

Ethnic Tourism of Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu: A Historical Perspective

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Tamil Nadu is the gateway of the south India. It is a land of beauty. A plethora of panoramic sites makes tourism in, Tamilnadu it has abundant tourist attractions. There are kinds of tourism in this wildlife tourism, eco-tourism, that is, hill tourism and adventure tourism. The latest type of tourism which has evolved in this region i.e. medical tourism. Tamilnadu hills station have been favoured destinations for travelers for centuries, they have attracted human beings since the period of modernization because of their natural beauty, exclusive flora and fauna, fresh and unpolluted air, the expanse of greenery and virgin landscape.

In the ancient period mountains and the valley were associated with religion rather than as a place for recreation of tourism. The natural ranges were known as abodes of Gods. The original beauty was maintained by the tribal people. It was by forest migrated people. The department was started breaking in the medieval period with the onset of a new thinking viz., "the usability of the hills." The development which followed started to change the ecology of the area.¹ The initiation of human interference which began in the medieval period took its concrete shape in the British period. It was the British who were responsible for introducing technology and scientific marvel in the Eastern ghats with the purpose of modernizing the region.²

Hill destinations

The discovery and development of nearly all hill resorts in India is attributed by the British. Despite there are poor and difficult communications, they discovered these places and developed them as hill resorts because to escape the hot of the plains and to live in beautiful hill area with wooded surroundings which were cool and serene providing the right setting for taking rest and getting peace. Later every year the central as well as the state government took steps for making these places very popular in summer destination. In the incredible and incomparable land of India, the hill resorts happen to be the most intoxicating travel destinations of all. The hill resorts are the paradise for the adventure seekers that offer a wide variety of sports ranging from skiing, hiking, mountaineering, paragliding, rafting, trekking, kayaking to mountain biking.³

Tamilnadu is fortunate to have a number of hill destinations. Some of these like Kodaikanal on the Palani range, Udthagamandalam, Wellington, Coonur and Kothagiri on the on the Nilgiri range and Yercaud on the Shevaroy are popular among both foreign and domestic tourists. Apart from these well known hill stations such as Javadhu hills in Vellore district, Kolli hills in Namakkal district, Pachamalai in Trichirappalli district and Kalrayan, in Salem district. These hills are potential tourist destinations.⁴

Kolli hills

Kolli hills, Pachmalai and Kalrayan hills play a vital role in the south Indian history. One visualizes a place with a combination of sanctity, art, history and charm that is Kolli hills in Namakkal district. Namakkal district was inaquarated in 1996. The Kolli hills one of the very impressive hills of Tamilnadu. This is a major mountain range of Namakkal district and is an outlier of the Eastern Ghats. It is eighteen miles (28 kilometers) long (north south) twelve miles (19 kilometers) wide (east, west) and the Kolli blocks covers 441.4 square kilometers. It has seventy two hair pin bends. It is also called as 'Chathuragiri'(square mountain).⁵ The mountain has been in habited from pre historic times. It is much celebrated in the Tamil literature of the sangam period. The Kolli hills are noted for its Kollipavai legends, Valvilori festival Kollimalai medical herbs, Kollimalai honey, Kollimalai jalk fruit and Kollimalai bamboo. The hills are the garden of Namakkal district.⁶

The Kollimalai rises to a height of about 1500 meters at the Melagiri and receives an annual average of

¹ Prashant, et.al., *Tourism and Environment*, Dhanabad, 2000, p.22.

² V.P. Sati, *Tourism Development In India*, Jaipur, 2001, p.233.

³ *Torism statistical Handbook 1997*, published by the Government of Tamilnadu, Chennai, 1999, p.32.

⁴ Chris Cooper, et.al. *Tourism Principles and Practice*, , London, 1993, p.95.

⁵ M.Swaminathan, *Kollimalai Arulmigu ArappalliI Iswarar Thirukkovil thala varalaru*, Chennai, 2002,p.6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

to 100 cm. It supports natural stands of teak, jack fruit, guava, hill banana, pine apple, pepper, coffee, cardamom and honey.¹ It is on the Periya Kalrayan (about 1500 meters + MSL) that the temple of the 'distinctive deity' of the Malayalis, Kariraman is located. The Chinna Kalrayan is at about 1000 meters, the Kollimalai some what higher and the Pachamalai, the home of the Malayalis known as Kanchi Vellala somewhat lowers.²

These mountains were sometimes known as "kolli malai", the mountains of death".³ The reason is that early literature records the existence of an image called kollippavai on the top of these hills. This image was believed to represent the spirit or a maiden who lured way fares by her beauty and then killed them.

Pachaimalai

The Hills are situated in the Thuraiyur Taluk of the Trichirappalli District in Tamilnadu State. It is surrounded by Rasipuram and Namakkal in the west, in the north by Attur and Gangavalli Taluk of Salem district and in the east by Perambalur district. The entire hill range is scattered over approximately an area of about 35, 000 hectares, its attitude ranges between 2,000 and 3,000 feet. . The temperature in the hills is moderate. The average maximum and minimum temperature in the hills are recorded as 78° F and 72°F respectively. The rainfall is also moderate. The average rainfall for the last three years is observed to be 54 inches per year.⁴

Through the ghat road which is about 31 km length from Shobanapuram which is at the foot of the hill, we can reach the top of this hill. It has many hair pin bends (11 in number) and the road is a well maintained one. Three kilometer below the top of the ghat road, high way division authorities have displayed a notice board at valley view point and put up a small raised platform from where one can have a beautiful view of the valleys in the slopes and the hill below. At the end of the ghat road on the top of the hills, we are having two travelers' bungalows maintained by the local panchayat union and the other by the Forest Department.⁵ The hills replete with many herbal plants. Eight residential schools are there for the benefit of the tribal and Adi-Dravidas students.

Kalrayan hills

The Kalrayan Hills are geographically on with the Kalrayan of Attur Taluk in Salem District and one with the Kalrayans of Kallakurichi Taluk in Villuppuram District. They are divided into five "Jaghirs" of which Chinna Kalrayan Nad and Periya Kalrayan Nad lie in the Salem District.⁶

Periyakalrayans lies to the south of the Tumbal River and is itself divided into the Melnad, the north-west portion and Kilnad, the south east portion. The Melnad averages 2,700 feet with its chief village at Kovilpudur with the Manur Bridge rising to 3, 475 feet while the Kilnad has the highest ridge at Kovilmalai 4,25 feet and Nagalur 4, 229 feet. The Chinna Kalrayans is an almost uniform plateau about 2, 700 feet in height.⁷ A portion of this range is accessible by Lorrie and jeeps by forest road. The entire slopes are covered by reserve forest belonging to Government and over 60 square miles. The other major hills areas of Malayali tribes are Shervaryos hills, Jawadhu hills, Sitheri hills, these hills are well known in the Tamilnadu hills.⁸

Shervaroy hills

The Shervaroy is a small detached range about 400 sqm in area divided into an eastern and a western section by the deep valley of the vaniar stream. The western portion consists of three plateaus, rising to a maximum of about 1700 meters above MSL, Yercaud is at 1500 meters and a beautiful till station. The upper areas are covered with grass and sparse tree growth, plantations of exotics like apples, tobacco, potato etc have replaced the natural forests but up to about 1000 meters MSL bamboo teak and sandal wood are valuable forest species. The temperature (15 'to 25 'C) is always pleasant and true annual rainfall about 100 cm.⁹

Arappalli Iswarar Temple

Arappalli Iswarar Temple is situated on the banks of the stream Aiyaru, in Valappanadu village. Because of the belief that Arappalli Iswarar resides as a small fish in Aiyaru, the temple has also the name of "Fish Temple". The fish in the river are sacred, therefore, the river is also known as "Meenthurai Pallam" and Machai Aru¹⁰ (Fish River) priests perform daily *poojas* in the temple only after a ritual offering of rice coconut and fruits to the

¹ S.Balusamy, *Kolli malai Makkal Paadakai(tamil)*, Chennai, 2002,pp.35-37.

² *Ibid* , p.243.

³ Ahanaanuru,338;14,15

⁴ K.S.K. Velmani., *Gazetteer of Tamilnadu, Thiruchirappalli district*, 1998, p.43.

⁵ D.Maheswaran, *Ethnography of the Pachaimalai Malayalis Tribes*, vol. xviii. Chennai, 2003, pp.9-10.

⁶ Lefanu, H., *Manul of salem district in the presidency of madras*, vol.1 , 1883, p.210.

⁷ Thurston , E., *Op-cit*,p.428.

⁸ A.Ramaswamy, *Madras District Gazetteers Salem*, Madras, 1967, p.729.

⁹ A. Ramaswami., *Gazetteer of Indid*, Madras, Salem ,1967,p.743.

¹⁰ Bugnagi Rasannan, *Salem Encyclopedia*,2007, p. 6.

fish. It is customary for the pilgrims to catch the sacred fish by hand and adorn them with gold or silver nose rings in fulfillment of vows. Fish figure is carved on the foot steps of the temple. We can see small three fish figures on the walls of the temple. King William who visited the temple in the 1860's observed that the fish in the pool are so tame and ravenous that they came to the shore in shoals and then wriggled themselves up in heaps with their bodies half out of water looking anxiously for food.¹

The temple has been famous from ancient times. History reveals the significance of this temple. Many volumes of literature speak about the glory and greatness of this temple. It is one of the famous Siva temples in Kongu Nadu. In ancient period there were five divisions in the Tamil Country namely Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu, Pandya Nadu, Thondai Nadu and Kongu Nadu. Thirumular's *Thirumandiram* mentions about these five divisions.²

The temple complex contains many *Nadukals* an image of Adhan Ori and twenty one inscriptions of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The inscriptions in the temple mention about the endowments made by the kings. Queen and devotees to the temple like Sembiyan Madeviyar, the mother of Uttama Chola Deva deposited 100 *kalanju* of gold with the *urar* of certain specified villages in Kollimalai Nadu for meeting the expenses of the monthly Sankramanas in the Temple of Tiruvarappalli Alwar on the Kollimalai. The *urar* agreed to pay the monthly interest to the sabha.³ There are thirty *pancholoha* idols in the temple. It is believed that Sivalingam in the temple is 1300 years old. The name of the God is Arappalli Iswarar and the goddess Aramvalartha Nayaki. There are separate shrines for Lord Vinayaka, Lord Muruga. The Siva Temple was the four gods are worshipped at the same time at one place. *Ashtalakshmi chakkaram* on the ceiling, in front of the sanctum speaks the glory of this temple. This is only Siva temple on the hill, where we can see this beautiful *Asthalakshmi chakkaram* sculpture with Raja Rajeswari in the centre. People used to mediate under his *chakkaram*.⁴

In the 7th century Thirunavukkarasar and Thirunana sambandar mention this temple in their poems. According to legends, a group of thieves came to loot the temple. They caught some fish and cooked them; but he cooked fish got alive and jumped back into the Aiyaru river with the blessings of Arachalai valli Amman also known as Thayammal.⁵

Water falls

Akasa gangai is an enchanting 300 feet waterfall of river Aiyaru, located near Arappaleeshwarar temple. Thousands of steps lead down to the falls. It is situated in a beautiful valley surrounded by the mountains at all sides. Enroute, the natural beauty of the valley and the vegetation- covered peaks. The location is ideal for trekking and the breeze is pleasant, the cascade of silvery water touching and brushing the innumerable herbs which are abound in Kolli hills

It means "Ganges of the Sky" Aiyaru is the beautiful river in Kolli hills. It is constituent streams are Aroychi Aru, Kanappadai moolai Aru, Maasilamalai Aruvi, Nakkattu Aru and Thazhigai Aru.⁶ This river is known as the Arappalli Iswarar aruvi. The Arappalliiswarar temple its fall down of "Akasa Gangai" in other words we can say that it is "holy water falls". This falls down from 150 feet height. it will take 1½ hours to reach the water falls from the temple. The State Government is planning to make this spot easily accessible as a tourist attraction for pilgrims and pleasure seekers. It is an impressive waterfall of the river Aiyaru near the Arapaleswarar temple.

Adiperukku Vizha

Adi perukku vizha is a famous function in Kolli hills. Tribal people live in various parts of the hills in 265 villages. At the time of Adipperukku vizha they used to assemble in the Arappalli Iswarar temple and celebrate Adipperukku in the Tamil month of Adi on 17th, 18th and 19th (July – August). It is the time to revive ancient culture. The government used to conduct a festival named as 'valvil on festival' in the month of August and Kodai festival or vasantha vizha in the month of April of every year.⁷

Kolli Pavai

Kolli Pavai is the Goddess of Kolli hills (Killer Women). According to legends, she was a robot like figure created by the divine artist Viswakarma, to distract and kill demons that disturbed and annoyed the meditating

¹ John Short, *The Hill Ranges of Southern India*, 2001, p. 6.

² Ramanatha Pillai, *Thirumandiram Urai* (Tamil), Madras, 1974, p.23.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ A.R.E No. 503 of 1929 – 1930.

⁵ Vala Sundarakkavirayar, *op.cit.*, p. 180.

⁶ Busnagi Rasanan, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

⁷ Interview with T.Annadurai Semmedu Kolli Hills on 29.12.2014.

sages of the Kolli Mountain. The Tamil poets referred to Kollipavai as ‘pavai’ which means women.¹ The Sangam poets kalladanar, Kapilar and Paronar have mentioned her in their poems. This temple is situated 5 kms away from Arappalli Iswarar Temple. The sculpture was planted at the source of the Aiyaru River in the siddhankuttu peak. Where there is at present, a shrine dedicated to “Kongu Ayi” (Kongu Mother). The sculpture has eight hands with weapons. Worship of Ettukai Amman is popular in many villages in the region. Karu Nel (Paddy) and Karuvalai (plantain) a rare species are used for worshipping Kongayi Amman by the tribal people.²

Valvil Ori

Valvil Ori was one of the last seven patrons of the Sangam period. He was a ruler of the Kolli Kutram and was known as Mazhavar Perumagan. As a formidable and skilful bowman, he was known as Valvil Ori (Ori of the mighty bow). Sangam poets were admirable poems about him. He was killed by a Chera vassal Malaiyamman Thirumudi Kari; Kollimalai was annexed to the Chera territory of Mantharam Cheral Irumporai. In Silappadikaram mentioned about him.³

There is a life size statue of Valvil Ori sitting on the horse, installed in Ariyur Nadu, Semmedu. It was opened by Tamilnadu former Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi on 6th September 1975. There is a life size stone statue of Valvil Ori in the Kailasanathar Temple Rasipuram. A festival known as “Ori Vizha” is conducted annually from 1975, by the State Government on the Kolli hills.⁴

Flora and Fauna

The wilds of Kolli hills are known for their medical; herbs and plants. The vast expanse of forests of Kolli hills boasts varieties of rare medical plants and these are regular sources for the preparation of indigenous Indian medicines. Major tree species are Neem, Veepaloai, Usil, Velvel, Neermathi, Tamarind, Seethe odai, Naval, Illupai, Silver oak etc. Lemon grass is also prominent in most of the reserve forest areas. Wild animals like rabbit, wild boar, bear, hare, peacock, jackal, jungle cat, monkeys and variety of birds are seen in forest. Herbal farms are natural ‘god created’, free medical store.

Nature has laid open, her first drug store with innumerable branches all over, with her Hora in the open meadows, fields and orchards. Kolli hills are the Herbal garden of Namakkal district. Siddha Yoga Pharma in Velur is rendering valuable service to humanism in Namakkal district. Three lakh crores of export of herbals is going on in the world. China’s export is 40 thousand crores. India export is 400 crores only. India is rich with aboriginal medicinal plants from time immemorial. Hence the state government can give monetary assistance for medicinal plants. Cultivation scheme was to enhance the foreign exchange.

Many Siddhars lived in Kolli hills. They were sincere devotees, who tried to see god. They had a thorough knowledge about Siddha medicine. They wrote about the medicinal herbs in palm leaves in Tamil. Kalanginadhar, one of the eighteen siddhars wrote a book in palm leaf called *Kollimalai Ragasiyam* or *Malaivalam 500*. In this 500 poems he referred to 64 rare species of medicinal herbs and their qualities in curing diseases. He also mentioned the places where the medicinal herbs are growing, rare medicinal herbs *Karunelli*, *Karuvalai*, *Karu Nochchi*, *Moovilai Kuruthu*, *Chenkodi*, *Jothi Virutsam*, *Siriya Nankai*, *Periya Nankai*, *Savalya Karani* are found in a deep valley near “Eorakkar Kundam” which is one mile away from *Akasa Gangai* water falls.⁵ Herbal Research station in Kolli hills is preserving the rare species of medieval plants. *Nannari*, a rare species of medicinal root is grown abundantly in Kolli hills.⁶ Kolli hills are known for its mountains natural sceneries bird’s animals and medicinal plants.

View point

The important sight seeing places are Telescope House (at Solakadu). Government Herbal Farm Botanical Garden, view points at 34, 35, 36 and 37 hairpin bends.⁷ Picturesque view point. Boat Lake at Vasalurpatti view point at seekkumarai. Arappaleswarar temple, Kolli Paavai temple and Jain temple course of pleasant never ending landscapes crisscrossing 441 kilometer Kolli Hills ranges.

The boat house

The boat house of Vasalurpatti is located at km 9.2 Solakkadu Thinnanurpatti road. It is one of the most beautiful spot with small Natural Island in the lake covered with huge rocks and greenery on all sides. The

¹ *Valviyal Kalanchiyam* (Tamil), Thanjavur, p. 93.

² Balusamy, S., *Kollimalai Makkal Nadukal*, p. 68.

³ Silappadikaram, Vanchi Kandam Kuravai, p. 7.

⁴ Field visit in Kolli hills, Semmedu on 29.12.2014.

⁵ Personal Interview with Arappuli, Periyamangalam, Kolli hills on 28.12.2014.

⁶ Tamil Nadan, *Salem Mavattam Sila Aivugal* (Tamil), Bangalore, 1988, p. 16.

⁷ Field- Observation.

Perennial water sources available in the lake through the year. At present four fiber boats are available and for the conveyance of tourist about parking bay has constructed.¹

Botanical garden

As potanical garden is formed at the old tampcol site located some 3 km from Semmedu. In this garden area a park, rose garden, Herbal Park, ecofriendly cottages and a view point is located. The children park is located just above the fountain in the botanical garden. Statues of animals one see saw double (four seated) one way slide, one deluxe circular swing, one merry, go round and one six seated children. A gallery room for flowers show is available.²

Eco, friendly cottage

One boat type cottage is available for the tourist to take rest at garden, surrounded by bamboo tree and flower plants it attracts lot of tourist. A Japanese type of cottage is constructed here where the tourist can take their food and have rest which is covered with grass in the roof. In front of the cottage a valcono turtite type statue made of lava is available.³

YEARCAUD

Yearcaud is a small hill station situated on the shevaroy hills of the Eastern Ghats in Salem district of Tamilnadu. Yearcaud has an untouched landscape and has a very pleasant climate. This city is popular for oranges and coffee plantations. Another name for yercaud is poor man's ooty.⁴ Teak, sandalwood and silver oaks are there in great quantity in the forest areas of Yercaud, it is a amazing place to visit.

Yearcaud is one of the important tourist centres. It is situated on the southern part of the plateau at an elevation of 4.500 feet above sea level. It probably owes its existence to its proximity to salem. The first house was built by the J.M. Lecler who visited the hills in company with Brett, then sub-collector. The latter who had a taste for selecting charming sites, built in 1845 what is called fair lawns hotel.

Shortly after wards the grange was built which was selected at the time of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, as a possible refuge for the European settlers on the hills, in the event of a rising in Salem. North of Yercaud is a grassy maiden situated on the shores of a picturesque pool called. The lake (4.448 feet) from which the town is said to have derived its name North of the lake is a square grave containing two picturesque Malayali Temples. The lake is fed by a stream which has cut out a well – wooded ravine running from the head of the old ghat. The western side of this ravine is bounded by the ridges on which are situated prospect point and Lady's seat, commanding a good view of the plains.⁵

Though Yercaud cannot be called picturesque a shrill of a mile or two will reveal some of the grandest scenery in southern India. The finest view can be obtained from pagoda point, so called from a group of Malayali temples on its summit. This point commands the view of the mighty ridges of the Tohandemalai and Kalrayans.⁶ The east and the whole of the Salem – Attur Valley, backed by the massive bulk of the Kollimalai, Pachaimalai ranges and relieved by the nearer ridges of Bodamalai and Jengamalai. In the foreground is a splendid cliff, one of the southern buttresses of Shervaray hill mass, and many hundred feet below in the picturesque 'be live' village of Kakambadi. Lady's seat (4.548 feet) prospect point (4,789 feet) and Beems hill (4,828 feet) command the great plain of Tiruvalangode and Omalur taluks backed by the mountains of Coimbatore and Mysore plateau.

Further away are Duffs hill with a fine westward prospect and the Shervarayan with in moss-clad temples nestling in an exquisite glen besides a sacred well of limpid water. The best view to the north is obtained from Cauvery peak. A lovely view of the vaniyar valley and its sister ranges can be had at the bend of the Vellalakadai road, when it doubles back from Manjakuttai. The road from yercaud to Nagallur affords many charming glimpses of the westward hills. Yercaud being a Sanatorium is a favourite resort of missionaries among them, Catholics, Anglicans, the London Mission, the Leiting Lutheran Mission and the Danish Mission, all of whom have their chapels and bungalows in the neighborhood. It contained a Baukite factory, which is said to be the only one of its kind in the south, the Mon Ford mission school established here is one of the most popular public school in the region where students from all over the south Asia are found.

Shevaroy temple

The temple is located at the top of Shervaroyan hill. It is very vital place of worship for tribal people living in

¹ Field-observation.

² Field-observation.

³ Field-Observation.

⁴ P.muthusamy, Malai Olsai (tamil monthly), Chennai, june 2011,p.6.

⁵ A. Ramaswami, Op-cit,p. 743.

⁶ *Ibid.*

these hills. The temple itself is narrow and dark cave and seated inside are the god sherverayan and goddess Kaveri representing the Shervaroy hills and the Kaveri River. The local tribes celebratetheir annual festival in this temple during the month of May.¹

Killiyur falls

Killiyur falls refreshing and looks marvelous and is one of the most beautiful waterfalls, they fall from the height of 300 feet.²

Lady's seat

These are there in the form of a seat, which overlooks the Salem town and that road. The lady' seat has derived its name from a set of rocks made naturally. It is supposed that an English lady used to spend her evenings at this place watching the panoramic view from this rock. In addition, the place also houses a viewing tower, which is equipped with a telescope so as enjoy the beautiful view of Mettur dam and Salem town.³

Big lake

The majority attraction in Yercaud is the big natural lake or the emerald lake. The lake with its breathtaking hilly surroundings and a well maintained garden on its banks is worth seeing for any person.

Bears cave

Bear's cave, situated within the private coffee estate, is formed by two huge rocks is required to see for any tourist visiting Yercaud, which was believed to be home for the bears.

The pagoda point

The pagoda point situated on the eastern part of Yercaud hills and is also known as pyramid point. This has four piles of stones in order so as to form a pyramid shape. There is a Rama temple situated between the piles of stones.

Gomuki dam

The Gomuki dam situated under the Kalrayan hills 20 km nearby from kallakurichi. The dim silhouette of the kalrayan hills is visible against an inky black sky. The rippling waters are only by a crescent moon and a couple of winking stars. In this dam receiving water from Periyar falls and Pudur Megan falls in Kalranyan hills. These falls becomes a veritable flood during the monsoon season. The assurances of walking another few kilometers would take to the Pudur Megan falls and make up 4 km pathway and warnings that it would be foolish to venture alone dissuade making journey.

At an altitude that ranges from 315 meters to 1190 meters, the Kalrayan hills roll out like an uneven carpet across Villupuram and Salem districts. Covering an area of 600 sq. km these hills provide an expansive space for wandering about. However, there are not many places of tourist interest in this area, the few hamlets being far from appealing. The leaves any tourist who wants to come to these parts only one option, exploring the area with an open mind and at his or her own pace. There are forested patches here which are unspoiled and good for trekking, the weather is invariably pleasant and there are a great many dormant waterfalls that spring to life in the monsoon months.⁴

Pulinchulai

Pulianchulai a hamlet situated in Thuraiyur taluk on the bordering Kollimalai of Salem district is 72 Kilometer from Tiruchirappalli.⁵ As the name suggests there are groves of Tamarind trees in the hamlet. It is a beautiful picnic spot at the foot of the Kolli hills. At the top of the Kolli hills there is a water fall known as *Dakshina Gangai*. The water of the Perennial stream containing medicinal properties reaches Pulianchulai and joins the coloroon.

On the tank of the stream, exacts on the border of Salem and Trichirappalli district there is small temple dedicated to Goddess "Kuruvayi:". As per the legend, the temple is built by Adhi Sankara "Kuruvayi" a brahmin women trekked this maintain with her brother to worship "Kolliparai" constructed by Mayen.the devil architect on Kolli hills, Kuruvayi could not climb the hills and so her brother left her in the custody of the Vagiri chetty.

¹ E.thurston, Caste and Tribes in Southern India, Delhi , 1909, pp.422-436.

² Field- observation

³ Field- observation

⁴ Moses, *Application of Remote Sensing Data for Delineation of Ground water Potential Zones in the Kalrayan hills*, Tamilnadu, 2003, p.43.

⁵ K.s.k. velmani, *Gazetteers of Tamilnadu*, Thruchirappalli District. Chennai,1999, p.1589.

Her brother did not return and Vagiri chetty started harassing her. At this time, Adi Sankara who was on a pilgrimage to south reached this place and he was ordered by an oracle to redeem Kuruvayi from the clutches of Vagiri Chetty.

In this attempt Vagiri chetti's men started attacking Adi Sankara and his men he will rose to stay high. It was said that Adi Sankara constructed a temple for "Kuruvayi" here. A shandy meets here on Fridays and serves as a marketing place for the products cultivated on the Kolli hills namely banana, pepper, fruits, cloves, etc. the shandy is organized under a margosa tree which is said to be near one century old.

Eco-tourism in pachamalai

The forest department plans to launch eco-tourism in Pachamalai near Thuraiyur in Tiruchirappalli district. With the objective of improving the socio-economic conditions of the tribal community settled there. Funds available with the village forest committees given under the Tamilnadu Afforestation project would be utilized to develop eco-tourism involving the tribal community.

As part of this initiative, proposed to be launched in April, 2011, eco-tourism committees would be constituted in the tribal hamlets of Keelakarai and Top Sengattupatti, where the forest department has a guest house.¹ Pachamalai also known as the Pachais (green) they are much greener than some of the other hills in the vicinity. Veeraramar dam is located in these hills on Kallar. River includes Kallar and Sweata nadi.² Waterfalls include Mangalam aruvi, Koraiyar falls and Mayil uthu falls. Jackfruit is one of the popular seasonal produce from this area.

¹ The hindu 1st march, 2011.

² Field observation.