



# THE GLOURIOUS HISTORY OF SAPTHA VIDANGAR STHALAM

**Dr.G.ANBARASI**

**Assistant professor History**

**A.D.M College for women (Autonomous)**

**Nagapattinam - 611001**

## ABSTRACT:

Saptha Vidangar Sthalam holds a glorious history deeply rooted in Hindu mythology and religious significance. This sacred site, comprising seven temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, is steeped in legend and spiritual importance. The term "Saptha Vidangar" translates to "seven medicinal herbs" in Tamil, reflecting the belief in the healing properties of the plants surrounding the temples. Each temple within Saptha Vidangar Sthalam showcases unique architectural styles and is associated with various mythological narratives. Pilgrims visit these temples seeking blessings, spiritual solace, and the supposed medicinal benefits attributed to the site. This study explores the rich historical and religious heritage of Saptha Vidangar Sthalam, highlighting its significance in Hindu culture and mythology.

**Keywords:** Saptha Vidangar Sthalam, Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva temples, sacred site, Tamil Nadu, religious significance, architectural styles, mythological narratives, pilgrimage, spiritual solace, medicinal herbs.

## INTRODUCTION

In the native language, "vidanga" means "not chiselled," and "sapta" means "Seven." These are the seven Saptavidangathalams, which are dance-focused temples in Tamil Nadu devoted to Lord Shiva. The six other temples are called Tirunallaru, Nagaikaaronam (sometimes called Nagapattinam), Thirukarail, Thirukuwela, Thiruvaimoor, and Vedaranyam. The main temple is situated at Tiruvarur. A Vidangar lingam, an uncarved Swayambumurti, is kept in each temple. These are Thyagarajar shrines near the shrine of Lord Shiva.

## ORIGIN OF VIDANGAR

In the Chola Kingdom, Muchukunda Chakravarthi was born. He once traveled to Indraloka, the realm of celestial beings, at the request of Indra, the deva monarch, who needed his assistance to vanquish the formidable demon known as Vaalasaran. Feeling immense satisfaction and gratitude for Muchukunda chakravarti, Indra replied, "Ask of me anything that you desire. I'll provide the boon to you. In response, Muchukunda chakravarti said, "I noticed that you were worshipping an emerald lingam here. It draws my heart in. I want to bring it to Bhuloka (earth) so that I can worship and place it there. That lineage was something that Indra wished to keep. He was unable to retract his word, nevertheless, at the same moment. Thus, he had six more unique lingams created.

## THIRUVARUR THYAGARAJA TEMPLE



- Name of the Siva lingam : Vidhividangar
- Dance form : Ajaba natanam

Dance without chanting, resembling the dance of Sri Thyagaraja resting on Lord Vishnu's chest.

## HISTORY

Thiruvellarur **Temple**, also known as Thyagaraja **Temple**, is dedicated to Lord Shiva. In **that** temple, Lord Shiva is **worshiped in the form of** Lord Thyagaraja Swamy **Lingam**. This huge temple **has around 33 hectares** of land which is a **huge** complex. This temple **has the largest** number of shrines **in** the temple complex. The **lord's feet** are **exposed** on special occasions like Panguniuthram festival and Thiruvathirai festival and covered with **flowers on other days**. Utsav Murthy is taken out of the temple during a **chariot** procession known as **the Chariot Festival**. The temple is **famous** for **its folk** dance procession known as Ajapa Thanam, a **songless** dance performed during the Chariot festival.

## AJABA NADANAM

Thyagaraja is associated with ajaba nadanam. Ajaba's mantra is "hamsa - soham". It is calm, still Japanese represented by inhaling and exhaling. Thyagaraja is said to perform this dance on Vishnu's chest in yoganidra. This controlled breathing is familiar to yogis.

## DIVYA DARISANAM

Saptha Vidangam , the seven sacred steps of Ajapa natanam at Tiruvarur Temple, The seven steps of the Ajapa Natanam dance are believed to represent the seven chakras or energy centers in the human

body. Each step is associated with a specific chakra and is said to activate and energize that particular chakra.

The first step, called the "Mooladhara Vidangam," is associated with the root chakra, which is located at the base of the spine. The second step, called the "Swadhisthana Vidangam," is associated with the sacral chakra, which is located in the lower abdomen. The third step, called the "Manipura Vidangam," is associated with the solar plexus chakra, which is located in the upper abdomen. The fourth step, called the "Anahata Vidangam," is associated with the heart chakra, which is located in the center of the chest. The fifth step, called the "Vishuddha Vidangam," is associated with the throat chakra, which is located at the base of the throat. The sixth step, called the "Ajna Vidangam," is associated with the third eye chakra, which is located between the eyebrows. The final step, called the "Sahasrara Vidangam," is associated with the crown chakra, which is located at the top of the head. This step is believed to represent the ultimate union of the individual self with the divine.

### THIRUNALLAR – “UNMATHA NADANAM”



- Name of the Siva lingam : Nagaradangar
- Dance form : Unmatha natanam

This form of Lord Shiva is worshipped for protection against the ill effects of planet Saturn and is associated with the Pithan dance.

### HISTORY OF TIRUNALLAR SANISWARAN TEMPLE:

The greatness of the **Thirunallar Saniswaran** Temple is that offering prayers at this temple are believed to reduce the malefic effects of **Planet Saturn** or the **Shani Dosha** as well as increases the positive effects of **Saturn** there by help people benefit from great difficulties, Challenges, and limitations. For over a thousand years, devotes visiting **Thirunallar Saniswaran** Temple have found their Misfortunes and bad luck to decrease as this is the only temple possesses healing powers literally and metaphorically. And devotes strongly believe that a holy dip in the sacred waters of **Nalan Theertham** washes off all kinds of afflictions and misfortunes caused by their past karmas.

## UNMATHA NADANAM

The main deity is darbaraneswarar. Here Nataraja performs the **unmatha nadanam**. Nataraja is in an intoxicated state while performing this dance. In Tamil, one can say mei marandhu – forgetting oneself in bliss of God consciousness.

**Thirunallar Saniswaran Temple** is considered one of the ‘Saptha Vidanga Sthalam’s’. Each idol or Murti in these seven temples has the Lord representing a unique dance form. The processional deity or Somaskandhar of **Thirunallar Saniswaran Temple** is ‘**Naka Vidangar**’ and the unique dance he performs here is ‘**Unmatha Nadanam**’. Hence the place is also known as ‘**Nakavidangapuram**’.

## NAGAIK KARONAM — SUNDHARA VIDANGAR — VILLATHI NATANAM



- Name of the Siva lingam : Sundaravidangar
- Dance form : Vilathi natanam

This form of Lord Shiva is believed to bestow beauty and prosperity and is associated with the Tharanga dance.

The temple is one of Saptha Vidanga Sthalam and he is known as Sundara Vidangar . The place is one of Mukthi sthalam and considered equal to Kasi kasetram.

Main Deity is Swayambu Lingam known as **Kayaroganeswarar** and his consort Known as **Nellayadakshi Amman**. This is one Sakti peetam. Urchavar here, known as **Chandra shekarar Sthala Vinayakar** of this temple is known as Nagabarana Vinayakar. Thyagessar sannidhi is next to main sanctum. At the back of main Lingam in the sanctum we see **Somaskanda moorthy**. Thiru Gyanasambandhar, Thiru Navukkarasar and Sundarar sang Hymns on Lord Siva of this place.

## VILLATHI NADANAM

Shiva is worshipped as Kayaroganeswarar. Here, the dance is like the waves of the ocean – **villathi nadanam**. Kadal alai konjiyum varum, seeriyum varum. The waves can be soft and playful, or they can be wild and raging. When the deity is taken on a procession in a pallak, the people who carry the pallak enact these dance movements – the movements of waves in an ocean. Hence Nataraja’s dance at this sthalam resembles waves – small waves and big waves.

**THIRUKKARAIYIL – ADI VIDANGAR, “KUKUTA NADANAM”**

- Name of the Siva lingam : Adhividangar
- Dance form : Kukuta natanam

This form of Lord Shiva is associated with the Kukuta dance and is believed to provide blessings for the growth of agriculture and fertility.

Lord Shiva is a Swamyambumurthy in the temple and is called as Kanniyira Nathar. Mother is called as Kailasa Nayaki. The east facing temple has no Rajagopuram. The office of the temple is on the right side. The flag post-Kodimaram and Bali Peeta are covered with metal. Nandhi is at a higher level. There is a three tier inner tower. At the right side of the entrance are epigraphic details on the Sthala purana. There are also shrines for Lords Maha Vishnu, Muruga with six faces, Bhairava and Mothers Saraawathi and Gajalakshmi and Shivalings.

**KUKUTA NADANAM**

The main deity is Kannayiramudayar. The dance is like that of a cock, seval – kukuta nadanam.

**THIRUKUVALAI – AVANI VIDANGAR, “BRINGA NADANAM”**

- Name of the Siva lingam : Avani vidangar
- Dance form : Bringa natanam

This form of Lord Shiva is associated with the Birunga dance and is believed to bless devotees with good health and prosperity.

The temple is facing east with a 5 tier Rajagopuram. Dwajasthambam, balipeedam and Rishabam are after the Rajagopuram. Dwarapalakas are in stucco. Moolavar is of Swayambhu. In koshtam Vinayagar, Dakshinamurthy, Lingothbavar, Brahma and Durga. Idols of Lord Shiva as “**Maraikattu Manalar**” and Parvati are on the back of moolavar.

This is the 242<sup>nd</sup> Thevaram Paadal Petra Shiva Sthalam and 125<sup>th</sup> sthalam on the south side of River Kaveri in Chozha Nadu. This place was called as Thirumaraikadu during Thevara times, during 15<sup>th</sup> Century as “Vedavanam” and now called as “Vedaranyam”. This is one of the movar Paadal Petra sthalam and is praised in 6 thirumurai out of 12 Thirumurai.

There are many inscriptions associated with the temple indicating contributions from Cholas, Thanjavur Nayaks and Thanjavur Maratha kingdom. The oldest parts of the present masonry structure were built during the Chola dynasty in the 9th century, while later expansions, are attributed to later periods, up to the Thanjavur Nayaks during the 16th century.

As per Periyapuram, Thirunavukkarasu Swamigal, came to this temple after worshiping Lord Shiva of Thiruvaniyam, Thiruthalaiyalangadu and Thirupereyil.

### BRINGA NADANAM

Shiva is worshipped as Brahmasurewarar. Here, the dance resembles the movements of a beetle, **vandu – bringa nadanam**. The circular patterns of movement, the vertical and horizontal movement and the jumping movement of a beetle are enacted while carrying the pallak, during the procession of the deity.

The **Thyagarajar Temple at Tiruvarur** is famous for the **ajapa thanam(dance without chanting)**, that is executed by the deity itself. According to legend, a Chola king named Mucukunta obtained a boon from Indra (a celestial deity) and wished to receive an image of Thyagaraja Swamy (presiding deity, Shiva in the temple) reposing on the chest of reclining Lord Vishnu. Indra tried to misguide the king and had six other images made, but the king chose the right image at Tiruvarur. The other six images were installed in **Thirukkuvilai, Nagapattinam, Tirukarayil, Tirukolili, Thirukkuvilai and Tirumaraikadu**. All the **seven places** are villages situated in the **river Cauvery delta**. All seven Thyagaraja images are said to dance when taken in procession (it is the bearers of the processional deity who actually dance). The temples with dance styles are regarded as **Saptha Vidangam(seven dance moves)** and the related temples are as under:

### THIRUVAYMUR – NILA VIDANGAR, “KAMALA NADANAM”



- Name of the Siva lingam : Nallavidangar
- Dance form : Kamala natanam

This form of Lord Shiva is associated with the Lotus dance and is believed to provide spiritual enlightenment and liberation.

Vaimoorthy Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva located in Thiruvaimur in tiruvarur district of Tamilnadu. The presiding deity is called as Vaimoornathar. Mother is called as **Pallinum Nanmozhi Ammai/ Ksheeropavachani**. This Shirne is regarded as the 241<sup>st</sup> Devaram paadal Petra Shiva Sthalam and 124<sup>th</sup> Sthala, on the South side of river Cauvery in Chozha nadu. Appear and tirugnanasabandar have sung hymns in praise of Lord Shiva of this temple. This Temple is one of the Saptha Vidangam (seven forms of dance of siva) temples. The temple is famous for the dance pose **Kamala Natanam** – Dance like lotus that moves in a breeze – Nallavidangar.

## KAMALA NADANAM

Shiva is in the form of **vaimur nathar**. This is the temple where Lord Shiva invited **Thirunavukkarasar** saying “**thiruvaimurukku va**”. The dance resembles the gradual blossoming of a lotus flower. The blossoming happens from the inner to the outer. When they bring the deity in the pallak, they do so following the movement of a blossoming lotus – from below to above. They do not carry the deity at a fast pace. The dance is slow, because it resembles a lotus swaying gracefully to a gentle breeze. Hence the pallak is carried in a slow manner, gently swaying from side to side.

## THIRU MARAIKKADU — BUVANIVIDANGAR — HAMSAPADA NATANAM



- Name of the Siva lingam : Bhuvanivividangar
- Dance form : Hamsaptha nataanam

This form of Lord Shiva is associated with the Hamsabada dance and is believed to protect devotees from negative energies and provide overall well-being.

Shiva is worshipped in the form of Vedaranyeswarar. Here, the dance resembles the gait of a swan – hamsa paada nadanam. The dance motion while carrying the deity in the pallak resembles the graceful movements of a swan.

## HAMSAPTHA NATANAM

The Thyagarajar Temple at Tiruvarur is famous for the ajapa thanam (dance without chanting). According to legend, a Chola king named Mucukunta obtained a boon from Indra (a celestial deity) and wished to receive an image of Thyagaraja Swamy (presiding deity, Shiva in the temple) reposing on the chest of reclining Vishnu. Indra tried to misguide the king and had six other images made, but the king chose the right image at Tiruvarur. The other six images were installed in Thirukkuvalai, Nagapattinam, Tirukarayil, Tirukolili, Thirukkuvalai and Tirumaraikadu. All the seven places are villages situated in the

river Kaveri delta. All seven Thyagaraja images are said to dance when taken in procession (it is the bearers of the processional deity who actually dance). The temples with dance styles are regarded as Saptha Vidangam (seven dance moves). And the related temples are as under:

### CONCLUSION:

The Sapta vidanga Sthalams are a group of seven temples in Tamil Nadu, India that are dedicated to Lord Shiva and are known for their emphasis on dance. The temples are believed to house unshielded idols of Lord Shiva, and each temple has a unique name for the dance performed by the deity.

### REFERENCE

- Filed work individual
- Sthalapuranam

