CHAPTER - VI

THE RELIGIOUS VIEW POINTS
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As rightly observed by James Hastings "religion means, on the one hand, the body of beliefs entertained by men regarding the Divine and supernatural powers, and on the other, that sense of dependence on those powers which is expressed by word in the form of prayer and praise or by act in the form of ritual and sacrifice". So it is evident that an analysis of a devotional work will be beneficial for having an estimate of a religious faith or order. Since the Tevaram hymns of the earlier Nayanmars formed the basis for Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, "the intensity of devotion that characterises them is excelled only in the Tiruvāsagam of Māṇīckavāsagar." The outpourings of Manickavasagar are exuberant and his confessions are more outspoken. As such it becomes a must to have an analysis of the work of Māṇīckavāsagar for having an estimate of his religious viewpoints and also to notice the then existed religions condition in the Pāṇḍya country. The period which lasted between sixth and twelfth century was a notable period of Bhakti movement and it was also a period noted for a climax

3. Ibid, Pp.425-26
of religious rivalry. During that period of Bhakti movement or devotionalism Saivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism etc., were in logger heads with each other. But it must be remembered here that both Saivism and Vaishnavism have attained a mature states. They have attained such an established position due to the Saiva Nāyanmārs and twelve Vaishnava Ālvars along with the patronages render by the then Pallava, Pāṇḍya and Chōla rulers. Due to enhanced devotion and improved religious faith the people devoted their attention towards the worship of various minor deities also. Many works pertaining to Bhakti or devotional literature were collected, edited and popularised. It was a period which had witnessed the establishment of a lot of Siva and Vishnu temples at different places. Temple worship along with the progressive religious ideals too developed. By analysing the Tiruvāsagam mostly a popular work on Saivism among the Saiva canonical works, it will be endeavoured to know how Maṇickavāsagar was able to disclose the religious practices on the above said line.

During Maṇickavāsagar, the contemporary of Varaguṇa II, Saivism reached the acme of its true form and his principles of religion centered around love, mercy and surrender. Further Maṇickavāsagar, being an exclusive worshipper of Siva, follower of Saivism and preacher of Saivism he could rightly be called a

5. Porri Tiruvagaval, 74,75, Tiruchchatagam, Meyunardal, 2:4
monotheist. As no facts and principles have been borrowed by him from any quarters he maintains his own individuality and has rendered valuable services to promote Saivism. The mentioning of Siva of different places by Māṇīckavāsagar too compels one to have an analysis on that line. The availability of many devotional works which emerged during the previous periods is also of great value to have a comparative analysis. So to have an analysis on that line the availability of various other religious ideas and Manickavasagar's views about them, as depicted in Tiruvāsagam will all be utilised and discussed at length. Further it is a must to have an estimate of the cultural glory of the then Pandya country, which was known for its multifaceted religious activities.

_Six Religious Faiths_

During the period of Māṇīckavāsagar as pointed out by him there prevailed six religious faiths viz; _Saivam, Vaishṇavam, Sākham, Sauram, Kaumāram_ and _Ganāpathyam._ While Saivam and Vainavam were popular Saktham, the worship of Sakthi, Sauram, the worship of Sun or Surya, Kaumaram the worship of Kumaran i.e., Murugan and Ganapathyam i.e., the worship of Ganesha were coming up gradually. It is pointed out that Siva due to his superior nature functions as a pioneer of the Gods of other religions. Due to the availability of different

6. _Idem_
7. _Tiruvaṇḍappaguthi, 17, 79_
8. _Tiruvārthai, 3:2_
religious orders, it is obvious that Manickavasagar, by treating them as minor deities has not rejected them but has requested the people to give up that worship and asked them to avoid them.⁹ As the activities of the minor religious faiths are unacceptable he has pointed out that one should not yield to minor principles.¹⁰ Further it was felt that lower deities cannot do any favour to the devotees. So he rejects them.¹¹ To elevate the status of Saivism and to set aside the existing minor deities and influence of polytheism he has taken his own efforts which are exposed through his work.

Manickavasagar was a great antagonist of Buddhism. The scene of his chief triumphs against the Buddhist took place at Chidambaram and it indicates that the Pāṇḍya rule extended even upto Chidambaram. He has expressed his aversion to Buddhism by calling that as a religion of ignorant people.¹² He has gone even to the extent of saying that Buddha himself hailed the qualities of Siva.¹³ Thus Buddhism had its headway in the then Tamilnadu and Manickavasagar has condemned it.

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⁹. Tiruvesaravu, 4:3  
¹⁰. Achchoppathigam, 2:2  
¹¹. Senthilapathu, 5:1-2  
¹². Tiruthol Nokkam, 6:1  
¹³. Tirutellenam, 16:1
It is unique to note that for highlighting Siva, he has gone even to the extent of calling him as the father of Velan (Nal Vēlan Tādai). He has called Siva as 'Pōr ere' i.e., the war bull. It also suggests that he had called him so because Murugan, his son was a war God. As seen earlier he has employed this tactics to promote Saivism on for with the methods employed by his earlier Saiva and Vaishnava counterparts. In addition to that Siva is treated as the father of the Veri Kamal Saṇḍayan i.e., Murugan who was associated with Veriyaḍal, or Velanāḍal or Murugan propitiation, a tradition popular even from the Saṇgam age. While this Murugan propitiation exhibits a primitive practice of the hunters, it was carried out mainly to honour Murugan. It is also followed

14. Tirupporchunnam, 3:3
16. Achchappathu, 8:2
19. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Development of Religion in South India, Orient Longmansm, Madrasm 1963, p.33
mainly to achieve the grace of Murugan and to get answers for their sorrows and miseries. Anyhow Siva being a cosmic dancer should have also been linked with Murugan due to this ecstatic and frenzied dance.

In addition to the above facts just to stress the superiority it is pointed out that Siva was understood and obeyed by Hari, Brahma and others.\(^{20}\) Even though Ayan and Tirumal were prominent Siva was superior than them.\(^{21}\) In the same way Siva was superior than Indra and other celestials who were his subordinates.\(^{22}\) Even Tirumal who was capable of many things could not have a deep and broader views like Siva.\(^{23}\) \(\text{Nārāyaṇā}^{1}\) i.e. Vishṇu was unable to see feet of Siva.\(^{24}\) Tirumal, who was known for his incarnation, could not trace the feet of Siva.\(^{25}\) Such facts indicate that due to the rivalry which existed between Saivism and Vaishnavism, Manickavasagar has degraded and under estimated the qualities of other deities. This also is a measure adopted to promote Saivism.

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21. Ibid, 5:1
22. Ibid, 7:1
24. *Tirupponnusal*, 1:3
25. *Tiruttellenum*, 1:1
It was also a period in which various religionist were making efforts to enhance the prestige and status of their own religious faiths.\textsuperscript{26} It was believed that the different religious orders of that period which were having principles which could not assist people who were suffering due to worldly miseries.\textsuperscript{27} So it is evident that religious feuds and rivalries should have been quite frequent during that period. But as the Pāṇḍya ruler Varaguṇā II was a Saivite, due to the impact and influence of his spiritual master Māṇickavāsagar Saivism should have attained a conspicuous rank among them.

\textit{Atheists}:

While religious confrontations were taking place there were atheists who opposed the religious practices of that period. Those who opposed Saivism and other religious faiths spoke ill of spiritualism in groups.\textsuperscript{28} There were atheists who showed no reverence to the feet of God and were liers and were leading an improper life.\textsuperscript{29} But Siva was believed to accept them without showing any aversion.\textsuperscript{30} Thus atheism was also prevalent and the Saiva Saint has endeavoured to stop their activities.

\textsuperscript{26} Porri Tiruvagaval, 51-53
\textsuperscript{27} Tiruttellēnum, 17:1-3
\textsuperscript{28} Porri Tiruvagaval, 46-47
\textsuperscript{29} Tiruchchatagam, Anubhūga Siddhi, 2:2
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, Kārunyathu Irangal, 3:1
Varaguna II, the master of Manickavasagar, was also a devotee of Siva because of the influence of the latter, considered Siva as a sweet meals. It was also felt that the worship of Siva will avoid rebirth. As he was a patron of Siva the Pandya country was having Siva as its primary deity. Siva, the one who drank poison was the master of the Pandya. Pandya believed that Siva will offer him the bliss. The Pandya king due to his fascination towards Siva was able to set aside the constant affinities and attachment towards worldly affairs. The Pandya country was the place which was known for the cessation of worldly miseries due to the grace of lord Siva. Such facts indicate the superior nature of Siva and the Saiva principles in the then Pandya country. It was mainly due to the efforts of the Saiva saint Manickavasagar and Varaguna II, the Pandya ruler.

While highlighting the qualities of Siva in various ways the poet was able to suggest that surrender will be a way for achieving success in this world. He

31. *Tiruppāṇḍi Pathigam*, 1:1
32. Ibid, 2:4
33. Ibid, 4:1
34. Ibid, 5:3
35. Ibid, 6:4
36. Ibid, 8:3
37. *Tiruppadaiāṭchi*, 1:4
has pointed out that by weeping and surrendering even the lier who is having a heart of lies can cross the ocean of Karma.\textsuperscript{38} It is revealed that by deep devotion and surrender one will be able to go near to God.\textsuperscript{39} The concept of surrender adopted by Māṇickavāsagar is a new line of devotional approach when compared with those of the earlier Saiva Nāyanmārs.

Siva, the primarily accepted deity of the poet has been described as the one known for his dualistic qualities. It is also a new kind of approach in elevating a specific religious order. The God is treated as a single as well as many aspects.\textsuperscript{40} He is described as the one who has the qualities of joy and sorrows.\textsuperscript{41} He is treated as the beginning and end and simultaneously the affection and revelation.\textsuperscript{42} He is considered to be the darkness and light.\textsuperscript{43} While heaven is described in various contexts he has also pointed out that those who do not worship Siva will reach hell after death.\textsuperscript{44} The God is treated as aged and youth and as truth and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{38} \textit{Tiruchchatagam, Ānanda Paravasam}, 10:1-2
  \item \textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ānandamalai}, 2:2
  \item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{Sivapurāṇam}, 5
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 70
  \item \textsuperscript{42} \textit{Tiruvanṭapaguthi}, 51-52
  \item \textsuperscript{43} \textit{Nēthal Viṇṇappam}, 17:5
  \item \textsuperscript{44} \textit{Athisayappathu}, 4:3
\end{itemize}
lie.\textsuperscript{45} Such controversial facts indicate that it was a practice to treat the God as a blending of two opposites. Thus an endeavour has been maid to captivate the attention of all the people belonging to various categories.

For promoting Saivism and worship of Siva he has hailed the five lettered mantra i.e., \textit{Na Ma Si Vā Yā} of Siva. He opens his \textit{Tiruvāsagam} with that letter.\textsuperscript{46} By the repeated uttering of that Mantra the individuals will be relieved from their miseries.\textsuperscript{47} In the section called \textit{Kārunyaattu Iraṅgal} he has assigned a song\textsuperscript{48} to appreciate the qualities of Siva. Here one can understand that like \textit{Na Mo Na Ra Ya Na Ya} the seven lettered mantra of Vaishnavites Manickavasagar should have utilised the five lettered mantra to elevate the popularity of Siva.

It should be remembered here that the concept of Ardhanari too gained familiarity during that period. Siva is mentioned as the one who has the woman (Uma) as the part and parcel of his body.\textsuperscript{49} The lady of the locks of hair was a part of Siva.\textsuperscript{50} He is treated as the part and parcel of the lady who had a twinkling

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\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Tiruvēsaravu}, 8:1-2
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Sivapurāṇam}, 1:1
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Tiruchchatagam, Kattaruthal}, 7:3
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid, Kārunyaathu Iraṅgal}, 2
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Kīrти Tiruvagaval}, 78
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Tiruchchatagam, Arivuruthal}, 7:2
He has pointed out that Siva is keeping the lady of the mountain as a part of his body. Siva is mentioned as the God who has the lady as half of his body. The lady who has the feet, smoother than cotton is mentioned as the part and parcel of Siva. The availability of the concept of Ardhanārīswara enables one to understand the unison among deities. Further by that the author Māṇikavāsagar has stressed that both men and women are equal and no one should show any disparity on the ground of sex.

Along with the references to Umā, i.e., Parvathi, the saint has mentioned that goddess Kāli too obtained beautiful face because of the grace of Siva. It points out the fact that Kāli cult too existed during that period. Kāli, the goddess of desert tract was familiar even during the age of Silappatikāram. It also informs us the continuity of the archaic nature of that deity. Namagal, the goddess of wisdom was also worshipped with other goddesses such as Parvathi or Gowri

51. Ibid, Karunyathu Iraṅgal, 5:3
52. Tiruchchālal, 7:1
53. Athisayappathu, 2:3
54. Vālappathu, 6:1
55. Kirti Tiruvagaval, 142-143
56. Silappathikāram, XX:39
Saraswathi, the goddess of wisdom was quite familiar and because of that they have given greater veneration for scholarship and wisdom. Like the worship of goddess, Siva, the father of Kumaran (Kumaran Tan Tadai) i.e., Murugan, is also associated with Surya i.e., sun. From these facts it is revealed that polytheism was prevalent then and the Saiva Saint mainly to enhance the worship of Siva has adopted various techniques and principles. So that he has given importance to Siva's mount i.e., bull and has even called Siva as the possessor of Vidai i.e., bull. Siva is even called as Mala vellai vidayone i.e., the white bull owner. Thus one can witness a full fledged development of Saivism from the works of Manickavasagar.

Even during the period of Manickavasagar, the practice of performing vedic sacrifices was adopted discretely. In temples, the Tamil kings, nobles and others executed sacrifices by the use of flesh, blood, coconut, flowers etc. In this

57. Tirupporchunnam, 1:2-3
58. Tiruvunthiyar, 13:1
59. Ibid, 17:3
60. Ibid, 19:1
61. Tiruchchatagam, Kattaruthal, 1:1
62. Tiruppulambal, 2:2-3
63. R. Rajalakshmi, op.cit, p.52
64. Ibid, p.175
regard Maṇickavāsagar too has given importance to sacrifice in his work. Siva is said to have been fond of sacrifices.\textsuperscript{65} The sacrifices were executed for different purposes by distinctive methods.\textsuperscript{66} While assigning importance to sacrifices, Maṇickavāsagar has also informed that the worship should be executed with moral bindings and adherence to fastings.\textsuperscript{67} It was also a customary practice to seek solace for their distresses.\textsuperscript{68} Thus the period of Maṇickavāsagar was known for its religious customs and traditions. Ritualistic forms and sacrifices have also attained prominence during that period.

As the work taken up for study centres around a religious theme one has to concentrate on the forms of worship and the types of temples revealed by that work. With regard to the forms of worship there were different types. They will also expose the customary practices of worship which existed then. With deep devotion, love and affection the devotees were expected to roll on the ground and express their affinity.\textsuperscript{69} They applied even sandal paste and executed their worship.\textsuperscript{70} By keeping the clasped hands over the head the devotees worshipped

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Tirupporchuṇṇam}, 20:1
\item \textbf{Tiruvundhiyār}, 5:1, 10:1
\item \textbf{Ānanthamālai}, 3:1
\item \textbf{Tiruchchatagam, Meyuṇardal}, 3:4
\item \textbf{Tiruvanḍappaguthi}, 148-152
\item \textbf{Porri Tiruvagaval}, 203
\end{itemize}
the God with shedding tears and uttering the words Jaya, Jaya.\(^{71}\) Flowers were also offered at times of worship.\(^{72}\) The deity was hailed and appreciated and worshipped in a standing posture.\(^{73}\) By singing and dancing in front of the God and by requesting the God to relieve the devotee from the miseries of life the worships was expected to be a true and honest one.\(^{74}\) Even prostration was also approved. So they felt that by captivating the attention of the God by surrender in various forms one can go near him and gain his blessings.

During the month of Mārgalī (December-January ), it was a custom to execute their worship by singing and going around the streets at the time of dawn.\(^{75}\) Singing in praise of the lord during the month of Mārgalī was yet another customary form of worship.\(^{76}\) It was also a custom of singing the meaning of the Vedas.\(^{77}\) Mārgalī Nirādal was also a custom associated with the religious practice.\(^{78}\) Dragging of temple cars around the four main streets during festive

\(^{71}\) Tiruchchatagam, Meyuṇardal, 1:1-4
\(^{72}\) Ibid, Ārivuruthal, 2:3, Tiruppalli Eluchchi, 1:2
\(^{73}\) Ibid, Kaimāru Koṭuthal, 5:1
\(^{74}\) Ibid, Ānantha Geetham, 10, Tiruppalli Eluchchi, 5:2
\(^{75}\) Tiruvembāvai, 1:4-5
\(^{76}\) Ibid, 6:8, 8:8, 14:8
\(^{77}\) Ibid, 14:4
\(^{78}\) Ibid, 20:8
occasions was another common tradition of worship. Various devotional songs were sung at times of worship. It was also a customary practice to worship God with clasped hands. The deities were worshipped in the temples even though the temple was an old hut. The God should not be condemned as done by the moneyed people. With the use of flowers it was a customary practice to express what is required to the God while worshipping. By standing, sitting, and lying, the devotees worshipped God by uttering the words of eulogies.

The devotee searched for the God at various places by calling his name. The cosmic dancer of Thillai was worshipped with the offering of Konrai flower garland to him. Execution of ritual formed a part of the worship.

79. Tiruppūvallī, 18:3
80. Tiruttaśaṅgam, 6:3
81. Tiruppallī Īluchchi, 4:3
82. Ibid, 8:2-3
83. Ādaikkalappathu, 9:2
84. Puṇarchhippathu, 3:3
85. Ibid, 8:1-2
86. Aruṭpathu, 2:2
87. Achchappathu, 7:3
88. Pidithapathu, 7:2
flowers the God’s worship was not recognised.\textsuperscript{89} Along with flowers and joint hands it was necessary to worship God with shedding tears.\textsuperscript{90} One was expected to avoid worldly love and affection for the sake of getting the bliss of God.\textsuperscript{91} It was felt that all the miseries should be avoided and the feet of god should be hailed and worshipped.\textsuperscript{92} The beat of drum was a part of the worship.\textsuperscript{93} It was a custom to offer flowers in a pious and obedient way.\textsuperscript{94}

The above facts indicate that there existed specific and customary practices in worshipping. Anyhow one cannot deny that the above were all common throughout the ages and applicable to the succeeding periods. The worship was also belief oriented one.

As Tiruvāsagam is a work purely associated with Saivism it also becomes a must to have an analysis of the treatment of Siva by Maṅickavāsagar. Because that will be beneficial to have an idea about the qualities of Siva. Further as it

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{89} Arputhappathu, 2:1, 5:3
\item \textbf{90} Sennippathu, 8:3
\item \textbf{91} Ibid, 10:3-4
\item \textbf{92} Yāthiraippathu, 6:1-2
\item \textbf{93} Tiruppādai Eluchchi, 1:1
\item \textbf{94} Tiruppādāyātchi, 6:1
\end{itemize}
was a period of rise and fall of Saivism and Vaishnavism one can understand the distinctive nature of Siva in that state of confusion and confrontation.

From Kirtitiruvagaval it is possible to note that Siva of different places expressed his own individualistic qualities and calibre. By showing his archaic body, in a dramatic way, he was able to set aside the sins of his devotees. He was expected to offer the eight kinds of mystic powers (Attamasiddhi) at Pattamaṅgaḷai. At Tiruvathavūr and Chidambaram he proved himself a cosmic dancer. He was in the form of Ardhanārisvārā at Tiruvegambam. He is hailed as the ancient God. He is depicted as the God wearing the cloth made of the skin of the tiger. It is mentioned that he will assist the devotees who approached him. He was treated as the above all words and deeds. He was uncomparable and beyond comparison with

95. Kirti Tiruvagaval, 44-95
96. This place is now known as Pattamangalam where the god Dakshinamoorthy is said to have been the executor of eight siddhies nowadays. There is a separate shrine for him outside the temple (visited the temple on 13.03.2002)
97. Kirti Tiruvagaval, 121 Tiruvaṇḍappaguthi, 37
98. Tiruvaṇḍappaguthi, 52
99. Ibid, 42
100. Ibid, 41
101. Ibid, 40
anybody.\textsuperscript{102} He was the reliever of the distresses of all those who belonged to six different religious orders.\textsuperscript{103} Due to his superior virtues he was not understandable to various other Gods.\textsuperscript{104} Because of that nature he was venerable and worshipped by them all.\textsuperscript{105} He is even hailed as the creator, protector and destroyer.\textsuperscript{106} By attributing various functions to him it is evident that Māṇḍūkkaṇṭhā has employed such an approach mainly to enhance the status of Siva. Further he has brought to light the distinctive qualities of that God.

Siva is said to be the bearer of the river Ganges in his head.\textsuperscript{107} In the same way it is pointed out that he was the residing in various places such as Tiruvārūr, Tiruvaiyaru, Tiruvannamalai, Tiruvecambathurai, Tirupparaithurai, Tiruchirappalli, Coutralam, Kogali, Engoimalai, Kadambur, etc.\textsuperscript{108} Tirukkalunkunram, Tiruppuvanam also were the places associated with Siva.\textsuperscript{109}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 50
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid, 17
\item \textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 182
\item \textsuperscript{105} Porri Tiruvagaval, 1
\item \textsuperscript{106} Ibid, 100
\item \textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 146
\item \textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 147-160
\item \textsuperscript{109} Ibid, 191-192
\end{itemize}
From these facts one has to note that Manickavasagar has visited and popularised many Saiva centres of his period by including them in his work. It also informs us that there were many develop Saiva shrines in different parts of the Tamil country.

He was not only the one who wore the dress made up of tiger’s skin but also he is treated as a dancer in the grave yard. He was known for his lock of hair and possessor of the bull as his mount. To venerate Siva, the saint has called him as Thillaiṅkōṇ i.e., the king of Thillai, i.e., Chidambaram. He was even called by the name Saṅkaṟa. Siva is also hailed as the one who uttered the Vedas. He is treated as the king who is the protector of all the living beings. He was the one who accepted all the offerings through sacrifices. He is also treated as dancer i.e., Kūṭṭan. Siva is said to be the God of thousand names.

110. Tiruchcatagam, Meyunardal, 7:4-5
111. Ibid, Kattaruthal, 1:1
112. Ibid, Anubhoga Suddi, 5:2-3
113. Ibid, Karunyathu Iraṅgal, 3:4, 4:1, Tirutoṉ Nōkkam, 10:3
114. Nēthal Viṅnappam, 43:2-3
115. Tiruammānai, 16:5-6
116. Tirukkōttumbi, 2:3
117. Tirutoṉ Nōkkam, 1:3-4
118. Asaippathu, 7:3
Because of the superiority of the Brahmins, Maṇīckavāsagar too has called Siva as the Brahmin who ruled him. When Siva is noticed as the God of the great Pāṇḍya country of the South it is obvious that Saivism was a prominent religion in that country then. Siva is venerated as the great guide who offers various virtues to his devotees. Only on that condition it is also suggested that he was the one who showered his grace and bliss on Tirumal, Indra and others who approached him. Here too Maṇīckavāsagar has reduced the status of other Gods. He is portrayed as the one who wears the Konrai garland and also the one who killed the tiger. Thus by depicting Siva as a deity of unique qualities, saint Maṇīckavāsagar has highlighted the superior nature of Siva. He was capable of attracting many devotees. That even suggests the popularity enjoyed by Saivism in the Pāṇḍya country.

In this regard it also becomes a must to have some of the general qualities of God as mentioned by Maṇīckavāsagar. That too will suggest the religious attitude and outlook of that period. Simultaneously one can also have the religious

119. Puṇarchchippathu, 10:3
120. Tiruppāṇḍi pathigam, 4:1-2
121. Tiruvārthai, 2:2
122. Ibid, 1
123. Ibid, 8:1-2
beliefs which prevailed then. Siva, who was expected to show mercy on his devotes, was believed to sever the bonds of this deceitful sensuous frame by his might. The God is considered as a gracious one and as a reliever of all the miseries of the devotes. God is treated as an entire and complete one without any comparision. God is expected to relieve the fear and sorrows and will satisfy all the needs of his devotes. God is the one who is said to function as the five elements. It was believed that God will relieve the ailments of the devotees. By relieving the devotees from all the sorrows and sufferings it was believed that he will safeguard them from the ocean of life. He has pointed out that Vedas have hailed the superior virtues of the Gods. God is said to invite the devotees to give up their attachment towards worldly life and will enable

124. Kirti Tiruvagaval, 7
125. Sivapurāṇam, 86
126. Kirti Tiruvagaval, 101
127. Ibid, 112
128. Tiruvanḍappaguthi, 49-50
129. Ibid, 95-103
130. Ibid, 136-141
131. Tiruchchatagam, Anantha Paravasam, 9:1
132. Tiruthellenam, 10:4
133. Kandapathu, 10:4
them to cross the ocean of birth.\textsuperscript{134} It is insisted that by showing deep devotion towards God one can relieve himself from the sorrows of rebirth.\textsuperscript{135} Such facts stand to prove that Manickavasagar too has followed his own measures to promote devotionalism among the people. Further by bringing out the religious beliefs he has encouraged people to be more devoted to Siva.

One should remember that there will be no religious orders without having the impact and influence of the Vedas. In this regard one should devote attention to the influence of the Vedas over Manickavasagar and his devotional work. On the basis of the Vedas, he has pointed out that God is imbibed in the Vedas which one created for exhibiting the different aspects of piety.\textsuperscript{136} He elevates the status of Siva by pointing out that Siva is the deity mentioned in the Vedas.\textsuperscript{137} To eulogise the qualities of Siva he has gone even to the extent of saying that Siva is above all the Vedas.\textsuperscript{138} Siva is treat not only as Veda but also as the meaning of all the vedic concepts.\textsuperscript{139} Tirupperundurai, i.e., modern Avudayarkoil

\begin{enumerate}
\item Kulaitha pathu, 9:3
\item En\-nappathigam, 1:1
\item Tiruchchatagam, Anantha Paravasam, 5:1
\item Nethal Vinnappam, 43:2-3
\item Tiruchchalal, 17:3
\item Koil Tiruppathigam, 5:2
\end{enumerate}
(Tirupperunthurai), where Manickavasagar was able to see Siva in the form of a Brahmin ascetic, is treated as the holy place where four Vedas are chanted.\footnote{140} Further Tirupperundurai is the place where Manickavasagar wrote his Sivapurana\footnote{141} and God wrote it as uttered by Manickavasagar.\footnote{141} Siva is said to be a superior deity superior than those of all mentioned in the archaic Vedas.\footnote{142} Siva’s feet are treated more superior than those of those mentioned in the Vedas.\footnote{143} To enhance the prestige of Siva and to point out his ancient nature Manickavasagar has pointed out that Siva was more archaic and superior than the Vedas.\footnote{142}  

Above all it is also a must to have an analysis of the facts about the temples as pointed out in Tiruvasagam. As it is a known fact that it was a period of development of temple architecture due to the efforts of Pandya, Pallava and Chola monarchs, an attempt also will be made on that line. The usages such as Sempon Koil\footnote{144} (Red coloured golden temple) indicate that there were temples

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{140} Arutpathu, 6:3
\footnote{141} It is a town located in the train route in between Mayiladudurai and Karaikkudi and 15 kms. away from Arantangi. Here the life of Manickavasagar met with a drastic change. (vide Tirupperundurai Talavaralaru, Tiruvavadudurai Adheenam, Tiruvavadudurai, 1991)
\footnote{142} Pandaya Nanmurai, 1:1
\footnote{143} Tiruppadai Atchi, 4:3
\footnote{144} Tirupporchunnam, 4:3, 5:3
\end{footnotes}
with the roofs of the sanction sanctorum with golden coverages. The general term Koil,\(^{145}\) points out the fact that the construction of structural temples have attained perfection. In addition to that it is exposed that the worship should have taken place at the place called temple. He has pointed that the temples had shrines for goddesses separately within the temples.\(^{146}\) Even during his period that is in the 9th century A.D. the temple at Tirupperundurai was in existence.\(^{147}\) This temple is now called Atmanatha Temple and in the mainshrine there is no icon and God is shown as a formless one available every where.\(^{148}\) There is a huge stone infront of the formless deity in the main shrine while they offer cooked rice at twelve noon. There is aseparate shrine for Mānickavāsagar in the third Prakāra of the temple and Mānickavāsagar is facing east. In the first Prakāra there is a shrine for the processional image of Manickavasagar and in that shrine Manickavasagar is facing north. This temple has many expansions during the subsequent periods and it is known for its architectural glories.\(^{149}\) The Chidambaram Natarāja temple has been called by him as Ponnambalam.\(^{150}\) Here

\(^{145}\) Tiruchchāḷal, 3:1  
\(^{146}\) Kuyilpathu, 3:2  
\(^{147}\) Tiruppaḷḷi Eluchchi, 8:3  
\(^{148}\) Personal visit to Atmanatha temple on 10.3.2002  
\(^{149}\) Appendix, I  
\(^{150}\) Koil Mutha Tiruppatigam, 8:2, 10:3
is must be remembered that the Nataraja shrine in the Madurai Meenakshiamman temple is known as Velliambalam. As he was known for his superior virtues Manickavāsagar has even treated his mind as the temple\textsuperscript{151} and that speaks of the mental maturity of the saiva saint.

Thus the above facts indicate that the work taken up for study, along with its expressions about Siva, contains a lot of details regarding the religious condition of that period. Various facts about the concepts, goddesses, principles and philosophies religious tendencies, forms of worship, the religious attitude of the Pandya ruler and the Pandya country etc, are revealed in that work. Various facts about Siva too are available in it. When Siva is hailed in this work as a superior deity than the other Gods and also the Gods belonging to other religious sects it should be approved that there prevailed religious rivalry among the then existed religious orders. Further Manickavāsagar has appreciated Siva to a large existence like the Vaishnava Ālvārs who have enhanced the status of their deity Vishnu. So it cannot be denied that this devotional work contains historical datas of cultural values.

\textsuperscript{151} Pidithapathu, 6:1