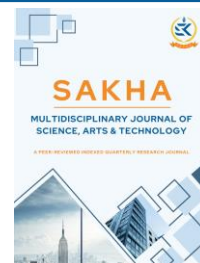




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The Veneration of Durga Deity of Heritage Monuments in Villupuram District

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Abstract

This study has focused to exhibit the veneration of Durga deity of Heritage monuments in Villupuram district. There are a greater number of Heritage monument existed in Villupuram district, which covered around thirty-two¹ as per Archaeological Survey of India. In the premises, both Shiva and Vaishnava temples list above the criteria, possessed the deities belongs to ancient period. On the consequences, the Durga deity also occurred in the premises comprised from Pallava and Chola period. The King Rajaraja, Rajasimha, Kutottunga are constructed the temple attributed the Durga deity which venerated by the people in the same. Most of the deities placed towards the northern side of the temple, believed that the abolition of evils and blessings to the people. Durga deity has renowned numerous names as Kottaravai,² Gowmari, Brahmi, Maheswari, Vaishnavi and Samundi. Durga deities has vehicles Peacock, indeed this deity equally preferred from other male deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Eswarnar, Indira and Narasimhan.

Keywords: Veneration of Durga deity, Villupuram District, Heritage Monuments, Panamalai and Sendamangalam.

Introduction

There are a greater number of Heritage monument existed in Villupuram district, which covered around thirty-two¹ as per Archaeological Survey of India. In the premises, both Shiva

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and Vaishnava temples list above the criteria, possessed the deities belongs to ancient period. On the consequences, the Durga deity also occurred in the premises comprised from Pallava and Chola period. The King Rajaraja, Rajasimha, Kutottunga are constructed the temple attributed the Durga deity which venerated by the people in the same. Most of the deities placed towards the northern side of the temple, believed that the abolition of evils and blessings to the people. Durga deity has renowned numerous names as Kottuvai,² Gowmari, Brahmi, Maheswari, Vaishnavi and Samundi. Durga deities has vehicles Peacock, indeed this deity equally preferred from other male deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Eswararn, Indira and Narasimhan. This study has focused to exhibit the veneration of Durga deity of Heritage monuments in Villupuram district.

Durga Deity

Mythologically, Durga deity is the formation of Sakthi (power) and Parvathi. The literal meaning of the deity is 'Undefeatable deity'. Generally, the Durga deity has four hands, indeed all the sculptures carved in this nature. She had four legs, seated above the Bull (Mahisa) on the standing position. Some sculptures She is seated above the lion (Simha vahana). She holds the conch(sankha),³ Chakra (wheel), Bow and arrow, Abhaya Mudra posture. ⁴Durga treated as the carnation of Lord Vishnu through mythological perspective. Durga deity, generally placed northern side of the Sanctum sanctorum on both Shiva and Vaishnava temple. Durga deity has been glorified the devotees through the ages.⁵

Veneration of Durga

Tolkappiam, a Sangam literature mentioned about the veneration of Kograi. Indeed it was considered as the victory deity as the following:

“Marankadai Kuttiya Kudinilai Sirantha

Kottuvai Nilayum Athinai Puraney”

(Thol Porulathigaram , 62)

However, Tholkappiyam mentioned Palai land, but not mentioned about the Kotraiai and its proper place. The prose writer Ilampooranar mentioned as the Kottuvai deity could be the related to Palai land (dry land).⁶ For example, the Purapporul Venbamalai mentioned about the existence of the Kottuvai as

“Ali Manikkodi Payngili Paykalaik
Kooli Valimadai Kotravai Meeli
Aran Murunga Agol Karuthin Adaiyar
Muran Murunga than Munthurum”
(Vetchim 20)

This literature mentioned about the Kotravai, and she has the flog of lion and peacock. She also had the devil battalion, and stag force. The refrence about the both Kurinji and Mullai lands were transformed into Palai land during the summer. Silappadigaram mentioned as ‘Mullaiyum Kurinjiyum Muraimaiyin thirindu’ tells the above statement as true. Hence, the Palai lands was included the other form of lands during summer. The veneration of Durga diety was continued from ancient period. Durga deity was glorified in the various forms namely Durga, Vishnu Durga, Mahishashavarthini, Kotravai, Navadurgai, Shailaputhri, Brahmacharini, Chandraganda, Kushamanda, Skandamatha, Kathayani, Kalarathirai, Mahagowri and Sithathathiri.

Kotravai was mostly located in the forest lands; hence the veneration existed in the hilly region in ancient period, has the position seated in the Bull. Some places, Kotravai bowstring to the Arakan(devil) and seated above the lion, and called as Mahisahavarthini.⁷ She has four hands, eight hands with Conch, wheel looked like carnation of Vishnu, placed in the Vishnu temple called as Vishnu Durga.⁸ Durga has the weapon like conch, wheel, bow and arrow, Sulam(trident), sword, Shield and angusa. ⁹The major and minor deities are venerated in the temples and attributed several poojas and ceremonies in the same. But the poojas are conducted for the Durga deity on special days, like Thursday and Friday.¹⁰ Moreover, the poojas were conducted on the auspicious days like Navarathiri while the red flowers adorned to the deity.

Panamalai

Panamalai is located in Anandapuram panchayat in Villupruam District. Narasimhavarman II (alias Rajasimman) built a temple existed in this period, which authenticated that it was belongs to Pallava period. This temple significant to the carved form stones, rock cut temples, named Thalagireeshwar temple. There are sixteen stripe Sivalingas existed and also has the Durga sculpture placed in this temple. Pillars were carved in very height and Thirusutru mandapa existed.¹¹ Durga deity is located in the western side of the Rajashima inscription, it

revealed the hereditary of the Pallava period. Durga deity placed in a standing position in single leg (left leg) above the lion, with eight hands in a rock cut sculpture. The right hands of the sculpture clinched wheel and the sword. Another two hands had a 'Kadaga Mutra', and placed in the thighs. The left hands possessed Conch, Shield, bow and arrow, and final one has placed in the thigh. Pallava period Durga in a standing position has the crown. Durga deity has the ear lobe in a rounded shape, the shoulder ornament, ornament in wrist, band in the waist, anklet in the foot. The lion (simha) also has the position that one leg raised upward and one placed in the floor. This sculpture more similar to the Kanchi Vishwanathar temple. This shows that the veneration of the Durga deity in Pallava period, and existed during the Narasimhavaram in the same.¹²

Ulagapuram

Ulagapuram is located in Tindivanam road around 23-kilometer distance in Villupuram district. Chola period temple is existed in Ulagapuram named 'Sri Kailasamudaiyar'. Sanctom Sanctroum has the prominent God Shiva (Kailasa), Ulaganayagi Amman. Also, the Dakshinamoorthy and Durga existed in the temple. Both Vinayaga and Sun God existed in the temple. This temple was constructed by Kandarathiyan which mentioned by Rajaraja I inscription belongs to third regnal year. Further, this temple was renovated in the Pandya and Vijaynagara Empire. Both Sanctom Sanctroum has Kandarathithayan prayed to the deity (sculpture). The main deity Kayilamudaiyar in the shape of Linga. The inscriptional sources mentioned the name as Ariyakulasegari Eswaramudaiyar, Sri Kayilainattu Parameshwari, Ariyakula Kesari Eswaramudaiyar Mahadevar and Ariyakula Kesava Eswaramudaiya Nayanar¹³. This temple has the several sculptural sources of Narthana Vinayaga, Pichadanar, Dakshinamoorthy, Brahma, Sandekeshwar and Durga.¹⁴

The Ulagapuram temple Durga deity might be the important example of the Chola sculpture. She has eight hands, ornaments placed above the Mahisha(bull) in a standing position. The Duda (ambassadors of God), conch, stage are placed near the Durga deity. Her hand grasped conch, sword, wheel and posed 'Abhayamudra' and other hand placed in the thigh. This sculpture has the ornaments in the neck and ear. Behind the Durga sculpture a stage placed.¹⁵

Brahmadesam (Brahmareeswarar)

Brahmadesam is located around 25 kilometre from Villupuram , 23 kilometer from Gingee. There is a temple existed namely Brahmareeswarar temple located north western side, included sanctum Sactroum, Arthamandapa, Mahamandapa, Mugamandapa, Thirusutraumalaigai, sub shrines and Gopura. A Durga deity was identified at the time of excavation from the Archaeological Survey of India, has the eight hands seated above the Mahisha (bull). Her hands holds conch, sword, shield and Bow and Arrow. Here, the Vishnu Durga existed in the Arthamandapa, also holds conch, wheel and rest of hands placed in the thigh. This shows that Brahmadesam might be important place in the kingship, and the veneration of Durga deity was prominent in the same.¹⁶

Perangiyur

Perangiyur is located around ten kilometre in the Southern side on the bank of South Pennar river. The epigraphical sources mentioned this region as 'Prangiyur'. The primary God has been renowned as 'Thirumoolashtana Madavar'. The epigraphical sources belongs to Rajaraja I to Kulottunga existed. Durga deity placed above the lotus(padmapeedam) is in the Perangaiyur, only one place in Tamil Nadu. Generally, the Durga deity placed in the Siva temple, but this temple has different one, which possessed conch and wheel. This showed the Durga deity veneration in the temple at Perangiyur.¹⁷

Sendamangalam

Sendamangalam is located between Ulundurpet and Villupuram road near Gadilam bridge. The primary God Abathyakasar, and deity Prasanna Nayagi (Periya Nayagi) existed. There the sculpture has the enormous number and pillars. Manavalapperumal named this palces as 'Vanilai Kandeewaram'. The Sendamangalam fort possessed the pazhayamman in the temple pond was more significant. This fort was established by Manavalaperumal, indeed the King Koperunjingam glorified the same. Here, the Pallaavas were venerated the Kotraivai deity during their period.¹⁸

Conclusion

The Hindu religion has the veneration of female deity more than two thousand years. Durga was the famous deity to caranat to killed the devil of Mahisha. Lord Thirumal's wife Durga was glorified for all the Kingdom in Villupuram District. Indeed, all the heritage monuments have

the Durga sculpture, which depicted the importance of the veneration. Pallava Kings venerated the Durga deity as their family deity, established several temples with the Durga sculpture in the same. Durga veneration authenticated that the women are more prominent in the ages.

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