

History and Archaeological Wealth of Tamilnadu with Accent on Tourism Angle

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Abstract: Tamilnadu forms part of the oldest landmass in the world which comprises of varied indigenous cultural features. It civilization is one of the most ancient civilizations, and has a span of more than 5000 years of continuous existence known from recent Adichanallur finds dated to 3000 B.C. The presence of different types of environment, ecological and other related features made the people to make their settlement in a place which they felt it would be comfortable. From prehistoric times till the 15th century A.D, in there was a continuous and seamless development in the socio -economic, cultural and political spheres of the Tamil people. There were continuous modifications in life style, civilized societal status, new techniques and ideas in manufacturing artifacts and in habitations - cave shelters, pits, houses made out of thatched roof, bricks and stones, construction of palace etc. The invention of pottery enabled storage of water, grains and domestication of animals improved the economic level of the population. The presence of semiprecious stones (agate, carnelian, chert, beryl etc) and of iron, gold, silver, etc in various places facilitated extensive trade contacts. This works initially paves way in publishing the exclusive notes on the ancient history of Tamils. Tourism is travelling for recreational or leisure purposes. The world tourism organization defines tourists as people who “Travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.” Tourism plays an important role in boasting employment and encouraging different sections of the economy. Tourism was seen earlier as a mere service sector, but now it is recognized as an export industry.

Keywords: Tourism – Heritage Monuments – Pre History – Historical Monuments

DISCUSSION

Tamilnadu forms part of the oldest landmass in the world which comprises of varied indigenous cultural features. It civilization is one of the most ancient civilizations, and has a span of more than 5000 years of continuous existence known from recent Adichanallur finds dated to 3000 B.C. The presence of different types of environment, ecological and other related features made the people to make their settlement in a place which they felt it would be comfortable. From prehistoric times till the 15th century A.D, in there was a continuous and seamless development in the socio -economic, cultural and political spheres of the Tamil people. There were continuous modifications in life style, civilized societal status, new techniques and ideas in manufacturing artifacts and in habitations - cave shelters, pits, houses made out of thatched roof, bricks and stones, construction of palace etc. The invention of pottery enabled storage of water, grains and domestication of animals improved the economic level of the population. The presence of semiprecious stones (agate, carnelian, chert, beryl etc) and of iron, gold,

silver, etc in various places facilitated extensive trade contacts.

The pre history of Tamilnadu starts from the Palaeolithic culture which is known from the stone tools obtained from various places of the state.

The knowledge of writing and later improvements in the educational condition also had a great impact in the ancient Tamil country which later flourished to a great extent. After the evolution of kingship and dynasties of various royal families in the Tamil country, in the beginning of the 1st millennium A.D, the history of Tamilnadu had an extensive change. The practice of various religions (Hinduism as well as Jainism, Buddhism etc formed about 3rd century B.C) paved way for the construction of different types of monuments. These monuments exposed the individuality, greatness, integrity and the indigenous quality of those religions.

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Due to the unique culture of Tamil country, tourists from other states and from abroad through the tourist spots throughout the year. The enhancement in the tourism sector will lead to increase in tourist arrivals and duration of stay, distribution of income and benefits from tourism to other sectors and better conservation of natural and cultural heritage sites. This involves the development of quality tourism infrastructure in high potential tourism circuits both environmental and cultural improvement in the institutional and regulatory frameworks to co-ordinate the efforts of multiple agencies.

Tamilnadu is becoming an attractive tourist destination at the international level as it has rich cultural heritage monuments of architectural splendor, i.e., World Heritage Sites and many other sites of more or less equal aesthetic impact. This features in the attraction of investments from other government as well as the private sector including international tour promoters. Aggressive promotion and marketing campaigns through print and electronic media at the domestic, national and international level, creation and up gradation of basic amenities and infrastructure would increase in the tourist arrivals to Tamilnadu. The inflow of the tourist is increasing every year. The chart given shows the increasing ratio;

Year	Number of Tourists (in lakhs)
2007-----	524 [1].
2008-----	647[2].

This is nearly 122. 58 [3] lakhs higher than the previous year.

2011 -----	1401 [4].
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The increase in the tourist activity has boosted the economy of the state. The ancient monuments usually attract tourists are normally temples and religious monuments which are the symbol of Tamil culture and society and are treasure houses of art and architecture, painting, sculptures with unique iconographic features, inscriptions, ancient palaces, forts, dams, ports, etc are also popular among tourists. Pre and proto historic sites are available in larger number and scholars, students, and researchers visit

them often, but as some are in remote areas, this often deters the tourists from visiting these sites.

Most monuments of all periods from Sangam age onwards are located at the places within reach. So there is scope for tourism throughout the year. Tamilnadu with a long coast has had numerous ports and harbours since the earliest period. Tamil sea farers carried on travel to long distances to South East Asia in the east and to Egypt and Mediteranean in the west from many centuries before the christian era.

Kaveripoompattinam (Puhar) [5], Musiri and Korkai were important port cities of the Chola, Chera and Pandian kings respectively. Kaveripoompattinam is mentioned in the Sangam works Akananooru (205:11-12), Purananooru (30:11-13) and Pattinapala (172-175). Ptolemy and the author of Periplus have mentioned this site as Kamaram/Khabaris. The light house in this port city is mentioned in Narrinai (219). The post Sangam Silapathigaram also describes this port. Excavation here has revealed a brick structure, Buddha vihara, potsherds with Tamil script, terracotta objects besides materials pertaining to later periods also. Musiri [6] an important and busy port city in the ancient Chera country also had light house, tollgate, godowns etc. Vigorous trade was conducted in these ports. Spices, silk, perfume varieties, marbles, diamond etc figured in the. Korkai [7] was the vital port in the Pandya country. Later when it was destroyed by the natural calamities Kayalpattinam [8] became the port. Uvari [9] was also an earliest port of the Pandyas. Korkai was the second capital for the Pandyas, and a prince stayed there. At the time of the visit of Marcopolo in 13th century, Kayal had superseded Kayalpatinam. J.C. Molony (1970) states that this brisk foreign trade was the cause of the prosperity of the Tamil kingdoms during that period. Most of these portcities are of much tourist interest because of interesting remains.

The construction of limestone temples of fine archeitctural beauty dedicated to various gods and goddesses from about the 6th century A.D onwards which continued apace till about 1700 A.D. Tamils developed their own unique architectural features which constitute the icons of Indian culture and civilization, especially as most of the temples in North India were destroyed by invaders of North India while the Vijaynagar empire ensured their preservation and even augmentation in South India.

Temples constructed in various different styles was a class by themselves. The styles of architectural features are one of the main attractive phenomenons. Temples from the pre Christian era as well as those from the 20th century A.D exists in this state. Till about 6th century A.D most ancient temples were built of brick and mortar and many of them have not survived.

The temples and the gods and goddesses worshipped there, were a vital part of the socio-economic and political history of Tamilnadu. The parts of human body were metamorphically equated to different components of temple. Some temple can be dated from their architectural features. The songs of Saiva Nayanmars Vaishnas always provided valuable references to the temples of those days and also indicate the age and importance of temples. Inscriptions engraved in temples are of course the most useful from the historical angle.

Temples were constructed with the locally available raw materials, with the knowledge and experience in the architecture and construction method of local architects. In areas of suitable rocks for instance in Mamallapuram and Sitthannavasal fine temples were carved out of the living hills. Sometimes supplementing them with bricks, lime mortar also. In the plains with no hills temples were constructed using stones brought from nearby regions as at Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Dharasuram etc. The architects made their own innovations besides utilising the remarkable canons of architecture and sculpture in ancient texts on SilpaSastra. This explains the unique architectural features of monuments seen all over Tamilnadu. These monuments attract the tourists due to their historical importance, sanctity, etc.

The style of art and architecture differ from region to region in Tamilnadu. In some places many of them could be seen together. Tamilnadu is unique as being the state which can still display a number of architectural features older than 1500 years ago.

Pallava, Chola, Pandya rulers and their subordinate rulers of the ancient Tamil country have all contributed magnificently to temple architecture in Tamilnadu. Many unique style of architecture are attested. Pallavas were pioneers in introducing new style of art and architecture. Their temples rock-cut and structural might perhaps have drawn an inspiration from the funerary megalithic monuments many dating earlier than the Christian era in Tamilnadu.

There are numerous Heritage Monuments in Tamilnadu under the control of the State Department of Archaeology and the central Archaeological Survey of India. There are nearly 85 monuments, declared for protection and preservation under (the act Tamilnadu Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological sites and remains act 1966 (TN Act 25/1966) and Tamilnadu Ancient and Historical monuments and Archaeological sites and remains rules 1971) the State Department of Archaeology, Tamilnadu. The Archaeological Survey of India, Chennai Circle has nearly 403 monuments. Monuments in Tamilnadu are under the control of Thrissur Circle.

Some of the monuments have been declared as World Heritage Monuments well developed and promoted as major tourist attractions by Government and Private sectors through print and electronic media. Some have always been as important pilgrimage centres. But there numerous heritage monuments in Tamilnadu, not so well exposed and promoted, though they also have historical importance as they possess unique sculptures, art and architecture etc. besides inscriptions. These monuments are vital in contributing to Tamilnadu socio - economic history.

In this paper brief descriptions of UNESCO declared World Heritage Sites and monuments will be given and other important monuments will be continued later. Archaeological vestiges like palaces, ports, forts, dams, churches, mosques etc will also be highlighted.

In Tamilnadu living Chola temples namely Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur, Brihadeeswarar temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Airavateswarar Temple, Darasuram, Group of Monuments at Mamallapuram and the Nilgiri Mountain Rail were declared World Heritage Sites and Monuments.

The great living Chola temples built by various kings is stretched all over Tamilnadu. These temples stand as an fascinating examples of cultural legacy that existed during 11th - 12th centuries A.D. They also exhibit the specialized artistic skills, efforts and activities of artists and arts organizations of that period. Though these temples have been elaborately studied, a brief description of the temples is given below for the viewers:

Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur:

This temple is situated in the midst of the Thanjavur city. It is dedicated to lord Shiva. It is also known by different names like Peruvudaiyar kovil, Thanjavur Periya Kovil, Rajarajeswara temple, Rajarajeswaram etc. The foundation for this temple was laid out during the rule of Rajaraja I in 1002 A.D. It is considered as one of the largest temples of India and most prized architectural beauty of Tamilnadu [10]. This temple is the first building fully built by granite. It is an architectural exemplar showcasing the pure form of the Dravida type of temple architecture. The temple testifies to the brilliant achievements of the Chola in architecture, sculpture, painting and bronze casting [11].

The esteemed architect and engineer of the temple was Kunjara Mallan Raja Raja Perunthachan as stated in inscriptions found at the temple. This temple stands in a platform which is 500 ft in length and 250 in Breadth. The Vimana or Temple tower is nearly 216 ft in height, which is considered to be the tallest in the world among this type of temples [12]. The gopuram of

the main entrance is 30 m high, smaller than the vimana. It is unusual in the dravidian architecture where the gopurams or the main towers are taller than the vimana. There is a big statue of Nandi carved out of a single rock, at the entrance measuring about 16 feet long and 13 feet high. The sculptures found in this temple are of immense iconographic interest in addition to the paintings which illustrated the dance and music themes. Its long and well inscribed inscriptions are most interesting and informative of the history of the temple, its builders and people who have donated for the temple.

Gangaikondacholisvara Temple:

It is located at Gangaikonda Cholapuram, a small village which is nearly 35 kms away from Kumbakonam enroute to Jayankondam. This village came to be considered much important as it was erected as the capital of the Cholas during the reign of Rajendra Chola I. It is also constructed out of the Dravidian architecture. He established this temple after his great victorious march to river Ganges over the Palas in North India. This temple complex has two entrances, a gopura on the east and a plain torana (entrance) on the north. The vimana is octagonal in shape and is 9 storied at a height of about 185 ft. A great part of the enclosure - wall, the superstructure of the gopura and the entire two-storeyed cloister inside were pulled down in the last century to supply stones for the construction of a neighbouring river dam, the vimana and its axial mandapa are fortunately extant and intact [13]. Right in the entrance of the Mahamandapa is the giant Nandi, unlike a single stone carvings this Nandi seems to be made of brick stones and mortar as evident by the cracks. South West corner of the temple is the shrine of Ganesha. Lord Siva's consort referred as Brhannayaki and has her own small shrine in the North side. On the north side shrines dedicated to Chandikesvara and Mahishamardini or Durga are seen. Dwarapalakas which are huge structures guarding the doors of the Mandapa, were 10 ft tall and can be seen both in South and North side entrances of the Mandapa.

Airavatesvara Temple:

It is located at Darasuram in Kumbakonam taluk of Thanjavur district. It is 3 kms away from Kumbakonam. It was constructed during the rule of Rajaraja II (1146-1173 A.D). The temple complex is considered to be the storehouse of art and architecture. The superstructure were built out of brick, while the basement part is constructed out of stone. The front mandapam is in the form of huge chariot drawn by horses. The temple has some beautiful stone carvings. The dancing poses of Bharatanatyam are carved in the stone. There is also carvings which shows the village women helping a pregnant lady to deliver her baby, in which the two hands of the lady are seen kept over the shoulders of the womenfolk. The paintings on the walls have been repainted during the Nayak periods.

Archeological Survey of India has taken necessary steps to preserve this monument from the intruders.

Several rulers of Pallava dynasty were pioneers in temple architecture and art. Later, rulers of Thondaimandalam as well as the parts of Tamilnadu followed suit, often surpassing the Pallavas in the field.

Among the Pallava rulers Mahendravarman I and his son Narasimhavarman I (*Mamalla*) are noteworthy. They constructed numerous stone temples including the unique monolithic rock cut temples. Some of these temples, eg. Pancha Pandava Rathas at Mamallapuram do not now have any idols or images of gods and goddess in the main sanctum.

Mamallapuram consists of numerous monuments constructed by the Pallava rulers. The important monuments includes Five Rathas (Draupathi, Arjuna, Bhima, Dharmaraja, Nakula Shadava) collectively called Panchapandava Rathas, Ganesha, Valayankuttai and Pidari rathas, the Shore temple, the Tiger cave at Saluvankuppam, a few kilometers north of the main town, Arjuna penance, Mahishasura Mardhini cave temple etc. Among these monuments, on the basis of their architecture and iconographic features, the Shore temple, Five rathas, Varaha Mandapa, Arjuna's Penance, Mahishasuramardini cave have been declared as World Heritage Sites.

Shore Temple:

It is located in Mamallapuram, which is 50 kms south of Chennai in the shore of Bay of Bengal. The Shore temple was constructed by Rajasimha around 700 - 728 A.D, when the constructional style of Pallavas was at peak from the angles of decoration and intrinsic quality. It is a structural temple built out of granite. At the time of its creation, the village was a busy port during the reign of Narasimhavarman II of the Pallava dynasty and it is one of the oldest structural (versus rock-cut) stone temples of South India [14]. This temple complex comprises of three shrines. Among this the largest was called as Kshatriyasimhesvara shrine facing the sea on the east has a 5 storied vimana with a height of about 60 ft and sits on a platform which is a 50 ft square platform and the smaller one called Rajasimhesvara face west. They both are dedicated to lord Shiva. Between these two shrines there is rectangular one without any superstructure, whose presiding deity is said to be recumbent Vishnu, which is cut out of a low living rock.

Five Rathas:

This is located in Mamallapuram very near to the Shore temple in sea shore. This is considered to be an important example of Monolithic Rock-Cut architecture. It was carved out during the reign of Narasimhavarman I (630 680 A.D). The outstanding contribution to rock-architecture of Pallava

Narasimhavarman Mamalla is the cut-out monolithic shrines or vimanas, popularly called *rathas* [15]. These monolithic rathas were erected with various storey's, single to triple. Dharmaraja, Arjuna and Draupadi rathas are square in plan, Bhima and Ganesha rathas are rectangular and Nakula Shadeva ratha is apsidal.

Varaha Mandapa:

It is a rock - cut cave temple situated at Mamallapuram in the heart of the town. The most prominent sculpture in the cave is that of Lord Vishnu in the incarnated form of a Varaha or boar lifting Bhudevi, the mother earth goddess from the sea. Also carved are many mythical figures. The cave faces west and has four octagonal pillars and two octagonal pilasters. The entrance facade has four octagonal pillars and two octagonal shaped pilasters.

Arjuna's Penance:

It is also located very adjacent to the Varaha Mandapa and is constructed around the mid 7th century A.D. It is an open - air bas - relief monolith. It is about 43 ft in height and is carved on the face of two huge adjoining boulders. The relief depicts the flow of the Ganges down from the Himalaya mountains. The story in the bas-relief depicts that King Bhagirath brought down the Ganges from Heaven to purify the souls of his ancestors. His plan went awry when he realized that the flood would inundate the earth, so he had to undergo a penance to convince Shiva to intervene, who came down to earth and let the flood trickle through his hair, dispersing the waters safely in innumerable streams all over the world. This strange sight aroused the curiosity of the world's animals, who gathered round the soaking God.

Mahishasuramardini cave:

It is considered to be the classical example of the south Indian architecture constructed during the Pallava reign. It is a rock-cut cave temple located on a hill, near a light house. The temple is part of the Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed in 1984 [16]. Among the architectural features three reliefs carved out on the cave walls are considered to be prominent. One is of Vishnu reclining on the seven hooded serpent, Adishesha, another of Durga, the main deity of the cave temple slaying the buffalo headed demon Mahishasura, and the third sanctum also has a sculpture of Vishnu [17]. The cave shrine faces east and has three chambers. Its internal dimensions are 32 feet (9.8 m) in length, 15 feet (4.6 m) in width, and 12.5 feet (3.8 m) in height. It is dedicated to the goddess Mahishasuramardini, who is considered an incarnation of the goddess Durga.

Apart from this ancient monuments 18th century built Nilgiri Rail was also declared as the World Heritage site as an extension to the Darjeeling

Himalayan Railway in 2005. Its construction was started in 1891 and was completed around 1908. At first it was operated by Madras Railway. Later it was taken over by the Southern Railway of India. It was first operated from Coonoor to Udhagamandalam (Ooty). Now it runs from Mettupalayam to Udhagamandalam covering a distance of nearly 46 kms. There are nearly 208 curves, 16 tunnels, 250 bridges in the route in which 32 are major ones and 15 are road over bridges [18]. Previously the train was operated with the help of 'X' Class steam rack locomotives manufactured by the Swiss Locomotive and Machine Works of Winterthur in Switzerland. Later this engine was replaced by Southern Railway by coal-fired locomotives.

All visitors, natives and foreigners are enthralled to see these architectural beauties. The unique and fantastic structural edifice of Pallavas exposes the development in the architectural status of the ancient Tamil emperors. Proper maintenance and security for the viewers, good hospitality, easy transport facility, proper accommodation, shopping facility etc have ensured fine tourist response.

The other notable Pallava monuments are rock cut temples at Mandagapattu, monolithic mandapa at Thirukazhukundram, Singavaram, Melacheri, Mamandur and Saluvankuppam, the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, Thalagireeswarar temple at Panaimalai, Vaikuntha perumal temple at Kanchipuram etc. The small temples are erected at the end phase of Pallava dynasty are the Shiva temple at Kooram, Sivapuram, Mahadevar Koil at Edaiyarpakkam, Arugar Jain temple at Poondi (Arani), Irataikoil (Twin Temple) at Keezhaiyur, Vadamalleeswarar temple at Oragadam, Agastheeswaram Siva Temple at Palayavalam, Nayanar Koil at Vilankudi, Udaiyar Siva Temple at Tirukolili (Tirukuvalai), Thiruvur Dt, Vashishteswarar temple at Karanthattangudi, Ologamadevisuvara temple at Thiruvaiyaru, Sunderaswarar (Siva) temple at Senthalai, Adhitheswaram Siva temple at Thirupurampiyam, Veerataneshwarar temple at Thiruthani, Parameshwarar temple at Gudimallam and Mathangeswarar temple at Kanchipuram. These temples witness the eclectic attitude of the Pallava rulers who aimed at religious harmony.

The **Cholas** who ruled over the Tamil country for more than 400 years from the emergence of Vijayala Chola, contributed to the development of Tamil culture and society. The Chola rulers were great temple builders incorporating innovative and unique features in the fields of temple art, architecture and sculptures. The developments were more indigenous than Rock cut temples of Pallavas and Pandiyas (which shared common features with such temples in Deccan). Some Chola temples will be considered below;

Sivan Koil, Sivapuram: (Oragadam during the Chola period).

This temple is located 25 kms from Kanchipuram via. Sunguvarchathram. It was constructed during the reign of Rajaraja I (985-1014 A.D). This is called as Rajarajeswaramudaya Mahadevar Koil. There are inscriptions which records the donations made for the maintenance of the temple by the Chola rulers.

Mahadevarkoil, Edaiyarpakkam:

It is 20 kms away from Kanchipuram via. Sunguvarchathram. It is apsidal in plan, a unique feature of Pallava architecture. The images of gods and goddess in this temple portrays the art of Chola period art of 12th - 13th century A.D. Inscriptions of Kulothungachola I and Rajaraja II are seen in this temple.

Irattai Koil (Twin Temple), Keezhaiyur:

It was once part of the capital city of the Pazhuvettariyur, cheiftains and subordinates to the Chola kings. They were built by the cheiftains Kumaran Kandan and Kumaran Maravan (9th century A.D) and are excellent examples for the early Chola architecture.

Udhiyagiriswarar Temple - Varichurmalai(hill) (Kunnathur), Madurai:

There are two caves in this hillock. The one facing east is named as Udhayagiri and one facing west is named as Asthagiri (from the word Asthamanam). This cave temple is dated to 8th century AD. It looks that this cave could have been used by the Jaina monks for shelter during the rainy days. But in later years it must have been converted into the Shiva temple after erecting a linga in it.

Agatheeswaram Siva Temple, Palayavalam: (Thiruvarur district).

Inscriptions of Rajaraja I are seen in this temple. The garbhagriha and other architectural features are similar to the Bragatheeswarar temple in Thanjavur. Hence this temple can be assigned to Rajaraja I.

Nayanar Koil, Vilankudi: (3 miles north-west of Madurai).

It was constructed during the reign of Vikramapandiyan (1180-1190 AD) and was reconstructed during Nayaka rule. The front portion was demolished and was later constructed as a Mandapa while the deities of this temple were shifted to Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple.

Udaiyar Siva Temple, Thirukolili (Thirukuvalai, Thiruvarur Dt):

This place is mentioned in the Tamil literare Devaram. This temple comes under the administration of Dharmapuram matha. The iconographic features of

Dwarapalaka (Door Keepers) at the entrance of Artha Mandapa lets us to know that this temple could have been build during the Pallava rule. The inscriptions in this temple belongs to later Cholas and Pandyas. It also helps us in knowing the socio - cultural history of the Tamils during their rule. The Chola inscriptions belongs Rajaraja II, Kulothunga III, Rajaraja III, Rajendra III and Veerarajendra. The Pandya inscriptions belong to Kochadaya - panmarana Thirubhuvana Chakravarthigal Sundarapandyan (Sadayavarma Sundarapandian I - 1251), Sundarapandyan Komara Panmarana Thirubhuvana Chakravarthigal Kulachekara Devar (1268-1311).

Vashishteswarar Temple, Karanthattankudi:

It lies 10 kms north of Thanjavur. The inscriptions of Rajaraja I (1002), mentions this site as *Thanjavur Koorathu Thanjavur Purampadi Vadavatin Vadakarai Karunthittaikudi*, Rajendra I (1015, 22) inscriptions mention it as *Thanjavur Koorathu Thanjavur Karunthittaikudi*, Thanjavur Purampadi Karunthittaikudi. This temple might have been built during the Athitha Chola I (880 - 907 A.D) period. The sculptures in this temple are master pieces of temple architecture of 1000 A.D.that was in existence before 1000 years.

Ologamaadevisuvara Temple, Thiruvaiyaru:

It was built by Ologamadevi, first wife of Rajaraja Chola I. There are nearly 17 inscriptions in this temple. All these inscriptions portray the history, heroism, religious faith etc of the Rajaraja I. This temple is an excellent example of Chola architecture.

Sundareswarar Siva Temple, Senthalai, Thanjavur: (North of Thanjavur via. Thiruvaiyaru).

The inscriptions mentions this place as Chathurvedimangalam. This place was once the capital of the Mutharayar rulers before 9th century A.D.

Adhitheswaram Siva Temple, Thirupurampiyam: (North-west of Kumbakonam).

It is called as Paranthaka Chola Chathurvedimanagalam. Adhithya Chola I built this temple. This place was praised by Thirunavukarasar in 7th century A.D. and should have been famous even in those days. More than 100 inscriptions are noticed in this temple. Inscriptions belonging to the Chola rulers like Rajaraja I, Rajendra I, Kulothunga I, Kulothunga II, Rajaraja II, Kulothunga III, Rajaraja III and one Vijayanagara inscription is also noticed in this temple. The inscriptions thus revealed the socio-cultural and political history of Tamils.

There are nearly 275 Shiva temples in Tamilnadu which are glorified in the Tevaram hymns and 108 shrines dedicated to Vishnu in the Nalayira Dhivya Prabantham.

Jain Temples:

Jainism is a very old religion in India and an integral part of Indian Culture. Right from 300 B.C. onwards Tamilnadu has been a confluence of the Vedic religion as well as Buddhism, Jainism and Asivika faith. The Jaina monuments and temples preserve the cultural heritage of the Digambaras sects of Jains from by-gone days. The rock-cut images and icons of the deities and their attendants are “characterised by stark simplicity, a spirit of unconcern, as it were, for the admittedly sophisticated contemporary social and cultural environment, represented by a commanding immobility of a stance amidst the pulsating life-cycle around” [19].

Jainism was a influential religion right from 3rd century B.C to 4th century till 8th century AD and to some extent in some areas even upto 12th century AD. This is known from the inscriptions found in the caves of Pudukottai, Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts. The Pallava rulers like Simhavarmman, Simhavishnu, Mahendravarman and the Pandya ruler Nedumaran and other subordinate rulers were patrons of Jainism. The above Jaina monuments are well preserved and the cave inscriptions are published.

In fact the earliest architectural activity in Tamilnadu commences from these Jaina caves. The Jaina vestiges were available in the form of caves, temples, sculptures, bronzes, paintings, epigraphs and manuscripts. Even today many ancient Jain caves and temples (some still worshipped) stands as a symbol of the religious harmony in the Tamil country. The caves which have early Tamil inscriptions are mainly confined to the hill ranges in and around Madurai, Pudukkottai and Tirunelveli districts and are associated with the polished stone beds.

To mention some of the jain monuments, an attempt has been made here in detail.

Kilavalavu: (Melur taluk of Madurai district, just 10 kms away from Melur).

A Tamil (Tamil-Brahmi) inscription of 2nd century B.C is engraved directly below a chiseled portion of the rock [20]

Alagarmalai: (20 kms north-east of Madurai).

It is also called as *Vrishabhadri*, *Idabagiri* or *Solai malai* [21]. Azhagar Kovil, one of the 108 sacred Vishnu temple is at the foot of the hill. At the top is Pazhmudhircholai, considered by some to be one of the six abodes (Aarupadi Veedu) of Lord Murugan. Between Alagarmalai and Kidaripatti, there is a huge cavern with many beds. Tamil Brahmi inscriptions are engraved in the eyebrow of the sheltering boulder, at an inaccessible height. There are totally 13 inscriptions [22]. This is one of the single site, where the largest number of inscriptions are discovered. The stone beds

vary in size and are seen scattered over the whole surface of the cavern. The inscriptions in the cavern reveal the names of the craft persons. Below the cavern, a beautiful Tirthankara image and a vatteluttu inscription of 9th century A.D are seen. This site is a densely forested area, rich in biodiversity. This forest area is composed of rare species of trees of economic importance and besides valuable medicinal plants.

Haridranadi

It is located in the Mannargudi taluk of Thiruvavur district. It is about 35 kms from Thanjavur city and 18 kms from Orathanadu town. The temple constructed in this site deserves a special mention as it has a very attractive and beautiful image of Mallinatha. This temple was constructed in the 12th century A.D. during the rule of a Chola King. Apart from this grand images of Sri Sarasvati Devi, Sri Padmavati Devi, Sri Dharma Devi and Sri Jvalamalini Devi are also installed in this temple.

Poondi Arugar Temple

It is 3 kms away from Arani en route to Arcot. It is built in the Chola architectural style. The main deity is referred as Ponnezhilnathar in Chola inscriptions and also as Viravira Jinalayam in the Sambuvaraya inscription.

Vastipuram:

This pilgrim centre is situated 20 kms away from Erode city. During the 6th century A.D. this place was considered to be the important seat of Tamil scholars. Beautiful image of Tirthankara Candraprabhu is seen installed in the temple found here. The image is highly artistic and attractive. The pillars and ceilings bear beautiful images of Pancakalayanaka representing Tirthankaras. This temple also has the icons of Tirthankara Adi Prabhu and goddess Ambikadevi. This temple was constructed by the king called Kongivelur.

Munigiri:

This site is located at Karande village which is located 15 kms away from Kanchipuram. This place was an important centre for the meditational practices for Jain Saints in the 3rd century A.D. It is called as Munigiri, because it was an important centre of austerities for many Jain Saints. An attractive icon of Tirthankara Kunthunatha is installed in this site. Chola kings like Rajaraja Chola, Rajendra Chola and Krishnadevaraya and Ramadevaraya of Vijayanagar Empire have gifted lands and other gifts to this temple. The idols of Adinatha, Parsvanatha and Mahavira are installed in this temple.

Puzhal:

It is located 2 kms away from Red hills village which is 15 kms north-west of Chennai. Huge images of

the first Tirthankara Lord Risabhadeva and Lord Parsvanatha are installed in this place. This temple is considered to be 1500 years old and a fine image of Bhagavati Padmavati Devi is installed.

Apart from the above mentioned sites various other monuments belonged to different period were also noticed all over Tamilnadu. They are in the form of *Forts, Palaces, Mosques, Churches, caves, hills, heritage sites etc.* These monuments were highly attractive as they receive a good number of tourist through the year. These monuments portrays the cultural development of those days. Also they establish the art and architectural heritage of the ancient days. An attempt is made here to expose the monuments which are not well known to the general public.

Kamuthi Fort:

This located 90 kms south of Madurai in Ramanathapuram district. It is locally called as *Kamuthi Kottaimedu*. It was constructed three hundred years ago by the Sethupahi King Udaiyathevar alias Vijaya Rangunatha Sethupathy. When Panchankurichi fell into the hands of Britishers this fort came under the control of East India Company. It is one of the important tourist spot in the southern Tamilnadu.

Manora Fort:

It is one of the ancient forts of Tamilnadu. It is located 65 kms south of Thanjavur nearer to the Pattukottai town. It was built by the Maratha king Sarafoji II in 1814-1815. It was constructed to commemorate the successful advancement of British troops over the king Napoleon. This is 8 storied building whose tower is hexagonal in shape which is 23 metres in height. There is a claim that the king Sarafoji might have hidden his treasure in the mazes of the fort. There is a belief that there exists an underground passage in this fort which leads to the big temple in Thanjavur which is 65 kms away from here.

Fort Geldria or Fort Geldaria:

It is located in Pulicat (Pazhaverkadu), Thiruvallur District. It is about 60 kms north of Chennai. This place was the first settlement in India for the Dutch Republic and the capital of Dutch Coromandel [23]. It is one of the important Dutch monument in Tamilnadu. It was built by Dutch East India Company in 1613 AD. Geldria was the name of the native province of Wemmer Van Berchem, the then General Director of the Dutch East India Company [24]. The fort was built on the shores of Pulicat Lake, very near to the Bay of Bengal and the Coromandel Coast. Being an important area for trade there also existed rivalry between the colonial powers of the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the British. The fort was occupied by the British from 1781 to 1785. In 1795, the Dutch surrendered the fort to the British by around 1804 or 1805, before finally giving ownership to the British on

1 June 1825. This fort is presently under the control of Archaeological Survey of India.

In addition to this fort, there are two cemeteries which are of historical interests. One is the *Old cemetery* constructed before 1656 A.D. and the new one constructed after this date. The old cemetery is located on the North West corner of Kottai Kuppam street. There were many tombs, though some tomb stones are of later period also. Most of the graves here are of Dutch, some of British and some of the local people. One of the tombstones, which is dated to 1758 AD had inscriptions in Tamil. All the graves are in the East-West orientation. Due to its inaccessible nature because of the presence of thorny bushes, a detailed attempt on the cemetery was not possible. The *New cemetery* is located at the south - west corner of the fort Geldria. There are totally 77 graves in it. Most of them belongs to Dutch. The entrance gate to the cemetery is a semi circular arched opening. Two skeletons are inscribed on the supports on either side. Words in Dutch language are inscribed on either sides of the key stone. From the translation we come to know that 11 graves were constructed for women and 9 for men [25].

Attur Fort:

This fort is located in Attur of Salem District. Attur is located 55 kms west of Salem. The fort was built by a local Palayakarar, called Lakshmana Nayakan during the 17th Century. It was used as a garrison till 1854 by the Britishers. Later the fort was not active. It was under the control Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan and Britishers consequently. The fort occupies an area of about 62 acres. The walls of the fort was 30 ft tall and 15 ft wide. Wedge shaped cut-stones which is not mixed with any mortar was used to decorate the fort. The fort was guarded by the river in the east and by moats on other sides. The swimming pool (pool house) used by the royal family was fed from the river through the water gate [26]. Some of the portions of the fort is dilapidated, while other portions are encroached by the local people for the purpose of the huge stones in them [27].

Kenilworth Fort:

This is also called as Kenilworth Castle. It is located in Hosur of Krishagiri district, which is 50 kms away from Bangalore. It was only fort in India which resembled the architecture of Kenilworth Castle in England [28]. This fort was built by Mr. Brett, then British Collector of Salem, to use it as the residence. So it is also called as Brett's Fort. Later this fort was bought by the government in 1875. It had a lofty tower, which stands only partially now. Large elegant windows adorned the walls of the huge central hall. It provided a wide view of the miniature lake nearby and its stained glass windows were beautiful in the light of the evening sun [29]. The vast vaults and underground chambers of the castle are yet to be explored.

Dutch Fort, Covelong:

This fort was located around 50 kms south of Chennai on the East Coast Road en route to Pallava archeitctural beauty, Mamallapuram. It was built around 1750's by the Dutch. The fort is completely destroyed and even ruins of the fort is not available. Presently a private luxury beach resort is constructed over this place.

Apart from these forts, there are some forts which deserves special mention but in a dilapitated conditions whose archeitctural features and details was not to accessible. So for the view of the readers some of the names of the forts are given here: Erode fort, Tangrakottai (ruined castle) situated in Dharmapuri district, Anchettidurgam in Krishnagiri district, Droog Fort, Coonoor, etc. There are other forts well known to viewers also, which are under the control of government agencies like Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu and Archaeological Survey of India.

Chepauk Palace:

It is located in Chepauk, Chennai near the sea shore and very close to University of Madras which was also constructed at the same time. It was designed and constructed by Paul Benfield. Presently it is called as Ezhilagam complex where the Public Works Department and other Government Buildings is housed. The presence of Agriculture departments and other departments on the side of wallajah road makes it impossible to have a view of the enchanting palace. It was the official residence of the Nawab of Arcot from 1768 to 1855. It was constructed in the Indo-Saracenic style of Archeitecture. This palace comprises of two parts namely northern and southern blocks. In which northern block is called as Khalsa Mahal and the southern block is called as Humayun Mahal. It covers an area of 117 acres of land [30].

Tamukkam Palace:

This is located in Madurai. It was built in 1670 and was used as the summer palace of Rani Mangammal in, who was the queen of Madurai Nayak. Later it was occupied by Britishers and served as the official residence of District Collectors. At present Mahatma Gandhi Musuem is housed in palace. It is a multi pillared and arched palace.

Fernhill Palace:

It is located in Connoor in Nilgiri district. It was constructed in 1844 by Captain F. Cotton of Madras Engineers Regiment. When it was constructed first it was called as Fernhill Bungalow. The palace served as the official summer residence of Maharaja of Mysore. The carved wooden bargeboards and ornamental cast iron gives it a appealing look. The total area of the palace was around 50 acres. It is composed of green lawns, stylized gardens and dense woods with spectacular views of terraced tea gardens and lush

verdant valleys [31]. It is now one of the important tourist spot in Ooty although the year.

Ramalinga Vilasam Palace:

It is located in the heart of the Ramanathapuram town. The original name of palace was Ramanathapuram palace. It was constructed between 1690 and 1710 during the rule of Kizhavan Sethupathi (1674-1710). This complex consisted of a main durbar hall, residential buildings, private rooms, weapons store room and a cave. The murals found in this building representing the life pattern of the Sethupathi kings, scenes depicting their battles with the Maratha kings of Thanjavur and their European contacts are quite exquisite [32].

Other palaces include Maratha Palace, Thanjavur, Padhmanbhapuram Palace, Kanyakumari district, Ettaiyapuram palace in Tuticorin, Arranmore Palace in Ooty which are noteworthy and serves as an important tourist spots.

Kazimar Big Mosque:

This mosque is located in the heart of Madurai city very nearer to the Central Bus stand (Periyar Bus stand). It is popularly known as Periya Pallivasal. Hazrat Kazi Syed Tajuddin of Oman, who came to Madurai around 13th century A.D is believed to receive the land as donation where the mosque is located at present from the hands of the Pandyan King called Kulasekara Ku(n) Pandiyan [33]. This shows the communal harmony that prevailed between the religions generocity of the Pandiyan kings, who were Hindus. The mosque can accomodate a capacity of 2500 people. The dargah of Madurai Hazrats is seen inside the mosque premises. A Madrasah is located inside the mosque in which around 120 students learn basic Arabic. The huqdars of this mosque are being appointed as Kazi's to the government at every age since 13th century right from the period of Hazrat Qazi Syed Tajuddin.

Begambur Big Mosque:

This mosque is located at Dindigul on the foot of Palani hills. It is constructed 300 years ago by Hyder Ali. This mosque and its surroundings were named after Ameer-un-Nisha Begum, younger sister of Hyder Ali. After her death in 1766, her body was brought and buried in this complex. This mosque has two towering minarets and a prayer area. Tourists visits this mosque regularly to have a look over the tomb of Ameer-un-Nisha Begum.

Hidayathul Islam Safia Jamath Mosque:

It is located in the heart of Coimbatore city just 1 km away from Coimbatore junction. It is popularly known as Kottai Hidayathul Islam safia Jamath. It was constructed during the reign of Tippu Sultan in 1776

A.D, later which was destroyed by the Britishers [34]. This mosque is popularly known for its architectural work. White marble slabs were used for the inner pavement which is ornamented with black borders. It represents the Indo - Arabic style. Pink carpets which are brought from Mysore adorned the floors. Traditionally the pillars were constructed out of smaller bricks which were polished with the mixture of limestone and egg. Apart from the intricate architecture, the mosque is famous for imparting education. A Madrasa, a higher secondary school and an Arabic college function on its premises [35].

Tamil Nadu is a place where there is a significantly high Christian population. Therefore the number of churches in Tamil Nadu is quite high. Churches in Tamil Nadu are known for their excellent architectural beauty. Their designs project a mixture of various cultures. The churches of Tamil Nadu have both structural as well as spiritual significance. They are significant pillars in the history of India since we can trace the spread of Christianity through it. Though there are numerous churches in Tamilnadu few churches have been dealt detail below:

St. Stephen's Church:

This church is located in Ooty on the road leading to Mysore. It is made out of Gothic architecture. The foundation for this church was laid on 23rd April, 1829 by Stephen Rumbold Lushington, the then Governor of Madras Presidency. It was opened for the public on 3rd April, 1831 in the eve of Easter. The architect of this fascinating church was John James Underwood, Captain, Madras Regiment [36]. The main beam and other timber for the church was brought from Tipu Sultan's palace of Srirangapatna. On the western side of the church over the wall, a painting depicting the Last Supper is displayed just above the panelled doors. The glass windows the scenes of crucifixion of Christ and Mary holding baby Jesus in her arms are depicted. The church also has the speaker's stand (Pulpit) with a flight of steps [37]. In April 1981, this church celebrated its 150th anniversary.

Lourdes Church:

It is popularly known as Our Lady of Lourdes Church. This is located in the heart of Thiruchirapalli city. It is constructed in Gallo -Catholic (Gothic) architecture around 1840. The tower is filled with artistic petal like flowers and dolls in the shape of pet animals. The stained glass windows depictis the life of Jesus, Jesuit Saints and Evangelists [38].

Schwartz Church:

This church is situated in Thanjavur. It stand towards the east of the Sivaganga tank. It was built by Raja Serfoji, the last sovereign ruler of Thanjavur, in the year 1779, to honour the Danish missionary

Reverend Frederick Christian Schwartz [39]. An interesting thing to note at the church is on the western side where a marble statue depicts the last moments of Frederick Christian Schwartz with Raja Serfoji by his side. The architecture involved in the Church also reflects the French touch in it. The arches, the front elevation and the door way bring forth the French architecture extensively. The Church is a sure example that portrays the colonial past of Thanjavur. One should visit Schwartz church on a tour to Thanjavur. This is one of the important tourist attraction in Thanjavur apart from other noteworthy monuments like Big Temple, Maratha Palace, etc.

San Thome Church:

It is Roman Catholic minor Basilica in Chennai (India). It was designed in Neo-Gothic style, favoured by British architects in the late 19th century. It was built in the 16th century A.D. over the tomb of St Thomas. As far as the Christian tradition of South India, St Thomas, was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus who had arrived from Judea in 52 A.D in Kerala and preached between 52 A.D. and 72 A.D., when he was martyred on St. Thomas Mount [40]. The International Shrine of St. Thomas Basilica has an underground tomb chapel where pilgrims can pray in front of the sepulchre of St. Thomas. During his visit to India in 13th century A.D. When Marco Polo visited Mylapore, he visited this church in 1292 A.D and recorded his visit in his travel diaries [41].

Our Lady Of Health, Velankanni:

This church is located in the heart the town Velankanni which is 350 kms south of Chennai and just 12 kms south of Nagapattinam town in sea shore. The history of its construction is traced to around the midst of 16th century A.D. It was built on the Gothic architecture and later on it was modified when Portugese entered the region. Though more than 500 years of history has gone, even today various festivals and celebration in relation to the christianity are celebrated. Nearly two million visitors or pilgrims visit this church every year. Interestingly , the participants of these festivals belongs to other religions, which shows the cultural co-ordination and religious harmony among the people. The Shrine of Our Lady of Velankanni, also known as the "Lourdes of the East" [42].

The sites and the monuments mentioned above and other monuments which are not detailed in this chapter no doubt is a worthful attractions for the tourists, historians and archaeologists who visit Tamilnadu. They not only give recreation, but also impart education among the general public. Tourism in Tamilnadu has now been recognized as an export industry due to its multiple advantages. Though tourism gained importance in late 1950's it has grown in rapic pace and enhanced its share in domestic and

international tourist arrivals as well as in foreign exchange earnings. The Tourism department of Government of India also assists the states in the development of tourist infrastructure through the central financial assistance schemes. Aggressive promotion and marketing campaigns through print and electronic media at the national and international levels, creation and provision of good infrastructure at tourist spots have resulted in the continuous increase of tourist arrivals of Tamilnadu. Creation of Affordable infrastructure, exploring new markets and focused marketing have contributed to sustained growth in tourism in the state.

Tourism is stress buster and it changes the mindset of an individual completely. It strives to showcase the various facets of Tamilnadu to cater to the requirements of different age groups. Many innovative projects and path-breaking initiatives have made this possible [43].

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