CHAPTER III

AN OVERVIEW OF VELANKANNI, THIRUNALLAR & NAGORE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu lies in the southern most part of Indian Peninsula bordered by Puducherry, and the states of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. It is bounded by the Eastern Ghats in the north, Kerala in the west, the Bay of Bengal in the east and Indian Ocean in the south. Tamil Nadu is blessed with unique Vegetations, Beaches, Monuments, Temples, Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks. Some of the famous Temples are located in Tanjore, Madurai, Chidambaram, Rameshwaram, Kanyakumari, Kancheepuram, Velankanni and Mahabalipuram. The State is also called as the land of Temples and home for many mosques and churches (Winston, 2010). The Tourist Map of Tamil Nadu is presented in Annexure III.

Pilgrimage Tourism has become popular among the people and Tamil Nadu has varied Pilgrimage Tourism destinations to allure tourists from different parts of the world. The present study aims to study the strategies to improve Pilgrimage Tourism in Tamil Nadu.

This work aims to study the status of Pilgrimage Tourism in Velankanni, Thirunallar & Nagore. The study focuses on Pilgrimage-Tourist motivators, Tourist profile, problem and opportunities with respect to Accommodation, Accessibility, Attractions and Amenities. The infrastructural facilities and Pilgrimage Tourism have
been studied from the perspective of promotion of Pilgrimage Tourism in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. In addition, this study aims to suggest measures to make Pilgrimage Tourism economically viable and suggest appropriate and effective promotional strategies for promoting Pilgrimage Tourism in the State.

Pilgrimage activities bring enormous economic gains to the local people. The number of Pilgrims visiting the famous Temples in Tamil Nadu is almost equal to the population of Tamil Nadu. The study is an empirical one based on the survey method. Three places of Tamil Nadu have been identified as the study areas with high positive effects of Pilgrimage Tourism on income, employment and standard of living of local residents. The per capita income at constant price in Tamil Nadu indicates that the growth percent is 4.32 during 2000-01 and 1.73 during 2002-2003. In 2004-05, the growth percent is 0.39 and the growth percent is 5.26 during 2006-07. In 2008-09, the growth percent is 8.07 and the growth rate percent is 10.03 during 2010-11.

3.1. VELANKANNI- A CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE CENTER

3.1.1. Location and Background

The maximum and minimum temperature in Velankanni in summer is 36 °c (97 °f) 29 °c (84 °f) and winter is min. 28 °c (82 °f) 21 °c (70 °f). It was once a tiny village on the coast of the Bay of Bengal and it is now a popular Pilgrim center. Velankanni is a panchayat town in Nagapattinam district. Annexure II presents Nagapattinam district. It is located in the shores of Bay of Bengal and it is 350 km from Chennai and 12 km from Nagapattinam. It is officially spelled as Velankanni (virgin of velia, the town), also spelled as “Velanganni”. It is a very dry place surrounded by full of sea sand. There were trade relations with Rome and Greece.
3.1.2. Topography

Velankanni consists of an area around total 5.5 sq km. The main occupations of the people are agriculture and fishing.

3.1.3. Temperature & Climate

Temperature is high in the month of April and May. December and January are the coolest months in Velankanni. The daily temperature revolves around 29°C and nights are pleasant, but have heavy wind blows from the sea. Rainfall is experienced during October and November (Riju, 2012).

3.1.4. Transport and Communication

Velankanni is well connected by buses throughout Tamil Nadu. Frequent buses are available from Thanjavur & Thiruchirapalli. Nearest railway station Nagapattinam. Nearest Airport is Thiruchirapalli & Chennai.

3.1.5. Historical Backgrounds

The Historic shrine at Velankanni offers unique opportunity to the spiritually oriented devotees. The place has been developed remarkably in the past twenty five years. Irrespective of caste or creed, a large number of devotees flock to her hallowed shrine at Velankanni.

During the latter half of the 15th century, a ship sailed from Macao to Portugal caught in the violent storm in the Bay of Bengal. The ship was washed to the shores of Velankanni through the blessed Mothers’ powerful intervention. The sailors had
built a chapel in Velankanni as a token of their gratitude. They had chosen to erect with our lady holding the baby Jesus in her left hand and a scepter in her right hand standing majestically on the globe. The history of Velankanni clearly shows that Mary had chosen to establish her throne in the venerable place to shower blessings on humanity.

Velankanni was raised to the status of an independent township in 1771. It became an independent parish as it was founded by Bishop’s Mylapore. Vasco-Da-Gama followed by Alvara Cabral in 1501 made this place more popular in India and in Europe. The second expedition brought eight Franciscan missionaries. The Franciscan missionaries took care of the province of Goa and Mylapore and looked after Nagapattinam and Velankanni. They perpetuated the memory of their ownership of the shrine by giving a place of honor to two Franciscan saints, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony of Padua. However, Velankanni and Nagapattinam were two important parts of the kingdom of the Vijayanagar Empire.

Velankanni was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of the diocese of Mylapore and it was administered by the Portuguese ‘Padroado’. Under this system, the Civil Government of Portugal met all the expenses incurred towards the maintenance of the diocese of Mylapore. The diocese of Mylapore was placed under the sacred congregation for the propagation of faith under the direct control of the Roman pontiff. In 1951, Dom Manuel Guerreiro was appointed the Bishop of Angola in the province of Mozambique in Africa. The interim administration of the diocese of Mylapore was temporarily entrusted to Rt.Rev.Msgr.
3.1.6. Socio–Economic Background

The main language is Tamil while people living in the border area speak Malayalam. The main occupation is fishing. As it is a rural town and Pilgrimage center, the economy of the holy place is largely determined by the inflow of tourists followed by the cascading effects of tourism development in the area.

Velankanni spreads to an area of about total 5.5 sq km and its population is 10,827 (2010) in which males constitute 48 per cent and females 52 per cent. The average literacy rate is 69 per cent that is higher than the national average of 68 per cent. The male literacy is 75 per cent, whereas female literacy is 64 per cent (Robert, 2010).

3.2. TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN VELANKANNI

Velankanni is a must-see Pilgrimage center in Tamil Nadu and this sacred place woos devotees having faith in Christianism. Apart from the shrines and Churches, there are other attractions that entice visitors to select and visit Velankanni. Annexure IV exhibits Velankanni Chrch.

3.2.1. The Marian Shrine

The Spirituality of Mary attracts most of the devotees to Velankanni. Pilgrims have long-cherished desire to have a dharshan of the ‘Holy Land’ and the miraculous Mother of good health. This lady of good health loves all devotees.
3.2.2. Velankanni – A New Parish

Velankanni was a part of the parish of Nagapattinam, but as Pilgrims began to pour into Velankanni. Fr. Antonio de Rosario was appointed the first parish priest of Velankanni. The feast of the new parish of Velankanni was celebrated on the feast of the nativity of our blessed mother on 8th September in a grand manner and this procedure continues till today. Michael Francisco Fernandez was in charge of the parish of Velankanni till 1889. In 1952, the new diocese of Thanjavur came into being, and Velankanni became a part of the new diocese.

3.2.3. The Shrine of Our Lady of Health

The Chapel of 24ft by 12ft constructed by the Portuguese was expanded to 79ft by 22ft by expanding the nave of the church. Another 20 feet was added to the nave of the church in 1920. Besides, two gothic domes were constructed. In 1933, two new wings were constructed to the right and left of the main altar, meeting the nave at right angles. A spacious vestry was also provided immediately behind the altar thus giving the entire sacred edifice the figure of a Latin cross.

Above the centre of the ancient main altar is the miraculous image of Our Lady of Health. It remained untouched and unaltered as the focal point and cynosure of every devout Pilgrim’s eyes fall on this image. The magnificent octagonal gothic dome of strictly geometrical and architectural proportions enhances the grandeur of the majestic edifice. The shrine of Our Lady was blessed in 1933 on the feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception. The moral support behind all development was then the parish priest very Rev. Fr. Sebastio Savier Noronha. He attained his eternal reward on August 21, 1942 and had relentlessly worked to spread the blessings of Our
Lady and was laid to rest in front of Our Lady’s shrine. Rev. Fr. Michael Vincent Rodriguez beautified ‘our lady’s tank’ and paved the path for Pilgrims from the shrine to our lady’s tank.

### 3.2.3.1. Growth of the Shrine

The renovated altar was blessed by his Excellency, the Bishop of Thanjavur. The original shrine basilica was unable to accommodate the ever-growing number of Pilgrims, especially during the festival season. An extension behind the original shrine basilica (169ft by 55ft) was constructed in 1974. The extension Basilica is almost a replica of the world famous Marian shrine at Lourdes in France.

Rev. Fr. Maria Susai took charge of the parish of Velankanni in 1963. He began constructing hundreds of room for the convenience of Pilgrims. He put up a new building for the ‘museum of offerings’ and arranged the offerings in such an impressive manner during his term of office, the extension of the shrine basilica was carried out. A straight path from the extension basilica to Our Lady’s tank was erected during his period. He had been instrumental in bringing out the movie ‘Annai Velankanni’. Indian Overseas Bank was opened in a new block during his period.

Thomas Vaz erected the Clock Tower at our lady’s tank and properly constructed the tank. Pilgrims who come to Velankanni make it a point to take water with them and touch the sacred water from our lady’s tank. Incidentally, many healings also take place by applying the oil. This oil is popularly known as ‘Our Lady’s Oil.'
Msgr. Thomas Vaz also plastered the concrete covering over the roof of the shrine. Fr. Gabriel introduced four new convents at the shrine to help the Pilgrims. He has brought in the convents of the sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary and the sisters of St. Louis Gonzague to look after the spiritual needs of the Pilgrims. His establishment of the convent of the sisters of the missionaries of charity (Mother Theresa’s convent) is noteworthy. The chapel at Our Lady’s tank, Our Lady of Health, extension of the museum, an open air auditorium, holy family community hall and new Tonsure Hall were constructed during his period.

Moreover, construction of St. John’s cottage, St. Luke’s cottage, the extension of little flower cottage, St. Assisi cottage, the first floor of St. Joseph’s lodge, St. Thomas’ quarters’ annexure, St. Xavier’s Tourist halls and Our Lady of Mount Carmel halls for the accommodation of Pilgrims were also undertaken under his leadership. Our Lady of good counsel home has been put up for the benefit of the staff in order to provide adequate safety to Pilgrims. He was well known for his press apostolate.

3.2.3.2. Fostering Eucharistic and Marian Devotions

Fr. Sammanasu introduced the Eucharistic procession around the shrine on the first Friday of every month. The procession begins at 6.45 in the evening and is followed by the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Hundreds of Pilgrims participate in the service.
3.2.4. Adoration & Reconciliation Chapel

The Adoration and reconciliation chapel at the shrine was built as a memorial of the historic event of the 10th world day of the sick held at Velankanni. It was blessed by Rev. Dr. M. Devadass Ambrose, the bishop of Thanjavur and opened by the special envoy of the pope, Archbishop Javier Lozano Barragan on February 9, 2003. The chapel had been put up with a view to encouraging Pilgrims to cultivate private devotion to the most Blessed Sacrament. Velankanni has been blessed with two apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

3.2.5. A Glimpse of the Shrine Basilica

This Marian shrine is an internationally famous Pilgrimage centre and it is popularly known as the ‘Lourdes of the East’. It stands as a beacon in the diocese of Thanjavur and attracts not only catholic Pilgrims but also people of all religions.

3.2.5.1. Institutions Supported by the Shrine

An institute for Marian studies has been established to impart proper instruction to priests, Religious and laity on Mariology. Higher secondary school and a primary school and a boarding Don Bosco home for children have also been established to provide educational facilities to the needy students. Health care and social welfare institutes have also been established to provide basic medical facilities.
3.2.6. Liturgical Timings in the Shrine

**First Friday: 06:00 p.m:** Mass in Tamil in the lower extension basilica followed by Eucharistic procession around the shrine; sermon and benediction in Tamil in front of the extension Basilica.

**First Saturday: 05:30 p.m:** Our lady’s car procession around the shrine from the entrance of the lower extension basilica, followed by ‘blessing of the sick’ ceremony, benediction and mass in Tamil in the lower extension basilica.

**09:00 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight:** Three-hour adoration to the Blessed Sacrament in the shrine basilica physically handicapped people, who wish to be blessed with the most holy sacrament, must get tokens from the father’s house. Tokens are distributed from 10:00 a.m.

3.3. FACILITIES FOR PILGRIMS

Magizhchi Madha lodge was built by Fr. Sammanasu and St. Joseph’s lodge at the main road was extended with 54 rooms, and a new lodge, ‘Infant Jesus lodge’ in front of St. Luke’s lodge near the shrine was put by him and opened by the bishop 1994. Two community hall both at Keelaiyar and Thirumangudi were constructed by Fr. Sammanasu. These halls are meant for Pilgrims who come by walk all the way from their homes to the shrine. Many Pilgrims walk the whole distance from their home town to the shrine as an act of penance. They usually take shelter at places near a stream where it is cool and where they can have a wash. A large hall was put up by Fr. Sammanasu for the distribution of ‘holy water’ from our lady’s tank. This hall is
convenient for distributing water to the large number of Pilgrims during the annual feast.

In order to make the booking of rooms convenient for Pilgrims, a booking office was put up in 1992 in front of the town bus station. In 1991, a home for the aged and the abandoned was inaugurated on the southern side of the shrine. An extension of the home for the aged was put up for orphan girls to stay and undertake the manufacturing of coir products like doormats.

3.3.1. Retreat House

The retreat house provides a pleasant atmosphere and all the facilities needed to help people from all walks of life. It is a spiritually uplifting retreat. The retreat centre comprises a spacious conference hall, a beautiful chapel as well as a small private chapel along with 75 rooms with adequate facilities and a dining hall. The participants are provided with decent meals at a moderate rate. Those organizing retreats, prayer services, charismatic retreats and seminars are expected to arrange their own group of participants and facilitators and fix the dates of the retreat or seminar with the director.

3.3.2. Accommodation Facilities

Now-a-days, lodging facilities is a necessity for the Pilgrims due to consistent increase in flow of Pilgrims to the shrine. Fr. Arul Irudayam set up Pilgrims quarters with necessary amenities and constructed a two storied mandap in an area of 44,000 sq feet for Pilgrims. In the spiritual realm, four appreciable developments have been seen at shrine in the last couple of years. They are the establishment of a counseling
centre, a spring of prayer, the history of salvation’s exhibition display and introduction of the liturgy of hours.

3.3.3. Counseling Centre

Most of the Pilgrims visit the shrine for inner healing and for confessing their past sins. Some of them come for getting relieved from their mental burden. This is one of the best places to get relieved from all sorts of worries and burden.

3.3.4. Inauguration of Jubilee 2000

The coterie of bishops of Tamil Nadu celebrated the jubilee 2000 at the Marian shrine at Velankanni. Almost 75,000 people from all parts of Tamil Nadu gathered at the shrine to celebrate the event.

3.3.5. Common Facilities for Pilgrims

As of now, there are as many as 15 Pilgrim quarters besides the Christ the King’s Mahal—a gigantic structure with an area of 44,000 sq ft for the free stay of poor Pilgrims. The other facilities include the mass offering centre, Religious articles book depot, the Marian book stall, the shrine canteen, a counter for booking rooms, and open air auditorium and a community hall. The museum of offerings in the shrine campus bears eloquent testimony to be miracles that take place at the shrine. The offerings in the museum have been beautifully arranged for Pilgrims to witness the miracles wrought by our lady’s powerful intercession.
3.4. ROLE FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Shrine Board has donated money to the Central Railway Authorities for extension of tracks to Velankanni from Nagapattinam. This route can make journey more comfortable and safe for the Pilgrims and eventually the flow of Pilgrims has increased. Due to continuous influx of Pilgrims, 600 more rooms are proposed to be constructed. 150 rooms are planned to be constructed in first phase.

3.4.1. Tenth World Day of Sick

The tenth World Day of the Sick was celebrated at the shrine of our lady of Velankanni from February 9th to 11th, 2002. With the inspiration and encouragement of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care, Vatican, the Commission for Healthcare of the Catholic Bishops conference of India and the diocese of Thanjavur organized the 10th World Day- the Sick at Velankanni.

The delegation from the Vatican comprised 27 members from countries like Bangladesh, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Italy, France, Spain, Peru, Uganda, Zaire, Kenya, Sri Lanka and India. They came together and shared their experiences in healthcare and discussed on the new avenues of cooperation and involvement in the vital ministry of the church.

3.5. THIRUNALLAR AS A PILGRIM DESTINATION

This holy place was previously known with names like, Dharparanyam, Nagavitanga Puram, Naleswaram, etc. The present Tamil name ‘Nallaru’ means ‘in the middle as the river, as ‘Nal’ stands for middle. Two rivers (‘Aru’ in Tamil) flow
here, as one flow from the northern side and the other flows on the southern side. Thiru’ is an honorific signifying holiness.

3.5.1. Location and Background

Thirunallar is a small town in Karaikal in the union territory of Pondicherry. It is the most notable for the shrine of lord Saturn. The name of temple is Tirunallar Saniswaran Temple and it is dedicated to lord Darbharanyeswaran, a form of Lord Shiva. Whenever (Planet) Saturn transits from one zodiac sign to another (an occurrence roughly every 2.5 years), millions throng this shrine for worship. The legendary king Nala is said to have been relieved of his afflictions caused by the malefic influence of Saturn after worshipping Theertams (sacred bathing places).

3.5.2. Topography

Thirunallar consists of area around total 45.8 sq km. It lies in Nagapattinam district. It is a very dry place. The main occupation is agriculture. Thirunallar is a place located in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Thirunallar is located at the latitude of 10.926 and the longitude of 79.791. The holy place can be reached by road via Trichy - Thanjavur - Thiruvarur - Karaikal - Thirunallar or Thanjavur - Kumbakonam – Thirunallar.

3.5.3. Temperature and Climate

Thirunallar has a mixed climate with hot summers and pleasant winters. Best period to visit is from October to March. Summers extend from March to May. Temperature lies in the range of 25c to 40c that make the weather hot and not
preferable for tourism activities. Monsoons offer very little rainfall from June to September and make the climate ideal for Tourist activities. Winters extends from December to February. Winters are pleasant with temperature ranging from 20c to 30 c. Tourist inflow is huge at festivals seasons.

3.5.4. Socio-economic Conditions

People of Thirunallar largely depend on agriculture and sea fishing. Thirunallar spreads to an area of about total 45.8 sq km. The total population is 33,720, out of which Hindus are 21600, Muslims and Christians are 7700 and 4420 respectively the sex ratio is distributed as 1021 females per 1000 males. Thirunallar has an average literacy rate of 73 per cent that is higher than the national average of 59.5per cent. The male literacy is 79 per cent as against female literacy is 68 per cent in Thirunallar.

3.6. TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AT THIRUNALLAR

The name inspires ‘Saturn’ or ‘Sani’ and literature and custom has painted Lord Saturn as a malevolent planet in terrifying colors responsible for all the disasters in human life. There are many special features associated with Saturn, among the nine planets worship. An old proverb declares “there is none who gives as much as Lord Sani and none who causes ruin as much as Lord Sani.” Lord Sani is both an unparalleled benefactor as well as a grim destroyer.

It is a unique Temple and holy place of Thirunallaru. It is a beautiful spot surrounded by lush green agricultural fields all around. One can reach the route from Mayuram to Karaikkal. It is situated on the highway from Kumbakonam to Peralam.
Rivers, tanks and canals. It not only gladdens the heart of devotees, but also quenches their thirsts. The Temple of Sani Bhagavan adorns the centre to the town. The Sannidhi (sanctum sanctorum) houses Lord Sani facing to the east direction.

3.6.1. Fairs and Festivals

On Uthirattadhi of Vaikasi month, the holy flag is hoisted and a grand festival is conducted for 18 days. Visaka Threetham day is special in significance. It is the biggest festival, on the last day the festival of god manifesting himself to a shepherd is celebrated with pomp. On the full moon day in Purattasi, the festival of lord Indra worshipping god Thiagesar is celebrated on the full moon day in Margazhi month, people come forward to serve free food to the poor. Moreover, during Prodosham, Shukravaram, Vinayaka Chathurthi, Navarathri, Vishnu in Chitrai Month and Vishnu in Aippasi month, special festivals are conducted and Special Poojas are offered.

3.6.2. Glory of the Tanks (Theertham)

The Temple has 13 theerthams (sacred water tanks) and Theerthams can only be identified known as Nala Theertham, Brahma Theertham, Saraswathi Theertham, Agasthiar Theertham and Amsa Theertham. Annexure VII shows the holy Pond of Thirunallar Temple.

3.6.3. Structure of the Temple

The main tower is Raja Gopuram and is Sri Dharparanyeswarar Sannidhi. The lord has many names Adipureeswarar because Brahma worshiped to get salvation. The Temple is situated amidst bushes of Kusa Grass; Nallarar because Nala
offered worship and got everything back and Sri Nagavidangar. Every one
voluntarily starts their prayers “on lord, by their Zodiac Sign Rasi, likes seven and
half year’s Sani of the eighth place, mortal deadly Sani or Ardhashtama Sani, to go
away from their life and be kind to them, in particular devotees offer a lamp with the
sesame along with blue colour flowers along with the recitation of their holy name.
Annexure V portrays the structure of Thirunallar Temple.

Daily Pujas worship is offered six times as per the custom. It includes Usha
Kalam, Kalaiandhi, mid-day prayer, Second Kalam and Ardhajamam. Lord
Saturn is offered prayers five times in a day. On Saturday, which is a special day for
holy bathing worship prayers etc., devotees perform darshan with payment. Lord
Saturn is enthroned on a golden crow.

3.7. RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE OF THIRUNALLAR

3.7.1. Incarnation of Sani Bhagavan

To Lord Surya (the sun) and his consort Sagya Devi alias Sanchika were born
three children Vaivas – Vatha Mahu, Yama (God of Death) and Yamuna (the sacred
river goddess). Sanchika could not endure the intense heat of her husband. She
decided to go back to her father’s house. She transformed her own shadow into a
beautiful damsel called Chaya Devi and left her behind with her husband.

3.7.2. Ill-Effects of Sani

Ravana prayed Lord Sani for overcoming adverse situations. Ravana also
prayed Lord Sani for having a son who can have a long life and rule for the fourteen
worlds.
3.7.3. **Thiru Nallaru Saturn’s Transit**

Saturn’s transit means that the planet Saturn has moved from one zodiac sign to the next. According the zodiac sign under which one is born, it may cause good or evil effects. If one worships Lord Sani on that particularly where Saturn’s movement occurs the evil effects will be less and the good ones will increase, that is why people throng to visit. The transit festival of Saturn is celebrated in Thirunallaru once in two and half years according to the number 28 almanac with cobra picture.

3.7.4. **A Brief on Sani**

Sani has only one face with other names like Mandharan, Pinimukhan, Savuri Mudumagan etc. Sani married Neela and had a son called Guligan by her. Some holy books mention the crow as his Vahanam (vehicle) while some others give this Honour to the eagle. Sani is blue complexioned and his hair is in plaits. He is fond of dark (black) colour. He wears a garland of blue gems and has a black Binidi on his forehead. He is cruel by nature. He has the strength of the male and the softness of the female. Annexure VI exhibits the image of Lord Saneswara Bagwan.

3.8. **NAGORE- A MUSLIM SACRED PILGRIM CENTER**

Our Hazarath to a particular spot namely Quthub sat in “Khalwath” in Nagore (in Tamil Nadu). This sacred spot is presently known as “Chilladi”. “Chilla” in Persian language means 40 days of mediation in solitude. The appearance of Hazarath Khilr (Alai) before our Hazarath revealed that there was a building in Nagore buried underneath a sand dune. Accordingly, the servants dug out the particular spot and an ancient building with a dug well was found. Now the old
building is called “Muthubakh”. It is situated in the north-eastern side of the Dargha. Hazarath Khilr (Alai) pointed out that Allah had ordinate this place to be our Quthub’s adobe during his stay at Nagore. Annexure VIII presents the image of Nagore Darga.

3.8.1. Location & Background

Nagore is located approximately 16 km south of Karaikal and 4 km north of Nagapattinam. It has a population of approximately 90,000. The prime attraction is the renowned a five-century old Nagore Dargah, a revered place of all faith. It is an old Islamic Shrine attracting millions of Pilgrims to this land irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

3.8.2. Topography

Nagore consists of area around total 21.12 sq km. Main occupation is agriculture. It is located in an altitude from the sea level and the rainfall is 350mm season throughout the year.

3.9. Tourism Attractions

3.9.1. Five Minarets

Ebrahim Khan Sahib of Jinji built the First Minaret (Minara) according to a vow. That Minarat is known as “Sahib Minara.” The height is 77 feet. Jinji Ibrahim Khan also built a dome in the centre of the Dargha. So it is called Nadu Mandapam. The year of construction was 1055 Hijiri. This Minaret was constructed by Nalla Sayeed Maricar of Nagapattinam. This Minaret is located at the head side of our Qutub’s Rowla Shariif. It is called Thalaimattu Minara height is 93 ½ feet year of
construction was 1100 Hijri. Peer Nainar a friend of Nagapattinam Nalla Syeed Maricar at Malacca built the third minaret. This is called Muthubaq Minara. This minaret was built near Muthubaq. The height of this Minaret is 93 ¼ feet. It was built in Hijri 1110th year.

Justice Dawood Khan of Parangi Pettai wanted to construct a minaret as his offerings and he built the fourth minaret. This minaret is called “Ootu Minara”. Its height was 80 feet. The year of construction was Hijri 1128.

Thanjavur was under the rule of Maratha Kings (Maharashtra). It was the time when Maratha King Prathap Sing was the monarch of Thanjavur. He prayed to our Quthub and took a vow that he would build a monument if he was blessed with a son. He was blessed with a male child. The child was named Thulasi (later known as Thulasi Maharaja). He undertook a massive construction and the big minaret took shape.

He raised the present massive Minaret. This huge structure is presently known as “Big Minara”. The unique feature of this Minaret is that it has the Maharastrian architectural design with four sides, while retaining the Islamic pattern of architectural design of a pucca minaret. It was built in 1177 hijri year. The height of the Minaret is 131 feet. It is taller than the other four Minarets.
3.9.2. Peer Mandapam

This building was built by the Dutch authorities who ruled Nagapattinam. This Mandapam is located inside the premises of Dargha Shariff. Annexure IV shows the image of the holy tank at Nagore.

3.9.3. Dargha Shariff

Nagore Dargha has four main entrances namely Alankarea Vasal in west, Thalaimattu Vasal in north, Kilakku Vasal in east and Kalmattu Vasal in south. The total area of Dargha is 1, 94,790 square feet. The other buildings of Dargha were constructed by different kinds of people in different times. Then the Maratha king of Thanjavur endowed the village called ‘Elakadambanoore’ as his inam. Then Thulasi Maharaja presented 14 other villages to Dargha as his Inam.

3.9.4. First Kandoori Festival

In the next year, the first day of Jamathul Akhirth four sects of fakirs arrived at Nagore Hazarath Yousuf Sahib received them warmly and provided them with food and shelter. On the first day of Jamathul Akhir the flag is hoisted by the staff. The ceremony will last for 14 days. In the 10th day Hazarath Syed Mohamed Yousuf Sahib (R.A.) will be anointed with sandal paste on the Mazare Shariff sacred tomb.

The residents of Nagapattinam bring a pot containing sandal paste in “Koodu” (Thabooth). On the 9th day evening, the Dargha is decorated with lights. When the ‘Koodu’ approached the site near ‘Muthubaq’ the pot containing sandal paste is received and carried into the rowla Shariff. Then Hazarath Syed Mohamed Yusuf
sahib (R.A) anointed the sandal paste on the sacred tomb. Then he covers it with a piece of pure white cloth. From the next year onwards the residents of Nagapattinam brings the flags in a procession to Nagore that is hoisted marking the beginning of Kandoori festival that lasts for 14 days.

Accordingly the same custom is followed still now. After taking part in the ceremonies, the disciples take leave of Hazarath Yousuf Sahib (R.A). They are provided with cash and kind on the eve of departure by Hazarath Yousuf Sahib (R.A). Usually, they come on a camp for a month and receive “barthi” (cash and kind).

The anniversary of the holy saint is celebrated every year, for 14 days commencing from the first day in the month of Jamathul Akhir Hijiri year. The festival (urs) is known as the grand Kandoori festival which attracts hundreds of Pilgrims from Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Arabia, Dubai and other countries.

3.10. RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE

3.10.1. Miracles

Since his birth, our Hazarath performed several miracles. Diseased people were flocking towards the abode of Hazarath and went after getting their wishes fulfilled and their diseases cured. Hazarath explained that it was a miraculous bowl which would supply sufficient food for all of them he added that the persons that had appeared were no other than adham and harva (Alai) (Adam & Eve)
3.11. TOURIST ARRIVALS & FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS

3.11.1 Domestic Tourist Arrivals in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is one of the top domestic tourism destinations in India. The State is gifted with enchanting tourism places of interest along with outstanding transport network and accommodation facilities at the tourism destinations. Apart from enjoying the advantage of one of the gateways of India for the foreign tourists, domestic tourists also visit the state in large number due to its proximity to Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. Tirupati is the first domestic tourism destination in respect of attracting domestic tourists. Furthermore, the total domestic tourist arrivals to Tamil Nadu are presented in Table 3.1.

The State received 168.20 lakhs domestic tourists in 1998 and it is a 5.2 per cent growth compared to the domestic tourist arrivals in 1997. It is surprised to see a growth of 13.4 per cent and 15.4 per cent in 1999 and 2000 respectively. There was a sudden nosedive of domestic tourist arrivals in 2001 due to the several socio-political risk factors in India. The State could revive from the tumble of domestic tourist arrivals in 2002 with 14.0 per cent rise. The year 2006 witnessed a growth of 18.0 per cent (462.31 lakhs domestic tourists) as compared to the year 2005 during which the growth was only 7 per cent. Furthermore, the state experienced 18.8 per cent growth in domestic tourist arrivals in 2009 and this is the highest growth that the State could witness from 1998 to 2010.
### TABLE 3.1
Domestic Tourist Arrivals in Tamil Nadu (in Lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Tourist Arrivals</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>168.20</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>190.67</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>220.11</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>236.47</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>269.60</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>309.04</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>366.27</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>391.95</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>462.31</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>526.43</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>563.03</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>668.80</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010(p)</td>
<td>740.21</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Official Records, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu
3.11.2. Foreign Tourist Arrivals in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is a fascinating state with innumerable attractions enticing foreign tourists from different parts of the world. One of the main entry points is Chennai, the capital of the State. It is the airport that receives highest number of foreign tourists in Southern Indian States. As such, foreign tourists land in Chennai and get dispersed to several other destinations within in Tamil Nadu and other key destinations in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and Puducherry.

While interpreting the foreign tourist arrivals to State from 1998 to 2010, it is inferred from Table 3.2 that there was an increase of 0.7 per cent in 1998 as compared to the previous year. However, there was an increase of 5.3 per cent in 1999. Barring the year 2001, 2002 and 2009, the State witnessed positive growth in foreign tourist arrivals during the period given in the table. Moreover, the State could receive highest number of foreign tourists in 2003 that is 6.71 lakhs and 17.85 lakhs in 2010 respectively. Nevertheless, there was growth in foreign tourist arrivals from 2003 to 2010, excepting a marginal fall in growth in 2009. Thus, it may be interpreted that Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar can attract more foreign tourists when there has been a significant growth in foreign tourist arrivals in the last several years.
### TABLE 3.2

**Foreign Tourist Arrivals in Tamil Nadu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Foreign Tourist Arrivals</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>-7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>-5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>13.26</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>14.38</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>14.37</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17.85</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Official Records, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu
3.11.3. Domestic Tourist Arrivals in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar

Apart from attracting foreign tourists, Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar have been attracting domestic tourists from the various states of India. It is quite obvious for the religious tourists who are bound to perform several rituals and offerings as per traditions and customs. As it is seen from Table 3.3, these three places have not attracted domestic tourists in large number rather the places have become popular for the day visitors or excursionists, who do sojourn at the pilgrimage places and visit for religious obligations. The other reasons may be attributed to limited accommodation facilities at the sites for which visitors have return home on the same day. This is the reason why, the number of visitors at three sites is abysmally low as it is not expected to happen given the religious and pilgrimage importance of the places.

While analyzing the secondary data collected from the official records of Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu, two important trends have been traced out from the year-wise data presented in the table from 2000 to 2010. As far as Nagore is concerned, there has been gradual growth of domestic tourist arrivals and the percentage of annual growth has a variation from 0.36 in 2005 to 48.3 per cent in 2002. This further explains that there is a fluctuation of growth between 2000 and 2010. At the same time, Velankanni received 1.76 thousand domestic tourists in 2000 and it increased to 9.21 thousands in 2010. The growth of domestic tourist arrivals became negative in 2005, 2008 and 2009. The year 2003 witnessed the highest percentage of growth of domestic tourist arrivals (49.07%). Similarly, Thirunallar is a Hindu pilgrimage site located in Karikal – one of the enclaves of the Union Territory of Puducherry. This pilgrimage site received 2.21 thousands domestic tourists in 2000
and it increased to 7.10 thousands in 2010. The increase is not so significant when the potential of the place as pilgrimage center is taken into consideration. Apart from the year 2009, there was positive growth in the annualized domestic tourist arrivals from 2000 to 2010. It is however inferred from the domestic tourist arrivals that these three pilgrimage sites have not become an overnight destination for the pilgrims or tourists.

**TABLE 3.3**

*Domestic Tourist Arrivals in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar (In Thousands)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DTAs (Nagore)</th>
<th>% of Growth</th>
<th>DTAs (Velankanni)</th>
<th>% of Growth</th>
<th>DTAs (Thirunallar)</th>
<th>% of Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>49.07</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>46.02</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>-16.6</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>-10.9</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>-16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9.01</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Official Records, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu*
3.11.4. Foreign Tourist Arrivals in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar

Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar symbolize the sacred places for Hindu, Muslim and Christian community people respectively. These holy places not only attract the domestic tourists in large number but also woo foreign tourists from different continents. Foreign visitors from Middle East countries and other Muslim countries visit Nagore as it is one of the sacred places for Muslim pilgrims. Similarly, Christian pilgrims from France, Germany, USA, UK, Canada and other countries visit the holy places of importance in Velankanni. At the same time, Hindu pilgrim.

It is seen from Table 3.4 that foreign tourists visit the three holy places regardless of their pilgrimage interest and motivation or religion. While comparing the foreign tourist arrivals across the three places, Thirunallar has received the highest foreign tourists as compared to Velankanni and Nagore. However, Velankanni received more foreign tourists from 2003 to 2006 as compared to Thirunallar. On the other hand, Nagore receives least numbers foreign tourists while comparing the status of the other two places. Apart from the marginal fluctuations in the growth of foreign tourist arrivals, Velankanni witnessed a two-digit from 2002 and 2005 and the year 2003 experienced a three digit growth of 120.13 per cent in foreign tourist arrivals. The year 2002 and 2006 witnessed a downfall in the growth of foreign tourist arrivals in Velankanni and Thirunallar.
### TABLE 3.4

**Foreign Tourist Arrivals in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar (In Thousands)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nagore</th>
<th>% of Growth</th>
<th>Velankanni</th>
<th>% of Growth</th>
<th>Thirunallar</th>
<th>% of Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>9.97</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>13.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0.816</td>
<td>-14.91</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>17.89</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>-12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>120.13</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>5.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>16.55</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>24.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>-16.53</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>20.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>0.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.588</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>0.548</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>0.333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Official Records, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu

### 3.11.5. Foreign Exchange Earnings in Tamil Nadu

**Table 3.5** exhibits the foreign exchange earnings from Tourism in Tamil Nadu. The State is one of the top leading domestic and inbound tourism destinations in India. **Table 3.4** presents the year-wise earning of foreign exchange from the expenditures of foreign tourists. This 31-year data clear presents the magnitude of
tourism development and activities that have taken place in Tamil Nadu for which the increase of tourism revenue has increased from Rs. 32.5 crores in 1970-71 to Rs. 12011.5 crores in 2010-11. Even though the significant growth of foreign exchange earnings from tourism has been registered, but it has taken more than 30 years to do reach the milestones.

**TABLE 3.5**

**Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism in Tamil Nadu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(Rs. in Crores)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>189.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>1166.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>1063.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>1130.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>1225.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>1300.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>1606.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>1856.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>4892.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6060.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>6970.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>7423.8</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>10231.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>10879.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>12011.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Official Records, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu
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15. http://www.winentrance.com/generalknowledge/churchesindia/velankanni-
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