**SIVAGANGAI**

* **Sivaganga District** is one of the 38 districts (an administrative district) in Tamil Nadu state, India.

  It is bounded by Pudukkottai district on the Northeast, Tiruchirapalli district on the North, Ramanathapuram district on South East, Virudhunagar district on South West and Madurai District on the West. Karaikudi is the most populous centre in the district.

**HISTORY**

The Kingdom of Ramnad originally comprised of the territories of Ramnad, Sivaganga and Pudukottai of today.

* **Regunatha Sethupathy** alias Kilavan Sethupathy, the 7th King of Ramnad reigned between 1674 and 1710. Kilavan Sethupathy, came to know of the bravery and valour of Peria Oodaya Thevar of Nalukottai near Sivaganga.

  Bhavani Sankaran, the son of Kilavan Sethupathy conquered Ramnad territory and arrested Sundaeswara Regunatha Sethupathy, the 9th King of Ramnad. **Bhavani Sankaran** proclaimed himself as the Rajah of Ramnad. He became the 10th king of Ramnad and he reigned from 1726 to 1729.
He quarrelled with Sasivarna Peria Oodaya Thevar of Nalukottai and drove him out of his Nalukottai palayam. **Kattaya Thevan**, the brother of the late Sundareswara Regunatha Sethupathy fled from Ramnad and sought refuge with the Rajah of Tanjore Tuljaji.

While Sasivarna Thevar was passing through the jungles of Kalayarkoli, he met a Gnani (sage) named **Sattappiah**, who was performing Thapas (meditation) under a jambool tree near a spring called ‘**SIVAGANGA**’. The deposed king prostrated himself before him and narrated all the previous incidents of his life.

The Gnani whispered a certain mantra in his ears (Mantra Opadesam) and advised him to go to Tanjore and kill a ferocious tiger which was kept by the Rajah especially to test the bravery of men. Sasivarna Thevar went to Tanjore. There he became acquainted with Kattaya Thevan a refugee like himself.

Satisfied with the good behaviour of Sasivarma Thevar and Kattaya Thevan, the Rajah of Tanjore wanted to help them to regain the States again, ordered his DALAVOY to go with a large army to invade Bhavani Sankaran. Sasivarna Thevar and Kattaya Thevan at once proceeded to Ramnad with a large army furnished by the king of Tanjore. They defeated Bhavani Sankaran at the battle of Uraiyur and captured Ramnad in 1730. Thus Kattaya Thevan became the 11th King of Ramnad.

**First RAJAH SASIVARNA THEVAR (1730 – 1750 )**

Kattaya Thevan divided Ramnad into five parts and retained three for himself. He granted the two parts to Sasivarna Thevar of Nalukottai conferring on him the title of “Rajah Muthu Vijaya Regunatha Peria Oodaya Thevar”. 
Second RAJAH – MUTHU VADUGANATHA PERIA OODAYA THEVAR (1750 – 1772)

Sasivarna Peria Oodaya Thevar died in or about the year 1750. He was succeeded by his only son Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Oodaya Thevar. He was the second Rajah of Sivaganga. His wife Rani Velu Nachiar acted as “friend, Philosopher and guide” to him.

Tandavaraya Pillai was the able minister of Sivaganga country. Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Oodaya Thevar granted commercial facilities to the Dutch only after the English rejected a similar offer, made to Colonel Heron. Further the aim of the English was to oblige the ruler of Sivaganga to serve the Nawab or to pay tribute to him or to dissuade them from establishing relations with foreign powers like the Dutch. A two pronged offensive was made by the English.

Joseph Smith from the east and Benjour from the west invaded Sivaganga Palayam in June 1772. The country was full of bushes of cockspur thorn, though there were villages and open spaces here and there. Rajah Muthu Vaduganatha Thevar, in anticipation of the invasion, erected barriers on the roads, dug trenches and established posts in the woods of Kalayarkoil. On the 21st of June of 1772 the detachment of Smith and Benjour effected a junction and occupied the town of Sivaganga.

The next day, the English forces marched to Kalayarkoil and captured the posts of Keeranoor and Sholapuram. Now, Benjour continuing the operations came into conflict with the main body of the troops of Sivaganga on the 25th June 1772. Muthu Vaduganatha Rajah with many of his followers fell dead in that heroic battle.

The heroic activities shown in the battle field by Velu Nachiar is praised by the Historians. The widow queen Velu Nachiar and daughter Vellachi Nachiar with Tandavaraya Pillai fled to Virupakshi in Dindigul.
Later they were joined by the two able Servaigarars Vellai Marudu and Chinna Marudhu.

Third RANI VELU NACHIAR (1772 – 1780)

Rani Velu Nachiar and her daughter Vellachi Nachiar lived under the protection of Hyder Ali at Virupakshi near Dindigul. Frustrated by the joining of forces against him, the Nawab ordered that Velu Nachiar and Marudhu Brothers were permitted to return to Sivaganga and rule the country subject to payment of Kist to the Nawab.

Abiding by this Order, Rani Velu Nachiar accompanied by Marudu brothers and Vellachi Nachiar entered Sivaganga. An agreement was reached where by Rani Velu Nachiar was permitted to govern the Sivaganga Country and Chinna Marudu, the younger was appointed her minister and the elder Vellai Marudu as the Commander-in-chief.

Thus the widow Queen Velu Nachiar succeeded her husband in 1780. The Queen Velu Nachiar granted powers to Marudhu Brothers to administer the country in 1780. Velu Nachiar died a few years later, but the exact date of her death is not known (it was about 1790).
Maruthu Brothers

Marudu brothers are the sons of Udayar Servai alias Mookiah Palaniappan Servai and Anandayer alias Ponnathal. They are native of Kongulu street of Ramnad. They belonged neither to the family of the ancient poligars nor to their division of the caste.

Servaikaran was the caste title and Marudu the family name. The Marudu Brothers served under Muthu Vaduganatha Thevar. Later they were elevated to the position of Commanders. Boomerangs are peculiar to India.

Two forms of this weapon are used in India. These weapons are commonly made of wood. It is crescent-shaped on end being heavier than the other and the outer edge is sharpened. Their name in Tamil is VALARI stick.

It is said that Marudu Brothers were experts in the art of throwing the valari stick. It is said that Marudus used Valari in the POLIGAR wars against the English. The Marudu brothers with 12,000 armed men surrounded Sivaganga and plundered the Nawab’s territories.
The Nawab on the 10th of March 1789 appealed to the Madras Council for aid. On 29th April 1789, the British forces attacked Kollangudi. It was defeated by a large body of Marudu’s troops. He was in close association with Veera Pandiya Kattabomman of Panchalankurichi. Kattabomman held frequent consultations with Marudhus.

After the execution of Kattabomman in 17th October 1799 at Kayattar, Chinna Marudhu gave asylum to Kattabomman’s brother Oomadurai (dumb brother). He issued an epoch-making Jumboo Deweepa proclamation to the people in the island of Jamboo the peninsular South India to fight against the English whether they were Hindus, Mussalamans or Christians. At last the Marudhu Pandiyars fell a victim to the cause of liberating the motherland from the English supremacy.

Marudu Pandiyan the popular leader of the rebels, together with his gallant brother Vellai Marudu were executed on the ruins of fort at Tiruppathur in SIVAGANGA District on 24th October 1801. They showed their determination and spirit at the outset of the final struggle of 1801 by setting their handsome village Siruvayal on fire to prevent its being made use of by the English forces.

Marudu brothers were not only warriers and noted for bravery, but they were very great Administrators. During the period from 1783 to 1801, they worked for the welfare of the people and the Sivaganga Seemai was reported as fertile. They constructed many notable temples (i.e Kalayarkoil) Ooranis and Tanks.

Based on the “District Gazette” 1990 of Ramanathapuram, and the history of Sivaganga maintained by Samasthanam, Sivaganga District has been formed mostly with an area of entire Sivaganga Zamin and part of Ramnad Zamin.
TOPOGRAPHY

Sivaganga District was carved out from the composite Ramnad District on 6th July, 1984 and the District started functioning on 15th March, 1985.

Sometimes referred as 'MarudhuBhoomi' to honor the bravery of the great Marudhu brothers, the district is bordered in the North and Northeast by Pudukkottai District, on the Southeast and South by Ramanathapuram District, on the Southwest by Virudhunagar District, and on the West by Madurai District, and on the Northwest by Tiruchirappalli District

Soil of the district is **predominantly black**. Part of Sivaganga district has **red soil** also.

The district experiences a very dry and hot climate with low degree of humidity. Normally, the temperature varies from 22°C to 39°C. The district receives a normal annual rainfall in the range 801 – 100 mm, during the year 2011-12, it received 872.8 mm of rainfall.

There are no perennial rivers in the district. The river Vaigai is the only major one which enters the district near Tiruppuvanam and flows through Sivaganga block.

ART, ARCHITECTURE, CULTURE

The art, culture and architecture of Sivaganga is predominantly characterized by Chettinad.

Chettinad is a region of Sivaganga district with Karaikudi as its capital and comprises of 74 villages. Chettinad is the native of **Nattukottai Chettiyars** also known as **Nagarathars**.
As Chettinad is situated in a strategic position along the trade route to South – East Asia, Chettiyars, a hard working community, moved as traders and money lenders to Burma, Srilanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and other South – East Asian countries.

They earned money there and returned to Chettinad along with different cultural experiences and contributed to the diversity of the society here. Chettinad is also known for its culinary delicacies which can be attributed to the Chettiyars’ exposure to the diverse culinary patterns of South-East Asia.

Chettinad is home to some of the best chefs in Tamil Nadu. This is also thanks to the diverse cultural experiences which the people of Chettinad have been exposed to.
Chettinad is famous for its traditional jewelry, silver ware, Kandanghi Sarees (hand woven), Kidarams (big vessels), brass vessels, Kudai (palm leaf basket), clay and wooden toys (especially Chettiyar and Aatchi) and decorative Kolam (art work). Chettinad is also known for many clan temples, Ayyanar Shrines and Mariyamman Temples.

The celebration of festivals like Deepavali, Pongal, etc., and rituals such as marriages are somewhat unique to the people of Chettinad. The Chettinad Architecture is also unique in character. The Nagarathars who returned with much knowledge and money constructed large mansions with Burma teak.
The mansions are characterized by exquisite carvings and stucco work. The Chettinad architecture is characterised by its use of large space in halls, courtyards, verandas (Thinnai), etc., and huge Burma teak pillars, Belgian glass works, ceramic tiles (specially Athangudi tiles). One of the master pieces of Chettinad architecture can be seen in the Raja's palace at Kanadukathan.

In the recent years, most Chettiars have migrated to different places and the mansions are being converted into hotels and resorts. This has attracted the tourism industry, which is capitalizing on the rich heritage and culture of this region.
DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2011 census, Sivaganga district had a population of 1,339,101 with a sex-ratio of 1,003 females for every 1,000 males, much above the national average of 929.

A total of 137,235 were under the age of six, constituting 70,022 males and 67,213 females. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes accounted for 17.01% and .06% of the population, respectively.

In addition, the average literacy of the district was 71.67%, compared to the national average of 72.99%, while the district had a total of 338,938 households. On the other hand, there is a total of 620,171 workers, comprising 117,030 cultivators, 122,166 main agricultural labourers, 9,864 in household industries, 212,042 other workers, 159,069 marginal workers, 23,973 marginal cultivators, 77,397 marginal agricultural labourers, 4,792 marginal workers in household industries and 52,907 other marginal workers.

AGRICULTURE

The district’s principal crops are Rice, Millets and other Cereals, Pulses, Sugarcane, Groundnut, Ginger and Cotton, in which, rice was cultivated in nearly 70 per cent of the area followed by sugarcane in 5.93 per cent of the area.

The main sources of irrigation are Tanks, Tube wells and other wells out of which, nearly 65 per cent of the irrigation is covered by Tanks followed by other wells (33.68 per cent) and Tube wells (2.2 per cent).
One important aspect to note is that the area covered by **Prosopis Julifora (Veli Karuvai)** is the highest among all the districts in Tamil Nadu.

**ECONOMY**

Graphite is one of the common resources in Sivagangai. Very valuable graphite is available in Sivagangai and its surrounding areas. The Sivaganga graphite is of flaky variety with 14% average Fixed Carbon used in the manufacture of refractory bricks, expanded graphite, crucibles and carbon brushes.

TAMIN has over 600 acres of graphite bearing land in Pudupatti, Kumaripatti and Senthividyanathapuram of Sivaganga taluk, Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. Estimated reserve of graphite ore in leasehold area is three million tonnes. (recoverable graphite from 14% F.C is approximately 3 lakh tonnes).
The majority of the workforce is dependent on agriculture (72.8%). The principal crop of Sivaganga district is paddy rice. Most of the district has red soil. The other crops grown are sugarcane, groundnuts, pulses, millet and cereals.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University plans to set up the State’s first Red Soil Dryland Research Centre in Sivaganga district.

Sakthi sugar factory is also located in Padamathur, Sivaganga. It has the capacity to produce more than 5000 tons of sugar per day. It provides employment to more than 1000 labourers, directly and indirectly.

Moser Baer Clean Energy Limited has commissioned a 5 MW grid connected solar PV project at Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu.

The project was awarded to Sapphire Industrial Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of MBCEL, through a competitive bidding process conducted by the Tamil Nadu Renewable Development Agency.

The project is implemented under the 50 MWp generation based incentive scheme of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India.
TOURISTS DESTINATION

KARPAGA VINAYAGAR TEMPLE

Dedicated to Lord Ganesha, the shrine is an ancient rock-cut temple. Though the presiding deity happens to be of Lord Ganesha, the temple still has idols of several other Gods such as Lord Shiva. Though the temple was built under patronage of the Pandyas, the age of the rock-cut temple is believed to be 2500 years. The Raja Gopuram is constructed in the typical Dravidian style of architecture.

PATTAMMANGALAM GURU TEMPLE
One of the prominent religious shrines in Sivagangai, the Pattammangalam Guru Temple has the presiding deities of Lord Shiva along with his consort. The temple architecture is Dravidian in style and exudes absolute beauty. The gopuram of the temple is extremely beautiful and colourful. The temple complex houses ample multi-hued figurines that add on to the beauty.

**MADAPURRAM KALI TEMPLE**

Dedicated to Goddess Bathra Kali, the Madapurram is a major Hindu religious shrine in Sivagangai. The temple is believed to be nearly 1000 years old and attracts thousands of devotees.
The deity here is considered the Goddess of prosperity and also someone who can ward off evil spirit and black magic and is 13 feet tall and is guarded by two demons.

KOLLANGUDI KALI TEMPLE

Also known as Vettudaya Kali Temple, the Kollangudi Kali temple is yet another major Hindu shrine in the district of Sivagangai. According to mythological legends, Goddess Kali slayed the demon Chandasura at this very place. Thus, the Goddess here is considered to be very powerful. The architecture of the temple happens to be astounding (Dravidian style) and often leaves visitors in awe.

NATTARASANKOTTAI KANNATHAL TEMPLE
A major Hindu religious shrine in the Sivagangai district, the Nattarasankottai Kannathal Temple or Kannudayanaki Amman Temple, has the presiding deity of Goddess Amman. She is believed to possess immense power and blesses all those who seek her with absolute devotion. The typical Dravidian architecture of the temple is yet another attraction which is worth admiring.

VETTANGUDI BIRD SANCTUARY

There's a slice of raw nature in Sivagangai where nature lovers can have their fair share of enjoyment. Declared a bird sanctuary in 1977, the reserve houses several
species of avifauna. The drainage basins attract nearly 217 species birds with their number exceeding almost 8000. Be ready with your binoculars to be able to spot painted storks, darters, herons, egrets and even flamingos.

KUNDRAKKUDI MURUGAN TEMPLE

Also known as Shanmugunathar Temple, the Kundrakkudi Murugan Temple is a prominent religious shrine in the district of Sivagangai. Dedicated to Lord Murugan, the temple is situated atop a hill near Karaikudi. Often referred to as Mayurachalam, the temple can be reached climbing a flight of 150 steps. Here Lord Muruga appears with his consorts Valli and Deivanai. At the bottom of the hill, there is a temple dedicated to Lord Ganesha.

CHETTIAR MANSION
Constructed in 1902, the Chettiar Mansion is a major historical attraction in Sivagangai. The huge building exudes beauty and awe in every form. The palace spans 42,000 square feet and was built with granite from Spain, marble from Italy, teak from Burma, cast iron from the UK, and stone and tiles from the famous Athanagudi tile factories. The intricately carved ceilings and the black and white floor tiles exudes an old-world charm.

**FAMOUS PERSONALITIES**

**QUEEN VELU NACHIYAR**

Refer history in page no: 4

**MARUDHU BROTHERS**

Refer history in page no: 5

**Suddhanantha bharathi**

An Indian philosopher and poet. His teachings are focused mainly on the search for God in Self, through the Sama Yoga practice he created.
In 1984 the Raja Rajan Award was given to Bharati by the Tamil University in Tanjore, effectively proffering the honor of Doctor of Literature.

**Pa. Chidambaram**

An Indian politician and former attorney who currently serves as Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha and formerly served as the Union Minister of Finance and Union Minister of Home Affairs of India.

He was the Finance Minister starting in May 2004 through 2014, except for a three-and-a-half year stint – beginning November 2008 – as Home Minister. Chidambaram returned as Finance Minister in July 2012, succeeding Pranab Mukherjee, who demitted office to become the President of India.

**Kaniyan poongundranar (கககககககககககககககக)**

An influential Tamil philosopher from the Sangam age between 6th century BCE and 1st century CE. His name Kaniyan implies that he was an Kaala Kanithar (astrologer) (kaala kanitham in Tamil literally means mathematics of date, time and place). Kaniyan was born and brought up in Mahibalancanatti, a village panchayat in Tamil Nadu’s Sivaganga district.

He composed two poems in *Puranāṇūru* and *Natrinai*. His famous Tamil quote "*Yaadhum Oore Yaavarum Kelir*" is at present depicted in the United Nations Organisation. 