

Hindu Monuments in Srivaikuntam and Tiruchendur Taluks

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Abstract

Srivaikuntam one of the sacred Vaishnavite centre is called after the name of Lord Vaikuntapathy who is otherwise known as Kallarpiran. Srivaikuntam contains the words “Sri” and Vaikuntam. ‘Sri’ denotes holiness and Vaikuntam the holy abode of Lord Vishnu with the emergence of Bhaktimovement and because of Nammalvars mangalasanam the place became more sacred to the Vaishnavite as one of the diviyadesas. After the suppression of Poligars, the entire Tirunelveli District was divided into nineteen taluks including SriVaikuntam taluk. Srivaikuntam taluk was included of Thoothukudi, Tiruchendur and Portion Ottapidaram, Sattur and so on. After 1838 Tenkarai (Alwarthirunagari) became taluk instead of Srivaikuntam and one hundred and seventy two villages. In 1860 again in Srivaikuntam become the taluk headquarter replacing Tenkarai. Out of Srivaikuntam taluk Tiruchendur taluk was formed in 1911. The remainder with the addition from the Ottappidaram taluk of eight mitta and ten villages including Thoothukudi formed the new taluk of Srivaikuntam.¹

Keywords:- *Srivaikuntam, Tirunelveli, Temple, Thiruchendur, Taluk.*

Introduction

The Srivaikuntam taluk consisted of ninety three villages in 1965. The recent taluk administration of Srivaikuntam is differed some degree from the Past one. In Srivaikuntam taluk six of nine Navathiruppathi temples are situated². They are Srivaikuntam Nattam Thiruppuliyengudi, Perungulam and IrattaitthulaiVillimangalam. Among the nine Navakailasam temple two Kailasanathar temples are situated in Murappanadu and Srivaikuntam in Srivaikuntam taluk. Temples in Srivaikuntam taluk preserves epigraphs on the date in from

early Pandyas to that of Nayak rulers. The important Siva and Vishnu temples and their historical significances are discussed in detail.

Sri Kailasanathar Temple – Srivaikuntam

Srikailasanthar Temple is one of the biggest temple in Tuticorin district. It is situated in the north eastern corner of Srivaikuntam. The place around the temple is also known as Kailayapuram. This temple is dedicated to Kailasanathar and SivakamiAmman. Kumaraguruparar recited kailasakalampagam on kailasanathar of this temple³.

There is a board at the entrance of Kailasanather temple which reveals that Sage Romesa one of the disiple of Sage Agasthiya set up the Audai to Lord Kailasanather and coined small shrine. The vilmana and mandabhas were constructed by the kings of Madurai, chandrakula pandyas, central shrine of this temple was reconstructed by sadaiyavarma veerapandya first (1253 to 1283) during 13th century A.D. One inscription of this king found on the wall of central shrine. Veerappa nayak first built (1572-1595) velvichali and sandhana sabapathi mandapa⁴. Flag mast was erected on designing between the years of (Muthuveerappanayak II) of 1609-1623. Eastern Gopura was constructed by Thirumalai nayak during 1653 to 1659 A.D All this details are available in the wooden notice board and on the painting on the walls available inside the temple. These information were collected on my personal visit to the temple. The big tower at the eastern entrance in dilapidated condition is not in use. Now the southern side is used for dovotees was made some hundred years ago. The entire building of lord kailasanathar temple is wholly built by black stones only.

Tiruvaludisvarar Temple – Perunkulam

This temple is believed to be constructed before the reign of Vachira Dega Pandya of Korkai in the year 143 AD (Kali 3244)⁵. Tiruvaludisvarar Temple was

constructed by the ruler of Korkai. The presiding deity is made of Salagrama Stone and hence the gateway that is in its front has become the Principal entrance. Inside this walls enclosure series of concentric court yards noticed around the central nucleus. On which is located the main sanctum of Lord Tiruvaludisvarar. There are thus four courtyards in the temple and local saivaites would add the main street around the temple as the fifth one. The narrow closed passage immediately around the Thalavarisaiprakara. The third seveli mandapa prakara area the fourth is Nandavana Prakara. The fifth or last is known as Veli prakara. The five prakaras are representing the five elements of nature Earth, Water, Fire, Sky and Air.

The first prakara is KaruvaraiPrakara a platform shape encircling sanctorum on four sides of this prakara double walls encircle it, leaving front portion of Karuvarai in which two doors are fixed.

Sri Chokkalinga Swamy Temple – Murappanadu

Sri Chokkalinga swamy temple is situated in the Southern Eastern side of the Murappanadu Kovilpattu village as well as on the Western bank of Thambiraparani river. A Gurukkal performs Pujas twice a day. The Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department administers the temple⁶.

Sri Thirumoolanatha Swamy Temple – Vallanadu

The village Vallanadu is located at a distance of twenty Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam the Taluk Head Quarters. The village has Sri Thirumoolanatha Swamy temple. The area of temple is four acres. The main deity of the temple is Sri Thirumoolanatha Swamy as Swayambhu Linga. The Goddess in the temple is Sri Aavudai Amman. Pujas are conducted four times by a Gurukkal. Tiruvathirai in the month of Margazhi is the main festival. The Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department administers the temple.

Sri Thirumoolanatha Swamy temple lies to the North of the Vallanadu. The temple complex is a big one with subsidiary shrines for all Parivara deities. The temple is a specimen for 14th century architectural features. Inscriptions of Parakrama Pandya, Veera Pandya and

Vikrama Pandya are found in the temple. The inscriptions are engraved on the Adhithana portion of the shrine of the presiding deity, on the walls of the Mahamandapa and adhithana of the Devi shrine.

Several burial urns have been unearthed from this Vallanadu village. These point out the civilization that existed here some 2000 years ago⁷.

Sri Thirumoolanatha Swamy temple as it stands today is a vast and impressive complex of structures, enclosed by high and massive compound walls all around occupying a rectangular plot of land. The temple measures 269 feet East to West and 217 feet south to north occupying an area of four acres. Thus it is one of the largest temple complexes in Srivaikuntam Taluk.

An inscription said “Sri Maran Sri Vallapa Vala Nadu” and “Valla Nadana Jeyankonda Pandya Nallur”⁸.

Sri Murampeswarar Temple – Vasavappapuram

The village Vasavappapuram is located at a distance of fifteen Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam. The nearest Railway station is Seydunganallur, which is at a distance of five Kilo meters from the village. The village has one Siva temple, A Gurukkal conducts Pujas. The temple own 0.04.5 Hectares of land, the villagers administer the temple.

SriMurampeswararswamytemple was constructed in the later Pandya period. The entrance of the wall carries the symbol of fish. It clearly exposes that the temple certainly built up by a Pandiya ruler. Also a fish symbol can be seen on the top of the walls of temple. Sri Murampeswarar swamy temple Lord Sri Murampeswarar swamy Lingam in sanctum sanctorium karuvarai is facing east lonely as primary idol and presiding deity

Karuvarai is covered with wall on north south, west and East. The

length of garbahagraha is 26 feet, 14 feet width and 12 feet height, above this 12 feet height vimana is situated. Connects the sanctum to the close of Arthamandapa.

Sri Chokkalinga Swamy Temple – Manakkarai :

The village Manakkarai is located at a distance of ten Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam. The nearest Railway station is Seidunganallur, which is at a distance of twelve Kilo meters from Manakkarai. The main deity of the temple is SriChokkalingaswamy in the form of a PradishthaLinga. The area of temple is 1.80 acres. The temple has an Arthamandapa, Mahamandapa and Mukamandapa. A Gurukkal conducts Pujas four times a day. The temple owns 2.40 acres of land. KarthigaiDeepam is the main festival. The Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department administers the temple¹⁰.

Karuvarai is covered with wall on north south, west and East. The length of garbahagraha is 12 feet, 10 feet width and 15 feet height, above this 15 feet height vimana is situated. Connects the sanctum to the close of Arthamandapa. Arthamandapa is of 40'' feet length, 28 feet width and its height is of 15 feet. This mandapa is supported by sixteen pillars in four rows and a height of pillar is 15 feet length.

Sri Chokkalinga Swamy Temple – Aarampannai

The village Aarampannai is located at a distance of seven Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam. The age of temple is said to be hundred years. The area of temple is Sixty Cents. The main deity of the temple is Sri Chokkalinga swamy. The other deity in the temple is Sri Meenakshi Amman. The temple has Garbhagraha, Arthamandapa, and Mukamandapa. The Vimana is six feet tall. The temple owns 2.88 acres of land. A Gurukkal conducts Pujas once a day. The Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department administers the temple¹¹.

Sri Sankumukheswarar Temple - Pazhayakayal

The village Pazhayakayal is located at a distance of Twenty eight Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam. The nearest Railway station is Thoothukudi, which is at a distance of Seventeen Kilo meters from the village. The main deity of the temple is Sri Sankumukheswarar in the form of a Lingam. The other deity in the temple is Sri Sakthi Vinayagar. The area of the temple is 1.5 acres. The temple has two Gopuras and a Prakara. An Odhuvar conducts Pujas twice a day. The temple has some landed property. Amavasai in the month of Adi and Thai is an important in this temple. The presiding deity is to then out in ceremonial procession to the river bank on these days. The Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department administers the temple.

Sri Chandrasekara Swamy Temple – Maramangalam :

The village Maramangalam is located at a distance of Twenty Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam. The nearest Railway station is Kurumbur. Which is at a distance of eighteen Kilo meters from Maramangalam. The main deity of the temple is Sri Sivan. A Gurukkal conducts Puja once a day. Sivarathiri is the main festival. The villagers administer the temple.

Inscriptions name this place as SolendraSingaChadurvedimangalam. An inscription of Kulotunga I describes the place as SolendraSinga Chadurvedimangalam, a brahmadeya in Madhuranthaka Valanadu in Mudikonda Chola Valanadu. This place is referred to as Maranmangalam for the first time in the record of Sundara Pandya. His inscription notifies this place as Maranmangalam alias “DevendraChadurvedimangalam”. The presiding deity of the Siva temple is presently called Chandrasekara swamy, whereas inscriptions refer this presiding deity as “Sri KailasaChandraSekhara Eswaram Udaiyar”.

Sri Chandrasekara Swamy temple measures “75” feet East to West and 47 feet South to North. Totally occupying an area of 1.5 acres. It has some structures like central shrine, Ardha mandapa and Maha Mandapa. The Vimana, Mandapas, Gopuras are excellently moulded by sculptures. The entrance of the wall carries the symbol of fish. It clearly exposes that the temple certainly built up by a Pandya ruler. Also a fish symbol can be seen on the top of the walls of temple. Sri Chandrasekara Swamy temple Lord Chandrasekara Swamy Lingam in sanctum sanctorum karuvarai is facing east lonely as primary idol and presiding die. Chola and Pandya Inscriptions found on the Southern and Western side bottom of Karuvarai.

ChandirasekariAmmanshrine situated in the Easternside of Chandrasekaraswamyshrine. Arthamandapa is of 27' feet length, 16 feet width and its height is of 12 feet. This mandapa is supported by eight pillars in two rows and a height of pillar is 12 feet length and 1½ feet width. Panthal mandapa situated in front of Eastern entrance mandapa facing East. This mandapa is of 27 feet length and 16 feet width and its height of 12 feet.

Sri Vyakirapatheeswarar Temple – Seydunganallur

The village Seydunganallur is located at a distance of Thirteen Kilo meters from Srivaikuntam. The main deity of the temple is Sri Vyakirapatheeswarar. A Gurukkal conducts Puja twice a day. Thiruvathirai in the month of Margali is the main festival. The Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment Department administers the temple¹².

An ancient Siva temple with inscriptions adorns this village. Inscriptions mention this place “Sezhianallur alias Tiruvengalda Chadurvedi Mangalam”. The Presiding deity is referred to in inscriptions as Tiruppuli Eswaramudaiyar and the consort is referred as “Periya Nachiyar”.

There are 13 inscriptions in the temple. The earliest epigraph is that of Maravarman Srivallabha's 17th year. Hence the temple must have been

erected in his times (1145 – 1162 A.D). The divine consort was first referred in Maravarma Vikrama Pandya's record. Hence the Devishrine must have been constructed in the latter's times (1218 – 1238).

Conclusion

The foregoing research reveals historical importance of Monuments in Srivaikuntam and Tiruchendur Taluk . The Past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past. The Dutch historian P.J. Bolk, defined history as the thought and the work the daily life, the belief, the needs the habits of our ancestors social history is one among the kinds of History Social History is the history of human society in its social aspects. It includes moral, manners art, culture, food, dress and also concerned with the origin and developments of social institutions like temples. Material Sources of the past are objects that results from the activities of men who lived in the past monuments furniture, pictures, Potriats, tools, Utensils, Weapons, Coins and all the objects that are brought to light through excavations are material sources. The direct sources helps to identify the past without difficulty. Archaeological monuments also served as an evidence for the construction of the history of Srivaikuntam and Tiruchendur Taluk.

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