CHAPTERISATION
PLAN OF THE THESIS

The present thesis consists of six chapters excluding an introduction and conclusion. Introduction to the Saivaisn and temple studies, along with a brief discussion of Perunkulam and Tiruvaludisvarar temple is also included.

The first chapter entitled “Land and People” traces the place of Perunkulam and of its people from the time of beginning to the present day.

The second chapter describes the “Structure of the temple”. The third chapter focusses on the “Architectural features of the temple”. The fourth chapter is about “The Pujas and Festivals of the temple”. The fifth chapter analyses the “Administration of the temple”.

The sixth chapter gives a feeling of the importance and complexity of temple in social life of the people. The concluding chapter presents the “Research Findings of the Study”.

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CHAPTER I

LAND AND PEOPLE
CHAPTER 1
LAND AND PEOPLE

The term “Perunkulam” denotes big pond. Perunkulam is situated on the southern bank of big pond. That is why it is called as Perunkulam.¹ Perunkulam is one of the reputed Mukthi shetras to reach the abode of lord Siva. Inscriptions refer this place as Perunkulam alias Uthamapandya Nallur or Thadakavanam².

Perunkulam is situated (18) Eighteen k.m from Srivaikuntam on the Northern bank of river Thamiraparani in a size of 20.48 sq.km. It was formerly included in Tirunelveli District and now in Thoothukudi District carved out of Tirunelveli district on 20.10.1986³.

Perunkulam is large and pretty with its long and broad roads. It preserves much of its ancient lay out with its broad streets still bearing the older names such as Ratheveethi, Madaveethi. It is connected with other places of historical interest viz, Korkai, Srithondanallur, Srivaikuntam, Athichanallur, Kongaraya-kurichi, Sawyerpuram and Tirunelveli.

¹ L. Tamilvanan Chidambaranar Mavattam, Chennai, 1986, p.99
² ARJE 1932 - 33 No. 216
³ Book for general information to public on Town Panchyat, Thoothukudi, 1988, p.1
Perunkulam is one among the Navathirupathi temples. (Alvarthirunagari, Tirukkolur, Thentiupperi, Eratti Tirupathi, Natham, Varakunamangai, Thiruppuliyankudi, Srivaikuntam) Perunkulam has two principal divisions, Thiruvalutheswaram and Thirukulanthai which are also called as Sivathiruvalutheeswaram and Vishnu Thirukulanthai respectively.

The former is a compact little village on the northern extremity of the village nucleating round the Tiruvaludisvarar Temple. The later is a bigger division having the group of larger temples like Mayakoothar and Mutharamman. The temple complex comprises of a vast rectangular enclosure, occupying an area of about two acres, eight cents. With the emergence of Bakthi movement, this place became more sacred to the Saiva Devotees.

**PHYSICAL FEATURE**

The general flatness of Perunkulam is about 1052 feet (300 meter) relieved by the hills of Vallanadu and Manakkarai. Tiruvaludisvararm is surrounded by extensive cultivable lands and palmyra groves. A view from the topmost storey of the western tower is a panoramic vista of enchanting landscape, which is a vast plain area noted with a number of ponds, cultivated fields with coconut and other plantations.
Perunkulam comprises of many wet, dry, Inam and purambokku lands. The occupied land divisions are of 727.49.39 acres, wet lands are of 336.82.0 acres, while dry lands are of 375.7.5 acres. The patta lands are 15.20.17 acres.4

The north western part of Perunkulam region is covered by the Vallanadu hills. It is widely spread over more than ten miles. The sheer beauty of these hills, dense forest, fertile green lands, vast plain, sprawling paddy fields, banana plantations etc., all blessed the people of Perunkulam through the ages.

Thamiraparani provides limitless water resources. Further the physical features of land helps in establishing the character of the land as the region of scenic beauty with plenty of resources in water and soil5. The structure of Tiruvaludisvarar Temple was built of granite stone transported from Vallanadu hills.

4 A. Register Number 18 Perunkulam village Srivaikuntam Taluk, Thoothukudi District, Madras, 1986, p.76

5 A.J. Stuart (comp) A manual of the Tirunelveli district in the presidency of Madras, Madras 1899, p.7
POLITICAL HISTORY OF PERUNKULAM

Adichanallur and Korkai speak the historical antiquity and soil fertility of Perunkulam region. Adichanallur or more properly, Velur Adichanallur Parambu is on the southern bank of river Thambiraparani in an extent of, one hundred and fourteen acres, spread from south to north, the northern portion is raised and the southern portion is lower. Archaeologists call this mount as Tallikkadu and it contains many Urn burials. The site testifies to the existence of a big city. It also exemplifies the megalithic culture and iron culture, which prevailed here in unison.  

Archaeological excavations were conducted at Adichanallur by Dr. Jagore a German in 1876, Mr. Louis Lapicque of Paris in 1903 - 04 and Alexander Rea, the Honorary Assistant Superintendent of Ancient Articles, from 1899-1906. The objects over 6000 in number excavated from this burial site are finely made pottery of various kinds in great in number. Many implements and weapons, vessels and personal ornaments in bronze, a few gold ornaments, a few stone beads, boxes and some household stone implements used for grinding curry or sandal wood. Traces of cloth and wood preserved by rust or oxidation in contact with

metals are found. In a number of urns there were quantities of mica in pieces about an inch in size. Husks of rice and millet were found in quite a large number of pots inside the urns. All the implements and weapons are in iron. There are names in bronze⁷.

The various types include pots, large and small bowls, jars, long and small cups, ring stands, short and long, besides the urns above alluded to⁸. Sepulchral urns have been found at Agaram, Vadakkuvallanadu, Vallanadu, Murrapanadu, Vasavapapuram, Karunkulam, Vttilapuram, Konkarayakurichi, Srivaikuntam taluk, Pudukudi, Thiruppuliyanurad, Velur, Kalvay, Appankoil and Maramangalam⁹.

Based on the excavation at Adichanallur, it is asserted that the people of Srivaikuntam region had a long history prior to Indus Valley civilization of 4000 BC. It indicted the antiquity of Perunkulam prior to 4000 BC fixed the period of iron age. The civilization that developed in the Perunkulam region disappeared later on due to the shifting of river Thambiraparani and recession of the sea. The northern part of the

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⁸ The Annual report of the Archaeological survey of India for 1903-04. pp.158-159

Pandyan country had its seat at Madurai and southern part, at Tirunelveli. The southern part comprises of Tirunelveli region including Perunkulam like Korkai and Manapadai veedu were at that time an important centre of Pandyan kingdom.

The last Sangam Pandya ruler Kanappereyil Kadanta Ukkiraperuvaluthi built some shrines of Tiruvaludisvarar Temple in Perunkulam followed by other Pandyas. Ukkirapperuvaluthi as a poet and was traditionally believed to have caused the anthology of Akanannuru to be made.

It is also believed that Thirukkural, the immortal work of Thiruvalluvar was published in the presence of Ukkirapperuvaluthi and fortyeight poets at Perunkulam Tiruvaludisvarar temple. The ancient Pandyas divided Tirunelveli region into thirteen division and among them were Valuthi Valanadu. Perunkulam was included in the Thiruvaluthi Valanadu.

11 Dr.U.V.Samintha Iyer, Encharitham, Chennai, 1950, p.35.
12 PT Srinivasa Iyengar History of Tamil Studies, New Delhi, 1986, p.89.
During the reign of Rajasimha I (730 - 760 A.D) and Varaguna II (862 - 885 AD) Pandya country was divided into four Valanadus namely Keralesingavalanadu, Amitha-Kunavalanadu, Srivallabavallanadu and Tirusaluthi Valanadu\(^{13}\).

Perunkulam was once again came under the jurisdiction of Thirusaluthi Valanadu. Valanadu was ruled by Arayar, the officers of Pandya king with the help of Ursabbai and Nattusabai. Inscriptions of Srimararavallbha (835-862 A.D) (Maran Sadayan) found on the south side of Artha Mandapa of the Thirusaludeeswarar temple at Perunkulam\(^{14}\).

Village was the smallest unit of Pandya administration during the Sangam period. The village assembly known as Manram or poturil maintained the administration of this village, as well as social functions like festivals and temple adminitration\(^{15}\).

Five inscriptions belonging to Sadaya Maran alias Veera Narayaa Sadayan’s (880-900 A.D) reignal year 2,11,22,15 corresponding to

\(^{13}\) S.I.I. XIV No. 60, p.47.

\(^{14}\) ARE 1932 - 33 No.215

\(^{15}\) Pathittru 23:5; Puram 89:7 & Commentaries.
882,891, 902 are found on the north wall of the Tiruvludisvarar temple of Perunkulam\textsuperscript{16}.

Inscription belonging to Veera Pandya reignal year (15) fifteen and corresponding to 961 A.D is found on the south wall of the Tiruvaludisvarar temple of Perunkulam\textsuperscript{17}.

Paranthaga Chola I captured Madurai and its different parts. Again the Pandya ruler Rajasimha III was defeated by Sundara Chola and his son Aditya III in 926 and 966 AD respectively. Under his successor Raja Raja Chola I (985-1016 AD) Perunkulam became a small administrative unit of Chola country in the name of Uttamachola Nallur in Thiruvaluthi Valanadu: During the reign of Rajendra Chola (1012-1044 AD) representative was appointed to look after Madurai and Tirunelveli region of Chola Pandya and Jatavarma Sundara Chola Pandya Deva, Son of Rajendra Chola I became the first Chola Pandya. Inscription belonging to Sundara Chola Pandya regional year (3) three and corresponding to 1024 AD is found on the north side of the Artha mandapa of the Tiruvaludisvarar temple of Perunkulam. Then his successors Maravarma

\textsuperscript{16} ARE 1932 -33 No.227, 220, 228, 219

\textsuperscript{17} ARE 1932 - 33 No.233, 239
Vikrama Chola Pandya, served as the representative over the Pandya country of the Tanjore crown.

The post of viceroy was abolished due to the uprising of Pandya king during the period of Kulothunga I (1071 - 1122 A.D). Inscriptions belonging to Kulothunga I regional year (31, 40 and 37) thirty one, forty and thirty seven corresponding to 1101, 1110, 1107 are found on the north side of the entrance into the Artha mandapa of the central shrine, and the north wall of Tiruvaludisvarar temple of Perunkulam\textsuperscript{18}.

LATER PANDYA PERIOD

During the reign of Vikrama Chola the Chola power started its downward course and the Pandyas began raising their heads. They appear to have regained their independence about the middle of the first half of 12\textsuperscript{th} century is evidenced. The inscription of Jatavaraman alias Tribuvana Chakaravarthi Srivallabadeva is found on the north wall of central shrine of Tiruvaludisvarar temple of Perunkulam. This inscription mentions the temple of Tiruvaludisvarar Udiyar in Uthama Pandya Nallur alias Perunkulam, a division of Thiruvaluthi Valanadu\textsuperscript{19}.

\textsuperscript{18} ARE 1932 - 33 No.214, 218, 222

\textsuperscript{19} ARE 1932 - 33 No.226
Jatavarma Kulasekara Pandya brought the entire Chola Mandalam under the Pandya banner. Three inscriptions of him, regional year (19, 25 and 26) nineteen, twenty five and twenty six corresponding to 1209, 1215, and 1216 are found on the west wall of central shrine of the Tiruvaludisvarar Temple of Perunkulam.

He was succeeded by Maravarma Sundara Pandya I (1216 - 38). Five inscriptions of Maravarma Sundara Pandya I regional year (4, 9, 12, 15, 10) four, nine, twelve, fifteen and ten corresponding to 1220, 1225, 1228, 1231, 1216 are found on the west wall of the kitchen, south wall of the central shrine: on the west wall of 1st prakara on the north west and south wall of the central shrine, on the west wall of the kitchen and north wall of the central shrine of the Tiruvaludisvarar Temple of Perunkulam.

Two inscriptions of Thirupuvana Chakaravarthi Konrimaikondan alais Maravarma Sundara Pandya II (1276 - 1293) regional year 10 and 13 and corresponding to 1276, 1293 are found on the second pillar in the

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20 ARE 1932 - 33 No.230, 231, 217
21 ARE 1932 - 33 No.240, 232, 229, 242, 241
artha mandapa and south wall of the artha mandapa of the
Tiruvaludisvarar temple of Perunkulam.\textsuperscript{22}

Maravarma Sundara Pandya I was succeeded by Maravarma
Sundara Pandya II (1238 - 1251) Jatavarma Sundara Pandya I (1251-
1268) and Maravarma Kulasekara I (1268 - 1311) respectively. During
the reign of Kulasekara I (1268 - 1310) several Pandya princes, corulers
whom are Jatavarma Vira Pandya whose reign come to an end in 1252
A.D\textsuperscript{23}.

Maravarma Vikarama Pandya (1283 to 1291AD) and Jatavarman
Srivallaba (1291 to 1316 AD) these two names were in addition to the
names of the sons of Kulasekhara Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya.

Two inscriptions of Vikrama Pandya Deva regional year 10 and 12
corresponding to 1293 and 1295 AD are found on the North wall of the
central shrine and on the third pillar in the Artha mandapa of central
shrine of Tiruvaludisvarar temple of Perunkulam\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{22} ARE 1932 - 33 No.211, 236
\textsuperscript{23} E.I. vol VII, p.11
\textsuperscript{24} ARE 1932 - 33 No 221, 212
During the Malikafur invasion of Madurai in 1311 AD the Chera ruler Ravivarman Kulasekara utilized the opportunity and conquered Pandya country including Perunkulam. Veera Pandya recaptured the Pandya country from the Chera ruler. He left the country under the device of coregent rule.

The coregentontie was shared by following rulers namely Sundara Pandya, Vikarama Pandya. The coregents on the part ruled different regions by divide among themselves. On his part Jatavarma Parakirama Pandya (1315 - 1347 AD) had his jurisdiction over Perunkulam region for he was entrusted with power over Tirunelveli region25.

At the end of 14th century AD and beginning of 15th century A.D three kings ruled the Thenpandi region in the same name of Parakirama Pandya from 1384 - 1415 AD, 1387-1415 AD and 1401-1434 respectively. At the same time Sadiya Varman Kulasekara Pandyan, Sadiyavarma Vikarama Pandyan, Tirunelveli Perumal Komaravarman allias Virapandya Deva also ruled the Thenpandi region26.

25 K.A. Nilkanda Sastri, *The Pandya kingdom*, pp. 245, 246
26 T.A.S. Volume 1, p.45
NAYAK PERIOD

King Auchuta Raya 1530 - 1542 the founder of Nayak kingdom appointed Visvanatha Nayak as the ruler of Madurai. In 1530 Viswanatha Nayak of Madurai and his able general Ariyanatha Mudaliyar killed the Pancha Pandya, sons of Chandrasekara Pandya at Kayathar war. The Nayak of Madurai divided Nayak Kingdom into (72) seventy two palayams and assigned to each poligar27.

Out of (72) Seventy two poligars, (34) thirty four were southern poligars. The southern poligars had their palayams most probably in the Tirunelveli region28. The southern poligars gave constant trouble to the sircar territory like that of Perunkulam.

Ariyanatha Mudali was succeeded by his son Kalattinatha Mudali. He concentrated on his administration mainly in the south. He was succeeded by his sons Nayina Mudali and Viraragahava Mudali respectively. During the reign of Muthu Krishnappa Nayak II

27 B.J.M. Kulasekharaj; A forgotten episode of History of South India, Being an account of family of Dalavay Mudaliars of Tinnevely, Madras, 1924, p.20

28 Madras Council Military country correspondence, 3 May 1753 and K.Rajayyan, Rise and fall of Poligars of Tamil Nadu, Madurai, 1978, p.3
Viraragahava Mudali was succeeded by Kadantai Mudali who called himself as 'Mahipah', the king of southern region.29

Kadantai Mudali was succeeded by his son Nayinattimudali. The Tirunelveli region was separated from the Madurai country as a province and he himself was appointed as the Governor of Tirunelveli of the then ruler Thirumalai Nayak (1623-59 A.D)30.

The History of the Dalavoy governors had its long lineage in Tirunelveli province and of its subdivision like that of Perunkulam continuously until the formation of Tirunelveli collectorate in 1801. Nayinattimudali was succeeded by Chinna thambi Mudali whose governorship was terminated in 1682. After Chinnathambi Mudali, Medai Kumara Swami Mudali was posted as Dalavay Governor. Vijayaragava Chokkanatha Nayak of Madurai (1706 - 1734 A.D) visited once in two years and he endowed lands, gifted jewels, gold etc. to the temples.

GOVERNORSHIP OF TIRUNELVELI

Aral Alaggappa Mudali, son-in-law of Medai Thalavai KumaraSwamy Mudali acted as Governor of Tirunelveli from 1700 -

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1735 AD\textsuperscript{31}. In 1736, Chandashahib invaded Madurai and declared himself as the ruler of Madurai and Tirunelveli. To govern the Tirunelveli province Kumaraswamy Mudali was appointed as Nawab agent in Tirunelveli\textsuperscript{32}.

In Carnatic Navayet Dynasty was replaced by Wallajah dynasty in 1774. Unwaruddin was appointed as the first new Nawab of Carnatic by Nizam of Hyderabad\textsuperscript{33}. Instead the Nawab appointed Anwarkhan as Faujdar and Amuldar to look after the Tirunelveli province.

**NAWAB PERIOD**

The fertile never failing Tambiraparani river bed and the region south of it formed the Sircar region which was under the direct jurisdiction of the Nawab agents called head renters or Amuldhars. The Amuldhars appointed many Amils to assist them. Since Perunkulam was on the Thambiraparani river bed it was included in the circar region. The Amuldhari of Tirunelveli governed this region through his Amil. The Amils controlled the principal inhabitants or village head man who looked after the revenue of the village. The Wallaja authority collapsed.

\textsuperscript{31} BJM Kulasekaraj op.cit., pp.21,22  
\textsuperscript{32} R.Cald Well, History of Tinnevelly, New Delhi, 1985, p.86.  
\textsuperscript{33} S.R. Lushington, Report on Revenue Settlement 28\textsuperscript{th} May 1802, Para 15.
For a while Chandasahib was nominated. Kumaraswami Mudali's elder brother Titarapa Mudali was elected for the post of Amuldhar in 1751\(^{34}\).

Mundimeyan succeeded Titarapa Mudali and acted as Amuldhar in 1752 and 1753. Meanwhile Muhamed Ali, the Wallaja Nawab of Carnatic consolidated his authority in Tirunelveli province. Mafuzkhan, the brother of Muhammed Ali killed Mundi meyan, the agent of Chandasahib and was posted as Nawab agent in Tirunelveli province\(^{35}\).

Mafuzkhan sought the help of Madras Governor to quell the rebels in Tirunelveli provinces. Likewise the Madras Governor sent Col. Heran with a regiment of 500 soldiers and another 2000 sepoys under the command of Yusuf Khan or Khansahib\(^{36}\).

Thus for the first time the British general was invited into Tirunelveli province. It opened a series of British invasion in later course. The Nawab on his part sent his brother Mafuzkhan with 1000 horses. With the help of some western poligars of Tirunelveli province Mafuzkhan opposed Muhammed Ali. He was suppressed and replaced by

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\(^{34}\) Lord Pigot in council 21, April 1755, Military consultatians Vol IV pp.70,71


Alagappa Mudali in 1756. Thereafter Yusufkhan became the Amuldhar of Tirunelveli from 1757. He revolted against Muhammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot. It invited major Donald Campbell’s expedition to Tirunelveli province. Yusufkhan was captured and executed on 16th October 1764

Tirunelveli province after Yusufkhan was under the management of Delavay Alagappa Mudali in 1764. From 1765 - 1769 it was left under the supervision of Raja Hukuamat Ram. In 1770 Syed Muhammed looked after the provincial affairs and in 1777 Muhammed Ektibarkhan was entrusted with power.

In 1778, 1779 and 1780 Thirumalaiappia Mudali, Alinawazkhan and Dalavay Tirumalaiappia Mudali were respectively posted as Amuldars of Tirunelveli. In 1780 Hyder Ali perpetuated his famous invasion of the Carnatic. He conjured the part of Tirunelveli province.

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37 R.Caldwell, op.cit., pp.126-127

38 Hodgson, Report on the province of Tirunelveli, 24 sep 1807


40 Aitchisan, a collection of Tratics, engagements and sanatus relating to India and neighbour countries Calculta, 1864- Vol V p.81
To safeguard his region Nawab entered into an agreement with the British known as the carnatic treaty of 1781\textsuperscript{41}. The Madras Governor introduced assignment systems. This system continued up to 1785. By the assignment, company had authority over Tirunelveli province. There was only gradual progress until the year 1801\textsuperscript{42}.

Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras posted George Proctor as the Superintendent of southern assigned revenue. He assumed the authority on 8.12.1781. He was allowed to collect revenue from the Nawab Amuldars\textsuperscript{43}.

But George Proctor's appointment created clash in Tirunelveli province with Head Renter Dalavay Thirumalaiappa Mudali. It made the Madras Government to recall George Proctor. In 1782 Dalavai Thirumalaiappa Mudali passed away and was succeeded by Tittappamudali as the head render of Tirunelveli\textsuperscript{44}.

\textsuperscript{41} A. J. Stuart op.cit., p.144


\textsuperscript{43} Select committee proceedings from 17\textsuperscript{th} Feb to 22 June 1781, abstract dispatched to England Vol 2, pp.18

\textsuperscript{44} Tirunelveli letter Book of Committee of assigned Revenue 6 June, 1783 Vol 5 pp.88-89.
He failed to pay Peshkush Property. Therefore the Madras Government posted Eylesirmin as Superintendent to secure the revenue of Tirunelveli province. He gave the Committee of Assigned Revenue of full in sight into State of the revenue of Tirunelveli province. Eylesirmin also dismissed Tittarappa Mudali and arrested him on 3rd June 1783 for the embezzlement of the considerable part of revenue of Tirunelveli province and appointed Zinulabbdin as the head renter. Besides he himself supervised the Tirunelveli province by dividing it into the 12 revenue units for the revenue administration of years 1783, 1784 and 1785. The twelve revenue units were Alwarthirunagari, Ambasamurthiram, Attur, Kalakad, Durmossanum, Palayamkottai, Gangaikondan, Tenkasi, Tiruchendur, Tirunelveli, Srivilliputhur and Srivaikuntam.

These twelve revenue units were left under the control of twelve revenue renters, who were responsible for Zinulabbdin, the head renter of Tirunelveli province. Perunkulam including Srivaikuntam was leased to renter Periathiruvedi Pillai for the years 1783, 1784 and 1785.

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46 Tirunelveli District collectorate Records Vol 4364 pp.23-28

RESTORATION OF AMULDARSHIP

As regard the revenue administration, the system of assignment ended in 1785. The Nawab appointed Ekhiberkhan as Amuldar over Tirunelveli province from 1785 to 1790 AD. He spread out violence and due to his instigation the Amil of Srivaikuntam, oppressed the people of Srivaikuntam and Perunkulam.

Unable to bear the atrocities the subjects deserted Perunkulam and even ran off to the Vallanadu hills to serve their lives. On 12th July 1792 the Carnatic treaty was signed between the Nawab and the British company. By that treaty the British Governor took on its shoulder the responsibility of collecting revenue from the nawab authority over his Circar region was not totally ended.

On the other hand the British drive over the poligar region in the name of revenue collection infuriated the latter who in a retaliatory measure attacked the sarcar territory and plundered the revenue, which belonged to the Nawab’s concern. It is to be noted that Perunkulam was committed to such plunder on many occasions.

Perunkulam was included as one of the villages in Srivaikuntam Taluk until 1838. After 1838 Perunkulam became one of the village of
Alwarthirunagari Taluk. In 1860 again Perunkulam became the village of Srivaikuntam Taluk. In 1871 the Local Fund Act was passed by which Tirunelveli District was divided into two circles namely Tirunelveli and Seranmahadevi. Tirunelveli circle contains six places.

Perunkulam came under the Tirunelveli circle instead of Srivaikuntam. In 1884 Local Board Act was passed and Taluk Board of Srivaikuntam was created in 1886. Srivaikuntam Taluk Board has jurisdiction power over the taluk revenue district including Perunkulam. Village administration of Perunkulam was complete by reorganized in 1909. Captain W.H.Horsley prepared for the project of Construction of dam across the river Thambirapran at Srivaikuntam. The completion of Srivaikuntam dam was fulfilled in 1889, at an expenditure of 17.75 lakhs.

In 1873 Perunkulam came under the jurisdiction of Srivaikuntam subordinate court and special magistrate court. In 1862 the post of Superintendent of Police was created in Tirunelveli District. Perunkulam came under the police jurisdiction of Srivaikuntam. The Panchayat Board was established in Perunkulam in May 1886. For a long time Perunkulam
was in Tirunelveli District and now it is included in Tuticorin district carved out Tirunelveli district on 20.10.1996\(^4\).

**PERUNKULAM TODAY**

Perunkulam, second grade Panchayat came into function in the area limit spreading over 20.48 sq.km miles. In the Panchayat administration of Perunkulam both officials and non official members have been in service since its establishment on the official line. An executive officer, a junior assistant, two bill collectors, one record clerk, five health workers, one plumber, two water tank operators, two motor operators, one supervisor of street lights and a watchman are serving. These officers are concentrating themselves in executing the decisions that are taken in the Panchayat Board meetings. To serve the people of Perunkulam in a good level the Panchayat Board also includes President and Vice President. There are fifteen wards in Perunkulam secondgrade Panchayat.

The President and VicePresident are elected by the ward members. Their period of office is now fixed for five years from 25.10.2006 to 24.10.2011. Mrs.S.Violet and Mr.S.P.J.Sundararajan served as the President and Vice President of this second grade Panchayat. House tax,
occupation tax, vehicle tax, punishment charges from the misuse of water are collected by the Bill Collectors.

The second-grade Panchayat Union Office is situated near the northern side of Tiruvaludiswarar temple. This Panchayat Union includes thirteen revenue villages namely Perunkulam, Aladiyur, Naduur, Koilur, Usadoym, Oodiadiyan, Undialur, Chenkunioor, Panderasilai, Pannaivilai, Panvilai Puthoor, Vannianoor and Pannaivilli bungalow. Perunkulam comes under the Srivaikuntam Legislative Assembly Constituency and Tirunelveli Parliamentary constituency.

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

Perunkulam was one of the revenue divisions created by the British Governor. The village administration of Perunkulam is governed by the village administrative officer. He collects land taxes and other concerned taxes on the fixation by the Revenue Inspector.

The old Perunkulam village planning has with certain modifications. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. It has some progress in industry by getting government loans. Perunkulam accommodates all the essential needs of the people. In Perunkulam there is a Bazar with enough shops. There are many old and new houses on the
roads with narrow streets. There is both private hospitals and Government Primary Health Centres. A veterinary hospital is also functioning.

A branch of Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank, Agricultural Co-operative Bank, Sub Register Office, VAO Office, RI Office, and TVS Hospital are there to facilitate people. One Public Library, one Middle School and one Post Office are also accomplishing the needs of the people. Each and every street is well planned. The broad and long streets are connected with one another. Also these streets serve for wooden claviers during the time of temple of festivals in Perunkulam.

Since Perunkulam is the granary of Tuticorin District, the bags of paddy are exported through the lorry transportation. The road lines connected the pilgrim centres of Eratti Tirupathy, Natham, Varagunamangai, Srivaikuntam, Athoor, Kurangani, Alwarthirunagari, Thenthiruperai and Tiruchendur.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The Perunkulam region sustained and nurtured an ancient civilization. The archaeological excavations conducted at Adichanallur, Srivaikuntam and Kongaraya Kurichi assessed that there have been Pre

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49 E.E..107 Perunkulam 13.5.1955
historic Dravidian settlements in this region. The golden worth closers and the cock symbol on the Trident discovered in Adichallur burial urns, closely resemble the Mohenjadaro symbols and might be relics of early Murugan Cult\textsuperscript{50}.

Major portions of the population of Perunkulam consists of the Brahmins, the Vellalars, the Maravars, the Yadavas, the Kammalas, the Pallas, the Parayas and the Chakkiliyas. The other caste people are living in limited numbers.

The Brahmins are of high caste people in the social set up. Their place of inhabitations were known as Agraharam. They are known as Iyers, Iyengars and Pattars who are temple priests. Pattars do puja to Saivatic temple and Iyengars doing pujas in Vaisnava temple and are known as Pattacharis. They reside close to the temples in the street opposite to the valuthiswarar temple on both side of North and South, East car street and West car streets.

The Iyangars live around the Mayakoothar Temple. The Vaishnavities used to go the area of Saivites during the Tamil month of Markazhi. Generally the Brahmin of Perunkulam have spacious houses

\textsuperscript{50} V. Perumal \textit{Porunai Valam} (Tamil) Tirunelveli, 1977, pp.85-86.
with considerable ground left behind as backyard. They never allowed
dogs and fowls to enter their houses⁵¹.

In the past they did not allow the non brahmhins into their streets.
They joined Government services by giving up their traditional duties
attached to the temple. Only some are attending the services to the
temple. Some migrate to urban areas. They leave their houses for rents to
other caste people. Some of them sold their houses due to poor financial
condition and began to allow their woman to be employed in government
service by giving up their traditional duties attached to the temple. Only
some are attending the service to the temple. A few of them were land
owners employing hired labourers.

Next to the Brahmins the Vellalas occupied the second position.
They hesitate, in granting liberty and equality to the downtrodden section
of society. By race the Vellalas were Dravidians. The holders of big
estates formed the mobility and were called Vellalas (lords of the flood)
expressive of their skill in controlling flood and storing water for
agricultural purposes. The Pandya, Chola and Chera kings belonged to

⁵¹ H.R.Pet, op.cit., p.102
this class. Vellalas are from poor families who became cultivate peasants were called Veerakudi Vellalars cultivators from fallen ruined families\textsuperscript{52}.

In Perunkulam, Vellalars are rich land owning class. They were agriculturists and Saivitas\textsuperscript{53}. They were Pandya Vellalas who enjoyed high political influence and held the post of village accounts, kanakkan and village munsif. Indeed there are a number of subsects among the Vellalas namely Saiva Vellalas, Namathari Pillaimar and Kottamar.

The Vellalas perform worship in their houses and study the writings of the Tamil Saiva saints (Tinamurai) as Brahmins read Vedas\textsuperscript{54}. In their marriages the Vellalas employ gurukkal of their own caste and not the Brahmins\textsuperscript{55}. They reside at Pillaimar west street, west car street, south car street and east street.

THE KOTTAMARS

By caste, the Kottamars were the brick layers. They were the traditional servants of Kottai Vellalas of Srivaikundam. Kottamars

\textsuperscript{52} Silap, Vol I, 43 Puram, S.2 30.1.13

\textsuperscript{53} Tamilvanan L., op.cit., pp.131, 132.

\textsuperscript{54} Census Report of India 1901, Madras Vol XXV, Part, Madras, 1902, p.183

\textsuperscript{55} H.R.Pat, op.cit., p. 103
followed their masters from the original homeland of the latter. They reside at the eastern end of the Sannathithi street. They respected the rulings of their master and were paid. They performed the menial duties. At the funeral they took out dead bodies to the burning ghat. Because of the court verdict, in 1839, Kottamar shifted their residence outside the Srivaikundam mud forts. Then they spread to many villages of erstwhile Tirunelveli district including Perunkulam\textsuperscript{56}. The Namathari Vellalas reside in middle street.

DEVADASI

Dance is also a kind of fine arts most popular from the age of Sangam in Tamil Nadu. In the Post Sangam age dance became a classical one. But art of dance as a classical one among the minds of the Tamils became familiar from the days of the Pallavas. The institution of Devadasi began during the Pallava period and reached its zenith under the Imperial Cholas.

The concept of Natyasastra by Bharathamuni is portrayed in a manner of Panels on the Vimana of Tanjore Temple by Rajaraja and Nataraja temple at Chidambaram by Vijayanagar rulers. Even though dance is familiar in Tamil Nadu, the basic concept of Bharatha Natya

\textsuperscript{56} M.N.Muhammed Sherip, \textit{Perappumudaal Eruppuvara, Tamil Katchigal} (Tamil) Madras, 1985, p.47
perhaps be migrated from North to Tamil country. Kathakali, the
traditional dance of Kerala is performed even today in the southern tip of
Tamil Nadu. Bhagavathamela, a kind of dance, of course, migrated from
Andra is enacted even today at Milattur a village in Thanjavur district.
All the above evidences prove that dance is also drifting in nature.

**Devadasi** System is also existed in Perunkulam.
Thiruvaluthiswarar temple at early Pandya and Chola period, served as
the evidence of that system prevailed there. Hindu revivalism and royal
patronage contributed to this trend. Besides worship and ceremonies
Devadasi took keen interest in the promotion of music, dance drama and
learning. Young and attractive woman were requisitioned to make the
functions colourful, to raise funds in support of worship and help the
priests. In response there began the practice of nominating girls for
service to gods in temple to as making endowments in land and jewels.

In the 28th regional year 1218 A.D of Kulasekara I period Nakkan
Aludayal alias Rupasundari Talikkoli received tenancy rights of
Devadana lands in Iluppaikudi from the Devakammis of
Tiruvaludisvaram Udiyar Temple⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ ARE 1932-33, No.217
In the 4th regional year of Sundra-Chola-Pandya 1st 1220 A.D, Nakkan Ulugudaiyal alias Devaga Sundara Talikkoli granted sheep for twilight lamp before image of the deity set up in the temple by Nakkan pillaiyalvi alias Nanadesi Talikkoliyar, another Padiyilar of the temple.  

The status of temple varied according to the number of devadasis it employed. The new arrivals received training in temple arts from senior masters and elder devadasis. After gaining adequate expertise, they moved in to different areas of activity as singers and dancers. They made performances at festivals in temples and mutts, and entertained the people. When processions were taken out, they were required to perform entertainments outside the temple establishments. However it was not a practice to take assignments in private institutions and houses.

Devadasis decorated the temples with flowers, painted religious themes on walls, associated themselves with rituals and ceremonies and raised the funds for temples. Depending upon the area of profession, they were known by different names padiyilar talikkolis, nartkakis and sanis. Many of the devadasis, usually from high families, did the service without receiving any remuneration, while others received lands or wages.
for their support. In course of time young and beautiful girls belong to the poor families were sold to the temple.

They were forced to go through a process of celestial wedding with the God of the temple and were pressed in to service. As a result sex life entered temple precincts and devadasis co-habited with priests and nobles. Therefore the rich merchants particularly the Chettiyars waited for opportunities to capture the dancing girls when they were taken out.

In subsequent period as the Hindu power went out Muslim and Christians occupied their place, endowments to temples declined. Prostitution became the source of income and all devadasis were considered as prostitutes. On 7.3.1901 Perina, a devadasi of Tiruvaludisvarar temple escaped from there and got assylum in Christian church at Panaivilai. Paster Rev.Walker and Amy Carmicheal saved her life. Amy Carmicheal started a home for escaped devadasis at Donavor59. In 1922 the Panagal ministry abolished the Devadasis System in Madras Presidency. By this way Devadasi System was also abolished in Tiruvaludisvarar temple at Perunkulam.

59 A. Devanesan, History of Tamilnadu, Marthandam, 2002, pp.391, 392
The street in which the Vanniyars reside is known as Chettiyar street. They adopt the Brahmanical ceremony of Upanayanam. The chief oil produce in Perunkulam is that obtained in the ordinary country mill checker. They were engaged in trade such as wholesale and retail grocery dealers, cloth merchants and the like.

Another important caste living in Perunkulam is the Maravas. They are considered as the sub caste of Tevars. In the past they were the Warrior class\textsuperscript{60}. They occupied the social status next below the Vellalas\textsuperscript{61}. They are meat eaters and exchange hospitality with Idayans. They are wearing the sacred ashes of Siva and professing to be adherns of Vishnu\textsuperscript{62}.

The Maravas engaged themselves in the Kaval duties of the temples at Perunkulam and in the nearest villages. Maravas reside in Maravar street. Their settlements in Perunkulam has increased recently. The Yadavas community is also an important caste group upto 1935. They were called as Idayans or Konars. The Yadavas of Perunkulam considered Perunkulam as their homeland. By their profession they are

\textsuperscript{60} H.R. Pat, op.cit., pp.139,140
\textsuperscript{61} Pharoah and Co., \textit{A Gazetteer of South India}, London, 1885, p.441
\textsuperscript{62} S.Kathirvel, \textit{A History of Maravas 1790-1802}, Madurai, 1977, p.17
cattle reares. They sell milk, curd, butter and ghee. They are peace loving people and follow the rituals of Vishnava sect. In Perunkulam they are living in the Yadava street.

The Kammalers in general occupy a position similar to that of the Yadavas, Maravas etc. The communities maintain friendly relations and consider themselves as equal. Yet in the recent past the Kammalas comprised of the sections namely the goldsmith, the brasssmith, the blacksmith, the carpenter and the stone archy. They wear the sacred thread and many of them observe the regular thread invective ceremony like Brahmins. Both men and woman of this caste wear cloth in style of Saivite Brahmins. Many of them are strict vegetarians. They take place in pursuing the customs and manners of Brahmins. New vegetarians among them are increasing now. They suffer much economically except the goldsmith.

THE DEPRESSED CLASS

The important branches among the depressed classes are Pallas, Valluvas, Chackkilayas etc. They form a considerable portion of the society of Perunkulam. In the past they were educationally, economically

\[63\] S.Saraswathi, *Minorities in Madras State*, New Delhi, 1974, pp.21,22

\[64\] P.K. Nambiyar, *op.cit.*, p.124
and socially backward. The Adidravidars are sewing, agricultural labourers and as coolis of various purposes. As they are tillers of the soil till now, they have been engaged by the Vellalas and Brahmins for their land cultivations.

They are socially degraded and are made as serfs and slaves by their masters. They are not allowed in to choulterics which are specially organized for the poor people. They cannot enter temples and public wells. Regarding their religion most of them are Hindus and are nature worshippers. They worship the sun, moon and five elements. In the recent times they are allowed to enter in to temples.

The condition of the Chakkaliyas or Arunthathiyyars is entirely different from the Adidravidas. They are serving as scavengers and sweepers in the local administrative offices and government and private hospitals. They speak Telugu and mixed Tamil. They are very low in the economic and social standards than the Adidravidas. They have no property.

The other important minority people living in Perunkulam area are the Ambatters, the Barbars, the Dhobies, the Kuyavars, the Pandarams and the Kaniyans. The Ambatters are also known as Muruthuvars. They
attend the maternity cases in village sides and even in the orthodox families of Perunkulam. They used to take care of batting children for certain matters. The Barbers are engaged in the funeral functions of the Hindus. They used the sons of the dead persons. In ordinary days they earn by opening saloons for haircutting.

The Dhobis (vannans) wash dirty clothes. The Pandarams are the temple servants who assist the Brahmins in decorating the deities. They decorate the deities by making garlands of flower. They pick up or pluck flowers in the temples gardens (Nandavanams) and other gardens. They are living at the end of the Mutharamman Koil Street. The Kaniyans are the folk musical players and dancers. They play musical instruments by telling stories of the village deities. They have been living in thatched houses without any facilities. Originally till 1937 depressed class people were not allowed to enter in to Hindu temples.

Between 1937 and 1938 Rajaji ministry passed the Temple Entry Authorization Act. This act allowed the depressed class people to enter the temple with the permission of higher caste people. K.T.Kosalram Nadar opposed the conditions of this act.
In 8th July 1939 Madurai people agitated to allow entry into temples by depressed class people. Under the leadership of K.T.Kosalram Nadar (a great fighter and supporter of Thiru.K-Kamarajar of the Congress Party) large numbers of the depressed class people in and around Perunkulam entered into the Tiruvaludisvarar Temple and other temples of Perunkulam without any opposition of the temple authorities. The Governor passed Act IV of 1947, known as the Tamilnadu Temple Entry Authorization Act. It allows all castes of Hindus to enter the temple and worship.

**RELIGIOUS LIFE**

Religion plays an important role in shaping the social life of the people. The people of this region follow the two sections of Hinduism namely Saivism and Vaisnavism and other sect. The temple of Tiruvaludisvarar attracts the Saivaites to worship Lord Siva. The Inscriptions of Perunkulam Mayakoothar temple referred the existence of Jain Palli named as Nilkarakara Perumpalli in Perunkulam.⁶⁵

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⁶⁵ ARE 1932-33, No.243.
The Jainism had entered Tamilnadu before the 3rd century B.C.\textsuperscript{66} Jainism flourished very well under the pandyas and a cluster of aseetic, resorts sprang up around Madurai and Tirunelveli. Independent structural temples were built in many parts Pandya nadu.

In the 15th reignal and 43 inscription of Tribhuvana Chakravarthi Koneri Melkondar alias Jatavarma sundara Pandya inscription found on the north and west wall of Mayakoothar mentioned about the Jain temple alias Nikarakara Perumballi of Perunkulam.

**MAYAKOOOTHAR PERUMAL TEMPLE**

Perunkulam is a place of popularity as it is the birthplace of Jeganatha Kavirayar who wrote Pillai Tamil Mathava Kesari. He was a nineteenth century poet and religious preacher, who later became the saviour of Vaisnavism as well as Hinduism in the period of religious aggression that was due to the advent of Europeans and the vigorous influence of Muslims. It is worthly to note that he spread the Tamil language in Tamilnadu. He was wellversed in Tamil and Sanskrit.

Perunkulam, one of the sacred Vaisnava centre, is called after the name of Goddess Kulanthai Valli. Perunkulam contains the words 'Thiru'

\textsuperscript{66} (K.K.Pillai Social History of Tamilnadu p.507)
and 'Kulanthi Thiru’ which denotes Holyness and Kulanthai, the holy abode of goddess Kulanthai Valli. Mayakoothar Perumal Temple situated on the southern side of the road to Eral and Perunkulam village. Perunkulam has principle divisions like Tiruvaludiswaram and Thirukulanthai which are also called Siva Tiruvaludisvarar and Vishnu Thirukulanthai.

The temple complex of Mayakoothar comprises of a vast rectangular enclosure occupying an area of about acres. With the emergence of Bakthi Movement and because of Nammalvar’s Mangalasasanam the place become more sacred to the Vaishnavas as one of the Thivyadesas.

It has some inscriptions, the earliest inscription belongs to the Jatavarman Kulasekara Pandya Tamil (1190-1217 AD) in the 12th century found on the north and west wall of the temple states that in the 15th regional year and 430 days Thibuvana Chakaravarthy Kuntam Molisinga Perman Guruklathiyan of Seynam alias Parakirama Pandya Nallur in Milalekuram donated a land to the Mayakoothar temple for the expenses of daily offerings and worship during the service instituted in his name and special festival to the deity once every month on the day of Maha

67 Thiruvai 8.5.1 (3561)
which was his Nataistar. This land was purchased from the regiment at Uthamapandya Nallur alias Perunkulam.

By the royal order the Mahasabha of Perunkulam made the above land free from taxes. The Vaishnavas named this region as Thirukulanthai, the abode of Mayakoothar of Vishnu. In this way both the major streets of Hinduism exalt the place Perunkulam.

The Hindus without disparity are going to worship both Lord Mayakoothar and Tiruvaludisvarar in Perunkulam. In addition to the two major temples in Perunkulam there are many small temples. Perunkulam is a familiar place attracting pilgrims, devotees and others to visit the temples and Sengol Mut. Kalapiravar Temple is situated on the western side of east car street.

Sithivinayaga Temple is situated to the southern side of Tiruvaludisvarar Temple. Patchi Perumal Sastha Temple is situated north eastern side of Perunkulam. This temple belongs to the Maravar community. Pathirakali Amman Koil and Mutharamman Koil is situated on the northern side and southern side of the Siruthondanallur road. Both are belonging to the Vellala Community who are the chief patrons of these temples. Kanni Mula Vinayaga Temple is situated at the south west
of Perunkulam. Shengolmadathipathis Memorial Yard is situated on the extreme end of east car street.

Mayakkoothar temple was built during the period of early Pandyas. The ground Plan of the structure together with their measurements are given and the same are illustrated in general ground plan of the temple. Like other big temples of South India this temple was built a various times. The temple inscriptions furnished evidence for determining the age of structures.

Perunkulam Mayakkooother temples is a vast and impressive complex of structures, enclosed by high and massive compound walls all around occupying a rectangular plot of land. The temple measures 350 feet east to west and 90 feet south to north roughly occupying and the main entrance the eastern direction. Its height is sixty feet.

The temple epigraphs mention the date of construction and the person responsible for the same. Not only the temple epigraphs of this age but also some literary works reconstruct the History of these Temples. Thiruvoimoli is a 7th C literary work which refers to
Perunkulam and its temple. This is the first and earlier reference to the Presiding deity Venkatavanan.\textsuperscript{68}

Madura Kavi Alwar of 8\textsuperscript{th} C composed Kannir Srithampu.\textsuperscript{69} Praise of the Presiding deity of this temple. Thivakavi Pillai Perumal Iyankar of 17\textsuperscript{th} C composed 108 Thirupathi Anthathi on Perunkulam in Praise of the presiding deity of this temple.\textsuperscript{70}

This temple is also refer in Thamiraparani Sthala Puranam (Sanskrit), Perunkulam Manmium and Jeganatha Kavirayar's Pillai Tamil and U.V. Ananatha Krishna Iyengars Thanipaa Manchari oru pattu.\textsuperscript{71}

According to one legend Kumutha Valli the wife of Vedarajan of Perunkulam was taken away by the Giant Agamasuran to the Himalayas during the time of taking bath in the pond. Hence, Vedarajan appeal to the Lord Venkatavanan to get back his wife from giant Agamasuran. Lord Venkatavanan killed the giant Agamasuran and got back the Kumuthavalli from Himalayas to Perunkulam. Lord Venkatavanan got

\textsuperscript{68} Thiruvaimoli 8:2:4 (3561)

\textsuperscript{69} Jegannatha Kavirayar, Thanipadal thiratu. P.13.

\textsuperscript{70} 108 Thirupathi Anthathi, 56.

\textsuperscript{71} SSM Sundaram and V.Ramakrishnan Perunkulam alias Thirukulanthai thala veralaru and Glory of Mayakkother, Madurai; 2005, p.12.
over the Maya ways of wars of Agamasuran. Thus Lord Venkatavanan has been popularly called Mayakkothar.

As days passed on Kamalavathi daughter of Vedarajan and Kumuthavalli wanted to get married to Lord Venkatavanan. She decided to take penance. Her penance had good effect soon Lord Venkatavanan appeared before her on the appeal of Kamalavathi, Lord Venkatavanan took her on his Chest.

Mayakkothar Temple was constructed by the early Pandyas the Presiding deity is made of Salagram stone adhence the gate way that is in its front has became the principal entrance. Inside this walled enclosure a concentric court-yards noticed around the central nucleus, on which is located the main Sanctum of Lord Venkatavanan. These are three courtyards in the temple and the local Srivaishavas would add the main street around the temple as fourth one.

To enter it just before and opposite to Karuvarai a door leading West-wards and doors at north and south provided touching an close to Ardhamandapa back side. Karuvarai is covered with wall on north,

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south and west. On eastern side on wall, but with double half doors with five bells fixed on each half door. The entry to it is provided with door on the wall. On the walls between Thalavarisai prakara and Karuvarai Prakara, on west, north and south walls, there are painted matters defining the incarnations of Vishnu. On the roof place, Ramayana epics pictures are also painted assumed to have been done in the 17th century AD.  

Lord Venkatavanan is standing in yoga pose. Kamalavathi thayar sculpture engraved on his chest. Venkatavanan statue is of (5 ½) five and half feet in standing posture lifting right hand blessing devotees in Kadi kastha and the left hand in Abayakstha Posture.

Urchavar named as Mayakkoothar in Copper Metal Idol stands at (2 ½) two and half feet height platform in a Golden Palanquin with Kamalvathi and Kulanthaivalli. Thayar, Urchavar's Golden Chest cover of Golden plate removed only in the Tamil month of Avani and clean and polished. On that day a celebration to the original image of him Abesekams is done.

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74 Sundarar Opcit, p.5.
This is called Seshtar Abesekams. This temple is considered as representing God Saniswarar. Lord is for a away from the entry to the temple in the sanctum santorium with Ananatha vimana of Ananatha Nilaya vimana of (42) forty two feet height on its top facing east in Sanctum Sanctorum.

Archa figures can be seen and so in that stage lord appears in three different poses like reclining, standing and sitting. At Varaguna Mangai Lord in Sitting Posture, at Thiruppuliyanakudi in reclaiming Posture and at Perunkulam standing Posture and all those three posture are Co-joining praised by Nammalvar.

Sri Mayakkoothar shrine was small structure before 8th century AD. Urchavar Mayakkoothar in Copper metal idol, idol casting of images in bronze by cast wax process was increasingly practiced before 5th century AD.

The entrance of Sanctum Santorium there are two statues in stone called as Dwara Balakas on each side. Further they are the Security

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75 Sundram, Op cit, p.5.
76 Nalayer Thivyra Prabandam, 3685.
guards and gatekeeper. They are pleased to receive devotees and extend welcome, and they report to God about the presence of devotees. 77

The length of Karpagraha is (20) twenty feet and width (20) twenty feet and height (15) fifteen feet and above this teras vimana situates. Karuvarai prakara has (70) seventy feet length and (10) ten feet width on all side. 78

In the front door of Karuvarai fixed with (8) eight bronze bells a narrow antarala can meets the Sanctum to the close of Arthamandapa in its front. It is of (40) forty feet length (40) forty feet width and its height of (20) twenty feet. Arthamandapam otherwise known as Kuradumandapam is covered with wall on all four sides and at the front wall the entrance door is known as Manivoil as bells are fixes on the door.

There are (16) sixteen stone pillars in four rows in Arthamandapa and a height of pillar is (20) twenty feet length and (1 ½) feet one and half feet width the pillars have a gap of (10) ten feet bearing a small mandapam known as Vila mandapam an (5 ½) five and half feet height

77 Sambantham, Tirumular Thiruvirunthu, Madras, 1995, p.224.

78 Filed Study 20.9.2007.
platform. In the south western corner of Arthamandapam a room situates for washing cloths of the deities. In the North western corner of a platform stone statue of Senaimuthalvar stands. Touching him an eastern side there are (12) twelve stone statues of (12) twelve Alwars. In this Arthamandapam devotees stand and worship Mayakkoothar.

In the third row on the pillar touching the wall of Garbagraha has yali figure in (8 ½) eight and half feet height, in this yali for (3) three feet height plantain shape pillars and above it for (4) four feet stoned plant situates. In the third row in all pillars chiseled three feet elephant on the base height of pillar ten feet yali and an lion seated posture at the height of five feet and above it for two feet stoned wooden plant of stone.

Before this Mahamandapam with no wall except on Western side touching the Arthamandapa at Northern and southern side there are three steps to go up touching this Mahamandapam, Arthamandapa situates at which Urchavar Mayakkoothar is standing posture with his consorts Kulanthaivalli, Kamalavathi and Kumuthavalli and Sakkarathalvar statues which are in copper metal. All these idols, are placed only in the month of Chithirai. On Vaikunta Eagathesi day Lord Mayakkoothar is in reclaiming posture appears. Till then all these icons are placed before the main deity Mayakkoothar in Garbhagraha.
The architecture features already show that they belong to the early Pandya times and probably to the 5\textsuperscript{th} Century AD. Pandya rulers started the construction of temples with stones. Bricks were replaced by stones. The Arthamandapam and Mahamandapam pillars were changed and gigantic decorative pillars were installed during the times of later pandyas and Madurai Nayaks.

SECOND PRAKARA

Second Prakara is known as Thalavarishai Prakaram. It is an open courtyard. Which runs around to Garbhagraha, Arthamandapa and Mahamandapa and hence known as Thalavarisai prakaram.

To construct the temples exclusively with black stones, (12) twelve each stone placed on the top of each one. To fix both stones the lower stone in its top provided a pit or hole and the stone to be placed in it will have peg. So that the portion of peg of the upper stone is fixed on the pit of lower stone. Besides to have them clinched to be seated to make joint of each other medicine is appeared in between that two stones. It is called the Astapanda Marunthu.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{79} B.Kothanta Raman, \textit{Indiyakalaikal}; Madras 1987, pp.91-93.
THIRD PRAKARAM

Third Prakaram is known as Seevili Mandapam this is encircled by a wall on all sides. Nager Statue, Well and Manavala Mamuai are situated on the Northern side of the Seevili prakaram.

MUHA MANADAPAM

Muhamandapam is situated in front of the Mahamandapam. It is of (120) one hundred and twenty feet length and (96) ninety six feet width. This Mandapa is supported by (79) seventy nine pillars and (20) twenty feet height.

Palipeda, Alter, Flag mast and Karuda Alwar statue are kept in the middle of the Mahamandapam. Thirumadipalli and grocery room are situated in the southern side of Mahamandapam.

PakalPathumandapam situates in the South west corner of Seevili Mandapam. Adyyana festival takes place there, this festival celebrated in the month of Markali recite Prapandam during the day time. So this is known as Pakalpathu Urchavam. Erapathu Mandapam is situates in the North East corner of Muhamandapam. Rajagopuram situates in front of the Muhamandapam. It is (24) twenty four feet length (31) thirty one feet width.
FORTH PRAKARAM

Forth Prakara are outer courtyard. The entire outer courtyard is enclosed by a high boundary wall (Thirumathil) in all sides with only one opening which form the principle gate way in this temple is only are on the east so necessary the principle deity and all the important structures like Dhvajastambha, Palipeda and main entrance are facing the East.

Raja Gopuram has four stories with total height (60) sixty feet the entrance through it is of (7) seven feet width for stands on a lofty blinth built of solid stone imaginary which form stable foundations for the super structures are pyramidal in shape writes in several stroies.

The horizontal and vertical arrangements seems to be well balanced in the Raja Gopura. The inner part of first two stories are made up of wood with well carved sculptures and royal images installed there.

Raja Gopurams is of (31) thirty one feet width Block stones and above at burnt bricks and lime mortar. The top of the Raja Gopuram there are (5) five kalasams situates. Simhaladams are facing four sides small entrance door with height of (20) twenty feet and (7) seven feet width is at the entrance to the temple with double doors. Fortunately
there are a number of inscriptions on the blind portions of the Raja Gopurams giving us clues to its probable date.

Fourth prakarams represents the outer space of the temple. In the centre of it Raja Gopuram situates touching the Gopurams on all the four sides the compound wall situates with a height of (30) thirty feet. The width of the wall is one feet. The length of the wall on the northern and southern side are (230) two hundred and thirty feet respectively. The eastern and western walls length are (90) ninety feet.

In the eastern wall in the centre, Rajagopuram situates. In the North East corner of the front wall (North to South wall) Karudalvar statue in sitting posture is fixed and in South Eastern corner also similar statues is fixed an the top of the wall, bending the right foot forward and left foot backward posture. In these four karudas two simhas statues are fixed facing east and another towards south and in north near karuda statue an simha facing north and another facing east.

PANDAL MANDAPAM

It is before the Raja Gopuram placed over (26) twenty six stone pillars with a length of (130) one hundred and thirty feet and width of (28) twenty eight feet. This mandapa height is of (17) seventeen feet. On
the top of it sculpture of conch discuss and Thenkalai Namam are noticed. On the Southern side of them situates Karudalwar doll in sitting fortune with two hands clasped in worshiping force sitting future. Hanuman sculpture is situated in the northern side. In the centre of pandal Mandapam Nedukaruda or Ramayana Karuda situates.

It is (11) Eleven feet length and (11) Eleven feet width in square shape. In the stone small mandapams there are four steps each in front and back side to reach the centre of these Mandapa which stands on a platform of (2 ½) two and half feet.

TEMPLE CAR

Temple car are used as Vahana or vehicle for gods in festivals. There is a Mandapam known as Therattu Mandapam situates at west car street. Theradimadan koil is under neeth this mandapam.

THEPPAKULAM

The huge temple tank situates on the north east of temple at a distance of (300) three hundred feet at Sannathi street is considered to be sacred one. It is of (131) one hundred and thirty one length and in with of square shape, in the centre the Neerali Mandapam is of (15) fifteen feet height on three feet height platform.
For a long time the administration of Mayakkothar Temple was under the control of Tuticorin circle Devasthana committee Sri Mayakkothar Temple is a notified temple of Govt. under the Hindu Religious and Charitable endowment Act of 1959 and it is administrated by an executive officer appointed by the department along with the three honourary members known as Arankavalar Kulu.

Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and charitable endowment Act 22 of 1959 continuous in force till date.

RENOVATIONS

Renovation to the temple was carried out by Ariyanatha Muthaliar, now this temple is maintaining by T.V.S. Company.

In addition to the two major temples in Perumkulam there are many small temples. Perumkulam is a familiar place attracting pilgrims, devotees and others to visit the temples and Sengol Mutt. Kalapiravar Temple is situated on the western side east car street.

Sithivinayaga Temple is situated to the southern side of Tiruvaludisvarar Temple. Patchi Perumal Sastha Temple is situated north eastern side of Perunkulam. This temple belong to the Maravar
community. Pathirakali Amman Koil and Mutharamman Koil situated on the northern side and southern side of the Siruthondanallur road. Both are belonging to the Vellala Community. Who are the chief patrons of these temples. Kanni Mula Vinayaga Temple situated at the south west of Perunkulam. Shengolmadathipatti Memorial Yard is situated on the extreme end of east car street.

SENGOL MUTT

Perunkulam is well known for its famous Sengol Mutt. It is situated on the southern side of Tiruvaludisvarar temple. Sengol Mutt served as the Saviour of Saivism as well as Hinduism in the period of religious aggression that was due to the influence of Muslims and the advent of Europeans. It is worthy to note that he contributed much to the spread of the Tamil language in Tamil Nadu.

The Sengol Mutt is one among the eighteen Thirukailaya Mutts namely Thiruvaduthurai Athenam, Tharmapura Athenam, Thirupanathal Kasi Thirumadam, Suryanar Koil Athenam, Kanchi Thandaivandole Athenam. Madurai Thirugana Sambanthar Athenam, Kuntakudi Thiruvannamalai Athenam, Thulavar Athinam, Thirupugalam Velakurichi Athenam, Natchiya Koil Athenam, Vedaranyam Athenam, Sirkalai Vallala Athenam, Ambarmahanam, Sorkapura Athenam,
Chidambaram Agama Siva Prakasa Athenam, Annappan Pettai Thayumana. Swamikal Athenam, Nilapadi Athenam, Rameswara Athenam and Perunkulam Sengol Mutt.

The first Guru of Chidambara Mutt was born at Vedaranyam in the name of Dumman. He received Theitchi from Sankaranardar at Chidambaram. Then he was called as Satyagani. He wrote a book in the name of Satya Ganam. He worshipped a small size Lingam known as Alagia Chittambalevar. He worshipped it throwing Kami Kagama pooja. The eighteenth guru of Chidambara Mutt, was called as Mahavirathan alias Pattam Yoga Dhamabara Sitthar Sathiyagani. He was invited by Prakirama-Cholartha Pandiyan from Chidambaram to Kallur near Tirunelveli.

In the year 143 AD (Kali 3244) Vachira Dega Pandyan, the successor of Vetivelcheliyan of Korkai, was defeated by Chola king. He escaped from Korkai to Kallur through a secret way. He met Dihambra Sitthar at Kallur. With the help of Dihambara Sitthar, Vachira Dega Pandyan recaptured Korkai from Cholas. After that incident, with blessing of Guru Dihambra Shithar, he established 64 Mutts in the name of Silapureeswarar (Kallur matt) from Courtallum to Korkai.
He invited the Guru and established mutt at Perunkulam. He was coronated and received Sengol from Dhambara Shitthar at Korkai. In memory of that incident Silapurureeswarar mutt of Perunkulam is called as Sengol Mutt. Gurus of Sengol Mutt received the right to coronate the Pandya King and gave Sengol to him and maintained the administration of Tiruvaludiswarar temple. With the advice of Guru, Nankudi-Vellalas of Srivaikuntam area celebrated Thiruvathirai Kattalai, Surasamhara Kattalai and Thirukalyana Urchavam in Tiruvaludiswarar temple. The statue of 18th Sannithanam is kept in Artha Mandapam of Thayar Shrine at Thriupudaimaruthur temple.

With the effort of Sengol Mutt, during the second half of second century A.D, Ukiravaludhi Pandya called Thiruvalluvar, Nakkirar and other fortyeight Sangam poets at Perunkulam Tiruvaludiswarar temple. In the presence of Sengol Mutt Guru the famous work of Thiruvalluvan’s Thirukkural was released at Perunkulam Tiruvaludisvarar temple. In memory of this incident the statues of Ukiravaluthi Pandiyan and 48 or 49 Sangam poets were erected in the Second Prakara of Tiruvaludisvarar temple\(^8\).

\(^8\) N.Mahalingam, Om Sakthi, July 2000, pp.91-92
In 1890 U.V. Saminatha Iyer visited this mutt and collected information about the release of *Thirukkural* from the Guru. After the death of (101) one hundred and one Guru Arumuga Sundra Satyagana Padarasannathi the guru post of Sengol Mutt was vacant from 1981 to 1996.

During the time the Mutt was maintained by 23rd guru of Thiruvaduthurai Mutt, Paramachania Swamigal. On 15.9.1996 Kalyana Sundra Sathiya Gana Pandara Sannathi assumed the office of Sengol Mutt as (102) one hundred and two Pidathipathi.

**SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF SENGOL MUTT**

Branches of Sengol Mutt are situated at Tirunelveli, Pappankulam, Courtallum and Papanasam. One high school and three middle schools are run by this Mutt at Pappankulam, Kela-Ambasamuthiram and Palayamkottai. The Mutt posses 113 acres of wet and dry lands and buildings at Tirunelveli and Courtallam. This Mutt established (63) sixty three Nayanmar's stone statue in Nellaiappar temple at Tirunelveli.

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DAILY WORKS AT SENGOL MUTT

Common prayers are conducted between 7.00 p.m and 8.30 p.m. daily with evening. Thiruvasagam and Devaram hymns are recited here. Religious discourses, Siva thichai' and religious conversion are conducted here. Chitirai Full Moon Pandhami thiti guru pooja of First Guru is celebrated here every year in the month of chitirai. Free meals is distributed to the public in the memory of the guru\textsuperscript{83}.

STRUCTURE OF SENGOL MUTT

Sengol Mutt is situated on the northern side of Eral Perunkulam road and Southern side of Tiruvaludisvarar temple with an area of two acres like the temple. 2½ inches padika lingam, perpetual lamb and Bronze icon of Natarajar are kept in the Karuvarai. Artha Mandapam and Other rooms are situated in front of the Karuvara. In front of the Artha mandapam, twenty pillars are bearing the Mahamandapa. In the south west corner of Mahamandapam guru’s office is situated.

South east corner of Mahamandapa the store room is situated. 

Madapalli (kitchen) is situated in the south eastern side of store room. Theppakulam and Nandavanam are situated behind the kitchen. Muhamandapam is situated in front of the Maha mandapam. A single room is

\textsuperscript{83} Interview with 102, Guru of Sengol Mutt Kalyana Sundara Sathiyara Gana Pandya Sannathi dated 28.11.2004.
situated in the first floor. Visitor's hall is situated in front of the Muhamandapam.

GREAT MEN OF PERUNKULAM