

## SIVAGIRI MUTT: A HISTORICAL ENQUIRY

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**Abstract:** *Sivagiri is one of the most part of the Indian sub- continent that plays a dominant role in socio-religious history of the modern world. It is citadel of spirituality of which is located at Varkala near Chiranyinkil taluk in the district of Thiruvananthapuram. Sree Narayana Guru selected this isolated hilly area for his meditation and centre of his activities and established an Ashram there. Soon it rose in to prominence as a spiritual centre and become the venue of pilgrimage. The sivagiri became a centre of attraction with the arrival of Narayana Guru. After establishing his ashram at hill top he almost stayed permanently there. He named the place as “Sivagiri Kunnu” the Hindu God Siva is believed to be in ‘Kailas’, the topmost spot of the universe. Siva being the favorite God of Guru, he naturally named hill in the name of Siva. Thus this place is known as Sivagiri.*

**Key Words:** *sivagiri, Sree NaraYana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, Spiritual centre, Siva, Saratha, Parnasala, Sivagiri Mutt, Mahasamadhi, Brahma Vvidyalaya*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

After leaving Aruvippuram Sree Narayana Guru did not stay at a palace long. Like **Lord Buddha** and **Sankara**, Guru had unquenchable ‘wanderlust’. He never remained in one place for long. He travelled incessantly. In the course of Guru’s extensive travels, he was searching for suitable area to establish an *Ashramam*, of the many places pronounced for the natural beauty, which the Swami had visited, the one that attracted him was a neglected hill-top later named as ‘*Sivagiri*’ at Varkala. It enchanted him. His visit to Varkala becomes more frequent around 1903. In the beginning, he sat near a **Jack tree**. In due course Guru made temporary *Parnasala* there with palm leaves and stayed there.

### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To evaluate History of Sivagiri Mutt
- To analyse Educational Contributions of Sivagiri Mutt
- To sketch spiritual services of Sivagiri Mutt
- To analyse cultural services of Sivagiri Mutt

### 3. Establishment of Ashram and Sivagiri

Sree Narayana Guru reached *Sivagiri* in the month of January 1903. Kumaran Asan makes a reference to the arrival of Guru at Sivagiri in the first volume of *Vivekodayam*. Guru’s presence at Varkala attracted people from far and wide. They came to see him just at Aruvippuram years back. He used to talk these people about the peculiarities of the place and the special features of Varkala Tunnel, Varkala spring, green plantation and trees, land, lakes and proximity to sea and of course about the importance of the **Janardhana Swami temple**. He like the place and expressed his desire to have an ashram there. Late Guru become a permanent settle there. Of course, he used to travel to other place as well but continued to stay at Varkala.

The Sivagiri became a centre of attraction with the arrival of Narayana Guru. After establishing his ashram at hill top he almost stayed permanently there. He named the place as “**SivagiriKunnu**” the Hindu God Siva is believed to be in ‘Kailas’, the topmost spot of the universe. Siva being the favorite God of Guru, he naturally named hill in the name of Siva. Thus this place is known as Sivagiri.

### 3. Sivagiri: A Spiritual Centre

The purpose of the all great men is to make the world a happy place to live, by establishing universal fraternity. Guru’s life was dedicated to this purpose. It was a great yoga. His life was full of activities to achieve this goal. The main centres of such activities of Guru were **Aruvippuram**, **Sivagiri** and **Always**. He started from Aruvippuram . Guru wanted *Sivagiri* to be a Spiritual centre. Ultimately Sivagiri turned to be the centre of everything

connected with Guru, his teaching, his message etc. In 1087 (M.E.) (1912). Sivagiri was duly developed to be religious centre contemplated by Guru. The consecration of Siva and Devi were the main functions to convert Sivagiri as religious centre.

#### 4. The Sivagiri Installation

It is record by historians and biographer's of Guru that such a splendid function as Sivagiri Installation of *Siva* and *Sarada* were done before in the long history of SNDP Yogam. A description of the function is given in 1087 Edavam Edictorial Vivekodayam as "The important function of installation of Sarada Devi was done on 19<sup>th</sup> Medam 1087(M.E.)(19<sup>th</sup> MAY 1912) on 18<sup>th</sup> Tuesday night about 3 o' clock Guru and some thantries(pujaris) and Sanyasins came after bath and started the ceremony. Siva prathishta was done at 4 O' clock and Saradapratishtha at 5 O'clock.

#### 5. Sarada Mutt

*Sarada (Saraswathy)* is the Goddess of *Wisdom, Janna* or *Vidya*. The place where *Sarada Devi* installed is called '**Saradamadam**'. *Sarada Mutt* is quite different from other conventional temples established by Guru. It is heptagonal building constructed with smooth tiles and windows with colorful glasses. Indistinct with other temples, it has windows. There are two doors in front and back side of the mutt. The front door, which opens towards the idol, has blue glass panes and the back door was made of plank.

It is cute pagoda like *Sreekovil* inside a circular enclosure with a half wall and yard spread with snow-white sand. The beaming idol of the Devi idol, idol of the Goddess being sculptured as in standing pose, with foot fixed in a beautiful lotus. On the wall behind the idol of Goddess *Sarada* there depicted the symbol 'Om'.

#### 6. Parnasala

On the right side of the sarada mutt there is a *Parnasala* roofed with *coconut* leaves. The room inside the *Parnasala* contains an idol and a picture of Sree Narayana Guru. There are many pictures of guru and other historic personalities, on the walls of the circumambulating corridor of the *Parnasala*. It includes the pictures from Jesus Christ to Sai Baba and from Gandhiji to

Tagore. It was treated as the resting place of Sree Narayana Guru. The prominent personalities like, C. Rajagopalachari, Watts, and May others had met with Guru there.

Very near to that *Parnasala*, there is mutt of Guru where Gandhiji, Tagore, C.F. Androse and others held discussion with Guru. The articles used by Guru are kept there even today. This is the venerated abode of Guru. Next to the Validika mutt there we can see the Samadhi Mandapam of this principal disciple Swami Bodhananda.

#### 7. Mahasamadhi Mandapa

The most attractive and spiritual part of the structural constructions at Sivagiri was the marvelous concrete designed structural building, known as 'Maha Samadhi Mandapa' erected in the top most of *Sivagiri* hill. It is the pinnacle of peace and brotherhood, where the soul of Guru rest in place.

#### 8. Brahma Vidyalaya

The dream of Guru to start a centre for imparting philosophical, spiritual and theological education relating to all sects was materialized in the form of Brahma Vidyalaya. It is the centre of higher learning in spirituality. It attempts to inculcate the spiritual qualities of teacher especially good behavior, fair customs and manners, mercy and tender heart, devotion and piety and scholasticism among the students. The students who joined in Brahma Vidyalaya are known as Bramacharis. The Brahmacharis underwent process of rigorous training. To them education is not a mere physical exercise but spiritual exercise. They were strictly guided by the rules and regulations put forward by the Guru. The Guru's exalted ideal was soon to materialize in one of the great confluences in the history of spiritual movements the *Sivagiri pilgrimage*.

#### 9. CONCLUSION:

As per the *Puranas* and *Ithihasa* the term '*sivagiri*' is used to denote 'Kalidasa', the abode of Lord *Siva*, the destroyer. There are other places in India bearing the same name, in *Ramanathapuraam* district Tamil Nadu located very near to Iduki district of Kerala, there is a place known as '*Sivagiri Mountain*' of *Sahya Mountain Range*. That is why this particular place assumed the name Sivagiri. There are references in north India and Maharashtra about the name '*Sivagiri*'. *Sivagiri* is one of most holy part of the Kerala.

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