

# Planning for Conservation of Temple Precinct in Tamilnadu: A Case of Kanchipuram

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**Abstract:** *Temple Precincts of India are unique to its region. Its significance of cultural and religious influences are noteworthy that there are both religious and commercial activities associated with them (Dr.Binodbiharisatpathy). Most of the religious cities in India have a radial planning and perform diligently to fulfil the various needs of the population (Thilagam, N Lakshmi, 2015). Among the many temple towns of India, Kanchipuram is a city known as a multi-cult center with multiple temple development (Thilagam, N Lakshmi, 2015). Over time, the city has evolved to support the needs of its inhabitants with development that are being restricted to the city periphery. This sort of spread causes vanishing the imageability of city. Due to the character lose there is the need of planning for conservation in Kanchipuram (HRIDAY, 2015). A thorough analysis of the temple town, its significance, ideologies and functioning can give one a fair idea about the city, its context and performance. The study aims to combine the aspects of planning and conservation to critically analyses the temple precinct. The study also focus on understanding the religious heritage of the region along with identification of factors forming the basis of the concept.*

**Keywords:** Temple precinct, planning for conservation, heritage, multi-cult, Religious cities

## 1. Introduction

Among the ancient temple cities of South India are notable ones like Kanchipuram. They have been distinct in their style of architecture and the religious significance. These architectural wonders are places of worship which attract a huge crowd of pilgrims from across the globe. The impact of the same can be assessed with the mighty increase in the floating population of the place over these past years. Many of these structures are protected by agencies like the ASI Archaeological survey of India, HRIDAY and State Bodies but the impact of the remaining uncared temples directly affect the immediate surroundings and the structures nearby. The very diverse activities observed by the varied groups of pilgrims themselves does have a great potential to impact the built environment around these sacred sites (Municipality District Map of Kanchipuram, 2011).

When the analysis is pilgrimage centric, we find that it is seasonal and limitations of time and space play major roles. Overtime, however the development of all sorts inclusive of commercial, institutional and residential have all been focused to the outer fringes leaving these historically important nodes less important. The Major reasons for evolution are population density, so the daily needed thing also increase (HRIDAY, 2015). Planning Conservation will aim at restoring this lost interest by making the development more associated to these ancient sites of pilgrimage and will parallel cast the necessary grandeur to the rich philosophy and the vibrant design principles that have been demonstrated in these sites by our predecessors. It will in many ways augment the built heritage associated to it in way of the layout of the city by itself and also will amplify the weightage given to the regional setting as in where these

cities are placed and their relationship with the immediate surroundings (HRIDAY, 2015). The issues and challenges faced by these temple cities can be justified with an analysis of the surroundings of these places which are ill maintained or are in strike contrast with them or even by the religious core itself which on analysis will display the oscillating frequency and character of the temple it encompasses over the past few decades of rapid urbanization mostly ignoring these sites and heading towards the rural fringes. As time rolls, our needs change and so does our relative development which in turn drastically changes our understandings of the challenges and potentials which have entirely tumbled the fate of these temple cities (Ranee Vedamuthu ,D. Jayanthi, 2005).

Even though the identity and the image of the city is fading the domestic tourism is increasing year by year due to the religion importance of the area. Main objectives are to study about the role of conservation of temple precinct. to study about the historical importance and planning of religious settlement. And to identify the factors and study the tangible and intangible elements influence in planning conservation.

## 2. Literature Study

### 2.1 Location

Kammakshi amman temple precinct locates at Kanchipuram municipality Kanchipuram district Tamilnadu. To the north of the district lies Chennai, and to its south is Vellore. The Bay of Bengal bounds the district on the east while the Vellore and Thiruvannamalai districts are towards the west (HRIDAY, 2015).



**2.4.1 Tangible**

Temple is the main tangible element in the precinct. Temple act as the core Kamakshi amman temple, the economic and settlement pattern happened due to the temple due to the increase in tourist foot fall there are opportunities for the religious commercial. Due to the increase in commercial and urbanization modern materials where used to the surrounding building. Eventually the image of the heritage city is being fading.

**Table 2.2: Tourist Footfall**

S. No	Year	Domestic	Foreign
1	2005	962839	53411
2	2006	1211945	63273
3	2007	1486774	79162
4	2008	1758970	110156
5	2009	2159498	130930
6	2010	3481974	183862
7	2011	4197567	244258
8	2012	6083243	259104
9	2013	8678005	294737
10	2014	14564678	336552

(Hriday, 2015)

**2.4.2 Intangible**

Festivals and silk weaving these are the identified intangible elements. Festival Kammakshi Amman temple festival is famous it Is happening at march, June, July, august. Even the road are designed according to the chariot path. (VASINI, Sri KAMAKOTI PEETA, 2006)

**2.5 Planning attributes**

- Open spaces
- Main streets
- Heritage buildings
- Main node

- Rajaveedhi
- Residential

**2.6 Existing issues of the precinct**

Urbanization and the commercial activity increases are the major issues. Due to reconstruction and maintenance of the surrounding buildings. Usage of modern materials are implemented in the building it leads to the loss of imagebilty of the historic important place.






**3. Methodology**

The methodology for the study was formulated according to the five stages of the study through various background and case studies. From the first stage we studied about the role of planning in urban conversation of temple precinct by finding the characteristics of the temple precinct and comparing the existing characteristics of the temple towns in India namely Madurai and Kanchipuram and also the spaces in to different area according to the character of the space (THILAGAM, N LAKSHMI, 2015).










From the second stage, study was conducted about the historical importance and planning of religious settlements to understand the reason of the settlement, culture and activities in the area. From the third stage, the key indicators that shapes the temple precinct at temple precincts are identified by comparative study of the existing characteristics and the morphology of the temple precincts. From the fourth stage, the factors that influence in planning for urban conversation of temple towns are identified. Finally a comparative study is done according to the key indicators that influence the urban conversation within the temple precinct.

**4. Conservation in Planning**

**Table 4.1: Showing the needed conservation strategies at temple precinct**

	Kanchipuram	Madurai	inference	conservation needed	existing condition
open spaces			open area 23 % for madurai kanchipram 42 % is open space.	REHABILITATION	due to the urbanization open spaces are filling in to commercial. we need proper conservation of the open space in precinct then we can reduce the pollution
Main streets			the main streets are aligned according to gopuram. 	PRESERVATION RESTORATION	The number of bulding and building increase day by day so the charecter of the street and the electric line obstruct the gopuram.



heritage buildings			there are more than one temple at the precinct so morphologic growth dosnot concentrat on one temple.	PREVENTION PRESERVATION CONSOLIDATION RESTORATION REHABILITATION REPRODUCTION RECONSTRUCTION	they are not following preservation they follow reconstruction rehabilitation.
main node			the nods at the precinct are more concentrated with traditional or religios commercial.	PREVENTION RESTORATION REHABILITATION RECONSTRUCTION	The number of bulding and building increase day by day so the charecter of the street and the electric line obstruct the gopuram.
Raja veadhi (morphology)			the path bowdry eve-lute from time to time. the cultural importece also grow when the precinct also increase.	PREVENTION PRESERVATION CONSOLIDATION RESTORATION REHABILITATION RECONSTRUCTION	The number of bulding and building increase day by day so the charecter of the street and the electric line obstruct the gopuram.
residensial			 Agraharam with the ancient culture and building materials	PRESERVATION RECONSTRUCTION	The are trying to reconstruction but re-hablitaion can b done due to the heritage value of the building

- Control of building height in Precinct.( so the view of the Gopuram can be seen from any part of precinct)
- East Gopuram is the main entry to the Kanchi Kamakshi Amman Temple. East facing street need to be made one way in order to reduce the vehicular rush.
- Development of the East facing street (Mada Street) by giving settings and tourism development by preserving the character of the space.
- Development of road network so that pedestrian can be given more importance
- Identifying the spaces for future development by not losing character of precinct.
- Proper parking and preparation of land use.
- The two public toilets in the Mada Street is insufficient (Hriday, 2015).

## 5. Conclusion

The study was an attempt to formulate planning strategies for temple precinct in Tamil nadu. This was done through analysing the planning aspects using the literature study and case studies. For this comparative studied of two temple city and their morphological character understood through literature review. Comparative study of the both (Kanchipuram and Madurai) get to understand the factors that both spaces have the similar features and temple position. The precinct area is delineated in to tangible and in tangible area. Tangible area consist of Open space, Main streets, Main nods, Rajaveedhi and the heritage building.

By the comparative analysis, the importance temple precincts were understood and how they were conserved.

Finally planning strategies to preserve the temple precincts were formulated. Through these procedure it was analysed planning for conservation of temple precinct in Tamilnadu is Necessary.

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