RELIGIOUS AND HERITAGE TOURISM IN TAMIL NADU—AN ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a global phenomenon in the last 55 years and this is the World’s largest money spinning and employing industry today. Country like India which has a huge population, the percentage of people employed in travel and tourism directly or indirectly exceeds 5 million\(^1\). Tourism has an immense economic impact around the world.

The word tourism related to tour which is derived from the Latin word “tornos\(^2\)”, which means a tool for describing an article or tourner’s wheel. It is from the word “tornos” that the notion of a “round tour” or a “Package tour” has come which is very much of the essence of tourism.

Tourism has grown from individual travel in early times into a mass phenomenon in modern days, involving domestic and international tourists\(^3\). Modern tourism is a direct product of the economic, social, and cultural progress, promoted by technological and scientific advances, higher real income, larger leisure time, and demographic expansion. The spread of education which has created awareness of our cultural heritage and urbanization have greatly helped to create a psychological propensity to mobility and an urgent need for recreation and relaxation\(^4\). Various thinkers defined tourism according to their

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4 S.C. Raychoudary, Social, Cultural and Economic History of India, Surjeet Publics, New
perspectives. Some of them divided tourism into categories, on the basis of its components. On the basis of the components, tourism had been divided into culture, traditions, natural scenes, entertainment, and other attractions⁵.

According to H. Robinson, one of the most important components of tourism is cultural heritages like ways of life, traditions, arts and crafts etc⁶.

Tourism has been classified into three different types depending on whether a tour is conducted within the country or neighbouring countries or with distance countries. They have been designated as, (1) Domestic tourism, (2) Regional Tourism and (3) International Tourism respectively. Tourism again we can classify on the basis of the purpose, the distance, and the locale of the spot as follows:-

REPRESENTIVE AND SPIRITUAL TOURISM

From the ancient to the present time, spiritual reasons have been a motive force behind tourism. Visiting religious places has been one of the earliest motivations of travel. For a Christian, a visit to Jerusalem or the Vatican, for a Muslim, a pilgrimage to the Mecca, for a Hindu, a visit to Rameswaram is considered to be a great act of faith. 'A large number of pilgrims of all the major religions travel within their country and across many countries to visit these religious centers. Particularly when we think about Madras it is the ‘Temple City of India’, that offers visitors a rich replica of temple architecture and it also posses a large number of churches and mosques. Visiting the religious spots of Madras gives satisfaction to every one of any religion.

HERITAGE TOURISM

This is connected with the individuals desire to travel in order to learn about people and their cultural heritage expressed in art, modes of living, dress,


music, literature, folklore, monuments and heritage, and to understand and appreciate their culture in all its totality. The concept of heritage tourism had some importance. This is good news, bad news scenario. Most heritage institutions have been founded to serve the public. Why it is said as good news scenario is just because it gives economic contribution to the national income of the country at the same time it helps many Poor’s to run their life with small businesses. In its other side i.e., in the bad side along with the tourists bad effects of drugs using its sale and demolition of indigenous culture and heritage.

RECREATION AND PLEASURE TOURISM

Pleasure and leisure are basic purpose of tourism. Industrialization and urbanization have created great pressure on modern living. Getting away from all that routine of everyday life is perhaps the most important motive for travel. People want to spend and relax their leisure hours at hill resorts, beaches, forests, valleys, waterfalls, river beds, and sunshine. 'Such a relaxation is very essential for their physical and mental health.

There are some other classifications under this concept. However, this study wants to analysis religious and cultural tourism and its importance in Tamil Nadu.

MADRAS: SEAT OF ANCIENT CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Traditionally tourism in Tamil Nadu has been for cultural and religious reasons. As the state is known mostly for its temple towns, it is an important destination of for pilgrims, not only from other parts of the country, but also outside the country. The preservation of the old dance and music forms has been an important aspect of heritage and cultural tourism in the state. The project launched by the government of India in the year 1977, called Destination South

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7 Ravee Chauhan, Heritage and Cultural Tourism, Vistha International publishers, New Delhi, 2006, pp.13-15
India, was the project which really found out the important touristic spirit in South India and its monuments, sculptures and other places.\textsuperscript{9}

Madras, known as Chennai at present, and the administrative capital of Tamil Nadu, is the fourth largest city in India. Madras is a modern metropolis, founded as Fort. St. George in A.D. 1639 by Francis Day of the East India Company. It has grown by taking within its fold historic towns and ancient villages. Madras is a city of a myriad contrasts, with ancient charm and modern amenities. And in every year lakhs of foreign and indigenous people are visiting these tourist locations. As the definition of Robinson, the cultural tourism exposes the way of life of a community, their traditions, art and architectural contributions. It reveals the past situations and life of the people of that time. That includes the signe and symbol of a time. Say for instance, Mahabalipuram, once it was the center of Pallava rulers, now it remains as one of the great architectural contribution of the rulers.

There are many Hindu temples, churches, mosques, Jain and Buddhist places of worship in Madras. The Santhome Cathedral Basilica built over the tomb of St. Thomas, the Theosophical Society founded by Annie Besant. The world head quarters of the society, the Kalakshetra.

The Marina, the second longest beach in the world with the Anna and M.G.R. memorials. The memorials to national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Kamaraj and Rajaji, Valluvarkottam, built in memory of saint Tiruvalluvar, the Birla planetarium Aringar Anna Zoological Park (Vandalur), and the National Deer Park which includes a Reptilium, Kishkinta, India's No. 1. Theme park in 110 acres of landscaped green space and more than a dozen of India's newest and most exciting and hi-tec family fun attractions, some of them for the first time in Asia, are sure to attract Indian and foreign tourists.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{9} Government of Tamil Nadu, Policy Note on Tourism, Demand No. 47, 1989-90, p.1.

\textsuperscript{10} Jayapalan, N., An Introduction to tourism, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, p.270.
Thus Tamil Nadu is an apt state for both religious and cultural tourism. In the state both these concepts are always mingled together and such places and its progress are explained below.

MYLAPORE

The most important temple at Mylapore is the Sri Kapaleswara temple, which is dedicated to Arulmigu Kapaleswara, an aspect of Lord Siva. It is delightful introduction to Dravidian temple architecture and sculpture. Fragmentary inscription date back to 1250 A.D., but the present structure was renovated by the Vijayanagar Kings in the 16th century. This is one of the real symbols of the states architectural and cultural tradition.

MAMALLAPURAM

Once a flourishing part of the Pallavas of Kanchi, this monumental centre is today a major beach resort and holiday centre. Places to see include the Shore Temple, the Five Rathas, Arjuna's Penance, Krishna Mandapam, Mahishasura Mardhini cave, Vashanjantapam and Tiger Cave. Mamallapuram bears the testimony and pays tribute to its Pallava artists and to the culture of south India. The sculptures depicted in the temple were taken from mythological episode of Hinduism. In 1995, the Tamil Nadu government announced Mamallapuram as one of the Heritage Town.

KANCHEEPURAM (THE GOLDEN CITY OF TEMPLES)

The city of a thousand temples, Kancheepuram is one of the seven sacred cities of India. A former capital of the Pallavas, it is famous for its exquisitely woven silk sarees. Places to see include Ekambareswarar Temple, Varadarajaswamy

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12 Bendra, V.P., Tourism in India, Primal Publication, Aurangabad, 1979, p.15.
13 Madras, A Booklet Published by Orient Long Man Ltd., Madras, 1993, p.66.
14 Tourism Policy Note, 2005-2006, p.27.
Temple, Vaikunthaperumal Temple, Kailasanathar Temple, Kamakshi Amman Temple, and of silk fabrics. Adi Sankaracharya, one of the famous saints of India, established his religious seat (Kamakotipeetam) here\(^\text{16}\).

**MAJOR TEMPLES OF KANCHIPURAM**

- The Kailasanatha (Siva) temple: The temple is situated at Putleri Street. It was built by King Raya Simha in the late 7\(^{th}\) century.
- The Vaikunthaperumal temple (Vishnu Paradise): His temple was built in the 8\(^{th}\) century. Its colonnade lion pillars and extensive sculptures bears historical Pallava inscription\(^\text{17}\).
- The Varadarajaperumal temple: (bestowed of boons), also known as Devaraja Swamy temple is 3km southeast of town. It was renovated by the Vijayanagar kings after 500 years\(^\text{18}\).

**THIRUKAZHUKUNDRAM**

Thirukazhukundram means the hill of the sacred eagles. The middays feeding of the eagles here is a daily ritual. At the top of the hill, the temple priest feeds them every noon. This attracts thousands of devotees. Legend has it that these eagles, said to be the incarnation of two saints, fly all the 1000 and odd miles (1600 k.m) from Varanasi to Rameswaram via Thirukazhukundram every day. It lies about 15 kms west of Mamallapuram\(^\text{19}\).

**VELLORE**

Vellore is the headquarters of the North District, with an ancient fort and a well-preserved Jalakandeswara temple noted for its sculptures. Vellore is also

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\(^{16}\) The Hindu, 28 April 1994.

\(^{17}\) R. Gopalan, History of the Pallavas of Kanchi, University of Madras, Madras, 1928, p16

\(^{18}\) C. R. Srinivasachari, Kanchipuram Through the Ages, Vishal Printers, New Delhi, 1979, pp.259-260.

\(^{19}\) Tamil Nadu-Splendure of India, A Booklet Published by ITDC, Madras, 1993, p31.
famous for the Christian Medical College and Hospital founded in the early part of the century by the dedicated American Medical Missionary, Dr. Ida Skudder\textsuperscript{20}.

**THIRUTHANI AND THIRUVANAMALAI**

Thiruthani is a stone built Pallava temple named Virattanesvara, sacred to Lord Siva and it is a private temple and still in use as a place of worship. Within the shrine there is a linga molded on a pedestal of the usual kind. The four armed doorkeepers remember that it is different from other Pallava artistic\textsuperscript{21}. It is one of the six shrines which are the hill abodes of Lord Muruga. The Kavadi festival on Aadikirthigai day is a delight.

Thiruvanamalai is a famous pilgrim centre and has an ancient temple, where Siva is worshiped in the form of fire, one of the five elements which he represents. There is also the famous ashram of Ramana Maharishi which attracts visitors and followers from India and all over the World\textsuperscript{22}.

**CHIDAMBARAM (SEAT OF COSMIC DANCE)**

Chidambaram is also called "Thillai" since the place was originally a forest of Thillai (Execcaria agallecha) shrub. It is an important pilgrim centre and a holy place for the Saivites as the famous Natarajar Temple (Siva as a cosmic dancer) is located here. This temple is also noted for its golden roof over the sanctum sanctorum. Bharatha Natyam dance poses are depicted in sculpture in this temple. The Thillai Kali Amman temple is at the northern end of the town. The main image of Nataraja is within a rectangular shrine, conered with copper tiles and gold and it is called “Golden Hall”. The 108 poses of Bharathanatyam classical dance are carved on the walls of eastern tower\textsuperscript{23}. The Annamalai University, the first

\textsuperscript{20} R. K. Das, Temples of Tamil Nadu, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombat, 1991

\textsuperscript{21} Thiruttani and Velangeri Copper Plates (ed.) R. Nagaswamy, Tamil Nadu State Dept. of Archaeology, Madras, 1979, pp2-9.


residential university in Tamil Nadu, is on the eastern outskirts of the town, and is a great centre of Tamil learning and Carnatic music.

The Chitrakootam is another shrine, situated to the Nataraja temple is dedicated to Lord Govindaraja. It has five halls, the Nirthya Sabha, Deva Sabha, Chit Sabha, the house of Aksha Lingam and Kanaka Sabha.

SEERKAZHI

It is 20 kms from Chidambaram. The scared town of Seerkazhi has an old temple of Lord Siva. The temple here has three shrines, viz., (1) Sri Brahmapureeswarar, Sattanathar, and Thoniappar Shrines, (2) The Goddess Tirunilai Nayaki shrine and (3) The shrine of God-Child Gnanasambandar. The temple is known for its beautiful sculptures.

VAITHEESWARAN KOIL

Vaitheeswaran Koil it is 26 kms from Chidamabaram. The place is famous for the Siva Temple. He takes on the name of Vaidyanathaswamy, the healer of diseases, and his consort is Thaiyalnayaki (Parvathi). It is believed that a bath in the holy waters of the Siddamirtham tank within the temple complex will cure all diseases. The devotes offer gold and silver replicas of organs and pray for good health. There is a Murugan shrine dedicated to Selva Muthukumaraswami inside.

POOMPUHAR

Poompuhar was once a major port of the Chola Empire. The original city was submerged by the sea, and at present only a small village is there. This ancient city is also the birth place of the Tamil epic Silapathikaram (epic of the Anklet). The ancient glory of this place has been revived by the Government of Tamil Nadu. An art gallery depicting scenes from the Silapathikaram was opened in 1973. Puhar was a planned city built over 2000 years ago. Excavations show an extent of planning that would make most modern planners envious.

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24 Ibid., p.436.
Today, Poompuhar has a fine beach, and its calm waters offer good sea-bathing and above all it is one the most important heritage center our state and country.

**THARANGAMBADI (TRANQUEBAR)**

This place is 15 kms from Poompuhar. It was Danish trading place in the 18\(^{th}\) century. There are churches, a Siva temple, a museum, and a fine beach. The 2000 year old gate is of historical and architectural interest. The residents to Tranquebar have to pass through it on their way out and into the town. Most of the buildings are in good condition. The town has been targeted as a possible beach resort - historical location to rival Mamallapuraram. The Danish Government has expressed keen interest in developing the spot. The Danish fort is slowly falling into the sea and the Government of India is trying to save the same with the assistance of the Danish Government.

**KUMBAKONAM**

It is a well developed town 36 kms, north of Thanjavur, a sacred spot known for its four large temples dedicated to Sarangapani, Kumbeswarar, Brahma, and Nageswarar. The one dedicated to Brahma is unique. The very important Mahamakam festival takes place at the Mahamakham tank once in 12 years when it’s believed that the waters of 9 sacred rivers flow into the tank. During this sacred occasion lakhs of people from all over the country assemble here to bathe and wash away their sins.

**THANJAVUR**

Scenically one of the most enchanting districts in Tamil Nadu is Thanjavur. it has the reputation of being considered as the Rise Bowl of Tamil Nadu. Once a Chola capital, Thanjavur is the cradle of Tamil culture and civilization, and the granary of the South. Thanjavur hosted the A Booklet Published by 8\(^{th}\) World Tamil Conference with pride and enthusiasm, for the first time, a district headquarters with fewer facilities was selected for the conference the State Government took efforts to develop the infrastructure and other facilities to host
this big event. After fixing the venue, the Government took up works like the construction of an over bridge which remained a distant dream of the Thanjavur people for the past two decades, laying of a 17 kms ring road, renovation of the neglected palace complex, building houses for the delegates, giving a face lift to Sivaganga and other parks, and reshaping the whole town with widening of roads, sodium vapor lamps, etc. Today what remains of its glorious legacy are the temples of the Cholas, not less than 74 of them are around the Thanjavur itself\textsuperscript{27}.

The Brahadeeswarar temple or the big temple is the major attraction of Thanjavur. It was built by the great Chola emperor, Rajaraja Chola. The Big temple is that dynasty's finest contribution to Dravidian temple architecture. What makes the construction so unique is the diversion from the usual temple building norms of having tall gopuram and smaller vimanam (the tower over the sanctum). At the big temple the vimanam is high, while the gopuram remains stunted. The tower is a testimony to the engineering skill of the Chola architects who planned its construction in such a way that the shadow of the gopuram never falls on the ground. Another important attraction of Thanjavur is Thanjavur Palace and the Tirumalai Naicker Mahal\textsuperscript{28}.

In keeping with the 'bigness\textsuperscript{29}' of the temple is the gigantic Mahalingam in the shrine, and the massive Nandi at the portals. It is the second largest monolithic Nandhi in the country. The art gallery, the Saraswathi Mahal Library, the Sangeetha Mahal, and the Schwartz Church are also well known places of interest in Thanjavur.

**AROUND THANJAVUR**

Thiruvaiyaru is situated on the banks of the Kaveri 15 kms from Thanjavur. Thiruvaiyaru has an old Siva temple, dedicated to Panchanatheeswar. Though pilgrims flock to this temple through out the year, Thiruvaiyaru is more renowned

\textsuperscript{27} D. Dayalan, Early Temples of Tamil Nadu, Harman Publication, New Delhi, 1992,pp.19-21.

\textsuperscript{28} Government of Tamil Nadu, Policy Note on Tourism, Demand No.50,1994-95. p.9.

\textsuperscript{29} The Hindu, August, 15, 1982.
for its association with Saint Thyagaraja who along with Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Sastri comprise the trinity of Carnatic music. On the banks of the river are Samadhi of the saint, and it is here that the great music festival in the country, Thyagaraja Aradhana, is held annually in the month of January when most of the leading exponents of Carnatic music come to perform and are watched by thousands of ardent fans.

**SWAMIMALAI**

Situated on a 30 mts high platform, this is one of the six abodes of Lord Subramaniya. It marks the spot where the young Subramanya explained to Siva the meaning of 'Om' which precedes every Hindu prayer. The presiding deity is called Swaminatha.

**THIRUBUVANAM**

There is a Siva temple built and patronized by the Cholas. It is a large temple not visited by many the village is an important silk weaving centre of the Stated.

**DHARASURAM**

The Dharasuram Temple, built by Rajaraja Chola-II, is an excellent example of the 12th century Chola architecture, and is well preserved to this day. The temple has been restored by the Archaeological Survey of India. The UNESCO has adopted it for preservation of heritage.

**THIRUVARUR**

This is the hallowed birth place of the Saint Thyagaraja. The tank at the Thyagaraja temple known as Kamalalayam is a big draw for pregnant women who come to take a dip and pray that their children too be blessed with all benefits. The annual car festival is the biggest of its kind.

**NAGAPATTINAM**

The port town of Nagapattinam has a temple dedicated to Nagaraja, the king of the serpents. The town is also a convenient base for visiting Velankanni
and Nagore, two pilgrim centers of two different faiths, Christianity and Islam respectively.

VELANKANNI

Velankanni, 12 kms South of Nagapattinam, is one of the most famous Catholic pilgrim centers and is known as the Lourdes of the East. People of other faiths and religions too come to this church to pray at the shrine of "Our Lady of Health". Many bring with them small gold and silver replicas of parts of the body to donate to the church. Velankanni is particularly crowded during the festival period in August - September. There is a small church museum which has a display of the offerings made by those who were miraculously cured of their diseases. Nagapattinam is a fishermen's paradise too.30

NAGORE

Nagore, 12 kms, north of Velankanni, is a famous Muslim pilgrim centre. The tank is called "Peerkulam", and is believed to have curative powers. The Dargah is visited by people of all religious faiths. The Sandhanakoodu festival attracts thousands of devotees from all over the state.31

TRIVUNALUVR

Here is a temple dedicated to Saneeswaran. It is the only temple dedicated to Saneeswaran (Lord of Saturn), and it is believed that one could get rid of their curses and spells of bad luck if they pray here. Four in the sacred lake is considered a 'must' by all devotees.

VEDARANYAM

Both a centre of pilgrimage and historic interest, Vedaranyam is believed to be the place where Lord Siva and his consort Parvathi attired in full bridal finery appeared before Saint Agasthiyar. Vadaranyam is also the site of the salt

30 Madras, A Booklet Published by Orient Long Man Ltd., Madras, 1993, p.25.
Satyagraha led by C. Rajagopalachari, who later became the first Governor-General of the independent India. Its forest is rich in wild life of a minor variety.

**TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (OR) TRICHY**

Trichy is an ancient Cauvery delta town. The city was a Chola citadel from the Sangam age. The Pandiwas and the Pallavas also held sway over this region for short periods. The Nayakas of Madurai had built the town and the historic Rock Fort which played a vital role in the Carnatic wars in the 18th century. Today, Thiruchirapalli is a blend of history and tradition as well as a pilgrim centre and a thriving commercial city.

**AROUND TRICHY**

Srirangam is a picturesque island on the river Cauvery. It is known for its Vaishn native temple dedicated to Lord Renganathaswamy. The temple has 21 magnificent towers, which were built around the 13th and 14th centuries A.D., and is surrounded by seven walls within which the town itself is located. The Vijayanagara kings and the Madurai Nayakas renovated the temple.

**THIRUVANAIKKAVAL**

At Thiruvanaikkaval, a temple known as Jambukeswarar temple is dedicated to Lord Siva. Jambu is the name of the holy tree under which Eswara(or) Siva in the from of a Lingam is submerged in water. This temple is also known as Jambukeswaram after the legendary elephant that once worshipped this Lingam.

**PUDUKKOTTAI**

A former princely state, 'Pudukkottai', 50 kms from Trichy, is one of the most ancient regions in the country. This place is of absorbing interest to historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and lovers of art. The archaeological and cultural remains at Kodumbalur, Narthamalai, Kudumianmalai, Sittannavasal, the ancient abode of Jains dating back to the 2 century B.C.

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Thirumayarn and Avudaiyarkoil are proof of its rich heritage. The rulers of Pudukkottai have built several beautiful and also constructed tanks and canals. The collectorate of the district is now functioning in one of the palaces. The other places of interest are Sri Kokaneswarar temple and Government museum situated at Thikukokarnam. Kudumianmalai is known for its musical inscriptions and Sithannavasal for its paintings.

**MADURAI**

Madurai, once the seat of Tamil learning and still the place where Tamil language is spoken in its purest form is an ancient city. The city of Madurai was planned out in the shape of a lotus with the famous Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple, the Golden Lotus tank, and a number of pillared hails in the centre. It is situated on the banks of river Vaigai. It was here that Kannagai the heroine of the great Tamil classic, 'Silapathikaram', sought justice for her husband Kovalan at the court of Nedunczhelian, a Pandya king. Legend attributes the foundation of the temple and town to Kulasekara, the famous Pandya king. Tamil learning, art architecture, and literature flourished through the ages in Madurai.

**RAMESWARAM**

Rameswaram is one of the most venerated sacred temple towns in India. It is an island in the Gulf of Mannar; it is even mentioned in the epic Ramayana. This holy place draws a never-ending stream of pilgrims. A devotee who visits Varanasi is also expected to visit this place in order to gain the full fruits of his prayers. The most perfect pilgrimage of the Hindus is considered concluded only with a dip in the ocean at Rameswaram. This pilgrim centre is sacred to both Saivites and Vaisnavities, and befittingly, the temple here is one of the grandest in the country, known as the temple with the longest corridor in India (1220 mts). The Ramanathaswami temple is built at the spot where Rama worshipped Lord Siva after he slayed Ravana, the king of Lanka, who had adducted his wife Sita. The prayers were offered to plead forgiveness since Ravana happened to be a
great devote of Lord Siva. The temple is very old and was rebuilt several times by various kings.

Rameswaram is surrounded by some of the world's most beautiful coral reefs, and the entire land is a picturesque locale of sun, sand, and sea. Places to see include Kothandaramar temple, Kurusadai, and other near by islands; the local handicrafts include articles made of sea shells, and corals. The Pamban Bridge crossing which one reaches temple towns is a marvel of engineering.

TIRUNELVELI

Situated on the banks of the river Thamiraparani, the town of Tirunelveli, which was once the capital of the Pandyas, has a history that goes back to 2000 years. The main attraction of modern day Tirunelveli, however, is the twin temple of Kanthimathi and Nellaiappar dedicated to Parvathi and Siva. Among the interesting sights in the temple are the golden Lilly tank, the thousand - pillared hall, which has some exquisite sculptures, and the musical pillars which produce different musical notes when struck Tirunelveli is known for Pathamadai Korai mats from which are a small village, 30 kms from Tirunelveli. It is also the birth place of Swami Sivananda. Utility articles for which the place has earned a name halwa, a tasty sweet meat and Palm product Tirunelveli is well connected by road. It is also a major junction on the Southern Railway. The nearest airport is Madurai from where Indian Airlines connections are available. There are a number of private, unclassified hotels and Railway retiring rooms for accommodation.

TIRUCHENDUR

The shore temple here is one of the six abodes of Lord Subramanya. This place is believed to be the place were Subramanya offered victory prayers to his father Lord Siva after slaying the demon Surapadma. The Skandasashti festival is

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celebrated at the temple in October to November every year\textsuperscript{34}. There are a couple of other temples at Alwarthirunagar and Srivaikundam close by.

**PANCHALAMKURICHI**

It is a small but historic village; it was from here the great warrior Kattabomman known as Veera Pandiya Kattabomman raised his voice against the British regime in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The Kattabomman memorial was first constructed by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1974, While the ruined original fort is under the protection of the Archaeological survey of India. There in a temple for Sri Jakkammal the hereditary goddess of Kattabomman, and it is located near the fort; a cemetery of British soldiers is seen near the fort.

**KAZHUGUMALAI**

The Jain temples here are among the oldest in the country, and have some excellent sculpture. The rock cut cave temple dedicated to Lord Siva is also worth visiting\textsuperscript{35}.

**SANKARANKOIL**

Sankarankoil is a unique temple dedicated to Sankaranarayana, who is the combined manifestation of Siva and Vishnu. There are two other shrines dedicated to Siva and Parvathi\textsuperscript{36}.

**TENKASI**

Tenkasi literally means Varanasi of the South. There is a beautiful Siva temple here which has a flagstaff that is 400 years old\textsuperscript{37}.

**PADMANABHAPURAM**

The capital of Travencore until A.D.133. Padmanabhapuram is own for its fort which enclose among other buildings a palace and a temple. The place has

\textsuperscript{34} Census of India 1961, op.cit.,pp.243-244.


some important art relics, while Ramaswamy temple has exquisitely depicted scenes from the Ramayana.

**CONCLUSION**

The religion and cultural heritage is the core of the life of Indians. Though, India is secular state its people are firm in their trust in god and its cultural heritage. Both religion and heritage are both sides of the same coin. Because, religion provides various customs, resources for an ethical and moral life, that determined the cultural heritage of the country. Thus in this context the role of tourism is that the temples are the most important source of our tourism industry. It attracts both rationales and irrationals. So it is easy for us to show the cultural life and moral values we depicted through our life in these temples. Tourism links men, community, civilization and culture together. So in this study it really wants to emphasis that tourism is an inseparable part of our life, the religious places are the most attractions of the tourists to the country. Thus tourism and tourists, religion and religious places have an important role in the development and revival of our culture heritage.