

THE TEMPLE OF ANNATHANA SCHEME

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Abstract

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa launched the Annadhanam scheme in more temples in the State and distribution of pooja articles worth above Rs.2. Crore to 10,000 tiny shrines. She launched the extension of the Annadhanam scheme to more temples at the Secretariat, an official release. She also sanctioned time-pay scale remuneration for 820 personnel working on daily wages and consolidated pay under the Annadhanam Scheme in temples. As a token of giving new pay scale order to personnel, she handed over the order to two of them. Also, as a token of launching distribution of pooja articles to 10,000 tiny shrines in the State at a cost of above Rs.2 crore, she handed over pooja articles to five poojaris. Launched in 2002 by Jayalalithaa in the Sri Kabalishwarar Temple here, the Annadhanam Scheme covers over 500 temples benefitting thousands of devotees every day.

INTRODUCTION

Thus spake the great Saint Sundara Moorthy Nayanar describing the indispensable role of temples in the life of Tamils. The temples in Tamilnadu are the Holy Shrines for the countless devotees and tourists far and wide in India and abroad. They are instrumental in creating order in the society guiding unity among the public, besides being an encyclopedia for morals in life. They are also historical monuments propagating art, culture and civilization of the Tamils. Our Government headed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Puratchi Thalaivi Amma is showing keen interest in maintaining, protecting and preserving ancient socio religious cultural centres of Tamil Nadu.

NEW TEMPLES

In the city, other temples covered were Komaleeswarar Temple, Pudupet; Thiruvatteesswarar Temple, Triplicane; Arunachaleswarar Temple, Sowcarpet; Ekambareswarar Temple, Aminjikarai; Sowmya Damodara Perumal Temple, Villivakkam; Raveeswarar Temple, Vyasapardi and Balasubramaniaswami Temple, Teynampet. In other parts of the State, the extension of the scheme was formalised with the participation of Ministers.

VAZHAKARUTHEESWARAR TEMPLE AT KANCHEEPURAM

Venkateswara Nithya Annadanam Endowment Scheme was started by T.T.Devasthanams on 6-4-1985 with serving of free food to 2,000 pilgrims per day at Tirumala by the then Hon'ble Chief Minister of A.P. Sri Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao garu. The scheme was transformed into an independent trust by name "SRI VENKATESWARA NITHYA ANNADANAM TRUST" with effect from 1-4-1994. The Executive Officer, T.T.D is the Chairman to the Trust. The name of the Trust has been changed as "SRI VENKATESWARA ANNAPRASADAM TRUST" w.e.f. 1-04-2014. This trust is being run with the donations received from Devotees / Donors from all over the world. The trust deposited all the donations in nationalized banks and the interest accrued on it is being utilized to meet the expenditure of the trust.

PALANI ANNADHANA SCHEME

The Donor may participate in this scheme by investing Rs.20000/- and from the interest of this investment every year Annathanam is given to 100 persons on any one day the donor decides, or the donor may participate in this scheme by giving Rs.2000/- for a particular day for Annathanam to 100 persons. Annadanam scheme extended in three sub-temples, arulmigu Periyannayaki amman Temple-Palani, Arulmigu Kurinji Aandavar Temple-kodaikanal and Arulmigu Kulanthai Velappar Temple-Oddenchathram.

MADURAI MEENAKSHI AMMAN TEMPLE

Annadhanam Scheme was launched in this temple on 23.3.2002. Susequently the scheme was extended in two sub-temples, Arulmigu Marriamman Temple - Theppakulam, and Arulmigu Thiruvappudaiyar Temple-Sellur. TEMPLE NAME TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DAY AMOUNT IN Rs. Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai. 500 Rs.12,500/-

ANNADHANA MANDAPAMS

Tamil Nadu Old Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa on inaugurated Annadhana Mandapams and guest houses at various temples and housing quarters for employees of Hindu religious and charitable endowments department, all constructed at a cost of Rs 14.83 crore, through video conferencing from the secretariat. Financial aid to 146 Kailash-Mansarovar devotees and 10 devotees of Mukthinath was launched, and the chief minister distributed aid to two Mansarovar pilgrims and one Mukthinath pilgrim. The chief minister inaugurated 21 Annadana Mandapams at various temples, including Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram constructed at a cost of Rs 4.26 crore.

SRIVILLIPUTHUR ANDAL TEMPLE

The temple is associated with the life of Andal, who was found under a Tulsi plant in the garden inside the temple by Periyalvar. She is believed to have worn the garland before dedicating it to the presiding deity of the temple. Periyalvar, who later found it, was highly upset and stopped the practise. It is believed Vishnu appeared

in his dream and asked him to dedicate the garland worn by Andal to him daily, which is a practise followed during the modern times. It is also believed that Ranganatha of Srirangam Ranganathaswamy temple married Andal, who later merged with him.

CONCLUSION

Fresh awareness and special interest have been created among the public regarding the Annathana Scheme of temples. Our temples are not just the places of worship, but also exist on monuments of our rich cultural heritage and hoarified. An excellent and conducive atmosphere to rejuvenate the management of the temples has now been created under the sincere leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister. It is our primary responsibility to regulate and maintain the administration of the religious institutions for the sake of the future generation. The Officers and the employees of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Administration Department have resolved to dedicate themselves with their selfless, honest and efficient service, to uphold the glory, divinity, and sanctity of the religious institutions and their maintenance by adopting the verse of "Thirukkural" viz.

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