Thanjavur district. At present this district is composed eleven taluks namely, Pudukkottai, Aranthangi, Avudaiyarkoil, Manamelkudi, Illupur, Kulathur, Kantharvakottai, Alangudi,
Thirumayam, Kambakudi and Ponnamaravathi. There are 765 Revenue villages. The area of the district is 4663 sq.kms. The population of the district is 14,52,269 (as per census 2001 provisional figures). The District depends a great deal on the monsoon for its waters supply.

Viralimalai a tiny pilgrimage town on the Chennai Kanyakumari Highways in the Border of Pudukkottai District. Viralimalai is fame for it’s Lord Muruga Temple which inspires hundreds of people form the neighbouring District every day and especially on festive seasons. Thousands of pilgrim thronging to this small but busy town not only to say their vow to their faithful god but also to fulfill their desire of casual sex.

**Viralimalai - Area Description**

**Location**

Viralimalai is on the bus route between Madurai and Tiruchy. It is 25 kilometers from Tirchy and 40 kilometers northwest of Pudukkottai. Viralimalai is 371/2 kilometers. A Railway station is twelve kilometer from Manapparai. Viralimalai temple is on top of a big rock and can be seen from a great distance.

Viralimalai temple is situated in the heart of the town of viralimalai. Hence the town takes the name of the hill. Buses, which play from Tirchy to Madurai and from Pudukkottai to illupur go via Viralaimalai. Devotees can reach Tirchy by road, rail or air and hence proceed to Viralimalai. In Tiruchy and Viralimalai there are many private boarding and lodging houses and food facilities are also available.

**Hill**

The hill is small and rocky from the foot of the hill a beautiful flight of steps take us to the top. These foot steps are engraved on the rock and are 2007 in number. In between there are beautiful mandapam for devotees to rest. There are thick woody orchards on the hill and peacocks abound in these orchards. Great saints and yogis are said to have lived in the form of Kura trees and worshipped Lord Muruga and hence the name Viralimalai derived from the Tamil word viravi.
**Special Features**

This temple is specially known for the peacocks that are found in plenty. Cigar is Unique offering similar to the sandal paste offered to Lord Dandaudapani during Arthajama puja in palani. During the region of Ramachandra Thondaiman of pudukkottai the lord is believed to have appeared in his dream and requested the offering of cigars for the kalasandhi and sayarachi puja. The king is said to have been cured of his diseases after the offered of cigars to the lord according to history. We also find a number of causes in which saints and yogis have performed penance. This is a place where the lord blesses devotes with the power to control the indriyas or senses. Rishis Narada Subramanya for getting their sins propitiated. The mute Siva Chaniyar obtained the power of speech after worshipping lord Murugan here. These and many more are the marvels of this temple.

**Temple**

We find the statute of kashyapa Muni and Narada Muni in the hill temple along with sculptures of Arundhati and Vashightha. We also find the sculpture of Arumugan and Arunagirinathar on the pillars found on the way to the temple. The temple is located on top of the hill and can be seen from a greater distance. A beautiful flight of steps along with mandapams for devotees to rest, take us to the top of the hill. At the foot of the hills the water tank called saravana poigai is located on southern side and on the eastern side there is a shrine for the goddess Maikannudaiyal. It is customary to worship this goddess before climbing up the hill.

On the way to the hill top we find the Idumban sannidhi a small care shrine for Meenakshi Sundrareshwar and a mandapam called sandama kottam at the end of the flight of steps. Adjacent to the sandana Kottam Mandam we find the Navaratri and Shanmuga Moorthy Mandapam. Next to the Navaratri Mandapam we find the south-facing Raja Gopuram. In the Shanmuga Moorthy Mandapam of this temple with a single prepare the Utsavamoorthy gives Darshan together with devas. In the western part of the prahara we find the shrines of vinayagar, Dakshna moorthy, Agasthiyar and Arunagirinathar and in the northern side we find the shrine of chandikeswaran and Bhairavar.
The shrine for Navagraha is located on the way to the Maha Mandapam in front of the Sanchtum Sanchterum. In the maha Mandapam Natarajar, Sivakami, Manika Vinayagar and Srinivasa perumal with Consort await to bless on the outer walls of the garbhagragha we find inscriptions inside the sahtarum Lord Muruga Showers blessing upon the devotees.

Theertham

On the southern part of the foothill saravan poigai, the sthala Theertham is located. It is also called Naga theertham. The sthala Vrilshami in this temple is kasi vilvam.

Moolavaru

The vision of the lord & inside the garbha graham is soul-stirring. The lord is in the form of Arumugan, six faced and twelve hands seated elegantly on the peacock facing east. The divine consorts Valli and Deivannai stand on either side. As the sivdhariyar offers camphor the devotees can see the three faces at the back in the mirror which the other three can be viewed directly.

When the temple and its allied properties were acquired by vadi lakaiya naicker, the temple was renovated and built by their successors and the descendants of Meerugapuiyar. In the 18th century the temple was under the control of Pudukkottai Thondaiman. In the 18th and 19th century during the Karnataka was viralimalai Tiruchirappalli was a military area. The tourist Bungalow was built in 1822 for the army chiefs to halt and rest. The palayankarar's used to offer cigar to the lord.

Method of worship

The daily puja is performed six times a day and as per komika Agaman.

Festivals and Pujas

Taipusam, Pankuni Uttiram, Kanda sasthi and Adi Krittkai are the main festivals as in other Murugan temples.
**Inscriptions**

On the outside wall of the sanctum sanctorum, we find a few inscriptions. These contain certain information on the history of the temple. The sixteen Tiruppukal hymns dedicated to Viralimalai Murugan by Arunagirinathar contain latent philosophic fourth which, when delved into, make one to exclaim in high spirits. My aim is not to expound each and every Tiruppukal hymn verbatim but to extricate the highest values of philosophic froths found in these hymns and place them before the readers who would perhaps, serve as feast of though for them.

In a tiruppukal hymn Arunagirinathar chooses to explain the modes and procedures of Sivayoga, how it is to be practiced, what the state of Sivayaga would be and how one has to identified with the Almighty, in categorical terms which no one in the past did.

It stirs pious emotions in devotees to ascend viralimalai Hill, knowing not which rocks are yogis and which are ordinary rocks. In this extraordinary situation of yogis surrounding the hill, Arungirivathar went to viralimalai only to obtain up adesa (instruction) from lord Murugan. He was a chosen devotees of lord Murugan in that he came to Viralimalai not on his own but on an invitation from lord murugan, who appeared in his dreams and called him to visit viralimalai.

Arunagirinathar on his advent to viralimalai, experienced more of bliss than in any other place. His experience loomed many old with the subtle presence of yogis, all around him. He started yelling out in ecstasy that lord Murugan chose him to do the service to him and made him a servant of long lineage.

In another tiruppakal hymn, Arunagirivathar makes known that lord Murugan of Viralimalai emerged from the sanchaturm sanctorum and appeared before him only to hear the Tiruppukual song sung by him.

Thus Lord Murugan is praised by Arunagirinathar in sixteen viralimalai Tiruppukal hymns giving out the full account of bhakti puranic episodes and geographical descriptions par excellence. (http://murugan.org/research/chandrasekaran.htm.)
3.3 Objectives of the Study

- To study the social environment of prostitution (past and present).
- To study the social aspect of prostitution.
- To study the income, expenditure and savings pattern of commercial sex workers.
- To find out the expectations of commercial sex workers.
- To list out the health conditions of prostitutes.
- To explore the awareness of HIV/AIDS among the sex workers and the role of NGOs in it.

3.4 Scope of the Study

It covers the entire society; it affects the economic structure of the customers, irrespective of their occupation and income. They are from different corners of society as industrial workers, officers, statesmen and business men. Above all, the ethics of society is also affected.

In addition, the latest developments on health, such as HIV/AIDS also is the significant phenomenon as on half shoot of commercial sex workers.

This study brings out the practices of commercial sex workers, the type of customers, the role of intermediary and other related people. So that, it will contribute to reference to Pudukkottai District.

The outcome of the study may be associated with other parts of the state and country.

The suggestions emerge out of study could be generalized.

3.5 Research Design

This study aims to bring out the living conditions of the commercial sex workers along with their socio, economic, health aspects. Hence it is a descriptive study. There is no point of diagnosing, experimenting and or exploring about commercial sex workers. These are not applicable.
3.6 Unit of the analysis

Any female commercial sex worker of any age group, practicing sex work in Viralimalai is the unit of analysis.

3.7 Population and Sample

There is no formal counting of the commercial sex workers. The number of commercial sex workers at Viralimalai is 320, which is made available through a survey conducted by an NGO. The study covers 50 per cent of the population by applying Systematic Random Sampling. Every alternative commercial sex worker was selected. Some of them initially did not co-operate but after serious conversation they are convinced.

3.8 Tools of Data Collection

An interview schedule was administered comprising 95 questions. Out of which 41 are open ended 49 are closed ended. Dimensions wise the interview schedule comprise Economic aspects 15 questions, legal aspects 4 questions, social environment aspect 8 questions, physical study aspect 6 questions mental, social, spiritual and health aspect 8 questions, details about education aspects 2 questions, entertainment aspect (21) questions, Dance aspects 11 questions, health care aspects 4 questions, awareness of HIV/AIDS aspects 11 questions, and attitude aspects 16 questions.