

## CHAPTER VII

### BIFURCATION OF TRAVANCORE TEMPLES AND TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

On 1st November 1956, Indian states were reorganised on linguistic basis and obviously Kerala state was also re-organised. The four Tamil speaking taluks of Thovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode in the southern Travancore were merged with the then Madras state. These four taluks constituted the kanyakumari district which formed the southern most district of Madras state<sup>1</sup>. Consequently the Travancore temples were also bifurcated. Accordingly 490 Travancore temples were entrusted to the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board. They included 450 incorporated temples, 18 unincorporated temples, 12 **sanketan** temples and 2 **sreepadam** temples<sup>2</sup>. All these temples are widely appreciated for their exalted artistic excellence<sup>3</sup>. Subsequent to the bifurcation of Travancore temples, a separate fund called

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<sup>1</sup> B. Maria John, *Linguistic reorganisation of Madras Presidency*, Nagercoil, 1994, pp.78-88.

<sup>2</sup> Vide in the Appendix VII, pp.44-58.

<sup>3</sup> Vide in the Appendix VIII, pp.59-61.

Kanyakumari Devaswom fund was also constituted on 1st November 1956. The Commissioner, H.R. & C.E<sup>4</sup> (Administration) was appointed as one man Board to administer the devaswom in the transferred territory. The then Madras Government granted Rs.13.5 lakhs to kanyakumari Devaswom Board which they got from the consolidated annual grant of 51 lakhs. The amount obtained as share to Travancore Devaswom Board was 37.5 lakhs. The devaswom surplus fund available as on 31st October 1956 was also divided in the above proportion and the kanyakumari Devaswom Board got 24 lakhs as its share.

#### **Kanyakumari Devaswom Board:**

As per the Act 30 of 1959, passed by the Madras legislature, the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board was established on 1st April 1960. The President and two members constituted the Board. The president and a member were nominated by the then Madras Government and the Ruler of Travancore nominated another member. K.M. Boothalingam pillai (president), A. Brahmanandaswamy Nadar and R.N. Krishnaswamy Iyer

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<sup>4</sup> H.R.&C.E:- Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment.

(members) constituted the first Board<sup>5</sup>. Only the permanent resident of the transferred territory was eligible to be nominated to the Board. He should profess the Hindu religion and must attain the age of thirty-five years. The members could be removed on the ground of misbehaviour or incapacity. The President and members of the Devaswom Board were entitled to get travelling cum halting allowances for every month and it was fixed as Rs.200. for their tour at least for 10 days. Later the allowance was enhanced to Rs.250/-<sup>6</sup>.

The Devaswom Board functioned from 1st April 1960 to 31st December 1974 for about 15 Years. The working of the Board was effective. The most important function of the Board was to control the administration of devaswoms in the transferred territory. The Board supervised the activities of the temple, made arrangements for the proper conduct of **pujas**, **ceremonies**, **ulsavams** and other festivals of the temples. The Board appointed temple servants for the proper conduct of **pujas** and **ulsavams**. Board members visited

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<sup>5</sup> S. Nateson 'Devaswom in kanyakumari' , Souvenir, Kanyakumari Devaswom Board, Suchindrum, 1971, p.9.

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum No. 64632 U/61, Suchindrum, dated 17 July 1961.

the important temples during the days of **ulsavams**. They were entitled to get travelling allowances during their visit<sup>7</sup>. Apart from temple administration, the Board has undertaken many social, cultural and educational activities with a view to uplift the social, economic and cultural betterment of the Hindu community. The Board conducted meetings at regular intervals and urgent meetings were conducted with circulation minutes. Assistant devaswom commissioner acted as the secretary of the Board. The kanyakumari Devaswom Board has prepared and passed byelaws on various subject matters at the Board meetings. These byelaws were published in one or more newspapers of local languages of the locality, district gazettes, and exhibited them in the devaswom notice board at Board's office at Suchindrum. People expressed their objections and suggestion over the byelaws, which enabled the Board to modify them. Such modified byelaws were sent to the government through the commissioner<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> G.O. No.2229, Revenue Department, dated 24 may 1961.

<sup>8</sup> G. O.No. 2229, Revenue Department, dated 13 July 1961.

The Board prepared the administration report every year. The report covered all the activities of Board. In the administration report for the year 1960-'61, a detailed report regarding the social activities of the Board had been given. The establishment of schools and other educational institutions including the **thevara patasala** at Suchindrum were the major educational activities of the Board.<sup>9</sup>

### **Temples:**

The kanyakumari temples had a separate identity. Kanyakumari was an important town of the Pandian Kingdom and from the beginning of the Christian era it was a famous place of pilgrimage<sup>10</sup> . The temples here existed as centres of cultural activity. During the bifurcation of Travancore temples, at the eve of state re-organisation, the temples situated in this area were entrusted to the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board. There were 490 temples of different categories<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Devaswom Minutes, Suchindrum ,June 1962, p.3.

<sup>10</sup> Elamkulam p.n..kunjan pillai, **studies in kerala history**, kottayam, 1970, p.12

<sup>11</sup> Kanyakumari Devasworn Board Administration Report, Suchindrum, dated 20 July 1992, p.2

1) Incorporated temples	458
2) Unincorporated temples	18
3) Sanketham temples	12
4) Sreepadarn temples	2
Total	490

These temples were divided into five groups at taluk level, the groups being<sup>12</sup>.

- 1) Nagercoil group (Agasteeswram taluk)
- 2) Bhoothpandy group (Thovala taluk)
- 3) Padmanabhapuram group (Kalkulam taluk)

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

4) Kuzhithurai group (Vilavancode taluk)

5) Shencottah group (Shencottai taluk ,Tirunelveli district)

**Group wise temples<sup>13</sup>**

Sl No	Name of Temples	Nagercoil Group	Boothapany Group	Padma Nabapuram Gorup	Kuzhithurai Group	Shengottah Group
1	Incorporated Temples	94	66	116	94	83
2	Unincorporated Temples	3	6	2	2	5
3	Sankethan Temples	2	1	8	1	-
4	Sreepadarn Temples	-	-	2	-	-
	Total	99	73	128	97	93
				Grand Total		490

<sup>13</sup> Administration Report, op.cit, p.2.

Incorporated Devaswoms were the temples mentioned in the schedule of the devaswom proclamation of 1097 M.E., which had been under the management of the ruler of Travancore. Then they came under the revenue department and subsequently transferred to Travancore Devaswom Board. During bifurcation these temples were entrusted to Kanyakumari Devaswom Board. Total number of temples under this category was 458<sup>14</sup>. After the assumption of the incorporated devaswoms, the Devaswom Board took over some of the temples managed by trustees on account of their mismanagement and these temples came to be known as unincorporated devaswoms. The properties and funds of these devaswoms were kept distinct and separate from the incorporated devaswom. There were 18 unincorporated devaswoms under Kanyakumari Devaswom Board<sup>15</sup>. The administration of SreePadmanabha Swamy temple and **Sreepandaravaka** properties and funds of the said temple was vested in a trust with the ruler of Travancore. There was a separate department known as **sanketham** department. When **sreepandaravaka** lands were taken over by the Government, the administration and management of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



**sanketham** temples were placed with the devaswom Board<sup>16</sup>. There were twelve **sanketham** temples in the transferred territory. The **sreepadam** temples were managed by the palace directly. There were separate lands known as **sreepadam** lands for these temples. **Sreepadam** lands were taken over subsequently. The management and control of these temples were transferred to the Devaswom Board. There were two **sreepadam** temples under Kanyakumari Devaswom Board<sup>17</sup>. The temples under category 3 and 4 were royal family temples. They were entrusted with the Board because of their properties being abolished by laws enacted by the government. Among the incorporated temples, some of them were considered as big temples. Such temples assumed that status on the basis of the expenditure incurred by them for **pujas**, ceremonies and other festivals. In other parts of Tamilnadu the temples which have more income are considered as big temples. This is a major difference between the temples of kanyakumari district and other parts of Tamilnadu. Kanyakumari temple, Suchindrum temple, Nagercoil Nagaraja temple, Mondaikadu temple, Tiruvattar temple, Velimali kumarakoil temple are some of

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<sup>16</sup> Sreepandaravaka land abolition Act, 1964.

<sup>17</sup> Administration Report, op.cit., p.3.

the ancient and famous temples in Kanyakumari District<sup>18</sup>. These temples are conducting many festivals and **ulsavams** apart from **nityanitanam**. The expenditure in these temples are high and so they are considered as major temples. The ritual in these temples are similar to those of the temples of Travancore. Some of the important **ulsavams** in Kanyakumari temples are Mondaikkadu Koda Maholsavam, Kumarakoil Thirukalyanam, Kollamcode Thookkam and Suchindrum car festival. A large number of people participated in these festivals. Sivalaya Oottam in sivarathri day and Saraswathy **puja** procession on navarathri eve are two notable festivals in Kanyakumari District, which cover the entire district<sup>19</sup>. Many temple priests like **santhikars**, **tantri**, **melsanthi**, **kizhsanthi** etc were appointed on the initiative of Board for the proper conduct of **pujas** and **ulsavams**<sup>20</sup>. The **santhikars** are appointed for a particular period ordinarily for a term of three years<sup>21</sup>. The **santhikars** in Kanyakumari temples were directly paid

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<sup>18</sup> Administration Report op.cit., p.5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> The Travancore Devaswom hand Book, p.142.

<sup>21</sup> G.O.No.D5067, public department, dated 4 October 1935.

with paddy but now they are paid in cash<sup>22</sup>.

### **Temple Servants:**

The temple servants under Kanyakumari Devaswom Board are designated as contingency staff and they have not been given a definite scale of pay similar to the government servants. They are paid consolidated amount as their salary. In many temples the santhikars have to deposit a security amount with the devaswoms department and it is considered as a minimum qualification for the post<sup>23</sup>. Following is the amount of security deposit fixed by the government.

1. **Santhikars** in the cape, Thiruppathisaram and Velimala Devaswoms - Rs.500 each.
2. **Perianambi** in the Thiruvattar Devaswom - One year's pay.
3. **Santhikars** in other Devaswoms - Rs.25 to 200.

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<sup>22</sup> K.K.Pillai, op.cit., p.174.

<sup>23</sup> Government of Madras, G.O. M.S. No. 1986, Revenue Department, dated 29 July 1964.

Apart from santhikars, there are other temple servants (contingency) such as **nathaswaram, thaval, panchavathiam, vilakkeduppu, suruthi, thalam, malaikettu, patramtheipu, thalithoopu, kazhakam, sankuvili, thirumeni kaval, pariyudayavar, bhagavthar, thevaram, kai-vistharam, rudhra-jepam** and **adthyayanam**. In addition to these temple servants, brahmin peon, watchman and strong room guards are also appointed<sup>24</sup>.

In addition to temple servants, there are 131 government servants and 14 thirukoil servants<sup>25</sup>. These two categories of employees are drawing their salary as per the scale of pay admissible to the government servants. They are governed by the government service rules. There were 15 officers working under kanyakumari Devaswom Board from 1960 onwards. The salary of the temple servants has been revised subsequently. The practice of giving **kattichoru** to some categories of temple servants have been stopped and in lieu of that, paying cash was started. Contributory

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<sup>24</sup> Administration Report, op.cit., pp.5-6.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp.4-5.

provident fund was introduced to temple servants and other devaswom servants other than government servants<sup>26</sup>. As per this scheme, the Board shall make contribution to the provident fund based on the pay of the subscriber from time to time. Such contribution shall be limited to six percent of the pay drawn by a subscriber. The scale of pay for the officers of the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board and other **thirukoil** servants were revised as per the pay commission recommendations. The four categories of contingency staff also received the enhanced dearness allowance. However the temple servants are still treated as contingency servants and their service conditions are yet to be improved. The reason is that the temple staffs are paid their salaries out of the collections from the 'hundis'. It is high time that this condition ought to be changed and the service conditions, particularly the salary of the temple servants should be paid, in accordance with the basic requirements of their lives.

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<sup>26</sup> Government of Madras, G.O.No. 347, Revenue Department, dated 25 january 1962.

After the Board assuming office, it had taken some pragmatic steps for the benefit of the temple servants. A survey was conducted among the temple servants working in various temples under the control of the Board. Vacant places in some temples were filled up. There were 1046 temple servants working in different temples under kanyakumari Devaswom Board. Similarly there were 14 thirukoil servants and 131 government servants who were also working in the Board office, temple offices, libraries and maramath department<sup>27</sup>. Among them, scale of pay was granted only to the government servants working in the administration wing. The workers inside the temples including the santhikars were treated as contingent staff and they were paid in the traditional way. The split up figures of the temple servants, thirukoil servants and government staff along with the pay scale are given separately<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Administration report, op,cit, p.5.

<sup>28</sup> Kanyakumari Devaswom Board Souvenir, op,cit., p.4.)

**DETAILS OF TEMPLE SERVANTS UNDER  
KANYAKUMARI DEVASWOM BOARD**

1.	Melsanthi (Archakar)	140
2.	Kizhsanthi (Assistant to Melsanthi)	220
3.	Nathaswaram	50
4.	Thaval	50
5.	Watchman and strong room guards	160
6.	Pancha-vadhyam	60
7.	Vilakkeduppu	05
8.	Brahmin peon	05
9.	Sruthi	30
10.	Thalam	10
11.	Mlaikettu	50
12.	Patram Teipu	20
13.	Thali-Thoopu (sweepers)	100
14.	Kazhakom	40
15.	Sankuvili	10
16.	Thirumenikaval & Paniyudayavar	58
17.	Bhagavathar - Thevaram & Kaivistharam	18
18.	Rudhra-Jepam & Adhyayanam	20
Total		1046

## **DETAILS OF GOVERNMENT SERVANTS**

1.	Devaswom Superintendents	05
2.	Managers	02
3.	Maramath Section Officers	02
4.	Assistants	14
5.	Junior Assistants	22
6.	Typists	03
7.	Overseer	01
8.	Suboverseers	05
9.	Sreekariam	39
10.	Chadrams	21
11.	Office Assistants(peons)	16
12.	Watchman	01
	Total	131



## **DETAILS OF THIRUKOIL SERVANTS**

1.	Junior Assistants	02
2.	Supervisors	02
3.	Electricians	02
4.	Maistry	03
5.	Library Assistants	02
6.	Office Assistants	03
Total		14

**KANYAKUMARI DEVASWOM BOARD**  
**SCALE OF PAY OF STAFF**

No.	Designation	Scale of Pay Rs
01	Assistant Devaswom Commissioner	300 -600
02	Devaswom Accounts Officer	300-600
03	Superintendents of Devaswom	250-400
04	Thiruvabharanam Special Officer	250-400
05	Manager (office)	180-300
06	Manager (Devaswom)	180-300
07	Technical Assistant	150-375
08	Maramath Section Officer	150-375
09	Assistants	125-175
10	Auditors (U.D)	125-175
11	Junior Assistants	90-140
12	Auditors (L.D)	90-140
13	Librariam	90-140
14	Typist	90-140
15	Srikariam	80-110
16	Treasurer	80-110
17	Head accountant	80-110
18	Chandram	70-100
19	Accountant	70-100
20	Manager (P.D.Devaswom)	70-100
21	Overseer	125-175
22	Draftsman	125-175
23	Suboverseer	90-140
24	Electrician	70-100
25	Last grade servants	50-60
26	Work Superintendent	30-60

### **Administration under legislation:**

In the devaswoms of former Travancore and later Kanyakumari district, the major tool for the administrative change was the statutes enacted from time to time. They are mainly the Travancore - Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950 (T.C.Act XV of 1950), Tamilnadu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959 (Tamilnadu Act 22 of 1959) and Tamilnadu (Transferred Territory) Incorporated and unincorporated Devaswom Act, 1959 (Tamilnadu Act 30 of 1959). The rules framed thereunder streamlined the administration of devaswoms by giving a new framework and functioning. The evolution of devaswom administration shows two district stages<sup>29</sup>. They are the devaswom administration of the erstwhile Travancore state and devaswom administration after the merger of transferred territories to Madras state<sup>30</sup>. These two stages clearly differ in nature and pattern of devaswom administration. In spite of this system of administration prevailed in Travancore continued to exist in Kanyakumari district

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<sup>29</sup> Adminstration Report, op.cit., p.1.

<sup>30</sup> Transfer of the four Tamil speaking taluks (Thovala, agastheeswram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode) to Madras State. (B.Maria John, **op.cit**, pp.78-88)

till formation of Kanyakumari Devaswom Board which was formed in April 1960. During this period, the government brought the above statues and subsequently a number of amendments. These statues and amendments changed the administration of devaswoms to a large extent.

The Hindu Religious Institutions Act of 1950 is a milestone in the administration of devaswoms in Travancore after the abolition of monarchy in the state. Similarly the Tamilnadu H.R.&C.E Act 1959 is an important landmark in the history of temple administration in Tamilnadu. The administrative pattern of devaswoms in the state changed drastically after the implementation of the Act. The salient feature of this Act is that it has given provision for the formation of charitable endowments with the temples. In Hindu system there is no line of demarcation between religion and charity. On the other hand charity is regarded as part of religion. Hence charitable endowments were formed as part of religious structure<sup>31</sup>. However the traditional aspects of devaswoms have been protected by this Act. The legacies and in roads of the previous temple administration and traditional

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<sup>31</sup> R.Sengottuvelan, **Tamilnadu H.R.&C.E. Act**, 1959, Madras, 1989, p.6.

aspects, materialised the H.R.&C.E., Act of 1959 into a moulding frame work for the H.R.& C.E., administration<sup>32</sup>.

According to the Act, a trust Board is constituted for each temple and the trustees are nominated to the trust. The trust Board is called **aramkavalarkuzhu** and the trustees are called **arumkavalarkal**. The administration of the temples is handed over to such trust Boards. Certain qualifications are prescribed for becoming a trustee. He is not eligible to be a trustee if he does not profess the Hindu religion<sup>33</sup>. The trustee of a religious institution shall bound to obey all lawful orders issued under the provisions of this Act by the government, the commissioner, the deputy commissioner or the assistant commissioner. The trustees may be hereditary trustees or the persons selected by the area committee. They are appointed by the assistant commissioner as per the provisions of the Act. Every Board of trustees constituted must consist of not less than three and not more than five persons. One shall be a member of the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe<sup>34</sup>. They

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<sup>32</sup> S.V.Murugan , **Tamilnadu H.R.&C.E Act** 1959, Coimbatore,m 1983, p.4.

<sup>33</sup> **Tamilndu H.R.&C.E Act**, 959, S.26(a)

<sup>34</sup> **Tamilnadu H.R.&C.E. Act**, op.cit., S.47, 1(2c).

can elect a chairman for the trust Board from among the members. A trustee can be suspended, removed or dismissed on valid reasons by the appropriate authority<sup>35</sup>. One of the notable provision included in the Act is the membership of a scheduled caste person in the trust Board which can be termed as a progressive measure. This is not guaranteed in the Board constituted under Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act 1950.

The Tamilnadu (Transferred territory) Incorporated and unincorporated Devaswoms Act, 1959 (Act, 30 of 1959) was brought about for the administration and control of the incorporated and unincorporated temples of the transferred territory. This Act gave provision for the formation of Kanyakumari Devaswom Board<sup>36</sup>. The Board functioned under the control and authority of the commissioner H.R.&C.E. Department, Madras. This was a major difference between the Travancore Devaswom Board and the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board. This Board only supervised the administration of 490 devaswoms of the transferred territory which had been bifurcated from Travancore Devaswom Board at the time

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, S.53(2)

<sup>36</sup> **Tamilnadu Act 30 of 1959**, st.George Fort Gazette, Madras, March 1950.

of state re-organisation. The provision for the devaswom fund of these temples has been incorporated in the constitution of India on the basis of the covenant entered into by the Raja of Travancore - Cochin state with the Government of India<sup>37</sup>. Virtually the temples covered under this Act are the royal controlled temples of erstwhile Travancore. In recognition of this, one member of the Board was a nominee of the maharaja of Travancore. A saving clause has also been included in the Act<sup>38</sup>. It says that nothing contained in this Act shall affect or authorise any interference with the right and privileges specified in schedule III to which the ruler of Travancore is entitled by custom, established usage or otherwise. In the schedule III many customs, established usages were prescribed. **Vazhivad** on the birthday of His Highness and **Kanikka** offerings by the Maharaja at his visit were common features in all the temples<sup>39</sup>. Navarathri **puja** is another custom followed in the south Travancore. Every year as per the date and time fixed by palace, Saraswathy Amman from Padmanabhapuram palace temple,

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<sup>37</sup> Eastern Book Company, (ed), **Constitution of India**, Article 290A, Lucknow, 1986, p.116.

<sup>38</sup> **Tamilnadu Act 30 of 1959**, op.cit., S.32.

<sup>39</sup> **Tamilnadu Act 30 of 1959**, op.cit., Schedule III, S.32.

Subramaniaswamy from Velimalai kumarakoil and Munnotti Nanga Amman from Suchindrum temple are brought in procession to Trivandrum and after **puja** etc in the palace they are taken back after **Vijayadasami**. Necessary arrangements in this connection are being done through the chief secretary to the Government. This ceremony is still continuing as a semi-government function. Hence the old systems are followed in the devaswoms of Kanyakumari district, inspite of many years rolled after the state re-organisation. This is due to the aforesaid provision included in the Act as well as the customary belief followed by the people of this area.

### **Income and Expenditure:**

The Kanyakumari Devaswom Board acted as a controlling body with systematic supervision and control of the devaswom finances here. The main source of income was the devaswom fund constituted at the time of state reorganisation for the benefit of the temples in the transferred territory. Accordingly, the annual government contribution was fixed as Rs.13.5 lakhs every year<sup>40</sup>. This was guaranteed under Article 290A of the constitution of

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<sup>40</sup> Adminsitration Report, op.cit., p.7.



India<sup>41</sup>. This amount was given in lieu of the devaswom lands being converted into **pandarapattom** or **sircar** lands<sup>42</sup>. However this is not the only source of income to the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board. The Kanyakumari devaswom Board also received as its share a sum of 24 lakhs from out of the devaswom surplus fund. This amount has been invested in fixed deposit in scheduled banks<sup>43</sup>. Besides the above, the income derived by way of lease of remaining lands, interest from investments made by the Devaswom Board in banks and other financial establishments, rent from buildings constructed at the temple premises and rented for shops, **kanikkas**, **nadavarvu** etc from devotees are the other sources of

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<sup>41</sup> Annual payment to certain Devaswom Funds.....A sum of Thirteen lakhs and fifty thousand rupees shall be charged on and paid out of the consolidated fund of state of Tamilnadu every year to Devaswom fund established in that state for the maintenance of Hindu temples and shrines in the territories transferred to that state on the 1st day of November 1956 from the state of Travancore - Cochin(Indian constitution Act 290 A, op.cit., p.116)

<sup>42</sup> Chithiraputhra Pillai, 'Devaswom Finance -A study' , **kanyakumari Devaswom Board Souvenir**, op.cit, p.52.

<sup>43</sup> **Ibid.**, p.52.

income for the devaswom<sup>44</sup>. However, the source of receipts have shown steady increase since 1956<sup>45</sup>.

Year	Receipts	Expenditure
1957-58	1453561.47	1532804.26
1958-59	1466368.94	1446758.34
1959-60	1491864.22	1446232.20
1960-61	1503595.10	1568052.36
1961-62	1511143.77	1568399.62
1962-63	1949881.60	1612905.74

The increase in the income was mainly due to the increase in the **kanikkai** and **nadavaravu** such as **hundial** receipt and **archanai kattanam**, **thulabharam**, **vadamalai** (in Suchindrum temple) and other **vazhivadus** of the devotees.

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<sup>44</sup> Kanyakumari Devaswom Board Administration Report, *op.cit*, p.71

<sup>45</sup> Devaswom Minutes, Suchindrum, June 1963.

The landed properties belonging to the temples have also been a source of steady income to devaswom. The temples under Kanyakumari Devaswom Board owned the following landed properties.

- |                |   |              |
|----------------|---|--------------|
| (1). Wet lands | : | 137.57 Acres |
| (2). Dry lands | : | 234.76 Acres |
| (3). Manavari  | : | 647.56 Acres |

The annual income expected from the above properties are (i) Rs.37500/- in cash and (ii) 60900 litres of paddy in kind. Yet this is not properly received by Devaswom Board annually without any lapse. At the close of the fasali Year 1400, the pending collection amounts are as follows<sup>46</sup>:

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<sup>46</sup> Kanyakumari Devaswom Board Administration Report, op.cit, p.6.

- |       |                      |   |                             |
|-------|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| (i)   | Lease amount in cash | : | Rs.1002713                  |
| (ii)  | Building rent        | : | Rs.1403110                  |
| (iii) | Lease amount in kind | : | 536281.250(Litres of Paddy) |

#### **Nadavaravu:**

The income derived from the presentation and offerings by the people is called **nadavaravu**. While much revenue was obtained from land revenue, **nadavaravu** too formed a major source of income of the temples. Presentation or **kanikkas** made to the devaswoms in the form of coins, silver, gold, jewels, vessels, lamps, silks, livestock, grains, coconuts and other articles formed **nadavaravu**<sup>47</sup>. Some articles like fruits, sugar, sandal etc were received as **thulabarams**. In some temples strong **Hundials** were

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<sup>47</sup> Proceedings of the government regarding the Recorganisation of Devaswoms, Trivandrum, p.16.

kept at the entrance of the temple for the people to deposit their **kanikkas**. **Nadaikkuvaipu kattanam** for **kavadi** etc. are also considered as **nadavaravu**. Sale proceeds of offerings like **sanchayachoru**, **parayeedu** etc. will also make income to the devaswoms<sup>48</sup>. The live stocks received as offering in certain temples were also auctioned<sup>49</sup>. In some temples of rural area the people of the locality, per house contribute a monthly amount called **masavari** for the conduct of customary **pujas** of the temple.

#### **Vazhivadus:**

**Vazhivadu** is another source of income to the temples. **Nivedyam** or food offering to the temples made by private individuals are called **vazhivadu**. The **vazhivadu** articles are entrusted to the **santhikaran** for preparation and performing<sup>50</sup>. A fixed amount should be remitted to the devaswom as fee for each **vazhivadu**. In some temples cracks are offered as **vedivazhivadu**

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<sup>48</sup> **Travancore Devaswom Manual**, Vol.1,p.233.

<sup>49</sup> Government of Travancore, G.O.No.2013, Revenue Department,dated 23 Edavam 1086M.E(June 1900).

<sup>50</sup> Proceedings of the Government regarding the organisation of Devaswom, op.cit., p.16.

and a particular rate is fixed for each crack. In some temples annual auction will be conducted to perform **vedivazhivad** of a year and income is received in advance as a lumpsum<sup>51</sup>. **Archana** is another **vazhivad** in which the offering is made in the name of a particular individual. There is a fee for performing **archana** and it is known as **archana kattanam**, which is a source of income to the devaswom<sup>52</sup>.

### **Expenditure:**

Each temple is a large consumer. Much of the income is spent for the conduct of pujas and other related festivals. The ceremonies for which expenditure is incurred may be broadly divided into ordinary and extra-ordinary ceremonies<sup>53</sup>. Ordinary ceremonies are **nithyanidanam**, **masavishesham**, **attavishesham** and **ulsavam**, while extraordinary ceremonies are conducted for special occasions on specific reasons. A considerable amount is spent for these

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<sup>51</sup> Auction of Vedivazhivad at Vettuvanni Kandan Sastha Devaswom, Martandam, Kanyakumari district.

<sup>52</sup> Velimala Kumarakoil temple - Special Archana Rs.5/-, ordinary Archana Rs.3/-

<sup>53</sup> ***The Travancore Devaswom Manual***, vol.II, 1956, p.120.

ceremonies. In some temples the ceremonies on particular days are conducted at the expense of certain private individuals<sup>54</sup>. For minor and petty devaswoms all payments are made from the deputy commissioner's office, Suchindrum by way of cheque on production of bills and vouchers by the concerned temples<sup>55</sup>. A register is maintained for each group in addition to the cash book of expenditure<sup>56</sup>. The income derived and the expenditure made are done as per the budget sanction for the particular financial year.

There are some temples in the district, which enjoyed grants from Devaswom Board<sup>57</sup>. Apart from this the renovation and reconstruction of temples were being systematically carried out from year to year according to an approved scheme of the maramath department functioning under the Devaswom Board. But due to the scarcity of funds, this could not be carried out promptly and regularly. Purchase and repair of temple cars, vessels and other articles form a major expenditure. The cleaning of temple ponds, white washing and painting etc. are the obligatory items of

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<sup>54</sup> *The Travancore Devaswom Manual*, vol.I, 1954, p.125.

<sup>55</sup> Budget File No.F3, R.C.No.2193/62 of kanyakumari devaswom Board.

<sup>56</sup> *The Travancore Devaswom Hand Book*, op.cit., p.208.

<sup>57</sup> Vide in the Appendix VII, pp.57-58.

expenditure. Similarly some unexpected items of expenditure such as the repair of temple car of Suchindrum etc. by fixing two new wheels for the car, have to be carried out<sup>58</sup>. The feeding cost of elephants and other livestock belonging to the temple also incur expenditure.

Besides, the Act has provided for a certain non-devaswom expenditure such as for the social, educational and cultural advancement of the Hindu community<sup>59</sup> according to the availability of funds after meeting the obligatory items of expenditure. Under this category of expenditure, the expenses for starting schools, colleges, libraries and grant for other cultural institutions are coming. The Kanyakumari Devaswom Board has started schools at Mondaikkadu, Tripparappu, Kuzhithurai and Suchindrum and a college at Kuzhithurai. A library at Nagercoil was also started<sup>60</sup>.

Another major item of expenditure is the salary and wages given to temple servants other than the departmental officers and

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<sup>58</sup> Kanyakumari Devaswom Board Minutes, Suchindrum, June 1964.

<sup>59</sup> ***The Tamilnadu Act 30 of 1959***, s.18.

<sup>60</sup> Kanyakumari Devaswom Board Minutes, Suchindrum, 1961-67.



employees who are paid directly from the devaswom fund. The enhancement of dearness allowance, contributory provident fund, pensionary benefits, travelling allowances, mahout wages etc are met from the devaswom revenue. Hence almost all the thirty items of expenditure<sup>61</sup> existed during the period of Travancore Devaswom Board existed under the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board also.

A budget is prepared for each financial year and the expenditure is made in accordance with the budget provisions. Unlike in government, the expenditure has to be limited to the receipts of fund. There is no provision for a deficit budget since the deficit could not be adjusted through the mobilisation of more income from other means. Hence the receipts and expenditure would always be tallied and in some cases the expenditure would be less than the receipts<sup>62</sup>. The Board must submit the budget to the commissioner, H.R.&C.E department, Madras<sup>63</sup>. The commissioner has full power to make alternations, omissions, or additions in the budget as he may deem fit and proper. His decision

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<sup>61</sup> ***Travancore Devaswom Manual***, op.cit., p.243.

<sup>62</sup> Kanyakumari Devswom Board Financial Report, 1961-71.

<sup>63</sup> The Tamilnadu Act 30 of 1970, pp.3-4.

is final in this respect. This principle is certainly a retrograde step<sup>64</sup>. The Travancore Devaswom Board has more powers regarding the budget. There, the Board is more or less an autonomous body accountable only to the high court concerning budget and auditing. But the H.R.&C.E department, Madras was more powerful than the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board.

The following details regarding receipts and expenditure give the real picture about the budget of Kanyakumari Devaswom Board

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<sup>64</sup> R.Ramaswamy pillai, **op.cit.**, p.16.

### **Financial position:**

When years passed by expenditure exceeded the income. For example for fasli year 1400, the expenditure exceeded the income by a margin of Rs 152083/-. There are many reasons for this. First of all the price of things have gone up considerably. An article worth of Rupees one in the year 1960 has multiplied in cost subsequently. Like wise the cost of materials required for the maramath work has also increased considerably. But, whereas the annual government contribution of Rs.13.5 lakhs fixed during 1956 and being paid every year for the maintenance and up keep of the 458 incorporated devaswoms remain unaltered<sup>66</sup>. Therefore the annual maintenance works in some archaeological and historically important temples<sup>67</sup> were not carried out for the past several years due to lack of funds. Further mere remuneration paid to be temple servants also could not be increased even to the extent necessary to suit their living<sup>68</sup>. This clearly shows that the financial position of the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board was not at all satisfactory. In

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<sup>66</sup> kanyakumari devaswoms Board Adminsitration Repoert, op.cit, p.7.

<sup>67</sup> Vide in the Appendix VIII, pp.59-61.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p.7.

order to improve the financial condition of the Devaswom Board many novel schemes have been planned and implemented. It has to be done systematically and effectively with a long run programme.

The kanyakumari Devaswom Board has taken effective measures to improve the income of the temples. Many experts and experienced persons were consulted for this purpose. In many important temples, new **vazhivadu** schemes such as **laksharchana** and **kodiarchana** have been conducted. Many worshippers came forward to contribute for the new **vazhivadu** schemes<sup>69</sup>. The Board has also taken the following decisions to improve the income sources of the temples

- (1) To allow the devotees to enter the temples wearing pants, shirts etc so that there will be, an increase in the number of devotees. So the **kanikai** offerings to the temple will also increase.
- (2) To lease the temple tanks to the Department of Fisheries for fish culture.

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<sup>69</sup> Adminstration Repoert, op.cit, p.12.

- (3) To hire the vacant mandapams for daily rent to conduct marriages.
- (4) To construct buildings for shops and Thirumana Mandapams in the available vacant sites with bank loan and public contribution.
- (5) To keep open the main door of the temple more time so that the pilgrims and tourists arriving at any time may have a **darsan** of the deity and present their offerings.

Some of the decisions of the Board seem to be against the established usage and custom of the temples, yet it can be allowed to the extent they do not affect the sanctity of the temples. The kanyakumari devaswom Board functioned fairly well till its abolition in December 1974.

## CONCLUSION

The state of Travancore had the complexion of a Hindu state by virtue of the domination of Hindu population and reign of Hindu sovereigns. The Hindu character of the state was re-enforced when the rulers assumed the title 'sreepadmanabhadasa', which symbolised that the ruler being the **dasa** or servant of Sreepadmanabha, the prime deity of the royal family. In Travancore most of the temples were founded and endowed by Hindus and managed by trustees called **uralars**. In course of time enormous wealth accumulated in the temples by way of donations from the people and the ruler. The state had direct control over a few temples but it exercised **melkoyma** right over the management of other temples. The **uralars** not only enjoyed unrestricted power in the administration of temples but also exercised judicial and executive powers among the people within the temple **sanketams**. Later they became corrupt and began to misappropriate the funds of the temples. As a result the **pujas** and other ceremonies were not held properly in some temples.

On seeing the ugly state of affairs of the temple administration, Col Munro, the resident **dewan** of Travancore took over the management of 348 major and 1123 minor temples with all their properties. This was a turning point in the history of temple administration of Travancore. The orders of the government emphasised that the assumption was in the interest of better management of temples. However, much criticism was levelled against the assumption by several Hindus who considered the act amounting to that of confiscation of temples and their properties. This contention was rejected by the Travancore high court holding that the position of the government was only that of a trustee and the government was not entitled to transform the properties belonging to temples into **sircar** properties. Thereafter the revenue department was entrusted to administer the temples of Travancore and the **pandaravaka** properties. Yet the administration of temples by the revenue department was also not an unmixed blessing. The inconvenience felt by the revenue authorities leading to their inability to look after the affairs of the temples was the first reason to demand for a separate devaswom department. Secondly the non-

Hindus and non-caste Hindus demanded for the separation of devaswoms from revenue department since they were kept off from the appointment of revenue department which included devaswoms, owing to the rigidity of caste rules. The sovereign also convinced that the assumption of administration by the government did not make any change in the quality of administration. Therefore the government appointed a committee to enquire and report on the feasibility of separation of devaswoms from land revenue department. The committee favoured for the separation which culminated into the formation of devaswom department in April 1922. Though the devaswom commissioner was the head of the newly formed devaswom department, he functioned under the **dewan** of Travancore. When examining the devaswom administration from 1811 to 1922, it is evident that the governmental interference in the administration of temples did not fetch any improvement to the devaswoms, lest it harmed the existence of such devaswoms. But the trend began to change gradually after 1922, when the newly formed devaswom department began to function in the right direction by introducing many reforms in the devaswoms of Travancore. But one can not expect that the earlier evils melted in the administrative machinery



of the temples could be removed all on a sudden. However these reforms opened the door for the genesis of popular movements for temple entry to all sections of Hindu community irrespective of caste, creed and social status. These movements gained momentum inviting more charges in the temple administration of Travancore. The historic temple entry proclamation made by the maharaja of Travancore on 12th November 1936 had a positive impact on the society that accelerated the process of social change through spiritual freedom and equality of worship. It paved the way for popularisation of temple worship in Travancore, which had its repercussions in many ways. Due to the increase in the flow of Hindu population to the temples, there was an improvement in the general economy of temples. This necessitated for proper regulation in the financial administration of temples which included accounting and auditing of funds collected through various sources. Moreover with the abolition of monarchy, the dawn of democracy appeared and the religious institutions were democratized in the light of new legislations. Thus the Travancore - Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950 was enacted by the Travancore legislative assembly which provided for the establishment of Travancore Devaswom Board.

The Act envisaged a well-defined devaswom establishment with the creation of a Devaswom Board along with the hierarchy of officers and employees for the control and management of devaswoms. The evaluation of the working of Travancore Devaswom Board upto 1960 reveals that the Board can provide effective administration to all categories of temples existing in the state.

In 1956, due to state re-organisation the Travancore temples were bifurcated and 490 temples of the transferred territory were handed over to the newly formed Kanyakumari Devaswom Board. The special study on the administration of temples in Kanyakumari district from 1956 to 1960 shows many unique features. The temples here got the legacy from Travancore and the **pujas**, rituals and ceremonies conducted here are very much similar to that of Travancore temples as per the established custom and usages. Therefore these 490 temples still preserve a kind of separate identity from other temples of Tamilnadu. However, as time went on, some changes have taken place in the

administrative set up of these temples due to the application of H.R & C.E. Act of Tamilnadu. Subsequently, the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board which was established in 1960 was abolished. Yet these 490 incorporated and unincorporated temples are still under the control of a separate deputy commissioner and executive officer working at Suchindrum where once the Kanyakumari Devaswom Board functioned.