

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**I M A HISTORY VI SEMESTER**

**HISTORY OF KONGU NADU UPTO 1800 A.D (18MHI24C)**

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**Kolli Hills** or **Kolli Malai** is a small mountain range located in Central Tamil Nadu and spread over the [Namakkal district](#) and [Tiruchirapalli district](#) of India. The mountains rise to 1300 m<sup>[1]</sup> in height and cover an area of approximately 280 km<sup>2</sup>. They are part of the [Eastern Ghats](#), which is a mountain range that runs mostly parallel to the east coast of Southern India. The mountain is a site of pilgrimage, because of the [Arapaleeswarar temple](#), but the area is also popular with Motor cycle enthusiasts because of the high altitude motor-able terrain with 72 [hairpin bends](#)

The **Malayali** is a tribal group found in the [Eastern Ghats](#) of northern [Tamil Nadu](#). The name derives from *malai-alam* meaning "hill-place," denoting an inhabitant of the hills. They are the largest Scheduled Tribe in Tamil Nadu, with a population of around 358,000. They are divided in to three groups: the *Periya Malayalis* ("big" Malayalis) who live in the [Shevaroyis](#), the *Nadu Malayalis* ("middle" Malayalis) from the [Pachaimalais](#), and the *Chinna Malayalis* ("small" Malayalis) from the [Kollaimalais](#).

Edgar Thurston believed they were once Tamils from the plains who moved up into the hills and developed their own culture.<sup>[1]</sup>

Each group of Malayalis have their own tales about their origins. According to their traditions, the three groups were descendants of three brothers from [Kanchipuram](#) who settled at each of the three hill ranges. One story is this: A long time ago the Vedars (hunting community) of Kagundi, having been refused marriage with Vellalar girls, kidnapped them. To recover them, seven Vellalar men set out with dogs, telling their wives that if their dogs returned alone, they should assume they had perished. At the Palar river, the men were able to cross but the dogs returned home. After the men successfully rescued the girls, they returned home to find themselves presumed dead and their wives now considered widows. Therefore they married Vedar women and moved into the hills.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Malayalis are mainly hill farmers, who cultivate *thinai* and *samai* (types of millet). Each village is headed by a headman, who has an extra share of goods from the festivals. Under the headman was the *kangani*, who did duties for the headman and received some grain in return. They have a system of stratification. The *durai* is the headman of the village and has the highest status. The *moopan* is an intermediary between the *durai* and the *kudippadai*, the common people. These divisions are only present in social and religious rites.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Malayalis have several types of marriage: arranged marriage (known as *sellakalyanam*), marriage by elopement (less common) are some. During the *nitchayadhartham*, the engagement, a group of 10 men, including the groom's father (if alive) goes to the bride's house. The group must wear *dhotis* and *thalaipagai* (a turban) such that no hair on the head is seen. Although its original reasoning is unknown, some believe it wards off evil omens. The party is given mats to sit on, and are served water by the girl in order to observe her bearing and manners. If they need

more time to observe, they ask for more water. They are then invited to stay for dinner: if the match is not OK, the invitation is decline, but if the match is approved, the invitation is accepted. To fix the bride price, or *parisam* in Tamill, the bride and groom's party meet on an auspicious day, without bad omens being present, and are offered milk (or starch water). Then follows a symbolic conversation about the quality of the milk, which ends with the groom proposing the bride price. This is then negotiated again twice, which is the final bride price. The bridegroom's family is obligated to give the largest *parisam* they can afford. The day of the marriage is fixed at the same time.<sup>[2]</sup>

They worship Siva and Vishnu, but mainly worship village goddesses also found in the lowlands such as [Mariamman](#) and [Draupadiamman](#). They commonly took oaths holding camphor in front of the god and then extinguish it, symbolizing their desire for the deity to "snuff out" their life if they have told a lie.

The hill tribes or Adivasis (original inhabitants) as they are called, account for barely 5% of the area population in the Western Ghats. The tribals have coexisted with nature for centuries in quiet harmony with rich traditional knowledge and cultural life.

The changing times have told on the lives of the tribals and they have to make a hard choice; accept development with its positive and negative features or perish. In recent years with the reduction in forest area, imposition of forest regulations, construction of dams etc. the lives of

the tribals have been highly disturbed. Hunger, ignorance and exploitation have forced them to leave their traditional forest living and take to crimes, migrate or seek employment in rural and urban areas.

The profiles of some of the major tribes of the Western Ghats are as follows:

### **The Tribes of the Nilgiris**

Before the British opened up the high pastures of the Nilgiris in 1818 to the western civilisation, they were the preserve of four tribes: The Kotas, who gave their name to Kotagiri, made tools and music; the Badagas, who cultivated the land, the forest dwelling Kurumbas who collected honey and wood and also performed sorcery; and the Todas, who with their herds of sacred buffalo, provided milk and ghee. *Toda Woman in traditional shawl - Pic by Mohan Pai*

#### **The Todas**

The Todas have unique traditions revolving around their buffalo and their temples, which are dairies. Unlike their neighbours on the plains, in feature or build, they are tall athletic and well-proportion built and variously described as being Italian, Mesopotamean, Arabic or Jewish origin (it has been suggested that they are the lost tribe of Israel or descendants of Alexander's army). Their traditional dress is Roman type toga, covered by a shawl, and their language is Dravidian in origin, which supports the theory that they were part of the Dravidian flight southwards from the invading Aryans. The idea does not explain however, their physical appearance which is so different from their shorter neighbours on the plains below; when and why they sought refuge in the Nilgiri plateau must remain a mystery forever. The Todas consider they were created by gods

to be the lords of the Nilgiris, and have been here beyond human memory. The Todas live in hamlets called munds. Their huts have an entrance less than a metre high, and closed by a solid block which slides across to

Inside these bamboo and rattan structures is a raised sleeping platform, a fireplace and a cooking slab. Toda life centres around their cattle and dairy produce - milk, curds and ghee -forms the basis of their diet. When a tribesman dies, several of his valuable buffaloes are bludgeoned to death so he will have solace of their company and the nourishment of their milk on his journey to the kingdom of death.

The Todas practice polyandry, a woman marrying all the brothers in the family; inbreeding and syphilis led to a long and steady decline in their numbers until recent times, when the advent of drugs and better medical care has helped stabilise their population. Today there are about 60 Toda settlements around Ooty.

### **The Soligas**

The forest regions of Yelandur, Chamarajnar, Nanjangud and Kollegal which include Biligiri Rangaswamy and Malai Mahadeshwara hill ranges in the southern part of Karnataka are inhabited by nearly 20,000 indigenous people called Soligas. The Soligas have co-existed with the forest for centuries in quiet harmony. Though primarily semi-nomadic, in recent years with the imposition of forest regulations, the Soligas have taken to more or less sedentary existence in small forest villages called **podus** or **doddi** or **hadi**. To an outsider what impresses most is their traditional knowledge, cultural life and a life in harmony with nature.

The Soligas live in small huts at appropriate distance from water sources in fairly safe places to protect themselves from wild animals. All through the night they keep fire near their huts so as to ward off wild animals and protect them against cold.

The staple food of Soligas is ragi. The crop cultivation practices are quite primitive and their agriculture is known by the name ಕಲಾಕೋಡು ಬೆಸಾಯಾ (kalakodu besaya). The Soligas depend extensively on a number of non-timber forest products that are collected by the entire family.

The Soligas have their own medicine system known as ನಾರು ಬೆರು ಅಷಾಧಿ (naru beru aushadhi) (roots and tuber medicine). They also depend on ಠಾಮ್ಮಡಿ (Thammadi) (the priest) who worship their Gods and Goddesses and give them ವಿಭುತಿ (vibhuti) (sacred ash).

The Soliga marriage is simple and by elopement. The boy and girl normally in their teens love each other and elope to the forest and may land up in some remote podu. The local Soligas provide them food and water. They are then brought back to their podu and a ನ್ಯಾಯಾ (Nyaya) (inquiry) is held. They are fined Rs. 12.50 and then blessed by the elders. A simple marriage ceremony is held thereafter involving a community feast. In some cases, however, no ceremony is held and the boy and girl live as man and wife in their podu. The Soligas appear to be acutely aware of their environment. Their concern for environment appears to be a product of their necessity and intuition. Years of close association with nature might have made them realise her secrets and inner life. Their life-line being forest, by sheer necessity too, preservation of forest has been ingrained in their culture.

**Hallaki Vokkals of Uttara Kannada**

Halakki Vokkals are confined to the coastal talukas of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. They are agriculturist living on farm lands located at the outskirts of towns that are sandwiched between the Western Ghats on the east and the expanse of the Arabian sea to the west. 75,000 Halakkis live in Koppas under direct control of their community heads. Mud walls and floors of their thatched huts are elaborately decorated with ❖❖❖Hali❖❖❖( White rangoli against black or red background). They have a rich folklore.

Their women (Gowdathis) are graceful, light in colour and very pretty. The hair are parted in the centre and brought back into a pendulous bun. Their nose, ears, necks arms and ankles are loaded with ornaments made of brass, copper and silver. They have a great fancy for blue, yellow and red beads, and wear them in large numbers around their necks in the form of strings. Women are extremely hardworking and a bridegroom has to pay ❖❖❖Tara❖❖❖ (bride price) to his father-in-law prior to the wedding.

### **The Siddis**

The Siddis are the descendants of African Negroes, who were brought to India mainly by Arabs, the Portugese and the Dutch. They are chiefly found in the forest areas of Ankola, Mundgod, Haliyal and Yellapur taluks. They live in small clusters constituting a distinct settlement of a village or independent settlement. Their occupation is agriculture and they also collect honey and go hunting. They speak Are-Marathi, a mixture of Marathi, Konkani and Kannada.

## **Tribals of Wayanad**

Wayanad district is predominantly a tribal district and the major tribes are : \* Paniya \* Adiya \* Kuruchiya \* Kathinayaka \* Kuruma tribes.

### ***The Paniya***

The Paniya, a major tribal community in Kerala live in the hills of Wayanad. The headman of Paniya settlement is called **Chattan**, and the head of the family is **Mudali**. The Paniya priest **Chemmi** wields authority over a group of settlements.

They practice monogamy and widows are allowed to marry. The Paniyas were bonded labourers employed by the planters.

### ***The Adiyas***

This is another of the slave tribes and the community is divided into subgroups called the **Mandu**. The headman of the Mandu is called **Peruman**. Polygamy is not a taboo among them and sex offender is not ostracized.

### ***The Kattunayakans***

This is a primitive tribe and the Kattunayakans literally live in jungles and are mainly engaged in collecting forest produce and honey. They do not mingle with other tribes. The headman is called **Muthan** whose decisions are always final. The Kattunayakans worship animals, birds, trees and other Hindu deities and firmly believe in black magic and sorcery.

### ***The Kuruchiyans***



The Kuruchiyans are an agricultural tribal community and they are excellent archers who joined Pazhassi Raja in fight against British. They live in small though clean houses and do not encourage drinking alcohol except on festive occasions.

*The*

*Kuruma*

The Kuruma tribals are supposed to be the original inhabitants of Wayanad. They are also good archers and had joined Pazhassi Raja in his fight against the British.

Subsistence economy in the Western Ghats is gradually dwindling for much of the hill dwelling tribals have sought employment in the local private and government sectors. The proportion of people classified as scheduled tribes is less than 5% in the four biodiversity rich states viz Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In fact the population classified as scheduled tribes in the states of Goa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala is hardly 1%.

### **Distribution of the Tribes of Northern and Central Western Ghats (Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa)**

Bhils are considered to be amongst the oldest settlers in the country. They derive their name from the Dravidian word **Billu**, which means bow. Bhils are thus seen with bow and arrow which is their traditional weapon. They live in isolation, go for hunting, fishing,

practice shifting cultivation and have escaped to a large extent the influence of Brahmanian (upper caste) culture. This tribe was able to maintain political independence to a great extent and it remained the most turbulent amongst all the tribes.

Warli Tribe has become famous because of their traditional folk painting art. The Warlis are mainly residents of Thane district of Maharashtra spread out in the villages of Dahanu, Talasari, Mokhada, Vada, Palghara and extends up to the Gujarat border. Their tribal paintings are different from other folk and tribal art. They do not narrate mythology in primary colours as did the Madhubanis instead they are painted on mud, charcoal, cow dung based surfaces using only white colour, and are decorated with series of dots in red and yellow. Their paintings are influenced by the seasonal cycle as their life around them is directly reflected in the paintings.

### **British India Period**

After the Vijayanagara Empire fell in the 17th century, the Nayaks established their state as an independent kingdom and they introduced the [Palayakkara system](#).<sup>[23]</sup> In the latter part of the 18th century, the region came under the [Kingdom of Mysore](#), following a series of wars with the [Madurai Nayak dynasty](#). After the [defeat of Tipu Sultan](#) in the [Anglo-Mysore Wars](#), the [British East India Company](#) annexed the region to the [Madras Presidency](#) in 1799. The region played a prominent role in the Second [Poligar War](#) (1801), when it was the area of operations of [Dheeran Chinnamalai](#) who fought against the rule of British East India Company.<sup>[24]</sup>

Kongu Nadu used to consist of [Coimbatore](#), [Tirupur](#), [Erode](#), [Salem](#), [The Nilgiris](#), [Karur](#), [Dharmapuri](#), [Namakkal](#), [Krishnagiri](#) and parts of [Dindigul](#) district in the South Indian state of [Tamil Nadu](#). Parts of [Palakkad District](#) in the state of [Kerala](#) and parts of [Chamarajanagar District](#) in the state of [Karnataka](#) also fall under the region.<sup>[25]</sup> The [Western](#)

[Ghats](#) mountain range passes through the region with major rivers [Kaveri](#), [Bhavani](#), [Amaravati](#) and [Noyyal](#) flowing through the region.<sup>[26]</sup> [Palghat Gap](#), a mountain pass connects the neighboring state of [Kerala](#) to the region.<sup>[27]</sup> The [Eastern Ghats](#) mountain range, which consists of the hills [Kollimalai](#) of Namakkal district, [Shevaroy](#) (Shervarayan) and [Mettur Hills](#) of Salem district and Palamalai of Coimbatore district, also passes through the region. The [Biligiriranga Hills](#) of Chamarajanagar District is located at the confluence of Eastern and Western Ghats belongs to the region. The [Kaveri river](#) flows into Tamil Nadu from Karnataka through Dharmapuri, Salem, Erode, Namakkal and Karur districts.

Apart from the above-mentioned districts, minor parts of [Palakkad](#), [Kallakurichi](#), [Idukki](#), [Wayanad](#) and [Chamrajnagar](#) districts are also fall under Kongu Nadu region.

Language[[edit](#)]

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[Tamil](#) is the sole official language while [English](#) is an additional official language for communication purposes. [Kongu Tamil](#) (Kongalam<sup>[28]</sup> or Kongapochu) is the dialect of Tamil language that is spoken in Kongu Nadu, which is the western region of Tamil Nadu.<sup>[29]</sup> [Badaga](#) is spoken by approximately 130,000 people in the [Nilgiri Hills](#) of Kongu Nadu region. [Toda](#), [Irula](#), [Kota](#) are some of the languages spoken by tribal population of the Nilgiris district.

Cultural values[[edit](#)]

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Traditionally, people of the Kongu Nadu region upheld the [Tirukkural](#) with utmost reverence<sup>[30]:779</sup> and practiced [vegetarianism](#) for ethical and religious

reasons.<sup>[31]</sup> The [Tirukkural](#) remained the chief administrative text of the region during the [medieval period](#).<sup>[30]:779</sup> Several Kural inscriptions and other historical records are found across the Kongu Nadu region. The 15th-century Jain inscriptions in the [Ponsorimalai](#) near [Mallur](#) in [Salem district](#) bear couplet 251 from the "Shunning meat" chapter of the Kural text, "தன்னூன் பெருக்கற்குத் தான்பிறி தூனுண்பா னெங்ஙன மாளு மருள்", carved out on a rock in five lines, indicating that the people of the Kongu Nadu region practiced [ahimsa](#) and [non-killing](#) as chief virtues.<sup>[30]:774–779, 783</sup> The 1617 CE Poondurai Nattar scroll in Kongu Nadu, the 1798 CE [Palladam](#) Angala Parameshwari Kodai copper inscriptions in [Naranapuram](#) in Kongu Nadu, the 18th-century copper inscriptions found in [Kapilamalai](#) near Kapilakkuricchi town in [Namakkal district](#), Veeramudiyalar mutt copper inscriptions in [Palani](#), Karaiyur copper inscription in Kongu Nadu, and the Palaiyakottai records are some of the other Kural inscriptions found across the region.<sup>[30]:774–784</sup>

## Economy[[edit](#)]

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Kongu Nadu had a flourishing economy from ancient times and had trade contacts with foreign nations. [Kodumanal](#) was a 2,500-year-old industrial colony discovered by archaeologists.<sup>[32][33]</sup> The region was located along an [ancient Roman](#) trade route that extended from [Muziris](#) to [Arikamedu](#).<sup>[34][35]</sup> A Chola highway called *Rajakesari Peruvazhi* ran through the region.<sup>[36][37]</sup>

## Statehood demand[[edit](#)]

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There are demands for the creation of separate state of Kongu Nadu, comprising the regions of western districts of Tamil Nadu.<sup>[38][39]</sup> There have been numerous claims that Kongu Nadu region has often been ignored by successive governments in spite of being the largest contributor to the

state's economy. The entire region comprising 10 districts accounts for more than 40 percent of the revenue. Some political outfits allege that this part of the country has been consistently ignored by the central and state government and this is well reflected from the fact that a city like Coimbatore, which is the second largest city in Tamil Nadu and with indomitable private entrepreneurial spirit doesn't even have one public sector company. A number of political caste outfits name [Kongunadu Makkal Katchi](#), [Kongunadu Makkal Desia Katchi](#), [Kongunadu Munnetra Kazhagam](#), [Kongu Vellala Goundergal Peravai](#), [Tamil Nadu Kongu Ilaingar Peravai](#), [Kongu Desa Makkal Katchi](#), are active in the region claiming to fight for the rights of the region.<sup>[40][41][42][43]</sup>

Cuisine[[edit](#)]

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Kongu Nadu cuisine is predominantly [South Indian](#) with rice as its base and a collection of exotic recipes being created by the people residing in the Kongu region.

As it is also native to an arid area, the cuisine includes cereals like [jowar](#) (cholam), [bajra](#) (kambu), [ragi](#) (kezhvaragu), and different kinds of pulses and sesame. Food is served over a banana leaf.<sup>[44]</sup> Eating on a banana leaf is an old custom and imparts a unique flavor to the food and is considered healthy.<sup>[45]</sup> [Idly](#), [dosa](#), [paniyaram](#) and [appam](#) are popular dishes.<sup>[46][47][48][49]</sup> Kongu Nadu cuisine does not involve marination of any raw material and as a result the food has a different taste and unique texture. The best quality turmeric is grown in the region and this is an important ingredient in the cuisine. Turmeric is added into curries which gives the product a deep yellow colour and an aromatic substance.<sup>[50]</sup> The traditional Kongu people were mostly [vegetarians for religious reason](#).<sup>[31]</sup> Opputtu is a variant of [Puran poli](#) made with rice, chickpea, palm or cane [jaggery](#), cardamom and ghee.<sup>[51]</sup>

The cuisine of Kongunadu region has specialties like Santhakai/Sandhavai (a noodle like item of rice), Oputtu (a sweet tasting pizza-like dish that is dry outside with a sweet stuffing), *kola urundai* (meatballs), Thengai Paal (sweet hot milk made of jaggery, coconut and cotton seeds), Ulundu Kali (Sweet made out of jaggery, gingely oil and black gram), *kachayam* (sweet made out of jaggery and rice), *arisimparupu sadam*, *ragi puttumavu*, *arisi puttumavu*, *kambu paniyaram*, *ragi pakoda*, *thengai barbi*, *kadalai urundai*, *ellu urundai* and *pori urundai*. Parota made with maida or all-purpose flour, and loosely similar to the north Indian wheat flour-based Paratha. Arisimparupu sadam is unique to the region and frequently made in homes. Kongunadu cuisine is distinct from rest of the Tamil Nadu by using coconut oil and coconut in most dishes. The region is the highest producer in Gingely oil, Coconut oil and Turmeric. Which reflects in their cuisine. Blessed with an abundance of oil seeds growing, the region indulges in a variety of pickles soaked in oil. Lemon, Raw mango, Green pepper, Tender mango, Ginger, Mango Ginger are few of those which are made into pickles.

- Sangameshwar **Temple**,Bhavani.
- Arulmigu Arthanareeswar,Tiruchengode.
- Magudeswarar **Temple**,Kodumudi.
- Kalyana Pasupatheeswarar **Temple**,Karur.
- Vikriteswarar **Temple**,Venjamakoodaloor.
- ThirumurugaNathasamy **Temple**,Thirumurugan Poondi.
- Sri Avinashiappar **Temple**, Avinashi.

### **ADIYAMAAN CAVE TEMPLES AT NAMAKKAL**

Namakkal is famous for the 'Namakkal Anjaneyar', and 18 foot tall idol of Hanuman that stands beneath the open sky. The city lies at the foot of a huge rock, upon which there is a fort built by Ramachandra Nayakar, a Vijayanagar chieftan who ruled Namakkal during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that Tippu Sultan hid in this fort for some time to escape the British. Later, the fort was captured by the British.

According to one legend, the name Namakkal is derived from Namagiri, which is the name of the single rock formation at the center of the town. Two cave temples were excavated on this mountain. Although these cave temples resemble the architectural style of the Pallava dynasty and the somewhat lesser known Pandya rock cut temples, they belong to the period of the Adiyamaan rulers of this region, which was one of the ancient ruling families of South India. Together with the Cheras, Pandyas and Cholas, they are known to us from Tamil Sangam literature, dating to the early centuries of this era. Among the prominent rulers of that period was Adiyamaan Neduman Anji, patron of the renowned Tamil poetess, Auvaiyar. The Adiyamaans ruled from Tagadur, or contemporary Dharmapuri, and their domain was northern Kongu, which included the present Salem district.

These two cave temples are known as the Sri Ranganathaswami temple and Sri Lakshmi Narasimha temple. But the inscriptions found on the walls describe the Ranganatha temple as Atiyanaatha Vishnu graham, a shrine to Vishnu built by the Atiya king Gunasila. Another inscription refers to the Atiyendra Vishnu graham and to the Atiya kula. An inscription found on the main sanctum, which contains an image of Vishnu as Anantaśāyi, refers to the shrine as Sayya griham (Sayana griham). Modern visitors to these temples today may not know that these were once cave temples because of the later additions of mandapas and subsidiary shrines.

The Narasimha cave is located at the foot of the hill on the west side of the rock, while the Anantaśāyī cave is located half-way up the east side of the hill and has a set of steps leading to it.

The Narasimha cave consists of a fairly large sanctum sanctorum with complicated relief sculptures rendered on either side of the cave walls. There are three different depictions of the Narasimha avatara of Vishnu in this cave temple: Bala Narasimha, who was first born out of Vishnu and explains to the other deities the purpose of His incarnation; Ugra Narasimha who tears open the chest of the demon Hiranyakasipu with his claws; and the seated or Kevala Narasimha. The Bala Narasimha image within the Vaikuntha Narayana panel is a rare one, where Vishnu Himself reveals to the gods the form he will take to destroy the demon.

The Vaikuntha Narayana relief panel is beautifully carved, where Vishnu as Vaikuntha sits in maharajalilasana, one leg folded and hanging at ease and the other raised, the heel on the coils of the five-hooded Ananta or Adi Sessa, flanked on either side by Brahma and Shiva. He has four hands; the upper two hands hold the chakra and sankha, held a little above his fingers standing in the air. The fire tong on the top of each weapon is unique. This feature is to be seen in all the Namakkal reliefs and sets them apart from Pallava and Pandya sculpture.

Bala Narasimha is seated on the lower left side of the panel, with one leg folded and the other raised with the heel on his seat, beneath the left leg of Vishnu. The leonine face is very beautifully carved by the sculptor: mane, ears, eyes, and wide open jaws are superimposed by a peaceful expression, indicative perhaps of the deliverance that he will bring about. His upper left hand holds the sankha, but his upper right is in bhuddhasramana, the mudra of salutation. Bala Narasimha reveals to the gods the man-lion form in which he will destroy the Asura king Hiranyakasipu, to whom Brahma had already granted a boon that he would not be killed by either man nor beast. The sculptor places Bala Narasimha exactly below the figure of Brahma.



In the Ugra Narasimha panel, Narasimha uses his nails to tear apart Hiranyakasipu, lying on his lap. The wide open mouth, bulging eyes and the flowing mane around the god's face give him a terrifying look. Narasimha has eight arms, on the two of his upper most hands he has sankha (couch) and chakra (wheel). Another pair of upper hands holds kadga (sword) and bow. The third pair of hands keeps the demon king immovable on his thighs. The God lifted him above the earth to kill the Hiranyakasipu because of the boon he attained from lord Brahma. That is he should not be killed by any man or animal, or by any weapon which is neither dry nor wet and not in the earth or the sky. So, the Narasimha that is the half man half lion deity killed the demon by using his nails.— The seated Narasimha in the central cell of the Lakshmi Narasimha cave is the principle deity of the temple who is under worship. This is a peaceful form of the deity, accompanied by Rudra, the Sun (Surya) and Rishi Sanaka to the right and Rishi Sanandana, the Moon (Candra) and Brahma to the left. Surya and Candra wave flywhisks. Though we do not find any Lakshmi image inside the cave, the name Lakshmi Narasimha might have arisen when the bronze icons of Narasimha with the Goddess were installed here. To the right of the main shrine, there is a panel containing the Varaha or Boar avatara of Vishnu who, in the form of a boar, rescued Mother Earth the demon Hiranyaksha. His body is human and his head that of a boar. This theme seems to be a favourite among the Gupta, Chalukya, Pallava and other early dynasties, because some of the most notable early depictions have been found at Udayagiri, Badami and Mahabalipuram. This may have happened because of the popularity of the puranas which were compiled during the Gupta period (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. CE). To support this theory, in this Varaha sculpture we find four sages – Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara – who, according to the Vishnu Purana, sang hymns in praise of Vishnu's deed.

The Ranganatha cave temple consists of a raised rectangular shrine, with two pillars and two pilasters along the front. The main shrine houses Vishnu reclining on his serpent bed in his Anantasayi (Ranganatha) form, which is cut into the rock. A large number of celestials and attendants stand, dance and sit around him. On the two side walls of the mandapa we can see the Trivikrama and Sankara-Narayana forms of Vishnu. In the Ranganatha panel, Vishnu is shown as Anantasayi in yogasayana, lying on the serpent coil. Unusually, this serpent is not Adishesha but the king of the nether world Karkotaka, the fiercest of the serpents and is hence represented with the face of a lion within each of his five hoods. On the top of the panel we see Surya, Markandeya, Narada, Tumburu and Brahma sitting in the lotus which comes out of Vishnu's navel, while celestials come out of the clouds. On the base of the serpent couch are represented the weapons of Vishnu personified as ayudha purushas and Sri-Lakshmi. Madhu and Kaitabha two demons who came out of the ears of Vishnu while he was in yoganidra, dance at His feet.

On the left wall of this cave temple the Vamana relief has been repeated. Facing him is Sankara-Narayana or Hari-Hara. The casual standing figure of Narasimha on the adjoining wall has nothing to do with the theme of the panel: he may have been placed there by the architect either to fill a gap or to balance the gallery.

The Vamana (Tirvikrama) avatara panel is depicted on the right wall of the ardha mandapa, Both the Vamana (dwarf) and Trivikrama forms of this incarnation have been sculpted in the same panel in a narrative style. On one side, the panel describes the event of King Bali gifting three feet of land to Vamana without listening to his guru Sukracharya; on the other side, Vishnu covers the earth with one stride and the heavens with the second in his Tirvikrama form.

The lesser known Adiyamaan rulers of the Kongu dynasty excavated these two caves for the worship of Vishnu on the basis of Puranic legends. Yet these cave reliefs are distinctly Pandyan

style, datable to the eighth-ninth centuries. So, who created them? They are unique in their depiction and are never seen on the tourist circuit. Try and visit them if you ever visit Salem-Namakkal.



### Perur Pateeswarar Temple

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**Perur Pateeswarar Temple** is a [Hindu](#) temple dedicated to [Shiva](#) located at [Perur](#), in western part of [Coimbatore](#) in state of [Tamil Nadu](#) in [India](#). The temple was built by [Karikala chola](#) in 2nd Century.<sup>[1]</sup> The temple is located on the bank of the [Noyyal River](#) and has been patronized by poets like [Arunagirinathar](#) and Kachiappa Munivar. Lord Shiva, known as 'Patteeswarar', is the presiding deity of this temple together with his consort [Parvati](#), who is known as 'Pachainayaki'. The deity is believed to be 'Swayambu Lingam' (self emerged). The pillars raised in this temple depict the architectural prowess of the Tamil sculptors.

Over the period of time, this temple is known by different names such as: Kamadenupuri, pattipuri, Adhipuri, Daksha Kailasham, Thavasiddhapuram, Gnanapuram, Kalyanapuram, Pirava Neri Thalam, Pasupathipuram, Western Chidambaram.<sup>[2]</sup>



This ancient temple was built by king [Karikala Chola](#) in 2nd Century, thus making this one of the oldest temple in the state. During the rule of [Raja Raja Chola I](#), 'Artha Mahal' and 'Maha Mahal' were constructed. In addition to this, there were regular donations from the Chola king, which were documented on the temple walls.

History reveals that the great poet Sundarar sung the devotional 'Devaram' song in this temple by the 7th Century. Nonetheless, strangely Perur Pateeswarar Temple does not make it to the list of Kongu Nadu Padal petra sthalams, which otherwise has seven of the 276 temples.

From the 14th to 17th Centuries, the kings from different dynasties like Hosala dynasty, Vijanagara Empire, Nayakkar Kings have contributed immense donations for the maintenance of this temple. The famous 'Kanaga Sabhai' was built around the 17th century, by Azhagathiri Nayakkar of Madurai.

By the 18th Century AD, the primary deities were renovated and also a Mahal for the 63 Nayanmaars were raised. By the 20th century, the Kalyana Mahal and the front Mahal were constructed, and the tower was renovated as well.<sup>[3]</sup>

Architecture[[edit](#)]

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This temple has several [gopurams](#) and halls, famous of which is, 'Kanaka Sabha', the one with the golden statue of [Nataraja](#). The pillars have carvings of the various manifestations of Shiva and the ceiling has a series of stone chains.<sup>[4]</sup>

There is a Patti Vinayagar shrine, dedicated to [Ganesha](#). The Arasambalavanar Shrine dedicated to Shiva at the spot where Shiva is believed to have performed his [Thandav](#) under a peepul tree.

There are also statues of [Gajasamhara](#), [Virabhadra](#), [Bikshadana](#), Oordhva Thandava, [Saraswati](#) with Veena. The sacred trees associated with temple are the palm and tamarind trees, called Irava Panai and Pirava Puli.

Culture[[edit](#)]

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Every year the temple celebrates a classical dance week, typically [Bharata Natyam](#). The most prominent and talented dance schools of the city and even some from other cities take turns to awe the audience with their performance.<sup>[5]</sup> The temple is believed to be one of the places where Shiva is believed to have performed Ananda Thandavam.<sup>[6]</sup>

Tiruppukkozhियur

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**Tiruppukkozhियur** (also called **Karunaiyaaththaal Temple**, **Avinasilingeswarar temple** and **Avainasiappar temple**) is a [Hindu temple](#) dedicated to the deity [Shiva](#), located in [Avinasi](#), a panchayat town in [Tiruppur district](#) in the [South Indian](#) state of [Tamil Nadu](#). Shiva is worshipped as Avinasiappar, and is represented by the [lingam](#). His consort [Parvati](#) is depicted as Karunambigai. The presiding deity is revered in the 7th century Tamil Saiva canonical work, the [Tevaram](#), written by Tamil saint poets known as the [Nayanars](#) and classified as [Paadal Petra Sthalam](#).

The temple complex covers five acres and it houses two gateway towers known as [gopurams](#), each facing the Avinasiappar and Karunambigai shrine. The temple has a number of shrines, with those of Avinasiappar and his consort Karunambigai being the most prominent.

The temple has six daily rituals at various times from 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., and four yearly festivals on its calendar. The Brahmotsavam festival is celebrated during the day of the Magam (February - March) is the most prominent festival.

The original complex is believed to have been built by [Cholas](#), while the present masonry structure was built during the [Nayak](#) during the 16th century. In modern times, the temple is maintained and administered by the [Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department](#) of the [Government of Tamil Nadu](#).



*Avinasi* indicates the one that cannot be destroyed indicating Shiva's grace to his devotees. As per Hindu legend, two boys of eight years of age took a dip in a tank when a crocodile swallowed one of them. The mother of the boy pleaded [Sundarar](#) to rescue his child and said that she was planning to do [Upanayanam](#) (sacred thread ceremony) to the child when this incident happened. Sundarar, who was on his way to [Tiruvanchikulam](#) heard the incident and sung praises of Shiva in the temple.<sup>[1]</sup> The boy was miraculously rescued from the clutches of a crocodile and this event is commemorated during the *Mudalai Vaai Pillai Utsavam* on Panguni Uththiram. There is a shrine to Sundarar on the banks of the temple tank and the bottom of the flagpost carries the image of the legend. Since the boy came out of crocodile's mouth, the place is called Pukkoliyur. [Brahma](#) is said to have worshipped the Shiva here for hundred years. The elephant of [Indiran](#), [Iravadham](#) is said to have worshipped at this temple for twelve years.<sup>[2]</sup>

Architecture[[edit](#)]

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This temple is situated 40 km from Coimbatore and about 14 km from [Tirupur](#). The nearest railway station is at Tiruppur and the nearest airport is [Coimbatore International Airport](#). The Shiva temple at Avinasi is spread over an area of 1.5 acres (6,100 m<sup>2</sup>). The main rajagopuram is on the east side with seven tiers and is over 100 ft tall.<sup>[3]</sup> Inside there are two corridors. At the main entrance, the sculptures of Narthana [Ganapathy](#) can be found on both the sides. Once we enter, there is a mandapam and the sculptures of [Veerabathirar](#), Oorthava Thandavar, [Kaali](#) can be seen on the pillars of the mandapam. The main shrine is for Lord Shiva known as Avinasiappar and the Ambal his consort is known Karunambikai . Ambal's sanctum is to the right of Avinasiappar's sanctum, unlike that in most temples. The mandapam in front of Ambal's

sanctum has interesting sculptural work. The pathways on the four sides of the sanctum sancotrum are decorated with the images of [Nayanmars](#), [Murugan](#) Sannadhi in the northwest and [Karaiakal Ammaiar](#) Sannadhi on the northeast. The large [Nandi](#) here and the carved image of a [scorpion](#) in the Ambal sanctum are of significance here. Several other carvings here deserve attention. Avinashiappar temple is a protected monument under the [Archaeological Survey of India](#). The Theertham here is a well, called as Kasi Gangai Theertham. The sthala Vrisham is Paatiri. There is a shrine for Kaalabhairavar and is being worshipped here with the offerings of Vadai Maalai.<sup>[4]</sup>

Religious importance[[edit](#)]

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It is one of the shrines of the 275 [Paadal Petra Sthalams](#) - [Shiva Sthalams](#) glorified in the early medieval [Tevaram](#) poems by Tamil Saivite [Nayanar Sundarar](#). The temple also finds mention in [Tirumular](#)'s *Thirumantiram*, [Arunagirinathar](#)'s *Tiruppugazh* and [Manikkavacakar](#)'s *Tiruvacaka m*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Festivals[[edit](#)]

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The temple priests perform the [puja](#) (rituals) during festivals and on a daily basis. The temple rituals are performed six times a day; *Kalasanthi* at 6:00 a.m., *Irاندam Kalm* at 9:00 a.m., *Uchikalam* at 12:00 a.m., *Sayarakshai* at 6:00 p.m, *Irاندam Kalm* at 7:30 p.m., and *Arthajamam* at 9:00 p.m.. Each ritual comprises four steps: [abhisheka](#) (sacred bath), *alangaram* (decoration), [naivethanam](#) (food offering) and *deepa aradanai* (waving of lamps) for Edaganathar and Elavrakuzhali. There are weekly rituals like *somavaram* (Monday) and *sukravaram* (Friday), fortnightly rituals like [pradosham](#), and monthly festivals like [amavasai](#) (new moon day), *kiruthigai*, [pournami](#) (full moon day) and *sathurthi*. Sundarar's

miracle is celebrated every year as *Mudalai Vaai Pillai Utsavam* during Panguni Uththiram during the [Tamil month](#) of *Panguni*. The Car festival attracts large crowd and the festival car here is said to be on par with [Tiruvapur](#).<sup>[4]</sup> The procession of the 63 Nayanmars (Arupathi Moovar Ula) is another important festival celebrated here.<sup>[3]</sup> Other festivals include Vinayaka Chaturthi, Aadi Pooram, Navaratri, Aippasi Pournami, Skanda Sashti, Kartikai Deepam, Arudra Darisanam, Tai Poosam, Maasi Magam, Panguni Uththiram and Vaikasi Visakam.<sup>[6][2]</sup>

### Sangameswarar Temple

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**Sangameswarar temple** (also called **Thirunana** and **Thirukooduthurai**) is a temple in [Bhavani](#), in the [Erode district](#), of the [Indian state](#) of [Tamil Nadu](#). It is a [Hindu temple](#) dedicated to Lord [Shiva](#). It is 15 km from [Erode](#), 30 km from [Gobichettipalayam](#), 56 km from [Salem](#) and 106 km from [Coimbatore](#).

The temple was built at the confluence of rivers [Kaveri](#), [Bhavani](#) and the mystic [Amutha](#) (Agaya Gangai).<sup>[1]</sup> The temple was praised in old Tamil literature as [Thirunana](#). The place is also known as Dakshina Triveni Sangamam and [Kooduthurai](#) indicating the confluence of three rivers. Devotees perform last rites for ancestors on the riverbank and offer prayers at the Sangameswarar temple.<sup>[2]</sup>



*Kubera*, son of *Vishrava* was gifted an aircraft to visit Shiva temples across the country in recognition of his devotion to Lord Shiva. While he was flying near the river Cauvery *Kubera* was surprised to see a deer, tiger, cow, elephant, snake and rat drinking water near an *Ilandhai* tree on the river bank without enmity, to answer his wonder *Kubera* heard a



voice from the sky saying it was a place where *vedas* visited, inhabited by *gandharvas* and advised him to worship the *shivalingam* under the *iilanadhi* tree. The temple's *Ilandhai* tree gives fruit on all seasons which was used for everyday puja even today. The cow behind the Vishnu statue remains the harmony between *Saivism* and *Vaishnavism*. It was said from generations that every inch under the temple has one *shivalingam*. The presiding deity is believed to have been worshipped by [Kubera](#) and sages [Vishvamisra](#) and [Parasara](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

### History[[edit](#)]

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During the period of Chera Chola and Pandya's there was a cave connection existed between *Chidambaram* and *Sangameswarar* temple and puja's are performed at same time in both temples. In the year 1804, William Karo, a British Collector of [Coimbatore](#) district, visited [Bhavani](#), camping in the Travellers' [Bungalow](#). One night, when he was asleep, a small girl woke him up and got him out of the Bungalow. Once they were out, the Bungalow collapsed. Shocked by this incident, the Collector turned to thank the girl but to find, she wasn't there. The next day, the priest on duty informed him that it was Bhavani Vedanaayaki Amman, who saved his life. He bore three holes in the temple wall exactly opposite to Vedanaayaki Amman shrine and torched these holes to pray the goddess. He offered a gold plate to the goddess with his signature dated 11/01/1804. The holes and the gold plate are present even now and are taken care with caution.

### Architecture[[edit](#)]

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The temple is constructed on a 4-acre (16,000 m<sup>2</sup>) plot. The main [RajaGopuram](#) with 5 tiers is located on the north side of the temple. The presiding deity is Lord Shiva known as Sangameswarar along with his consort Pannaar Mozhiyaal or Vedanayagi. A shrine dedicated

to [Kartikeya](#) is situated between the shrines of Siva and Parvati. There is also separate shrine inside the temple for Lord [Vishnu](#) and his consort Soundaravalli Thaayar. The stala vriksham is an ilandai ([Zizyphus mauritiana](#)) tree. The annual Brahmotsavam is celebrated in the [Tamil month](#) of Chitrai.

Rock status of this temple represents the beauty of stone carving and the culture of the people. When water or milk poured on the two identical stone statues in front of *ambal sannidhi*- Hindu goddess, one smiles at you, while the other sheds tears at you. The temple got a precious *Ambal* statue, a Hindu goddess donated by a district collector during British period for saving his life. Of all the seven holy Shiva centers of the Kongu Region, *Bhavani* is known as *Thirunana* in script. The holy waters of Sangameswarar temple is known as *Cauvery theertham*, *Surya theertham* and *Gayatri theertham*.

The Amirthalingeswarar in the temple is placed on a seat called Avudayar according to Saiva principles. It is a mobile one that can be removed and placed on the seat again. Men and women seeking boons for children take the Sivalinga, perform puja and walk around it for three times and place it back on the Avudayar. The Amirthalinga is in the southern entrance of the temple.

Literary mention[[edit](#)]

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It is one of the shrines of the 275 [Paadal Petra Sthalams](#). The [Nayanmars Thevaram](#) pathigam is composed by [Sambandar](#). He had composed 10 poems in this temple in the praise of the lord which comes under 2nd Thirumurai. Saint [Arunagirinathar](#) who visited Thirunanaa, has composed many songs ([Thirupugazh](#)) on Lord [Subramanya](#).<sup>[4]</sup>