Chapter-V

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Administration is the range of activities connected with organizing and supervising the way that an organization or institution is functioning. The temple is a multi purpose institution which plays a dominant role in moulding the religious, social and cultural lives of the people through out the centuries. Since very early times the Tamil kings not only built many temples but also donated lands and other gifts for the maintenance of these temples, and also conducted daily pujas and periodical renovations. In course of time the successive ruler and dynasties also equally donated to the temples.¹ As a result the wealth of these temples increased enormously. The maintenance of these accumulated wealth and regulation of its administration grew into a complex one. All these needed the appointment of many officers to look after these administrative functions.

The Five Divine Sabhas are located in the Natarajar temple, the Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple, the Vataranyeswarar temple, the Nellaiyappar temple and the Kutralanathar temple respectively. All the administrative activities of the Five Divine Sabhas are carried out through the temple authorities. The scholar has decided to highlight in this chapter, the administration of the above mentioned temples.
Administration of the Nataraja Temple

The inscriptions of Chidambaram Nataraja temple clearly revealed the administration of the temple was conducted by an assembly of men who were known as Padiperumakkal such as Sri Karyamseivar and Koil Nayakam Seivar, Tirumaligaikkuru Seivar, Maheswara Kariyam Seivar and accountants. They met in the temple periodically to take decision regarding the temple affairs. In medieval times, the requirement of an administrative set-up was met by a committee. It has non-official members of the village assembly. This separate body of persons in charge of the temple affairs functioned as the watchdog of the temple administration. A study of the village assembly or other bodies connected with temple administration will be incomplete without a knowledge of the territorial divisions of the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Vijayanagara period.²

The Nataraja temple at Chidambaram has no landed property or any other endowments and does not receive any Mohini or Tasdik allowance at present, and is controlled by the Dikshitars.³ Though some inscriptions of the Chola and Vijayanagar periods speak of instances of grants of land, of property or other endowments by those Hindu rulers who were deeply drawn to Nataraja of Chidambaram, such endowments were made to a limited extent, in the very early periods, in the name of Lord Nataraja, but in later periods, they were
made only in the name of the various functionaries of the temple. In the earlier stages, some of the executive staff and devotees of Nataraja might have been associated with the Dikshitars in the management of the temple. It is possible that the Mysore and Carnatic wars and the political turmoil that followed disturbed their association with the management, and the lands and properties assigned over the centuries by rulers of the various dynasties were taken over by the invaders. The Dikshitars who, all along, had the unquestioned right to the ownership of the Nataraja temple and the right to conduct the ceremonial rites with respect to Nataraja’s worship, continued to be the owners and the management of the temple. The Dikshitars’ absolute control of the temple and its management is a fact sanctified by history.

The Dikshitars of Chidambaram are an exclusive and endogamous community. They have no occupation other than temple service and no means of livelihood other than emoluments of such service; and no one else has the right to conduct the rites of worship of Nataraja. The Dikshitars have been the hereditary trustees of the temple with complete control on its affairs and management. The expenses for the temple puja’s at the Nataraja temple are met partly by contribution by the Dikshitars themselves from their funds and by collection of subscriptions from their clients and in the major part by periodical benefactions of numerous devotees.
The help, monetary or in kind, given by a devotee for conducting the affairs of the temple in accordance with the prescribed rituals, is called a kattalai. The expenses of the six daily puja’s, of the various festivities connected with the Brahmothsavam twice a year for Nataraja, and of the festivals for the other deities are met out of some standing kattalai’s by leading philanthropists, the late Pachaiyappa Mudaliar’s Trust, the Saivite mathas whose devotion to Nataraja is unsurpassed, the Chettinad family and others of the Nagarathar community, whose benefactions to the Nataraja temple during the 19th and 20th centuries have been enormous and generous, and contributions from individual devotees on special occasions. Another source of perquisites for the Dikshitars is the Pavada ritual heaps of rice cooked in sugar-candy and plain rice are spread out on a board as offerings to Nataraja in the Kanaka Sabha an inspiring sight. Many devotees invoke the Lord’s blessings by financing such Pavada’s.

The gifts and offerings to the temple are divided among the Dikshitars. The right of collecting these is given to a batch of twenty among them, who are on duty in the temple for a cycle of twenty days; they have the charge of the keys, the five shrines and the jewels. The right of management goes the round of all the trustees in any given year, in this manner. The five shrines are those of Nataraja, Sivakama Sundari, Sri Mulasthan, Deva Sabha and the Pandya Nayakam. Twenty of the Dikshitar’s are always on duty in the temple, all the
males of the community (except unmarried boys and widowers) doing the work by turns lasting 20 days each, until each one has been the round of all the different shrines.\(^{11}\)

The twenty Dikshitars divide themselves into five parties of four each, each of which is on duty for four days at one of the five shrines at which daily puja is made, sleeps there at night and becomes the owner of the routine offerings of food made at it. Large presents of food made to the temple as a whole are divided among all the Dikshitars. The right to other oblations is sold by auction every twenty days to one of the Dikshitars at a meeting of the community. These periodical meetings take place in the Deva Sabha. The large silver lamp from Nataraja’s shrine is brought and placed there by a pandaram and (to avoid even the appearance of any deviation from the principle of absolute equality of all Dikshitars in the management of the temple) the pandaram acts as president of the meeting and proposals are made impersonally through him.\(^{12}\)

The jewels of the Nataraja temple include some which have been presented by various kings and rulers. The respective temples have lists of the jewels, details of presentation by the kings and the places where they are kept in custody. Among them is a jewel called Nalan Padakkam. Tippusultan is reported to have offered a golden chain to Lord Nataraja. The jewels are kept
safely in a box in each of the shrines and keys of the boxes are in the custody of a group of Dikshitars nominated for this purpose, in accordance with the rotation system.\textsuperscript{13}

The Dikshitars methods of administration are entirely democratic in character. Every Dikshitar has a vote and a voice in the conduct of the affairs of the temple. All questions affecting the management of the temple are decided at periodical meetings of the community, in the Deva Sabha, by the vote of the majority. There are elaborate rules of procedure, checks and counter-checks in order to prevent any mismanagement or miss-appropriation. Provision for veto exists. Jewels in daily or ceremonial use at festivals is properly guarded and accounted for at every stage.\textsuperscript{14}

A select group of Dikshitars is entrusted with the joint custody of jewels and the organizational details of festivals like Ani Tirumanjanam and Arudra Darsanam. The Dikshitars are understandably jealous of their great inheritance Nataraja and the temple and they unite as a body to make sure that the traditions and practices are rigidly observed and that there is no departure from the practices sanctified by time and the procedures laid down by their ancestors.\textsuperscript{15} This structure has endured over the centuries a tribute to the wisdom, the strength of character and the enlightened leadership of the Dikshitar community.
One of the earliest documented incidents relating to the status of Chidambaram Nataraja temple or Sabhanayagar temple as it is officially known dates back to 1885. The Dikshitar or the priest community who administered the temple approach, the Madras High Court to designate the temple as private one. The Chidambaram temple was a place of public worship and not a private property of the Dikshitars.\textsuperscript{16} When the Hindu Religious Endowment Board was created and the relevant Act was passed in 1925, the Dikshitars appealed to the Government to exempt the temple from the Board schemes. Though the Government accepted the appeal, it informed the Dikshitars that section of the Act relating to submission of accounts and formulation of administrative schemes would apply.\textsuperscript{17}

In 1933, the Government tried to streamline the management of the temple by proposing a committee comprising nine Dikshitars. This committee, in turn, was to appoint a manager subject to the approval of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board, maintain accounts, properties, and account for cash offerings. The Dikshitars challenged this scheme, but the High Court Bench upheld it in 1939 with minor modification. However, the Madras Government did not pursue the proposal.\textsuperscript{18} In 1951, the Government wanted to abolish private temples in the state. It appointed an Executive Officer to oversee the Nataraja temple administration. The Dikshitars challenged this. The Madras High Court, in its Judgment in 1959, held that the Nataraja temple belongs to a
religious denomination, and hence the appointment of an Executive Officer was opposed to the fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 26 and 27 of the constitution.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1982, the Government citing reasons of mismanagement, issued notice to the temple and proposed to appoint an Executive Officer to manage it. When the Dikshitars appealed, the Government defended its decision stating that the appointment of an officer was only to administer the properties. It would not interfere in religious rights of the priests. The Dikshitars moved the court in 1984, when the court dismissed their petition in 1997, they filed an appeal. The court then directed them to file a revision petition with the Government.\textsuperscript{20} When the petition was rejected in 2006, the Dikshitars approached the court again. After hearing both sides, the single judge of the High Court, in 2009, passed orders upholding the appointment of an Executive Officer.\textsuperscript{21}

The Supreme Court quashed the Tamil Nadu Government’s February 2009 order appointing Executive Officer to manage the affairs and properties of the Natarajar temple.\textsuperscript{22} The right to administer the temple by the Dikshitars had been recognized by the Supremes Court in its Judgment in 1952 and it could not be taken away. On the State Government contention that it had a right to interfere when there was mismanagement, the bench said such interference could only be for a short period. The provisions of the Tamil Nadu Hindu
Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, Subramania Swamy, an Indian politician, argued that if there were allegations of misappropriation, it should be dealt with under the provisions of Indian Penal Code and not by taking over the temple administration.\textsuperscript{23}

The Supreme Court verdict has brought cheer to the Dikshithars and devotees. The Dikshitars said that ever since the State Government took over the temple in 2009, they had been taking various measures to retrieve the temple. The Madras High Court had rejected their petitions twice and finally, they along with Subramanian Swamy, filed a case in the Supreme Court which had established the “denomination factor and hence, restored their rights which they enjoyed for hundreds of years, over the management of the temple.\textsuperscript{24} Now the Nataraja temple is administered by the Dikshitars.

**Administration of the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple**

The administration of the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple was founded on a well-organized basis. Rules and regulations were framed with attention to minute details. While the king was the final authority and his orders were taken on all important occasion, the day-to-day administration was left in the hands of the *Sthanikas* who were seven in numbers. The rights and responsibilities of each of these *Sthanikas* were well, defined and each had administrative authority over groups of servants who were placed under their
control. All the facts relating to the temple, its repairs, its endowments, its
servants and its festivals were entered in a temple code known as the Sritala.
The administration was carried on in the manner described in this aide memoir
and whenever differences or doubts arose about any question the book was
consulted and its regulations followed in earlier times.

In terms of Tamil Nadu Government Order No. 1198 of 29.03.1937, the
temple was brought under the direct supervision of the Board of Hindu Trust
and in terms of the Order No. 10 of 08.01.1953, of the Commissioner of Hindu
Religious Trust, Chennai, the powers of the Administrative Officer and the
Board of Trustees were defined and the temple was brought under the
administration of the Department of Hindu Religious Trust. From being
administered by first grade Executive Officer, the administration was upgraded
in phases and today it is being administered by a Joint Commissioner /
Executive officer. The temple has 125 inside staff and 93 outside staff, 40 part
time staff totaling 258 members.

**Joint Commissioner / Executive Officer**

The Joint Commissioner / Executive Officer appointed the Hindu
Religious and Charitable Endowment (HR & C.E) Department supervises the
Meenakshi Sundaeswarar temple management and the work of the temple
staff. He is non-hereditary. His tenure is three years. He attends to the work of
protecting and safeguarding the temple building and their equipments maintaining the traditions recognized by the temple, meeting the expenses of religious functions and festivals and contributing to the development of the religion, social, culture, education and other needs. It is within his authority to fix changes for the temple festivals and to fix the ratio out of the amount to be paid to the archakas and to the other office bearers of the temple.29

Accountants

The accountants look after the income and expenditure of the temple. Their duties comprise preparing bills for the salary of the temple staff maintaining account of the cash, paddy, straw and grains obtained from the devotees as gifts. The salary is also paid out of the income of the temple. The devotees would make cash offerings, meant to be utilized for specific sequences of worship in the temple, daily or on festive occasions.30 Donations would also be made to feed the pilgrims free of charge in the temple. The temple treasury should receive these donations, and arrangements must be made for the proper utilization of the funds. Accounting, auditing and financial control become necessary aspects of temple administration.

Board of Trustees

A Board of Trustees comprising five trustees to assist the Executive Officer will be appointed by the Commissioner of the Department for a period
of three years on the recommendation of the local area committee. These persons shall be a resident within a radius of few km from this temple.\textsuperscript{31}

**Functionaries of the Temple and their Duties**

The temple maintains a good number of staff rendering various kinds of works. It consists of both Brahmans and non-Brahmins but only Hindus. The functionaries of the temple may be classified under three heads; there are (a) Spiritual staff, (b) Administrative staff and (c) Physical staff according to the nature of their duties.

**(a) Spiritual Staff**

The temple houses the main deity in the sanctum, and entrance into the sanctum is the privilege of the priest who worships in it. None of the administrative staff, including the highest, can enter the sanctum even rulers of the realm had to stand outside the sanctum, regardless of their munificent gifts and grants to the temple, and among the priests employed in the temple, not all of them had the freedom to enter the sanctum. It is only the chief priest (viz. worshipping the presiding deity, *sannidhi-archaka*) that could not only enter the sanctum at will but touch the deity that is worshipped.\textsuperscript{32}

A few assistant priests could also enter the sanctum, but they were not allowed to touch the image in the sanctum. The nature of worship in the
sanctum would not allow the chief priest to move out of the sanctum until the worship is over. He would, therefore, require some attendants and helpers (paricharakas), who were also drawn from the priestly class. This temple has several functionaries assisting the routine worship. It is usual for some standing and antiquity to have a number of priests on its pay-roll. There will be the chief priest who worships in the sanctum and directs all other priests. He is called sannidhi-archaka in and around this temple. The priest who helps him inside the sanctum is called sannidhi paricharaka (viz., the sanctum-attendant).\textsuperscript{33}

Priests, whose work is scheduled outside the sanctum, but not outside the main premises of the temple, are generally known as devakaris. Cleaning the vestibule that is immediately in front of the sanctum and the cells where the processional icons are kept, cleaning the temple kitchen and cleaning the vessels used in worship is the responsibility of one priest. He also carries the bali image in his hands, when the chief priest or his sanctum attendant sets out to offer bali (food-offerings) to the secondary deities in the enclosure of the temple.\textsuperscript{34}

Another priest is entrusted with the task of bringing water from the pond every morning for worship (technically called garīga), preparing the sandal-paste needed in worship) daily, offering brief worship to the enclosure deities. There are also priests engaged in the room where fire-sacrifice is daily offered
according to Vedic rites (yaga-sala), and those engaged in the kitchen which prepares food for offering to the deity during worship, there will be priests whose services are required whenever the processional images are taken out for ceremonial worship outside the sanctum. Some priests are detailed for specific. Recitations like Veda, Prabhandha (Tamil hymns), Sahasra-nama and stotra while the worship is being conducted inside the sanctum.35

After that they exchange their duties vice-verse for the next seven days. While these two are in service, the other two are generally allowed to take rest. except on festival days. The priest who should be Brahmins perform abisheka, decorate works, chant mantras, conduct pujas, deeparadana, neivedyam, providing deity prasadha every day in this temples.

Parisarakas

There are four assistant to the priests generally knows as Parisarakas who must also the Brahmins. One is in charge of God’s shrine, another of Goddess’s shrine and the third of subsidiary shrines. They help in every function of the priests like cleaning the sanctum, bringing items for Tirumanjanam and Darsanam, supplying water, lighting oil lamps in sanctum and other inner shrines, showing things like chauri, mirror, light, umbrella, etc., before deities at puja hours, distributing prasadas to devotees, etc., The fourth
one is in charge of *madapalli*. He prepares *neivedyas* and bring them to sanctum and other shrines.\(^{36}\)

**Oduvar**

There is a trained *Oduvar* to recite *Tevaram* and other devotional songs in Tamil everyday during all the six *kalams* of worship on the Sundareswarar shrine. He conducts *Tevarabajana* everyday, in the temple premises with some local school students.\(^{37}\)

**Nagaswaram and Tavilvidvans**

There are one set of *Nagaswaram* and *Tavilvidvans* who play during all the *puja kalams*. All these spiritual staff are closely associated with the daily routine work within the temple. However, they have to perform their duties, during the time of processions of deities on festival day in the outer *prakaras* and car streets also.\(^{38}\)

**b) Administrative Staff**

The administrative staff consists of a Superintendent, Cashier, Accountant, Assistant Clerk, Store Keeper and Six *Maniams*. The duties of these officials are as follows. The Superintendent does the overall supervision of the day-to-day activities of the temple and the entire staffs are under his control. He is ably assisted by them. The Cashier is responsible for all valuable,
cash and remittances to banks. The Accountant maintains registers relating to the lease or lands to tenants and sent for temple buildings. He maintains registers for all kinds of income to the temple. The Assistant and Clerks render other electrical work and assist their superiors. The store keeper looks after the provisions of the temple, supplies things for pujas and offerings everyday and maintains accounts for the same.39

(c) Physical Staff

The Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple maintains a number of servants, renderings various kinds of physical services to the temple. The functions discharged by them are of a varied nature. The temple have one meikaval who is the security of the bronze sector and safety-locker where the precious ornaments of the Gods and Goddess are kept. There are some of lady staff collect flowers from temple garden and make garlands for the deities daily. They also lift oil lamps and electric lights outside the sanctum.40

There is one bellman that rings the bell during every pujas. The temple cows are looked after by a cow-herd. There are ten watchmen known as vasakavals five for the outer and the other five for the inner tower total ten watchmen per day. The conditions for the recruitment to the administrative and spiritual functionaries are not very rigid. The posts are offered an application to
the Devasthanam who fills up the post with people of talent and experience. Executive Officer is the chief authority in every aspect of the temple activity.\textsuperscript{41}

\textbf{Administration of the Vataranyeswarar Temple}

In early times village chieftains administrated this temple. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, ‘Nagarathar’ came forward to re-build the temple. In fact various donors and religious servants spent a large amount of money to reconstruct this temple in an useful way to the devotees of the temple.\textsuperscript{42} The administration of this temple was vested with the Trustee nominated for the adhoc purpose. Later the administrative system of this temple was put vended the control of Commissioner in Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board of Madras. The Trustee maintained the entire administration of this temple. The Committee requested to Commissioner to appoint an Executive Officer to the temple. Subsequently the temple administration has been jointly executed by the Trustee and the Executive Officer.\textsuperscript{43}

A separate act was passed on 29\textsuperscript{th} August 1961, for the appointment of an Executive Officer on the request of the Trustee Board. Thus a new scheme was introduced through which provision was made to appoint an Executive Officer to control the temple administration under the above scheme. A. Sivanandi was appointed as the fist Executive Officer on 20\textsuperscript{th} September 1962.\textsuperscript{44} The new modified scheme has been drafted to administer the temple properties
concerning the temple. It possesses movable and immovable properties. These properties of the temple came in the form of donations or endowment made by various donors and religious servants. Thus Trustees (non-hereditary) have been appointed by the Temple Board. Besides all the new appointment in the temple, salaries of the workers of the existing establishments are made with the previous specific sanction of the Board.\textsuperscript{45}

The Executive Officer is in charge of the day to-day administration of the temple. The Trustee receives all income due to the temple, make disbursements on behalf of the temple and put under his custody immovable livestock's and grains, the jewels and valuables shall be in joint custody with the Trustee. The Executive Officer also maintains the proper accounts, supported by regular vouchers for the receipts and disbursements. The temple servants have to work under the direct control and supervision of the Executive Officer and are obliged to obey the orders of the Executive Officer. The power to appoint, transfer, promote and take disciplinary action against the temple servants is vested with the Trustee.\textsuperscript{46} In this connection Trustee is also given power to represent the temple in all legal proceedings.

Jewels and other costly articles of the temple not requested for daily use are kept in separate rooms inside the temple. The key of the lock is under the custody of the Trustee. Jewels and vessels required for daily use are in the
custody of the Executive Officer, who gives a note to the Trustee for such jewels and valuable articles in his custody. He cannot lent or hire such things without the previous specific sanction of the Board. The Executive Officer is responsible for the proper maintenance of the temple and for the proper performance of the daily services and for the conduct of periodical festivals according to the usage and directions issued from time to time by the Board. He is in charge of the temple office and is also responsible for the timely submission of the reports.

The Executive Officer is able to verify the valuable things, jewels and all immovable of the temple once in a fasli. After the close of the fasli he submits a report of the verification to the Trustee and the Board. The Executive Officer also verifies the stores of the temple once in a month and submit reports. He submit progress reports or diaries of work done every month in the first week of the subsequent months, a report of the facts of the verification of stores every month in the first week of the subsequent month, abstract of monthly account in the prescribed form before the middle of the subsequent month, a report of collection and balance of all items before the end of every years and a yearly Administration Report in the month of the July of every year. Besides he also submits on Annual Report regarding the immovable including jewels and valuable etc., in the month of July of each fasli.
In addition to that three months before the end of the fasli the Executive Officer prepares a budget in the prescribed form for the succeeding fasli and places the same before the Trustee. The Trustee as usual does not pass it before one month prior to the beginning of the fasli to which the budget is related. No expenditure in excess of the amount sanctioned in the budget can incur without the previous sanction of the Board. Also the records and accounts of the temple are kept by the Executive Officer. He checks and verifies the cash, jewels and immovable. Finally, the Board is authorized to do any things even to remove, solve or settle the difficulties, doubts or disputes. The orders passed by the Board are entitles to rules and regulations. They are being carried out for the maintenance of accounts, registers, passing of bills of expenditure and other matters relating to the accounts of the temple; for the custody and safety of the jewels and valuable items of the temple, for the preservation of the properties and building of the temple and for the safety and convenience of worshippers.

**Administration of the Nellaiyappar Temple**

The Nellaiyappar temple is one of the very popular and richest temples in Tamil Nadu. The temple is one of the senior grade temple under the control of an Assistant Commissioner of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board. The Assistant Commissioner looks after the day to day administration.
Normally a Board of trustees having five members approve of the activities of
the Executive Officer. But as the Board ceased to exist the powers are vested
with the Fit person who is also the Deputy Commissioner now.\textsuperscript{49} Regarding the
office management there is a host of clerks headed by a Superintendent. The
Superintendent of the temple office is on foreign service. All other staff are
appointed by the temple administration.

The Superintendent of the temple looks after the internal affairs besides
his supervision of the duties of other staff. The Accountant comes net in rank
and file. He prepares the budget and maintains the accounts. He is consultation
with the Assistant Commissioner and Executive Officer fixed the dates for the
\textit{Hundial} opening. The other clerical staff assist the Accountant and also attend
official correspondence. One of the clerk is entrusted with the court work.
There are two \textit{Pannai} clerks who look after the paddy collection and also
receive the lease amounts from the lease. The clerk who maintains the
investment register receives money orders also. There in another clerk who is in
charge of the establishment. There is a separate section to carry out the festival
works and a clerk looks after it. A \textit{tapal} section is functioning and the clerk
maintains a separate register for incoming \textit{tapal} and a dispatch register.\textsuperscript{50}

The staff of the temple receives all collections. He is responsible and
remit the cash into bank and pays all the bills. Besides this he is in charge of
adorning jewels to the deities. The karuvoola batter assists the staff in this matter. The archakas are responsible for due performance of pujas and rituals of this popular temple. The archakas are one among the most responsible persons and keep one of the three keys of the karuvoolam (treasury). They also keep the key of all sannadhis. It is their routine to open and to close the sannadhis. All their duties are closely watched by the Assistant Commissioner of this temple. The Parisarakas prepares neivedyam and lights all lamps in sannadhis. They also assist the archakas during abhishekams and deepa aradhanas.

The Adhyayama Bhattars are reciting mantras during all archanas. They are neither paid servants nor they are given service inam lands. Their income is their share in archana ticket besides the rice doles given daily and sudhanthiram amounts. The temple places its record of having two odhuvars. They recite Tevaram during all pujas. The men who supply garlands and flowers are called Thirumalais. There are two such people in this temple. One among these two attends the Palliarai decoration also. The twelve sweepers keep the temple campus clean and neat. The temple watch guards are posted in all key points and they watch temple sincerely. There are twelve watch guards who take their ensignment in shifts. There is a separate electric section and there are two electricians. They take care of the temple generator and attend all electric works.
Administration of the Kutralanathar Temple

The religious and secular traditions to be followed in the Kutralanathar temple, Courtallam are being followed with due care and the temple is being maintained properly. The management of the temple looks after the daily maintenance. The administration is carried on under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board (H.R. & C.E.) with the help and consent of the local leaders. The Executive Officer shall in the name of the Joint Commissioner, appoints the Accountant, Archaka, Parisaraka, Oduvar, Instrumental Vidvans, Araiimeikkaval, Tirumalai, Tiruvilakku, Thalayari, temple sweeper and other inner and outer employed of this temple.53

In the event of any vacancy arises in the cadre of office-bearers of servants either permanently or temporarily, the Board of Trustees fill up the same. All of them subject themselves to the control of the Board of Trustees. The staff of this temple maintains registers in readings relating to the properties, accounts, rewards, registers, notices and other documents. Accounts of every day are completed on the same day itself. The Board of Trustees before the end of the March every year submits the statement of income and expenditure for the previous year in the Pro forma prescribed to the Commissioner. On the Commissioner's approval, it is recorded the administration. The administration
is carried on based on the same. The Board of Trustees maintains the accounts relating to income and expenditure of this institution. Separate accounts are maintained for every year.

A register is maintained by the temple Executive Officer. It gives the history relating to the funding and growth of the temple, the details pertaining to its former and present Trustees, and the details if any relating to the post of the successor. It also gives the names of the Executive Officers, their salary, their rights and grades, conditions of services, particulars of jewels, gold, silver, precious stones. Utensils and all movable properties belonging to the institution with their weight, value, title deeds and other documents, details of mulavar, stone images and utsavamurtis, details of special records, pertaining to the historical traditions with their abstract details and all particulars required by the Joint Commissioner. The details of the register are scrutinized annually by the Trustee or his authorized agent. Similarly, the Commissioner inspects the records relating to the properties, registers, correspondence and statement of account relating to income and expenditure and all books of account.

Regular accounts are duly maintained in the Kutralanathar Temple Devastanam. These accounts are subjected to annual audit by the Audit Superintendent, who sends them for approval to the manager and the later with his approval forward it to the Sanmitanam. After his sanction, the approved
accounts are kept on record. The maintenance of lands, collection of the revenue, control over farmers, action against illegal occupation of the temple lands and against misappropriation of temple funds, and employment of personnel to look after these details necessitated an administrative set-up and elaborate organization of functionaries. The more generously endowed the temple, the greater and more complex its administrative machinery. The maintenance of the temple-premises and the temple property and the administration of the several non-religious details of the temple necessitate a large number of functionaries.

The administrative machinery of the temple would have to operate within the framework of the social and legal sanctions prevalent in the country. Apart from the Executive Officer of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu, there are seven members of office staff and 18 members of non-official staff for puja purposes. The office consists of four clerks, one for attending to demand, collection and balance affairs, one for attending to litigations (court clerk), one in charge of temple store, one Accountant and two last grade servants. The non-officials for puja are five officiating priest, Two cooks, Two Parisarakaras (assistant to priests), Two Meykkavals (Watchmen), One Oduvar (recites of Tevaram hymns), One set of temple music party (melam), one Thiruvilakku (lighter of lamps), one Nandavanam (gardener) and the Tiruvadi (Sweeper).
All the day to day activities of the Five Divine Sabhas are managed by the respective temple authorities. The Dikshitars administer the Nataraja temple, whereas the remaining four temples are managed by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board of the Tamil Nadu Government. More over the movable and immovable properties of these temples are looked after by the temple authorities.
End Notes


8. Interview with N. Kasirajan, Dikshitar, Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, 13-09-2011.


24. *Ibid.*., p. 44.
31. Interview with V. Soundararajan, Trustee, Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai, 13.06.2013.
32. *Ibid.*.
33. Interview with M. Dhanasekaran, Temple Priest, Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai, 24.06.2013.

36. Interview with L.Ayyappan, Temple Priest, Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai, 24.06.2013.


41. Interview with V.R. Boomiraj, Executive Officer, Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai, 26.03.2013.


44. G.O.Ms. 140 (H.R. & C.E. Department) 21.03.1962.


47. Interview with R. Sabhapathi, Temple Priest, Vataranyeswarar Temple, Thiruvalangadu, 05.05.2012.


52. Ibid.


55. Ibid.


57. Ibid.