

## KARUR REGION AND ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – A STUDY

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Karur is a town of great significance for the history and culture of the Tamils. It has played an important role in the Tamil region for over two thousand years. For the past one hundred years it has been turning out important artifacts and historical relics, that has invited the attention of scholars all over the world.<sup>i</sup> Karur is a municipality in the district of Karur, in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is located on the banks of the Amaravati River. It is at a distance of 60 km to the southeast of Erode and 70 km to the west of Trichy. It lies 100 km to the south of Salem, 150 km to the north of Madurai and 140 km to the east of Coimbatore.

### **Historicity of Karur**

According to Hindu mythology, Brahma began the work of creation here, referred to as the "place of the sacred cow." Epigraphical, numismatic, archaeological and literary evidence have proved beyond doubt that Karur was the capital of early Chera kings of the Sangam age. It was called Karuvoor or Vanji during the Sangam days. There have been a plethora of rare findings during the archaeological excavations undertaken in Karur. These include mat-designed pottery, bricks, mud-toys, Roman coins, Chera Coins, Pallava Coins, Roman Amphorae, Rasset coated ware, rare rings etc.<sup>ii</sup> Karur was built on the banks of river Amaravathi, which was called Anaporunai, during the Sangam days. Silver Denari of the Roman emperors Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius were found near Karur in 1806. Situated as it was near the point where the territories of the Chera, Chola and Pandya dynasties met, it must have played a significant part in their ancient struggle. It has been generally supposed that it was the Capital of the Cheras and is identical with the Kapoupa Bacieiove Knop Bopov (Karur, the palace of the Chera King) mentioned by Ptolemy.<sup>iii</sup> The names of the early Chera kings who ruled from Karur, have been found in the rock inscriptions in Aru Nattarmalai close to Karur.<sup>iv</sup> R. Raghava Iyengar's work was a brilliant exposition. Prof. K.A.Nilakanta. Sastri, the great historian accepted the view of R. Raghava Iyengar and located the Sangam age Cheras at Karur. Then came the brilliant reading of the Pugalur inscription by Sri Iravatam Mahadevan, who showed that three generations of Sangam age Cheras, mentioned in the record, near Karur.<sup>v</sup> The historicity of Karur has been known by its various names mentioned in the different sources like Pandu Vanchi, Vanchularanyam, Vanchimanagar, Vanchithai Ur Athipuram, Viracholapuram, Karpupuri, Baskarapuram, Sanmangala Sethiram, Mudivalangu Cholapuram etc.<sup>vi</sup>

The Tamil epic Silapathikaram mentions that the famous Chera King Cheran Senguttuvan ruled from Karur. In 150 B.C. Greek scholars Ptolemy mentioned "Korevora"<sup>vii</sup> (Karur) as a very famous inland trading centre in Tamil Nadu. After the early Cheras, Karur was conquered and ruled by Pandyas, followed by Pallavas and later Cholas. Karur was

under the rule of Cholas for a long time. Later the Naickers, followed by Tipu Sultan, also ruled Karur. The British added Karur to their possessions after destroying the Karur Fort during their war against Tipu Sultan in 1783 A.D. There is a memorial at Rayanur near Karur for the warriors, who lost their lives in the fight against the British in the Anglo-Mysore Wars. After that Karur became part of British India and was the first, part of Coimbatore District and later Tiruchirappalli District.<sup>viii</sup>

Karur is also a part of Kongunadu. The history of Kongunadu dates back to the 8th century. The name Kongunadu originated from, "Kongu", meaning nectar or honey. Kongu came to be called Kongunadu with the growth of civilisation. The ancient Kongunadu country was made up of various districts and taluks, which known as Palani, Dharapuram, Karur, Namakkal, Thiruchengodu, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Satyamangalam, Nilgiris, Avinashi, Coimbatore, Pollachi and Udumalpet. Kongunadu was blessed with enormous wealth, a pleasant climate and distinct features. Kongunadu was ruled over by the Chera, Chola, Pandya, Hoysala, Muslim rulers and finally, the British.

Karuvoor Thevar, born in Karur is one among the nine devotees who sang the divine music Thiruvichaippa, which is the ninth Thirumurai. He is the single largest composer among the nine authors of Thiruvichaippa. He lived during the reign of the great Raja Raja Chola I.<sup>ix</sup>

Karur, the original name is Karuvur meaning the place of an embryo,<sup>x</sup> was once a part of Coimbatore district, was merged with Tiruchirappalli district during 1910. A separate Karur district was formed on 30th September 1995 by trifurcating Tiruchirappalli district. Initially, Karur District was carved out of the composite Tiruchirappalli district, consisting of three taluks, namely Karur, Kulithalai and Manaparai. Subsequently, Manaparai Taluk was decoupled, and Musiri Taluk was included in Karur District. Later Musiri Taluk was decoupled from Karur District.<sup>xi</sup>

The soil of this region is made fertile by the waters of the Kaveri River on the north and by the Amaravati, Nalkasi and Noyyal rivers on the other sides. Although the economy of this place is agro-based, it is also popular for its handloom products. There are several temples and other places to visit in Karur.

### **Sri Kalyana Pasupathinathar Temple<sup>xii</sup>**

Pasupathieswarer temple is one of the chief attractions of Karur. Pasupathieswarer temple, which dates back to the time of Cholas, is dedicated to Lord Siva. This temple is considered among the seven Sivalayams or the Sivasthalams or the holy abodes of Lord Siva in western Tamil Nadu, (the Kongu region) the others being Thirunanaa (Bhavani) Sangameswarar temple, Tiruchengode Arthanareeswarar temple, Tirumurugapoondi Tirumuruganathaswamy temple, Tiruppandikudumudi (Kodumudi) Kodumudinathar temple, Tiruppukkoliyur (Avinasi) Avinasiappar temple and Venjamaakudal Vigirthanatheswarar temple. The temple is noted for its five feet high Pasupathieswarer Linga which is represented by a group of five sculptures. This linga, situated in the sanctum sanctorum, is also shown as being bathed by the milk oozing from the rudder of a cow. It is said that the holy cow Kamadhenu worshipped Lord Shiva at this place, and Hence, the

deity got the name Aanilaiappar (Aa means cow) and then Pasupathinathar, which means 'Lord of all living beings'.

The temple structure built on 2.65 acres of land has two gopurams (tower). The seven tier front Rajagopuram is 120 feet high and is adorned with stucco images of mythological characters. The other gopuram is a five tier one. Inside the temple, there are two corridors. The main attraction of the temple is its 100 pillared mandapam with inscriptions of Chola and Pandya. The temple complex has a holy tree called Vanji and a holy spring called Thadaagai Theertham. The five feet high idol, which can be seen in a slanting position, is a Swayambu Moorthy (self-created image), and is kept in the main shrine (Moolvar). It is said that three days a year during the Tamil month of Panguni (March 15 to April 15), the sun's rays fall directly on this lingam. Apart from the main shrine, there are two shrines for the female deity's. One is for Sundaravalli (Soundaranayaki), facing south and the other for Alagaravalli, facing east.

Poojas are performed six times a day. Archana', Sagasranama Archana, Ashtothra Archana, Abishekam are some of them. It is believed that those who surrender at the feet of Lord Pasupathinathar is blessed with a complete peace of mind. The devotees offer oil, milk, curd and tender coconut to the Lord and mangalsutra', jewels and sari to the Goddess.

The main festivals of this temple are Brahmotsavam in the month of Panguni (March-April, which include Soundranayaki Ambal's marriage) and Arudra Darshan or Thiruvadirai in the month Margazhi (December-January). Both these festivals are celebrated for 13 days. Besides these, festivals like Eripaththa Nayanar Utsavam, Navarathri and auspicious days like Pradosha days, Jupiter transit day, Saturn transit day and full moon days are celebrated with great devotion.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **Kalyana Venkattaramasami Temple**

Kalyana Venkattaramasami temple is one of the popular destinations at Karur. The rock-cut cave temple Kalyana Venkattaramasami Temple, popularly known as Then (South) Tirupati, is situated at Thanthondrimalai, around 5 km from Karur. The shrine placed on a raised portion of a hillock is one of the famous temples in the district. Lord Kalyana Venkataramana Swamy (Lord Srinivasa) is the main deity with the Goddesses Sri Devi and Bhoomi Devi. There is only one cave, i.e. for sanctum sanctorum. The cave temple was constructed during the period of Gunaseelan, who came under the lineage of Athiyaman, a chieftain of Thagadur. Some historians think that these temples might have been built around the eighth century A.D.; Madurai Tirumalai Nayak had gifted land and other things for the maintenance of this temple and its servants. Thanthodnimalai temple is facing the western direction, which is the a rare feature. Somasharama, an ardent devotee, was not in a position to go to Tirupathi and he was blessed by Tirupathi Venkatachalapathy with his darshan in Thanthondri hill. Apart from this, Sundarambikai, a pious lady, was also blessed with a male child and, Vishnu gave darshan to this lady, and her child in this Thanthondri hill as Kalyana Venkataramanswami. Once the priest of this temple sent his son to conduct poojas to this Perumal as he was indisposed and the son being a small boy, was unable to garland the deity. Therefore, he prayed to God to lower down His head so that he could

easily garland Him. Responding to his prayer, the Perumal lowered his head and enabled the little boy to garland Him, easily. The most auspicious occasion at Kalyana Venkattaramasami temple is the Deepam festival conducted during September – October. Other famous festivals are the 22 -day long Purattasi festival and the Masi Maha car festival.<sup>xiv</sup>

### **Mallappatti Tomb**

A few kilometers away from Nerur, the hamlet of Mallappatti is found. In the hamlet of Mallappatti, there is an isolated tomb raised to the memory of Lt. Stanely and other officers and Sepoys who were killed in the siege of Karur in 1783 A.D.

### **Sri Mariamman Temple**

Sri Mariamman Temple is one of the most important temples in Karur. This temple is situated towards the centre of Karur. The most auspicious occasion at Sri Mariamman temple is the annual festival which is held during the month of May. Around one million devotees will attend the festival. In this festival, 'Kumbam' is brought out of the Amman temple, is carried to River Amaravathi. This Kumbam is then lowered to the river bed with due respect. This festival is celebrated with great pomp and gaiety regardless of religion and caste at Karur. Devotees of all age groups, irrespective of caste and creed, will gather here to attend this ritual. The festival concludes with a spectacular firework display.<sup>xv</sup>

### **Pugazhimalai Shree Arupadai Murugan Temple**

Pugazhimalai Shree Arupadai Murugan temple is one of the popular pilgrimage destinations located towards the northwest of Karur, at Pugalur. Arunattarmalai alias Pugazhimalai Shree Arupadai Murugan temple is an ancient temple, situated atop a hillock at Velayuthanpalayam nearby Cauvery, constructed during the time of Cheras. This temple dedicated to Lord Murugan (Subramanian), is famous for its sculptural excellence. Thaipoosam, celebrated during the first week of February every year, is the most auspicious occasion when the devotees carry 'kavady' to this temple. The deity, placed in the chariot, is also pulled around the temple at night. Another historical importance of the place has stone beds with Brahmi inscriptions which were said to be written the first century. The inscriptions say that the Chera King Kadungo alias Irumporaiyan laid down the stone bed for the Jain monk Sengayan, who had been contemporary to the king. Arthanaripalayam is located seven kilometers away from Pugazhimalai. Amid of agricultural land, one fountain is found with five stone beds belonging to the first century.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **Mayanur**

Mayanur is a famous pilgrimage destination offered by Karur. Mayanur, which lies on the course of River Cauvery, is located on Karur Trichy main road, at a distance of 21 km from Karur. Cauvery River flows through Mayanur. The river's width is maximum (about 1.5 km) in Mayanur. Hence the river is called Aganda Cauvery (broad Cauvery). Across this river a new bridge-cum-dam construction is in progress. This bridge is estimated to save a travel distance of 40 km. From the main Cauvery river, three more channels are formed in

Mayanur and the water has been distributed to the surrounding villages over 50 km. Sellandiyamman temple, and Mariyamman temple are famous temples in Mayanur that are visited by the pilgrims visiting Karur.

Sellandiyamman Temple is located in Mayanur. The statue of Amman is slightly tilted and focused towards the Cauvery river. The historical stories say that Amman always wants to see the flow of water of the Cauvery river. This temple has been mentioned in the historical story Ponnar-Sankar written by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M. Karunanidhi. While writing this story, he stayed in Mayanur for a long time. Every year during August Adi-18 festival is celebrated grandly by the surrounding villages and the people of Mayanur. Mariyamman Temple is located in the centre part of Mayanur. Every year during April, the five days festival is being celebrated grandly by the Mayanur people.<sup>xvii</sup>

### **Tirumukkudal**

Tirumukkudal is a popular pilgrimage destination offered by Karur; Tirumukkudal is recognised as a heritage site by the Archaeological Survey of India. This is an ancient temple constructed during the reign of early rulers of the Thondaiman Dynasty. The temple is dedicated to Lord Agasthiswarar and his consort Anjanakshi. Pazhayaseevaram is yet another famous temple situated in the vicinity of Tirumukkudal temple, which dedicated to Lord Lakshmi Narasimha.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **Kadambavar Kovil**

Kadambavar Kovil is situated in Kulithalai which is on the Tiruchi-Karur highways leading to Coimbatore. This temple is described as Dhakshina Kasi, has two prakarams and is surrounded by a Big car street, and is facing the northern direction. Saint Thirunavukarasang sang about the temple. Agenda Cauvery is running a few yards away from the temple. Since the Sthala Viruksham is a Kadamba tree and the deity is also known as Sundarar, who has fulfilled the wishes of Devasanma by showing his wedding ceremony with the Goddess, this temple is equated with Madurai Meenakshi temple. The main deity in the sanctum-sanctorum is known as Kadambanathar, Sundaresar, Soundaresar and his consort is called Muttrila Mulaiammai in Tamil, and she is called Bala Kujambikai in Sanskrit. Her other name is Tirveni. It is said that this temple was worshipped by Lord Vishnu, Murugan, Brahma, Saptha Kannigai, Devasanma, Kanuva Muni, and Agasthiar. There is a saying that one who worships Kadambar in the morning, Rathnagireeswarar in the Ayyarmalai in the afternoon and Tiruneeinkoimalainathar in the evening, on the same day could be sure of attaining Moksha. Daily five poojas are performed here. Apart from this, Adi Puram festival for ten days, Purattasi Navarathri festival for ten days, Aipasi Kandhar Sashti festival for ten days, Karthika Somavara festival for four days, Markali, Thiruvathirai festival for one day, Tahipoosam festival for two days, Masi Magam festival and Brahmotsavam in Masi for ten days and Panguni Uthiram festival for one day are celebrated in a grand manner in the temple. During the Taipoosam festival, more than a lakh people visit the temple.<sup>xx</sup>

### Madukkarai

Madukkarai is a hamlet situated on the bank of the Cauvery 19 km to the west of Kulithalai in the Tiruchirappalli - Karur road. The temple of the village Goddess Sellandiamman on the bank of the Cauvery is supposed to mark the spot where the Chola, the Chera and the Pandya kingdom met. Kottai Karai, immediately to the east of Madukkarai, is supposed to have been the battlefield during the struggle between the three kings. It is said that Ponnar and Sankar, who came to this side of the Cauvery, saw the three kings (Chola, Chera and Pandya) quarrelling over their boundaries, mediated and fixed permanent boundaries for the three kingdoms. The existence of Ponnar Sankar temple in Sankar Malai 3.8 km from this place in Sithavalai village limits is also cited as evidence in support of this theory. Cauvery water was taken daily on elephant's back and then on horseback to Madurai for abhiseka in the temple. There are stables even now along this bund in every 16 km. It is also believed that there was a subway along the bund, and the Pandyas used to come to Madukkarai through it in times of emergency. It is said that the temple and the surrounding areas are no man's land. The Goddess is supposed to be a special guardian of the Cauvery embankment here. The river takes a peculiar turn just here and this is a vulnerable site during floods. The Goddess is the recipient of numerous vows from the inhabitants of this and the neighbouring taluks. There are 160 inscriptions on the walls of the temple. The Archaeological Department of the Madras University has conducted excavations in Nattamedu of this village, about half a km from here and discovered a foundation of old structures about three meters below the ground level. Pieces of coloured pottery with designs that to have been in existence some of 2000 years ago were also excavated.<sup>xx</sup>

### Mahalakshmi Amman Temple

Situated at Mettumahadanapuram, the 800-year-old Mahalakshmi Amman temple, dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi is believed to be built by King Krishna Deva Raya. Mattumahadanapuram is also known as Krishnarayapuram, which was named after the king. The annual festival of the temple known as Adi festival, is celebrated for two days in the Tamil month of the Aadi (mid July - mid August). The festival commence with the ceremonial procession of the 'Amman' to the temple and the chief priest performed abisheka with the holy water brought from the Cauvery river. The main highlight of the festival is the breaking of coconut on the heads of the devotees as a part of their fulfilment of the vow, during the festive days, a traditional lamp was lit on top of the temple flag post.<sup>xxi</sup>

### Saint Sadashiva Brahmendra

Nerur is yet another scenic destination situated in the vicinity of Karur, famous for the Samadhi of Saint Sadashiva Brahmendra. Sadashiva Brahmendra was a saint, a composer of Carnatic music and an Advaita philosopher who lived near Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu during the 18th century. He composed mainly in Sanskrit. Only a few of his compositions have survived but they are recognised as great compositions of Carnatic Music.<sup>xxii</sup> He has wandered around, naked or semi-naked, and often in a trance-like state. He was reclusive and often meditated and was described as being in a "supremely

intoxicated state".<sup>xxvii</sup> He has performed many miracles whilst alive; some of the most prominent are provided below. On the river banks of Cauvery in Mahadhanapuram, he was asked by some children to be taken to Madurai, more than 100 miles away, for an annual festival. The saint asked them to close their eyes, and a few seconds later, they have reopened and found they were in Madurai.<sup>xxviii</sup> He also wrote the Atma Vidya Vilasa, an Advaitic work. There is an epilogue to this story. The next day, another youth, incredulous at hearing this story, asked Sadasiva to take him also to this festival. It is said that the youth immediately found him in the distant city. When it was time to return, Sadasiva was nowhere to be found. The youth had to make his way back on foot.<sup>xxix</sup>

Whilst relaxing near a heap of grains, he began meditating. The farmer who owned the land mistook Sadasiva for a thief and confronted him. The farmer raised his stick to hit the saint but became a statue. He remained in this state until the morning when Sadasiva finished meditating and smiled at the farmer. The farmer was restored to his normal state and asked the saint for forgiveness. At another time, while meditating on the banks of the Cauvery river, he was carried away by a sudden flood. Weeks later, when some villagers were digging near a mound of earth, their shovels struck his body. He woke up and walked away. Long after all these happened when most people had forgotten the memories of his wandering in their lands, once the naked sannyasi was seen walking right through a Muslim harem of a Nawab. As a brahma-jnani who sees nothing but brahman everywhere, he would not distinguish between the different human figures which cross his path, nor would he be distracted by the sights or noises that his environment may present to him. It was in this state of trance that he was walking along. He, the naked sannyasi, walked straight into the harem, entering it at one end and walking out at the other, all the while walking through a maze of inmates of the Nawab's harem. The news reached the nawab, he had his men chase him, they cut off both his hands as he was walking along, the hands fell off, and still, he was walking along silently as if nothing had happened. The nawab got scared, picked up the hands that had been severed, ran to the Sage, and offered them in total remorse. The sage stopped his walking, the severed hands were restored to their place, the hands became normal and the sage walked away. There was no conversation. He attained Samadhi at Nerur, about 100 km West of Thiruchirapalli.<sup>xxvi</sup>

### **Munimuktheeswarar Temple of Chinnadarapuram**

The word 'Chinna' seems to have been prefixed to distinguish it from Dharapuram of Erode district. Keechaka of the Mahabharata period is said to have lived in this village and was annihilated by Bhima during the Agnyathavasa in Virata's kingdom. The ruined bastions of an old mud fort still seen in the village have belonged to him. The very old Siva shrine of Munimuktheeswarar is facing the fort and has several inscriptions.<sup>xxvii</sup> Masimaham festival is a fabulous celebration of the temple.<sup>xxviii</sup> It is located 32 kilometres southwest of Karur on the Dharapuram road. Karur is the nearest railway station and is connected by regular bus services.

### Thirukkanmaleeswarar Temple of Krishnarayapuram

Thirukkanmaleeswarar temple has been constructed in three acres by the Chola King. It is 18 kilometre from Kulithalai on Tiruchirapalli – Karur Highways and this is in the Tiruchirapalli – Karur train route. This town Krishnarayapuram has been constructed in memory of the King Krishnaraya of the Vijayanagar Empire. The river Cauvery and Sittralaivai canal run near this temple in the northern direction. This temple is surrounded by a lot of trees, such as plantain, mango, jack fruits trees, etc., which create a pleasant atmosphere. The deity in the sanctum-sanctorum is known as Tirukkanmaleeswarar Mukkattu Perumal, and the Goddess is called Mathukaraveni and Vandarkuzhali. The temple has separate sannadhis for Bairavar, Valampuri, Vinayakar, Uma Maheswar, Murugan, Panchalingam, Navagraham and Dhakshinamoorthi. In the inscriptions, this temple is described as Sittralaivai Puna Vail Kottam and also as Sittralavai Keesh Koil. According to legend, the Chera, the Chola and the Panya kings determined the border of their territories in Madhukarai, which is west of this Village. It was the Chola king responsible for the digging of the Sittralavai canal for irrigating the fields in this village. Malleeswarar Lahari is sung in praise of Tirukkanmaleeswarar. This Vinayaka in this temple are beautifully carved. Daily four poojas are performed in this temple. Apart from these, Prathosha pooja, Ani Tirumanjan in May-June, Adi Puram (June-July), Vinayaka Chaturthi in Avani month (September-October), and Navarathiri festivals in Purattasi (September-October) are celebrated in grand scale. This temple is under the control of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department.<sup>xxix</sup>

### Arulmighu Rathinagireeswarar Temple

Rathnagireeswarar temple is situated on a small hill near the Sivayam village of Kulithalai Taluk. It is located at a distance of 10 km from Kulithalai. This temple is one of the famous Saivite temples in South India. The place takes its name from the curious bare conical rock which rises suddenly from the surrounding plains. It is also said that the name is derived from the fact that the Chola king made a crown to the deity with a big Ratna (Ruby) in it. The place is also known as Ayyarmalai. It is a corrupted form of Aivarmalai, which probably meant the abode of the Pancha Pandavas. In support of this theory, there are five rock-cut beds as in Chittannavasal hills, under a cave in the rock, which is said to have been used by them. The hill is 1178' high and is ascended by a flight of 1017 steps. Though it is small, the temple on the top is a beautiful one. One can have a panoramic view of the landscape from the top of this hill. Numerous inscriptions are also found on the walls of the temple. The lord is known as Ratnagireeswarar, "The Lord of the Ruby Hill" and more popularly as Sokka. The Lord of Thunder is said to offer worship to God once in 12 years, and a crevice, in the rock is believed to be the place through which the thunder once made its entry.

The water for the deity is brought by a caste known as Thirumanjan Pandarams, who fetch it every day from the Cauvery. It is said that they are descended from an Aryan king who came to the God with the hope of getting back the lost ruby of his crown. The god in the guise of a Brahmin boy wanted to test his devotion by asking him to fill a magic vessel

with Cauvery water. The vessel could not be filled up and the Aryan king in a fit of anger struck the boy's head with his sword. The boy disappeared and the Lingam was found in his place. The head of the Lingam is still broken in a corner. The king was then blessed with the gem, and ordered water for the temple till eternity. A figure of him is carved in the arcade of the temple. The God Vairaperumal is subordinate to the main deity located at the foot of the hill. Vairaperumal is said to be a man of weaving community from Kancheepuram who cut off his head here in fulfilment of a vow and was deified accordingly. Apart from the Ratnagireeswarar temple in the hill Sivayam village has another Siva temple which is two km away from this hill. Arudhra darshan in Margali in this temple attracts a few thousand people from the surroundings. Chitra Purnima Car festival in the hill temple also attracts huge crowds.<sup>xxx</sup>

### **Venjamangudalur**

Venjamangudalur village is 21 km from Karur. This is famous because of the Sri Kalyana Vikirtheeswarar temple, which is said to be of great antiquity and built by King Rajakesari some 1200 years ago. There are seven inscriptions relating to this period. The presiding deity Sri Kalyana Vikirtheeswarar is represented by a 5 feet high installed Lingam. His consort is Vikirtheeswari. Sundaramurthy Nayanar visited the temple and sang about the deity in his Thevaram. Similarly, Saint Arunagirinathar had verified this temple in Thiruppugazh. Poojas are performed twice a day. The annual Car festival for 10 days, during the Masi Magam, attracts about 2000 devotees from far and near.<sup>xxxi</sup>

### **Pallapattiss**

Pallapatti is a small town situated 35 km to the south of Karur on the Karur-Dindigul road. The three dharghas, Baba Fahrudin dargha, Kutbuddin dargah and Sheik Abdul Khadar Vali dargha, stand as a testimony to the Muslim domination in the city. Tirumalai Nayak has to have endowed about 140 acres of dry lands in favour of the Baba Fahrudin dargah. Chandranakoodu Urus festivals is held in the Sheik Abdul Khadar Vali dargha on a grand scale for 15 days after the last day of Ramzan and over 10,000 Hindus and Muslims attend the festival.<sup>xxxii</sup>

### **Karur Government Museum**

Karur Government Museum, situated near the Bus stand, was established in the year 2000 and is maintained as a place of memory to the ancestors who ruled and lived here. The exhibits in the Museum include various types of bronze items, metal-ware objects, ancient classical musical instruments, ancient coins, rocks and minerals, fossils from the earth, botanical specimens, and other marine specimens. Lectures and workshops are conducted here and guide services are also offered.

Karur, though a texcity (textile city), attracts a large number of tourists by its historical monuments, temples, artefacts being displayed in the museum and so on. Philanthropists who are interested to renovate the age old temples without knowing the importance of their historicity. For instance, when the Pasupathiswarar temple was renovated, a large number of inscriptions had been misplaced. The Department of History

under my interest an exhibition on the history of Karur was inaugurated by the then Collector A. Karthik on 13 September 2005, which opened up the places of interest of Karur to the people. If the Department of Tourism still more takes care of definitely Karur district will occupy a prime place in the history of cultural tourism in Tamilnadu.

## Endnotes

- i R. Nagaswamy, Roman Karur, Chennai, Brahadish Publications, 1995, p. 1.
- ii M. Rajasekarathangamani, (ed), 'A unique Golden Ring in the Amaravathi River bed of Karur' in New Findings in the History of Tamilnadu (Tamil), Karur, Kongu Pathipagam, 2006, p.150.
- iii K.S.K. Velmani (ed), Gazetteers of Tamilnadu: Tiruchirapalli District, Chennai, Director of Stationery and Printing, 1999, vol. II, p.1574.
- iv Mailai Seenī Vengadasamy, Kongu Nadu Varalaru and Tulu Nadu Varalaru, Tamilnadu History Series - 6, Chennai, Amizhtham Pathipagam, 2008, p.153.
- v R. Nagaswamy, *op.cit.*, p. 2.
- vi M. Rajasekarathangamani, (ed), *loc.cit.*, p. 150.
- vii Mailai Seenī Vengadasamy, *op.cit.*, pp.140-141.
- viii K.S.K. Velmani (ed), *op.cit.*, p.1574.
- ix Pamphlet was issued by the Department of Hindu Religious Endowment Department, Karur, in 2011.
- x K.S.K. Velmani (ed), *op.cit.*, p.1573.
- xi G.O.(Ms.) No. 913, Development Department, dated 30 October, 1995.
- xii K.S.K. Velmani (ed), *op.cit.*, p.1575.
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