

# Uttarakosamangai Mangalanatha Swamy Temple at Ramanathapuram Taluk

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### Abstract

*Pilgrimage has been defined as a journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding. India is a land of temples, mosques and churches. Temples in India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular have a rich cultural heritage of their own. The South Indian temples played a multifaceted role in the religious, social and economic life of the people.*

**Keywords: Pilgrimage, temples, Uttarakosamangai, Mangalanatha Swamy Temple, religious activities, cultural activities, traditional festival**

### Introduction

Temple is considered as a place of worship, as well as a centre for religion and cultural activities. 'Tourists' potential of a country or a place mainly depends on its climate, scenery, historical monuments, arts, traditional festival and the people. The temple of Uttarakosamangai (Tamil Nadu, India) is not only attracting the regional tourists and pilgrim spot, but also serves as national tourists and pilgrim centre. The number of north and south Indians visiting Uttarakosamangai temple has been continuously increasing day by day. Historical evidences show that many cities and towns have developed mainly based on temples, mosques and churches. The religious-based towns and cities, for instance, Kasi (Uttar Pradesh), Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), Ramesvaram (Tamil Nadu) and Palani (Tamil Nadu) are the places that developed as big towns and cities, which greatly helped for the economic and other productive activities of the people around the temple complex, due to the visits made by the domestic and foreign tourists

### History

Uthira Kosa Mangai is a small hamlet on the outskirts of Uthira Kosa Mangai. It is thought to be one of the oldest Hindu temples, with Tamil literature describing it as "Mann Mundhiyo Mangai Mundhiyo?" which means "Did the mud (mann) come first or is the Mangai (the Temple's Female Deity)?" This is the location where Siva revealed the Vedic truths to Parvati.

This place is known as Uthira Kosa Mangai because Uthiram signifies (upadesam) kosam (secrets) Parvati (Mangai). The Pandya rulers are thought to have built the temple.

The temple was built by Achutappa Nayak (1529–1542 A.D.), a Hindu prince of Thanjavur, Muthu Virappa, and other kings of the Ramanthapuram Sethupathy dynasty. The queen of Ramanthapuram completed the most recent makeover. The Hindu Religious and Endowment Board of the Tamil Nadu Government maintain and administer the temple. The temple was built by

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Uttirakosamangai is eleven miles west south-west of Ramanathapuram on the road to Mudukulattur. Buses are plying to this place. A railway station of the name is 4 miles north of this place.

The name is derived from the words Uttram, which means answer, Cosa, which means Veda, and Mangai, which means woman. It is linked to a tale that says that while Siva was teaching Parvathy a Veda, Lord Subramanya shared the knowledge by disguising himself as a bee in the tuft of Parvathy. Siva became outraged and cursed Parvathy and Subramanya to be born as girls and fish, respectively. At this location, Siva appeared in the shape of a young man, married her, and taught her the Vedas. There are twelve more names for it. Manickavasagar's birth is linked to an occurrence from his former birth in this location, as told in the Sthalapuranam.

This location is well-known for its Siva temple. From east to west, it's 592 feet, and from north to south, it's 518 feet. The seven-story rajagopuram on the exterior wall opposite Mangalanathaswamy, the presiding deity, stands 120 feet tall. A gopuram of 64 feet high with five floors stands parallel to this gopuram and a few yards west of it. The one directly across from Mangalanayaki Ammal, the deity, is incomplete. Lord Nataraja is reported to have performed his "Cosmic dance," or Oorthava Thandavam, in both private and public settings in

this town. Because of this episode, this location is referred to as Adi Chidambaram, which means "first Chidambaram."

In this temple, Saint Manickavasagar is reported to have learned under the Lord alongside 998 others. The Lord once abandoned them and did not return at the appointed hour. As a result, the bereaved disciples joined the fire. They were converted into 1,000 Lingams by the Lord, who was pleased with their honesty and love. They are arranged in forty lines, with 25 Lingams on each line. At the site where the disciples entered the flames, a tank has been built. Agni Thirtham is the name given to it.

Saints Manickavasagar and Arunagiri have both paid visits to the temple and offered accolades to it. Arudra Dharsanam, held in December, and Chithirai, a festival that attracts thousands of pilgrims, are the two most important festivals.

### Architecture

The temple lies 32 kilometres east of Paramakkudi and 17 kilometres west of Ramanathapuram. A seven-tiered rajagopuram towers over the temple (gateway tower). The shrines of Mangalanathar, Mangalambigai, and Natarajar are among the most significant in the temple. Mangalanathar (Shiva) has distinct shrines in the form of lingam and Mangalambigai. Inside the temple is a 6 ft (1.8 m) tall antique maragatha Nataraja deity made out of emerald. A thousand lingams are enshrined in the Saharasralingam hall. The temple has magnificent stone sculptures of Yali (mythological dragon), shown with a rolling stone ball inside its mouth, near the entrance to the main precinct. In the corridor leading to the shrine, granite images of the gods Ganesha (son of Shiva and god of wisdom), Murugan (son of Shiva), Nandi (Representative of All Our Souls), and Navagraha (nine planetary deities) may be found. The first precinct or the walls around the sanctum of Erumbeeswarar, like other Shiva temples in Tamil Nadu, features images of Thenmugaparaman (Dakshinamurthy-Shiva as the Teacher), Durga (warrior-goddess), and Chandikeswarar (a saint and devotee of Shiva).

### Festivals and Worship

During festivals and on a daily basis, temple

priests perform puja (rituals). The priests, like those at other Shiva temples in Tamil Nadu, are from the Shaiva group, a Brahmin sub-caste. Ushathkalam is performed at 5:30 a.m., Kalasanthi is performed at 8:00 a.m., Uchikalam is performed at 10:00 a.m., Sayarakshai is performed at 5:00 p.m., Irandamkalam is performed at 7:00 p.m., and Ardha Jamam is performed at 8:00 p.m. For all of the deities in the temple, each ritual consists of four steps: abhisheka (holy bath), alangaram (decoration), naivethanam (food offering), and deepa aradanai (light waving).

The worship includes nagaswaram (pipe instrument) music, religious instructions recited by priests from the Vedas (holy texts), and devotees prostrating in front of the temple mast. Weekly rituals such as somavaram (Monday) and sukavaram (Friday), fortnightly rituals such as pradosham, and monthly festivals such as amavasai (new moon day), kiruthigai, pournami (full moon day), and sathurthi are also observed. The temple's major festivals are Tirukalyana Vaibhavam (sacred marriage) in the Tamil month of Chittirai (April–May),

Vasanthotsavam in the Tamil month of Vaigasi (May–June), Pathunal Siva Uthsavam in the Tamil month of Aaani (July–August), Annabishekam in the Tamil month of Aipasi (October–November), and Annabishekam in the Tamil month. Tiruvathidirai is celebrated during the month of Margazhi (December–January) while Sivarathri is celebrated during the month of Masi (February–March).

The Tiruvathidirai festival, which takes place in December, draws a significant number of visitors.

### Conclusion

Hundreds of devotees came from all across the state to see Arudra Darisanam at Sri Mangalanathar Swamy Temple in Uthirakosamangai. The temple is revered in the same way as Ramanathapuram, Sethu Madhava Theertham, and Lakshmana Theertham are revered. Except on Tiruvathidirai festival day, when special worship is practised, the emerald figure of Nataraja is anointed with sandal paste all year. Because even minor vibrations are thought to harm the picture, no percussion instruments are used during worship services.

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