



Marudhamalai Temple: A Study on Cultural, Spiritual and Historical Perspectives

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Abstract

Subramaniya Swami Temple is considered the seventh house of Lord Murugan. It is known as Marudhamalai, a popular pilgrimage site in the Western Ghats in Coimbatore. The origin of the temple is rooted in legendary antiquity and dates back to the age of Surapadma, the demon destroyed by Lord Subramanya, as referred to in the "SKANDA PURANAM". The inscriptions found in Thirumuruganatha Swami Temple, Thirumuruganpoondi, place the origin of the temple in the 12th century A.D., according to Perur Puranam. In this report, the Marudhamalai Temple is a sacred site in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, steeped in cultural significance and spiritual importance. This temple showcases stunning Dravidian architecture, with intricate carvings and sculptures depicting mythological stories. Overall, Marudhamalai Temple is a symbol of Tamil culture, history, and spirituality, attracting devotees and tourists alike with its divine ambiance, architectural beauty, and peaceful atmosphere

Keywords: location and geography, pilgrimage and workshop, tourist attractions, festivals, accessibility, visitors, considerations, recent developments, conclusion

Introduction

Marudhamalai also known as Marudhamalai Murugan temple is revered Hindu temple. The name "Marudhamalai" is derived from the Marudha (Arjuna) trees that are abundant in the area known for their medicinal properties. The temple's history is intertwined with the sangam period (3rd century BCE-3rd century CE) with mentions in ancient Tamil texts like the "Purananuru". Legends say Lord Murugan after his victory over Surapadman rested and mediated in these hills. It is a significant tourism destination in Coimbatore.

Marudhamalai temple celebrates various festival throughout the year attracting thousands of devotees.

This temple ancient history and nature beauty and peaceful atmosphere that has drawn visitors for centuries from the temple. Discover marudhamalai a hidden gem in Tamilnadu there are many fables and myths associated with this Temple. The region is home to diverse flora and fauna making it a popular spot for nature lovers. Marudhamalai offers a harmonious blend of spiritual ambiance and breadth taking landscapes making it a must visit destination for the devotees, tourist and nature enthusiastic alike. The temple was later built to commemorate this event. This article briefly describes the architecture structure, Morden significant, Festival, Tourism, Features, and its historical journey.



Historical and Mythological Origins

Marudhamalai derives its name from the “Marutha Maram” {Terminalia arjuna tree} a medicinal tree that is abundant in the region. According to legend, the hill and its surroundings were sanctified by sages who meditated here. The temple is believed to be over 1200 years old and has deep roots in Tamil Sangam literature.

The hill is revered as one of the sacred abodes of Lord Murugan, the Tamil god of war and wisdom. Mythology states that Lord Murugan resides here in the form of “Dhandayuthapani” offering blessings to his devotees. It is said that the god vanquished demons like Surapadma, Tarakasura, and others to protect the land from evil forces.

Architectural Features

The temple's architecture reflects Dravidian styles, featuring intricately carved Gopurams and Sanctums. The presiding deity, Lord Murugan, is enshrined in a majestic form, holding a staff in one hand and blessings to devotees with the other. Sculptures of peacocks, serpents, and other elements associated with Murugan adorn the temple premises. The steps leading to the temple, numbering around 900 and the picturesque trekking route made the journey to the top both challenging and rewarding.

Spiritual Importance

Marudhamalai Temple is a powerful site for devotees seeking blessings, courage, and wisdom. It is believed that praying here can alleviate health issues, especially mental and physical ailments due to the medicinal properties of the surrounding Marudha trees. Marudhamalai is considered a “Pachai Malai” (Green Hill) and is revered for its divine vibrations. It is particularly popular during the “Thai Poosam” and “Panguni Uthiram” festivals, which are celebrated with great fervor. Devotees undertake pilgrimages, perform rituals, and offer prayers for prosperity, health, and protection.

The hill is also known for its medicinal herbs, believed to have curative properties, which adds a layer of spiritual healing to the temple's significance.

Literary Reference

Marudhamalai is mentioned in Perur Puranam, Purananuru, and Tiruppugazh, highlighting its significance in Tamil Literature.

1. Sangam Literature

The Purananuru, a renowned Sangam anthology, includes references to hilly terrains and deities associated with them, especially Murugan, the protector of the land and symbol of youthful valor. While Marudhamalai may not be named explicitly, the descriptions of “Kurinji landscapes” (mountainous regions) where Murugan resides strongly align with locations like Marudhamalai.

2. Skanda Puranam

The Skanda Puranam, a major Sanskrit text later translated and interpreted in Tamil, refers to Murugan's victories over demons like Surapadman, followed by periods of penance and rest in sacred hill regions, one of which is believed to be Marudhamalai. This mythology strengthens the temple's identity as one of Murugan's sacred battle stations (“Padai Veedu”).

3. Perur Puranam

The Perur Puranam, a local puranic text connected with the nearby Thirumuruganpoondi temple, mentions Marudhamalai in the context of regional religious traditions. It also provides historical clues dating the temple's origin to the 12th century A.D., supported by stone inscriptions and copper plate records.

4. Thiruppugazh by Arunagirinathar

The 15th-century Tamil saint Arunagirinathar, a staunch devotee of Murugan, composed hymns in Thiruppugazh that are believed to mention or imply Marudhamalai among other sacred hills. His poetic style celebrated Murugan's abodes in vivid metaphors and musical rhythm, enhancing the devotional legacy of such temples.

Legend of Kongana Siddhar

One of the lesser-known but significant legends associated with the Marudhamalai Temple is that of



Konganar Siddhar, also referred to as Konghunavar a revered Siddhar (spiritual sage) who is said to have attained enlightenment in the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu. Konganar Siddhar was one of the 18 Siddhars of the Tamil Siddha tradition, known for his mastery over alchemy, medicine, and yogic practices. He hailed from the Kongu Nadu region (which includes present-day Coimbatore), giving him the name Konganar or Kongha

Navar. He is often associated with Marudhamalai Hill as a place where he meditated and received divine insights.

Konganar chose the hills of Marudhamalai for his spiritual practices due to the abundance of medicinal herbs and the powerful spiritual vibrations of the place. It is believed that he worshipped Lord Murugan in his form as Dhandayuthapani, and received divine visions and guidance during his meditation.

Some stories also describe him meeting Pambatti Siddhar on the hill, indicating a spiritual link between multiple Siddhars who considered Marudhamalai sacred. Konganar Siddhar is known to have written texts on Siddha medicine, alchemy, and spiritual transformation. He is credited with the creation of various herbal remedies, many of which used ingredients found in the Western Ghats, including the Marudhamalai region.

Though not as popularly worshipped as Pambatti Siddhar at the site, Konganar's spiritual presence is honored in oral traditions and Siddhar worship. A few shrines and footprints attributed to Siddhars like Konganar and Pambatti Siddhar can be found in the caves and pathways of the hill.

Legends of Pambatti Siddhar

One of the notable stories associated with Marudhamalai is about Pambatti Siddhar, a revered Tamil saint and devotee of Lord Murugan. It is said that the Siddhar meditated in the caves on this hill and achieved enlightenment. His association with the hill enhances its sanctity, and a small shrine dedicated to him can be found nearby.

Pambatti Siddhar was one of the 18 Siddhars, a group of Tamil sages, and is believed to have lived

during the 12th century. He is regarded as having performed penance on the Marudhamalai hill. According to legend, Murugan appeared to him in the form of a snake, and later again with his consorts Valli and Deivanai (Devasena), blessing the Siddhar and offering him the sacred Marutha Tirtham. A connecting tunnel route between Murugan's sanctum sanctorum and Siddhar's cave is believed to have existed, which the Siddhar is said to have used to worship the deity.

Cultural Heritage

The temple reflects Tamil culture and tradition, with ancient Tamil scriptures and literary works referencing this sacred hill and its deity, Lord Murugan. The temple's architecture, festivals, and rituals showcase the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Marudhamalai Temple is not just a religious site but also a cultural cornerstone that reflects the essence of Tamil identity, philosophy, and way of life. The temple upholds centuries-old traditions of Murugan worship, deeply woven into the social and cultural fabric of Tamil Nadu.

Devotional music, particularly the singing of Thevaram, Thiruppugazh, and folk hymns during festivals, sustains a living musical tradition. The temple premises often resonate with traditional musical instruments like the nadaswaram and thavil, which are integral to Tamil temple culture.

The rituals and daily pujas are performed according to Agamic principles, preserving ancient customs passed down through temple priests for generations. Marudhamalai is also a center for pilgrimage storytelling, where oral narratives and village lore about Murugan's miracles and the powers of the hill are shared by devotees, elders, and spiritual guides.

Additionally, the temple's role in hosting cultural fairs, classical dance performances (like Bharatanatyam), and bhajan groups during major festivals enhances its position as a cultural hub. It represents a sacred continuum where Tamil language, script, costume (like veshti and madisar), cuisine (prasadam), and religious art come alive in their purest forms.



The temple has become a vital space for preserving intergenerational transmission of heritage, as families bring children here to learn about their roots, gods, and rituals.

Festival and Celebration

Marudhamalai Temple celebrates various festivals throughout the year, attracting thousands of devotees. Some of the major festivals include: Thaipoosam, Skanda Sashti, Karthigai Deepam, Panguni Uthiram, Adi Krithigai, Vaikasi Visakam, Chithirai Pournami, and Aippasi Sashti.

Thaipusam (January -February)

A major festival celebrated with great devotion is when devotees carry Kavadi as an offering to Lord Murugan. The temple is beautifully decorated with thousands of oil lamps, creating a mesmerizing sight.

Skanda Sashti (October - November)

A six-day festival commemorates Lord Murugan's victory over the demon Surapadman, concluding with a grand procession and a re-enactment of the battle.

Karthigai Deepam (November - December)

A festival of spiritual reflection and inner peace symbolizing the victory of light over darkness.

Panguni Uthiram (March – April)

The festival celebrates the celestial wedding of Lord Murugan and Goddess Deivanai, marked by special poojas and traditional rituals.

Aadi Krithigai (July – August)

This special festival is dedicated to Lord Murugan, during which devotees undertake a spiritual walk up the Marudhamalai hill as a symbol of faith and devotion.

Vaikasi Visakam (May – June)

The festival celebrates Lord Murugan's birthday, marked by the performance of 108 Palkudam Abhishekams to Subramanya Swamy.

Natural Beauty and Tourism

However, the surroundings of Marudhamalai, particularly the hills in this region, are abundant with

medicinal plants and rich vegetation. The geographical features of the area, along with its conducive environment for trekking, make it one of the most preferred destinations for nature lovers and environmental enthusiasts.

Tourist Places Near Temple

1. Vellingiri Hills
2. Marudhamalai Eco park
3. Marudhamalai Herbal Garden
4. Isha Yoga Center and Adiyogi Statue
5. Perur Pateeswarar Temple
6. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) Botanical Gardens
7. G.D. Naidu Museum and Industrial Exhibition
8. Eachanari Vinayagar Temple
9. Siruvani Waterfalls and Dam
10. Kovai Kutralam Falls

Accessibility and Facilities

Located approximately 15 kilometers from Coimbatore city, the temple is easily accessible by road. Devotees can either climb the steps to the temple or take a bus service provided by the temple authorities. The facilities for visitors include clean water, resting areas, and a well-maintained path for trekking.

Thousands witness Consecration of Coimbatore Marudhamalai Temple after Twelve years

Thousands of devotees congregated at the Marudhamalai Temple in Coimbatore on Friday, April 4, 2025, for the consecration ceremony, which was performed with traditional rituals after a gap of 12 years. The previous consecration took place on March 18, 2013.

Pujas for the Kalasams of the main deity, Vinayagar, Patteswarar, and Karivaradharaja Perumal were performed by Sivachariyars in the presence of Perur Adheenam,

Marudhachalam Adigalar, Siravai Adheenam Kumaragurubara Swamigal, temple trustees, and officials from the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department at 8:45 a.m., amidst devotees chanting in praise of Lord Murugan.



After the consecration, Theertham (holy water) was sprinkled on devotees through water pipes and even sprayed using a drone. Devotees from Mettupalayam, Annur, Sulur, and Pollachi arrived at the foothills of the temple as early as 5 a.m. to witness the sacred event. To prevent overcrowding on the hill, devotees were allowed in batches from the steps leading to the temple. Hundreds of police personnel were deployed to manage and regulate the crowd.

Recent Developments in Marudhamalai

Marudhamalai a sacred hill in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu has seen some exciting developments recently.

Plastic Freezone Initiativa

Environmentalists are pushing for Marudhamalai Temple to be declared a plastic-free zone, due to concerns over plastic waste harming elephants and other wildlife in the area.

Temple authorities are taking proactive steps such as advising devotees against plastic use, installing signage, and deploying staff to regularly maintain the temple surroundings.

Infrastructure Upgrades

Eleven infrastructure projects are underway at Marudhamalai Temple, including the installation of lifts, an entrance arch, and a rest house for visitors. About 20% of the lift work has been completed.

Kumbabhishekam works for Marudhamalai Temple are also in progress as of March 2025, including the installation of solar-reflecting tiles and the completion of the Yoga Salai Mandapam.

Lift Installations

The installation of lifts at the Marudhamalai Temple is expected to be completed and ready for use by July 2025. The lift will facilitate easier access for devotees, especially the elderly and those with mobility issues.

Elephant Conservation efforts

Forest Department personnel are making efforts to reunite a wild elephant calf with its mother near the

Marudhamalai Hills. There is growing concern about waste management along the foothills of Marudhamalai, due to its impact on elephants moving between valleys.

Environmental activists are urging authorities to declare the area a non-dumping zone to protect local wildlife and preserve the ecological balance.

Environmental management Plane

Researchers have prepared an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to conserve the Marudhamalai ecosystem, which includes measures to reduce pollution, protect native flora and fauna, and promote sustainable tourism.

Tourism and visitor studies Visitor Impact

While there are no specific studies on visitor impact at Marudhamalai, research suggests that tourism can have both positive and negative effects on the environment and local communities. Implementing sustainable tourism practices can help mitigate these impacts.

Top Conference Halls in Marudhamalai Dr. R.C. Ananthi Mahaal

It is an excellent venue for events, with restrooms and air-conditioned rooms available. The pricing is reasonable, and cash payments are accepted.

Crystal Lake Service Apartments

A popular choice with a 4.6 rating from 29,992 reviews. Amenities include free cancellation, Wi-Fi, and a baggage room.

S4 Gardens

A resort with banquet halls, rated 4.2 from 323 reviews.

MRM Residency

Suitable for naming ceremonies and corporate events, this venue is rated 4.1 from 190 reviews. The conference halls offer a range of amenities and services for various occasions.

Tamil Nadu to install the world's tallest Lord Murugan statue at Marudhamalai.



The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Minister, P.K. Sekarbabu, announced plans to install a statue of Lord Murugan at Marudhamalai in Coimbatore. The statue will stand at a height of 184 feet, making it the world's tallest Murugan statue. The total cost of the project is estimated at ₹146.83 crore, with the Marudhamalai statue alone accounting for ₹110 crore.

The statue will be part of a hexagon-shaped complex that includes a museum, parking facilities, and other amenities. This project is one of three Murugan statues being installed across Tamil Nadu as part of a larger cultural initiative.

11 New Infrastructure Projects Underway at Marudhamalai Temple

As many as 11 infrastructure projects, estimated at a total cost of ₹36.70 crore, are currently underway at the Marudhamalai Subramaniaswamy Temple. Among these, the construction of a much-anticipated lift system is progressing steadily, with 20% of the work completed.

This project involves the installation of four lifts:

- Two lifts will connect the ground-level parking area to the 17.15-meter level.
- The other two lifts will operate between the 17.15-meter and 23.10-meter levels, providing seamless access from the hill car parking area to the temple floor.

Newspaper's

- English Newspapers: *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*
- Tamil Newspapers: *Dinamalar*, *Malai Murasu*, *Dhin*

Conclusion

Marudhamalai Subramaniya Swamy Temple stands as a timeless symbol of Tamil heritage, spirituality, and architectural brilliance. Rooted deeply in mythology, history, and nature, the temple continues to inspire awe and devotion among pilgrims and visitors alike. Its scenic location, sacred legends, and vibrant cultural festivities enrich the spiritual experience for all who come here. Recent

developments including infrastructure upgrades and environmental initiatives reflect a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity. As Marudhamalai moves toward becoming a global spiritual landmark, with plans like the world's tallest Murugan statue, it remains a beacon of divine grace, cultural pride, and natural harmony.

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