

1

2

Sri Nithya Kalyani Amman Thunai
Sri Varadharaja Perumal Thunai
Sri Gurubyo Namaha

**THAPPALAMPULIYUR VILLAGE AGRAHAARAM
AND
ITS TRADITIONAL CULTURES AND PRACTICES
- "THEN AND NOW"...**



SNASS Religious Trust

Thappalampuliyur

Ph:(044)24311096/9840036514/9551066125

Email: snasstpuliyur@gmail.com

Introduction and Disclaimer

Having succeeded to a reasonable level in the management of village temples of Thappalampuliyur, SNASS has embarked in achieving yet another goal, being dreamt for the last ten years.

With no documented information, hitherto, about the traditional cultures and practices of one of the beautiful and large Thappalampuliyur village agrahaaram in early days, it has been the urge for SNASS for quite some time, to get those treasures from "First Generation" and preserve them in a digital form.

By this process, it is possible to provide reasonably proven and authentic information regarding the cultural and traditional practices of our village and its temples, not only for the present generation but also for all future generations.

For some reason, we have not been able to achieve that goal

In the absence of such an information, so many members of SNASS FAMILY realize the importance of knowing the life style, tradition and culture of our ancestors and very eager to get that information. Towards that, so many family members have in the early past approached SNASS with questions like "whether I can get information about Thappalampuliyur practice of this function? or any idea as how to perform this rituals? . This attempt is only towards that.....

Having said that, it is easier said than achieving that goal of documentation. Almost the entire first generation members of Thappalampuliyur village have passed away excepting a very few. Those few, when providing some information, they are hesitant to give information sought for, as they themselves are not sure either due to their ignorance or could not remember. Also with the exit of Brahmin community from the village, the chain links in the traditional practices followed over generations have also been broken. So, while collecting such information, at one point of time, it is becoming a challenge to get informations as "reliable" one.

In spite of all above challenges, SNASS with its untiring effort is attempting to collect such informations through various sources namely the information collected in early past from the "then First generation" (through audio, video, written notes and photo graph), Informations collected by contacting a few available first generation members, informations about village tradition and practices from the elderly people living in the village and also people who have lived in the village during their younger days but migrated later, as well as the traditions being followed in the village currently.

Informations are also being confirmed to an extent possible through cross verifications before attempting to document. In that respect, currently in this article, it has been attempted to provide a Document to SNASS FAMILY under the title ***Thappalampuliyur Village Agrahaaram And Its Traditional Cultures and Practices –“Then and Now”*** which we hope would make you to enjoy with interesting and unique information about our village.

Under the above circumstances, wish to make it clear to members, that SNASS cannot be held responsible in case of any changes or error in the information provided in this document. In case of any other specific view on these informations, SNASS is willing to consider in an appropriate manner if the same is shared with SNASS.

SNASS also wish to thank each and one of those who have provided the information or helped in collecting this treasure of information to document in this manner.

FIN Rev-01

Date: June 2020

Compiled and Presented by :-

T.P.Venkataraman

Managing Trustee

SNASS Religious Trust

Thappalmpuliyur

Ph: (044)24311096/9840036514/9551066125

E-mail: snasstpuliyur@gmail.com

Editing support for Translation and information by:-

Mrs. Renuka Kamakoti,

-----00000000000000000000-----

Sri Nithya Kalyani Amman Thunai
Sri Varadharaja Perumaal Thunai
Sri Gurubyo Namaha

THAPPALAMPULIYUR VILLAGE AGRAHAARAM AND ITS TRADITIONAL CULTURES AND PRACTICES - "THEN AND NOW"...

Then :-

○ Thappalampuliyur Village of Thiruvarur district, which is adorned by "Kaduvaiyaar", a tribute of River Cauvery at its entrance is located approx. 5 KM from Thiruvarur. This village has a beautiful Agrahaaram, with four streets. Around 50 years ago these streets were fully occupied (approx. 62 houses) by, a Brahmin subject community "Vaadhyaamaal"(except three or four houses with other subject communities)

○ In olden days, Agriculture and Cattle maintenance were the prime livelihood of the Brahmins of this village. In addition to that they were strictly practicing their daily Brahmin rituals and also engaging their life in various spiritual activities, traditional function and festivals as well as in various temple related activities including management of temples. All the above, made the village people to lead a happy, spiritual and contented life.

○ It is to be noted that though the families were having their prime focus on their bread winning professions (either Vaidheekam or agriculture or profession), the Brahmins of this village, in those days never compromised on following their daily religious rituals and other traditional cultures.

Now:-

○ Over a period of time, for various economic/social/political reasons, almost all Brahmin families have been compelled to move out of the village mostly to urban areas after selling their ancestral houses in Agrahaaram and agricultural properties in the village to other communities. As such currently there are hardly 7 Brahmin families in that Agrahaaram. It is because of this, the entire Brahmin culture in the village and the village temple maintenance have been totally eroded.

○ Of late, this unfortunate state of affairs made a big dent in the minds of the families who migrated from the village and settled outside the village years ago but still having link with the village. This resulted in the birth of "SNASS" by bringing together various outstation/Local families of this village origin with a view to bring back the traditional cultures of Agrahaaram and maintenance of the temple in line with yesteryears' practices to the extent possible.

A. STRUCTURE OF AGRAHAARAM / BRAHMIN HOUSES AND THEIR JOURNEYS:-

THEN:-

➤ While the North and South Street of Agrahaaram were having houses facing each other, the East Street was having houses facing western side only. The only house in West Street was facing eastern side. Some plots in Agrahaaram were only an open yard without any houses. It is said that for the reasons of "Ishanya Sasthra" in those days houses were built in back and forth manner instead of being on straight line.

➤ Except one or two houses, all other were only tiled houses. Almost in all houses you had Pial (Thinnai) at the entrance, front/back Verandahs, Courtyard(Mutram), Porch (Thaazhvaaram), Hall (Koodam), Porch Room (Thaazhvaratthu ull), Hall rooms such as Kamiraa ull), Pooja room and Kitchen. Almost all houses had cattle shed (Maattukottagai) and back yards on the back side of the houses. Quite a number of houses had sacred "Thulasi Maadam" in court yard {a raised platform for growing "Thulasi (commonly known as Holy basil) plant} which would be worshipped by the women with pooja on daily basis.

➤ In the absence of Mixie/Grinders in those days, there would be no house without equipping themselves with basic kitchen needs such as Grindstone/Pestle (Ammi/Kuzhavi) {Normally used for preparing spices Paste), Granite Mortar with iron pounder/wooden Mortar with wooden pounder (used for crushing soft grains such as wet rice and chilli powder), Granite Rotary crusher (crushing hard grains such as Black gram and lentils).

➤ Every Brahmin family of the village had agriculture as the main livelihood. In addition, most of the houses were maintaining cattle such as cow, Buffalo and bullocks. The milk and milk products from cow and buffalo would not only used for the private consumptions, but in some houses they were selling to others for their livelihood. Bullocks were either used for agricultural purposes (Ploughing) or for Transportation of people to nearby towns in closed Bullock cart and other things in an open bullock cart.

➤ It is also the practice in every house, to grow vegetable/flowering plants on the back yards. The only means of getting water in ancient times were from the well. But over times, people started using hand pump and electric motor pumps for water supply in the house.

➤ The villagers were using oil/kerosene lamps during night times post 1945/50, when Sri Rama Saasthral, a land lord of the village with the help of other likeminded people of the village manage to get electric power supply connection from Thiruvarur through M/S South Madras Electric Supply Corporation, (M/S SMESC Ltd), a private body responsible for power distribution in those days. It was with his great effort to pool the minimum requirement of 5 house connection (to bring electricity to village from Thiruvarur) at the cost of Rs 50/- per connection which include in house wiring and Feeder connection. Subsequently, over period of time, more number of houses were able to get electricity and lighting.



North Street of Agrahaaram



Outside view of Agrahaaram House



Entrance of Agrahaaram House



Pial (Thinnai) of Agrahaaram House



Traditional Swing of Agrahaaram House



South Street of Agrahaaram



Porch Room (Thaazhvaaram) of Agrahaaram House



Hall (Koodam) of Agrahaaram House



Thulasi Maadam of Agrahaaram House

Structure of Agrahaaram Street and Agrahaaram House

➤ Similarly, around 1960-1965, the village got drinking water through underground pipeline to all streets of Agrahaaram and also first telephone connection to the village, with help of Govt., thanks to initiative taken by Sri. T.N.Krishnamoorthy iyer who was then President of Panchayat Board. Following that, in subsequent days, a culvert dam was built across Kattaar, a canal in the village by the Govt with the initiative of land lord Sri. V. Kalyanarama Iyer. This has provided a permanent solution for regulated supply of water for irrigation from the river to the entire northern side fields.

➤ Brahmin community of the village were keen on leading a healthy life in those days by maintaining a hygienic living environment. Daily sweeping, sprinkling of cow dung water early in the morning and plain water in the evening, and decorating with "Kolam" in the frontage of the house was an everyday affair for Brahmin women. Also sweeping and mopping entire floor of the house was their routines. On auspicious occasion, they used cow dung water for mopping the floor in the houses. In addition to this Brahmins were very regular in keeping the cattle and cattle shed neat by daily cleaning. The streets of Agrahaaram would be cleaned on daily basis by the cleaning staff employed by the village. As part of upkeep of houses almost every house of this community would undergo general minor repair, house cleaning and white washing at least once in year during Pongal festival.

➤ Women community of Brahmin would ensure that Houses and Agrahaaram streets would always be having a divine look by decorating them with different types of "Kolam" on different occasions. Pulli Kolam {with or without Kaavi (terracotta) bordering, and with/without colour powder}}, Izhai Kolam, Neli (zigzag design) Kolam are some of the types of Kolams used for decoration, depending occasions/functions either common to village or specific to a house. Such decorations would also be extended by the women to various temples during any special temple functions/occasions.

➤ In addition to this, all the housewives of the Brahmin houses strictly make sure they light the lamps in the Pooja room every evening, worship god and ensure that one lamp is lit and kept in designated "Maadam" (a niche for the lamp) in the entrance of the house. In some houses, a lamp is lit in "Thulasi Maadam" also situated in court yard.

➤ In fact if there is Kolam in a cow dung sprinkled surface in front of a house, it means that there a Joyous news of a baby born in that house. On the other hand, if there is no Kolam in front of any house or if there is no lamp lit in the "Maadam" of the house, then it means that the members of the family are mourning for some unfortunate event in that house.

➤ During any special functions like Marriage and Sacred Threading (Poonal) ceremonies , the whole house would be cleaned , white washed to have fresh look and also the walls would be decorated with Terracotta stripes (Kaavippattai) . Also a huge

Pandal would be erected in front of the house which again would be adorned with plantain tree, fresh bunches of coconut, Dates and panankay. All the above would give a gracious look to the entire house.

➤ In those days other community people had stipulated restrictions for entering a house or streets in Agrahaaram

Now:-

✦ Today, not only most of the houses in Agrahaaram have been occupied by other community families but also there is a considerable change due to factors like time, social/economic/political reasons and also living style of individuals. This has resulted modifications in the design and structure of the traditional houses in Agrahaaram to suit present day living conditions. Also any new house built at Agrahaaram, the same is being done with modern style and convenience which are far away from traditional ones.

✦ There was a time when the ground level in the roads of agrahaaram streets, were lower than the house entrance leading to water flow in the streets like a stream. The children used to float paper boats in that stream and have fun during rainy season. But today all the streets of Thappalampuliyur are higher level leading to rain water from the street entering the houses of Agrahaaram and giving hardship to residents.

✦ Hardly a few houses in Agrahaaram maintain cattle. Instead, Goats, Hens and cocks are being maintained by other community families. The streets which had bullock carts is currently filled with two/four wheelers, Tractors, Petty and repair shops.

✦ Modern Mixie/Grinder age has made Grindstone/Pestle (Ammi /Kuzhavi), Mortar/Pounders (Ural/Ulakkai), and Granite rotary crusher as show pieces in museum. Entertainment facilities like TV has virtually zeroed down the concept of meeting people and exchanging information of common interest amongst neighbours and their families

✦ However some of the older tradition like sweeping the street/frontage of the house, water sprinkling and drawing Kolam on a daily basis in front of all houses and also extending the same for streets during special occasions are being continued by other community also.

✦ Provision of drinking water distribution facility for individual houses, improved transport and telecom facilities are the welcoming features of the modern day.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS VILLAGE:

☞ Sri Nithyakalayani amman sametha sri Vyagrapureeswara swamy temple of this village is said to be more than 900 years old. Sri Nithyakalayani Amman is a Family Deity (Kula Deyvam) for not only Brahmins of this village but also for a number of Brahmins hailing from faraway places like Kerala, Mumbai and other parts of India. Similarly Sri Vyagrapureeswara swamy Koil of this village is also included in the nine temples identified for most popular "Nava Puliyur Kshethra worship (Vazhipaadu)". Visit link <http://bit.ly/navapuliyur> for details.

☞ The procession of a chariot (Ther) of powerful deity of this village Sri Kulundaalamman temple is a sight to see which is called as "Kulundaalamman Ther Festival". Never seen before and first of its kind where the such a massive chariot is being carried on the shoulders of hundreds of people of this village and taken through the paddy field (usually with muddy water) and various main streets of this village. This symbolises the unity of the whole village through such a divinely activity. It would be an amazing sight to witness when the chariot which would be carried in the shoulder would be dropped down (as and when the group feel exhausted) on its route irrespective of the place being a field with mud water, or nearby of house or on the main road. The chariot would again be carried on shoulder after a while with great enthusiasm to move on. This Ther Festival is a two day function, where in the whole village would have a festive look with people enjoying the whole event with full of joy and with family members not only from the village but also their relatives from other places.

During this festival, there is traditional practice for the villagers to offer "Earthen statues" (Silai Vaiththal) to Sri Kulundaalamman, praying for a cure for ill health for any family member/cattle and removal of obstacles in normal life. These earthen statues would be the whole body of man/woman, limbs of body, shape of a house and shape of cattle (such as cow/goat) and would be made available by the village potter for a cost by making prior order to him. On the last day of this festival, all villagers go to Potter's place, collect and carry their statues in a collective procession through the streets of the village accompanied by traditional trumpets and offer them to Sri Kulundaalamman.

☞ Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa of Kanchi Mutt has blessed this village with his visit and stay in the village for a few days, some time ago. During his visit, he has stayed & performed Pooja in Sankara Mutt of this village and blessed so many Brahmin families by performing "Bhikshai" for him in their houses. Similarly Sri Sri Jayendhra Saraswathi Swamigal and Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendhra Saraswathi Swamigal also have visited this village, stayed and performed Poojas in Sankara Madam and also performed Bhikshai in various Brahmin houses in agrahaaram.

☞ Upanyaasa Chakravarthy Sri Sengalipuram Anatharama Dhikshidhar had visited this Agrahaaram twice in year 1957 and 1968 and stayed in Sri V.Kalyanaraman Iyer's house.

During that period he performed Sapthaaham and Navaaham respectively. At that time, huge pandaals were erected on two streets of that house decorated by plantain trees and various varieties of fruits to give a festive look to entire Agrahaaram. There were huge gathering of people on all his Upanyaasam days, not only from the village but also from neighbouring towns and villages.

☞ This Village is blessed to get connected with Sri Sri Krishnapremi Swamigal (SRI SRI ANNA) from his early age (around 22 years of his age). His close association with this village and propagating spiritualism, from children to all elderly members of the village agrahaaram is considered to be an unsolicited boon to this village.

He used to visit our agrahaaram quite often and stay in Sri G. Krishnamoorthy Saasthrigal house in North street. Through his frequent visit to this village and performing various activities to promote spirituality has promoted various followers to his initiatives. His close association with this village from his early days and villagers respect and support extended to him, has made him to have a separate place in his heart for this village even today.

☞ Various highly placed Yathis (Sanyaasis) of those days gave lot of importance to this village and used to visit and stay in Sankara Madam. This is called as "Maadhukara Bhikshai". It was a practice that Only one Yathi used to visit at a time. His arrival and stay plan would be known in advance, to specific Vaidheekas and elderly members of the village who would do all necessary arrangements for his stay. On the day of his arrival all of them would jointly give a respectful welcome to him in the village and lead him to Sankara Madam. Yathi would perform Bhikshai only one time in a day, that too in three houses. The day and time of Bhikshai for those three houses would be planned and informed already. Accordingly the women of the house would prepare Bhikshai in an orthodox manner (following Madi & Aachaaram). Once the Bhikshai is ready in all the three houses, the elderly people of the village would go to Sankara Madam and bring that Yathi, who would get the Bhikshai from outside the house. He would receive all the three Bhikshais in a single Utensil, take them to Sankara Madam and eat. During his stay in the village, Yathis would spend their time by performing pooja in Sankara Madam, engaging people of the village in spiritual activities (through Upanyaasam, discourses and informal discussion) as well as visiting temples. The elder members of village as well as the Vaidheekas would respectfully take full care of Yathis during their stay in the village. On completion of his stay in the village, the villagers would gather in large numbers to bid farewell to the great saint who would then carry on with his yaatra . It is a belief that such sanchaarams (movement) of Yathis in the village would bring prosperity to the village.

☞ This village is also blessed to be the native place for great Sanskrit scholar & Upnayasakar like Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal (alias Sri Mahadeva Saasthrigal) who was once honourably quoted by Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa during his visit to this place as "Yathu Sreshtar" (meaning that he is Like Sri Krishna Bhagawan who was supreme of Yathu Kula Vamsam) and also a person with brain as sharp as front end of "Dharbai", the holy grass of Brahmins.



Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal (alias)
Sri Mahadeva Saasthrigal



Sri M. Subramania Saasthrigal



Sri T. Sundaresa Bhagavathar



Sri G. Krishna Moorthy Saasthrigal



Upanyasa Chakravarthy Sengalipuram
Sri Aanatharaama Dikshidhar



Sri Ramaa Saasthrigal



Sri T.N. Krishna Moorthy Iyer

☞ It is a matter of pride that people like Sri. M.Subramania Sasthriyal (M S Mama), a very well-known person in Vaidheeka circle and recognised as 'Veda Pandithar' by various Brahmin family, famous Bhagavathar "Sankeerthana Kalaathara" Sri Sunderesa Bhagavathar, who has performed hundreds of Bhajans (like Radhakalyanam, Kokulaashtami and Sri Rama Navami) not only at Thappalampuliyur but also in other parts of our country and Saama Veda scholar Sri G.Krishnamoorthy Sasthriyal who was honoured with a title "Vedha Rathnam" by Sri Sri Kanchi Mutt and also honoured by famous Spiritual centre in Chennai, M/S Vaidheeka Sri, had our Village agrahaaram as their Birth place.

C. STRUCTURE AND TRADITIONS OF VAIDHEEKAM IN THE VILLAGE:

THEN:-

○ "Yajur Vedha" and "Saama Vedha" are the two prime important vedas of the Brahmins of this village. So this agrahaaram had learned Vaidheeka vaaththiyaars of these two vedas and supporting this agrahaaram for all the needs of their Vedhic rituals (Karmaanushtaanams) on day to day life. There were approx. 7/8 Vedha vaaththiyaars from each of two vedas to support Vaidheeka rituals of the whole agrahaaram. Vaidheeka Vaaththiyaars of a few families were traditionally Called "Graama Upaadhyaya Vaaththiyaars" meaning that they would be performing rituals to the entire village. There was also a practice of taking the responsibility for performing " Graama Upaadhyayam" on turn basis among different families of 'Graama Upaadhyaya Vaaththiyaars". On all functions/rituals, these Graama Upaadhyaya Vaaththiyaars would take the help of other Vaidheeka Vaaththiyaars of the village. There would be "resource allocation" (called Maanyam) for Graama Upaadhyaya Vaaththiyaars as part of their Livelihood.

It is said that Vedhic Scholar Kallukkudi Sri. Mani Saasthriyal once mentioned that An outsider (of this village) getting "anugnai" (Professional engagement) from this village is extremely difficult because of surplus availability of local Vaidheekas. This was really true at that time when the village was blessed with so many Vaidheekam Vaaththiyaars.

Pre-Dawn Bath (Ushathkaala Snaanam), their respective Upaadhyayam , engaging other Upaadhyaya Vaaththiyaars for profession, Paarayanam, self/other house Poojas, Aarthy swasthaakam in temples, Chanting Vedhas during Swamy Veedhi Ula from various temples are the primary routines for Vaaththiyars of Village agrahaaram

○ Vaideheekas and orthodox Brahmins of this agrahaaram, as part of their daily routine used to go to Mela Kulam early in the morning (before sun rise) and have Ushatkaala Snaanam (Pre-Dawn Bath). There were some orthodox Brahmins who used to see the position of the star in the sky and decide the time to proceed for Ushathkaala Snaanam. Then they performed their Daily Nithya Karmaanushtaanams (namely

Sandhyaavandhanam) in Sankara Madam. After that they used to go their respective houses to perform their daily poojas and Paaraayanams, before engaging themselves in their domestic/agricultural activities. Some Vaidheekas as part of their professional service or income generation used to go neighbouring villages also.

○ In the evenings, no member of the agrahaaram family would fail to perform their Sandhyaavandhanam either in their house or in Keezhakulam tank (adjacent to Sivan Koil) and go to Sivan Koil to participate in Evening (Saayankaala) Deepaarathanai rituals of the temple.

○ Above all traditional discipline of Brahmin community and Village discipline which was being followed by everyone over generations were the reason behind their successful and happy life of those days Brahmin family in the village

Now:-

* In the current scenario, due to various socio economic changes in the village, increasing needs for livelihood for Vaidheekas and also migration of Brahmin community from the village, Vaidheekas have also been forced to leave and settle elsewhere in urban areas. Adequate (even surplus) numbers of Vaidheekas to perform services of Village Vaidheeka traditions and anushtaanams have become memories of the past and today there is hardly one or two Vaidheeka Brahmins in the village who depend on other villages and town to earn their livelihood.

* Graama Upaadhyayam, encouraging Village Vaidheeka Vaaththiyaars, Allocation of Village resources for Vaidheekas (Graama Maanyam) have been flown in the air. Livelihoods of Village Vaaththiyaars were badly affected due to absence of Vaidheeka anushtaanams in the whole village.

* With all Vaidheekas migrated from the village for their livelihood earnings, in to days conditions, even to perform some temple related functions like Rudhrabhishekam, which needs a group of Vaidheekas, we are forced to get them from elsewhere from nearby town.

D. TEMPLES AND TANKS OF THE VILLAGE:

◆ Sri Nithyakalyani Amman sametha Sri Vyaagrapureeswara swamy temple (Sivan Temple) is located on the eastern side of Agrahaaram of this village. On the western side, there is Sri Neelameni Varadharaja Perumaal temple (Perumaal Temple) within agrahaaram. Also on the western side of agrahaaram (outside agrahaaram), Sri Siddhi Vinayakar (Pilliar) Temple is situated. Sri Ayyanaar Temple is situated on the northern side of the village. Sankara Madam, the ancient building of this village is situated near Pillar Temple on western side of agrahaaram. Traditionally the Sivan temple, Perumaal Temple, Pilliar Temple and Ayyanaar temple are being maintained by Brahmin Community.

◆ Sri Kulundhaalamman Temple and Sri Maariamman Temple which are situated at the northern and eastern side of Agrahaaram are maintained by other communities.

Even though various temples are maintained by Brahmin and other community people, all community members go to all temples and worship all gods. Within the stipulated traditional discipline and control, each community members would respect other community tradition and participate in the temple festivals

◆ As part of beautification of these temples, Different tanks are situated near each temple (viz) Keezhakulam near Sivan Temple, Melakulam adjoining Perumaal Temple, Pilliar Temple and Sankara Madam, Kulundhaal Kulam near Ayyanaar and Kulundalamman Temple and also Maariamman Kulam near Maariamman Kovil. Necessary stepped constructions (Padiththurai) are also provided in each tank nearer to temple to facilitate devotees to have their bath or have their hands and feet purified before they enter the respective temple.

In addition to all above tanks, there used to be one more tank on the western side of Sivan Koil by name "Thaamarai Kulam" (Lotus tank) which is now totally in dried and encroached condition.

◆ As far as this village is concerned, in all the temples managed by other community, all the traditional / procedural activities are strictly being followed in a grand manner as per olden tradition and practice without any change over the period of time. It is believed that the presence of the families of that community in the village over a longer period of time, people's crowd, their unity and cooperation could be the reason for the above.

◆ But because of the migration of Brahmin community from the village, their unity, mass gathering for functions and rituals, enthusiasm, motivation and support for such events have been considerably eroded. This resulted in total decline in maintenance and day to day supervision of the temples being maintained by them (viz. Sivan, Perumaal, Pilliar and ayyanaar temples as well as Sankara Madam). Because of this building & structure of the temples, Nithyappadi anushtaanams, traditional functions and festivals associated with these temples were totally eroded. Moreover, the reality is that this situation seriously jeopardised the livelihood and motivation of the archakaas of the temples.

◆ Below are Brahmin community tradition and culture connectivity with Temple and tanks of the village in olden days.....

1. Tanks:

❖ Vaidheekas and orthodox Brahmins, in those days used to have their "Ushathkaala Snaanam" in Melakulam and perform morning rituals like Sandhyaavandhanam and Nithyanushtanams in Sankara Madam. Mostly in those days

Brahmin men and women used Melakulam and Keezhakulam for taking bath and some Men were using these tanks for performing their Sandhyaavandhanam also.

2. Sankara Madam:

❖ Sankara Madam is an ancient sacred place for Brahmins of this village and a common place for various spiritual events of Brahmins.

❖ People in this village are fortunate to get blessings from our great Gurus from Kanchi Mutt namely Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa, Sri Sri Jayendhra Saraswathi Swamigal and Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendhra Saraswathi Swamigal during their camp at this village. During their visit, they performed special poojas and also Bhikshai. Quite famous Yathis also stayed in this village during their frequent visits. They all used to stay at this Sankara Madam during their camps.

❖ Events like reading of New Panchaangam on Tamil New year day (Panchaanga Patanam), Sri Adi Sankara Upanyaasam on Sankara Jayanthi day, Sri Narasimha Upanyaasam on Narasimha Jayanthi day were all conducted in this sacred place. Local Scholars like Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal used to would perform these events.

❖ Moreover, in the Tamil month of Iyppasi (approximately between mid-October to mid-November), Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal used to do Paaraayanam of Thulaa Puraanam (Tale of Cauvery). On some special days such as beginning/last day, Ekaadasi, Dwaadhasi, Pournami and Amaavaasya during that month, Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal used to do Paarayanam in Sankara Madam. During those days, Brahmins from the village used to go to Sankara Madam and offer him things like rice, tamarind, Dhaal, and vegetable as a sign of gratitude and respect.

❖ Daily Sankara Pooja and Anushakaala Poojas were also used to be performed here. Also this place was ideal for some Vaidheekas and orthodox Brahmins to perform their daily rituals such as Sandhyaavandhanam and other Japakaaryangal

❖ Community mass celebration such as performing Yajur/Saama Vedha rituals during Aavani avittam would be really wonderful to watch. Since Melakulam is adjacent to Sankara Madam, this place was ideal for community mass celebration wherein part of rituals such as Kaamokaarishin Japam, Mahaa Sankalpam, Gada Pooja and Homa anushtaanams would be performed in Sankara Madam. Other parts of ritual such as taking head bath (Snaanam), Sacred thread wearing, and Kaandarishitharpanam would be done in Melakulam. This helped in conducting community mass celebration in a traditional way with immense satisfaction.

3. Maintenance of Village temples:-

❖ Maintenance and supervision of various activities of Brahmin controlled village temples in those days were under the control of villagers and a few members were taking the primary responsibilities to manage the affairs. Archakaas of those days used to get their livelihood in various ways. General resource allocation (General Maanyam) for temple maintenance and resource allocation (Maanyam) for special functions like

Pradhosham were available which would take care of the entire expenditure of temple maintenance including archakaas livelihood. In addition to that the archakaas used to go and collect door to door offerings of rice, Milk and oil, for some specific functions like Sashti. Over and above that Sambhaavanai (Cash offer) would also be done for Archakaas during archana, abishekam and special functions.

- During harvest season, the Poosaaris of other community temple would be offered paddy while harvesting is performed.

- Then over period of time, based on situation then prevailed, at the request of core members of village community who were maintaining the temple, Sivan Temple and Kulundaalamman temple were brought under HR&CE board, a govt body to maintain temples. Then onwards, salary for archakaas were paid by that body.

- Two Kaala Poojas {Praathakkaalaa and Saayankaalaa Poojas (Morning & Evening)} were performed for Sivan and Perumaal temple while one time morning Poojas were performed for Pilliar and Ayyanaar Temple. In those days Pilliar and Ayyanaar temple Poojas were performed by Sivan Koil Archakar.

- In Sivan temple in olden days, as Part of everyday Praathakkaala Pooja (Morning Pooja) Pooja would be performed as per aagama saasthras (viz) Lighting Deepam in all Sannadhis, Smearing oil for all Moolavar statues, (Ennakkaapu), performing traditional abishekam and alankaaram for all vighrams (Idols), offering Naivedyam as well as showing Karpoora Haaraththy for all Sannadhis including Surrounding temple Sannadhis would be performed. Deepam would be lit for both Kaalas (times).There is an exclusive place in sivan temple called" Madappalli" where Naivedyam would be prepared inside the temple in an orthodox manner.

- For daily Saayankaala Pooja (evening Pooja) in Sivan temple, quite a number of Brahmin men and women would participate. During this pooja, for swamy and ambal, traditional alankaaram and shodachopachaaram would be shown to them which would be followed by Archana and Karpoora Haaraththy and finally ending with Aaseervaatha Manthram. After that Karpoora Haaraththy would be shown to all devotees present and then vibhoothy / kumkum prasaadam would be distributed to all. For all above necessary manthraas would be chanted by Graama Upaadhyaya Vaaththiyar. In addition to this some orthodox Brahmin elders and Vaidheekas wil chant Japams like Rudhram on a daily basis. All the above would provide tremendous spiritual vibration to all devotees. It is also worth noting that everyday Saayankaala Pooja would be accompanied by traditional Mangala Isai with Naadhaswaram and Melam which used to add to the divinely atmosphere in the temple.

- Similarly in Perumaal temple also Praathakkaala anushtaanams in the morning as well as alankaara deepam anushtaanams in the evening would be performed on a daily basis. Some Brahmin members of the village were having the habit of visiting Perumaal temple also every day. Since Perumaal Koil was situated in North Street, members of family residing in North Street can just come out of their house and have

dharshan of Deeparathanai in Perumaal temple. In some houses of North Street there used to be a practice of having their supper only after seeing Perumaal temple deepaarathanai. Around year 1982, Aanjaneyar Sannadhi and subsequently Viswakshenar Sannadhis were consecrated in that temple.

- ✿ It is to be pointed out that such a Mass attendance of village agrahaaram Brahmins to temples in those days and engaging themselves in regular poojas on day to day basis were really a great motivating factor to the archakaas of all temples.

- ✿ In addition to the regular daily poojas, monthly Pradhosham pooja was also be performed in Sivan temple when there used to milk abishekam and "Kaapparisi"(wet rice mixed with Jaggery) naivedyam to Nandhi (Bull statue in front of Sri Vyagrapureeswara swamy Sannadhi), Procession of Swamy in Rishaba Vaahanam (Bull Vaahanam) in inner prakaaram of temple with Melam and Naadhaswaram and distribution of Sundal Naivedyam would make the function more auspicious with many people from village participating in the same. Similarly ekaadasi pooja is a special monthly function in Perumaal temple. Similarly all temples used to have countless religious functions with so many people having regular practice of participating in such functions and making

- ✿ Similarly Monthly poojas Sankatahara Chathurthy was carried out in Pilliar temple.

- ✿ Various regular annual functions in all temples would also be conducted in a grand and spiritual manner with full participation of Barhmins in agrahaaram.

- ✿ Above all, in all temples including Pilliar and Ayyanaar temple, special abhishekams and archanaas would be performed in private by local /outstation devotees on regular basis when they visit and make offerings to various village gods.

- ✿ Rudhraabhishekam is an unique ritual function in Sivan temple for Brahmin community of local/outstation devotees of Sri Nithyakani amman sametha sri Vyaagrapureeswara swamy of this village. This would be performed by individual families either for auspicious family functions like Marriage, or as part of their Venduthalai. On that day, Mangala Isai (Naadhaswaram & Melam) would be performed in the early morning in their house. Special aachaaram and Madi would be followed by the family members on that day. On an auspicious time in the morning, the whole family would formally proceed to the temple with Pooja Kalasam (empty brass vessel "Kudam") and abhisheka Items, preceded by Melam & Naadhaswaram. On reaching the temple, Rudhraabhishekam would be performed in an auspicious manner. After the completion of Rudhraabhishekam the entire family would return home along with Melam & Naadhaswaram. Community feast (Oor Saappaadu) for the entire agrahaaram would be offered by this family on that day for lunch.

- ✿ Currently such a traditional way of performing Rudhraabhishekam is being carried out every year by SNASS as "Samashti Rudhraabhishekam" with participation of all SNASS FAMILY members.



Pilliar Temple



Ayyanaar Temple



Kulundaalamman Temple



Maariamman Temple



Sivan Temple



Perumal Temple



Maariamman Koil Tank



Sankara Madam



Kheezhakkulam



Kulundhaal Kulam



Melakkulam

Temples and Tanks

E. ANNUAL FUNCTIONS/FESTIVALS IN THE VILLAGE AND TEMPLES/ A BRIEF NOTE ON THEM:-

THEN:-

1. Chiththirai:-

◆ "Panchaanga Patanam" – (Reading of New Panchaangam), Sri Aadi Sankarar Upanyaasam on Sri Sankara Jayanthi day, Sri Narasimha Upanyaasam on Sri Narasimha Jayanthi Day would be done by Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal at Sankara Madam. Paanakam (Jaggery water with lemon juice, dry ginger powder and elachi) Neer more(Add water, curry leaves, salt and tempered mustard in buttermilk), Sundal, Jack fruit and Palm tree leaf hand fan will be distributed during those functions.

◆ Paanakam, Neer more, Sundal, Jack fruit and Palm tree leaf hand fan would be distributed in Sri. Ramachandra Iyer's (Sri. Raamu Mama) house on the day of Akshyathiruthiyai

◆ Chithraa Pournami Pooja: This pooja would be performed on the day of Chithraa Pournami by the elderly lady members of Brahmin family in the village. On that day they would perform Chithrakuptha pooja and make offerings Called "Mura Dhaanam" to the Upaadhyaaya Vaaththiyaar. During this time, an offering of "Muram" (Wincrowing Fan woven out of bamboo wick) containing rice, Dhaal, two bunches of raw mango with leaf, Betel leaf and betel nut, along with Paanakam, Neer more and cash

◆ Maariamman Temple Chariot festival {Now Palanquin (Pallaakku)}, Karaka aattam, Agni Kapparai

◆ In the village, there is tradition to perform "Vidhai Muhurtham" (Seeding ritual), by the villagers before the start of irrigation and agricultural activities every year. It is the belief that this ritual would bring about smooth irrigation and a good yield in that year in agriculture for the entire village.

Basically this ritual would be performed by Brahmin Upaadhyaaya Vaaththiyaar on an auspicious day in this month in which all community family would join to pray. On this day, on the auspicious time in the morning all the villagers would proceed jointly to Kulundaalamman Temple tank, with various items for performing pooja (such as Coconut, Plantain fruit, Betel leaf and nut and raw brown sugar. Along with this seeds of paddy and other grains also would be carried by all members. Brahmin as well as other community male members would be joined by their children ringing hand bells. On the bank of this tank, a temporary "Seeding bed" would be made and watered for seeding the seeds. After performing the pooja, all the villagers would sprinkle the seeds in that "Seeding bed" and pray for smooth irrigation and good yield. Then the grains would be watered and allowed to sprout and grow over days. At the end of this pooja, coconut with brown sugar would be distributed among the villagers present.

2. Aadi:-

✦ All Fridays of this month Aadi being auspicious, Sahasranaama archanai and performing Maavilakku Praarthana by the Brahmin family women in sivan temple. Offering of Kozhukkattai for Pilliar in Pilliar temple by Brahmin families.

✦ On the last Friday of this month, a special and unique function of " Kala Arumbu" would be performed for Sri Nithyakalyani Amman. On that day, Ambaal would be decorated in a grand manner with lots of flowers and colourful saree. Sannadhis of Swamy and Ambal would also be decorated with "Flower Pandal". One "kalam" (24 measures) of Jasmine Buds would be offered in the lotus feet of Ambal and Alankaara Deepam would be shown to her.

3. Aavani:-

☞ Kulundaalamman Chariot (Ther) festival.

☞ Kokulaashtami Bhajanai Festival in Perumaal temple

4. Purattasi:-

○ Sravana Deepam in Perumaal temple.

○ Navaraathri festival in Sivan Temple for Nine days in this month used to be a grand village function in those days. Each day ubhayam (courtesy offerings) would be owned by land owners either individually or jointly depending on their land holdings {One Ubhayam for every 8 Velis (approx 52 acres)}. Each day in the morning there would be Sahasranaama archanai for Ambaal.

In the evenings of all days, there would be special alankaaram for Swamy and Ambaal. In addition to that there would be variety of events such as Muththaaraththy for Ambaal, Reading of Devi Mahaathmeeyam, Vedha chanting by Vaidheekas, and Kummiyaattam by Women. The entire family (women, men and children) of Brahmin family used to definitely participate on all evenings during this period. Some members of other community members also would attend the events. Distribution of Sundal, Vadai and Kaalanchi (Betel leaf and nut folded in a special method and tied with a knot) for all those who were present would be a sight to see. On the whole, the whole temple used to have a festive look on all the 9 days of Navaraathri festival.

5. Iyppasi:-

◆ Skandha Sashti and Sambaka Sashti for Sri Subramania swamy in Sivan Koil .. Procession around the village agrahaaram (Veedhi Ula) of Sri Subramania swamy in Peacock Vaahanam.

◆ Thulaa Puraanam reading by Sri Ramayana Saasthral in Sankara Madam.

6. Kaarthigai:-

➤ Kaarthigai Deepam is usually celebrated for three days in the village. (viz) Bharani Deepam, Sarvaalaya Deepam and Kuppai (Garbage) Kaarthigai consecutively. On all the days Agal Vilakku (Mud Pot Lamp) would decorate every house of entire village in the evenings.

On Sarvaalaya Deepam day evening, Alankaara Deepam for Swamy and Ambaal in Sivan temple would be performed as usual which would be witnessed by all Brahmin families. Then with the same Deepam, a "Deepasthambam" (A pillar stand containing bigger size of Deepam), specially erected in front of the temple would be lit. From that Deepam, all Brahmin families of the village would light a "Torch" (Called "Theeppandham"- bunch of dried coconut leaf tied closely) which they would have brought for themselves and carry this flame to their house. This flame would be used for lighting the lamps for that day decoration. Then this torch would be put off. The same torch would again be carried to Perumaal Temple where also the same would be lit from Deepasthambam there. From there, this torch would be finally taken to Pilliar Temple.

A "Bonfire" (Called "Sokkappaanai"- An arrangement erected with flammable materials like dried palm leaf, coconut leaf, dried cow dung and dried straw) be erected in front of Pilliar Temple. This would be lit by the torch brought by various families to that place and bonfire would be burnt out which again would be witnessed by the villagers. On burning out complete bonfire, the same topple down with flame in any one of the direction. It is a belief that in whichever side the bonfire topples, the yield of the lands in that direction is expected to be excellent in that year.

➤ On every Sunday of this month, abhishekams and alankaara deepam would be performed in early morning for Suriya Bhagavan in sivan temple. On that day, all Brahmin women of the village used to have their bath early in the morning in Keezhakulam (adjacent to Sivan Temple), participate in this abishekam with wet saree and have dharshan of this event. Pongal Naivedyam would be distributed at that time.

7. Maargazhi:-

a) Perumaal Temple:

✿ Daily morning street Bhajanai – The Bhajanai Group (Ghoshti) of the village, would assemble early in the morning at Perumaal temple. After having dharshan of Perumaal they would start their journey singing Bhajanai songs and proceed to Sivan temple through agrahaaram. Then after finishing dharshan there, they would again start their journey back to Perumaal temple, singing Bhajanai songs and covering other part of agrahaaram where the Bhajan would be ended. Having a taste of "Venpongal" (Rice boiled with Dhaal, ghee and pepper) at Perumaal temple at the end of Bhajanai is an unforgettable experience for Agrahaaram children and they would never miss it.

On 27th day of Maargazhi month alone, which is Called as "Koodaaravalli day" (the day on which Sri. Arangan agreed to accept Sri Aandaal as his life partner after 26 days of her rigorous fasting to achieve her goal), there would be ghee soaked "Akkaaravadisal"(prepared with rice, Kalkandu and milk) for Naivedyam and distribution in the morning instead of Venpongal

✿ Pagalpaththu - Raappaththu Festival (meaning 10 days of pre dusk festival & 10 days of post dusk festival) in Perumaal Temple- Similar to Navaraathri festival (for 9 days) in Sivan temple, this festival is a symbol of " Joy" for the entire agrahaaram of the

village. First 10 days rituals would be a "pre dusk" time (before 7.00PM) and next 10 days rituals would be "post dusk" time (before 9.00 PM). Only during Raappaththu, there would be additional special rituals in which, swamy would be decorated with different alankaaram every day, procession within the temple, Deepaarathanai after the procession and also Naivedyam and distribution of Sundal/Vadai would be there. Ubhayam (courtesy offerings) for Pagalpaththu would be from other community and for Raa paththu it would be house location row wise in agrahaaram on turn basis. Days would be allocated for such offerings by Village Munsiff (now called as Village administrative officers) and Karnam (Village revenue accounting person).

- ✿ Vaikunda Ekaadasi- Sorga Vaasal opening in the early morning on that day which would be attended by all Brahmin community members (Men and women) early in the morning after taking bath and with aachaaram (orthodox manner). This would be followed by Swamy Purappaadu (Veedhi Ula) of Perumaal around agrahaaram in Garuda (eagle) Vaahanam.

- ✿ Raadhakalyaana Bhajanai Uthsavam.

b) Sivan Temple:

- ✓ Thiruvaadhirai – On this day, early in the morning there would be abishekam and alankaara deepaarathanai for Sri Nataraja swamy. All members (Women, Men and children would take bath and visit Sivan temple and participate in the event. Then there would be Swamy Purappaadu (Veedhi Ula) of Sri Sivakaama sundareswari sametha Sri Nataraja swamy around agrahaaram.

It is a normal tradition for some Brahmin family to perform "Thiruvaathirai Nonbu" on this day. In Thappalampuliyur the same will be carried out slightly in a different way.

As mentioned before, there will be swamy Purappaadu of Sri Sivakaama sundari Ambal sametha sri Nataraja swamy. Normally whenever there is any swamy Purappaadu, the practice is to have Kolam, Poorna Kumbam, lighted lamp in each house in PIAL (Thinnai), in addition to showing Karpoora Haaraththy with broken coconut, Plantain fruit and Betel leaf & betel nut when swamy comes in front of your house.

On the day of Thiruvaadhirai, during swamy Purappaadu, in addition to above all, an additional Kolam would be drawn in PIAL (in a secluded place) and a full Banana Leaf (Nonbu Ilai) facing swamy (except facing South side) would be placed. "Nonbukkali and Koottu" contained in brass vessels would then be placed over this leaf. In addition to that, broken coconut , plantain fruit, betel leaf & betel nut, Sandal wood paste, Kumkum and also one "Nonbu Saradu"(Nonbu Thread) would be placed near the leaf. When swamy comes in front of your house, after showing Karpoora Haaraththy for Swamy, Naivedyam will be done for this "Nonbu Ilai", seeking the blessings of swamy. Then after swamy Procession moves and crosses four/five houses, this "Nonbu Saradu" will be tied to Sri Ambal in the pooja room. Then the women will perform their "Nonbu" in a traditional manner.

8. Thai:-

a) Sankaraanthi Festival (Pongal Thiruvizhaa)

⊙ First Day - Sankaraanthi Pooja

⊙ Second Day - Maattu pongal

i. Cattle would be given a bath in the morning, adorned with Neem leaf garland and Netti Maalai and Gho Pooja (special Pooja for Cow) would be performed.

ii. In the evening Cattle chasing (Maadu Virattuthal)

b) Thaippoosa festival in Sivan temple- Swamy Purappaadu (Veedhi Ula) of Swamy in Rishabha (Bull) Vaahanam around agrahaaram

c) On all Fridays of this month, women from Agrahaaram would offer "Kozhukkattai" for Pilliar in Pilliar temple and also Maavilakku Praarthana in Sivan temple.

9. Maasi:-

a) Maasi Maham :- On this day, in post dusk time, all the boys from Brahmin community would have fun by sprinkling "Padhar" (chaff- a defective product of paddy which is dry husk without grain inside) on the front side steps of each house in agrahaaram by shouting "Maasi mahaththukku Padharo Padhar". Women in all houses prepare "Milk Paayasam" and offer to moon through Naivedyam and then distribute in the family.

b) Sivaraathri festival in Sivan temple:- Four Kaala (Time) Pooja for Sri. Vyaagrapureeswara swamy in sivan temple. Elderly orthodox Brahmin family members spend that night in the temple without any sleep and participate in all four Kaala Pooja

10. Panguni:-

a) Sri Raama Navami Bhajanai Uthsavam in Perumaal Temple.

NOW:-

✿ Particularly with the exit of Brahmin community from the village and also because of the changes in social/economical/political reasons of the village, the structure of all temples (Particularly those managed by Brahmin community) became dilapidated without proper maintenance. Nithyappadi Poojas in temples became a question mark with no festivals and function taking place in a traditional manner.

✿ Similarly with no care and proper maintenance of the tanks of the village, silts got accumulated in the tanks for years together and became totally dry and unusable. Also the steps (Provided for usage of tank by villagers) in the tanks were totally damaged beyond usable condition.

✿ For this reason, likeminded local/outstation people associated with this village joined have taken up SNASS initiative, through which they managed to renovate all temples and ensured that Nithyappadi poojas are being performed in all the temples.

SNASS played a major role in bringing back the traditional festivals and functions in the same way it was performed decades ago.(For more details click link www.snass-tpuliyur.com)

✿ However factors like, lack of Brahmin population in the village, limited participants during the festivals/functions and changes in socio economic conditions really make us wonder whether it is possible to achieve the original level of traditional practices.

✿ Similarly with the help of likeminded local/outstation members of the village, and individual/corporate well-wishers, Keezhakulam, Melakulam and also Maariamman Koil tanks have been de silted and all the steps have been brought back to original condition making all tanks very useful not only for villagers but also for outstation members who visits the temple.

F. SOME INTERESTING MEMORY NOTES ON THE VILLAGE

i. What M S Mama said on the visit of Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa to the village

(More detailed explanation by Sri. Dr. N. Veezhinathan)

✿ During the visit of Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa in year 1957 to this village, an arrangement had been made to have a large gathering of people to traditionally receive him near Sri Kulundaalamman Temple (entrance to the Agrahaaram) at around 7.00AM with Poorna Kumbam by Vaidheekas and other elderly members of the village. But he reached the village much earlier, to Sri. Ramaa Saasthrigal house in North Street (as early as 6.00 AM) and got down from his Pallaakku. Normally when Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa gets down from his Pallaakku, he would be given a traditional welcome by blowing "Shank shell" (Sanghu). But because of his early arrival no one was there to receive him.

It was just then the women from the house opened the gate, came outside for drawing Kolam to receive Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa. The moment they saw Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa, women were totally perturbed and did not know what to do. Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa was sitting on the frame of a bullock cart parked opposite to the house and waited for women to complete traditional cow dung water sprinkling and drawing Kolam in front of the house. By that time the elderly members and Vaidheekas of the village including Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal arrived to the spot. Once women completed drawing Kolam, then, the most learned person in Sanskrit in the village and a perfectionist in Achaaram, Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal gave a formal reception to Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa in Sanskrit. At that time, he praised Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa as "Yathi Sreshtar" (meaning "A supreme saint (Gnaani) amongst Sanyaasis") and formally gave Poorna Kumbam and received him in the house. That Time Sri Sri Mahaa Periyavaa immediately replied to him saying that "You praised me as "Yathi Sreshtar". But you are an "Yathu Sreshtar" (meaning you are like Sri. Krishna Baghavaan, who was a "Supreme soul of "Yathu Kulavamsa"

Also, in Raghuvamsa Mahakaavyam, Chakravarthy Raghu, performed a yaagam by name "Viswajit". For that he gave all his wealth as offering to that Yaagam. He was having his pooja items in a mud pot and praying god. At that time Kowthsar, a disciple of Maharishi "Varathanthu" came, met Chakravarthy Raghu and requested him to make an offering of 14 crore sovereign gold to his guru "Varathanthu". At that time Chakravarthy enquired to Kowthsar about the welfare of his guru. During that time, Chakravarthy addresses "kowthsar"..."Kuchaakrabhuththe kuchalee kurusthe" (Raghu Vamsam-5th Sargam-4th slokam) (Meaning to address the Rishi to have "as sharp a wisdom as that of tip of Holy straw"). Similarly, here, during his conversation Sri Sri Periyavaa mentioned the same word " Kuchaakrabhutthee" to Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal and blessed him.

✿ On a different occasion, when Sri Sri Periyavaa visited sivan temple, he sat near the "Kaattaaththi tree' in the temple ("Sthala Viruksham" for this temple). He requested all the members of the families in agrahaaram to join him there and gave "Anugraha Bhaashanam". In his speech, when he described Sri Nithyakalyani amman of this temple, he mentioned that She is very famous all over the world and She is one who would fulfil the request(s) of her devotee "instantly" after the prayer. He also mentioned at that time, that the slokam "Indrakshi Stotram" is significant for Sri Nithyakalyani amman and everyone should chant the same in this temple. From that day onwards Sri Mahadeva Saasthrigal (Sri.M S mama's father), Sri T S Natesa Iyer and Sri Ramamirutha Iyer started to learn and chant "Indrakshi Stotram" regularly in the temple without fail.

ii. Blessed Association of Sri Sri Krishnapremi swamigal with this village

◎ Association of Sri Sri Krishnapremi Swamigal (fondly called as SRI SRI ANNA by his devotees) even at his very young age is a great unsolicited boon not only for the Agrahaaram but also for the whole village.

Sri G. Krishnamoorthy Saasthrigal (fondly known as Sri. G. Krishna Mama) of North street of agrahaaram used to go to village Mudikondan frequently to perform Paarayanam at the Prayer Hall (Athishtaanam) of Sri Aalangudi Swamigal right from year 1952, where he happened to meet SRI SRI ANNA and became his close associate. SRI SRI ANNA also used to learn more and more about Thappalampuliyur agrahaaram Brahmins, their cultures and life style. Then in the year 1956, when Sri. G.Krishna Mama met him during his routine visit to Mudikondan, SRI SRI ANNA expressed his temptation to visit our agrahaaram and perform Sri Krishna Sankeerthanam. Sri. G.Krsihna Mama also felt so happy, considered it as a great boon and invited him whole heartedly to visit this village.



Notes on SRI SRI ANNA's early days experience in Thappalampuliyur

Dyaana Room of SRI SRI ANNA in Bhavanam

Some of the early days close Devotees of SRI SRI ANNA



Sri Premika Yuvaraja Bhavanam



Village Tour of SRI SRI ANNA and his blessing to villagers

Sri Premika Yuvaraja Bhavanam and SRI SRI ANNA's Visit

From then on wards, SRI SRI ANNA used to visit our agrahaaram, and engulfed not only himself, but also entire Brahmin community of the village (right from elders to small children) in various ways, namely spiritual activities such as performing Pooja for Sri Kolaahalan, Bhajan, Paaraayanam, Dhyanam, writing devotional songs and slokams, Upanyaasam and engaging children of agrahaaram in small devotional dramas. Over a period of time, with increased involvement in spiritualism, the whole village would have a festive look when SRI SRI ANNA 's visit to this agrahaaram.

⊙ Also very many times, under different occasions, he had visited our village and performed Upanyaasam like Sapthaakam. Now a Days, in whichever town SRI SRI ANNA visits, Thappalampuliyur members, staying in that place goes and have Dharshan, attends to his Early Morning poojas, take holy water offered by him there, and also participate in his Upanyaasam. It would be a great moment of pride, when SRI SRI ANNA sometimes touches on his old memories of his Thappalampuliyur visit on one to one discussions during such dharshan.

It is also not out of place to mention, to day, due to his close association with this village agrahaaram from his younger days, the pride and spiritualism of this village has spread out in global way.

⊙ It is on the same reason, a few years after Sri G. Krishna Mama sold his house to other community and migrated to urban location for his personal reasons, Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamigal, a staunch Disciple of SRI SRI ANNA , bought that house from that person. He then renovated that house, christened as "Premika Yuvaraaja Bhavanam" and converted this as a place for Daily Vaidheeka Paaraayanam in memory of SRI SRI ANNA . Now Vaidheeka Paaraayanam is being held every day in that house. In addition to this, Various informations on SRI SRI ANNA's olden days in Thappalampuliyur and also some of the rare photo graphs of his past stay as well as photos of some of his very close devotess in those days have also been exhibited in that house.

iii. Interesting and Unforgettable traditional events in Village temples

➤ Siddhi Vinaayakar (Pilliar) Temple:-

☞ Pilliar in this temple would break all obstacles in one's life with a mere "Cedar Kaay" coconut break (- meaning throwing coconut by force on the ground and breaking)

☞ In olden days, if there is monsoon failure, the statue of a Pilliar (Currently placed in the front side of the temple) would be immersed in water in Melakulam by the boys of the village. This will be followed with a prayer for rain. By doing so, it is the belief that village would be blessed with rain. After some time, when there was no sufficient water in the tank, then a small make shift arrangement would be made with mud enclosure

around the statue to hold water to immerse the statue, into which water would be poured to immerse the statue. This again will be followed with a prayer.

➤ *Perumal Temple:-*

☞ On Raappaththu days during Swamy Purappaadu, there used to be a real competition among the agrahaaram boys to have fun and fight for carrying "Aayankol" with them (Aayankols –A Bamboo pillar device used to rest the cross bars of Swamy Pallaakku. Cross bars are to shoulder Swamy Pallaakku during Swamy Purappaadu. These rests would be used to support Pallaakku, when is made stationary, in front of temple for Naivedyam Karpoora Haaraththy for swamy).

☞ It is a sight to see with fun, the chaotic situation among the children waiting, during Bhattar of perumal temple distributing Venpongal Prasaadam early in the morning of Maargazhi month. All the children would be asked to stand on queue to receive. Bhattar would see the crowd and manage the available quantity to be distributed without any disappointment to children. Sometimes the crowd would be so much that he would adjust by pretending to take full quantity in his hand (but actually taking only half quantity in hand). Children would also manage to come twice/thrice in the queue through escape routes to get more quantity.

☞ Early morning Bhajan during month of Maargazhi would be completed on the day of Bhoghi (a Day before Pongal) with one of the group member dressed in a special "Clown Dress"

➤ *Sivan Temple:-*

* Muththaaraththy Deepam: Taking Muththaaraththy Deepam by the Village Agrahaaram Girls after Alankaara Deepam for Sri Nithyakalyani Amman on all the nine days of Navarathri is an interesting event in the village. For this event, the village girls (Why even the women of the family.....) would start planning to exhibit their talent and compete with each other. They will decide on a beautiful Kolam/Picture (namely Ambaal Picture) and would choose suitable size of the plate and clean them bright. Then the kolam/Picture is drawn on this plate. Sticky gum must be applied on the outline of this Drawing/Kolam. (Some orthodox women use soaked raw pappat instead of sticky gum). Before this, they prepare "rice pearl" and keep it ready. {Method of making--Take enough quantity of rice flour, add little water and boil it. Then stir well and keep adding water little by little and also stirring well till it becomes slightly sticky dough. With this dough prepare enough quantity of (to suit size of Kolam/Picture) small round uniform sized "rice pearls" and dry them under fan. To make Muththaaraththy more beautiful, size of rice pearl should be uniform.

These rice pearls would be nicely arranged over the gummed outlines of Kolam and stuck well and let it dry. Some people use sago grains of uniform size instead of "Rice pearls". This arrangement would then be decorated with different colour powder to have a beautiful look. Some girls/women use their own talents to decorate the whole

plate with additional features like a small parrot/bird (or any other attractive design) made out of the rice dough.

Then in the evening, girls would get themselves dressed in a beautiful traditional manner (viz) silk paavaadai, gold ornaments and also with pigtailed adorned with Jasmine and Fragrant screw pine (Thaazhambu). They would carry this Muththaaraththy plate to temple with Karpooram. The talent of girls lies on keeping the Muththaaraththy design as secret till the last minute surprise to the entire crowd in the temple. In the temple, after the traditional Karpoor Haaraththy is completed by archakar, he would get these plates from the girls one by one and show Karpoor Haaraththy to Sri Nithyakalayani amman with this plate. These plates would be returned to respective girls who then would take it around the crowd with Haaraththy with a look of pride when the people would appreciate the girls for their talent and hard work they have put on for this event.

Occasionally some mischievous young boys would also blow off the Haaraththy and spoil the Kolam for the sake of fun, which would create anger/disappointment to girls.

- * Sundal Basket: Getting Sundal and Vadai prasaadam in the temple during all nine days of the festival would be a great excitement for the children of village. Towards this, women would make small handy "Sundal Basket" for their children in different design using their creative talent with "Nut Grass" (Koraippull). Children would feel pride of carrying those Sundal baskets to the temple. In some families, they would make more such baskets and sell them to other families too.

- * Sandalwood paste abishekam for Sri Saneeswara Bhagawan: Till 1970 (approx.), it used to be a practice for the Agrahaaram School going boys to collectively perform Sandalwood abishekam for Sri Saneeswara Bhagawan in Sivan temple every year, on a Saturday in the month of May. During that day, there would be a gala event arranged by the boys to perform abishekam and Sandalwood paste alankaaram for this deity. The boys would collect money from each house in agrahaaram for the event. A beautiful Pandal decorated with Plaintain tree, bunches of Dates, Panankay, Coconut, and coconut sprout (Thoranam) would be constructed in front of Saneeswara Bhagawan Sannadhi. Small boys used to travel to adjacent town to fetch holy leaf Vanni Pathram, supposed to be very auspicious for Lord Saneeswara Bhagawan. At a time, when there was no machine to grind sandalwood into powder, the same would be ground manually in "Sandhanakkal" (Grinding stone for Sandalwood) with so much of efforts to make paste. Boys would offer themselves on turn basis to carry out this task with full excitement. To optimise the expenditure, and also to encourage participation, most of the work would be done exclusively by the boys.

It is not out of place to mention that Flute Sri. Ramani, (who hails from Thiruvarur) an eminent Carnatic flute artist, who was honoured with Sangheetha Kalanidhi Title on

the later part of his career, performed his first concert for this function. Next year when he wanted to perform at the same event, his lips got injured in a minor accident while coming to village in a bullock cart. So he couldn't perform a concert at the event.

G. SOME MEMORABLE TITBITS OF AGRAHAARAM EVENTS:

i. Unity of Agrahaaram:-

☛ Unity and cohesiveness among the Brahmin families in agrahaaram used to be an important factor for their happy living. One example for such cohesiveness is in preparation of food for Community feasting (Food for entire agrahaaram family). Other than Marriage function, they usually wouldn't hire a cook for any other special functions in their houses. Women were so helpful to each other in large scale cooking during any special event/occasion in their houses. Necessary utensils would be available in all houses. Otherwise, they used to borrow from neighbouring houses. Women experts were helpful in making certain special/tasty items during large scale cooking. Similarly for temple festivals like Navarathri, and Raappaththu Pagalpaththu, women volunteers would prepare Sundal and Vadai for naivedyam and distribution in temple. Kaalanchi and Jackfruit separation would be carried out by men volunteers

ii. Information sharing:-

➤ "Thinnai Petchu" (Discussion in the pial of house)- Informal gathering of various family male members in a particular house for general information sharing. In those days, as far as my knowledge goes, in south street Sri Kalyana Mama House, Kodi Veedu Sri Kalyanarama Iyer house and In north street Sri T N Krishna Mama House were the three places for such Thinnai Petchu. Such discussion used to take place around between 7 to 8 in the morning and 7 to 9 in the evening. Having Radio and getting daily newspapers used to be a luxury in those days.

Thinnai Petchu would also be held among the elderly members of Agrahaaram and the prominent persons of other community (called Naattaamaikkaarar) for discussing matters related to welfare and issues in the village.

As far as women are concerned, information sharing used to take place through informal gathering of likeminded women in some house during post lunch leisure time, or their getting together in tank while taking bath or in the temple when going for worship.

iii. Thinnai (Pial) Upanyaasam:

○ Thinnai (Pial) in Sri. Ramasamy Saasthrigal /Sri. Venkatarama Saasthrigal house in South Street used to be quite long and convenient for performing Upanyaasam. Normally Upanyaasam like Ramayanam, Mahaabharatham, and Krishna Leela would be performed by eminent people like Sri Ramayana Saasthrigal and Sri Ramachandra Saasthrigal. This event would go consecutively for 10 to 15 days during night for about two hours from around 7.00 PM. We were fortunate to have SRI SRI ANNA's

Upanyaasam also here during his early days. Swamy Portrait decorated with flowers and other pooja items would be made available for performing a small pooja before starting Upanyaasam every day.

Men and women were able to attend the Upanyaasam after dinner. People normally occupy nearby houses also to have a place to sit and listen as well to have comfortable view. It is the practice that all the houses in the agrahaaram are given prior information of such Upanyaasam for members to participate. The young boys in the village will take the responsibility of informing the same in all houses.

iv. School days of children:-

❖ In early days, a thatched shed school maintained by Sri. Viswanathan sir and his son Sri. Thiagarajan sir (alias Thiagu sir) was the only school available for the education of village children including agrahaaram children. It was an elementary school (having up to 5th Grade) by name Sri Krishna Elementary School. Children, after completing their 5th Grade have to go to Thiruvarur for continuing their education. Due to lack of transport facility, they would be made to walk the distance of 5 km every day to reach the school which would take an hour. Due to this reason, other community and Agrahaaram girls would discontinue their education after 5th Grade at village school. Only the Brahmin boys would continue their studies by walking down to Thiruvarur School. Depending on once resource availability, some children would also travel by bullock cart or bicycle. Sometimes, girl children might go out of village to stay in their relative's house and pursue their studies.

Once when the thatched shed of that school got blown off during a cyclone, kind hearted person Sri. T.N. Krishna Moorthy Iyer (fondly called as TNK mama), considering the welfare of the children, took over the management of this school and constructed a new building for the school. He dedicated his entire life, trying to build a better society-One that gave everyone the right and freedom to education and learning. His undying spirit and consistent efforts helped him to come closer to his visionary dreams. Over a period of time, he managed to construct a few more blocks in the school premises and received the "Middle school" upgradation which admitted students up to eighth grade. In order to encourage children to attend the school, he implemented the "Mid-day Meals" scheme and made education free to all. He did everything he could towards building this institution not out of duty or responsibility but out of love and passion. He breathed his last in this very school, while reading out school annual day report. Even today, he is remembered for the strong -willed visionary man that he was.

With the changes in lifestyle, economic reasons and developments in transport facilities, the children are being able to commute easily to pursue their education in various other places and schools.

v. *Community feasting (Oor Saappaadu):-*

* Community feasting used to be an important event in village agrahaaram during special functions like Rudhraabhishekam and marriage, in Brahmin families of those days. For such occasion special food would be arranged for the entire agrahaaram family and served. As far as possible such functions would be arranged during summer holidays to enable the school going children also to participate and have exciting moment. When served, children normally collect on hand (without getting served on the leaf) special items like sweet, Mango fruit and jack fruit. It is an unique pleasure to go out leisurely as a group, afterwards for exclusive places like river/tank side or under the tree shades and enjoy eating them in a rejoiceful manner. Also it is customary that one of the Bhagavathar or Vaidheeka Brahmin members of the village used to raga alapana with some slokams, (when Sweet/Paayasam are served).

There is an interesting point to be noted while inviting the village families for this community feasting. One or two boys and girls would be given the responsibility to go to each house and invite men and women in each house for lunch. This invitation would be done twice. Morning they would go in person to each house to "Inform" about the feast so that they need not cook that day (A kind of advance information). Again in the afternoon, just before serving food, they would go in person and "invite" them for lunch. If by chance any house is left without inviting (either in the morning or during food or for both), then the boys/girls who have been vested with that responsibility would be taken to task by the parents of the family. Occasions were there in such cases some families may not participate in the feast as they have not been invited formally.

vi. *Collection of Flowers for pooja on auspicious occasions:-*

◆ It would be an interesting event for agrahaaram boys to plug and collect flowers for festivals like Pilliar Chathurthy and Saraswathi Pooja. Everyone would be interested in collecting different types of flowers from plants located in different houses. This would be planned a couple of days ahead with a group of likeminded friends. On festival day, this group would start as early as 3.30/4.00 AM in the morning with a torch light. Boys would go through back yard of houses and silently jump over the walls to get these flowers while the family members were in their deep sleep. A couple of houses in agrahaaram used to have trees of Night blooming Jasmine flower (Pavazhamalligai Flower) which is very auspicious one for all types of poojas. It is a tradition that one should not pluck those flowers directly from the tree but should pick them from ground where these flowers would have fallen from tree. So normally if you want to gather more, one has to shake the branches of the tree to allow the flowers to fall which would then be picked by all. To regulate crowd for such collection, there are occasions for the house owner to allow the boys and girls in batches to collect flowers for specified time.

vii. Cattle chasing event for Maattu Pongal:-

☒ On the day of Maattu Pongal, in the evening, It is a traditional practice to let out cattle from all houses in the village (including those belonging to other community), chase them to assemble in a common open place in the village (usually called Cattle yard). At that time all cattle would have been decorated with garlands made out of Netty and Neem leaves. Traditionally, to start with, at specified time , one cattle from a particular house would be taken around three times through all four streets of agrahaaram by a cattleman before all cattle from the houses are let out.

It was also a practice that the first house to chase the cattle as above would be chosen through randomly picked up chit every year, on previous day of Maattu Pongal. (viz. Sankaraanthi day). All the children would get assembled in the place where the chit would be drawn. The chit from the lot would be picked by a small boy and once the house is identified the whole crowd of boys would shout and rush to that house to break this news. In case if there is no cattle in that house they would hire temple cattle by paying money. This house would not appear in next year random chit pick up to avoid possible repetition.

During cattle chasing event, it is a practice to prepare a powder by smashing together small portion of Citron leaf, Neem leaf, salt and dry chillies. The members of the family, after chasing the cattle away from house would chew a small portion of this powder and spit them out. It is a belief that this would eliminate any possible bad evil to the cattle.

When cattle are assembled in the yard, men and women of the village would ring hand bell and go around the cattle crowd thrice and perform namaskaaram to them. Men would pull out a couple of Netty and Neem garlands from the neck of a few animals during cattle chasing event , bring them home and drop them on the roof top as a symbol of prasaadam from the auspicious event.

Before the cattle return to the house from the yard, it is tradition to drive a pair of wooden pegs made out of raw Neem wood on either side (left and right side) both in the front and back side of the house. Also when the cattle enter the house, the same would be made to jump over a wooden pestle (Ulakkai) at the entrance of the house. It is a belief that all these acts would enable the cattle to have a healthy life driving away the bad evil.

viii. Chapparam during Aadiperukku festival:-

☀ It is also a tradition to make a Chapparam (a small chariot made to roll on 4 wheels decorated nicely with various designs cut in colour papers and pasted on specially made roof to give a beautiful look). Normally the boys in group would work for weeks to plan and make this Chapparam. Of course there would be competition amongst the group to get applaud from the villagers. These Chapparam would also have a small provision to carry a portrait of their favoured god.



Swamy Purappaadu (Veedhi Ula)



Vidhai Muhurtham



Samshti Rudhraabhishekam



Kala Arumbu



Kulundaalamman Ther



Agnikkapparai



Kaarthigaippai



Sri Rama Navami



Cattle chasing

***Titbits of
Agrahaaram
events***



Maariamman Pallaakku

On the day of Aadi perukku this Chapparam would be pulled along the road to the river bank of the village. The families (particularly the women members of the family dressed beautifully) would also follow the Chapparam, carrying mixed rice food for the entire family. It would be a great fun for the entire family and villagers to have the food served on the banks of the river which would have abundant water flow during that time. The chapparam would then be floated in the river with lots of fun and joy.

ix. Kaarthigaippai :

✿ On the day of Kaarthigai while the girls would derive fun by lighting the lamps, the boys used to have fun by producing sparks around his head by twisting a device called "Karthigaippai (also called Kaarthigai Sulundhu). This is nothing but a small cloth bag soaked in cow dung and dried. This is again tightly packed with a special carbon powder made by burning "Pannambu also called paalkkattai" (a product of male- palm tree). The powder is compacted well by stitching the bag tightly with a thread. This bag is held tight by means of fork to which a long strong jute thread is attached. On the day of Kaarthigai, this bag is fired with small pieces of ember (Thanal) and blown to give spark. Then the whole arrangement is circled around the head to produce circle of seamless spark (refer photo in page 34) which is a great fun for the boys.

i. Shank shell (Sanghu) blower's tour around the village:-

✿ Early morning of everyday in the month of Maargazhi it used to be the traditional practice of village Shank shell blower to go around the village who would sing devotional songs, blow the shank shell and also ring a bell. By doing so, it is believed that all bad effects of Maargazhi month (Maargazhi Peedai) will go away in the village. On hearing the sound of Shank shell some children, out of fear, used to close their ears and cover themselves with shawl during morning sleep. Villagers used to offer paddy during harvest, as a livelihood for this shank shell blower

ii. Swamy Purappaadu (Veedhi Ula) in Agrahaaram:-

➤ On various occasions of temple festival in the village, it would be the tradition to have Swamy Purappaadu (Veedhi Ula) around agrahaaram streets in a clockwise direction. The elderly people in village were unable to visit the temple due to their physical disabilities and have dharshan of Gods in the temples. Through this Veedhi Ula, the Gods themselves come to the door steps of all such devotees and give them divine dharshan.

➤ Dragging "Vaasanthi" was the practice in those days before swamy Purappaadu. There was a belief that the streets of agrahaaram would have been subjected to unhygienic condition due to demise of people in the village. Before any Veedhi Ula, an archakar would drag a burning coconut leaf torch (Theeppandham) on the street after sprinkling water and ringing bell.

By doing so it was believed that the streets were sanitized and purified for conducting Veedhi Ula. During this process, people would remain in their house and shut the door too.

Then, water would be sprinkled on front face of all the houses and also streets and Kolam would be drawn to beautify the streets.

Normally all swamys in Sivan and Perumal Temple would have Veedhi Ula in Vaahanam or without Vaahanam depending on festival of that temple. Sri Kulundhaalamman would come in Chariot (Ther) during that temple festival. In case of Maariamman temple festival after the Veedhi Ula of Sri Maariamman on specified day, on the consecutive Friday Sri Maariamman would also come in Chariot (Now in Pallaakku). Traditional events like Silambaattam, and Puliyaattam would prelude Maariamman Ther Ula.

Also during this event, in every house in agrahaaram, they used to draw Kolam in "Pial" (Thinnai), light lamp and also keep Poorna Kumbam (spiritual practice for any traditional welcome).

In addition to above, whenever Sri Kulundhaalamman and Sri Maariamman swamy comes for Veedhi Ula, "Thullu Maavu" would also be kept along with Poorna Kumbam. {"Thullu Maavu" – When prepared, the water soaked Raw rice is smashed in Granite Mortar (kal ural) till Maavu Jumps ("Thullal") out of mortar and hence this name). They would also keep a little Jaggery on the top of Thullu Maavu. Tender coconut, Paanakam (Jaggery water) and Neer More (Watered butter milk) would also be kept as part of offering.

Also broken coconut, Betel leaf & Nut, Plantain fruit, and Karpooram would be kept ready in traditional manner in a brass plate. The members of the house would wait for the arrival of swamy in their street/house.

All swamys (except Chariots) would stop in all houses where camphor deepam in brass plate will be shown to deity by the archakar.

Traditionally all Veedhi Ula would be carried out with Melam and Naadhaswaram. In addition usually Veedhi Ula will be followed behind by singing bhajans by a group of Brahmins and chanting of Vedhaas (Vedha Kosham) by another group of Vaidheekas.

After Veedhi Ula Swamy moves and goes to a distance from the house, it is the practice to dispense the water from the Poorna Kumbam, take out the bunch of leaves in that (Neem leaf for Kulundhaal & Maariamman Kovil and Mango leaf for other temples) and insert that bunch in the roof in entrance of the house.

iii. Arasa Pradhakshinam (Pradhakshinam around Peepal tree (Arasa Maram):-

○ On days, when Amaavaasya falls on Mondays (Somavaara Amaavaasai) orthodox elderly women of the village agrahaaram would perform "Arasa Pradhakshinam (Walking around Peepal tree in clock wise direction 108 times) near

Melakulam or Keezhakulam. This is supposed to be very auspicious for women. At that time they would perform a sankalpa Poojai under the tree and perform Pradhakshinam. For such of those women who cannot perform this Pradhakshinam for 108 times, there would be substitute members of the family who would perform part of the Pradhakshinam. During this event, for counting number of Pradhakshinam normally they choose an item to keep track of 108 counts which will then be distributed to others, including children. For this purpose, the children would start thronging that place from the morning and would be curiously waiting for collection of these items.

iv. Village Doctors and medication those days:-

☒ Sri "Aththu" Ramaswamy Iyer of Agrahaaram South Street used to be a prominent doctor in those days who would diagnose and cure the health related issues by reading the pulse of the patient and recommend homemade Herbal medicines/Kashaayams. He was a great person who would provide free consultation on 24X7 basis, to all the people in the village irrespective of the caste/religion, including house visit in case of emergency. As part of his practicing Aachaaram and traditional discipline, while reading the pulse, a pure silk cloth would be spread on the hands for orthodox Brahmin, women patients and members of other community, to maintain strict aachaaram. For patients who are in critical health condition, based on the heart/pulse rate, he would recommend for "Praayachiththam", a spiritual deed for any Brahmins soul just before their death. Because of his kind heart for such voluntary noble service, he used to be one of the most respected person in the village and people of all community would stand up and respect him whenever he passes by.

The Buttaacharyar of perumal temple would give an Ayurvedhic "Kasthuri Mezhugu" which would be taken with betel leaf, to improve immunity of a person.

In addition to that, Dr. Sundaresa Iyer (Allopathy Doctor) and Dr. Srinivasan (Homeopathy Doctor) would also visit the village for consultation purpose. In those days, with the absence of proper transport facility, Delivery of pregnant women will be performed in the village house itself. Quite a few times, some most competent local female elderly woman would herself attend the delivery. Sometimes, Dr. Sundaresa Iyer, who used to be most talented doctor in gynaecology would come and attend. He would not hesitate to wait for a long hours to perform delivery throughout night. Because of this reason, he would be treated as a close family member in the village and they all fondly called him as "Kairaasi" doctor.

In the recent past, Dr.Namasivaayam, (Homeopathy Doctor) who stayed in Agrahaaram used to provide local medical service.

-----0000000000000000-----