

= Tiruvannamalai =

Tiruvannamalai ( Tamil : Tiruva???malai IPA : [ ?ti???a??a?mal?i ? ] , also Thiruvannamalai or Trinomali and Trinomalee during British times ) is a town in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu . The town is administered by a special grade municipality that covers an area of 16 @. @ 33 km2 ( 6 @. @ 31 sq mi ) and had a population of 144 @, @ 278 in 2011 . It is the administrative headquarters of Tiruvannamalai District . Roadways are the major mode of transport in Tiruvannamalai , while the town also has rail connectivity . Chennai International Airport is the nearest domestic and international airport to the town . Tiruvannamalai is named after the central deity of the Annamalaiyar Temple , Annamalaiyar . The Karthigai Deepam festival is celebrated during the day of the full moon between November and December , and a huge beacon is lit atop the Annamalai hill . The event is witnessed by three million pilgrims . On the day preceding each full moon , pilgrims circumnavigate the temple base and the Annamalai hills in a worship called Girivalam , a practice carried out by one million pilgrims yearly .

Located on the foothills of Annamalai hills , Tiruvannamalai has been ruled by the Pallavas , the Medieval Cholas , the Later Cholas , Hoysalas , the Vijayanagar Empire , the Carnatic kingdom , Tipu Sultan , and the British . It served as the capital city of the Hoysalas . The town is built around the Annamalaiyar Temple like other Nayak capitals . Tiruvannamalai is administered by a special @- @ grade a municipality constituted in 1886 . Tiruvannamalai has an average elevation of 200 metres ( 660 ft ) and experiences a hot and humid climate . Being a pilgrimage town , most of the people are employed in the tertiary sector . There are 25 elementary schools , nine high schools , 18 higher secondary schools , four arts & science colleges , one government medical college and four engineering colleges in the town .

= = Etymology and legend = =

In Hindu mythology , Parvati , wife of Shiva , once closed the eyes of her husband playfully in a flower garden at their abode atop Mount Kailash . Although only a moment for the gods , all light was taken from the universe , and the earth , in turn , was submerged in darkness for years . Parvati performed penance with other devotees of Shiva , and her husband appeared as a column of fire at the top of Annamalai hills , returning light to the world . He then merged with Parvati to form Ardhanarishvara , the half @- @ female , half @- @ male form of Shiva . The Annamalai , or red mountain , lies behind the Annamalaiyar temple , and is associated with the temple of its namesake . The hill is sacred and considered a lingam , or iconic representation of Shiva , in itself . Another legend is that once , while Vishnu and Brahma contested for superiority , Shiva appeared as a flame , and challenged them to find his source . Brahma took the form of a swan , and flew to the sky to see the top of the flame , while Vishnu became the boar Varaha , and sought its base . The scene is called lingothbava , and is represented in the western wall at the sanctum of most Shiva temples . Neither Brahma nor Vishnu could find the source , and while Vishnu conceded his defeat , Brahma lied and said he had found the pinnacle . In punishment , Shiva ordained that Brahma would never have temples on earth in his worship . In Tamil , the word Arunam means red or fire and Asalam means hill . Since Shiva manifested himself in the form of fire in this place , this name Arunachalam came to be associated with Annamalai hill and the town . The first mention of Annamalai is found in Tevaram , the seventh century Tamil Saiva canonical work by Appar and Tirugnanasambandar .

= = History = =

The history of Tiruvannamalai revolves around the Annamalaiyar Temple . The recorded history of the town dates back to the ninth century , as seen from a Chola inscriptions in the temple . Further inscriptions made before ninth century indicate the rule of Pallava kings , whose capital was Kanchipuram . The seventh century Nayanar saints Sambandar and Appar wrote of the temple in their poetic work , Tevaram . Sekkizhar , the author of the Periyapuram records both Appar and Sambandar worshiped Annamalaiyar in the temple . The Chola Kings ruled over the region for more

than four centuries , from 850 to 1280 , and were temple patrons . The inscriptions from the Chola king record various gifts like land , sheep , cow and oil to the temple commemorating various victories of the dynasty .

The Hoysala kings used Tiruvannamalai as their capital beginning in 1328 . There are 48 inscriptions from the Sangama Dynasty ( 1336 ? 1485 ) , two inscriptions from Saluva Dynasty , and 55 inscriptions from Tuluva Dynasty ( 1491 ? 1570 ) of the Vijayanagara Empire , reflecting gifts to the temple from their rulers . There are also inscriptions from the rule of Krishnadeva Raya ( 1509 ? 1529 ) , the most powerful Vijayanagara king , indicating further patronage . Most of the Vijayanagara inscriptions were written in Tamil , with some in Kannada and Sanskrit . The inscriptions in the temple from the Vijayanagara kings indicate emphasis on administrative matters and local concerns , which contrasts the inscriptions of the same rulers in other temples like Tirupathi . The majority of the gift related inscriptions are for land endowments , followed by goods , cash endowments , cows and oil for lighting lamps . The town of Tiruvannamalai was at a strategic crossroads during the Vijayanagara Empire , connecting sacred centers of pilgrimage and military routes . There are inscriptions that show the area as an urban center before the precolonial period , with the city developing around the temple , similar to the Nayak ruled cities like Madurai .

During the 17th century , Tiruvannamalai came under the dominion of the Nawab of the Carnatic . As the Mughal empire came to an end , the Nawab lost control of the town , with confusion and chaos ensuing after 1753 . Subsequently , there were periods of both Hindu and Muslim stewardship of the temple , with Muraru Raya , Krishna Raya , Mrithis Ali Khan , and Burkat Ullakhan besieging the temple in succession . As European incursions progressed , Tiruvannamalai was attacked by French Soupries , Sambrinet , and the English Captain Stephen Smith . While some were repelled , others were victorious . The French occupied the town in 1757 and it came under the control of the British in 1760 . In 1790 , Tiruvannamalai town was captured by Tippu Sultan , who ruled from 1750 ? 99 . During the first half of the 19th century , the town came under British rule .

#### = = Geography = =

Tiruvannamalai is situated 185 km ( 115 mi ) from the state capital Chennai and 210 km ( 130 mi ) from Bangalore . The height of the Annamalai hill is approximately 2 @, @ 669 ft ( 814 m ) . Tiruvannamalai is located at 12 ° N 79 @. @ 05 ° E ? / 12 ; 79 @. @ 05 . It has an average elevation of 200 metres ( 660 ft ) . The town is located to the east of Eastern Ghats . The topography of Tiruvannamalai is almost plain sloping from west to east . Tiruvannamalai experiences hot and dry weather throughout the year . The temperature ranges from a maximum of 40 ° C ( 104 ° F ) to a minimum of 20 ° C ( 68 ° F ) . Like the rest of the state , April to June are the hottest months and December to January are the coldest . Tiruvannamalai receives scanty rainfall with an average of 815 mm ( 32 @. @ 1 in ) annually , which is lesser than the state average of 1 @, @ 008 mm ( 39 @. @ 7 in ) . The southwest monsoon with an onset in June and lasting up to August brings scanty rainfall . Bulk of the rainfall is received during the northeast monsoon in the months of October , November and December . The average humidity of the town is 77 % and varies between 67 % to 86 % . During the summer months of April to June , the humidity ranges from 47 ? 63 % . The municipality covers an area of 16 @. @ 3 km<sup>2</sup> ( 1 @, @ 630 ha )

#### = = Demographics = =

According to the provisional population totals of the 2011 census , b Tiruvannamalai UA had a population of 144 @, @ 683 , with 72 @, @ 351 males and 72 @, @ 332 females . The sex ratio of the town was 1 @, @ 000 and the child sex ratio stood at 960 . Tiruvannamalai had an average literacy rate of 81 @. @ 64 % with male literacy being 85 @. @ 6 % , and female literacy being 77 @. @ 7 % . A total of 14 @, @ 530 of the population of the town was under 6 years of age .

According to 2011 census , Tiruvannamalai had a population of 145 @, @ 278 with a sex @-@ ratio of 1 @, @ 006 females for every 1 @, @ 000 males , much above the national average of 929 . A

total of 15 @, @ 524 were under the age of six , constituting 7 @, @ 930 males and 7 @, @ 594 females . Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes accounted for 12 @. @ 37 % and 1 @. @ 22 % of the population respectively . The average literacy of the city was 78 @. @ 38 % , compared to the national average of 72 @. @ 99 % . The city had a total of 33 @, @ 514 households . There were a total of 50 @, @ 722 workers , comprising 583 cultivators , 580 main agricultural labourers , 994 in house hold industries , 44 @, @ 535 other workers , 4 @, @ 030 marginal workers , 84 marginal cultivators , 105 marginal agricultural labourers , 421 marginal workers in household industries and 3 @, @ 420 other marginal workers . As per the religious census of 2011 , Tiruvannamalai had 82 @. @ 57 % Hindus , 14 @. @ 07 % Muslims , 2 @. @ 79 % Christians , 0 @. @ 01 % Sikhs , 0 @. @ 01 % Buddhists , 0 @. @ 4 % Jains , 0 @. @ 13 % following other religions and 0 @. @ 01 % following no religion or did not indicate any religious preference .

The maximum decadal growth of population in Tiruvannamalai was observed during 1971 ? 81 and had reduced growth rate from 1981 due to the increased amount of industrial activity that took place outside the town . The density of the town was 45 per hectare during 1971 and increased to 90 during 1999 . A total 446 @. @ 2 ha ( 1 @, @ 103 acres ) ( 32 @. @ 75 % ) of the land is used for residential , 48 @. @ 77 ha ( 120 @. @ 5 acres ) ( 3 @. @ 58 % ) for commercial , 22 @. @ 34 ha ( 55 @. @ 2 acres ) ( 1 @. @ 63 % ) for industrial , 39 @. @ 35 ha ( 97 @. @ 2 acres ) ( 2 @. @ 88 % ) for public & semi public , 30 @. @ 38 ha ( 75 @. @ 1 acres ) ( 2 @. @ 22 % ) for educational and 678 @. @ 77 ha ( 1 @, @ 677 @. @ 3 acres ) ( 56 @. @ 94 % ) for non @-@ urban purposes .

= = Economy = =

Tiruvannamali is a temple town and a major pilgrimage centre in Tamil Nadu . The town is the marketing and service town for the surrounding places . Being the administrative headquarters of the Tiruvannamalai district , Tiruvannamalai has a lot of tertiary sector activities . Trade and commerce and service activities are the major contributors to the economy of the town . In 1991 , 7 @. @ 93 % of the population was involved in primary sector , 21 @. @ 34 % in secondary sector and 70 @. @ 73 % in tertiary sector activities . The town had a female work participation of 11 % . Due to the urbanisation from 1971 , there has been dip in primary sector activities and a proportional increase in the tertiary sector activities . There is limited agricultural activity within the town limits . The secondary sector involves manufacturing and construction , whose growth has remained stable over the decades . There are a number of oil mills , rice mills and agro based industries within the Tiruvannamalai town limits . The tertiary sector activities of trade , commerce , transport , storage , communication and other services has been increasing due to the increasing number of tourists to the town . The patronage to Girivalam has increased informal economic activities around the town . The major commercial activities are concentrated around Car Street , Thiruvoodal Street , Kadambarayan Street , Asaliyamman Koil Street , Sivanpada Street and Polur Road .

All major nationalised banks such as State Bank of India , Indian Bank , Central Bank of India , Punjab National Bank , Indian Overseas Bank , Bank of India and private banks like ICICI Bank , Karur Vysya Bank have their branches in Tiruvannamalai . All these banks have their automated teller machines located in various parts of the town .

= = Culture = =

The Annamalaiyar Temple is the most prominent landmark of Tiruvannamalai . The temple complex covers an area of 10 ha ( 25 acres ) , and is one of the largest temples in India . It houses four gateway towers known as gopurams . The tallest is the eastern tower , with 11 stories and a height of 66 m ( 217 ft ) , making it one of the tallest temple towers in India . The temple has numerous shrines , with those of Annamalaiyar and Unnamulai Amman being the most prominent . The temple complex houses many halls ; the most notable is the thousand @-@ pillared hall built during the Vijayanagar period .

The Annamalaiyar temple is one of the Pancha Bhoota Stalas , or five Shiva temples , with each a manifestation of a natural element : land , water , air , sky or fire . In Annamalaiyar temple , Shiva is

said to have manifested himself as a massive column of fire , whose crown and feet could not be found by the Hindu gods , Brahma and Vishnu . Aathara Stala are Shiva temples which are considered to be personifications of the Tantric chakras of human anatomy . The Annamalaiyar temple is called the Manipooraga stalam , and is associated with the Manipooraga chakra . The temple is revered in Tevaram , the Tamil Saiva canon and classified as Paadal Petra Sthalam , one of the 276 temples that find mention in the Saiva canon .

The most important festival of the Annamalaiyar temple is celebrated during the Tamil month of Karthikai , between November and December , concluding with the celebration of Karthikai Deepam . A huge lamp is lit in a cauldron , containing three tons of ghee , at the top of the Annamalai hills during the Deepam . To mark the occasion , the festival deity of Annamalaiyar circumambulates the mountain . Inscriptions indicate that the festival was celebrated as early as the Chola period ( 850 ? 1280 ) and was expanded to ten days in the twentieth century .

Every full moon , tens of thousands of pilgrims worship Annamalaiyar by circumambulating the Annamalai hill barefoot . The circumambulation covers a distance of 14 kilometres ( 8 @. @ 7 mi ) , and is referred as Girivalam . According to Hindu legend , the walk removes sins , fulfils desires and helps achieve freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth . Offerings are made in a string of tanks , shrines , pillared meditation halls , springs and caves around the hill .

Tirumalai is an ancient Jain temple complex in the outskirts of Tiruvannamalai that houses three Jain caves , four Jain temples and a 16 feet ( 4 @. @ 9 m ) high sculpture of Neminatha dated from the 12th century and the tallest Jain image in Tamil Nadu .

The Ramana Ashram and ashram of Yogi Ramsuratkumar , located around the Annamalai hill are popular visitor attractions of Tiruvannamalai . The Sathanur Dam over the Thenpennair river located 20 km ( 12 mi ) southwest of the town is a prominent picnic spot . This 786 @. @ 37 m Dam is 44.81m high and can store 7 @, @ 321 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 cu ft or 207 @, @ 300 @, @ 000 cubic meters of water . A scenic park is also present adjacent to this dam . Ulagalantha Perumal Temple in Tirukoyilur and Thiruvaramangam , situated 20 km ( 12 mi ) south of Tiruvannamalai are prominent Vishnu temples that are located around Tiruvannamalai .

= = Transport = =

The Puducherry ? Krishnagiri national highway , NH 66 and the Villupuram ? Mangalore National highway NH 234 pass through Tiruvannamalai . The town has eight arterial roads that connects it to other towns . The Tiruvannamalai municipality maintains a total length of 75 @. @ 26 km ( 46 @. @ 76 mi ) . The town has 9 @. @ 068 km ( 5 @. @ 635 mi ) concrete roads , 50 @. @ 056 km ( 31 @. @ 103 mi ) BT roads , 7 @. @ 339 km ( 4 @. @ 560 mi ) of WBM roads and 8 @. @ 797 km ( 5 @. @ 466 mi ) earthen roads . A total of 452 roads is maintained by the State Highways Department .

Tiruvannamalai is served by the town bus service operated by the TNSTC , which provides connectivity within the town and the suburbs . There are private operated mini @-@ bus services that cater to the local transport needs of the town . The main bus stand covers an area of 2 acres ( 8 @, @ 100 m<sup>2</sup> ) and is located in the heart of the town . There are regular inter @-@ city bus services to Tiruvannamalai . The TNSTC operates daily services connecting various cities to Tiruvannamalai . The Corporation operates a computerised reservation centre in the bus stand of the town . The SETC operates long distance buses connecting the town to important cities like Chennai , Puducherry and Bengaluru . The major inter city bus routes from the town are to cities and towns like Chennai , Bengaluru , Villupuram , Puducherry , Tirukoilur , Avalurpet , Kanji , Chengam , Sathanur , Sankarapuram and Manalurpet .

Tiruvannamalai railway station is located in the rail head from Katpadi to Villupuram and falls under the Tiruchchirapalli division of the Southern Railway . The Madurai @-@ Tirupati bi @-@ weekly expresses connects Tiruvannamalai to the cities of Madurai and Tirupati in either directions . There are also passenger trains running either side from Katpadi to Villupuram .

The nearest airport is at Chennai , which is located 172 km ( 107 mi ) from the town .

= = Municipal administration and politics = =

The Tiruvannamalai municipality was established in 1896 during British times . It was promoted to a second @-@ grade municipal municipality in 1959 , first grade in 1974 , selection grade in 1998 and special grade in 2008 . The municipality has 39 wards and there is an elected councillor for each of those wards . The functions of the municipality are devolved into six departments : general administration / personnel , Engineering , Revenue , Public Health , city planning and Information Technology ( IT ) . All these departments are under the control of a Municipal Commissioner who is the executive head . The legislative powers are vested in a body of 39 members , one each from the 39 wards . The legislative body is headed by an elected Chairperson assisted by a Deputy Chairperson .

Tiruvannamalai comes under the Tiruvannamalai assembly constituency and it elects a member to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly once every five years . From the 1977 elections , the assembly seat was won by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam ( DMK ) five times during the 1977 , 1989 , 1996 , 2001 and 2006 elections , the Indian National Congress party three times during the 1980 , 1984 and 1991 elections . The current MLA of the constituency is E.V. Velu from DMK .

During the 1957 elections , Tiruvannamalai was a part of Tiruvannamalai parliamentary constituency and was held by an independent . From the 1962 to 2004 elections , the town was part of Tirupattur constituency . The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam ( DMK ) won the seat nine times during the 1962 , 1967 , 1971 , 1977 , 1980 , 1996 , 1998 , 1999 and 2004 elections and the Indian National Congress won it three times during the 1984 , 1989 and 1991 elections and AIADMK once during the 2014 elections . From the 2009 elections , Tiruvannamalai is a part of the Tiruvannamalai ( Lok Sabha constituency ) ? it has the following six assembly constituencies ? Jolarpet , Tirupattur , Chengam ( SC ) , Tiruvannamalai , Kilpennathur and Kalasapakkam . The current Member of Parliament from the constituency is R. Vanaroja from the AIADMK party .

Law and order in the town is maintained by the Tiruvannamalai sub division of the Tamil Nadu Police headed by a Deputy Superintendent ( DSP ) . There are three police stations in the town , one of them being an all @-@ women police station . There are special units like prohibition enforcement , district crime , social justice and human rights , district crime records and special branch that operate at the district level police division headed by a Superintendent of Police ( SP ) .

= = Education and utility services = =

There are 25 elementary schools , nine high schools and 18 higher secondary schools in Tiruvannamalai . There are four arts & science colleges and four engineering colleges in the town . Electricity supply to Tiruvannamalai is regulated and distributed by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board ( TNEB ) . The town along with its suburbs forms the Tiruvannamalai Electricity Distribution Circle . Water supply is provided by the municipality of Tiruvannamalai from the Thenpennai river and Samuthiram through feeders located in various parts of the town . In the period 2000 ? 2001 , a total of 12 @.@ 5 million litres of water was supplied every day for households in the town . About 52 metric tonnes of solid waste are collected from Tiruvannamalai every day by door @-@ to @-@ door collection and subsequently the source segregation and dumping is carried out by the sanitary department of the municipality . The coverage of solid waste management had an efficiency of 75 % in 2001 . There is no underground drainage system in the town and the sewerage system for disposal of sullage is through septic tanks , open drains and public conveniences . The municipality maintains a total of 192 @.@ 24 km ( 119 @.@ 45 mi ) of storm water drains in Tiruvannamalai . There is one government hospital , one southern railway hospital , one municipal maternity hospital , two Siddha hospitals , two health centres and 16 private hospitals and clinics that take care of the health care needs of the citizens . There are a total of 3 @, @ 570 street lamps in Tiruvannamalai : 496 sodium lamps , 61 mercury vapour lamps , 3 @, @ 010 tube lights and three high mast beam lamp . The municipality operates three markets , namely the Jothi flower market , vegetable market and uzhavar santhai that cater to the needs of the town and the rural areas around it .