

Green Rameswaram Annual Report 2022-23



“Blessed is the little squirrel; he is doing his work to the best of his ability. I simply want to be like the squirrel in the building of Rama’s bridge, who was quite content to put on the bridge his little quota of sand-dust. That is my position”.



– Swami Vivekananda
At Shakespeare Club,
Pasadena, California
31 January 1900



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1. Renovation of Mohabeer Dharmashala - Green Rameswaram Project office



Before Renovation



After Renovation

Introduction to Mohabeer Dharmashala

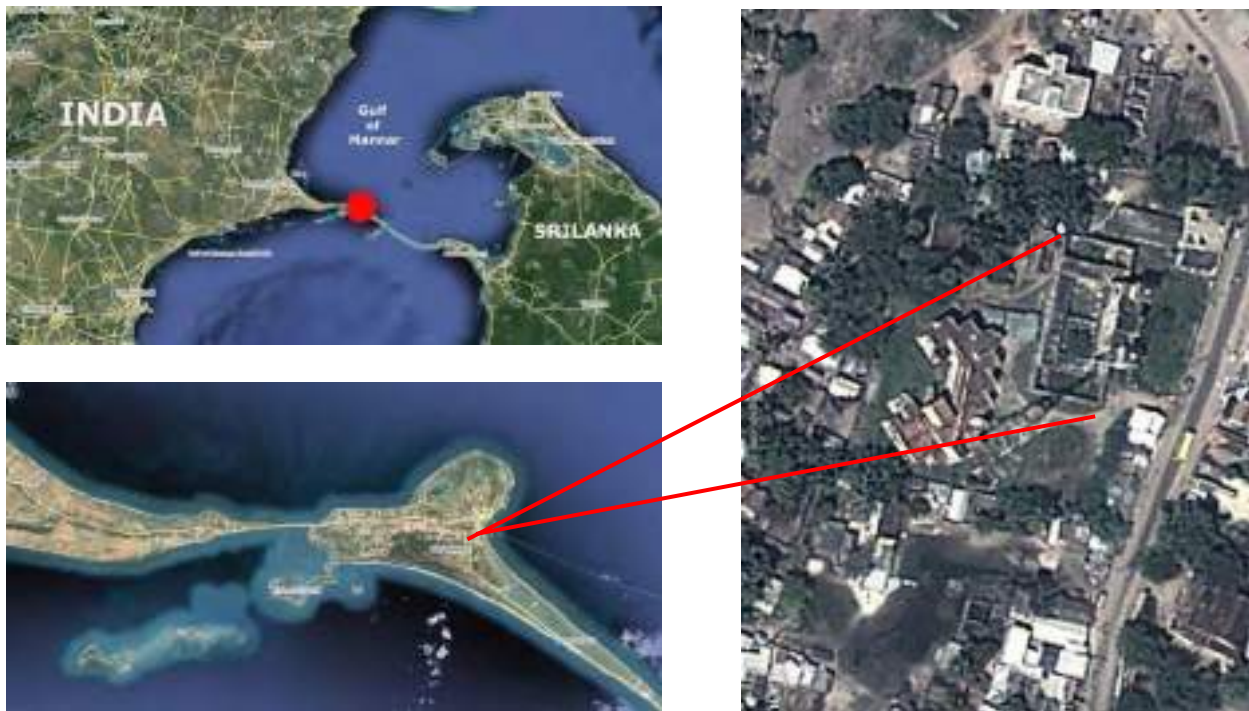
One of the significant architectural monuments of Rameshwaram was standing near Rameshwaram railway station totally Deteriorated, Neglected and Vandalised.

According to the local source this is the only existing Jain Buildings in Rameshwaram. Architecturally unique with its exquisite domes at the entrance, this building was the eye catcher to any pilgrim visiting Rameshwaram via Train.

Mohabeer Dharmashala as the name suggests once was Dharmashala serving the pilgrims. It seems that Ma. Sharada also stayed in this building during her sojourn to Rameshwaram in the year 1911. Later was used as government offices and was left underutilized leading to deterioration of the whole structure.

Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep requested the then District collector to give permission to renovate the dilapidated structure in the year 2015. The work was assigned to conservation architect Shri. Asaithambi of Puducherry. The work was carried out with the traditional methods like use of lime, jiggery and kadukkai etc. and without disturbing the original structure. We established the office of Green Rameshwaram project in this renovated building in the year 2016. Subsequently the government of Tamil Nadu gave this building to Green Rameshwaram Trust on lease for the excellent project of creating "Green Resilient Rameshwaram".

We are giving below the photo gallery - starting from the beginning to the end.



Location of Mohabeer Dharmashala



Earlier condition of Mohabeer Dharmashala

This Grade-I heritage structure was deteriorated seriously and was unsympathetically altered and vandalized to its core. The building is a load-bearing structure in lime mortar and country bricks, the madras terrace roofing was torn down due to negligence and vandalism. The first-floor balcony roof had completely collapsed and the dome on the either side had developed structural cracks due to vegetation growth on them.

The wooden staircases were demolished for wood and stolen similarly the rafters of madras terrace roof were stolen.

The first floor was inaccessible due to deterioration and the damage caused. The building structure was safe and sound but the walls, roof and floor had undergone third degree deterioration.



Condition of the building before renovation



Condition of the domes - full of vegetation and cracks



Collapsed Madras terrace roof



Collapsed Staircase



Deteriorated Plaster



Damaged Dome



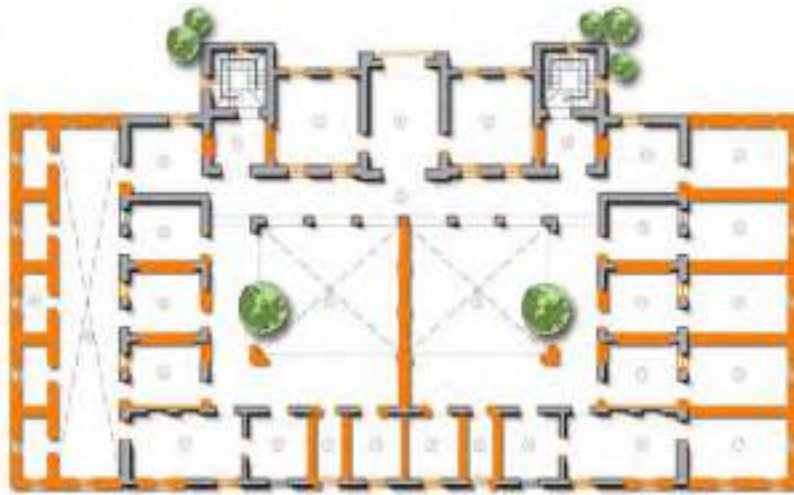
Altered construction



Deteriorated exterior



Damaged passage roof



Legend

Item	Description
	Structural/Design Element
	Structuring
	Entrance Lobby
	Stairs
	Open Space/Plaza
	Entrance to Museum
	Reception
	Exhibition
	Office
	Book Store
	Library
	Cafe
	Event Space/Plaza

Prior - Ground Floor Plan



Legend

Item	Description
	Structural/Design Element
	Structuring
	Stairs

Prior - First Floor Plan



Section AA'



Section BB'

Proposed Renovation

The building has lost all its character and was deteriorated to a greater extent. Partly the madras terrace roof has collapsed, the door and windows are removed and since the building was covered with debris the flooring was also damaged. However, the building was structurally safe for restoration.

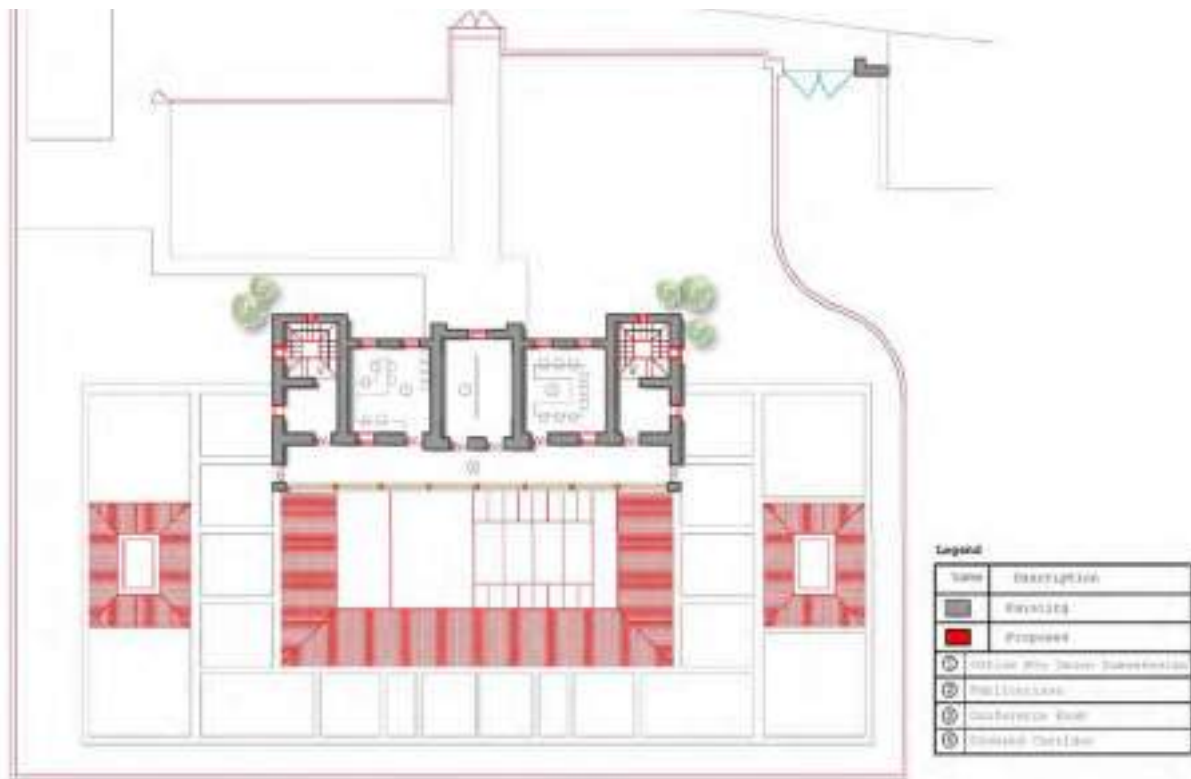
It was proposed to house exhibitions on Archaeology, Culture, Ecology and Green Rameshwaram Initiative along with training and skill development halls. In addition, the following facilities were proposed.

- 1) Information center
- 2) Room for publications and Arts crafts
- 3) Locker room
- 4) Pantry
- 5) Care takers room/guest room - the first floor
- 6) Four toilets and one bath room

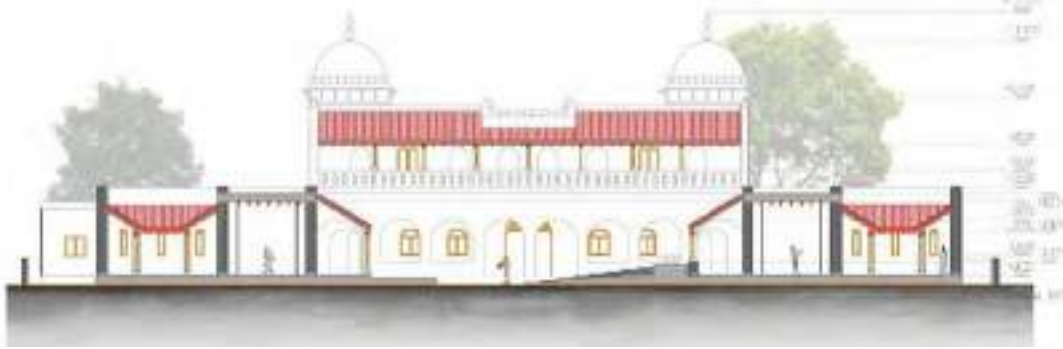
1.	Site	Mohabeer Dharmashala, Rameswaram
2.	Built up area	Ground Floor- 762.3 Sq.m (8202 Sq.ft) First Floor - 103.8 Sq.m (1116 Sq.ft)
3.	Foundation	Nil
4.	Structure	Load bearing
5.	Roof	Madras Terrace Roof
6.	Brick works	Country bricks using lime mortar
7.	Wall finishes	Lime Plastering
8.	Staircase	Precast cantilever steps
9.	Flooring	Cement oxide
10.	Bath room Floor	Rough Kota
11.	Terrace Floor	Weather proof tiles (White coloured)



New Ground floor plan



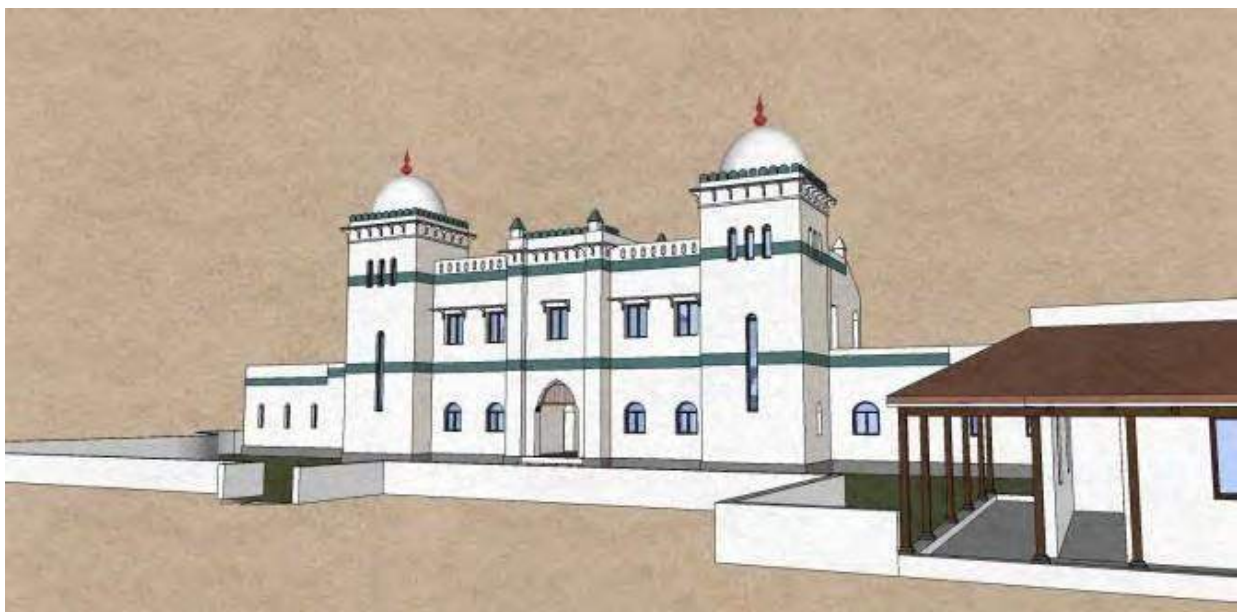
New First Floor plan



Section AA'



Section BB'



Schematic View of the building



Schematic View of the building

Process of Renovation

The heritage building was renovated authentically using original materials such as lime mortar, country bricks, teak wood. In the Ground floor and first floor verandah Palmyra rafters were used since Ramanathapuram district is known for its palm trees.

The lime mortar mix proportion was studied and applied to get the original mix. The lime mortar was prepared using slaked lime, river sand, kadukai, jaggery, palm water mix.

Mastercraftsmen knowing the technique of lime mortar and madras terrace roofing were brought from Karaikal along with the local masons.



Before Renovation



After Renovation



Before Renovation



After Renovation



Before Renovation



After Renovation



Before Renovation



After Renovation



Discussion with District Collector and Green Rameswaram project team during Renovation



Discussion with District Collector on solar power incorporation and Green Rameswaram project team during Renovation



Shri.Asaitambi discussing with Green Rameswaram project team during Renovation



BeforeRenovation



AfterRenovation



Before Renovation



After Renovation



Inauguration of Green Rameswaram project in the renovated building on 6th July 2016



Shri.A.Balakrishnan, President and Shri.Hanumantrao of Vivekananda Kendra standing for a group photo

Recently this restoration was given a special mention award by HUDCO for the year 2022-23





2. Water Management

This year we have Revived and Renovated five Traditional water bodies namely Jatayu, Vibhisana, Sarabha, Naraniya and Veera

2.1 Jatayu Teertham

Type:

Stepped Tank

Location:

On the way to Dhanushkodi - inside the forest

Coordinates:

Lat-9.25655, Long-79.31602

Measurements:

L9.14 m B 9.44m D 3.65m

Water holding capacity:

314927 litres

Water availability:

Throughout the year

Literary mention:

Sethu Purana Vasana Kaviyam

Affiliated to:

Ramanathaswamy Temple; HR&CE

Deity: Lord Rama

Survey no: 1044/2, Rameswaram Revenue village, Rameswaram Taluk

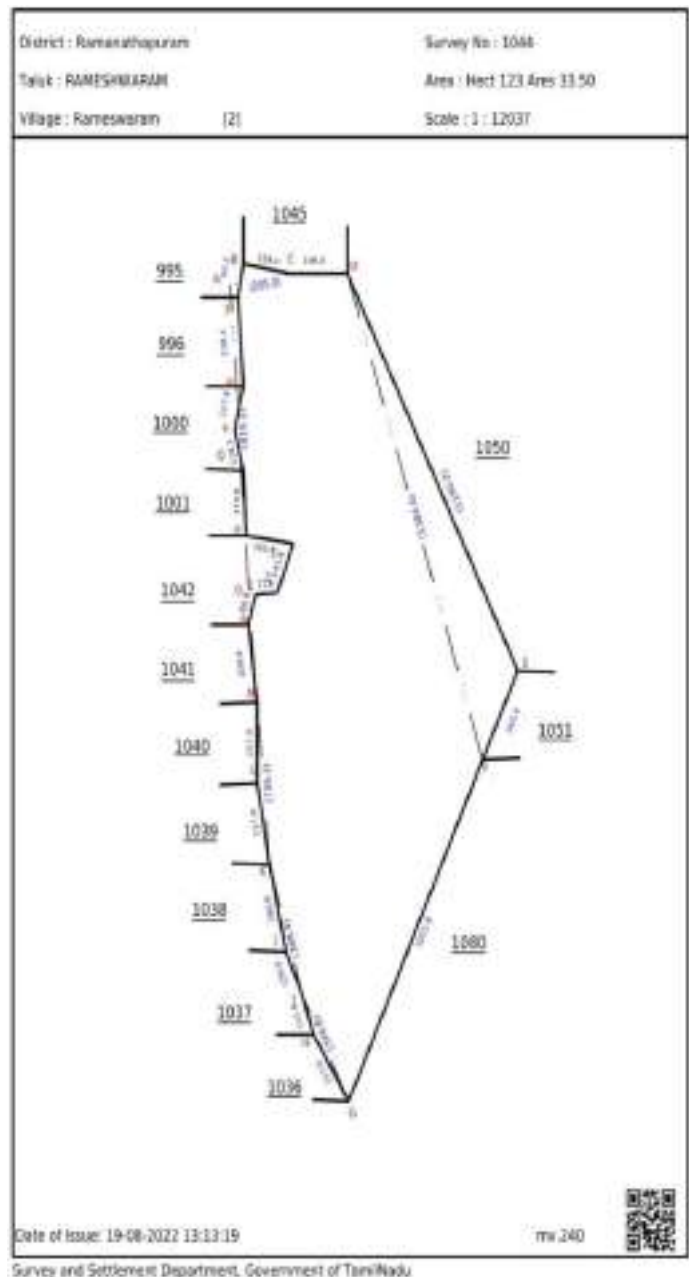
Ritual cleansing:

Cures Diseases and Removes the Sins

Year of renovation: 2022

Renovation work sponsored by:

Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep





Jatayu Teertham is a tank located in the forest area of Rameswaram Municipality, on the way to Dhanushkodi. Other water bodies namely Jatamakuta, Sarvaroga nivarana, Vibhishana and Sarabha Teerthams are in the vicinity. Tharavai wetlands are approximately 3kms away from Jatayu Teertham.

Location (Lat-9.25655, Long-79.31602)

Jatayu Teertham is located 6.4 KM from the west tower of Sri Ramanathasamy temple towards the South West direction.



Mythology and Spiritual Importance

As per Sethu purana vasana Kaviyam there is a Teertham in the name of Jatayu - Bird which communicated the abduction of Sita to Lord Rama. Anybody who has a dip in this Teertham will have the sins cleared and acquired punya and they will have the different forms of wealth.

Architecture

The entire construction of this water body is to suit cattle and wild animals. Thus, there is no gate so that the cattle can reach the water source without any difficulty. Moreover the steps are wide and almost like a ramp, so that the animals will not find any difficulty in reaching the pond. However it is raised by a parapet wall on three sides to prevent sand sliding.

Process of Renovation

Shri.Pakshi Sivarajan, literature scholar from Rameswaram who is also a volunteer of Green Rameswaram from its inception, informed us the existence of Jatayu Teertham. When the renovation team visited the location dilapidated Teertham structures were visible and the area was covered with thorny bushes. Water was stagnated in the area and wild animals use to quench their thirst in the Teertham. Initially renovation team considered the Jata Makuta Teertham, which is 1.5 km away from this spot, as Jatayu Teertham. A careful literature review and consultation with field experts cleared the ambiguity.

Teertham renovation works started with Bhoomi Pooja on August 29, 2022. Shri.Ganesan, Community leader from Ramakrishnapuram and other members participated in the event.



Traditional Bhoomi Pooja at Jatayu Teertham



Neem Tree plantations and hiding ground for the LTTE

In the forest area, the department has systematically planted Neem trees which are growing nicely. Once upon a time the forest was used by the LTTE militants during the conflict with the Srilankan Government.



Following renovation activities were carried out:

- i. Clearing thorny bushes
- ii. De-silting
- iii. Bund Strengthening
- iv. Side Wall repaired on all sides
- v. Cement Plastering
- vi. Parapet walls raising
- vii. Repair and Construction of steps
- viii. Entrance structure
- ix. Installation of Nagaraja idols on the parapet wall

Helping the wild animals and cattle in the remote forest



Vivekananda Kendra NARDEP is working in the field of Environment for number of years and thus the members felt that the water body also should be created for cattle and wild animals. During the survey period, they found the ponnies digging the ground in search of water. It is believed that ponnies know the ground water source which they use it emergency. Seeing this, the members approached the forest department and after lot of hassles, they got the conditional permission.



During the construction work ponnies and pigs came for inspection to see the work carried out for them. Perhaps, they wanted us to do the perfect work so that they can utilize the source for number of years.



Teertham before Renovation



Clearing thorny bushes



Strengthening Side walls



Repairing Sidewalls



Raising the Parapet walls



Repairing the steps



Steps repaired



Installation of Snake God Idols



2.2 Vibhishana Teertham

Type: Open with steps on one side for easy access to the water

Location: on the way to Dhanushkodi - inside the forest

Coordinates: Lat-9.234226, Long-79.36455

Measurements: L 5.78m B 3.11m D 3.20m

Water holding capacity: 51000 litres

Water availability: Throughout the year

Literary mention: Skandapuramam

Affiliated to: Ramanathaswamy Temple; HR&CE

Deity: Lord Rama

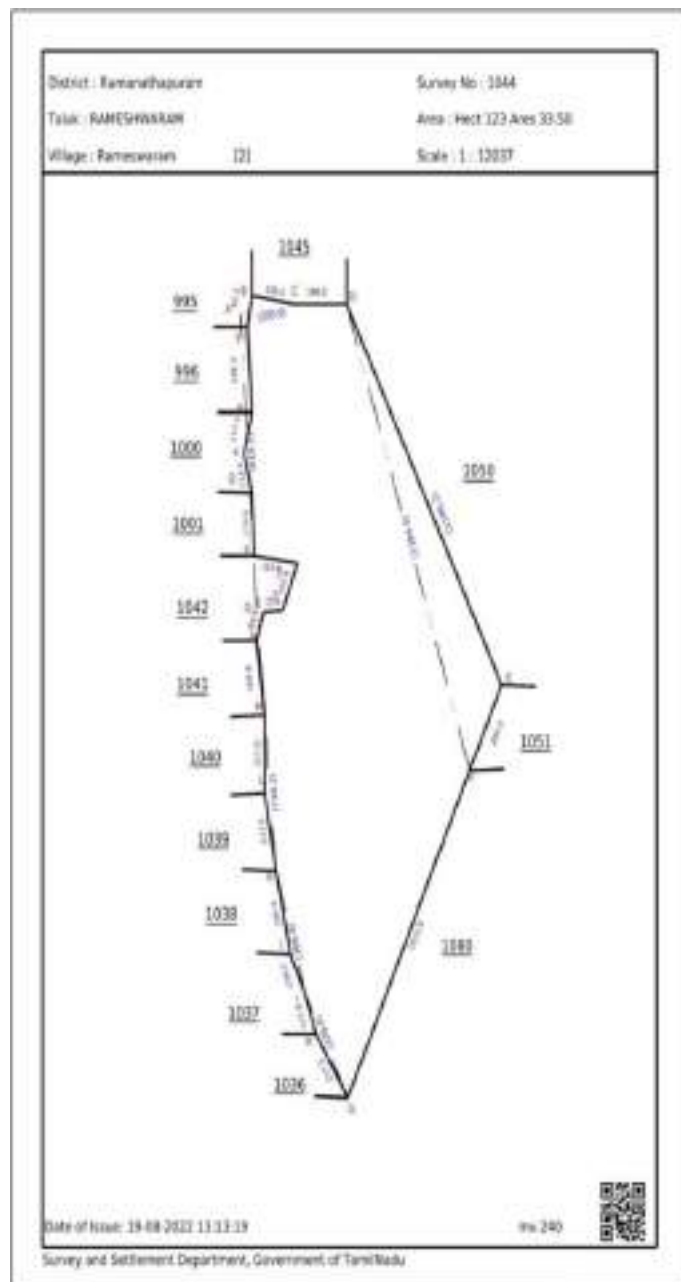
Survey no: 1044/2, Rameswaram Revenue village, Rameswaram Taluk

Ritual cleansing: Cures Diseases and Removes the Sins

Year of renovation: 2022

Working period: 29 September 2022 to 22 October 2022

Renovation work sponsored by: Vivekananda Kendra - NARDEP



Vibhishana Teertham is a water body located in the forest area of Rameswaram Municipality, on the way to Dhanushkodi near Kothandaramar Temple. Other water bodies namely Jatamukuta, Sarvaroganivarana and Jatayu Teerthams are in the vicinity. Tharavai wetlands are approximately 1kms away from Vibhisana Teertham.

Vibhisana Teertham is located 6.4 KM from the west tower of Sri Ramanathasamy temple towards the South West direction.

Etymology

Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa were born to Viśravas by his wife Mālinī. A daughter named Śūrpaṅkhā also was born to them. Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa went to do penance under the leadership of their eldest brother Rāvaṇa. They did severe penance and obtained various boons. The boon given to Vibhīṣaṇa was to live as a righteous life. After that they came back and defeated Kubera, the ruler of Laṅkā and brought Laṅkā under their control. Rāvaṇa became the ruler of Laṅkā. Rāvaṇa married Mandodarī, Kumbhakarṇa married Vajrajvālā the daughter of Mahābali and Vibhīṣaṇa married Saralā, the daughter of Śailūṣa a Gandharva, according to Uttara Rāmāyaṇa. Rāvaṇa conquered the three worlds and was ruling as the emperor of the whole world, when ŚrīRāma and Lakṣmaṇa went to the forest, with Sītā. Rāvaṇa carried Sītā away to Laṅkā. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, with the help of the monkey-army entered Laṅkā. At this time Rāvaṇa called together his ministers to consider the details about the battle with ŚrīRāma. Every one present except Vibhīṣaṇa voted for the battle. Vibhīṣaṇa advised Rāvaṇa to return Śītā, and beg Śrī Rāma for pardon. Rāvaṇa got angry and expelled Vibhīṣaṇa from Laṅkā. Vibhīṣaṇa joined the side of ŚrīRāma and informed him of all the military secrets of Rāvaṇa. In the battle which ensued Rāvaṇa was killed and Vibhīṣaṇa was made the king of Laṅkā by ŚrīRāma. It is stated in Kambarāmāyaṇa, Yuddha Kāṇḍa that according to the instruction of ŚrīRāma and at the instance of Indra, Viśvakarmā came to Laṅkā and renovated the city of Laṅkā. (See full article - Story of Vibhīṣaṇa from the Puranic encyclopedia by Vettam Mani)

Mythology and religious significance

As per Skandapurana there is a Tīrtha made by Vibhīṣaṇa (Vibhīṣaṇa). It liberates one from sins. It subdues great miseries. It dispels ailments. It is like fire unto the heaps of great sins. It is the destroyer of the torture of Kum̄bhīpāka and other Narakas. It destroys evil dreams. It is conducive to wealth. It removes poverty. He attains Vaikuṇṭha.

Architecture

The entire construction of this water body is to suit cattle and wild animals. Thus, there are no wall or gate so that the cattle can reach the water source without any difficulty. Only the steps have been constructed on one side for easy access to the devotees.

Process of Renovation

Though this has been located by the Green Rameswaram team in the year 2016 itself, we could renovate it only in November 2022. Green Rameswaram team was helped by the temple authorities for locating the Teertham. Teertham was tough to reach. Especially the materials transportation was a great challenge. After cleaning the area with JCB, Tractors were used with great difficulty as the pathway was wet and slippery because of the adjacent Tharavai wet land. Construction material was carried on head in the last stretch. Following works were carried out:

1. Removing the thorny bushes
2. Cleaning the entire area
3. Digging the water body and cleaning the debris etc.
4. Giving proper shape to the Traditional Water Body - Teertham
5. Providing steps for entry to the water body to the devotees
6. Installing Nagaraja idols on the entry pillars



Construction materials unloaded on the way as the tractor cannot go further in the jungle as the area is wet land



Water started oozing after digging only one foot



Cleaning of the dirt from the water body



Construction of steps for easy access to the Teertham



Idols of Nagaraja placed after the finishing work



Performance of pooja by the local purihits after completion of the work



2.3 Sharabha Teertham

Type: Stepped Tank

Location: On the way to Dhanushkodi - inside the forest

Coordinates: Lat-9.25655, Long-79.31602

Measurements: L5.48 m B 3.05m D 3.05m

Water holding capacity: 50977 litres

Water availability: Throughout the year

Literary mention: Skandapuranam

Affiliated to: Ramanathaswamy Temple; HR&CE

Deity: Lord Sharabeswara

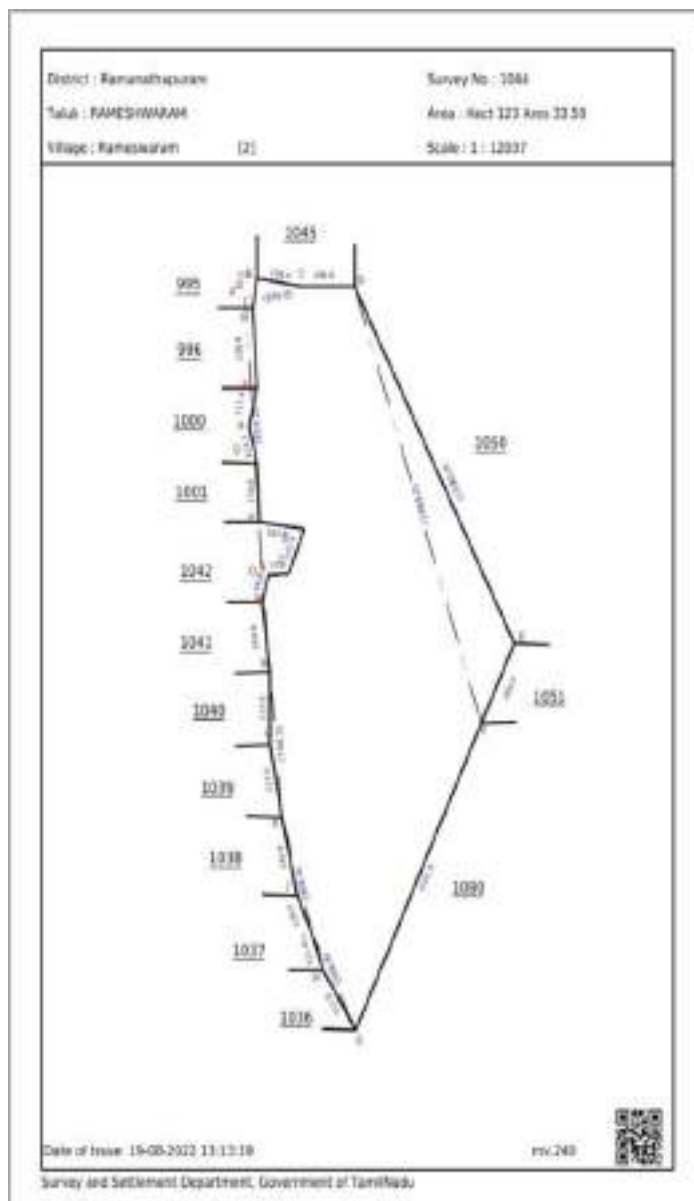
Survey no: 1044/2, Rameswaram Revenue village, Rameswaram Taluk

Ritual cleansing: Cures Diseases and Removes the Sins

Year of renovation: 2022

Working period: 29 September 2022 to 22 October 2022

Renovation work sponsored by: Vivekananda Kendra - NARDEP



Sharabha Teertham is a tank located in the forest area of Rameswaram Municipality, on the way to Dhanushkodi. Other water bodies namely Jatamukuta, Sarvaroga nivarana and Jatayu Teerthams are in the vicinity. Tharavai wetlands are approximately 1kms away from Sharabha Teertham.

It is located 6.4 KM from the west tower of Sri Ramanathasamy temple towards the South West direction.

Etymology

Śharabha (शरभ) refers to "legendary animal with eight legs" (living in the forest), according to the Rāmāyaṇa chapter 2.29. Sharabha is a creature in Hindu mythology

that is part of lion and part of bird. According to Sanskrit literature, Sharabha is an eight-legged beast, mightier than a lion and elephant and which can kill the lion. Sharabha, can clear a valley in one jump.

Shaiva scriptures narrate that god Shiva assumed the Avatar (incarnation) of Sharabha to pacify Narasimha. While as per Skanda Purana: The purpose of Shiva assuming the form of Sharabha was to ensure that the lion body of Vishnu was discarded and he got united with his original divine form.

Architecture

The entire construction of this water body is to suit cattle and wild animals. Thus, there is no gate so that the cattle can reach the water source without any difficulty. Only the steps have been constructed, even that are wide and almost like a ramp.

Process of Renovation

Near the Teertham there is a temple of double headed Muneeswarar which is being worshipped as the ancestral god for several people in Rameswaram. One Mr.Kumar and his mother are regularly doing the pooja. Shri.Pakshi Sivarajan (literature scholar from Rameswaram who is also a volunteer of Green Rameswaram) says that it is Sharabeswarar temple and the water body is Sharabha.

When the renovation team visited the location, it was covered with thorny bushes. Water was stagnated in the area and wild animals used to quench their thirst in the water.

Following works were carried out:

- i. Cleaning the surrounding area which was full of plates, paper, plastic bottles etc.
- ii. Removing the thorny bushes
- iii. Taking out loads of sand and dumping it away by way of tractor
- iv. De-silting the area
- v. Giving proper shape to the water body
- vi. Constructing steps so that the devotees can enter the water body properly



Sharabha Teertham before the renovation



Cleaning the surrounding area by Auto drivers



Cleaning work is onForest workers also joined



Thorny bushes being cleared by JCB



Water after de-silting



Construction of platform at the entry point



Steps under construction



Teertham is ready to welcome the pilgrims and the forest animals

Naga idols were supplied by the Agni Teertham purohit Sangam. While cleaning we could locate the Tortoise fingerlings and the same were transferred to the water body safely. Devotees of the nearby temple are happy with the work carried out by Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep, Kanyakumari and Green Rameswaram Trust.



2.4 Naraniya Teertham

Type: Stepped tank

Location: Outskirts of Olaikuda Village

Coordinates: Lat- 9.31534, Long- 79.32719

Measurements: L 9.75 B 6.09 De 4.26

Capacity: 498000 litres

Water availability: June- February

Literary mention: Sri Skanda Puranam

Affiliated to: Ramanathaswamy Temple; HR&CE

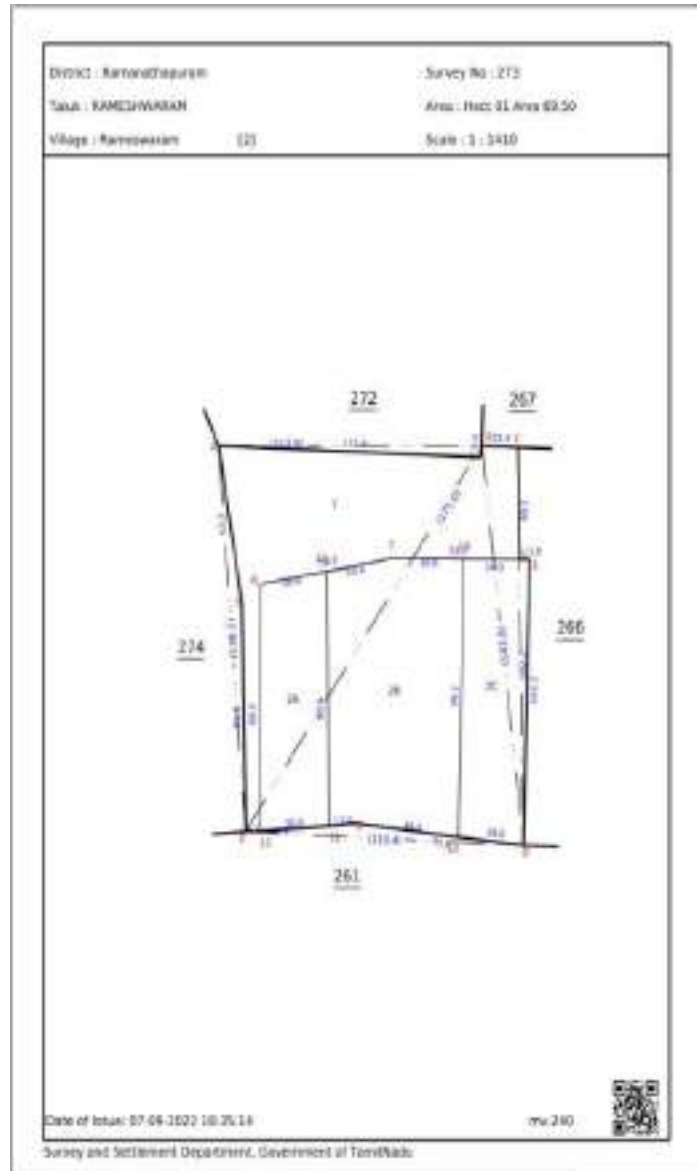
Deity: Lord Naraniya

Survey No: 273

Ritual cleansing: Cures Sins and Diseases

Year of renovation: 2022

Renovation work sponsored by: City Union Bank, Kumbakonam



Naraniya Teertham is a tank, located on the outskirts of Olaikuda village. The Teertham was named after Naraniya, a character in the epic, Ramayana. He was one of the ministers of Vibhishana. The waterbody had been buried under sand dunes before it was identified by the renovation team.

Location

The Naraniya Teertham is approximately 4.6 KM from the west tower of Sri Ramanathasamy temple in the North West direction. It is in the vicinity of other Teerthams such as Gaja and Narena.



Etymology

The Teertham was named after Naraniya, a character in the epic, Ramayana. Vibishana deserted his brother Ravana, because of his differences with him regarding the kidnapping of Sita. His mother, Kaikesi, advised him to go and serve Shri Rama, who was at that time gathering an army to conquer Ravana and to recover Sita. Vibhishana left Lanka and joined Rama's camp. Four aides of Vibhishana, namely, Veeram, Virekadhanam, Narena and Naraniya also accompanied him. Later, when Vibhishana was crowned as the King of Lanka, Naraniya was appointed as a minister by Vibishana.

Mythology and Spiritual Importance

According to SethuvasanaKaviyam, there are four Teerthams in the names of the ministers who came with Vibishana. They performed Saranagati (surrender) at the lotus feet of lord Rama. One is the Naraniya Teertham. It is huge.

Anybody who takes a dip in this Teertham will be relieved of his sins.

Architecture

The original Teertham area was very huge and was more than an acre. However, we have renovated only a small portion of it. It's a T shaped water body, meant mainly for the forest animals and cattle. So, there is a ramp up to the water enabling an easy access for the animals. However, the other three sides are having parapet walls to avoid sand and silt entering the water body. It has a water holding capacity of 498000 litres. During the construction we found a lot of floating stones from the land and the entire area was full of lime stones.

Process of Renovation

On 3rd May 2022, renovation work of the Naraniya Teertham started with the traditional Bhumi pooja involving the community. Smt.Thillai Pushpam, ward councillor attended the ceremony along with the villagers of Sambai.

Following renovation activities were carried out:

- i. Clearing of the area by removing thorny trees
- ii. De-silting was done
- iii. Constructing the walls on all the sides
- iv. Providing parapet walls
- v. Providing ramp for easy entry for the cattle and wild animals
- vi. Installation of Nagaraja idols
- vii. Traditional white and saffron colouring



Bhumi Pooja in the presence of local stakeholders

Demand from the Locals



St. Antony's Church of Olaikuda is famous in Rameswaram. Thousands of devotees gather here during the Eucharist festival. The existing water supply system in Olaikuda was not adequate to meet the water needs of the visitors during the festival.

When VK-NARDEP renovated Narena Teertham of Olaikuda in 2014, the local people requested the renovation team to renovate Naraniya Teertham also which is adjacent to Narena Teertham. When Naraniya Teertham was renovated, the people of Olaikuda thanked the VK-NARDEP team.



Offering flowers after the sacred ceremony



Clearing the area for free movement of JCB etc.

Discovery of a Ruined village

While carrying out the survey we could find the ruins of a village with a number of wells as well as dilapidated houses. The local elders informed the team that a few years back a village named Narikuzhi was existing. Unfortunately, the people had to migrate to other villages abandoning their houses for want of drinking water.



Houses in ruin - villagers left for want of water



"A crying well as the owner left it alone"



Pumping out the dirty water before desilting

Wild animals damaging the equipment



Since NaraniyaTeertham is close to the forest , wild animals frequently visit the waterbody to quench their thirst. During the renovation period, the team received soft water from Rameswaram Municipality and stored the same in containers at the work site. To their surprise, one day, some unknown wild animals damaged the containers during the night and as a result water stored in the containers had completely drained off. The next day, the animals damaged the pipelines of the rainwater harvesting structure. To avoid this problem, the renovation team covered the water containers and pipelines with thorny branches



A mongoose quenching its thirst from NaraniyaTeertham



During the survey by therevenue department



A JCB is doing the work at breakneck speed



Slowly the waterbody is taking shape



Recycling of material - old road side big stones, used for strengthening the traditional water body



Plastering work is on

Reuse - Recycle the material



The renovation team employed all possible methods to reduce the cost of civil work. Reusing the dismantled cement /stone blocks was one of the methods adopted by the team.

During the NaraniyaTeertham work, the renovation team collected the dismantled blocks from the nearby areas and used the same as a filler material for the foundation, flooring and ramp construction. The team received permission from the revenue and police departments before collecting the dismantled blocks.



T - shaped tank-the bigger portion is for cattle



Strengthening the ramp



Transportation of good quality stones for constructing the wall

We could locate a lot of floating stones while digging this Teertham. In addition, a lot of limestones were found in this area. They were crushed and then deposited in the tank area.



Spreading of sand - $\frac{1}{2}$ feet throughout the Teertham base for better maintenance



Good, fresh water is brought in a tanker for construction work as the local water is saline

Ward councillor's help



Smt. ThillaiPushpam, a ward councillor of Rameswaram Municipality was helpful to the renovation team during the renovation of NaraniyaTeertham.

The use of saline water would affect the strength of the structure in the long run. Hence, soft water (water that is free from dissolved salts of metals such as calcium, iron, or magnesium) is always preferred for all the construction work. The renovation team found

that the ground water available in Olaikuda was saline and was not suitable for construction work. Soft water had to be brought from other parts of Rameswaram. The renovation team sought the help of Smt.ThillaiPushpam to bring soft water from the Rameswaram Municipality. The ward councillor spoke to the Municipality authorities and ensured that the soft water was delivered for the renovation work.

Smt. ThillaiPushpam also mobilised volunteers from the local area to provide labour for the renovation work, particularly the curing work.



Construction of parapet wall is on...



Goats too are coming for inspection as the water body is going to be useful to them too



Slowly and gradually the water body is taking shape in two compartments



Another example of recycling of material:Huge paver blocks used for ramp



Ready NaraniyaTeertham waiting for the pilgrims



2.5 Veera Teertham

Type: Stepped Tank

Location: outskirts of Sambai area of Rameswaram

Coordinates: Lat- 9.30499, Long-79.31108

Key Measurements: L10.36 m, B 6.40m, D1.22 m

Capacity: 80,900 litres

Water availability: Available throughout the year

Literary mention: Skanda Puranam

Affiliated to: Ramanathaswamy Temple; HR&CE

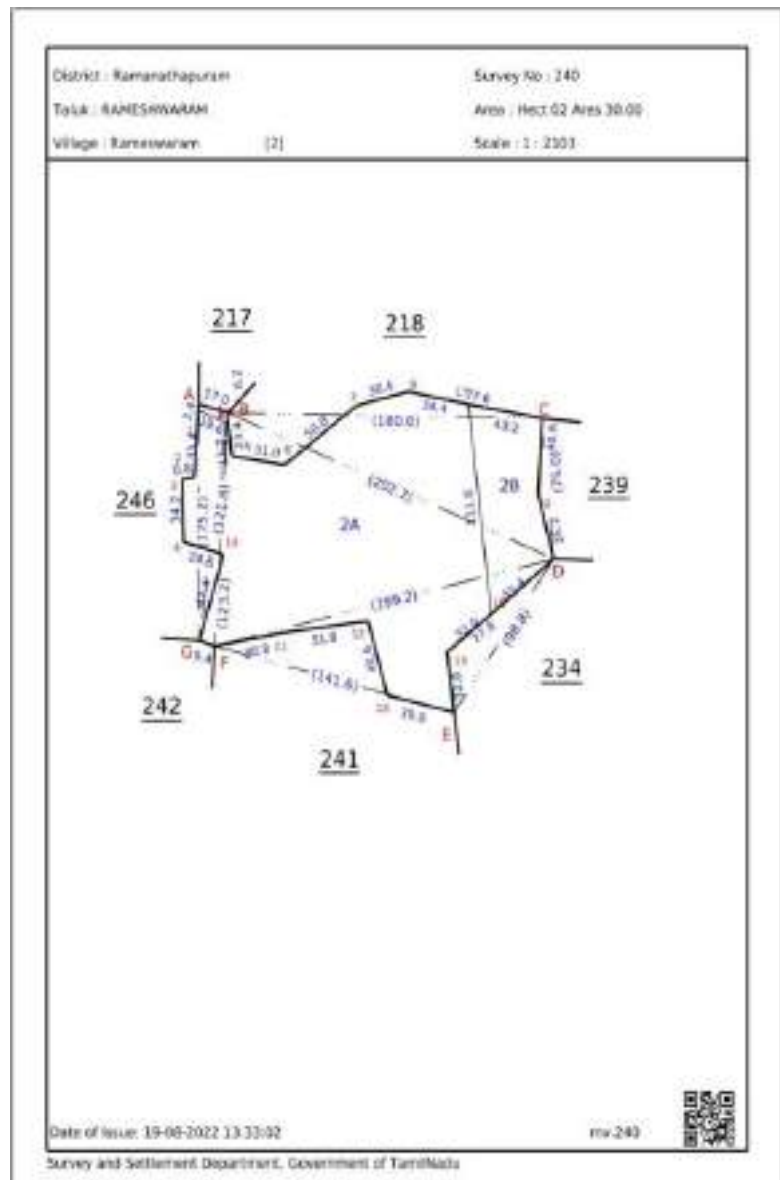
Deity: Lord Rama

Survey no: 240/2

Ritual cleansing: Cures Sins and Diseases

Year of renovation: 2022

Renovation work sponsored by: Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep



The Veera Teertham is a stepped tank, located on the outskirts of Sambai area of Rameswaram Municipality. It has been buried in sand dunes and got located by the Green Rameswaram team. The Teertham was named after Veera, a minister of Vibhishana as mentioned in the epic Ramayana.

Location (Lat- 9.30684, Long-79. 31108)

The Veera Teertham is approximately 2.7 km from the west tower of Sri Ramanathasamy temple in the North West direction. It is in the vicinity of other Teerthams such as Sahadeva, Nakula and Arjuna .



Etymology

The Teertham was named after Veera, a character in the epic, Ramayana. Veera was one of the four aides of Vibhishana who deserted Ravana, because of differences over kidnapping Sita, and joined the army of Rama. Later, when Vibhishana was crowned as the king of Lanka, Veera became a minister.

Mythology and Spiritual Importance

According to Sethu Vasana Kaviyam, there are four Teerthams in the names of the ministers who came with Vibhishana after their complete Sharanagati (surrender) at the lotus feet of lord Rama. One such is the VeeraTeertham.

Anybody who takes a dip in this Teertham will be relieved of his sins and they will receive all forms of wealth.

Architecture

It is a rectangular structure with regular parapet walls, main entrance and steps for going down. In addition, there is a platform in the front portion of the Teertham. One Ring well is also constructed within to serve during the summer days.

Process of Renovation

The Veera Teertham renovation work started on 9th March 2022 after performing the traditional Bhumi pooja. A few local stakeholders from the village were present.

Before starting the actual work, a pathway was cleared of thorny trees and unwanted debris. The area was leveled and covered with sand for easy movement of men and materials. Subsequently the following work was carried out.

1. Finalizing the location of the Teertham, as it was totally buried under the sand
2. Cleaning the entire area, which was full of unwanted materials and palm leaves
3. Excavating the land using JCB
4. Constructing the side walls and parapet walls
5. Providing an entrance with steps to enter the Teertham
6. Provision of a gate
7. Installation of Naga Idols
8. Painting with traditional colours

Evicting the encroachment



The renovation team identified the location of the Veera Teertham after reviewing the literature, consulting with the field experts and cross verifying the information with the revenue records. The team members reached the spot and to their surprise, they observed that a major part of the land of the Veera Teertham had been annexed to the neighbouring orchard through fencing. In addition, an entrance gate had been provided for the orchard

and that too on the porambokku land.

The encroacher objected to the renovation team members' presence on the site. He claimed that the land belonged to him. He also informed that he had been paying property tax for the land. The renovation team members requested him to show the evidences of ownership. The encroacher accepted to provide the evidence. But he did not want to show any document directly to the renovation team, rather he handed over the receipt of tax payment to Sri. Karnan, a local community leader.

Sri. Karnan, shared a photocopy of the receipt with the renovation team. When checked with records of the revenue department, it was found out that the tax had been paid for the adjacent land and not for the Teertha site. This confirmed that the waterbody area was encroached upon. The renovation team sought the help of the revenue department to survey the area. The department surveyors confirmed the claim and clearly demarcated the land of the Veera Teertham. Being proven wrong, the encroacher could not raise his voice anymore. He dismantled the fence, installed in the Teertham area.



Removing the thorny bushes and debris



Laying the road to reach the Teertham site - 300 Meters

Misunderstanding



A Sai Baba Temple is on the eastern side of the Veera Teertham. It is run by a registered Trust. When the Teertham renovation work was carried out, Sri. Prabhu, a senior administrator of the temple approached the renovation team and requested them to clear the sand dunes, present on the temple land. Accepting the proposal, the civil works team translocated the sand material from the temple land and used the same to level the path that connected the Veera Teertham with the residential area of Sambai.

A week later, a relative of Sri. Prabhu came to the renovation site and shouted at the civil workers. He alleged that the renovation team had stolen the sand from the temple land. He also threatened to take legal action. The renovation team members kept their nerves and calmly explained the happenings. After realising the fact, that the relocated sand was used for a common purpose, the problem creator got pacified and apologised.



Our supervisor, Shri.Kathiresan performing the pooja by breaking the coconut



Basic Excavation work is on and the soil is carried away for laying the road



Pumping out the water after the initial excavation



Unused stones from different places, carried to the site and reused



Construction work is on...A new Teertham is born



Slowly the new(?) way, old ancient Teertham is again useable



Construction of parapet wall...



Raising the parapet wall



Entry to the Veera Teertham with a beautiful entrance and steps



Long distance and short distance photographs of the holy Veera Teertham



Fully completed veera teertham

Making Manakkulam functional

Manakkulam is a small pond, located adjacent to the Veera Teertham. Manakkulam was silted, garbage dumped and infested with thorny bushes. The local people informed that the waterbody was functional a few decades before. Wild and domestic animals would quench their thirst in the pond. Manakkulam became dysfunctional because of negligence



and mismanagement. When the renovation work of the VeeraTeertham was underway, the local people requested VK-NARDEP to clean Manakkulam also. Accepting their proposal, the organisation cleared the debris, present in the pond and desilted it. The thorny bushes in the pond area were removed. As a result, rainwater is stored in Manakkulam these days. Horses and other animals from the neighbouring forest areas drink water from the pond





3. Waste Management

During the financial year 2022-23, the Green Rameswaram Trust partnered with Hand in Hand India to address waste management challenges in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. They conducted awareness campaigns, established waste segregation systems, promoted recycling and composting, and explored waste-to-energy technologies. Periodic clean-up drives were organized to remove waste from public areas. Their collaboration aimed to create a cleaner and healthier environment for the community and visitors to the holy town. A few pictures of the initiative





4. Landscaping and Beautification

This year, Green Rameswaram Trust conducted extensive planting activities as a part of their Landscaping and Beautification initiative. They planted 1880 saplings and 10,000 palm seeds across the island with the active involvement of 937 volunteers. These efforts aimed to enhance the aesthetic appeal, increase green cover, and promote ecological balance. The planting of palm seeds reflected a long-term vision for sustainable landscaping. The community's enthusiastic participation showcased a collective commitment in creating a beautiful and eco-friendly environment for the local community and visitors.



Plantation Activities





5. Livelihood

Total groups 72 and total members 936. The Green Rameswaram Trust, in collaboration with ACCENTURE and the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad through its Bengaluru office, successfully conducted four entrepreneurship training programs in Ramanathapuram District. These programs aimed to empower individuals with the skills and knowledge required to engage in sustainable and environmentally friendly business ventures. The details of each training program, including the date, place, training topic, number of participants, and status, are summarized below:

1. Cow Waste Value Added products

Date: 20-09-2022 to 21-10-2022

Place: Green Rameswaram project office

Number of Participants: 50

Status: Completed

The first training program focused on teaching participants how to utilize cow waste effectively by creating value-added products. Participants were trained on various techniques and processes to convert cow waste into useful and profitable products. This program aimed to promote sustainable waste management practices while generating income opportunities for the participants.

2. Organic Fertilizers

Date: 06-10-2022 to 08-11-2022

Place: Green Rameswaram project office

Number of Participants: 50

Status: Completed

The second training program focused on organic fertilizers. Participants learned about the importance of organic farming practices and were trained on the production and usage of organic fertilizers. The objective was to encourage sustainable agricultural practices and reduce the dependency on chemical fertilizers, thus promoting environmentally friendly farming techniques.

3. Establishment of Nursery Garden

Date: 28-10-2022 to 29-11-2022

Place: Green Rameswaram project office

Number of Participants: 50

Status: Completed

The third training program aimed to train participants in establishing and managing nursery gardens. The program covered various aspects such as seed selection, propagation techniques, nursery management, and marketing strategies. By imparting these skills, the training aimed to promote entrepreneurship in the field of plant nursery and contribute to the conservation of local biodiversity.

4. Beekeeping and Honey Processing

Date: 04-11-2022 to 05-12-2022

Place: Mandapam

Number of Participants: 50

Status: Completed

The final training program focused on beekeeping and honey processing. Participants were trained on beekeeping techniques; hive management, honey extraction, and processing. The aim of this program was to promote sustainable beekeeping practices, enhance pollination in the region, and create income opportunities through honey production and marketing.

B.1 Promotional Activities undertaken by us are

- Fliers and posters were promoted online
- Registration link through google forms were circulated online
- In all the SHG group meetings we have informed them about the Training programme and encouraged them to enrol in the programme

Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India
accenture

பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி
MICRO SKILL PRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

இந்திய பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி நிறுவனம் மற்றும் அக்சன்டர் நிறுவனத்தின் சேர்த்து பங்காண்டு திட்டத்தில் சிறு குறுநிறுவனங்களில் துவங்கும் இயக்கல் பயிற்சி மையத்தில் உடனடி

பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி
Nursery Garden Training Contents

- Types of Soils
- Macro and micro nutrients in Soil
- Preparation of potting material
- Maintaining the quality of soil
- After harvesting maintenance of Soil
- Organic fertilizers
- Selection of seeds
- Germination techniques
- Demo of preparation of sowing in Tray box
- Types of Green Shed
- Preparation of shade net house
- Water management
- Weeds management

பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி
செயற்கையான பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி நிறுவனம், அக்சன்டர் நிறுவனம், மையத்தில் சேர்த்து பங்காண்டு திட்டத்தில் சிறு குறுநிறுவனங்களில் துவங்கும் இயக்கல் பயிற்சி மையத்தில் உடனடி

பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி
செயற்கையான பசுவை இயக்கல் பயிற்சி நிறுவனத்தின் (E.D.II) மையத்தில் உடனடி

For details contact: 9945183837 / 920000201. For registration click the below link
<https://www.google.com/forms/d/1FAIpQLSf8-Aj6v1Dm8H1CwX004K1H000a0c>
Alternatively visit the link
Registration Interview - 08 October 2022
 inauguration - 28 October 2022
Last date for application - 07 October 2022

QR Code



Interviews with the help of MahalirThittam and District Industries centre officials



Shri. Johnny Tom Varghese, IAS, District Collector lighting the lamp during Cow Waste Value added products training programme



District collector speaking to the training participants

Overall, the Green Rameswaram Trust ensured that the training participants had ample exposure to practical aspects of the businesses they were being trained in. The participants gained firsthand knowledge of successful enterprises and farms related to cow waste value-added products, organic fertilizers, nursery gardens, beekeeping, and honey processing. These visits not only complemented the theoretical training but also allowed the participants to understand the nuances, challenges, and best practices in their respective fields. Field training equipped the participants with a comprehensive understanding of the business, fostering their entrepreneurial spirit and increasing the likelihood of successful ventures in the future.



Nursery Garden Exposure visit



Nursery Garden Kit Distributed by Shri.K.J.Praveen Kumar IAS, Additional Collector, Ramanathapuram District



Exposure visit Panchavarnam Honey farms

Conversion of a Habit to income generation activity



Smt. Usha Rani from Pamban is a plant lover and she used to grow small plants in her house.

Her husband works in a tea shop and is earning around Rs.7000 per month. She has her own house and her children are studying in private schools respectively. She is only a housewife and has studied only 10th std. She has the urge to contribute to the household expenses. She found this training a useful tool to improve her skills and an opportunity to help her family.

She was regular in attending the programme and was always attentive in the classes. After the training programme, she started her own nursery and preparing the seeds for plantations. She has prepared seeds of 1. Brinjal 2. Ladies finger 3. Spinaches 4. Mullangi, 5. Chilly 6. Tomato and 7. Cluster Beans. And started the sales in the December 2022. It's a big hit and she is seasoning these plants in her garden. Due to this activity she is able to earn an amount of Rs.1000 per month which is a very big boon to the family.



She is confident to take this up to the bigger level of marketing. In fact as the first step they have placed a board in front of their house as a starting point of marketing.





6. Green Health

Regular yoga classes are conducted for gents in the morning and ladies in the evening at our Green Rameswaram project office. On an average 20 participants attend the morning and evening sessions. Through this activity, we have spread the concept of "Yoga way of life" to the people of Rameswaram by conducting this activity round the year since last seven years. Vivekananda Kendra's worker Shri.Hegdeji is the main force behind this activity.

As usual, we celebrated International Yoga day - June 21, 2023, in a big way by covering the entire cross section of the society and celebrating it at different places. The details are as follows:

Institution	Place	No of Participants
Indian Coastal Guard Event	Mandapam	110
Police Forces Training	Ganesh Mahal, Rameswaram	120
Indian Navy Office	Rameswaram	80
Kendriya Vidyalaya School	Mandapam	300
Raja Matriculation School and Raja Arts and Science College	KunjarValasai	150
Pamban, Chinnapalem	Chinnapalem	70
Green Rameswaram	Krishna Garden Mahal, Rameswaram	250
	Total	1080





7. Social Capital

Teertha Pooja

We are organising Teertha poojas at renovated Water bodies at regular intervals. This year, we organised 74 Teertha Poojas in which 2102 people Participated. The details are as follows:

S.No	Teertham Name	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
		No. of participants											
1	Agni	46	55	70	65	75	75	135	95	55 300	55	75	75
2	Dharma	10	8	11	10	10							
3	Runavimochana	6		10	11	10	04					04	07
4	Kapi	7		8	4	10	04			05	04	03	05
5	Parameswara	12	5	47	22	35						30	
6	Hara	12		31		05							
7	Panacha	15		31		07							
8	Arjuna	10			11								
9	Bhima	10			11								
10	Amirthavapi		05	05									
11	Jhambavan		30	12	16								
12	Kumutha		10										
13	Villoondi			20	27								
14	Hanuman				21								
15	Papavinasaka				09	05							
16	Ramar				15	17							
17	Vaali				16								
18	Amutha				80	60							
19	Deva				30	60							
20	Ariyanaatchi					07							
21	Krishna											10	
22	Veera									04			
23	Mangala											12	
24	Jata						25						
25	Parasurama												12



Mangala Teertham Pooja



Agni Teertham pooja on every full moon day

Teertham Mass cleaning

Green Rameswaram Trust has made commendable efforts in conducting mass cleaning activities in the Teerthams that have been renovated by the trust. During these events, the participants engaged in various cleaning activities such as removing debris, litter, and plastic waste from the Teerthams and their surroundings. The mass cleaning activities not only contribute to the physical cleanliness of the Teerthams but also foster a sense of community involvement and responsibility towards preserving these sacred water bodies. The details are as follows:

S.no	Date	Name of the Teertham	No. of Members	Remark
1	08/08/2022	Arichalmunai	40	Purohit's Association
2	28/08/2022	Hanuman Teertham	20	Maruthuvar Sangam
3	29/08/2022	Jatayu Teertham cleaning	10	Construction work started
4	21/07/2022	Cleaning Parasuram Teertham	6	
5	29/09/2022	SarabhaTeertham Cleaning	15	Along with Forest Department
6	08/10/2022	Cleaning work at Kapi Teertham	25	Along with Sewa Bharathi Volunteers
7	31/10/2022	Temple Cleaning work at Sri Ramanathaswamy Temple	25	SPA Girls higher secondary school
8	13/10/2022	Arichalmunai	20	Purohit's Association
9	15/10/2022	Hanuman Teertham Cleaning	20	GR volunteers
10	17/09/2022	Agni Teertham Cleaning	165	Several voluntary organizations
11	29/10/2022	Brahma teertham cleaning	20	Rameswaram Municipality
12	14/10/2022	Mega cleaning Agni Teertham and Temple	345	Jagat Guru Seva Sangam and several sangams
13	08/11/2022	Near SarabhaTeertham	10	E-rickshaw drivers
14	26/11/2022	Agni Teertham	300	Regular event
15	27/11/2022	Mangala Teertham	280	Namashivaya Ulavara Pani Kuzhu
16	27/11/2022	RamarTeertham	200	""
17	27/11/2022	Temple Nandavanam Cleaning	150	""
18	27/11/2022	Ram Park	250	""
19	27/11/2022	Nambu Nayaki Amman Cleaning	100	""
20	27/11/2022	Badrakaliamman Cleaning	250	""
21	26/12/2022	NakulaTeertham	5	Teertha Mitras
22	15/12/2022	Arjuna/Bhima Teertham	5	Teertha Mitras
		22 Events	2261	



Kapi Teertham cleaning with help of Green friends



Hanuman kundam cleaning



Arichalmunai beach cleaning

Other events to build social capital

Green Rameswaram Trust has successfully built social capital and community engagement through 40 events, including Guru Poornima, Anna Pooja, Swami Vivekananda birth anniversary, Universal brotherhood day and Deepa Pooja etc., with a remarkable participation of 3,903 individuals. These activities promote physical and mental well-being, reverence for spiritual leaders, selfless service, and unity. By bringing people together and fostering a sense of belonging and cooperation, the trust strengthens its mission of environmental conservation, spiritual development, and overall community well-being. The details are given below.

Date	Event	No.of Participants
16.04.22	Deepa Pooja at Nambu Nayaki Temple	27
16.05.22	Deepa Pooja at Nambu Nayaki Temple	15
14.06.22	Deepa Pooja at Nambu Nayaki Temple	15
28.08.22	Deepa Pooja at Nambu Nayaki Temple	55
18.09.22	Deepa Pooja at Arulmigu Sri Ramanathaswamy Temple	2400
19.08.22	Sumangali Pooja	60
27.06.22 - 31.06.22	Trainers Training Programme in Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India at Ahmadabad	2
13.07.22	Guru Poornima Celebrations	135
24.04.22	World Book Day Celebrations	12
21.05.22 - 23.05.22	Motivation Camp at Kanyakumari	37

15.08.22	Independence Day Celebrations	80
27.08.22	Motivation lecture at Amrita School students	70
15-09-22	Universal Brotherhood day Celebration - Panchayat union School	100
24-09-22	Universal Brotherhood day Celebration - Vivekananda Bhaskaram	22
14-09-22	Universal Brotherhood day Celebration - MohabeerDharmasala	25
15-09-22	Universal Brotherhood day Celebration - Chinnapalem, Pamban	20
03-12-22	Gita Jayanthi Celebration - MohabeerDharmasala	40
04-12-22	Gita Jayanthi Celebration - MohabeerDharmasala	100
16-12-22	Gita Jayanthi Celebration - Mandapam KooniMariyamman Temple	50
12-01-23	Swamiji Birthday celebration - MohabeerDharmasala	65
12-01-23	Swamiji Birthday celebration - Chinnapalem, Pamban	50
13-01-23	Swamiji Birthday celebration - Thoppukadu, Mandapam	50
12-02-23	Future search exercise, Thattankudiyiruppu	153
12-02-23	Red cross society, Thangatchimadam	15
17-02-23	Shop opening, Sannathi Street	10
	Total	3903



Guru poornima



Deepa pooja



Red cross society, Thangatchimadam



Swamiji Birthday celebration - Chinnapalem, Pamban



Motivation workshop at Amrita School



Sumangali puja

Shri.N.Krishnamoorthi's webinars online mode of reaching out to the general public

Shri.N.Krishnamoorthy, a senior worker of Vivekananda Kendra covered various topics of cultural and naturally interest on every Tuesday at 6 PM. through virtual interaction. A total of 50 Webinars were held with 1836 people attending (on an average 36 members). The varied topics covered are given below:

Sl.No.	Date	Name of the Topic
1	05-Apr-22	Ananda Kumarasamy
2	12-Apr-22	MerguKarnatakam - Part 2
3	19-Apr-22	Vinayakar
4	26-Apr-22	Mergu Karnatakam - Part 3
5	03-May-22	Rajajis Arts, Literature, Spiritual and cultural works
6	10-May-22	MerguKarnatakam - Part 4
7	17-May-22	Papanasam Sivan
8	24-May-22	Uraivalam ennum paashya sambathu - Part 1
9	31-May-22	Uraivalam ennum paashya sambathu - Part 2
10	07-Jun-22	Suchindram to Kanyakumari - Part 1
11	14-Jun-22	Suchindram to Kanyakumari - Part 2
12	21-Jun-22	Puli Purasoolalil-PunitheIlakkiyathil-PurathanaIlakkiyathil
13	28-Jun-22	Iraivanin Thanga Karathal Uruvaakkapattavar Swami Renganandar
14	05-Jul-22	Nermaiyaana Manithare Iraivanin Unnatha Padaipu Moktcha Kundam Viveshwaraiya - Part 1
15	12- Jul -22	Gurumarkal Uruvaakiye Bharata Desam - Part 2
16	19- Jul -22	Thiru AanaikaKochenkatChozhaNaayanaar Saiva Thirukovilgal
17	26- Jul -22	Kaalam, Neram and Nirantharam
18	02-Aug-22	Mayilaaduthurai Saiva Thalangal

19	09- Aug -22	Kaalam,Neram and Nirantharam -Part 2
20	16- Aug -22	Mayilaaduthurai Vainava Thalagal
21	23- Aug -22	Bavani
22	30- Aug -22	Vanna Sarapam Thandayathupaani Swamikal Iraivanin Thanga Karatha IUrvaaka Pattavar
23	06-Sep- 22	Yaazhpanam Nalloor Arumuga Navalar Good works
24	13- Sep -22	Muthu villaiyum Mutram
25	20- Sep-22	Chinnangal, SadangugalmatrumSathiyathaimaraithupesuthal
26	27-Sep-22	Muthu villaiyum Mutram - Part 2
27	18- Oct 22	Muthu villaiyum Mutram - Part 3
28	25 Oct22	Geethaiennumottumankani
29	01-Nov-22	Geethaiennum Ottumaankani
30	08- Nov -22	Iraivanin Thanga Karathal Uruvaakappattavar Kanchi Virathivasathipayankaram Annankaracharya Swamigal
31	15- Nov -22	Madham Manithakulathirkkuaatriyathondru
32	22- Nov -22	Aalamarathadiyippanpaatupokkisham
33	29- Nov -22	Aalamarathadiyippanpaatupokkisham - part2
34	06-Dec-22	Swami Sivanantha Saraswathi
35	13- Dec -22	Thiruvaruennum Thiruthalam
36	20- Dec -22	Thiruvaiyaruennum Thiruthalam - Part 2
37	27- Dec -22	Surendranatha Gupta
38	03-Jan-23	Kodumaiyilladha Kodungallur
39	10-Jan-23	Kodumaiyilladha Kodungallur - Part 2
40	17-Jan-23	Appar
41	24-Jan-23	Thiruvarangam
42	31-Jan-23	Thiruvarangam - Part 2
43	07-Feb-23	Appayya Deekshidhar
44	14- Feb -23	Srirangam- sung by Azhwars
45	21- Feb -23	Thiruvarangam Part - 3
46	28- Feb -23	Savithiri- Maha Bharathathil, Puranathil, Sri Aravindhar Kaaviyathil
47	07-Mar-23	ThiruvarangamKalaigalumKolaigalum
48	14- Mar -23	Surya Worship - Part 1
49	21- Mar -23	Surya Worship - Part 2
50	28- Mar -23	Parsikkalin Desa Bakthi, kalvipani, thozhilvalarchimatrumakkalnalan

Policy Advocacy

District level Island development committee meetings were held at regular intervals for pushing the agenda of the "Green Resilient Rameswaram". This year, after a long gap because of covid pandemic, the state level island development committee meeting was held on 14th March 2023 under the chairmanship of Shri.Irai Anbu, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tamil Nadu.

Date	District / State level	Chaired by
05-05-22	District	District Collector
05-08-2022	District	District Collector
29-09-2022	District	District Collector
17-11-2022	District	District Collector
17-11-2022	District	District Collector
11-01-2023	District	District Collector
14.03.2023	State level Island Development Committee	Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tamil Nadu



A picture of Island Development Committee meeting

Establishment of Plastic Control Check Post managed by Forest Department



The Island Development Committee recognized the environmental significance of the Dhanushkodi region, situated near Rameswaram. To address the growing concern of plastic waste and its impact on the delicate ecosystem, the committee collaborated

Plastic Control Check post with the Forest Department to establish a Plastic Control Check Post. This check post was strategically placed along the route leading to Dhanushkodi. Its primary objective is to regulate and control the usage of plastic materials within the area. Plastic pollution poses a severe threat to the environment, wildlife, and marine life. Checkpost was established in the month of June 2022.

By conducting seven meetings, the Island Development Committee has made significant strides in preserving the cultural heritage and ecological balance of Rameswaram. The renovation and protection of Teerthams, along with the establishment of the Plastic Control Check Post, highlight the committee's dedication to promoting responsible tourism, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship in this beautiful island region.

