CHAPTER V
SATUTORY REGULATION OF TRAVANCORE TEMPLES

The temple entry proclamation of 1936, 'a miracle of modern times', was in fact the most non-violent and bloodless revolution silently took place in Travancore in recent years. With this act, the temple worship in Travancore became a popular religious movement through the participation of all sections of Hindu population irrespective of caste, colour and creed. Sri Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma, the Maharaja of Travancore changed the course of history and the destiny of the people with a stroke of his pen effecting a revolutionary change in the society. Yet for maintaining cleanliness inside temples and to upkeep the spiritual atmosphere certain rules were formulated and implemented. On 24th November 1936, such twenty-one rules and conditions were brought to the notice of the public through a proclamation. Many expressions like 'temple', 'chief officer' of deaswoms etc were explained in the proclamation and the powers of the chief officer

1 The Temple Entry Proclamation Memorial Souvenir, 1942, p.1.
was clearly specified. According to rule four, the permission to enter the temple would be limited upto the srikoil (sanctum sanctorum) and tidapally (kitchen) of the temples. From time immemorial, certain unwritten rules had been in vogue in Travancore temples regarding cleanliness and holiness with a view to achieve rare spiritual exaltation. For example, men wearing shirts and garments other than traditional dhoti and angavasthram are not admitted inside the temples. Such restrictions are intended to induce a reverent attitude in the worshippers and to enhance the spiritual efficiency of the Travancore temples. These conditions led to the formulation of such rules that would safeguard the maintenance of spiritual atmosphere in these temples. These rules were to be applied to all persons irrespective of their rank in the society or the community to which they belonged. They specified the classes of persons who should not enter the temples on certain occasions in consonance

---

2 The Regulations and Proclamations of Travancore, 1112 M.E (A.D. 1937) Vol.IV, p.3.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
with the prevailing custom and usage. Persons who are not Hindus, those who are under pollution due to birth or death in their families, drunkard persons, women at menstruation time, professional beggars, persons suffering from contagious diseases were not allowed to enter the temples. Taking meat into the temple, smoking within the premises, carrying cloth umbrella and kerosene lamp and such practice would be disallowed. The chief dehaswom officer has powers to grant or withhold permission depend on customs and traditions. His authority would prevail until set aside by higher authority. The chief officer has powers to pass orders for arrest against those who violate the rules. If any one contravenes the rules or commits any offence which requires purificatory ceremonies, he shall be awarded imprisonment and fine as per rules

The temple entry proclamation and subsequent development in temple administration put the management of temples in a new track. The existing laws became insufficient to contain the

5 The Travancore Directory for 1938, p.579.

6 Ibid., p.680.
aspirations of the people in the changed circumstances. So far as the administration of incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms in Travancore is concerned they were controlled and regulated by the previous proclamations such as proclamation of 1079 M.E (A.D. 1904), 1097 M.E (A.D. 1922) etc. The Regulation III of 1079 M.E (A.D. 1904) called as 'The Hindu Religious Endowment Regulation of 1079' gave dewan full power to administer the devaswoms taken over from trustees and also call upon to submit the list of properties, periodical accounts from the trustees of any temple. If also empowered the dewan to frame rules for carrying out this Regulation to provide for the better administration of the Hindu religious endowments in Travance. In the Regulation of 1097 M.E (A.D. 1922) the government constituted a devaswom fund under section four of the Regulation. It was intended for keeping the temples in a state of good repair in accordance with the usage and custom recognised by the government. The government also allotted in the state budget every year an amount for these devaswoms not being less than forty percent of the ayacut and

---

7 Hindu Religious Endowment Regulation III, Preamble, 1097 M.E, (A.D.1904)
sanchayam land revenue of the state\textsuperscript{8}. This shows the attitude of the government to protect the dehaswoms by supporting with financial assistance from the state fund since the dehaswom properties had already been merged with the sircar property on the assumption of their managements. The government never turned a deaf ear to the financial problems that affected the Travancore temples. Yet a major portion of the expenditure was met from the voluntary contributions and offerings made by the devotees. As the worship in Travancore temples was wide open to all sections of Hindu population of the state, the believers' visit to these temples increased day by day effecting a simultaneous increase in the income of the temples. Hence popularisation of worship brought about financial soundness in the temples of Travancore. This necessitated further statutory regulations for the administration and control of these temples both in terms of general and financial management leading to exaltation of spiritual performance of Travancore temples. Another reason for the birth of new statutory regulation was the political compulsion arised due to the merger of Travancore and Cochin state. The Devaswom (Audit) Proclamation

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., Section 4, p.3-4.
1123 M.E (A.D. 1948) provided a sum of rupees fifty lakhs every year to sreepandaravaka and the same would be paid to the Travancore temples. The Travancore Interim Constitution Act of 1123 M.E (A.D. 1948) also incorporated the same provision of continuing the practice of paying the same amount to Travancore temples. The SreePadmanabha swamy temple at Trivandrum was under the direct control of the ruler of Travancore and a separate fund was created for its purpose and an executive officer was appointed to supervise its administration. As a result the administration of the Temple became very effective.

The Covenant:

In July 1949, a covenant was entered into between the rulers of Travancore and Cochin with the concurrence and guarantee of the government of India whereby the united state of the Travancore and Cochin was formed. It legally came into force on 1st July 1949. The Raj Pramuk was appointed for the united state as per Article 4(1) of the covenant which had been entered into by both

---

9 Travancore Interim Constitution Act 1123 M.E(A.D. 1948), S.23, sub-section (I), proviso (A).

covenanting states and Sri Chithira Thirunal Blalramavarma became the Raj Pramukh in July 1949. He continued to be the Raj Pramukh till the formation of the Kerala State on 1st November 1956. As per Article 4(2) he was entitled to hold the office during his lifetime. According to Article 7(2) of the covenant a council of ministers was also appointed to aid and advise the Raj Pramukh in exercise of his functions. The ministers held the office during the pleasure of Raj Pramukh11. The remarkable feature of the covenant was the formation of the devaswom fund. As per Article 8(a), the obligation of the covenanting state of Travancore was to contribute a sum of rupees fifty lakhs every year from general revenue to the devaswom fund and rupees one lakh to sreepandaravaka properties12. Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple received rupees five lakhs every year as fund in lieu of rupees one lakh already sanctioned as per the devaswom (amendment) proclamation of 1123 M.E (A.D.1948). the Ruler appointed an executive officer to look after the affairs of the Sreepadmanabha Swamy temple at Trivandrum. The temple committee was

11 The Covenant, dated 1 July 1949, p.2.
12 Ibid.
composed of three Hindu members nominated by the Ruler of Travancore to advise him in the discharge of his functions.

The covenant also envisaged a provision for the establishment of a board known by the name Travancore Devaswom Board which was entrusted with the administration of all the incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms, all their properties and devaswom fund. The board was constituted on 1st August 1949 in accordance with the provisions of the covenant. The administration of the incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms and the Hindu religious institutions and funds in Travancore and Cochin came under the control of the respective devaswom boards from 1st August 1949. Yet the temple of Sree Poornathrayeesa at Trippunithura and Pazayannore Bhagavathy temple at Pazayannore continued under the direct control of the Ruler of Cochin.

The covenant provided for constituting a legislature consisting of the Raj Pramukh and a legislative assembly for the united state of Travancore and Cochin. All the persons who had been appointed as members of representative body of Travancore and Cochin

---

13 *The Covenant*, op.cit, p.3.

became the members of the legislative assembly of the united state. The legislature of the united state had the power to make laws within the framework of this covenant and the constitution of India. The Raj Pramukh had the power to promulgate ordinances as and when it was found necessary and such ordinances were later replaced through Act passed by the legislature. Altogether the covenant had twenty two Articles along with a schedule. The government of India had given concurrence to the covenant and guaranteed all its provisions\textsuperscript{15}.

**Ordinance No.IX of 1124 M.E (A.D.1949)**

The Raj Pramukh of united Travancore-Cochin state was pleased to make and promulgate the Ordinance No.IX of 1124 M.E(A.D.1934) in exercise of the powers conferred on him through Article 11 of the covenant with effect from 1st August 1949\textsuperscript{16}. The landmark development relating to the temple administration in Travancore was the constitution of the Travancore Devaswom Board as per Section 3 of the Ordinance. The Board was entrusted with the power of administration of incorporated and

\textsuperscript{15} V.P.Meneon, Concurrence of the Government of India, NewDelhi, 1949.

\textsuperscript{16} Ordinance No.IX of 1124 M.E(A.D.1949), dated 1 August 1949.
unincorporated devaswoms, devaswom fund, devaswom surplus fund except SreePadmanabha Swamy temple and Sreepandaravaka properties. The Board was constituted with three Hindu members of which the Ruler nominated one, Hindu council of ministers and Hindu members of legislative assembly elected one each. They were elected for four years. The members of the Board elected the President in their first meeting. A separate committee was constituted for the administration of the SreePadmanabha Swamy temple. The executive officer of the temple acted as the secretary of the committee. One of the noteworthy provision included in the ordinance was the provision for the assumption of management of Hindu religious endowments on certain grounds\(^\text{17}\). There were fifty six sections in the ordinance which had been incorporated in six chapters. The Hindu Religious Endowments Act of 1079 M.E (A.D.1904), Devaswom Proclamation of 1121 M.E(A.D. 1946) etc stand suspended due to the operation of this Ordinance\(^\text{18}\). Subsequently, the ordinance was replaced by another ordinance viz. the Hindu Religious Institutions ordinance 1950 and the same

\(^{17}\) Ordinance, op.cit.,S.34, pp.15-18.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., S.56.
was later replaced by Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950.

**Ordinance No.1 of 1950**

The Hindu Religious Institutions Ordinance No.1 of 1950 introduced further changes in the Temple administration. The formation of the united Travancore - Cochin state under Raj Pramukh brought about many changes in the administration of devaswoms in Travancore. Consequently the administration of temples was stream lined with new regulations both for spiritual administration and financial administration of temples in the region. In 1950, when the legislative assembly of the state of Travancore - Cochin was not in session, Rajpramukh promulgated the ordinance under clause (1) of the Article 213 of the constitution of India read with Article 238. He promulgated the above ordinance as he was satisfied that circumstances exist which made it necessary for him to take immediate action for making provision for the administration, supervision and control of various categories of
devaswoms and their appurtenances with immediate effect\textsuperscript{19}. This ordinance stressed many points with regard to the constitution of devaswom board, procedure for the election of members to the board, removal of members, honorarium for president and members\textsuperscript{20}, vesting of jurisdiction in the board etc which laid foundation for a permanent governing body for the devaswoms of the state. The ordinance was replaced by Act XV of 1950, which came into force on April 1950\textsuperscript{21}.

**Institutions Act**

The Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious institutions Act (Act XV of 1950) was passed replacing the Hindu Religious Institutions Ordinance, 1950. This Act has three parts, part-I extended to Travancore, Part II to Cochin and Part III to the whole of the state of Travancore and Cochin. It replaced all the previous proclamations and also the ordinance No. 1 of 1950. There are 130 sections in the Act of which 60 sections are meant exclusively for

\textsuperscript{19} Ordinance No.1 of 1950, 'Preamble', p.1.

\textsuperscript{20} Monthly Honorarium, for President Rs. 450/- and member Rs.400/- each.

\textsuperscript{21} Government of Travancore, Extraordinary Gazette, Trivandrum, dated 16th April 1950.
Travancore State\textsuperscript{22} and rest to Cochin state. In section 2, subsection (c), the incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms have been defined. The incorporated devaswoms are \textit{sircar} devaswoms mentioned in Schedule-I and unincorporated devaswoms are personal deposit devaswoms, which have separate accounts of income and expenditure. The Act also extensively dealt with the devaswom fund, surplus fund, devaswom properties, \textit{karanma} services and the Boards' control over the devaswom department, the powers, duties and responsibilities of devaswom commissioner, assistant devaswom commissioners and superintendents of the devaswom department. Section four of the Act is meant to constitute the Travancore Devaswom Board. Section six of the Act lays down that a person who is to be nominated or elected as member of the Board must reside in the state of Travancore - Cochin and profess the Hindu religion and must have attained thirty five years of age. Thus any person who has not openly renounced the Hindu religion is eligible to be a member of the Board. He need not be a believer in temple worship or is a person

having interest in the affairs temple. As the power of nomination is left to the council of ministers and members of legislative assembly, the Board was brought under the influence of political party in power. In his report on the devaswom administration reforms, K.P. Sankaran Nair, the legal advisor to the Devaswom Board had stated about politicization of the religious institutions belonging to the Hindus. He observed that owing to the onslaught of politics the day today administration of the temples and Board office deteriorated considerably.

Section 7 of the Act lays down the disqualification for membership to the Board. These include insanity, a person who is deaf mute or suffering from leprosy, an undischarged insolvent, an office holder or a servant of government, a local authority, a person convicted by a criminal court for any offence involving moral turpitude etc. Section 8(1) lays down that a member shall cease to be a member of the Board if he subsequently becomes disqualified under section 7 or if he ceases to profess the Hindu religion. The section Provides that any person interested may apply to the

23 K.P.Sanakaran Nair, Devaswom Administration Reforms, 1958, p.3-5.
24 Vide in the Appendix IV, p.11-12.
district court, Trivandrum against the order of disqualification. The section also provides for an appeal to the high court against an order of the district court and the appeal is to be decided in a division bench. Until the decision of the high court is pronounced the member alleged to have been subject to disqualification is entitled to act as if he were not disqualified. Section 9 of the Act lays that a member of the Board may be removed from his office by the high court on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. A single judge in the high court on receiving such an application from the Advocate general or a person belonging to the Hindu community has to conduct an enquiry and if a prima facie case is established he has to refer it to the division bench with reasons and the division bench would pass final orders\(^{25}\).

Chapter III of the Act, section 18 to 23 dealt with Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple\(^{26}\). Section 18(1) sets apart six lakhs of rupees annually out of fifty-one lakhs provided for payment to the devaswom fund in Article 238(ii) of the constitution, towards the


\(^{26}\) Ibid., p.16.
expenditure in SreePadmanabha Swamy temple. The ruler of Travancore is to appoint an executive officer to administer the temple, the Sree panadaravaka properties and all other properties and funds of the temple vested in trust in the ruler of Travancore and the sum of six lakhs transferred from the devaswom fund. A committee consisting of three Hindu members nominated by the ruler of Travancore advised him in the discharge of his functions. The ruler is the Chairman of the committee and the committee met once in a quarter at Trivandrum. The ruler fixed the remuneration of the members. The executive officer acted as the secretary of the committee.

One of the remarkable feature in the Act is the provision for the continuance of the Devaswom department as constituted in 1097 M.E (A.D.1922). The Board appointed the devaswom commissioner and the devaswom commissioner appointed the chief executive officer of the department. The expenditure in connection with the said department shall be met out of the devaswom fund.

27 Ibid.

28 Act XV of 1950, S.29 (vide in the Appendix IV, p.19)

29 Ibid.
The appointments in the administrative service in the devaswom department shall be made by the Board in accordance with the rules prescribed for such appointments.

**Devaswom Commissioner:**

At the apex of administration stood the devaswom commissioner who served as a link between the government and devaswom. Generally members of royal family were appointed as devaswom commissioner as seen from the appointment of Rajaraja Varma as the first devaswom commissioner\(^{30}\). He shall be the adviser to the government in matters relating to the devaswom administration. He is also directly responsible to the government for the proper management and control of devaswoms, charitable institutions and **Japadakshinas**. As a rule, he should be consulted in all matters affecting Hindu temples and in respect of applications for permission to open places of public worship under the proclamation.

---

\(^{30}\) Letter R.O.C. No.206 of 21, dated 13 April 1922.
Duties and responsibilities:

The devaswom commissioner occupied a respectable and responsible position in the hierarchy of the officers of the devaswom department. He was entrusted with the following duties and responsibilities:\(^{31}\).

(1). To supervise and control the working of the subordinate officers of devaswom department.

(2). To regulate the expenditure within the sanctioned pathivus and estimates.

(3). To watch and collect the receipts from all sources due to the devaswom fund.

\(^{31}\) Letter R.O.C. No.206 of 21/G.B., dated 2 September 1922.
(4). To make arrangement for the proper preservation and custody of *nadavaravus* (offerings from devotees), *thiruvabharanams* (ornaments of gods and goddesses), *pattuparivattams* (silk garments) and all belongings of devaswoms.

(5). To see the live stock attached to the devaswoms properly cared for.

(6). To submit for the sanction of government proposals for the revision of *pathivus* of those devaswom whose *pathivus* remain to be revised.

(7). To submit to the government an annual report on the administration of devaswom and other institutions in his charge with the special reference to the transactions of devaswom fund.

(8). To act as the administrator of the devaswom fund subject to the rules and instructions that may be laid down by government.

(9). To generally see the administration of devaswoms conducted in accordance with the provisions of the proclamations and
(10). To submit to the government all the returns regarding devaswom matters which were being sent by the chief secretary (earlier division - peishkars).

Besides these duties, he enjoyed a number of other privileges too.

(1). He got the right to make appointment in all the sanctioned establishments both in the offices and in the devaswoms under him. But their pay does not exceed to Rs.50 per mensem subject to the provisions of public service notification.

(2). To appoint all subordinates to the devaswom and other institutions under his control. But he should not divorce karanma holders appointments without the sanction of the government or appointing santhikars (priests) in the royal palace.

(3). To transfer any officer whom he is competent to appoint and all members of the non-gazetted staff.

(4). To transfer superintendent to one group to another.

(5). To grant any kind of leave under the rules to any officer whom he is competent to appoint, casual leave to all officers under him and privileged leave to all except the gazetted officers.
(6). To place a superintendents' additional charge of a neighbouring group when the superintendent of the latter is on leave.

(7). To dismiss, degrade, suspend, discharge, retire and accept the resignation of any officer whom he is competent to appoint, based on certain rules and regulations.

(8). To sanction all contracts for supplies and services to deaswoms, if the value of each case does not exceed Rs.2000/-. However, Rajaraja Varma was allowed to sanction to contracts to have the value upto Rs.5000/- which is an additional privilege enjoyed by him.

(9). To sanctioned the purchase of provisions to cash where no contractors are forthcoming, provided the sanctioned pathivus, budget estimates and nirak rates are not exceeded.

(10). To sanction the disposal of nadavaravu provisions and unserviceable silk cloths and credit the amount to the deaswom fund.

(11). To get the nadavaravu gold and silver melted in the mint and make necessary alterations in the thiruvabharanam registers,
provided that there is provisions in the budget for the expenditure that may be necessary for the purpose.

(12). To arrange for the disposal with the pervious sanction of government, of unserviceable thiruvabharanams, vessels and vahanams (vehicle of god) credit the amount to the devaswom fund and make necessary alterations in the registers.

(13). To maintain a full and correct account of thiruvabharanams and submit to the government the necessary half-yearly plus and minus accounts together with a view of certificates for verification.

(14). To maintain full accounts of vessels (bharanipathrom) and submit to the government half yearly returns and certificates regarding them;

(15). To have the complete control of the valuable clothes (pattuparivattams) of the devaswoms.

(16). To sanction the making of new thiruvabharanams, vessels and vahanams using old materials, provided that, in the case of estimates exceeding Rs.500/-, the sanction of the government is previously obtained;
(17). To sanction estimates for petty constructions and repairs up to a limit of Rs.500, in each case.

(18). To allow transfer of funds from the provision for purathepaditharam, for expenditure under akathepaditharam, in case the cash allotment for the latter is found inadequate on account of fluctuation in prices, the diversion being however made first from the item, arangukars (actors), then from 'procession' and lastly sadya (feast).

(19). To enquire into and report on the affairs of Hindu religious endowments, when required to do so in individuals cases, section 6 of the Hindu Endowment Regulation III of 1079 M.E. (A.D.1904).

(20). To sanction all estimates not exceeding the total sanctioned allotment for special purifactory and other ceremonies not included in the pathivu provided funds are available in the budget and the expenditure does not exceed Rs.500 in each case.

(21). To make contributions for renewal and repairs of minor devaswoms by private gentlemen or bodies provided that (a) an estimate is previously sanctioned for the purpose (b) the
contribution does not exceed one-half of the cost of the works or Rs.500/- which ever is less and (c) funds are available for purpose.

In discharging his duties, the commissioner was only helped by a personal assistant recruited from the cadre of Tahsildar. The commissioner's office was broadly divided into correspondence branch and account branch. The correspondence branch was again subdivided into English section and vernacular section. The devaswoms commissioner maintained a correct list of all endowments under his control and supervised the administration with the help of assistant commissioners and superintendents.

**Assistant Commissioner:**

The assistant commissioner were appointed next to the commissioner. They were responsible for the proper control and management of the devaswoms in his district and for the efficient conduct of ulsavams and other festivals\(^{32}\). They were to bring to the notice of the archaeological superintendent and of the devaswom commissioner anything of archaeological or epigraphical

---

interest met within temples\textsuperscript{33}. The assistant commissioner was empowered to make any appointment on the sanctioned establishment either in his own office or in the office 's subordinate to him. He got the right to transfer any officer, whom he is competent to appoint, to grant any kind of leave to any officer subordinate to him and make temporary arrangements for the conduct of work. Assistant commissioner was given the right to fine all subordinates except superintendents subject to maximum of Rupees two at a time. He can dismiss, degrade, suspend, discharge or accept the resignation of any officer whom he is competent to appoint. He must do this only after getting the written explanation from such an officer in accordance with the 'principles of natural justice'. He shall state the charges against such officer, the evidence in support of such charges, the finding in each charge and finally pass such order. In case of such punishment, it is open to the subordinate to appeal to the dehaswom commissioner against the order of punishment within thirty days. However, no appeal shall lie on an order imposing a fine. He is endowed with the power to confirm contracts for supplies and services upto Rs.1000/- and

\textsuperscript{33} Order Dis.No 450 of 22, dated 11 August 1922.
sanction estimates for petty construction and repairs upto Rs.100/-.

Assistant commissioners were empowered to issue summons for the attendance of persons or for the production of documents relating to enquires connected with devaswom matters. For the disobedience of such summonses the assistant commissioner got the right to fine them upto rupees fifty34.

Assistant commissioner was to keep revenue deposit register, register of security deposits, consolidated statement of receipts, monthly account classified abstract receipts, classified abstract of payments35. Assistant commissioners are of the rank of divisional treasury officers. To attend the work of these officers, they were allowed to keep one clerk, an accountant and a peon in addition to the office staff36.


36 Vide Appendix V, p.32.
**The Superintendents:**

The superintendents were the keystone of the efficiency and success of the devaswom work. They were ranked as drawing officers responsible for expenditure ranging from Rs.13,000/- to 1,43,400/-. The superintendents were responsible for an average expenditures of Rs.40,000/-. Important ceremonies like car festivals in the south Travancore and **ulsavams** were conducted under the supervision of the superintendents.

The superintendents shall be competent to grant leave to all subordinates under him except the chief officer of each devaswom. He can fine all subordinates subject to a maximum of rupees one at a time. He shall also be competent to place any subordinate under suspension pending enquiry. He can sanction to incur expenditure up to rupees five necessary for temporary **sudhi** (pasudana punniyam) for the conduct of daily ceremonies in anticipation of sanction, in any temple under his jurisdiction.
The classification of devaswoms proposed by the commissioner is to be approved. This is the prime duty of the superintendents. They were instructed to perform their duties to make the administration more efficient. In the initial stages the superintendents were to be guided by the assistant commissioners. They were required to report any difficulties while discharging their work. In this situation the revenue department was directed to render all necessary assistance by utilising the services of the officers of their department in regard to supplies and service, account rules and special ceremonies. The superintendents of devaswoms were empowered to issue summons for the attendance of persons or for the production of document relating to enquiries connected with the devaswom department. Violation to attend for such enquiries based on the summonses, they were empowered to impose fine upto rupees ten, but no right to excuse such offenders. The orders issued by the superintendents were not final. The aggrieved party can appeal to assistant commissioner and those from the assistant commissioners to the commissioner of

37 Order cur. No.292 of 22, dated 3 August 1922.
devaswom. However appeals from the decision of devaswom commissioner lie to the dewan. Apart from them, separate officers of the grade of superintendents were appointed for the personal deposit devaswoms in certain places namely Thuravur, Pattazhi, Erumeli and Paschima. The other personal deposit devaswoms will be controlled by the superintendents within their jurisdiction. The superintendents were of two ranks with two grades of salary and the lower grade was given the opportunity for promotion on the basis of their work.

The superintendents should maintain the registers like cash book, acquittance roll, undisbursed salary register, permanent advance register, contingent register, revenue deposit register, endowment register, register of Vazhivadus, register of pathivus, register of undisbursed pathivu, register of re-payments on undisbursed pathivu, register of thiruvabharanams, register of bharanipatrams, register of pattuparivattams, register of securities, paddy and rice register. Each superintendent was

---

40 The Travancore Devaswom Hand Book, op.cit., p.36.
provided with a clerk, accountant and a peon in addition the establishment employees\textsuperscript{41}.

Apart from the commissioner, assistant commissioners and superintendents, a group of staff was appointed for the control and management of devaswoms in the state\textsuperscript{42}. The office establishment should therefore be pretty strong both in the correspondence and accounts branch. Correspondence in the devaswom department should as far as possible be conducted in the vernacular (malayalm) language while English being adopted to communicate with other departments and the account office.

Section 31 deals with the power of the Board to manage the affairs of both incorporated and unincorporated temples of Travancore and arrange for the conduct of the daily worship, ceremonies and the festivals in every temple according to its usages. The properties and funds of unincorporated devaswoms are

\textsuperscript{41} Vide appendix V, p.33

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p.31-35.
kept separately. The Board is to keep regular accounts of the receipts and disbursements in respect of institutions under its control. The accounts are to be audited annually by the high court and take appropriate action. The major receipts and expenditure in the devaswom included 10 items of receipts and 30 items of expenditure\textsuperscript{43}.

Section 35 of the Act deals with the rule making power of the Board. Such rules should not become inconsistent with the Act and the rules are framed in the following matters.

(a). all matters expressly required by this Act to be described.

(b). regulating the scale of expenditure of incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms and of Hindu religious endowments under the management of the devaswom Board.

(c). the maintenance and auditing of the accounts of incorporated and incorporated devaswoms and Hindu religious endowments.

(d). submission of budgets, accounts, returns or other information by the devaswom department to the Board.

\textsuperscript{43} G.O.Dis.No.831/40/Dev., dated 3 September 1940.
(e). the method of recruitment and qualifications, the grant of salaries and allowances, the discipline and conduct of officers and servants of the Board and of the devaswom department and generally the conditions of their services;

(f). the establishment of provident funds and the grant of pension for the officers and servants of the Board and the devaswom department.

(g). the grant of travelling and haulting allowances to the members of the Board and the officers of the devaswom department.

Chapter V empowers the Board to supervise and control endowments as defined in section 2(b) and even to take over its managements in certain cases after holding an enquiry. Where the endowment is not taken over, the Board can appoint new trustee for its better administration. Though the decision of the Board regarding assumption of management of the endowment may be challenged before a court, the decision of appointing a new trustee

---

44 Act XV, op.cit, p.58.
can not be challenged. Chapter VI of the Act is dealing with miscellaneous provisions. According to section 58, the Board has been given the power to amend, alter or add to schedule I of the Act through notification in the gazette.

On careful analysis of the Act, it is evident that the former devaswom department was renamed and constituted as Travancore devaswom Board. Hence a detailed study of the devaswom Board would reveal its improvement from former devaswom department. The enactment of this Act clearly shows the reluctance of the government to continue the old pattern of temple administration in Travancore. The formation of Travancore devaswom Board was mainly intended for better and effective administration of temples in Travancore in a democratic way with peoples' participation in the governance. But one has to arrive at a meaningful conclusion, only after evaluating the working of Travancore Devaswom Board in comparison with the former devaswom department.

CHAPTER VI

ESTABLISHMENT OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD AND ITS WORKING

After the formation of united Travancore Cochin state in July 1949 and subsequent enactment of Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act XV of 1950, two Devaswom Boards were established, one for Travancore and another for Cochin. The Travancore Devaswom Board was constituted under Chapter II of Part I of the Act in accordance with the terms of the covenant. It was constituted under section 4(1) of the Act. It consisted of three Hindu members, one of whom was nominated by the ruler of Travancore. The Hindu ministers and the Hindu members of legislative assembly elected the other two members. The members are elected for a period of four years from the date of nomination or election as the case may be. A member is allowed to continue in office after the expiry of his term till the vacancy is filled up by a

---

new person or through his re-election\textsuperscript{2}. If a member wanted to resign his membership before the completion of his term, he was required to tender a written resignation letter. In 1984, a question arose whether a member for whom the term had already been expired could resign from his office. The court held that he should continue in office till the vacancy was filled up by a new member as per rules\textsuperscript{3}.

The Board is a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal with power to hold and acquire properties for and on behalf of the institutions under its management. The Board shall by its name sue and to be sued and the secretary of the Board shall represent in such suits. In 1976, the secretary himself was impleaded in suit no.83 of 1976 on behalf of the Devaswom Board with regard to a question whether the Board includes all members or only a single member as the case may be.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Act No.XV of 1950, S.10 (3), and p.7.
\item \textsuperscript{3} \textit{K.L.T.}, Case No.779, 1984.
\item \textsuperscript{4} \textit{K.L.T.} Suit No.83 (38), 1976.
\end{itemize}
Devaswom Board members and President:

The Board consisted of three members belonging to Hindu community, one of whom was nominated by the ruler of Travancore (by the Government, later through amendment). The Hindu ministers and the Hindu members of legislative assembly elect two others. These members, at the first Board meeting elect one of the members as its president. The President is the administrative head of the Board office. He can delegate powers to other Board members. The President and other members of the Board received honoraria subject to maximum of Rs.450/- per mensem for the president and Rs.400 per mensem for each of the other two members. The Board has an office in Trivandrum and the meetings of the Board are conducted there. The president will preside the Board meetings. If he could not present, he would authorise a member to preside the meeting. No business is

5 Vide in the Appendix IV, pp.11-13.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., S.13(2).
transacted at any meetings unless two members are present. In case of difference of opinion among the members, the president has a casting vote to decide the matter. As per section 11 of the Amendment Act 1974, the president of the Board is to be nominated by the Hindus among the council of ministers. According to a court decision in 1977, it was held that the president of the Board is not holding an office of profit under the government. The Court pointed out the following reasons.

(1). The right to remove a member is vested in the high court and not on the government.

(2). The honorarium received by the president was drawn from the devaswom fund and not directly from the government.

(3). He did not perform any function for the government.

(4). The government did not exercise any control over his functions.

---

Devaswom Board Secretary:

The Board secretary is the convener of the meetings of the Board. He keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Board. He is vested with many powers and responsibilities.

(1). He will sanction any kind of leave to the staff in the Board's office as per rules. But he is to sanction only casual leave to the superintendents working in the Board's office.

(2). He will sanction the increment to the employees of the Board.

(3). He is empowered to fine all the members except the superintendents working in the Board's office for various lapses and no appeal shall lie from such an order of imposing a fine.

(4). He will appoint the peons in the Board's office in vacancies of not more than one-month duration.

(5). He will draw and disburse the pay and allowances including T.A. for authorised journeys of the Board's office staff.

(6). He will attest the entries in the service books of the members of the Board's office staff.

(7). He will sanction indents for stationery articles and printed forms for various offices under the Board.

(8). He will communicate the decisions of the Board to the persons concerned.

(9). He will dispose of all the routine papers and investigation of claims which are not time bared. (Investigation of time bared claims i.e. claims of over 6 years will be sanctioned by the Board).

(10). He will exercise all such other powers as are conferred upon him by the Board from time to time.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10} The Travancore Devaswom Manual, op. cit., p.91.
There is a well organised office for executing various works of the Board at Trivandrum. The organisation of the Board’s office was a major preliminary work of Travancore deaswom Board. The president shall be the administrative head of the Board office. All general instructions issued from time to time for the guidance of staff members should be embodied in an office order book. The administrative head shall be competent to control the staff and regulate their work. He shall exercise superintending control over the whole Board office. The Board’s a secretary and two superintendents known as senior superintendent and junior superintendent. They will look after the daily routine work of the Board and the deaswom fund.

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.5.}\]
Powers and responsibilities of the Board:

Section 16, of the Act confers all rights, authority and jurisdiction on the Boards in respect of devaswoms and Hindu religious endowments formerly exercised by the ruler of Travancore. The Board is given powers of direction, control and supervision over the incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms and Hindu religious endowments under their jurisdiction. The acts and proceedings of all officers and servants of the Board and of the devaswom department are to be supervised and controlled by the Board. Section 17 of the Act empowers the Board to make bye-laws which are not inconsistent with Part I of this Act. Rules are also made in accordance with the above section. In 1953, the Travancore Devaswom Board was pleased to make bye-laws regulating the conduct of business of the meetings of the Board\(^{12}\). It also framed bye-laws regulating the form and manner of applications to the Board. The following rules were also prepared:

1. Rules for the purchase of properties.

2. Travancore devaswom pattom rules.

---

\(^{12}\) *Travancore Gazette* No.21, dated 26 May 1953.
(3). Rules regarding Entrance Test Examination for recruitment to appointments in the devaswom administrative service.

(4). Rules regarding the recruitment service and conduct of devaswom servants.

(5). Travancore devaswom scale of expenditure rules.

(6). Travancore devaswom audit rules.

(7). Travancore devaswom budget rules.

(8). Rules regarding the granting of travelling and halting allowances to the members of the board and devaswom officers.

(9). Travancore devaswom contributory provident fund cum insurance rules.

(10). Rules for the exercise of superintendence over the management of the Hindu religious endowments.

(11). Rules regarding constitution, functions etc of committees for the superintendence of endowments.
(12). Travancore devaswom contributory provident fund cum insurance for contingent employees.

(13). Rules regarding books, registers and accounts to be kept at the office of the Board.

(14). Rules regarding grant of copies of records.


The Board had examined the draft rules and revised forms of correspondence and was pleased to approve the same. This order minimised the volume of clerical work and provided for simpler forms of correspondence. In an order dated 25th September 1952, some general principles regarding audit were framed. So also the passing of the budget led to better financial administration in the Devaswom Board.

According to section 28(3) the Board resumed lands given for various purposes and services and took control over the holders of all karana services. Some of the karana holders challenged the

---

resumption order in the court of law holding that these properties had been given to them as *kanam*, which was equal to alienation of property\(^{14}\). The court held that order of resumption could be passed only in cases where there was alienation which amounted to transfer of interest in the property and not merely transfer of possession for enjoyment of property.

The Board has absolute power to supervise, direct and control the devaswom department. It had full power to manage and administer the funds of incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms under their control. The Board arranged for the proper conduct of daily worship, ceremonies and festivals in every temple according to its usages\(^{15}\). A question arised when the Devaswom Board appointed a person who was not a Malayala brahmin as *santhikaran* in a temple under the Board. The question was whether the appointment was opposed to recognized usage, as


\(^{15}\) Vide in the Appendix IV, SS. 29-31.
malayala brahmins were alone appointed as **santhikars** in the temples under the control of Travancore Devaswom Board. The court held that there was no illegality in the appointment since the word 'usage' mentioned in section 24 and section 31 of the Act cannot have any application to the caste of the person employed as a **santhikaran** in a temple\(^1\).\(^6\)

Section 32 of the Act deals with the responsibility of the Board for keeping regular accounts of all receipts and expenditure in respect of the institutions under its administration for auditing. The following are the major receipts and expenditure of the dehaswom department.

**Receipts:**

(1). Receipts from lands

(a). Outside Travancore (lands of Achakoil dehaswom held in Tirunelveli district and lands of certain scheduled dehaswoms of the Vaikam district in Cochin territory)

---

\(^1\) Adithyan V.Travancore Devaswom Board (unreported case) cited in *Souvenir, 'Dew Drops' -97*, Trivandrum, p.30.
(b). Inside Travancore i.e. **Kuthakappattam** and other revenues on devaswom lands and trees.

(2). **Nadavaravu** in cash through **vanchies**, **kanikkkakudoms**, **nadakkuvaippu** and collection in connection with kavadi and other **vazhivadus**, **satyam** etc.

(3). Sale proceeds of offerings like **sanchayachoru**, **parayeedu** and **thulabharam** articles, live stock etc.

(4). Miscellaneous, prohibitory assessment levied for encroachments on devaswom **purombokes**, **kudivila** on royal trees on devaswom lands, hire of devaswom elephants, rent for campsheds, letting and right of vending oil, firing petards (vedi vazahivadu - auction) etc.

(5). Arrears - revenue not collected before the end of the previous year

(6). Interest on fixed deposit and other investments.

(7). Sale proceeds of old stores and inserviceable materials.
(8). Capital receipts from lands purchased out of devaswom surplus fund.

(9). Loans refunded

(10). Devaswom special test examinations$^{17}$.

**Expenditure:**

(1). Salaries, dearness allowance and leave allowances to all officers.

(2). Pensionary contribution for the officers eligible for pension.

(3). Travelling allowances for the above officers

(4). Contingent expenditure of the drawing and controlling officers.

(5). Gants to temples within and outside state.

(6). Charitable institution (koppukars, pokkuvarathukars etc.)

---

$^{17}$ G.O.DB.No.831/40/Dev., dated 3 September 1940.
(7). **Pathivu** expenditure in scheduled dehaswoms.

(8). Extraordinary expenditure

(9). Religious libraries

(10). Maramath works carried out through the department including **ulsava** maramath.

(11). Purchase and repair of **thiruvabharanams**, **bharanipatroms** etc.

(12). Nandavanoms

(13). Elephant charges

(14). Rent and taxes

(15). Electric current and maintenance of electric installation.

(16). Religious convention and discourses

(17). Religious publications

(18). Hire of elephants.

(19). Miscellaneous and law charges

(20). Postage charges
(21). Diary farms

(22). Land compensation charges.

(23). Special police guards

(24). Telephone charges

(25). Advertisement charges

(26). Stationery and printing charges.

(27). Devaswom special test examinations

(28). Purchase of books

(29). Thiruvabharanom special office.

(30). Arrears payments.

The detailed statement showing the annual receipts and expenditure shall be prepared and produced before the auditors for auditing along all documents, cash books etc. The auditors shall send the report to the high court and the high court shall send a copy of every audit report to the Board. It shall be the duty of the
Board to remedy any defects or irregularities pointed out by the auditor and report the same to the high court. A copy of the audit report shall be supplied to any person who duly applies for the same.\footnote{18}

Section 33 of the Act gives power to the Board to prepare a budget for the next financial year showing the probable receipts and expenditure of the incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms and Hindu religious institutions under the management of the Board. The budget may be prepared within two months of the commencement each financial year. The budget will be submitted to the ruler of Travancore, at present to the government for approval.\footnote{19} The Board shall also prepare an administration report in each financial year of the working of the Board. The administration report will also be submitted to the ruler of Travancore for approval.\footnote{20}

\footnote{18} Vide in the Appendix IV, p.20.  
\footnote{19} Ibid., p.21.  
\footnote{20} Ibid.
In exercise of the powers conferred under clause (d) sub-section (2), section 35 of the Act, the Travancore Devaswom Board was pleased to make budget rules. The budget referred to in these rules is the estimate of annual revenue and expenditure of the expenditure of the institutions administered by the Board. The Board shall in each year prepare a budget for the next financial year showing the probable receipts and expenditure of the incorporated and unincorporated devaswoms. The departmental heads or other officers under the Board will also be present for the budget preparation and discussion when so required by the Board. The budget estimates shall be sanctioned by the Board early enough at least 15 days before the commencement of the financial year to which they relate. When the Board passed the budget, a copy of the same will be forwarded to the secretary. No new budget heads should be opened without the sanction of devaswom accounts officer and the devaswom Board. Officers incurring expenditure will be held personally responsible for excess expenditure over budget allotment unless it has the sanction of the
competent authority. All allotments made in the budget shall lapse at the end of the financial year\textsuperscript{21}.

The Board may assume the management of Hindu religious endowments in five occasions\textsuperscript{22}. It may be due to the request of two third majority of trustees. The important cause for assumption is the mismanagement of trustees including the violation of the recognised usages of temples\textsuperscript{23}. If any person is aggrieved by the order of assumption may file a suit against the Board to set aside such order. Subject to the result of the suit, the order of assumption shall be final. According to section 59 of the Act the members of the Board, officers and servants of the devaswom department, the members of the SreePadmanabha Swamy temple committee and the executive officer and other shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 15 of the Travancore penal code\textsuperscript{24}. Hence the powers and responsibilities go hand in hand as in the case of the public servants.


\textsuperscript{22} Vide in the Appendix IV, S.e7, p.23.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{K.L.T.} (S.N) No.83(38), 1976.

\textsuperscript{24} Vide in the Appendix IV, p.30.
**Devaswom Fund**

Section 25 of the Act deals with the constitution of devaswom fund for the administration of incorporated devaswoms. It consisted of (i) the sum of fifty-one lakhs of rupees mentioned in Article 238(10) (ii) of the constitution as payable from the government to devaswom fund. (ii) money released from time to time by the sale of movable properties belonging to the said devaswoms (iii) all voluntary contribution and offerings from devotees (iv) profits and interests received from investment of funds belonging to them and (v) all incomes belonging to and other income received by the said devaswoms. Out of fifty-one lakhs received to devaswom fund, six lakhs were to be contributed for the expenditure in SreePadmanabha Swamy temple Trivandrum. The unspent balance of each year out of the devaswom fund formed the devaswom surplus fund. This surplus fund is to be administered subject to the control and direction of the Board by the devaswom commissioner. In 1958-59, the endowment fund under the control of Devaswom Board was increased through an addition of a small amount of Rs.475/- which was contributed by SriGuda Sankara valiya Raja of Punnathoor, Kottapdi for instituting a *vazhivadu* in
the Vaikam devaswom. The devaswom surplus fund as it stood at the end of 1958-59 was Rs.9523527/- as against Rs.9518527/- for the previous year. With regard to the total receipts and expenditure during the financial year for 1958-59 under various budget heads were Rs.5855018/- and Rs.5594295/- respectively. The corresponding figures for 1957-58 were Rs.6090569/- and 5849364/- respectively. The figures showed a decrease in the receipts and expenditure from the 1957-58 to 1958-59.

The devaswom surplus fund is also showing an increase from year to year. Take for example, the devaswom surplus fund which consisted of fixed deposit account in banks, securities and shares and deposits with government for the year 1962-63 was Rs.9479466/- and for the year 1963-64 being Rs.6964122 which showed clear increase in the deposit due to various devaswoms under the Board.

**Working of the Board:**

---


After the statutory organisation of Travancore Devaswom Board in 1950, it acted as the sole administrative body to manage and control all the incorporated, unincorporated devaswoms and other religious institutions and endowments along with their funds. Thereafter the overall working of the temples became more effective. The first Devaswom Board constituted in accordance with the Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950, laid the foundation for a better administration. The Board gave importance in classifying the ceremonies of the temples, chalked out programme of daily pujas, revision of *pathivus* and instructions regarding conduct of *ulsavams*. The ceremonies performed in devaswoms may be broadly classified into ordinary and extraordinary ceremonies.

*Nityanidnam, masaviseshams, attaviseshams* and *ulsavams* are ordinary ceremonies of the temple. *Nityanidanam* is the daily round of ceremonies. Under this, daily *abhishekan*, *puja*, *nivediam*, *namaskaram*, *sreebeli* etc are conducted. The deity is taken in procession round the temple at the close of the morning, noonday and night services and *puja* is offered at the *valiabelikkal*

---

and to the devas installed in belivattom. This is called the sreebeli\(^{30}\). The board has issued instruction to all major devaswoms that sreebeli must be held without any interruption\(^{31}\).

**Masaviseshams** are periodical special ceremonies conducted on specified days in a month. They are conducted in certain week days such as Tuesdays and Fridays etc., thithis\(^{32}\) such as pradosham, shasti etc., specified days with reference to star such as askarthika, thiruvonam, sankranthi etc. The devaswom department permitted such temples to conduct these ceremonies in a fitting manner with the devaswom fund of the temples. With the special instruction of the Board, the Superintendents visited these temples on such days\(^{33}\). **Attaviseshams** are special ceremonies conducted on certain fixed days in the year. Sivarathri, vishu, ashtami, rohini, nira, puthari etc fall under this head. In most of the major temples, the ulsavams are conducted only once a year. In some temples there are more than one ulsavam and the duration

\(^{30}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{32}\) Tithi - bright and dark halves of the moon.

\(^{33}\) *Ibid.*
may generally be for 10 days. Ulsavams consist of special services within the temple or akathepaditharam as well as outside the temple or purathepaditharam such as feasts, processions, exhibitions of various art performances for the entertainment of the devotees who gather on the occasions. The Travancore Devaswom Board has undertaken the task of conducting all these ceremonies in the temples under their control in an effective and befitting manner with the co-operation of devotees and the participation of public. There are seasonal ulsavams with special pujas in some temples as in the case of Sabarimala temple. The Sabarimala temple has become the most popular pilgrimage centre in India.34

The mandalapuja and makaravilakku festivals during the year made a record both in the number of pilgrims and in the revenue collected. The receipts during 1962-'63 for mandalapuja and makaravilakku festivals was amounted to Rs.120306 and Rs.279533/- respectively. This has been considerably increased during 1963-'64 to Rs.175471 and Rs.394123 respectively35. The worshipping public offered vazhivadus in all these temples. These


generally consist of nivediams, archana, lighting, vedi vazhivadu as per approved rates\textsuperscript{36}. The devaswom Board issued instruction to issue written receipts for all payments to the temples. This made all accounts proper and accountable\textsuperscript{37}.

The Travancore Devaswom Board has taken steps for conducting the programme of daily pujas in all the temples under its control very promptly and perfectly. The number of daily pujas varies considerably in different devaswoms according to the importance of each devaswom. There are some devaswoms, just like Sabarimala temple, where pujas are not done daily but only occasionally. There are five pujas to be performed at different intervals of a day. They are, (1) ushapuja, (2) ethirthapuja, (3) pantheeradipuja, (4) uchapuja and (5) athazhapuja. In addition to these pujas, panchagavyam, navakom, nirmalayam, abishekm, deeparadhana are other pujas in the temples which attracted a large number of devotees. There is proper timing for each puja and it is calculated on the basis of sunrise and sun set by nazhikas, a

\textsuperscript{36} Travancore Devaswom manual, op.cit., p.125

\textsuperscript{37} K.S.A.R., op.cit, p.342.
timing in Indian method. For example, the *deeparadhana* is done within one and a quarter *nazhikas* after sun set. However these timings will not apply to Thiruvarppu temple which has a programme of its own\(^{38}\). All religious functions during *ulsavam* and other ceremonial occasions should end by midnight except the following functions, which may extend to two and a half *nazhikas* beyond midnight\(^{39}\).

(1) *Vrichikam* and *Kumbhom Ashtami* procession in the Vaikam dehaswom.

(2) *Pallivetta* and *arat* in the Ettumanoor, Aranmula, Ambalapuzha and Thirunakkara dehaswom.

(3) The Fifth and seventh *ulsavams* in Suchindrum dehaswom.

\(^{38}\) G.O.R. Dis. No.256/43, dated 5 April 1943.

(4). The eighth **ulsavam**, **pallivetta** and **arat** in Haripad devaswom.

The Travancore Devaswom Board members visited the major devaswoms during the days of **ulsavam**. The officials of the devaswom department inspected the temples periodically during the programme of daily **pujas** and **ulsavams**.

The temples activities in the Travancore temples showed fast improvement during the period from 1958 to 1965. During this period the Travancore Devaswom Board was reconstituted thrice. On 9th June 1958, the Board was reconstituted when the term of office of the president and members of the Board expired. The new Board was headed by A.S.Dhamodharan Asan as president and R. Vasudeva Pothuval and K.G. Narayanan as members. During the year steps were taken for the revision of Devaswom manual and for the gradation list of the staff. The work of the special officer appointed for this purpose was making good progress. Steps were taken for the formation of a unit in Board office for dealing with anticorruption cases. Three-district audit

---


offices were established in three districts for ensuring efficient audit of the accounts. These offices were placed under the administrative and technical control of the devaswom account officer and independent of the assistant commissioner of the district concerned. Again the Board was reconstituted on and September 1962 and the first meeting was held at the Board office building on the same day. The vacant posts for different categories of temple priests such as 
tantri, melsanthis, keezhsanthi were appointed during this period. Their work was placed under constant supervision. In large number of temples malayala tantram was followed. The paradesa tantram was followed only in the Shencotta taluk and some part of the Trivandrum district. The Board has also taken steps to give proper training to santhikars of the temples under its management. The duties and responsibilities of 
tantri, melsanthis, keezhsanthi and other temple servants were well defined and demarcated.

Tantri:

The headman of the temple is the tantri. A tantri is an accredited exponent of tantric rules on all spiritual matters including the methods of worship. Nambutries were appointed as tantri for the first time in Suchindrum temple\textsuperscript{43}. Generally they were appointed on a hereditary basis or karanma basis. They were the final authority on all rules pertaining to the religious rites of the pagoda. However they were limited in number and many of them hold tantram of several temples. They did not officiate the daily services except in a few important temples. They officiate for the ulsavams, other occasional and extraordinary ceremonies. For each extraordinary ceremony, the tantri should forward an estimate or paditharam prepared for the occasion, stating the nature of services, quality of the provisions and dakshina or remuneration due to the tantri. In recognition of the service they were remunerated, which varied from temple to temple. In some temples, the tantri was remunerated only for the occasional or extraordinary ceremonies, while in others he was given a monthly

\textsuperscript{43} K.K.Pillai, \textit{op.cit.}, p.174.
allowance. The remuneration was either in cash or kind\textsuperscript{44}. Tantri is an ecclesiastical dignitary was learned in the art of exhibiting proper signs and symbols to the accompaniment of appropriate mantras while bathing the deity, offering flowers, naivedya and the upacharas\textsuperscript{45}. The services of the tantries were utilised mostly during temple festivals\textsuperscript{46}.

**Melsanthi:**

The melsanthies are the chief pujaries in the temples of Travancore. He has to conduct the worship in the inner shrines of the temples\textsuperscript{47}. He has to look after the prompt conduct of pujas at the specified periods. However the duties like the preparation of nivedyam and other items required for offering were prepared with the help of subordinate officials of the devaswom department\textsuperscript{48}. This not only reduced the work load of the melsanithi but also

\textsuperscript{44} The Travancore Devaswom Hand Book, p.142.

\textsuperscript{45} V.Varadachari, *Agamas and south Indian Vaishnavism* Madras, 1982, p.35.

\textsuperscript{46} *T.A.S.*, vol.IV, p.29.

\textsuperscript{47} *Ibid.*

\textsuperscript{48} G.O. No. D.3343, dated 25 October 1918.
showed the superior authority enjoyed by him. Therefore his orders were to be obeyed by the subordinate priests.

Kizhsanthi:

As subordinate officiating priests, the kizhsanthies were provided with various duties and responsibilities. They cooked the nivedyam (sacred food) meant for offering, to furnish the melsanthi with water for bathing the image and hand over to him the vessel containing the charcoal on which incense is burnt. All the kizhsanthies were not enjoying the privilege of performing the pujas. For such kizhsanthies specified qualification was not required for. Yet they had to submit their conduct certificates.

Santhikars:

The sanctity of the temple rests on the performance of the santhi service. Santhikars are the officiating priests of the temple. Well-qualified persons were recruited for this service. They conducted ordinary ceremonies in the temples. They enjoyed many privileges. According to the tenure they were classified as

50 G.O. No.D.5067, dated 4 October 1911.
karanmasanthikars (hereditary santhikars) and nonkaranmasanthikars ⁵¹. Formerly the santhikars had to pay adayara, a fee just like a security deposit, in consideration for granting the privilege for conducting santhi in a temple. However, incourse of time the system of adayara and auctioning of santhi service for a fixed term were abolished ⁵². This enabled more suitable persons with real aptitude to come forward and accept the scared profession of santhi service. The Board also appointed new santhikars when the karanmasanthiekars vacated the place either by death or due to other reasons. The selection was made on the basis of good character, deep knowledge and proper training in the subject matter. In some temples like in the Suchindrum temple, the santhikars were selected from a limited circle. Training is considered to be an essential qualification and with this view the Board has started training schools in Travancore to impart proper training to santhikars. At one stage the Board considered non-brahmins also for the appointment of santhikars in the temples

⁵¹ G.O. No.D.5067, dated 4 October 1911.
⁵² Travancore Devaswom Manual, op.cit., p.60.
under their control. In some temples private individuals or bodies were empowered to nominate persons for santhi service on certain conditions such as they possess good character, lead pious life and perform the duty sincerely. The Board adopted the renovated method of appointment of santhikars through gazette notification calling for applicants, stating the qualifications, emoluments and other conditions of appointment53. Such notifications were issued six months before the vacancy arised. The santhikars thus appointed were paid remuneration. In 1958-59, the Travancore Devaswom Board has revised the scales of pay of both gazetted and nongazetted staff of the devaswom Board54. The temple servants were also brought under the pay revision. Devaswom provident fund and contributory provident fund were opened to different categories of servants of the devaswom department as per their service rules. The total number of subscribers to the contributory provident fund increased from 150 to 276 which was a notable increase when considering to previous year55.

53 Order C.No.550 of 22/Acc, dated 24 August 1922.
54 Vide in the Appendix V, pp.31-35.
Subsequently seven accounts of provident fund were closed in final settlement of claims. Only one account of the contributory provident fund was closed in final settlement of the claims. Moreover 77 new applicants were admitted to the contributory provident fund56. Two temporary land officer were working in the department for land administration from 1st April 1958. These officers discontinued from service with effect from 1st November 1958 and the work connected with land administration was entrusted to the assistant commissioners of the districts concerned57. The maramath department functioning under the Board continued to function under a qualified engineer. During the year 1958-59 works costing Rs.626105 were carried out in different temples. Several maramath works such as renovation of temples, repairs to temple tanks, erection of dhawajams, maintenance and repairs of devaswoms buildings, camp sheds and works in personal deposit devaswoms were undertaken by the department. The total amount spent for incorporated temples alone was Rs.68555958. This was an increase in expenditure when considering the amount

57 K.S.A.R., op.cit, p.312.
spent for the previous year i.e. only Rs.391923\textsuperscript{59}. The expenditure incurred on personal deposit (unincorporated) devaswoms was in addition to the said expenditure\textsuperscript{60}

The Travancore Devaswom Board has done remarkable service to improve the general administration of dehaswoms. The \textbf{pathivus} of 20 dehaswoms of different classes were completely revised and upgraded. New \textbf{pathivus} were instituted for the conduct of \textit{ulsavams} in a few other dehaswoms. On account of the revision of \textbf{pathivus} and upgrading of certain dehaswoms there was variation in the number of major, minor and petty and personal deposit dehaswoms. Accordingly, at the close of the year, the revised number of temples were 154, 243, 604, and 116 respectively as against 153, 246, 559 and 118 for the previous year. The Malayinkil dehaswom was brought under the Board in 1962. Again in 1964, Arppokara dehaswom was included with the scheduled dehaswoms\textsuperscript{61}. At the end of 1964 there were 155 major

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{K.S.A.R.}, 1962-63, p.257

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{K.S.A.R.}, \textit{op.cit}, p.311.
devaswoms, 246 minor dehaswoms, 600 petty dehaswoms and 166 personal deposit dehaswoms. As a result the newly included dehaswoms gained the status of *sircar* dehaswoms. With the increase in number of dehaswoms a new group was formed on 1st March 1963 with Karunagapally as headquarters. For administrative convenience the necessary rearrangement of groups and sub groups was also made.

In the early sixties, Travancore Dehaswom Board started to work with the broad social outlook. In order to make sure of people's participation in the administrative process of the temples, and also to earn their co-operation, advisory committees consisting of Hindu worshippers of the locality were constituted in several important dehaswoms. This gave an opportunity for the Hindu public to have a close touch with the administration of temples of their respective locality. This was a very progressive step towards making temple administration more public oriented in nature. Subsequently the Dehaswom Board organised the silver jubilee celebration of the Temple Entry Proclamation. It was held for three

---


days at the Srichitra Central Hindu Library, Trivandrum. C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer inaugurated the function and K.P.S.Menon delivered the valedictory address. A large number of people participated in the function. The Board also took keen interest in the preservation of ancient monuments and temple structures including vigrahams. The Hindu residents of Thiruvanvandoor near Chengannoor unearthed an idol of Gopalakrishna and the same was accepted by the Devaswom Board. The Board took steps for constructing a separate shrine at Thiruvanvandoor temple compound and Balalaya Prathishta was conducted there. The governor of Kerala laid the foundation stone for constructing a new temple on 2nd December 1963. The renovation of temples and the installation of new dhwajams were carried out under the supervision of the Board. In 1963, copper dhwajams were installed in Major Parippil devaswom and Major Changamkari devaswom and laksharchana and lekshadeepam were conducted in the Ettumanoor devaswom. These events attracted the Hindu community to a great extent. Similarly there was sharp increase in the number of marriages conducted in temples during this period.

---

which showed that the attachment of people with temple had improved a lot. The Board also took initiative in constructing new temples on the demand of the public. Accordingly, a new temple was constructed at Oripuram in Kottarakkara group. The Board assumed the management of Arpookkara private devaswom due to public demand.

The work of Travancore Devaswom Board did not stop with the administration of temple affairs alone. It has its activities in social and cultural spheres also. In 1957, a cultural development committee was constituted under the auspices of the Devaswom Board. A books sale depot was opened under the control of the cultural development officer and it functioned throughout the year. The SriChitra Central Hindu Religious Library at Trivandrum was maintained as a popular and useful institution. Besides this, fourteen libraries were maintained in important mofussil stations all of which attracted large sections of religious minded people. The cultural development committee held 32 sittings to decide various matters. The committee reviewed 46 books and 2 magazines submitted to the Board by various authors and publishers with

---

65 Ibid.
request for financial aid\textsuperscript{66}. The Board had prepared and approved a scheme for promoting religious education among harijan students by awarding scholarships for which Maharaja of Travancore donated a sum of Rs.25000/-. The Board supervised the working of the Srichitra Central Hindu Religious Library at Trivandrum and took measures for its better performance for the benefit of the Hindu public. In 1963-'64, the library had 132'A' class and 178'B' class memberships and above fifty one thousand persons visited the library during the year. This showed that the library was of immense use of the public. The authorities took steps to increase the number of books in the library to cope with the increase in the number of visitors. In the beginning of the year 1964, there were 8037 books in the library\textsuperscript{67}.


\textsuperscript{67} K.S.A.R., \textit{op.Cit.}, p.343.
The Boards' social welfare activities also need special mention. In order to help the poor and downtrodden people, the Board undertook many social reform activities. Board has started three orphanages, one each at Neyyattinkara, Kollam and Tiruvarppu. There were four harijan welfare centers one each at kanjiramkulam, Goureespattam, Murukkumpuza and Ozhkupara. A good number of harijans of all ages were attending the night classes regularly between 7 and 10 p.m. There were two cottage industry schools, one in the premises of the Board office at Nanthancode and the other attached to the orphanage at Neyyattinkara. The trainees were given training in spinning and weaving. The articles produced at the school were sold to the departmental employees at cost price. The Board had started a Hindu hostel at Poojapura, Trivandrum which began to function effectively. In 1964 alone, the Board awarded scholarships and fee concession to 619 college students and 276 school students incurring an expenditure of Rs.52369. One hundred and twenty six pupils who were children of non-gazetted officers and contingent employees under the Board were allowed fee concessions. There

---

68 Ibid.
were 70 departmental **mathapatasalas** and seven **geetha** classes under the Board during 1964. The total strength of the students was about 6500 and 95 teachers were engaged for the purpose. The Board also encouraged private **mathapatasalas** and gave a sum Rs.5790 as grand to 90 of such institutions all over the state. With a view to serve the general public of the state, the Board had started five high schools, four upper primary schools with a total strength of 5313 students. About 208 teachers were appointed in such schools for imparting education to all sections of the people. The Board's work for the noble cause of imparting education to the ignorant mass earned reputation in the field of education. Hence the work of Travancore Devaswom Board can not be underestimated only as an institution working for the benefit of the Hindus alone. However, the Travancore temples were bifurcated in the eve of state reorganisation and thereby 490 temples were transferred to the newly formed kanyakumari District and eventually the work of Travancore Devaswom Board was limited to the state of Kerala.