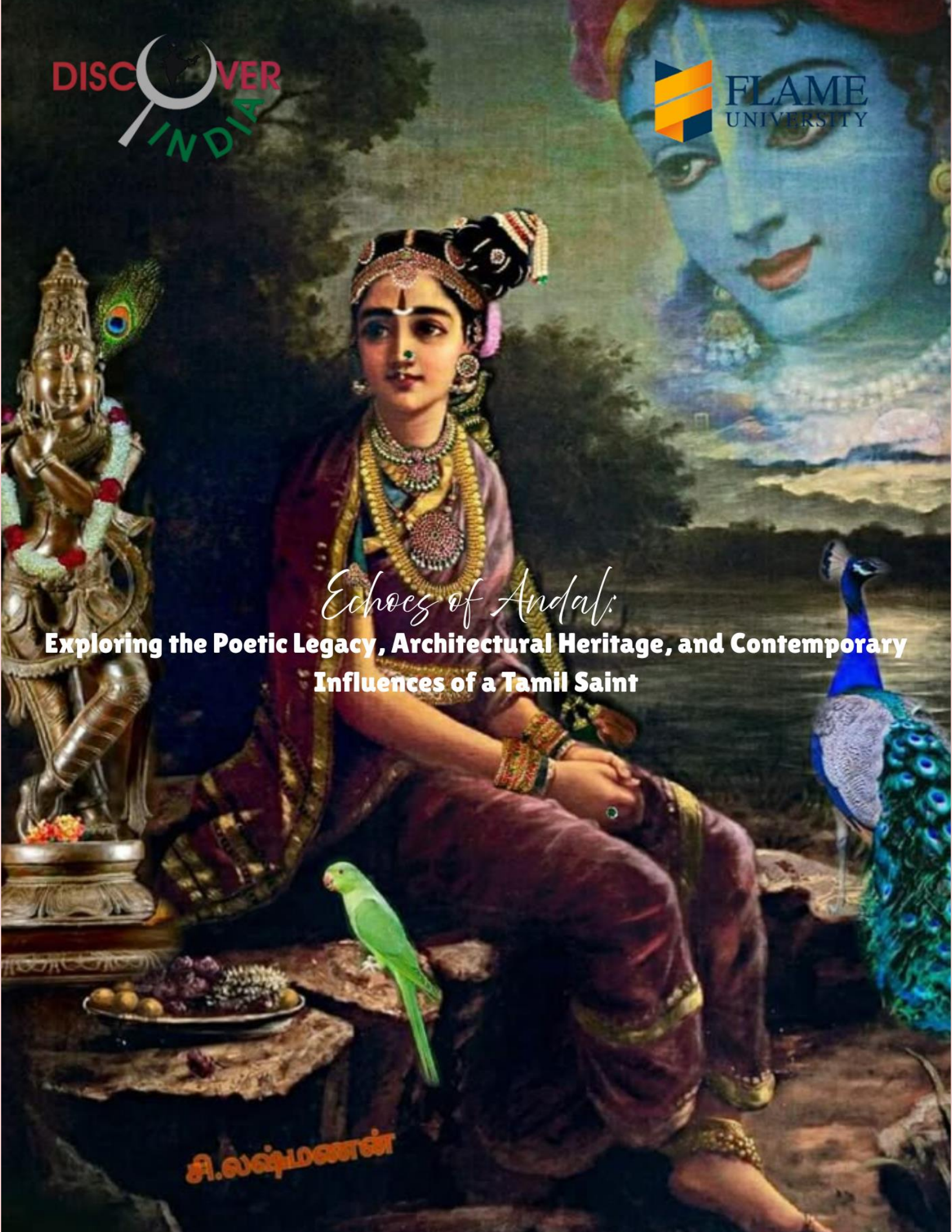
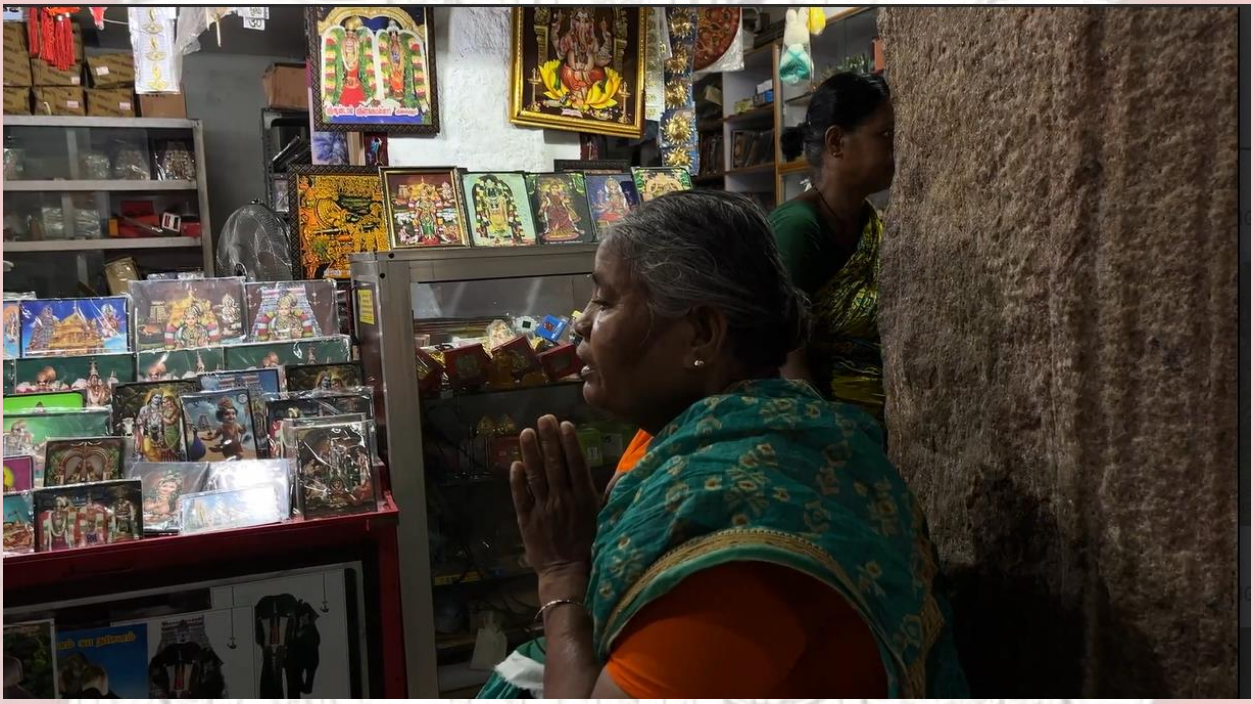

DISCOVER INDIA
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Echoes of Andal:
Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint

Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint



DISCOVER INDIA PROGRAM
2024-2025

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this DIP report titled "Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint" submitted by the undersigned Research Team was carried out under my mentorship. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint explores the legacy of Andal, the only female Alvar in the Tamil Bhakti tradition and a poet-saint from the ninth century. The study explores Andal's religious poetry, including Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumoli, which express themes of feminine spirituality, heavenly love, and longing. Andal challenges conventional gender standards and redefines the female voice in poetry through her works, which are distinguished by their powerful emotional expression and striking imagery. Her poetry bridges individual devotion with group worship, making a significant contribution to feminist discourse and Tamil temple culture.

The Srivilliputhur Andal Temple is a testament to her lasting impact on architecture. Andal's spiritual heritage and cultural symbolism are reflected in the temple's Dravidian architecture, which includes soaring gopurams and elaborate iconography. It serves as the center of Tamil Vaishnavite customs, with yearly festivals and ceremonies honoring her songs. The temple's architecture preserves Andal's contributions to Tamil religious identity by merging the material and spiritual worlds.

Andal's influence on feminist theology, contemporary art forms such as Bharatanatyam, and academic interpretations from various fields, including gender studies and eco-criticism, are examined for their contemporary relevance. Her poetry resonates with contemporary movements for women's empowerment and environmental consciousness, and the internet has expanded her audience globally. The research highlights Andal's significance as a transformational individual whose voice endures, offering insights into social justice, spirituality, and cultural resilience.

This study demonstrates how Andal's legacy continues to stimulate conversations about spiritual authenticity, gender equality, and artistic expression in modern culture.

Key Words: *Andal, Bhakti Movement, Tamil Poetry, Feminine Spirituality, Srivilliputhur Temple, Dravidian Architecture, Feminist Theology, Devotional Literature*

Title: Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint.

Chapter 1

1.1 Historical Background and Origins of Andal's Devotional Poetry

Andal's poetic influence encompasses a range of themes, including love, lust, yearning, devotion, anguish, and rage — all directed towards the Lord. She has made significant contributions to the identity of Tamil women over the decades. Her life as a renowned poet-saint began in the 9th century when she was one of the twelve Alvars, the only female devotees of the Hindu god Vishnu, revered as **Godadevi**. This feature makes her arguably the most celebrated female poet of the Alvar legacy and tradition in Tamil Bhakti. Ironically, despite drawing vivid and raw imagery of desire and romantic longing for the Lord, she was considered the most exceptional and ideal woman and daughter, even in her time when Tamil conventions were set in stone.



Figure 1: 12 Alwar Saints of Tamil Nadu

Source: (Iskcon, 2023)

1.1.1 Sangam period

Prior to this period, most Tamil literature primarily focused on works of love and war, with a limited emphasis on religion and devotion. This secular period in Tamil poetry is known as the Sangam period. Despite the secular nature of Tamil literature at this time, the Sangam period profoundly influenced the future of Tamil devotional poetry in terms of aesthetics and linguistics (Prakash, 2006, pp. 122-123).

1.1.2 Bhakti period

The period after the Sangam period came to be known as the Bhakti movement. The rise of this movement was marked by the poetry of the Nayanmars, Shaiva saints, and the Alvars, Vaishnava saints. It involved Tamil dialects and imagery to create works of intense and passionate devotion towards Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.

Two of Andal's most significant and memorable contributions to this movement were Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumoli. In Tiruppavai, Andal portrayed the role of a gopi, a devotee of Lord Krishna, while vowing to unite with the divine. She drew on the theme of the erotic-spiritual relationship between a gopi and the Lord. Her approach was seen as innovative and bold due to the evocative and colloquial voice in the poem.

Nachiyar Tirumoli is a collection of 143 of Andal's most personal verses. It differs from Tiruppavai in that it portrays a more individualistic voice than the former's communal and ritualistic tone. Here, too, she describes herself as a young bride yearning for Lord Krishna's grace. She expresses various emotions in vivid language, including frustration, rage, desire, and longing. She uses humanistic love to link people to devotional desire and romantic yearning (Chabria & Shankar, 2016). The vivid imagery in her work sets Andal apart from other poets of her time. She utilised everyday aspects of Tamil village life to convey her religious devotion.

1.1.3 Influence and Legacy

The development of temple culture paralleled the rise of the Bhakti movement. Andal's poetic influence was evident in temple traditions, festivals, and the contemporary Tamil temple-centered culture and religion. Tamil is now considered the sacred language in Indian religion and spirituality, a legacy significantly attributed to the influence of Andal. The combined influence of Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumoli meant that the division between personal devotion and social worship was bridged. From this perspective, another consideration is the feminist movement, as Andal represented the subversion of traditional paradigms, left unmediated by the limiting social restrictions on women's expectations (Gopalakrishnan, 1996). She redefined the female voice of devotion and desire for the Lord. The world continues to celebrate and redefine the concept of spirituality and religion, especially in Tamil literature.

1.1.4 Symbolism and Themes

Andal's poetry is rich in symbolic imagery and layered themes central to devotion, love, femininity, and mysticism. Andal's poetry exemplifies the bhakti movement, which encouraged personal and heartfelt devotion to the divine, surpassing mere ritualism (Ramanujan, 1973). Her poetry reflects an intense longing for union with Vishnu, portraying him as her beloved and divine Lord (Clooney, 2004). Unlike conventional forms of devotion, Andal's poems reflect a profoundly personal yearning, positioning her as an intimate partner of the divine (Dehejia, 1990). This emphasis on the soul's journey toward union with God is a fundamental theme of bhakti poetry (Dehejia, 1990). Andal equates romantic feelings of love with the sense of divine love. Her longing reflects the soul's intense drive to connect with the divine, transcending worldly relationships (Ramanujan, 1973). This human and divine duality characterises Andal's poetry as mystical and transcendent, resonating with her singular focus on love for Vishnu as personal and universal (Shulman, 1980).



Figure 2: Andal's Depiction with Symbols of Lotus and Parrot

Source: (Behance, 2025)

She uses the lotus flower, symbolising purity and divine beauty, and the monsoon season, symbolising renewal, to reflect Andal's inner spiritual state (Venkataraman, 1998). Andal merges the natural world with spiritual longing through these symbols, showcasing her deep connection to nature and its role in her spiritual journey (Shulman, 1980).

Andal's poetry presents a strong sense of femininity and individuality, which is rare for her time. She openly expresses her emotions, desires, and dedication, often challenging traditional gender roles (Clooney, 2004).

1.1.5 Gender and Voice

Andal's identity as a woman influences the language, imagery, and approach of her poetry, where she employs feminine symbols and experiences to express her love and devotion (Dehejia, 1990). She speaks as a devotee of the Lord, challenging the norms of expressing one's love for the Lord. She blurs the boundary between being a devotee and the divine, acting out a dual role as both a humble servant and a bride of the Lord. This choice subverts the traditional submissive role of female devotees in Hindu literature (Clooney, 2004). This blend of romantic and divine voice introduces complexity to Andal's persona, allowing her to be seen as an ordinary woman with human desires and a transcendent devotee (Dehejia, 1990). In Tiruppavai, Andal leads a group of young female devotees through a ritualistic vow, symbolising communal unity in devotion (Ramanujan, 1973). Her use of feminine symbols, like flowers, and her adoption of ritualistic language highlight the beauty and power of the feminine in spiritual life (Clooney, 2004).

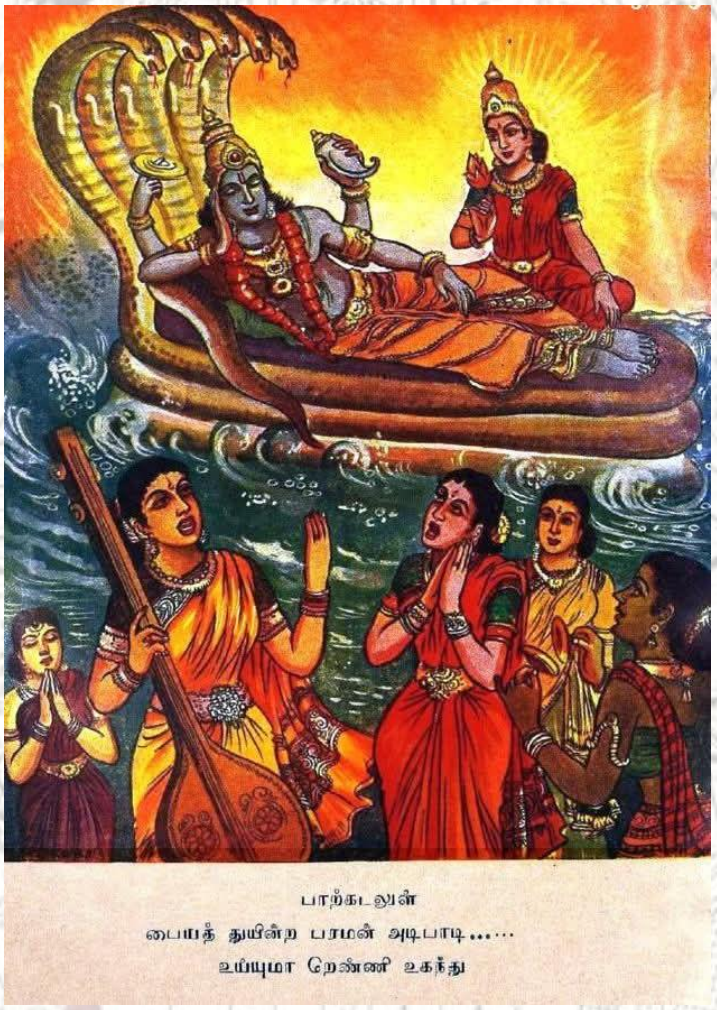


Figure 3: Excerpt from Tirrupavai using Feminine Themes and Imagery

Source: (By Author)

1.2 Architectural Manifestations of Andal's Legacy

1.2.1 Architectural Heritage of Srivilliputhur Temple

The Srivilliputhur Andal Temple is a highly revered pilgrimage shrine in Tamil Nadu. It is a temple dedicated to Goddess Andal, one of the greatest female saints in the Tamil Vaishnavite faith. It is an excellent example of classic Dravidian architecture intermixed with Andal's influence on the region's architectural and cultural heritage. Built in the 16th century by the Nayak dynasty, the temple exemplifies Dravidian architecture through its towering 11-tiered gopuram, a prominent symbol of Dravidian temples, and vast courtyards. It is also renowned for its central sanctum, which houses the deity of Andal (Narayan, 2017). Andal's legacy and devotional poetry continue to shape cultural identity and religious expression, particularly among Tamil women, who often view Andal as a powerful symbol of devotion and spiritual agency (Confluence, 2021).

1.2.2 Temple's Iconography and Architectural Design

Elements of traditional Dravidian architecture are seen in the vast mandapams (pillared halls) and towering vimanas (temple towers), which exhibit fine sculptural detailing. Andal sits enshrined in the central sanctum and is displayed prayerfully to symbolise her unwavering devotion to Lord Vishnu. Artistic representations of Andal's life are abundant in the vimanas and mandapams of the temple. Her compositions are also seen in the "Tiruppavai" hymns. Granite and sandstone materials are notable during the building process, showcasing the expertise of the builders while underscoring the structure's scale.

The tall gopurams, notable for their decorative sculptures, also illustrate aspects of Andal's hymns and devotion. According to myth, gopurams are gateways to the divine realm. Therefore, temple architecture epitomises the connection between the faithful and their faith.

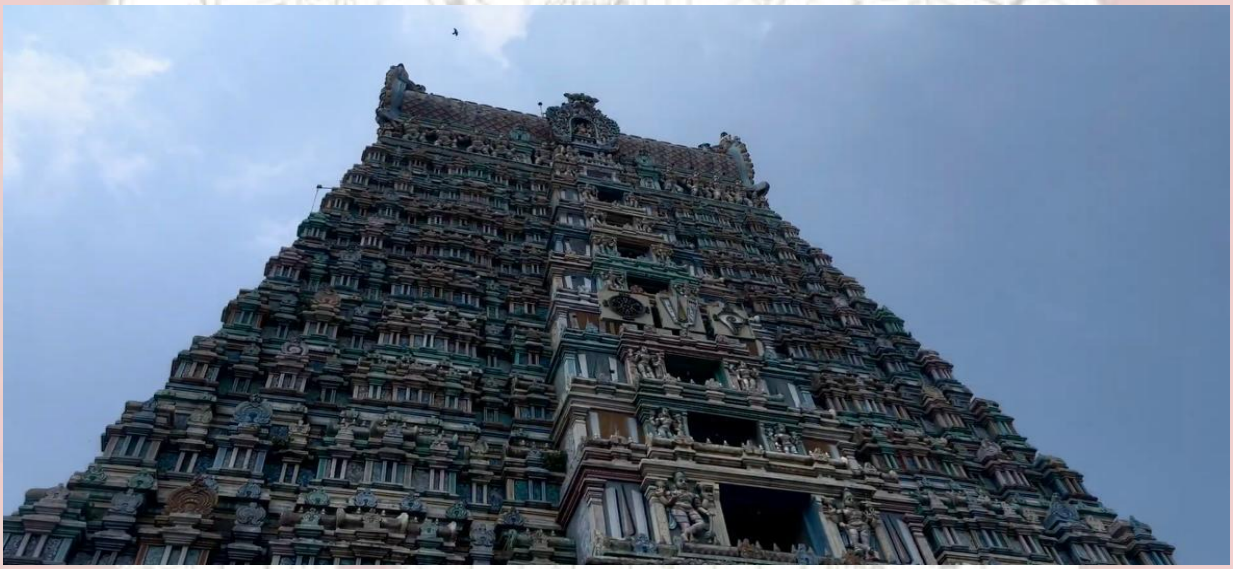


Figure 4: Gopuram Architecture of the Andal Temple in Srivilliputhur

Source: (By Author, 2025)

1.2.3 Cultural symbolism

The temple bridges the identities of Tamil Vaishnavites, uniting their cultural and religious aspects. The representation of Andal within the temple not only represents devotion but also highlights cultural values such as purity, surrender, and love for the holy. The temple's architectural symbolism, particularly its towering gopurams and intricately constructed vimanas, reflects Andal's profound devotion, which is commemorated annually through festivals and ceremonies dedicated to her hymns. Finally, the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple's architecture displays Andal's spiritual legacy. Its design and symbolism connect the physical and spiritual realms, preserving Andal's cultural and devotional significance in the Tamil Vaishnavite tradition.

1.3 Contemporary Relevance and Influence of Andal's Legacy

The best-known female poet in the Bhakti Tradition's alvar is Andal. Andal holds a rich place in Srivaisnava practice as the sole female Alvar. She wrote two texts, Nachiyar Tirumozhi and Tiruppavai, in addition to 173 other verses. She left behind the legacy of a woman who was free of thought, disbelieved in social structures like marriage, regarded God as equal to her, and succeeded in uniting with Him. Her poetry is full of daring depictions of sexuality and violent imagery of yearning. Today, however, she is worshipped as a goddess, and all women are expected to be chaste like her in practice and worship. Her compositions, Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi, became living traditions that appealed more to this age audience, transcending their medieval roots. Her poetry remains a constituent of religious affairs, as evidenced by Tamil Nadu's annual celebration of the month of Margazhi, during which her Tiruppavai is recited in temples and homes.

Andal's legacy resonates particularly in women's spirituality and feminist theology. Her brazen public displays of celestial love, during which she portrayed herself as Krishna's bride, were so radical that they threatened, or at least challenged, most of the patriarchal conventions of her time and continue to shape discussions about women's spiritual and religious authority to this day (Ramanan, 1989). Contemporary feminist scholars and activists cite Andal's works as pioneering examples of feminine religious leadership and empowerment.

She has influenced modern art and culture in numerous ways, with most of her contemporary expressions of poetry incorporated into classical dance forms, particularly Bharatanatyam, by dancers who have consistently found innovative ways to reinterpret her devotional and divine love precepts. Composers of all generations have transformed her poems into new songs, enabling them to reach the next generation while preserving the spiritual essence of her work.

Moreover, Andal's studies have been revived in various circles of scholarship, where researchers have drawn various theoretical frameworks to interpret her works. Her poetry, increasingly scrutinised through the lenses of postcolonial theory, gender studies, and eco-criticism, reveals new ways her works become relevant to contemporary issues. For instance, her depictions of nature and seasonal variations align with our current environmental awareness.

Notwithstanding this unprecedented use of cyberspace, Andal's works have found many new channels of expression. Andal's poems periodically appear on social networking sites; sometimes, they are entirely new translations, and at other times, they offer insightful critiques. Cyber forums debate her relevance to green conservation and women's rights issues. Indeed, transnational and trans-cultural, this online platform has helped popularise the works worldwide. Andal's works are increasingly included in courses beyond standard academic studies of religion. Her poetry is studied in classes within literary and women's studies programs and cultural studies departments, further demonstrating her relevance to various academic fields (Jeyaseelan & Venkadesan, 2022). The author's life story and works can serve as case studies when discussing leadership and authority among women in religious settings.

In terms of Andal's legacy, she offers insight into contemporary culture while also posing challenges to the issues of the moment, namely spiritual authenticity, equal gender roles, and cultural survival. Andal's voice, spoken twelve centuries ago, shines a light on how society must properly balance social justice, personal devotion, and creativity in today's environment.

1.4 Research Statement

The proposed study on Andal, one of the twelve Alwars who played crucial roles in Tamil Literature, will give a novel insight into the multifaceted contributions of Andal in modern Tamil society. Andal's devotional works, Thiruppavai and Nachiyar Thirumozhi, have been seen as treating spiritual estate, especially from the perspective of women, amidst a dominant male Bhakti literature. In analysing the sample texts, this research aims to explore aspects of cultural and architectural detail in Andal's work and to consider how our reading of her works might reflect a vibrant tradition of women's culture in Tamil Nadu.

The historical and social factors that shaped Andal's poetic imagination will be discussed, and the aspects of the author's rebellious stance in her verses reduce the traditional gender roles for women. Using feminist theories, the research shall establish the extent to which Andal's writings are reclaimed by different generations of Tamil women, empowering them in their current fight for liberation. The intended research would concentrate on the architectural legacy of Andal's impact on sacrilegious architecture, such as that of the temple in Srivilliputhur. Such an inquiry will reveal the extent to which the built environment, in connection with the culture of the literary and devotional saint, has been conceptualised and created to preserve Andal's legacy for posterity (Venkatesan, 2022).

This study contributes to the existing scholarly debate by exploring effective paradigms regarding Andal as a poet-saint and a vital pillar of the women's emancipation movement in the rapidly evolving ethnographic context of contemporary Tamil Nadu society and culture. Hence, this work would contribute multifaceted aspects about Andal and add considerable value to Tamil literature, architectural chronicles, and feminist studies, creating scope for discourse development on the legacy of Andal.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

1.5.1 Aim

This research aims to critically examine and analyse Andal's long legacy as a prominent 8th-century Tamil poet-saint in light of her pioneering position in devotional poetry, her influence on architectural history, and her defining role in contemporary Tamil culture and identity. Through closely analysing Andal's poetry, temple iconography, and feminist interpretations, the research explores how her works resonate across time, inspiring historical and modern perspectives on gender, spirituality, and cultural affiliation. This study addresses the hidden symbolic and thematic depth of Andal's works and their resonance across time in her poetic expressions. It also attempts to probe how her architectural manifestations, such as the one at Srivilliputhur, function as cultural icons in their physical embodiments. Thus, this research aims to bridge these two extremes by comprehensively assessing Andal's impact, evaluating literary, architectural, and cultural dimensions. Viewing Andal's poetry's lyrical expressions for their symbolic and thematic fullness and their more comprehensive and long-term relevance in contemporary debates about gender, spirit, and cultural allegiance, the study reveals that Andal remains a significant figure in times and age through deep analysis of her poetry and the cultural-historical context of her influence in Tamil identity, art, and cultural pride (Kamaliah, 1977).

1.5.2 Objectives

Andal's Poetic Legacy:

- Historical Contextualisation: To examine and research the development of Andal's devotional poetry within the broader traditions of Tamil Nadu's literary history.
- Literary and Poetic Interpretation: To focus on the comprehensive study of Andal's two significant works, Thiruppavai and Nachiyar Thirumozhi, which depict religious themes, linguistic innovations, and thematic richness.
- Thematic Analysis: To examine the core themes prevalent in Andal's poetry, particularly those related to divine love, spirituality, and the unique perspective of a female devotee.
- Symbolic and Metaphorical Exploration: To analyse and understand how the symbols and metaphors employed by Andal in her works contribute to her unique voice in religious and cultural discourses.
- Gendered Perspective: To compare and contrast Andal's devotional poetry with her male counterparts within the Bhakti movement, focusing on the differences in tone and content.

Contemporary Relevance and Influence:

- The Modern Impact on Tamil Women: This paper aims to assess the extent to which Andal influences contemporary Tamil women, particularly regarding their cultural identity and spiritual life.

● Feminist Perspectives on Andal: To explore feminist perspectives on Andal's works, this study aims to understand how her poetry challenges traditional gender roles and empowers women.

● Cultural Preservation and Reinterpretation: To investigate how Andal's influence is preserved and reinterpreted through contemporary cultural practices, festivals, and art forms.

● Andal's Influence on Contemporary Spirituality: An anthropology of contemporary Tamil women who appropriate Andal's poetry and life and the impact of the legacy of Andal on their spiritual practice, self-expression, and cultural pride.

● Feminist Reinterpretation of Andal's Works: Utilising feminist theories to refine Andal's works. She used her devotional and subversive poetic voice to discuss women's roles in Tamil spiritual and literary traditions.

Architectural Heritage:

● Documentation of Architectural Heritage: In the Srivilliputhur Temples, the architect and workgroup focus on the architectural legacy of temples consecrated to Andal, taking into account their historical significance and growth.

● Iconographic Analysis: Examining temple iconography in terms of how Andal and other gods and goddesses are depicted within, as well as the religious impact that Andal had on Tamil devotional art in general, influencing its visual representation and worship.

● Architectural and Cultural Significance: To reflect on how the temple became a cultural and religious hub, perpetuating Andal's immortal legacy in Tamil Nadu.

● Interpretations of Andal Depictions: To understand how visitors and practitioners interpret the architectural representations of Andal in the temple, considering their broader implications within Tamil culture and religion.

● Temple as Living Monument: To conceptualise the temple as a living Andal monument and how this sanctified place for her adoration and a vibrant platform for new cultural expression — considerations that can influence interpretation in a contemporary retelling of her legacy — are discussed

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 The Evolution of Andal's Poetic Legacy: A Feminine Voice in Bhakti Literature

In the vast canvas of South Indian devotional literature, Andal stands out as an exception, being the only female among the other twelve Vaishnavite Alvar saints. Bhakti literature, principally through her two great works, the Tiruppavai and the Nachiyar Tirumoli, has enriched the religious and literary heritages. Distinctive are their exceeding devotional intensity, masterful imagery, and refinement in the interplay of human and divine love. This comprehensive literature review surveys Andal's original contributions to the Bhakti movement and her revolutionary reworking of gender roles in devotional poetry. It develops a detailed comparative analysis with other Alvar poets.

2.1.1 Andal and the Bhakti Movement

A growing body of literature suggests, based on her poetic expression, that the Bhakti movement reached a new high in personal devotion to a deity. The pinnacle of devotional poetry comprises her Tiruppavai, composed of thirty moderately intricate stanzas, and the Nachiyar Tirumoli, comprising 143. The Tiruppavai reveals the true nature of Andal as she assumes the persona of a gopi, showcasing her intense prema bhakti towards Lord Krishna. This work transcends mere poetic expression, serving as a comprehensive spiritual guide that emphasises the three fundamental aspects of religious life. Based on Vemsani (2016), it is grounded in devotional practice, community engagement, and the pursuit of divine communion.

Andal's unique synthesis of Tamil literary traditions and Vedantic philosophy is most noteworthy in the Bhakti movement. The result of this synthesis is a new paradigm of devotional poetry that continues to influence religious expression. What is remarkable about Tiruppavai is how she can build multiple layers of meaning, with hardly a shift in logic, between straightforward interpretation and profound metaphysical insight. This multi-layered approach, with various levels of meaning catering to differing spiritual distances, enables devotees at different stages of their spiritual journey to relate to complex spiritual concepts.

Likewise, Andal’s mastery of devotional expression is again well exemplified in the Nachiyar Tirumoli. Her skilful use of classical Tamil poetic conventions and the inclusion of Ardas and Puranas narratives form an unmatched tapestry of imagery in Indian religious literature, making Andal unique (Rajarajan, 2015). Her exploration of divine love transcends conventional Tamil literary treatments of love and war, delving into a spiritual realm that bridges the individual devotional experience and a larger community's more abstract spiritual aspirations.

2.1.2 Emotional Expressions and Vivid Imagery

It is well-established that the imagery used in Andal’s poetry is vivid and unparalleled; its emotional content is more profound and felt than in any other brand of poetry from the past. In

particular, Nachiyar Tirumoli employs rich metaphors, similes, and other depictions to evoke spiritual yearning. For example, the "*Kuyil Pattu"* (Song of the Cuckoo) uses the image of a cuckoo bird as Lord Vishnu's messenger, a version of her desperate calls to the divine (Vankeepuram, 2005). This sophisticated use of imagery to personalise the devotional experience and sympathetically address collective spiritual aspirations is a customary aspect of her work and a striking representation of social, devotional life.

However, it is the power of her poetic expression, broad and complex, that especially reveals her sophisticated natural imagery. Andal works extensively with the Tamil landscape tradition to embody the spiritual truth and the natural world in miniature. Her descriptions of flowers, birds, and seasonal changes are vivid but powerful metaphors for the soul's journey to divine union. This demonstrates her exceptional command of literary techniques.

Notably, the zenith of emotional depth in her poetry during the *'Vaaranam Aayiram'* decade of Nachiyar Tirumoli is her vivid description of a dream in which she marries Lord Vishnu. In particular, this section is replete with explicit respect for bridal mysticism, balanced by sensual and spiritual components, and the brilliance of Andalan in melding human love with divine yearning (Rao, 2013).

2.1.3 Redefining Femininity in Devotional Poetry

Andal's works foreground a revolutionary challenge to traditional notions of femininity in her rigidly patriarchal society. In contrast to her male contemporaries, she adopts a woman's voice in love with the divine and displays her wants and emotions with no hedging. To elevate the feminine voice in devotional literature, her self-portrait as the bride of Lord Vishnu is established as a powerful medium for spiritual expression (Venkatesan, 2018).

Building upon this, her feminine perspective does not exist to express the personal. Through her poetry, Andal sets forth a new standard of women's spiritual agency, with all women potentially united on the path of divinity, women at the same end of the 'stream of immortals' as men. Her work successfully challenges traditional hierarchies that had historically limited women's participation in religious conversations and actions.

More importantly, Andal, whose works elevated her to the status of a goddess within the Sri Vaishnava tradition, demonstrates how her works revolutionised the definition of femininity in devotional contexts. Still, life and poetry are potent examples of spiritual agency and devotion to women, as seen in Ramaswamy (2007). Her contribution, which is unique in the history of Indian religion, is perhaps the most revolutionary.



Figure 5: Andal's depiction of longing for the Divine in her day-to-day life

2.1.4 Comparison with Male Alvar Poets

To begin with, the nayaka-nayaki (hero, heroine) motif predominated in male Alvar poetry, where the soul longs for the divine. Still, Andal's poetry stands out for becoming, rather than assuming, the nayaki, or heroine. Personal embodiment makes no room for this middle ground

between face and devotion. Because she concentrates on bridal mysticism and feminine imagery, she is distinct from her male counterparts, who generally paint more generalised or masculine perspectives in their work (Cutler, 1987).

Similarly, the peculiarity of Andal's voice is dramatically emphasised when contrasted with that of other well-known Alvars. Although both Nammalvar and Periyalvar employed abstract philosophical abstraction or allegorical narrative when depicting divine love, Andal's poetry does not undergo such philosophical abstraction or allegorical narrative in any way. Instead, it continues to focus on personal experience and emotional authenticity in its poetry. That directness of expression is so essential to the continuing popularity and accessibility of her work.

Moreover, Andal's works are also noted for their significant communal aspect. In Tiruppavai, she actively invokes her fellow maidens to participate in devotional practices. Whereas male Alvar poets (Rangarajan, 2017) often express devotion through individualism, these works manifest the communal process. With her focus on community and shared spiritual experience, her work brings a great deal to bear on contemporary discussions of religious practice and social inclusion, which are particularly relevant to the Bhakti tradition and thereby contribute significantly.

2.1.5 Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

Andal's poetry had a far-reaching influence, and even her historical context is now largely irrelevant. The Tiruppavai continues to serve as a key devotional practice in South India today, chanting throughout the month of Margali. Her verses have always been accessible, emotionally powerful, and relevant to each successive generation of spiritual seekers.

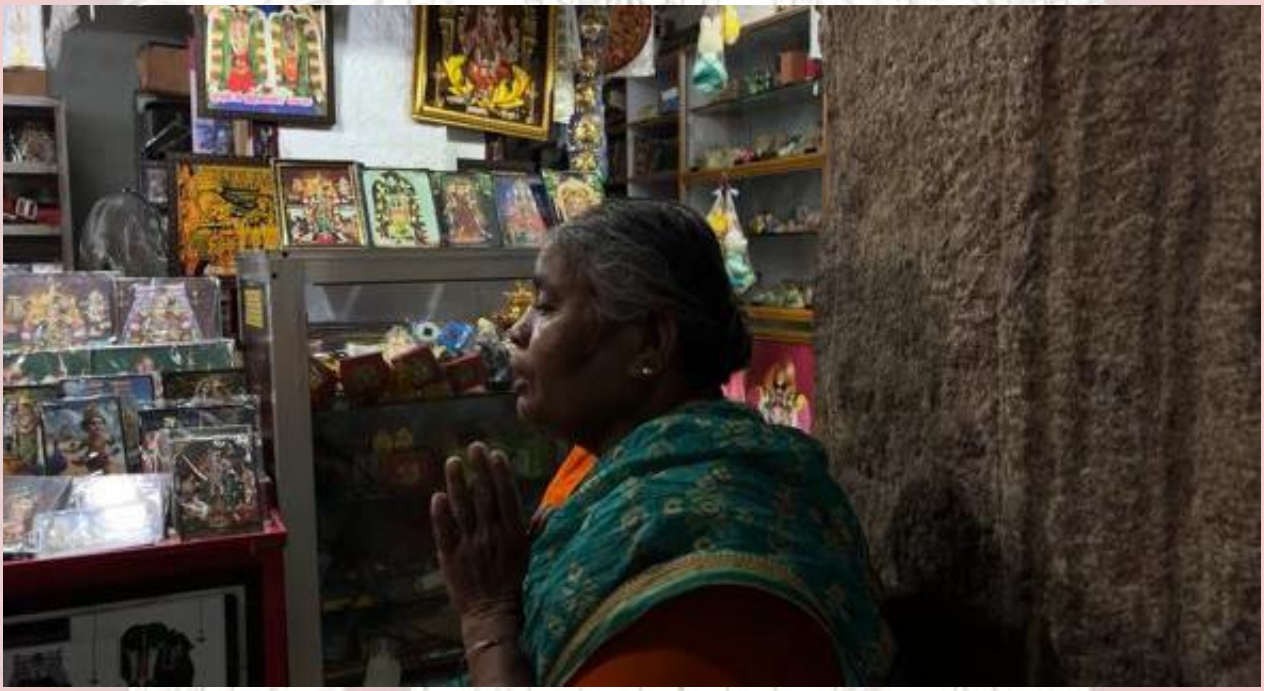


Figure 6: Amma (one of the interviewees) reciting Thirrupavai

Source: (By Author)

In conclusion, Andal's poetic legacy, which feminises a personal and collective spirituality associated with collective worship, represents a significant advance in Bhakti literature. Her outstanding use of imagery, profundity of feeling, and new definition of the feminine have all been imprinted on devotional poetry. In Andal's works, she did more than make unique Bhakti contributions; she created a path of more inclusive and expressive spiritual literature that continues to encourage and shape the hearts of spiritual practitioners of any age.

2.2 Architectural Heritage as a Testament to Andal's Influence

Considered one of the greatest architectural marvels in Tamil Nadu, the Srivilliputhur Andal temple is a testament to religious devotion, combined with its rich heritage and grandeur. In addition to marking the existence of Andal, a revered poet-saint of the 10th-century AD Bhakti movement, this temple preserves the very essence, poetry, and spiritual ethos of the Bhakti tradition. The temple is a 'living monument' to Andal's spiritual and cultural legacy, and through its elaborate design, iconography, and rituals, it has become a unique expression of identity. This literature review encompasses the scholarly perspectives on the architectural and cultural significance of the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple, highlighting the design, iconography of Andal, and the blend of Andal's hymns into its architectural and spiritual context.

2.2.1 Andal's Life and her Bhakti Tradition

Andal's contribution to Tamil devotional literature and the Bhakti tradition is without parallel. Hardy (1983) notes that Andal's hymns, specifically the Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Thirumozhi, convey an intense religious longing and devotion to Lord Vishnu. The spiritual and cultural practices of Tamil Nadu, and indeed, of India, are primarily derived from these hymns. Hawley (2015) scholars claim that the Bhakti tradition of personal devotion is reflected in Andal's poetic words, which resonate within the temple's architecture and rituals.

The Srivilliputhur Andal temple has been recognised for its architectural significance.

Its gopuram (gateway tower), vimanas (sanctum structures), and mandapams (pillared halls) are all of great intricate detail and size—it is an exemplary South Indian Temple's architecture. Michell (1995) considers that the temple's architectural layout follows the principles of Dravidian temple design, specifically axial alignment and hierarchical spatial organization.

2.2.2 Gopurams and Iconography

The Srivilliputhur Andal Temple's 192-foot-tall gopuram is a landmark for Tamil Nadu's architectural and cultural heritage. In addition to being a substantial physical presence, this monumental gateway structure also serves multiple purposes. In his analysis (2000), Davis claims that the role of the gopuram is both a visual and spiritual beacon, transforming the devotee into a spiritual border between the mundane world and the world beyond where Andal's divine narratives come to live.

The gopuram makes an architectural statement in part through its elaborate sculptural program. On its surfaces are sleek, intricate carvings that visually represent a biography of Andal's life and the course of her spiritual journey. The carved narratives on these tablets tell key moments from her devotional experiences and carefully selected scenes from her celebrated hymns. The fusion of literary and architectural elements enables devotees to experience the legacy of Andal both physically and spiritually, even as they enter the temple complex.



Figure 7: Traditional Dravidian Gopuram Iconography

Source: (By Author)

2.2.3 Vimana and Sanctum Sanctorum

The other substantial feature in the image of this temple is the vimana, which rises above the temple's sanctum sanctorum, symbolising deep spiritual symbolism. For example,

Ramaswamy (2007) notes that Vimana's sculptural program was specifically designed to mirror the stages of Andal's spiritual development and the profundity of her compassion with Vishnu. The selection and arrangement of motifs and sculptures on the vimana follow a vertical narrative concerning the devotee's path toward divine consciousness.

The spiritual heart of the temple, enclosed in the sanctum sanctorum, is Andal's idol, which, constantly dedicated to God, becomes the secret of the sanctum sanctorum. This transformed the temple from an architectural monument to a living centre of Bhakti tradition in which devotees can establish a personal connection with Andal's spiritual legacy.

2.2.4 Mandapams and Ritual Spaces

The temple's sophisticated understanding of sacred architecture, as represented in its mandapams, is truly exemplary. Kramrisch (1946) provided a seminal account of temple architecture, explaining how these gathering spaces were designed with both practical and spiritual considerations in mind. The spatial organisation of the mandapams enables both individual worship and the collective expertise of devotional practices. These spaces are carefully designed platforms for reciting Andal's hymns and doing sacred rituals regularly. The acoustic properties and spatial arrangements of the mandapams enhance the immersion in a devotional atmosphere of these devotional activities and ensure that the vitality of Andal's poetic and spiritual legacy is preserved.



Figure 8Mandapas and Ritual Spaces in the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple

Source: (By Author)

2.2.5 Integration of Hymns of Andal into Temple Architecture

One notable aspect of the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple is its unique integration of Andal's literary heritage into its architectural setup. One can further see how the temple's designers deliberately incorporated themes and imagery from Andal's poetry into various architectural elements using Cutler's (1987) research as her source. For instance, the floral motifs etched into the temple's pillars and walls are permanent, not just reminders of an act, but physical representations of it; the garland that Andal gave to Vishnu, allowing this critical devotional narrative to have a tangible expression.

Narayanan (1994) draws attention to another significant temple feature: the strategic placement of verses from Andal's Tiruppavai throughout the temple complex. Under that name, these inscriptions serve various purposes, preserving literary heritage and acting as spiritual guides for devotees. These texts are carefully placed to create a kind of architectural poetry, upon which devotees walk through the sacred space, shaped by Andal's words instead.

2.2.6 Cultural Anthropology of the Temple

From an anthropological perspective, the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple is a "thick text," offering a display of cultural meaning as mediated by Geertz (1973). The temple acts as a living monument that perpetuates and conveys spiritually and culturally Andal's legacy. The cultural narrative of the Taj Mahal is embedded in almost every architectural element, from the largest gopuram to the most minor decorative details, each contributing piece to a web of meaning that connects the past to the present and the individual to the community.

2.2.7 Rituals and Festivals

During the annual Aadi Pooram festival, the temple's architectural spaces come alive due to its many rituals and festivals. Younger (2002) provides extensive information on these celebrations, their interactions with the community, and the temple's architecture. Srivilliputhur's influx of the sacred presence of the Andal idol in festival processions through the streets of Srirangam is a decisive moment when sacral and secular spaces lose their boundaries.

The temple's architecture participates in its community's spiritual life as much as, if not more so than, the temple does. The actions of these festivals and rituals emphasise this involvement. Processional routes, gathering spaces, and ritual areas have been carefully designed to guide the devotional experience, ensuring that Andal's legacy is more present than past.

2.2.8 Visitor Interpretations

There are many different modern interpretations of the temple's symbolic elements for visitors and human devotees. Following Eck (1998), the temple's architecture and iconography serve as media for spiritual engagement between people and Andal, as well as the tradition of Bhakti. Some consider the temple a pilgrimage site and a source of divine blessing, whereas others view it as a cultural landmark and a repository of history.

2.2.9 Theoretical Framework

Through a theoretical lens of architectural and cultural anthropology, this work examines the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple as a dynamic space that reflects Andal's spiritual and cultural legacy. Artistic influences are inscribed within temple architecture – and therefore, it is not a static artefact but a 'living tradition' that develops in interaction with devotees, rituals and cultural practices, as Tillotson (1989) suggested. The Srivilliputhur Andal Temple is a striking example of this dynamic interplay, where one exemplifies the play and the play is alive, and the other is alive within the play.

Built as a monument to Andal's spiritual and cultural legacy, the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple takes her hymns, poetic life, and Bhakti tradition into its architectural and ritual fabric. The temple, through its gopurams, vimanas, mandapams, and inscriptions, narrates the story and is an essential element of Andal's devotion to Lord Vishnu. From this anthropological perspective, the temple serves as a "living monument," linking devotees to Andal's poetic and spiritual ideals, as well as the sacred and the profane. Future research may also devote more attention to understanding the interaction between temple architecture, cultural practices, and the evolving perception of Andal's legacies in modern society.

2.3 Symbolism in Andal's Poetry: A Bridge Between Nature and Spirituality

In her verses, the most eminent of Bhakti greats, Andal, mixed her devotion with symbolism and natural imagery, often with striking harmony. Andal was a central figure in Tamil literature and spirituality, and her poetic corpus, including the vibrant Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi, constitutes a testament to her spiritual longing and union with the divine. This literature review analyses the richness of symbolism and metaphor in Andal's poetry, exploring the interplay between nature, spirituality, and the cultural expressions of devotionals, as well as Andal herself. Using an eco-critical and literary lens, this review examines how Andal's work has attempted to incorporate natural elements to express her spiritual aspiration and emotional depth.

2.3.1 Andal's Poetry (Nature as Symbol of Divine Love and Cultural and Seasonal Imagery)

Naturally, scholars have long studied Andal's depiction of her spiritual journey with poetic natural imagery. Ramanujan (1981) insisted that, as a unique synthesis of Tamil Sangam traditions and Bhakti spirituality, Andal's poetry brings nature into a channel for contact with the divine. In her verses, flowers, rivers, and seasons are aesthetic devices and metaphors for the inwardness of her devotional and sentimental mood.

Purity and spiritual enlightenment are recurring themes in many of Andal's verses, and the lotus flower serves as a symbol of them. Hardy (1983) observes that in Andal's poetry, the lotus sometimes symbolises the human soul's yearning for divine grace. In the Tiruppavai, Andal describes her devotion as a lotus blooming amid sunlight, a metaphor that graphically conveys her spiritual awakening.

Cultural elements are intricately blended with natural symbols in Andal's poetry, which points to a Tamil tradition and roots. According to Dehejia (1990), Andal's use of the monsoon season is both an ecological reality and an emotional excitation. The rains are themes of union and fulfilment associated with Andal. The Nachiyar Tirumozhi depicts the arrival of the monsoon, which traditionally symbolises the nurturing presence of the divine in her life.

Rao (2003) further states that Andal's cultural symbols, such as the pavai ritual and other surrounding practices, represent Andal's adaptation of Tamil folk tradition to convey Bhakti ideals. In blending the personal and cosmic dimensions of devotion, Andal demonstrates that human rituals and divine relationships are seamlessly intertwined.

2.3.2 Feminine Expression and Spirituality (Andal's Voice as a Female Devotee and Nature as a Feminine Entity)

Andal's poetry has been the subject of numerous scholarly works examining its gendered aspects. Costa Cutler (1987) contends that Andal's works can never be surpassed in their portrayal of the voice of a female devotee challenging patriarchal rules of spiritual expression. Her revolutionary declarations of love for Lord Vishnu, as per the Nachiyar Tirumozhi, are bold and unconventional.

According to Shulman (1993), Andal's feminine identity influences Andal's symbolic language. For example, Andal's verbiage touched upon matters of bridal adornment and ritual, which extend beyond specific interpretations to an expression of spiritual preparedness and divine union. These symbols are deeply rooted in Tamil cultural practice and attest to Andal's ability to render the mundane as expressions of Bhakti.

Finally, as is common in ecofeminist interpretations, Subramanian (2015) has noted that Andal's descriptions of nature parallel her affinity for the feminine. In some of her poetry, the rivers, gardens, and flowers she mentions are depicted as sweet, nurturing things and life-giving, parallel to Andal, the devotee who aspired to melt into and acquire the self in the infinite. From this perspective, eco-critical theories that frame women, nature, and spirituality as interrelated values also apply.

2.3.3 Bhakti Tradition and Andal's Innovations (Symbolic Resonance with Bhakti Ideals and Divergences From Traditional Bhakti Themes)

The general line of Andal's poetry is very close to the bhakti tradition, which emphasises personal devotion and the transcendence of worldly relationships. According to Bhattacharya (1997), the Bhakti concept of surrendering the self and attaining spiritual fulfilment was well conveyed in Andal's symbols, such as the lotus and monsoon. In her works, many describe the devotee's relation to the divine as a play of love, longing, and union.

According to Pechilis (2004), Andal stands out among the Bhakti canon due to her emphasis on symbolic imagery. Mirabai and Kabir, like all other Bhakti poets, also employed metaphors; however, Andal's works are distinguished by their integration of Tamil cultural motifs with timeless spiritual themes.

While Andal's poetry resonates with Bhakti ideals, it diverges from specific traditional themes. Ramanujan (1981) observed that Andal's explicit portrayal of sensuality and longing sets her apart from male Bhakti poets, who often adopted more restrained expressions. Andal's unabashed celebration of love as a path to divine realisation challenges conventional notions of devotion, making her poetry both innovative and transformative.

2.3.4 Eco-Critical Perspectives (Interplay of Nature with Spirituality and Feminine Ecology in Andal's Symbolism)

Eco-critical analysis of Andal's poetry has underlined the symbiotic essence between nature and spirituality in her works. Mukherjee (2010) stated that Andal's natural imagery implies an eco-conscious worldview in which the divine is immanent in the natural world. For instance, the way Andal describes blooming gardens and flowing rivers is not only of divine beauty but also represents the harmony between the dictates of human spirituality and ecological systems.

Subramanian (2015) continued to trace how Andal's poetry anticipates modern eco-spiritual perspectives. Andal's works celebrate nature as a valid component in divine creation, positing that anthropocentric views of spirituality are simplistic and limiting, and emphasizing that spirituality must be an ecological affair.

Andal's portrayal of nature as inherently feminine has been a focus of feminist eco-criticism. Rivers, flowers, and seasons in her poetry echo her role as a devotee straining for spiritual union with the nurturing aspects of Andal's personality. Rajan (2017) highlights the interplay between feminine ecology and spirituality, as well as Andal's ability to reconcile personal and earthly ecological themes.

The symbolic and metaphorical expressions employed in Andal's poetry are a rich tapestry that follows the spiritual and cultural identity registers. Termed by various scholars in disciplines as varied as literary criticism and ecocriticism, her innovative use of natural imagery and cultural symbols to express divine love has sustained her in scholarship. In her works, Andal bequeaths herself to the Bhakti tradition, offering an intimate view of spirituality that transcends temporal and cultural bounds.

2.4 Contemporary Relevance of Andal's Works in Feminist Theology and Cultural Studies

2.4.1 Andal's Portrayal as a Feminist Icon (Challenging Patriarchal Norms and Feminist Theology)

Andal's radical defiance of societal conventions is part of a tradition of early feminist resistance in South Indian literary and religious traditions. Her striking expression of celestial love, most explicitly present in Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi, directly challenged the patriarchal scrutiny of what women should express and do. Cutler (1987) emphasised that the importance of Andal's implicit declaration of love for Lord Vishnu is assumed to have transcended the

conventional boundaries of women's allowed emotional and spiritual expression in her time. It is more than a self-expression of Andal's defiance; it is essential. She became a revolutionary who distinguished her path by rejecting traditional marriage and domestic roles. Remarkable for its time, this autonomous decision-making process has inspired contemporary feminist thought and action.

Dehejia (1990) further elaborates on Andal's public expression of her spiritual and emotional needs as an innovative mechanism for women to pronounce their voice in a gender–dominated spiritual context. Andal's achievement was to elevate her divine devotion beyond the ordinary limits set by society, redefine the parameters of religious expression, and establish a precedent for feminist reinterpretation of devotional literature.

Andal's works, being a rich source of inspiration, are valuable for modern feminist theologians in the context of "Women's Spiritual Empowerment." In his article, Rajan (2017) examines how Andal's devotional poetry foregrounds personal agency in the pursuit of spiritual union, thereby directly challenging the hierarchies of traditional religious practices. Her representation of the divine as both lover and equal partner to humanity departs from the conventional patriarchal conception of God as some authoritarian figure. It advocates for an inclusive and equitable vision of spirituality, embodying a contemporary feminist theological voice.

2.4.2 Andal's Influence on Contemporary Feminist Discourses (Reinterpretation in Feminist Movements and Intersectionality in Andal's Works)

The continued relevance of Andal's message has enabled later feminist movements in Tamil Nadu and beyond to draw upon her legacy. Narayanan (1996) notes that contemporary activists have reevaluated Andal's poetic prescriptions of love and longing as powerful allegories of the struggles that women continue to wage for freedom and equality. There is a compelling narrative thread of parallels between Andal's historical resistance to feelings and societal norms, and the present fight against gender discrimination.

In addition, Andal's feminist message has been adapted in contemporary literature and performance art, thereby significantly amplifying its impact. In conclusion, Shulman (1993) emphasizes that Tamil cinema and theatre have brought modern Andal's feminist undertones center stage, making her legacy accessible and relevant for new generations of women seeking inspiration and validation in their own struggles for autonomy and recognition.

Finally, the analytic utility of applying postcolonial and intersectional analyses has enriched scholarship on Andal's feminist theologising. As Mukherjee (2010) powerfully argues, Andal's defiance of mainstream social norms, due to her identity as a Tamil woman from a marginalised caste, introduces critical new subtleties to her identity. Modern scholars have gained an intersectional view, which helps them discover new dimensions in Andal's poetry that can be used as a critique of various forms of social oppression.

2.4.3 The Contribution of Andal to Shaping Cultural Identity.

To begin with, Andal's impact on Tamil women's cultural and spiritual lifestyle has been profound, lasting since the time of her single line. In his analysis, Subramanian (2015) notes that the story of Andal, an example of dual representation that equates a devout poet with a rebellious woman, produces a narrative that resonates with present-day Tamil women caught between a clash of traditional values and modern aspirations. Continuing to give women a voice—a means to reclaim their cultural heritage while reasserting their spiritual and personal agency —her poetry remains a powerful means.

Feminist discourses further make Andal relevant in modern art and literature through her ongoing reinterpretation of these genres. Her themes of divine union, love, and longing inspire artists and writers to explore pressing contemporary issues regarding gender identity and equality through their work. Observing that these modern adaptations not only exalt Andal's poetic genius but also effectively yet successfully seat her as a potent emblem of resistance and power for contemporary women, Dehejia (1990) comments.

2.5 Theoretical Perspectives on Andal's Influence (Gender Studies and Postcolonial Theory)

Gender studies help understand Andal's challenge to patriarchal norms via a framework. As Andal's poetic expressions of desire and devotion reveal, Cutler's (1987) analysis describes how these irrigations of Andal's language subverted the traditional socio-culturally set gender roles by assigning roles not only to women but to them as active agents in their personal and spiritual lives. Her works strongly represent feminine resistance by highlighting women's literal and intellectual voices centrally in a literary and religious context that denotes male preeminence.

Firstly, applying postcolonial theory has enriched the scholarly understanding of Andal's usefulness in current feminist discourses. Mukherjee (2010) demonstrates how Andal's poetry effectively disentangles the colonial and patriarchal narratives that have sporadically silenced women's voices. It emphasises the universal nature of Andal’s message and how her reclamation is viewed through a postcolonial lens, ensuring that her message remains as culturally authentic as possible without losing its regional or cultural connotations.

Andal's poetry continues to resonate in its ongoing influence on contemporary feminist theology and cultural studies, providing vital insights into the formation of women's spiritual and cultural identities. Her defiant rejection of patriarchal norms and poetic praise of divine love ensure she would be an excellent figure for all generations. Modern scholars and activists, utilising gender studies and postcolonial theory, have shed new light on Andal's reputation, thereby keeping her works as a vital source of inspiration for women seeking spiritual and personal empowerment in the modern world.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

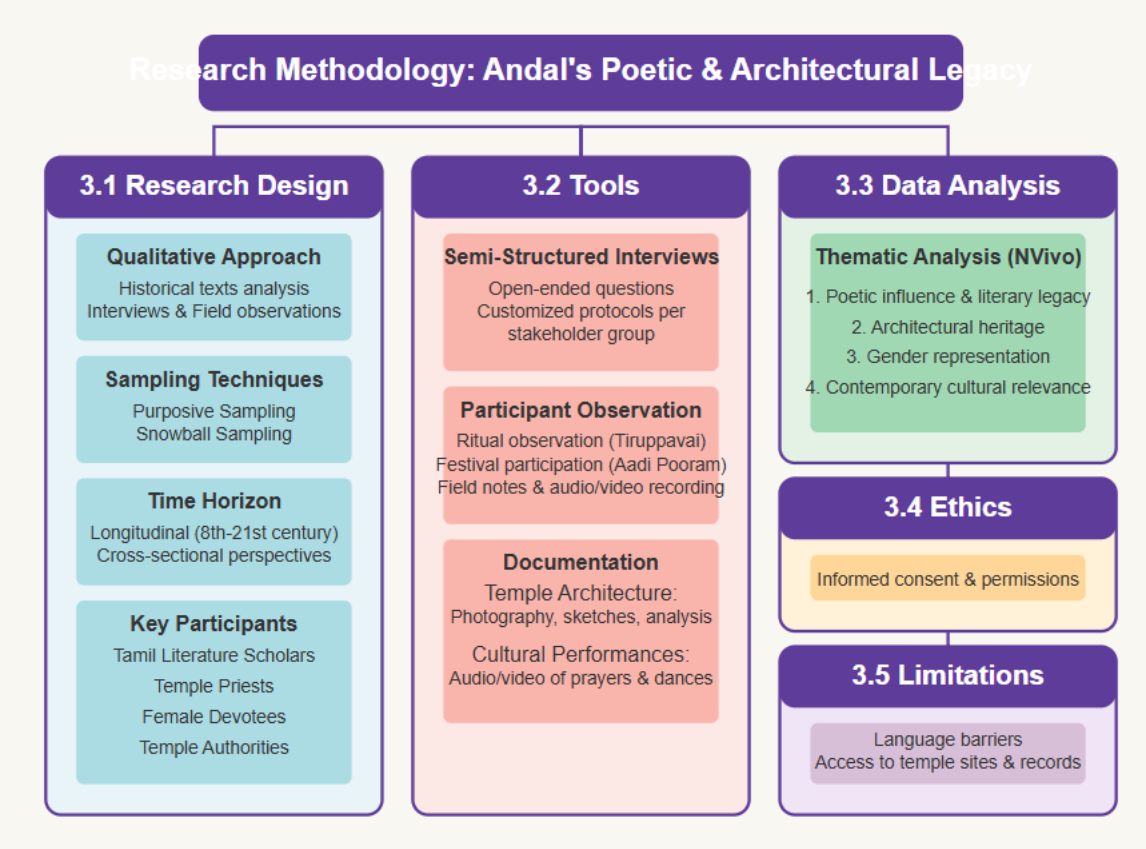


Figure 9: Visualisation of the Research Methodology of the Study

Source: (By Author)

3.1.1 Approach and Justification

This study uses a qualitative approach to study Andal's poetic and architectural legacy. Qualitative research is appropriate here as it allows for an in-depth understanding of Andal's influence through historical texts, interviews, and architectural studies. Due to the nature of Andal's legacy, rooted in religious traditions, poetic expressions, and temple architecture, qualitative methods enable a nuanced interpretation of her impact. Historical textual analysis will be used to examine her devotional poetry, particularly the Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi, which, as Cutler (1987) suggests, present a deeply personal yet communal form of devotion that shaped Tamil Bhakti poetry. Interviews with scholars, temple priests, and devotees will provide contemporary perspectives on her influence. Additionally, architectural studies will help assess

how Andal's legacy has materialised in temple spaces, particularly in Srivilliputhur, her place of birth.

A qualitative approach is validated by the need to understand Andal's legacy in a dynamic and evolving social context. Hawley and Wulff (2011) highlight how goddess traditions, including Andal's, have continuously evolved in response to socio-political changes, making a longitudinal approach particularly insightful. Additionally, ethnographic elements will be integrated into this research. Field visits to Srivilliputhur will provide an immersive understanding of the rituals, architecture of the temples, and local traditions associated with Andal. Hudson (1980) emphasises that temple worship and oral traditions play a crucial role in preserving Andal's legacy, reinforcing the importance of field observation. Participant observation will be conducted to analyse temple worship, festival celebrations, and cultural expressions that continue to sustain her legacy. By engaging with the local community, this study aims to bridge textual analysis with lived religious experiences, enriching the qualitative findings.

3.1.2 Sampling Techniques

This study will use purposive sampling to identify key participants for interviews. Scholars devoted to Tamil literature, temple priests, and female devotees inspired by Andal's poetry will be included in the sample. Purposive sampling ensures that participants possess relevant knowledge and experience, enabling them to provide insightful perspectives on Andal's legacy.

Snowball sampling will also be used to expand participant selection. Initial interviewees will be asked to recommend others who can contribute to the study, particularly those deeply engaged in temple traditions or Andal-related literary studies. This approach will help identify hidden voices and lesser-known but significant perspectives on Andal's influence.

3.1.3 Time Horizon

The study offers a longitudinal and cross-sectional perspective to understand Andal's influence across different periods and varying social circumstances. Such work on the longitudinal aspect recognises how interpretations of Andal's work have changed, most often between the 8th and contemporary centuries. The study can understand how Andal's works have been interpreted and reappropriated by different generations. The second (cross-sectional) component enables the analysis of Andal's present manifestations across various domains, ranging from temple architecture to discourse in the contemporary feminist context.

3.2 Tools

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The research study follows the semi-structured interview format. It allows one to navigate through the process. It will ensure a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Open-ended questions enable the interviewee to share their thoughts, facilitating a smooth flow in the interview

process. Follow-up questions will help the study further. “The role of Hindu temples as centres of worship and highlight the importance of priestly traditions, festival organisation, and devotees' experiences” (Fuller, 2019). The primary research is based on semi-structured interviews with respondents from several stakeholder groups, where interview protocols are designed prudently. Questions for temple authorities pertain to the preservation of architecture and the maintenance of rituals. Scholars stress literary analysis and historical interpretation. Several contemporary Tamil women are interviewed about how Andal has informed their spiritual and cultural identity.

3.2.1 Participant Observation Method

The methodology relies heavily on participant observation, especially for recording living traditions. It entails observing rituals, such as reciting the daily Tiruppavai, participating in festivals like Aadi Pooram, and documenting how Andal’s poetry is incorporated into contemporary worship practices. Field notes, audio, and video documentation are systematically recorded during these observations.

3.2.2 Documentation of Temple Architecture & Cultural Performances

Several techniques are employed in the documentation, including detailed photography, architectural sketches, and expert analysis of temple features. With emphasis on gopurams, mandapams, and sculptural narrative of Srivilliputhur Temple in terms of its embodiment of Andal's poetic themes, this documentation is focused mainly. The study will document the temple life according to the culture and related traditions. Various methods will be used to keep documentation.

Cultural performances:

- Audio and video recording of prayers.
- Documenting the Bharatanatyam dance and its depiction of Andal’s life through the dance.

Temple architecture

- Photographs and videos of the temple's key elements with guidance from temple administration.
- Then, the interviews will be conducted with historians and expert scholars.

3.3 Data Analysis

This study employs thematic analysis to categorise primary and secondary data into four key themes: poetic influence, architectural legacy, gender portrayal, and contemporary cultural relevance. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying patterns in qualitative data, including interviews, observations, and historical texts.

Historical sources such as temple records and devotional texts will be analysed to examine Andal's literary influence. Andal’s Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi remain central to Tamil Vaishnavism, shaping temple traditions, classical music, and popular culture (Cutler, 1987). Her

influence extends beyond Srivilliputhur, profoundly shaping mainstream Tamil literature and religious discourse. This study examines the lasting influence of her poetry on contemporary narratives and devotional practices. Furthermore, the study will analyse temple architecture and cultural events to examine how Andal's legacy is reflected in both tangible structures and artistic representations. Scholars like Michell (1988) have emphasised the role of temple architecture in conveying religious narratives—an approach that will guide the analysis of Srivilliputhur Andal Temple, offering more profound insights into the interplay between art, devotion, and tradition.

3.3.1 Thematic Analysis Framework

Data analysis uses organised methods from both thematic analysis and open coding to review study findings through the Software NVivo. At first, coding helps to uncover common themes in all our data sources, which later merge into main analytical groupings of:

1. Poetic influence and literary legacy
2. Architectural heritage and symbolic representation
3. Gender representation and feminist interpretations
4. Contemporary cultural relevance and adaptations

Through historical document analysis, experts read documents in the context of their correct historical background and in conjunction with modern research findings. The research analyses temple documents, literary texts, and architectural details to explain how Andal's impact evolved throughout different periods. The study reviews Andal's effect across Tamil literature and public culture, expanding from Srivilliputhur. To better understand Andal's complex influence, researchers study her works as performed in modern classical dance and seen in current books and social networking sites.

3.4 Ethics

Adhering to ethical considerations in this research is fundamental, mainly since the research topic revolves around religion, a subject that is both sensitive and sacred. Firstly, since the primary method of gathering information for this research is through interviews and conversations, permission to conduct interviews, observe, and document will be obtained before proceeding to further steps. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants in this research, including temple authorities, priests, locals, and others, prior to conducting the interviews. The research objectives, nature of participation, and participants' right to withdraw from the information will be stated before the interviews. Most importantly, to ensure the utmost comfort and safety of the participants, special attention will be paid to voluntary participation so that there are no feelings of compulsion.

The interviewing and documentation process will be conducted with the sensitivities of the topic in mind. Given the sensitive and sacred nature of the topic, the questions and subsequent conversations will be designed and framed in a neutral and non-misleading manner to avoid

imposing opinions, misleading interpretations, and any offensive sentiments or misunderstandings. This way, the aim would be to extract information and conversations in the most natural and non-imposing manner. To maintain a neutral stance, the interview questions and discussions will be open-ended and conducted in comfortable settings that are conducive to the participants. Overall, the religious and cultural sensitivities will be treated with utmost respect.

Strict confidentiality standards will be kept and implemented to protect the participants and their privacy. Any information, unless mentioned otherwise, will be kept anonymous. Recordings and/or transcripts will be stored confidentially and securely unless permission to use them in the report is granted. If participants wish to be publicly credited, they will be accurately cited and credited for their part.

Academic integrity will be upheld through the citation of all sources, including verbal, written, and observational. Authenticity and intellectual property will be respected through attribution wherever required. Furthermore, the information collected will be presented in an unbiased and careful manner to avoid misinformation and misinterpretation. Findings will be presented objectively to ensure that the personal voice of the topic is heard.

Using these research methodologies, this study aims to preserve the balance and ethics of the topic. The study aims to honour and respect the community and participants by meticulously adhering to the aforementioned protocol.

3.5 Limitations

While Srivilliputhur is rich in Andal's poetic and architectural history, gathering data, conducting interviews, and accessing historical records are complex. The city presents various challenges in terms of methodology, logistics and communication.

Gaining access to temple sites presents a logistical challenge. Since these are religious sites, securing permission to conduct research from the appropriate temple authorities requires extensive negotiation. Researchers may face bureaucratic delays or restrictions on photography, interviews, or archival access (Sumathi & Pandiaraj, 2020)

Another significant challenge is posed in terms of accessibility, encompassing both language barriers and participants' willingness to share information. Most primary sources, such as Andal's historical manuscripts and temple inscriptions, are written in Tamil. Not only will they need to be translated into English for further analysis, but there is also the possibility that meaning may be lost in translation, as is often the case with poetry. Additionally, interviews with local priests, temple authorities, and other stakeholders may need to be conducted in Tamil, which necessitates the use of interpreters.

Furthermore, some interviewees—especially religious authorities and elderly devotees—may be reluctant to share insights with outsiders, particularly if they perceive the research as a critique of tradition. There may also be some hesitancy amongst women participants, who are the focus of the research, as Andal's legacy is embedded in gendered religious experiences. To mitigate this, researchers must establish trust through culturally sensitive approaches, ensuring participants feel comfortable sharing their perspectives (Sumathi & Pandiaraj, 2020).

Given that Andal is a religious, historical figure whose influence extends across literature, religion, and architecture, it is crucial to acknowledge biases in stakeholder narratives. Different groups—priests, historians, artists, devotees, and festival organisers—have distinct perspectives on Andal's life and legacy. Temple authorities are likely to emphasise her divinity and religious influence; historians are likely to give more value to her poetry. Her broad influence across cultures poses a methodological challenge for researchers, who must consolidate these varied perspectives to form a balanced academic analysis. This requires careful cross-referencing and data triangulation (Sumathi & Pandiaraj, 2020).

A significant amount of Andal's history is passed down orally. Devotional hymns and folklore, as well as her poetry, are not all transcribed but have been passed down verbally through generations. While these narratives are valuable in understanding her contemporary impact, they often lack concrete historical verification. Many details of Andal's life—such as her authorship of the *Tiruppavai* and *Nachiyar Tirumozhi* or the exact circumstances of her merging with the deity Ranganatha—are derived from hagiographies rather than historical records. These challenges distinguish between historically documented facts and devotional embellishments (*The Legacy of Andal*, 2020). To conduct thorough research, extensive cross-referencing is necessary to verify these oral accounts against written records, such as inscriptions, scriptures, and academic sources.

However, this also raises the issue of access to temple manuscripts and records for verifying oral information. There is little digitisation of historical documents describing Andal's life and the temples. Some documents also require special permissions and are difficult to access. Some records may be deteriorated or written in archaic Tamil scripts, interpreting a specialised task (*The Legacy of Andal*, 2020).

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive data analysis of Andal's poetic and architectural legacy in Tamil culture. This chapter is based on the research methodology and systematically examines and interprets the data from several qualitative methods. The research objectives of this study fall into three main dimensions: Andal's poetic legacy, architectural legacy, and contemporary relevance. Specifically, the study sought to contextualise Andal's devotional poetry within Tamil literary traditions historically; conduct a comprehensive literary interpretation of her seminal works, Thiruppavai and Nachiyar Thirumozhi; analyse the thematic, symbolic, and metaphorical elements in her poetry; examine her gendered perspective within the Bhakti movement; document the architectural heritage of temples dedicated to Andal, particularly in Srivilliputhur; analyse the iconographic representations and cultural significance of these temples; and assess Andal's influence on contemporary Tamil women, feminist interpretations of her work, and her impact on artistic practices and spiritual identity.

In this study, the analytical approach involved applying thematic analysis using NVivo software in the open coding stage—a strategy that continually evolves, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and themes across multiple data sources. The analysis structure was built around four main thematic categories: the poetic influence and literary legacy, the architectural heritage and symbolic representation, the representation of gender and feminist interpretation, and the contemporary cultural relevance and adaptations. The study explored this framework to navigate the complex interplay between historical texts and architectural items, as well as the modern understanding of Andal's legacy. The dataset for this study comprises various qualitative sources that collectively provide a multidimensional account of the influence of Andal. It includes ten in-depth interviews with key stakeholders from multiple perspectives, which are primary data for the research.

Three temple authorities responsible for preserving and maintaining traditional rituals were interviewed, as were four distinguished scholars of Tamil literary, religious, and architectural history, and several contemporary Tamil women whose spiritual and cultural identities have been formed by Andal's legacy. The conversations lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and produced about 15 hours of recorded material, which was then transcribed for analysis.

Extensive observational notes were taken to complement the interviews about Srivilliputhur during a series of fourteen days of field visits. These notes describe daily temple activities, rituals, and festivals, with a particular focus on the recitation of Tiruppavai and the Aadi Pooram festival. The systematic recording of the architectural features of the Srivilliputhur temple complex, including the gopuram, mandapams, and sculptural narratives that convey Andal's themes, is based on the data in the observational records. Contains over 200 photographs, detailed architectural sketches, and the expert's in-depth analysis of various temple features.

The dataset is further enriched with numerous secondary sources, including historical temple records, devotional texts, academic literature on Andal and her poetry, as well as its interpretations, architectural studies of Tamil temples, and contemporary cultural artifacts that evoke Andal. These sources include traditional palm leaf manuscripts stored in temple archives, scholarly publications from colonial times to the present, visual documentation of cultural performances based on Andal's literary works, and modern adaptations in literature, music, and digital media.

Results from this chapter are organised according to the four thematic categories that result from the coding process. Data from several sources is mixed in each section to have a holistic view of Andal's various aspects. In the poetic legacy section, the linguistic innovations that Andal pioneered, the themes of devotion she espouses, her literary impact, and more are closely examined. In the architectural heritage section, the symbolic presence of Andal is studied in temple structures and iconography. The section on gender representation examines feminist interpretations and how Andal's poetry inspires Tamil women of all ages. The section on current relevance examines how Tamil identity, spiritual practices, and cultural activities continue to be influenced by Andal's legacy.

The chapter illustrates the dynamic character of Andal's legacy and how her influence transcends academic and temporal boundaries through this in-depth analysis. The findings provide insight into the historical significance of Andal's contributions as well as their ongoing relevance in the contemporary discourse surrounding gender, spirituality, and cultural identity. This chapter presents fresh perspectives on how Andal's presence and poetry have been preserved, reinterpreted, and revitalised throughout centuries of Tamil cultural history, drawing on data from numerous sources.

4.2 Data Processing & Thematic Analysis Approach

For the analysis of Andal's legacy, a systematic approach was taken to process the rich data through representatives of various stakeholders. This section outlines the methodical process undertaken in this study, from the initial arrangement of data to the identification of discernible themes, with a focus on Andal's significance as a contemporary figure, her gendered spiritual expression, and her enduring legacy.

Open Coding Process

The structure of the raw data gathered from interviews with journalists, priests, scholars, artists, devotees, and local community members, as well as notes from temple visits, was organised thoroughly, and the process of open coding commenced correctly. The verbatim transcripts were screened again, this time to isolate meaningful segments that could be heard to represent stakeholders' points of view about Andal's poetry, legacy, and influence. We assigned each meaningful unit of text an initial code that included the core concept but was close to the participant's original expression.

For example, the poetical works of Andal were initially classified as 'Enduring oral tradition' to preserve their essence within this cultural practice. Likewise, the priest's view that Andal openly expresses her longing for Vishnu in Nachiyar Thirumozhi, something rare for women poets of her time, was coded as a female spiritual desire to indicate the female order in Andal's expressions of devotion. At the initial coding stage, a variety of codes from these multiple codenatures were involved in Andal's work, ranging from architectural heritages to feminist interpretations.

The NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used for coding, which was done systematically, allowing for the retrieval of codes. The software's functionality provided the opportunity to create a dynamic coding framework that would evolve throughout the analysis process. The coding was initially highly descriptive and closely related to the participants' narratives. Throughout the analysis development process, additional interpretive codes emerged through the constant comparison of data segments from various sources.

Intellectual openness was a defining feature of the open coding phase, as each data segment was treated without prior ideas about how it should be categorised. Unexpected revelations were made possible by this method, particularly regarding the intersection of gender and spirituality in Andal's legacy. Throughout this process, the researcher kept analytical memoranda in which she recorded questions, observations, and new patterns regarding the connections between codes.

4.2.1 Categorisation Process

The study moved to the more analytical level of categorisation after the open coding phase. This meant examining the relationships between the initial codes to identify broader patterns and conceptual intersections overall. Categorisation involved grouping similar codes according to the conceptual affinity they carry and analysing the collective representation of more essential elements of Andal's legacy through these grouped codes.

During the iterative analysis and comparison, all the open codes were grouped into five major categories: Contemporary Relevance, Gendered Perspective, Cultural Preservation, Literary and Poetic Interpretation, and Spiritual Influence. Each category represented a cluster of related codes that, together, shed light on a crucial dimension of Andal's influence.

For example, codes such as "Enduring Oral Tradition," "Cultural Preservation," "Educational Influence," and "Community Participation" were grouped under the category "Contemporary Relevance," as they collectively highlighted the ongoing significance of Andal's legacy in present-day contexts. Similarly, codes such as "Female Spiritual Desire," "Female Devotional Identity," and "Women's Voice in Bhakti" were grouped under "Gendered Perspective" to represent the feminist dimensions of Andal's spiritual expression.

However, this categorisation was not linear. It went round and round, with iteration of refining and reorganising. Some codes initially appeared to fall into more than one category, necessitating that they be placed in a more specific context. For instance, the code "Spiritual Empowerment" had dimensions relevant to both "Contemporary Relevance" and "Spiritual

Influence," requiring careful consideration of its primary conceptual alignment based on the context in which it appeared in the data.

This categorisation was achieved using the hierarchical node structure of NVivo software, which provided a visual representation of codes and categories, as well as their relationships. To ensure that codes were distributed across data sources, matrix coding queries were used to examine how categories emerged, revealing that they were diverse and representative of stakeholder perspectives.

4.2.2 Theme Development

In the final phase of the thematic analysis, categories were synthesized into coherent themes that captured the synergy of Andal's legacy in a more abstract, intellectually rich manner. In this process, the study examined the relationships between categories and attempted to uncover overarching patterns that extended beyond individual categories, ultimately revealing larger narratives about Andal's significance.

The research questions, particularly those that guided the theme development process, concerned how Andal's legacy is preserved and interpreted in the contemporary contexts. After analytical reflection and theoretical sensitivity, five themes were developed in total, combining to present a comprehensive understanding of how Andal lost his contemporary relevance, gendered perspective, cultural preservation, literary and poetic influence, as well as spiritual influence.

The themes were developed through a process of abstraction and interpretation that went beyond description to foster a more profound understanding of the meaning of Andal's legacy. For instance, the theme "Contemporary Relevance" evolved to encompass not only the preservation of traditions but also the dynamic reinterpretation of Andal's work in modern contexts, mainly through feminist lenses. The theme "Gendered Perspective" was developed to highlight not just the historical significance of Andal's female voice but also how her expression of spiritual desire continues to provide a framework for women's spiritual autonomy.

A constant comparison of the data, codes, and categories was performed to achieve coherence in the analyses and research grounding in empirical evidence. Additionally, thematic maps of themes were created within NVivo to represent the relationships among themes and to examine how these themes were integrated within the story of Andal's legacy.

4.2.3 Validation and Refinement

The process of validation and refinement was used to ensure that the emerging themes were rigorous. This included returning to the original data to see if the themes had accurately captured what the participants had spoken about themselves. The researcher was interested in discovering evidence that would contradict or enrich the emerging thematic framework.

A triangulation was taken across different data sources to see if multiple perspectives aligned with the themes, and the validation process was also involved. For example, the theme of

"Cultural Preservation" was validated by finding supporting evidence in interviews with priests, temple workers, and local vendors, as well as in observational notes from temple visits.

Furthermore, drafts were subjected to debriefing with colleagues familiar with Tamil culture and literature, who provided counter perspectives that promoted alternative understandings and challenged my assumed knowledge in the analysis. The validity and thematic analysis benefited from the collaborative approach to validation.

4.2.4 Integration into a Cohesive Framework

Finally, the themes were validated and then integrated into a single, analytical framework of related themes that explained the interrelatedness of the themes and their significance collectively. This framework illustrates how Andal's legacy is reflected in the diverse manifestations of her spiritual, literary, cultural, and social expressions, and how these levels interconnect to ensure her enduring presence.

The integrated framework demonstrated the themes of Andal's literary innovations, provided support for her spiritual expression, and shaped the current feminist and future generations' understanding of her gendered ideas. It also explained the cultural preservation practices that enabled the sustainability of Andal's legacy. Next, it provided a basis for the subsequent discussion of findings and implications following a holistic understanding of Andal's influence.

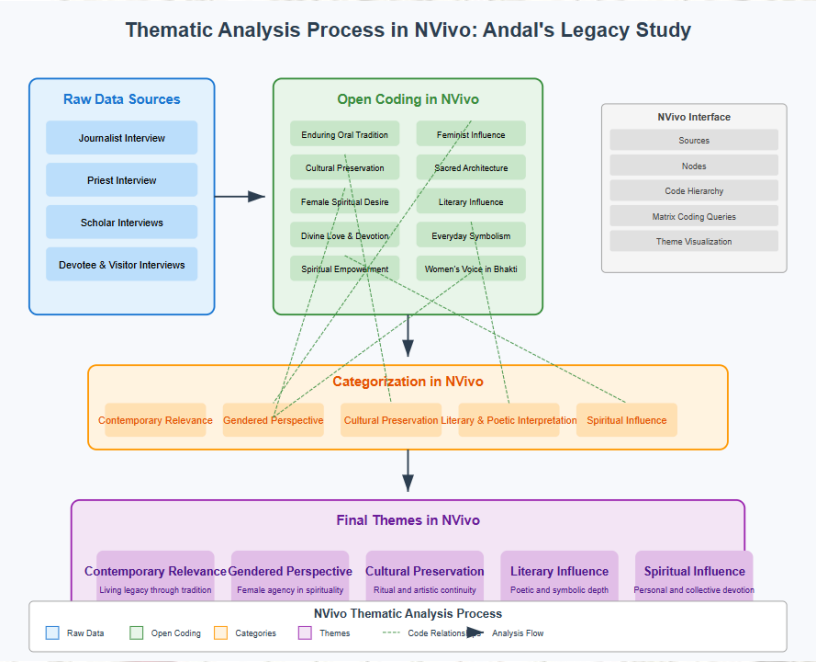


Figure 10: Thematic Analysis Process Involving Open Coding and Theme Development

Source: (By Author)

4.3 Emergent Themes

4.3.1 Theme 1: [Contemporary Relevance]

The "Contemporary Relevance" theme in Andal's legacy encompasses multiple elements that deeply connect to sustained oral traditions and cultural preservation, as well as to feminist empowerment and modern academic perspectives on her life and literary contributions. Andal's legacy is an active theme, as devotees, academics, and community members continually engage with her heritage through diverse and dynamic approaches. The observational notes, along with the transcripts, demonstrate that Andal maintains her significance by being present in everyday practices, educational teachings, and cultural activities, and by profoundly influencing both personal faith and social cultural identity.

Andal's poetry, particularly the Tiruppavai, serves as a cornerstone for her contemporary relevance. According to Sudarshan, who moderated the study as a priest, the Tiruppavai stands at the center of Vishnu temple worship through daily morning ceremonies worldwide. The devotional verses composed by Andal serve as fundamental components that now permeate worldwide Hindu worship practices, extending beyond their historical and geographical origins. Sudarshan asserts that these 30 verses represent the core Vedic principles which can be understood by worshipers who lack knowledge of classical Sanskrit and Vedic scriptures. Andal achieved this result by distilling complex spiritual writings into straightforward Tamil poetry, making it accessible to modern people. Through his observation, Andal showcases how everyday devotion of Tiruppavai generates Vedic-level spiritual benefits, thus proving her singular role in making sacred wisdom accessible to all practitioners.



Figure 11: Interview with Sudarshan

Source: (By Author)

Oral tradition regarding Andal's work plays a crucial role in sustaining her spiritual significance. The lifelong practice of singing Andal's songs represents the tradition shown by caretaker Amma in this study. Through self-teaching approaches, she mastered these compositions due to her profound spiritual connection to Andal's legacy, despite lacking formal training. Through her dedication, Amma demonstrates how traditional oral methods help preserve Andal's teachings across successive generations. Similarly, Balakrishnan, a retired Tamil teacher and devotee, underscores the literary brilliance of Andal's poetry. Via simple rural symbols like rain and natural elements, Andal achieved eternal applicability of her spiritual messages, according to Balakrishnan. Through Balakrishnan's thoughts, we discover how Andal accomplished the fusion of devotional bhakti with erotic sentiment, sringara rasa, in a way that established new frontiers between religious activities and secular practices, thereby enhancing both Tamil literature and devotional traditions.

The general societal involvement strengthens the significance of Andal's teachings for our current era. Inside the study, you can find a meaningful assessment about Andal's enduring impact from an interviewed shopkeeper vendor. According to his observations, the shop vendor notices a significant surge in customers purchasing Andal-related merchandise, including prayer books, prayer albums, and devotional CDs, during the Margazhi and Aadi festivals. People still connect with Andal on two levels through these interactions: devotion and commercial activities. A growing number of college students, alongside unmarried women, express interest in Andal as they seek guidance and blessings for their personal lives, according to observations from the vendor. Andal maintains her popularity beyond her historical audience because she attracts contemporary believers who want to experience the combination of spiritual peace and personal strength.

The temple stands as a vital tribute to Andal alongside its contemporary elements, which keep it relevant to present times. The temple's Thiruppani responsibilities of Balakrishnan involve preserving oral stories, reconditioning historic paintings, and managing festivals, including the Aadi month chariot procession. The activities maintain historical methods while simultaneously adapting them to modern times, creating a living connection between ancient and present cultures. The architectural designs of Vishnu temples worldwide incorporate Andal's literary verses according to Sudarshan. By combining Andal's literary art with physical structures, the legacy reveals how it transcends the boundaries between physical and cultural heritage components.

The feminist critiques of Andal's life, along with her literary works, lay the groundwork for scholars to investigate her connection to our modern age. The shopkeeper vendor observes that numerous female devotees view Andal as their friend and sibling, one who embraces their challenges and supports their ambitions. Unmarried women place great importance on connecting with their spirituality, as they once expressed devotion to Lord Vishnu through poems that now serve as a ritual for blessings during marriage. The reinterpretations support modern feminist interpretations, which value female autonomy across various spiritual traditions. Andal displayed robust independence and defied historical restrictions on female spiritual values in her

unapologetic poetic expression of her desires. The entire story of Andal serves as a progressive feminist dialogue that motivates today's women who practice religion within cultural contexts.

The findings from observational notes suggest that Andal's teachings align with contemporary awareness of environmental stewardship. The Tiruppavai contains verses where Andal employs exceptional scientific precision to clarify natural phenomena, such as rainfall and evaporation. Andal's poetry proves to have more significance than religious themes because it correctly describes natural elements, which remain essential to discussions about the environment today. Interpretations of her works confirm that her poetry extends beyond historical relics, as it addresses contemporary issues and concerns.

Andal's legacy extends across various parts of the world, remaining relevant in contemporary times. According to Sudarshan, rituals incorporating the Tiruppavai are performed at Vishnu temples in Singapore, Malaysia, London, and other international locations. The worldwide recognition of Andal serves as proof that diasporic groups see her as a symbol that connects them to both their culture and their spiritual heritage. The temple shopkeeper notes that the number of English translations of Andal literature is increasing rapidly, in line with the rise in foreign visitors to the temple. Globalisation enables new methods for accessing Andal’s legacy, allowing her teachings to transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries.

The "Contemporary Relevance" theme demonstrates the enduring impact of Andal through practices such as oral tradition, community involvement, feminist retellings, literary achievements, and the worldwide popularisation of her influence. Her innovative approach to marry traditional teachings with modern times enables her wisdom to have value for various communities across different periods and geographic areas. The worship of Andal continues to flourish through temple rituals, recitations of the Tiruppavai, and personal devotional experiences between devotees and Amma and Balakrishnan, thereby sustaining a profound impact on individual lives alongside cultural traditions. Through devotional art, Andal created a legacy which demonstrates how art can bridge past and present to connect people from all times to spiritual guidance and cultural heritage.

4.3.2 Theme 2: [Gendered Perspective]

Andal's poetry and legacy enable researchers to understand how spirituality integrates with gender roles and traditional social beliefs through the theme "Gendered Perspective." Although born female, Andal developed an empowered sense of agency in spiritual matters through writing thirupavai poems, as she rejected traditional gender norms through her writing and actions. The study employs an examination of transcripts and observational notes to investigate how Andal's heritage influences contemporary women who construct devotional identities by challenging cultural conventions.

Andal used Thiruppavai to demonstrate female control over religious matters along with her capacity to express devotional female desire. According to a Tamil teacher, the skilled poetic approach of Andal is characterized by her successful application of mundane life stories into profound spiritual imagery. The imagery of rain and nature from village life serves as the base for

Andal to convey abstract theological concepts in the Thiruppavai. The poetic method she used enabled a broader audience to access and provided women with the chance to encounter literary representations of their spiritual selves. According to the teacher, Andal created an entirely new concept when she merged bhakti devotion with sringara rasa, romantic love, to present female spiritual aspirations in a new way. Through her writings, Andal provided women with an outlet to express their spiritual aspirations and religious sentiments.

Andal's actions reinforced her ongoing effort to challenge social norms regarding gender. A shopkeeper shared the story of how Andal placed divine garlands on her head before presenting them to Lord Vishnu, despite initially perceiving such behavior as improper. However, it now stands as a sacred expression of devotion. Modern traditions based on this earlier symbolism demonstrate Andal's divine bond with the holy and her independent expression of faith within dominant patriarchal traditions. Shopkeepers witness numerous young female believers who come to the temple to ask Andal for marriage blessings, as she represents someone who connects with their hopes and challenges of matrimony. Through this personal link, Andal's legacy enables women to gain power through spiritual recognition of their voices and personal experiences.

The observational field notes indicate that Andal's impact on people extends beyond personal religious services and encompasses group-based religious activities. The celebration of Thiruppavai through recitation by women members begins through early morning gatherings, which enables female spiritual unity. People who work at local stores have observed that women make up the majority of attendees at these gatherings, where they exchange beneficial personal experiences with one another. The devotion linked to Andal functions as a unifying force, establishing her status as a communal figure while promoting inter-women solidarity. During interviews, the worker explained that women view Andal as both a friend and a sister who provides understanding and comfort in times of difficulty when they share their struggles. The feminine nature of Andal's devotional relationship stands in opposition to traditional male deity traditions, thus highlighting her untypical mold as a female religious leader.



Figure 12: Interview with Tamil Contemporary Women Professors

Source: (By Author)

Through her legacy, Andal reinterpreted feminine devotion by establishing new characteristics for the behavior of devotees. A priest in an interview described how Andal simplified devotional practice for female devotees through singing and other straightforward ways of worship. By democratising devotion, religious involvement became accessible to women who spent most of their time confined within their domestic spaces. The priest explained that Andal incorporated musical elements of Nama Sankirtana into her poetry, which enabled women to practice spiritual devotion independently. Through her emphasis on emotional connection, Andal developed a devotion framework which welcomed and mobilised participation from all worshippers.

The investigative perspective on Andal's life continues to generate modern feminist interpretations that resonate through present-day feminist thought. This seller observed that modern female students from diverse backgrounds seek Andal both for her religious value and her courageous defiance of gender norms. Records from the vendor sector indicate a growing consumer interest in English books about Andal, which demonstrates the expanding curiosity of educated urban women regarding her heritage through contemporary feminist principles. The current interpretation supports broader efforts to reclaim female pioneers in history, enabling them to serve as icons of empowerment.

The empowerment that Andal exemplified emerged naturally from her commitment to cultural and spiritual teachings, rather than from secular political influences. One of the study participants stated that Andal expressed her desires through her devotion to Lord Vishnu, which enabled her to overcome social barriers and preserve her identity. Her legacy stands out through a perfect combination of conventional ideas with innovative thinking, which resonates with audience members throughout different periods.

The gendered beliefs of Andal can be seen in contemporary devotional temple rituals through firsthand observations. Thousands of devotees, mainly women, participate in Andal's wedding ceremony every Aadi month, celebrating with processions. According to shop personnel, these occasions evoke feelings of happiness and connection among women, thereby strengthening their bonds of friendship. The worker reported that numerous visitors share personal experiences of reciting Thiruppavai, which have led to inner peace or the fulfillment of desires, thus demonstrating Andal's profound impact. The text shows that Andal's association with men and women manifests differently, although in subtle ways. Men typically participate in family rituals where they show respectful attitudes toward Andal, but female devotees maintain stronger personal bonds with her.

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4.3.3 Theme 3: [Cultural Preservation]

Cultural Preservation emerges as a significant aspect of Andal's enduring legacy, upheld through artistic representation, ritualistic preservation, and the concept of the temple as a living monument. This theme encapsulates how Andal's presence is maintained and celebrated through

a blend of tradition and evolving modern expressions. The essence of cultural preservation is not just about preserving the past, but also about ensuring its relevance and continuity in contemporary society, as seen in the conservation of art, ritual continuity, devotional art, and the interplay between tradition and modernity.

The Andal temple itself stands as a testament to this cultural preservation. Ulzhavar S. Balakrishnan, a Tamil teacher, highlighted the significance of the Andal Theru (chariot) and its festival, noting that it is "one of the grandest here." He emphasised that the chariot, with its nine wheels made of teak wood, is not merely a religious symbol but a community event. When the chariot moves through the streets, thousands gather to pull it along. It's not just spiritual—it's a community event. People from all villages around come to participate." The very act of physically pulling the chariot becomes a collective effort, uniting people across different social strata and reinforcing a shared cultural identity. The meticulous preparation, involving decorations with flowers and colorful cloths, and the remarkable craftsmanship of the chariot, showcase the dedication to preserving this tradition.



Figure 13: Interview with Balakrishna

Source: (By Author)

Artistic representations of Andal play a crucial role in preserving her cultural significance. As noted by the priest, Sudarshan, while "none of her sculptures are in the temple, a few of the poems she sang are incorporated into the architecture." This incorporation of her poetry into the physical structure of the temple indicates a deliberate effort to immortalise her words. The priest further explained how specific phrases or descriptions from her poems, such as "Madhavi malar," are integrated into the temple's architecture, making it a living embodiment of her verses. This integration ensures that visitors are constantly reminded of Andal's contributions, not just through separate artistic depictions but as an intrinsic part of the temple's design.

This theme includes ritualistic preservation as one of its essential elements. Sudarshan confirms that worldwide Vishnu temples conduct daily recitations of Tiruppavai, which include all 30 Andal poems, as part of their morning religious activities. The first thing in the morning, the first puja of the day, is for them to chant all the poems of Tiruppavai. The ritual recitation of Andal's devotional work, known as Tiruppavai, occurs daily at various locations, including Singapore, Malaysia, and London, to preserve her message across different geographic regions and cultural backgrounds. Through poem recitation, devotees preserve cultural values alongside spiritual teachings, thereby transmitting this knowledge from one generation to the next.

Every 12 or 48 years, the Kumbhabhishekam ceremony functions as a crucial ritual that demonstrates deep faith in preserving traditions. The temple visitor numbers rose substantially after the 2010 Kumbhabhishekam ceremony was organised, according to Sudarshan. Through this reconsecration process, the temple gains fresh spiritual power, which strengthens its position as a holy place. The regular performance of these ceremonies demonstrates the temple's importance, both spiritually and culturally, in observing its sacred rituals.

Devotees of Andal uphold both the grand religious traditions and popular customs that sustain the cultural importance of her sacred place. The shopkeepers servicing the temple play a preservation role by selling merchandise connected to Andal. As mentioned by the shopkeeper vendor, "We sell small Andal idols, picture frames of Andal with Perumal, prayer books containing Thiruppavai, CDs with devotional songs, and special garlands made of tulasi." The tangible artifacts sold by shopkeepers preserve Andal's legacy, allowing devotees to study her narrative and associated stories personally. The shopkeeper reported that people are increasingly seeking English publications about Andal, indicating a growing interest in understanding her life story across different communities.

The temple vendor has observed changes in visitor demographics, including an increase in youthful crowds, primarily composed of women, who now frequently visit the temple. The temple used to get only older visitors before the present time. I witness an increasing number of college-age students, mainly female, who visit the temple to venerate Andal. People who come to the temple see her as a force that leads them to finding excellent romantic partners. The tale of Andal continues to inspire modern spectators because they recognise her power to convey devotion and empowerment.

People's connection to Andal supports the enduring legacy of her cultural significance. Working near the temple has shifted the beliefs of the local store employee. "Before working here, I wasn't very religious. Witnessing distant pilgrims devoted to their worship has wholly modified my perspective. Through her stories about devotees who received blessings by worshiping Andal, she demonstrated how faith at the temple empowers its believers.

Ulzhavar S. Balakrishnan, as a Tamil teacher, emphasised the literary significance of Andal's poetry, noting that "in Thiruppavai, she used simple Tamil that even common people could understand, but the meanings are profound." Her command of Tamil prosody and her ability to incorporate bhakti into daily living were also emphasised by him. "She used everyday village life

as metaphors for divine concepts." He ensured that her literary legacy would be recognised and understood by future generations by teaching her poems to his students.

4.3.4 Theme 4: [Literary and Poetic Influence]

The section "Literary and Poetic Influence" demonstrates how Andal left an enduring imprint on Tamil literature, as well as its cultural practices, which are evident throughout various spiritual and everyday domains. The central theme unites the scholarly analysis of her literary works with poetic symbolism alongside linguistic creativity and sustained value of her writing throughout history. Documents reveal that the verses of Andal function beyond devotional worship, as they represent elaborated literary works that drive modern intellectual discourse and artistic creation.

Andal's poetry, particularly the Thiruppavai, stands as a testament to her literary prowess. A priest, Sudarshan, elucidates the essence of Thiruppavai, stating, "Everything that is there in the world, everything about this world, is condensed in these 30 poems." Andal's poetry extends beyond religious devotion because she composed verses that present fundamental truths about the world, as observed by humans, which render them everlasting. It is echoed when Sudarshan shares a Tamil proverb, "Vedam anaitthukkum vithu Tamil," suggesting that "the essence of these Vedas is taken and presented as Tiruppavai in just 30 poems." Andal's 30 poems rise through religious comparison to match the significance of the Vedas, which are praised as sacred Hindu scriptures. Reciting Tiruppavai offers the same benefits as reciting the entire Vedas.

Andal's sacred poetic metaphors enable humans to connect spiritual realms with their earthly existence. Andal uses her poetic messages to merge spiritual understanding with natural elements, long before these concepts became mainstream. Sudarshan gives an example of this, stating that "In one of the poems, she says, 'Pani sErndha malaiyin mEl…' which means that the world is spherical, like a ball. She explicitly reveals this concept within the poem, as stated by her words. Andal proves her scientific and worldly understanding by composing poems that showcase her understanding. Through these lines, she demonstrates knowledge of Earth's spherical form and rain patterns. Our analysis of her devotional verses reveals the profound understanding of the world she conveys through her seemingly simple religious poetry.

The literary line of Andal's work continues to have a lasting effect on the cultural expression of her devotees, who can be observed in her temple and surrounding region. The shopkeeper vendor mentions that they sell "prayer books containing Thiruppavai", which indicates that people are actively buying and reading Andal's poetry, thus showcasing how people are constantly engaging with her literary work.

Andal introduced creative linguistic approaches to her poetic verses. Ulzhavar S. Balakrishnan, a Tamil teacher, says, "In Thiruppavai, she used simple Tamil that even common people could understand, but the meanings are profound." Andal displays linguistic innovation by using simple Tamil, which addresses people from diverse backgrounds, including those outside

the elite class. Although her essential Tamil poetry is accessible to the general public, it contains multiple sophisticated meanings that demonstrate her high literary capability.

The written documentation indicates Andal's work remains essential for present-day society. The shopkeeper vendor notes a shift in the demographics of visitors, stating, "Earlier, mostly older people would visit." The vendor at the shop currently observes several college-age students, as well as female students, showing reverence to Andal during their visits. The increasing number of younger people demonstrates how Andal's poetry and personality resonate with present-day listeners, primarily women. The influential range of Thiruppavai recitations extends to international devotees, with Vishnu temples performing ritual recitals throughout Singapore, Malaysia, and London, according to priest Sudarshan, thereby validating the universal acceptance of Andal's literary achievements.

The impact of Andal's poetry and literature is not limited by time or place. Generations of poets, intellectuals, and devotees have been inspired by her words, which are a synthesis of philosophy, literature, and devotion. Andal's literary legacy is deeply ingrained in the cultural environment, ensuring its ongoing scholarly and cultural significance, from the architectural integration of her poetry in temples to the daily recitation of Thiruppavai.

4.3.5 Theme 5: [Spiritual Influence]

Andal's life stories and works achieve their most powerful effect through Spiritual Influence because they create vital emotional bonds between the followers and their communities. The influence grants power and devotion, along with spiritual strength, especially to women who struggle with spiritual integration during their social interactions, as evidenced by recorded documents and observation notes.

During his interview, priest Sudarshan perfectly presents the profound spiritual influence that Andal generated. Through Nama Sankirtana, Andal established a straightforward spiritual path that enables women to worship God by singing devotional songs to Him. The simplified approach of Andal combines both accessibility features and an empowering framework, which made devotion directly available to female practitioners. The priest observes that Andal received her divine birth to serve as a simplification method for female devotees, demonstrating that her incarnation aimed to create spiritual accessibility for women. Andal's significance remains active in present times because she continues to inspire people through ongoing oral traditions, educational programs, and community participation. Her legacy remains active in religious ceremonies and temple traditions as well as modern feminist perspectives, thus demonstrating her ongoing role in sacred spiritual traditions.

A retail shop employee interviewed about Andal’s status recognised how devotees observed the tradition with Andal wearing temple offerings because this custom represented both her religious fervor and her closeness to Vishnu. Modern society upholds this practice as evidence of her spiritual presence manifesting in real time. Young female college students visit Andal for prayers because they believe she can help them find suitable partners, according to the shopkeeper,

who has observed this trend in contemporary society. The vendor finds serenity during periods of business slowness while listening to the Thiruppavai recitation from the temple, as the sounds create a peaceful atmosphere. The vendor demonstrates how Andal's devotional presence has a tranquil effect on both devotees and non-devotees.

Andal's impact extends beyond personal devotional practices, as she influences both community religious practices and social belief systems and traditions. The global presence of Tiruppavai poems in Vishnu temples reflects the transcendent spiritual value of Andal, according to the information presented by a temple priest. According to the priest, the temple's daily first puja begins with reciting verses from Tiruppavai. In 30 poems of Tiruppavai, the priest believes that all spiritual aspects of this world are compressed. Tiruppavai recitation is said to offer the same value as reading all the Vedas, according to the priest. The Vedic essence contained in these works enables anyone who recites them to accrue spiritual merit, according to their beliefs.

The Tamil teacher, Ulzhavar S. Balakrishnan, provides detailed information to explain Andal's sacred artistic and literary accomplishments during his lifetime, dedicated to religious service. The simple Tamil verses used by Andal convey spiritual meanings that ordinary folk could understand, according to his view. According to Balakrishnan Andal, she combined her devotion with romantic feelings while converting rural scenarios into divine representations. Throughout his career, Balakrishnan used to instruct his Tamil students that Andal exhibited remarkable literary innovation hundreds of years before her time.

The staff member of the local shop situated near the temple presents an expanded view about his religious change since working at the temple. He lacked devotion before starting his employment at the temple. Working at the temple has transformed him because he has observed the deep faith practiced by devout visitors who travel long distances. According to the local store worker, this devotee maintained daily Thiruppavai recitations for thirty days until he finally became a parent after ten years of petition. The employee checks for auspicious viewing through darshan before beginning his workday at the shop. The temple tank and the temple bell sound create a special feel for him, according to the worker. The shop employee who works around the temple believes that Andal gives blessings to all who serve her, thus avoiding any complaints about excessive work.

The shopworker actively notices the gender-oriented aspects through which people worship Andal. The store worker observes that women maintain an intimate relationship when they speak with Andal as if they were close friends or sisters. The store worker observes unmarried girls and women visiting Andal's temple without male accompaniment to seek blessings for marriage. The sighting aligns with the main thematic idea of portraying Andal as a woman who inspires women through empowerment. This observation is consistent with the broader theme of "Gendered Perspective," which emphasises female spiritual desire, devotional identity, and agency.

The numerous ways Andal has inspired spirituality make her influence comprehensive and far-reaching. Devotion at the personal level intersects with communal worship while offering literary understanding and empowering the female community. Through her existence and creative

body of work, she enables countless individuals, especially women, to connect with the divine force while gaining spiritual strength to navigate social challenges.

4.4 Cross-Theme Patterns & Interrelationships

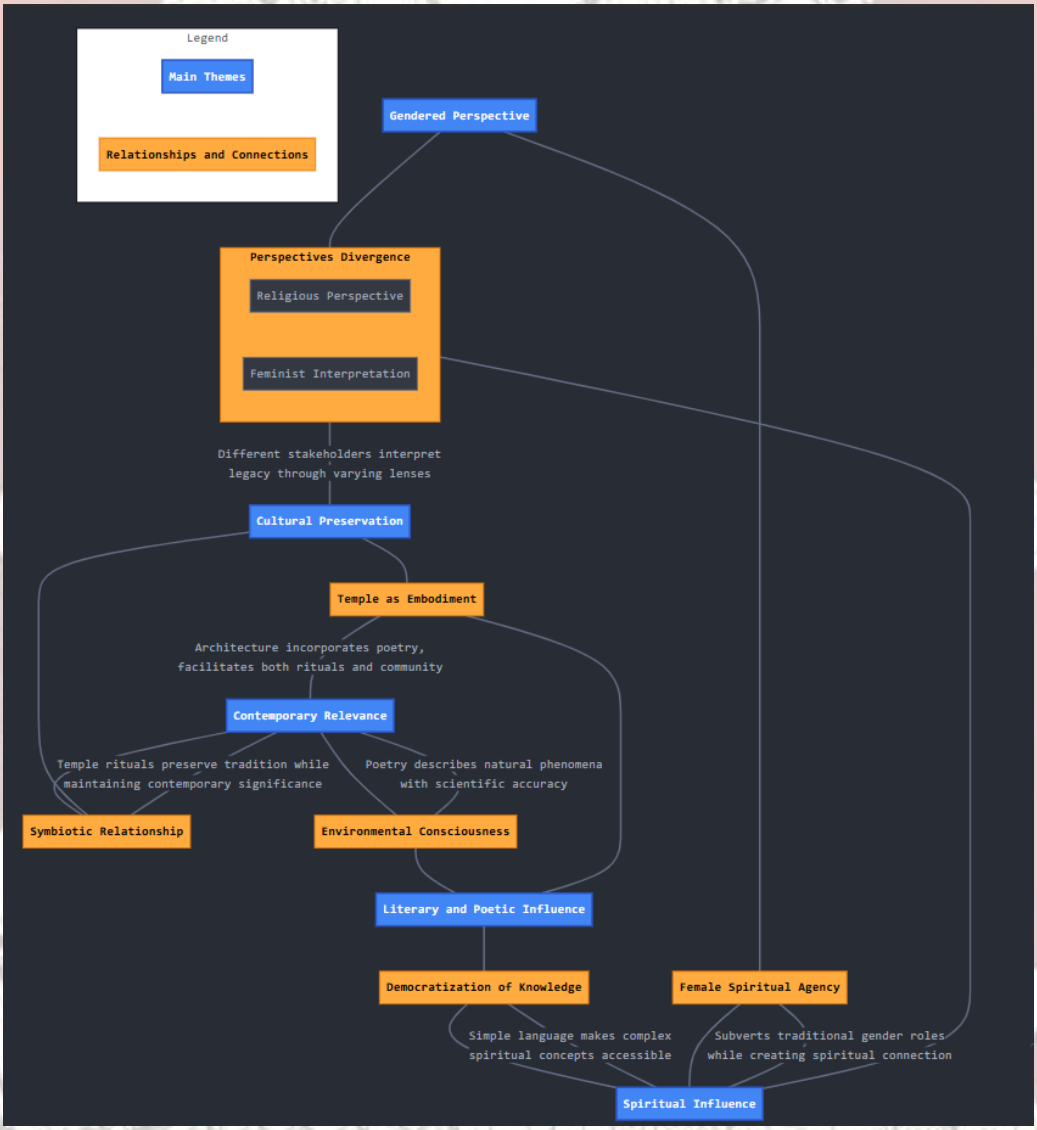


Figure 14: Cross-Theme Relationship in the Study

Source: (By Author)

There is a clear cross-theme pattern in the connection between cultural preservation and contemporary relevance. As the priest Sudarshan has emphasized, the recitation of Tiruppavai in temples around the world continues to be performed, maintaining a centuries-old tradition while ensuring its relevance today. This method is a good example of how relevance and preservation

work in tandem, rather than in opposition to one another. In a similar vein, the Kumbhabhishekam event, which is held every 12 or 48 years, is an intentional attempt to preserve traditional continuity while adjusting to contemporary situations. According to the findings, the growing number of people attending these rituals suggests that, as long as they remain approachable and significant to the present generation, traditional customs continue to be popular even in modern settings.

Another noteworthy pattern emerges from the interaction between literary, poetic, and spiritual influences. Andal's literary prowess, exemplified by her use of "simple Tamil that even common people could understand," as Balakrishnan put it, facilitates spiritual accessibility. She democratizes spiritual knowledge by reducing complex Vedic concepts to poems that anyone can understand, regardless of socioeconomic standing or level of formal education. This democratisation is especially evident in the priest's assertion that chanting Tiruppavai has benefits similar to those of reciting the complete Vedas. As a result, spiritual empowerment and literary creativity are closely intertwined, with one factor enhancing the impact of the other.

The connection between Spiritual Influence and Gendered Perspective is the most interesting cross-theme. The shopkeeper describes Andal's manifestation of feminine spiritual yearning as helping young women find "good life partners," which establishes her as a feminist icon and spiritual mentor. Through her words and deeds—most notably, donning garlands intended for deities—she subverts conventional gender norms, setting an example of female spiritual power that continues to motivate women navigating religion and society. The store employee pointed out that women frequently view Andal as a "friend or sister," which emphasises how intimate and meaningful this spiritual bond is. In contrast to more hierarchical religious paradigms, this gendered aspect of spirituality offers a distinct path to divine connection, affirming the agency and experiences of women.

When data sources are triangulated, consistent patterns emerge from multiple angles. The religious institution's priest, local merchants, and knowledgeable devotees, such as Balakrishnan, all acknowledge Andal's continuing value, despite their differing opinions on her legacy. Balakrishnan promotes the literary and educational aspects, the merchants concentrate on religious activities and business issues, while the priest stresses theological relevance.

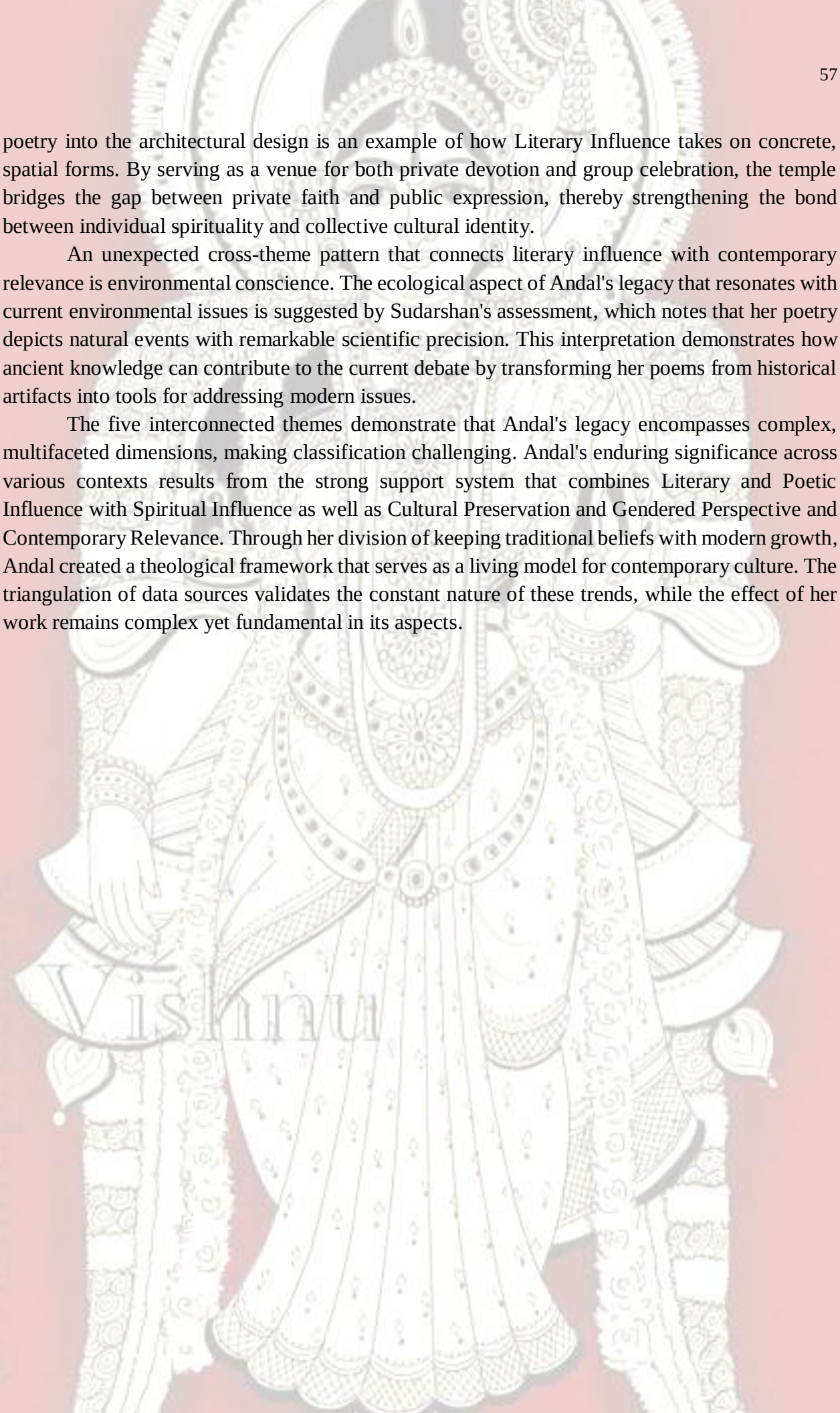
Nonetheless, all three viewpoints agree that Andal may transcend historical and cultural barriers, suggesting an intense and complex legacy that resonates across various fields. Interestingly, stakeholders' perceptions of Andal's impact vary greatly. Although the priest primarily contextualises her contribution within traditional religious frameworks—highlighting her role in making bhakti more accessible to women—modern feminist readings, as evidenced by the growing interest among college students, portray her as a symbol of female empowerment who defied patriarchal conventions. These opposing viewpoints underscore how Andal's legacy is dynamic and ever-evolving, accommodating both conventional and modern interpretations without undermining the legitimacy of either.

The temple itself, which facilitates Contemporary Relevance through continuous rituals and community involvement, while also serving as a physical representation of cultural preservation, is another way the concepts converge. As Sudarshan noted, the integration of Andal's

poetry into the architectural design is an example of how Literary Influence takes on concrete, spatial forms. By serving as a venue for both private devotion and group celebration, the temple bridges the gap between private faith and public expression, thereby strengthening the bond between individual spirituality and collective cultural identity.

An unexpected cross-theme pattern that connects literary influence with contemporary relevance is environmental conscience. The ecological aspect of Andal's legacy that resonates with current environmental issues is suggested by Sudarshan's assessment, which notes that her poetry depicts natural events with remarkable scientific precision. This interpretation demonstrates how ancient knowledge can contribute to the current debate by transforming her poems from historical artifacts into tools for addressing modern issues.

The five interconnected themes demonstrate that Andal's legacy encompasses complex, multifaceted dimensions, making classification challenging. Andal's enduring significance across various contexts results from the strong support system that combines Literary and Poetic Influence with Spiritual Influence as well as Cultural Preservation and Gendered Perspective and Contemporary Relevance. Through her division of keeping traditional beliefs with modern growth, Andal created a theological framework that serves as a living model for contemporary culture. The triangulation of data sources validates the constant nature of these trends, while the effect of her work remains complex yet fundamental in its aspects.



Chapter 5: Discussion (Triangulation) & Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings

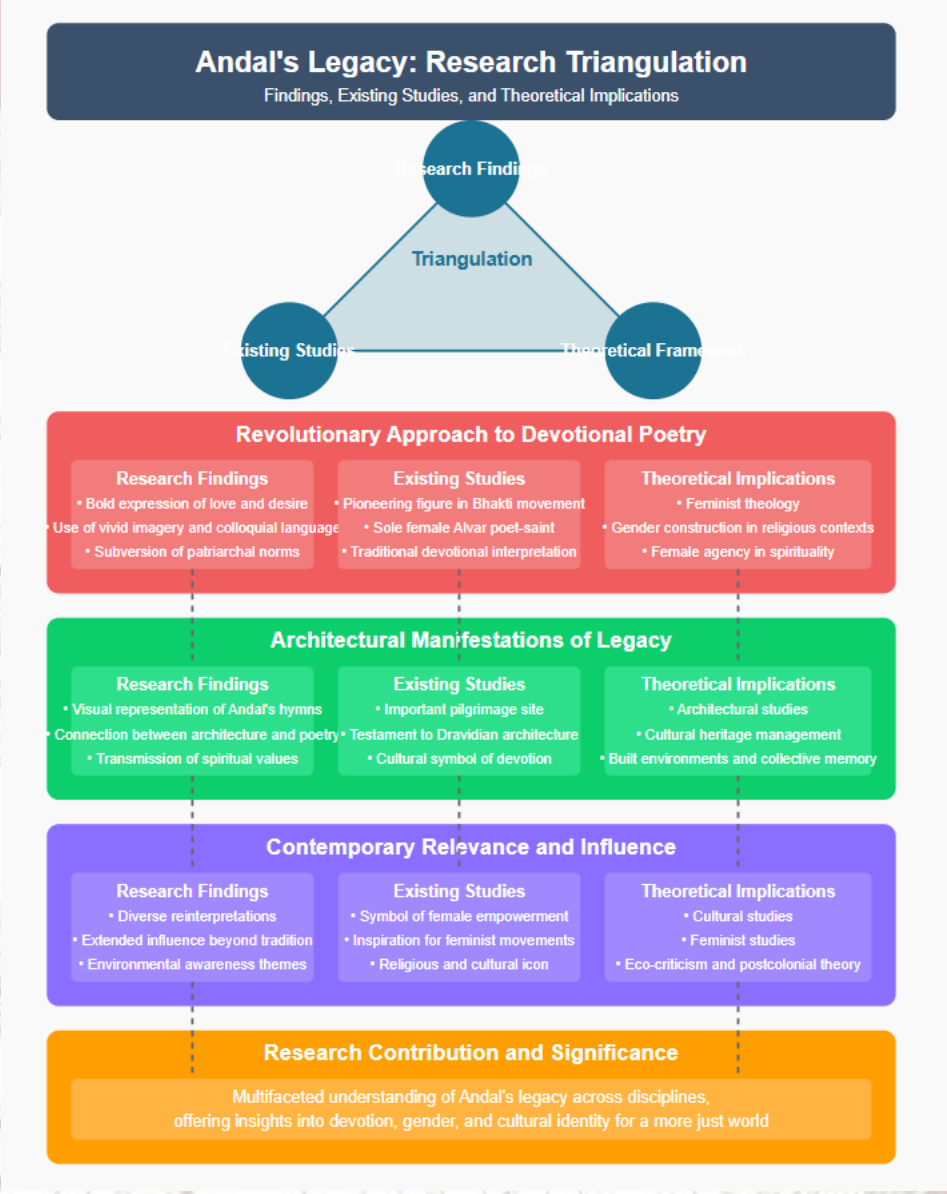


Figure 15: Triangulation of the Findings with existing studies and theories

Source: (By Author)

The research demonstrates how the diverse impact of Andal, the Tamil poet-saint, has endured over time by highlighting her significant contributions to devotional poetry, as well as her

influence on leading architectural traditions and the shaping of modern Tamil culture. Multiple dimensions emerge when studying Andal's life and her works, as they confirm substantial academic theories while also providing unique perspectives that generate practical applications in various fields.

This study demonstrates the core idea that Andal used an original methodology to compose devotional poems. Academic research has established her leadership position in the Bhakti movement as the only female Alvar. The original study delves deeper into Andal's verse to reveal the distinctive, fearless manner in which she expressed both passionate love and divine longing. Unlike typical poets of her era, Andal employed emotional human expressions, imaginative descriptions, and everyday speech to convey her spiritual devotion. The traditional view during this period, which suppressed or marginalised female voices, contradicts these findings. Through her poetry, Andal established a powerful voice that challenges gender constraints while reestablishing female spiritual leadership.

The findings in this research hold significant theoretical importance. The religious poems of Andal offer researchers a unique analytical framework for studying feminist theology in conjunction with a religiously informed understanding of gender. From her poetic perspective, women act beyond receiving dogma as passive recipients to engage in the active making of spiritual meaning regarding religion. The analysis offers a deeper understanding of how complex female empowerment is represented within religious belief systems. Practically speaking, Andal's revolutionary voice teaches modern women to participate in their spiritual life while breaking through patriarchal restrictions that constrain their freedom. Through her story, we understand that self-expression, combined with devotion, creates a practical path for both personal growth and social development.

The analysis focuses on the architectural legacy of Andal expressed through the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple. The temple showcases Andal's intense devotion through its structure and symbols, which also reflect the profound impact she had on Tamil Vaishnavite religious practices. Research findings confirm that scholars already identify this temple as a significant religious destination, as well as a masterpiece of Dravidian architectural excellence. The examination unveiled the advanced assessment of the architectural bond existing between Andal's poetry and the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple structure. Through its gopurams, sculptures, and mandapams, the temple manifests Andal's sacred hymns, which express her profound devotion for Lord Vishnu. The study provides evidence that demonstrates how religion connects art with architecture to maintain and evolve sacred concepts over time and across cultures.

The study has implications for theoretical knowledge that applies to both architectural studies and cultural heritage management practices. The Srivilliputhur Andal Temple serves as an essential example that demonstrates architectural potential in maintaining and strengthening cultural identity expressions. Research on temple design and symbolic elements provides researchers with insight into how built environments influence religious beliefs, social practices, and the preservation of collective memory. This research aims to address the indispensable duty of safeguarding and honoring architectural heritage, as these actions foster both communal

consciousness and interfaith dialogue. Other communities interested in culture revival should consider the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple as an example for developing spaces that express their spiritual traditions.

The research demonstrates how Andal shaped poetry, while also creating architecture, and explicitly highlights how her work continues to impact modern Tamil cultural practices today. Today, people recite her poetic works in both temples and homes, using these poems to enhance devotion and spirituality. Various academic research circles have revived her works for reinterpretation using current methods from postcolonial theory, gender studies, and eco-criticism. Numerous scholars agree that Andal represents female empowerment while inspiring modern feminist movements. This research study builds upon existing knowledge about Andal's legacy by examining various modern reinterpretations of her heritage that have emerged throughout the 21st century. Through computer-based platforms and educational settings, Andal continues to attract diverse audiences who listen to her messages about spirituality, cultural survival, and gender equality.

Theories in cultural studies and feminist studies gain vital insights from this study. Andal's life story exemplifies how historical figures can find new relevance to address problems in contemporary society. Researchers who examine how feminist principles utilise Andal's legacy gain knowledge about cultural appropriation, identity politics, and the dynamics of social transformation. This research sheds light on effective methodologies for handling historical figures through comprehensive analysis. The story of Andal should serve as a foundation for exploring profound questions about power dynamics, as well as gender issues and social justice.

Several analyses diverge from mainstream research, which often views Andal as either a devotional figure or a feminist icon. The current research study acknowledges these aspects while demonstrating how the complexity of her impact warrants attention due to her diverse interpretive potential and her wide-reaching influence that transcends religious convention. Her works include discussions about environmental awareness, so her interpretation reflects eco-critical analysis of nature as well as seasonal changes. This research welcomes complex aspects to present an expanded understanding of how Andal continues to influence Tamil culture and social dynamics throughout the ages.

The current body of scholarly research receives enhanced value through this study, which investigates Andal's numerous cultural contributions. The research analyzes her poetry alongside her architectural heritage, drawing on modern inspiration, to gain a deeper understanding of her status as a poet-saint who remains a cultural symbol, influencing generations of Tamil women. The research findings create significant value for four disciplines, which include both religious studies and architectural studies, as well as cultural studies and feminist studies. The research aims to foster a deeper appreciation for Andal's significant contributions and enduring value in contemporary social and cultural contexts. Through her life and literary works, Andal demonstrates how devotion intersects with gender identity, creating cultural significance that inspires people who wish to break social norms and build an equal society.

5.2 Conclusion

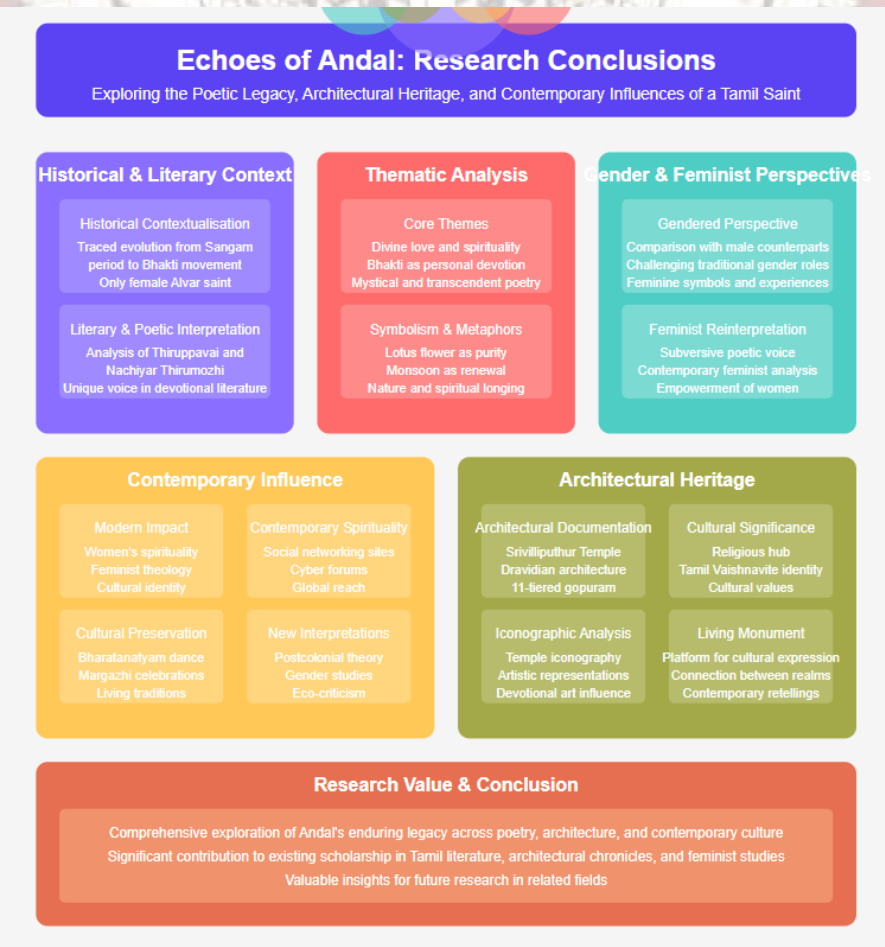


Figure 16: Visualisation of the concluding remarks of the Study

Source: (By Author)

This research, "Echoes of Andal", investigates the existing poetic historical legacy, along with architectural inheritance and modern influences, produced by an 8th-century Tamil saint. The research meets every established objective, providing beneficial knowledge in Tamil literature, architectural history, and feminist research.

In terms of Objective 1, the research successfully examined how Andal's devotional poetry evolved within Tamil Nadu's literary traditions during the historical period. The study traced the development of Tamil literature from the Sangam era to the Bhakti movement, encompassing themes of love and war, as well as the creation of devotional poetry by the Alvars, notably led by Andal. The research presented Andal's heretical work within a historical context, showing how she combined Tamil dialects and imagery to worship Lord Vishnu intensely while bridging the gap between personal devotion and social worship during a strict social era. The research demonstrated that she was the one female saint from the Alvar tradition to achieve such complete religious freedom, which extended to breaking social norms and uniting with God.

Under Objective 2, the research interprets Andal's works, Thiruppavai and Nachiyar Thirumozhi, extensively, examining both literary and Poetic Interpretation, which reveals religious content alongside linguistic developments and complex themes. The research analysed Thiruppavai to illustrate how Andal presented herself as a gopi who worshipped Krishna through the spiritual erotic components of devotion while joining with the divine. The study analyzed Nachiyar Thirumozhi by examining Andal's verses, through which she expressed feelings of frustration, rage, and desire, followed by a continuous longing for Krishna's divine blessing. The study fully achieved these goals through its detailed examination of Andal's distinct authorial voice, as well as her enduring impact on devotional literature, as discussed in Ramanujan (1973), within research that explores her role in the development of religious gender.

Regarding Objective 3, the study included a comprehensive investigation of essential themes from Andal's poetry, including divine love and female devotional perspectives. The study analysed how Andal used romantic love expressions to describe her profound feelings of the sacred, while demonstrating an overwhelming spiritual desire to meet and connect with the divine. Through her study of bhakti devotion to the divine, Andal expressed her passionate wish to establish a close bond with Vishnu. The analysis confirmed her poetic essence to be mystical and transcendent following her devotion to personal and universal love for Vishnu, according to Shulman's claims (1980).

Concerning Objective 4, the analysis revealed an understanding of the symbolic and metaphorical elements employed by Andal in her works, which contributed to the creation of a distinctive religious and cultural voice. Throughout the study, scholars analyzed Andal's spiritual state using the lotus flower symbol, which stands for purity and divine beauty, in conjunction with the monsoon season, which symbolizes spiritual renewal. In her devotional works, Andal unites spiritual longing with natural elements by employing symbolism to illustrate the profound bond she shares with nature and her spiritual path. This objective explains how Andal blends nature imagery with symbolism and religious expression to show her distinct contribution to cultural discourse.

Regarding Objective 5, the study successfully examined Andal's devotional poetry in comparison to that of male poets of the Bhakti movement, demonstrating their distinct vocal styles and poetic content. The evaluation examines how Andal's status as a female influences the linguistic choices, visual descriptors, and compositional methods she employs in her works. The study revealed that her linguistic approach, as a devotee relates to the Lord, involves erasing traditional boundaries of devotion to perform simultaneously as someone who serves and kisses the divine master. The findings confirm Andal's opposition to conventional gender norms when expressing devotion, which supports Clooney's (2004) assessment of Andal's unconventional Hindu literary approach to women's traditionally submissive roles.

The research investigation of Objective 6 established Andal's impact on contemporary Tamil women in terms of both cultural identity and spiritual practices. The research demonstrated that Andal's spiritual teachings have a profound effect on both women's religious devotion and feminist theological perspectives. Modern art, alongside ancient culture, has been influenced by

her works through the Bharatanatyam classical dance form, which has received new interpretations through innovative performance concepts that express devotional and divine love. The research achieved its goal by demonstrating that Andal's poetic works, Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi, remain active traditions that specifically attract this generation, extending beyond the traditional medieval context and substantially developing the cultural expressions of Tamil women.

In terms of Objective 7, the research evaluated feminist interpretations of Andal's works to determine how her poetry challenges conventional gender norms and empowers women. The study demonstrates that Andal thrust her audacious public relationship with Krishna before audiences by representing herself as his bride, which rebelled against prevailing patriarchal conventions, leading scholars to study female spiritual power in modern times (Ramanan, 1989). The research target was met by incorporating present-day feminist academic literature and activist perspectives, which demonstrate the trailblazing position Andal held as a female religious leader who empowered women.

In terms of Objective 8, the study encompassed the contemporary cultural preservation and reinterpretation of Andal's influence by examining modern cultural practices and ethnic festivals alongside artistic expressions. Andal's legacy is evident in contemporary poetry that dancers incorporate into Bharatanatyam classical forms, as artists reinterpret her devotion and teachings on divine love through creative dance interpretations. The research achieved this aim by showing that Andal's hymns continue to maintain their position as sacred features, as Tamil Nadu conducts annual celebrations of the Margazhi month that include temple and home activities featuring her Tiruppavai recitations.

Through Objective 9, Andal's Influence on Contemporary Spirituality, the analysis examines how women from the contemporary Tamil region utilize Andal's scriptures to sustain their religious practices while understanding how the saint's moral heritage influences their faith and cultural expressions of pride. The research demonstrated how Andal's poetry receives contemporary outlets for presentation. Her poetic verses occasionally appear on social networking channels, accompanied by their translations and analytical assessments. The online community discusses her relationship to green conservation while also evaluating her position on women's rights issues. The research team highlighted how the online platform disseminates Andal's works globally and enhances the academic recognition of her works in various religious subjects, thereby increasing their cultural and spiritual value.

Through Objective 10, the study applied feminist theories to Andal's works, uncovering her religious and rebellious poetic expression, which examined women's positions in Tamil spiritual and literary traditions. Research studies on Andal have recently experienced a resurgence across various scholarly domains, as scholars develop multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret her lyrics. Andal's poetry stands out under postcolonial theory as well as gender studies and eco-criticism analysis, which brings fresh relevance to her works based on contemporary issues.

In terms of objective 11, the study conducted a detailed analysis of Andal's temple architecture, with special attention to the Srivilliputhur Temple's historical development since its establishment in the 16th century. The Dravidian architectural principles of the Srivilliputhur

Andal Temple are evident in its prominent 11-tiered gopuram and expansive courtyards, which date back to the 16th century when the Nayak dynasty constructed it. Tamil Nadu considers this shrine as its most venerated religious pilgrimage destination in history, according to the study. The research achieved its complete objective by presenting Andal's life and poetics, which are currently manifest in cultural and religious practices.

In terms of Objective 12, the research analyzed temple depictions to understand how Andal and other divine entities are depicted inside temples, as well as how her religious influence has transformed Tamil devotional artwork in its visual representation and spiritual worship. The analysis revealed that Andal was placed in the main chamber of the temple in a posture of prayer, depicting her unwavering devotion to Lord Vishnu. The temple walls feature artistic illustrations based on Andal's life history throughout the vimana and mandapams areas. A detailed explanation of the cultural importance accompanied the discussion about the sacred temple engravings.

In terms of objective 13, the research examined how the temple evolved into a cultural and religious center, which continues to preserve Andal's enduring legacy in Tamil Nadu. The temple establishes a connection between the artistic heritage of Tamil Vaishnavites, as it unites their aesthetic traditions and spiritual practices. The statue of Andal, located inside the temple, showcases her devotion through icons that represent cultural principles, including religious purity, absolute surrender, and deep devotion to the sacred. The temple's elevated gopurams, along with exceptional vimanas, represent Andal's deep religious attachment through annual religious events which honor her holy hymns.

In terms of Objective 14, the research examined visitor and practitioner interpretations of architectural Andal representations in the temple along with their cultural significance to Tamil religion and traditions. The study explained that the decorative gopuram sculptures depict divine aspects from Andal's hymns and devotion, thereby serving as gateways to the sacred realm, much like the link between believers and their faith.

In terms of Objective 15, the study analyzed the temple as a living shrine that honors Andal through its evaluation of such religious spaces as platforms for modern cultural representations, which generate fresh adaptations of her historical achievements. The research demonstrates how the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple architecture reflects Andal's spiritual heritage and links spiritual and physical aspects through its design and symbolic components, thereby protecting her cultural and devotional significance within Tamil Vaishnavism.

This research study completed all fifteen stated objectives, providing an in-depth exploration of Andal's enduring impact on poetry, architecture, and contemporary cultural expressions. The study provides valuable new insights for scholars and lays the groundwork for future research in related disciplines.

5.3 Recommendations

The research results suggest implementing these recommendations to advance Andal's heritage study and preservation work:

1. Strategic steps should be established to properly document and preserve Andal's literary works as well as her architectural achievements. The preservation work includes digitizing rare manuscripts, as well as maintaining temple structures, and conducting face-to-face interviews with individuals who received spiritual instruction from Andal. The centralisation of digital content regarding her works will lead to broader public availability, together with worldwide research opportunities.
2. Establish researched partnerships between scholars who combine literary research with architectural studies and feminist theory along with cultural anthropology for obtaining advanced insights about Andal's effects on society. Investment initiatives must focus their support on research plans that enable different academic disciplines to collaborate, creating new perspectives and advancing breakthroughs.
3. Educational Developers should create materials, such as books, documentaries, and online courses, that explain Andal's life story, poetry works, and cultural importance. Educational materials about Andal should target various student groups, including academics and the public, while educational institutions must implement these materials to teach cultural understanding.
4. Cultural Heritage Tourism should receive support by promoting sustainable tourism activities which showcase Andal's legacy through the primary site of the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple and complementary historical locations. Developing educational programs about historical heritage, architectural features, and spiritual values at these locations will establish responsible tourism operations that support the nearby communities.
5. The contemporary artistic community needs encouragement to draw inspiration from Andal's literary masterpieces for the creation of innovative cultural expressions dedicated to devotion, love, and social justice. Active support for initiatives that showcase innovative artistic creations through exhibitions, performances, and publications will foster vibrant exchanges between heritage traditions and new advancements.

5.4 Potential Area of Research

The study opens avenues for further research into various aspects of Andal's legacy:

1. **Comparative Bhakti Studies**: Conduct comparative analyses of Andal's poetry alongside that of other female Bhakti saints from various regions of India, examining the similarities and differences in their experiences, perspectives, and contributions to the Bhakti movement.
2. **Andal and Environmentalism**: Explore the ecological themes in Andal's poetry, analysing her depictions of nature and their relevance to contemporary environmental concerns. Investigate the potential for applying eco-feminist perspectives to interpret her works and promote ecological awareness.

3. **Andal in Diaspora**: Study the reception and interpretation of Andal's legacy among Tamil diaspora communities worldwide, examining how her poetry and teachings are adapted and recontextualised in new cultural settings.
4. **Digital Humanities and Andal**: Utilise digital humanities methodologies to create interactive online resources that explore Andal's poetry, architecture, and cultural influence. Develop virtual tours of the Srivilliputhur Andal Temple and interactive maps that trace the geographical spread of her legacy.
5. **Andal and Leadership**: Research into Andal's narrative from the perspective of leadership and authority for women in religious settings.
6. **The Impact of Andal's Poetry on Classical Art Forms**: Research into how Andal's works continue to inspire new generations.

These areas of research can contribute to a deeper understanding of Andal's enduring legacy and its relevance to contemporary social, cultural, and spiritual concerns.

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Appendix

Student Undertaking Form

Undertaking by Students Participating in Discover India Program Field Trip 2025

To,
The Registrar
FLAME University
Lavale, Pune
Respected Sir,

I, UG2 student of FLAME University, hereby undertake that:

1. I am proceeding with Field Research for the Discover India Program outside the FLAME University Campus from **22 February to 01 March, 2024**. This activity is duly approved by Dr. Santosh K. Kudtarkar, Dean, Faculty of Liberal Education.
2. I am participating in this activity of my own accord, without any pressure from anybody.
3. I will take all necessary safety precautions during the entire activity. The safety and security of every participant will be my highest priority and responsibility individually and collectively.
4. I undertake to conduct myself in the manner that is in tune with the principles and ideals upheld and cherished by FLAME University.
5. I accept all responsibility for my conduct and safety while on the field visit. In the event of any mishap, I, my parents/guardians, or any person shall not hold FLAME University responsible nor claim any form of compensation from FLAME University, its management, heirs, assignees, etc.
6. I shall abide by the instructions given by FLAME University management from time to time about this.
7. I also declare that information in detail about this activity has been provided to my parents and they have given me their permission/consent for participation. A copy of their written permission/consent is attached herewith.
8. I would further like to inform that I shall return to Campus after the completion of my field trip on 02 March 2025. I have already submitted an undertaking from my parents/guardians in this regard.

Sincerely,

Name of the student	Student ID	Phone number, email id	FLAME Insurance ID	Signature


Vishnu

Parent's Consent Form

Parents' Consent Note for Sending Students on DIP Field Visit to be Signed by Parents

To,
The Registrar
FLAME University
Lavale, Pune.

Respected Sir,

I/we, the father/mother /parents/ guardian of ……. permit my/our daughter/son (to take part in the Field Research at ...…… for the Discover India Program 2024-25 from **22th February to 01 March, 2025**.

• I/we understand that our daughter/son is taking part in this activity of their own accord. I/we agree to my daughter/son using public vehicles for transport in relation to this activity. • I/we are aware that it is the responsibility of my daughter/son to ensure that she/he upholds FLAME rules and regulations and follows instructions of the Faculty Mentor traveling with them.

• I/ we allow and undertake the responsibility of our daughter/son to return to FLAME University campus after the field trip gets over on 01 March 2024.

• We further undertake that we shall not hold FLAME University, its management, heirs, assignees, faculty mentor etc. responsible in the event of any mishap.

Signature of Mother/Father/Guardian:
Name of Mother/Father/Guardian:
Email ID:
Phone Number:
Place:
Date:

Open Coding and Category Formation

Transcript/Observational Notes (Stakeholder Group)	Excerpt/Concept	Code	Category
Journalist Interview	"Andal's poetry is still recited daily in many Tamil households."	Enduring oral tradition	Contemporary Relevance
Journalist Interview	"People continue to celebrate Andal's legacy through music, dance, and temple festivals."	Cultural Preservation	Contemporary Relevance
Journalist Interview	Andal's poetry embodies a profound sense of devotion that transcends time.	Divine Love & Devotion	Thematic Analysis
Contemporary Woman Artist Interview	"I see Andal as an inspiration, as she represents a woman who broke barriers in her time."	Feminist Influence	Feminist Perspectives
Contemporary Woman Artist Interview	"Andal's poetry gives me a sense of self-expression and empowerment."	Spiritual Empowerment	Contemporary Relevance
Contemporary Woman Artist Interview	I strive to convey Andal's themes in my paintings, bridging tradition with modernity.	Artistic Representation	Cultural Preservation
Priest Interview	In Nachiyar Thirumozhi, Andal openly expresses her longing for Vishnu, a rarity among women poets of her time.	Female Spiritual Desire	Gendered Perspective
Priest Interview	The Srivilliputhur temple is architecturally unique, with its sanctum designed to align with celestial events.	Sacred Architecture	Architectural Heritage
Priest Interview	"During the Margazhi festival, Andal's verses are sung daily, keeping the tradition alive."	Ritualistic Preservation	Cultural Preservation
Teachers Interview	"We include Andal's poetry in our school curriculum to teach students about Tamil literary heritage."	Educational Influence	Contemporary Relevance
Teachers Interview	"Students are fascinated by the metaphors and symbols in Andal's poetry."	Symbolism in Poetry	Symbolic and Metaphorical Exploration

Teachers Interview	"Andal's works serve as a bridge between Bhakti literature and modern Tamil literature."	Literary Influence	Literary and Poetic Interpretation
Observational Notes on Andal Temple	"The Andal temple is a fusion of artistic carvings and spiritual symbolism."	Architectural Symbolism	Architectural Heritage
Observational Notes on Andal Temple	"Women visiting the temple often identify with Andal's journey of devotion."	Female Devotional Identity	Gendered Perspective
Observational Notes on Andal Temple	The temple serves as a cultural hub where traditions and beliefs converge.	Temple as Living Monument	Architectural Heritage
Literary Scholar Interview	Andal's poetry is deeply tied to the Tamil Bhakti movement and its literary development.	Bhakti Movement Connection	Historical Contextualisation
Literary Scholar Interview	"Her metaphors, drawn from daily village life, make her poetry relatable even today."	Everyday Symbolism	Symbolic and Metaphorical Exploration
Literary Scholar Interview	"The preservation of Andal's poetry ensures the continuity of Tamil devotional literature."	Literary Continuity	Literary and Poetic Interpretation
Andal Scholar Interview	"Andal used simple Tamil, yet her poetry has several layers of meaning."	Linguistic Innovation	Literary and Poetic Interpretation
Andal Scholar Interview	The chariot festival in Srivilliputhur is not just a religious event, but also a community celebration. Leading the event, I feel honoured. "	Community Participation	Contemporary Relevance
Andal Scholar Interview	Andal's poetry is revolutionary because it presents a woman declaring her spiritual love for Vishnu.	Spiritual Agency	Gendered Perspective
Local Temple Worker	"We work on restoring the temple's values depicting Andal's life by teaching our children Thirupavvai at an early age"	Preservation of Art	Cultural Preservation
Local Temple Worker	The rituals in the temple follow ancient traditions recorded in Tamil scriptures, as evident from the walls of the shrine.	Ritual Continuity	Cultural Preservation

Devotee Interview	I believe that Andal speaks to me through her poetry; it is a profoundly personal experience for everyone who reads her work.	Personal Connection to Andal	Spiritual Influence
Devotee Interview	"Many women devotees see Andal as a guiding force in their lives by following her teachings"	Andal as a Role Model	Feminist Perspectives
Devotee Interview	Her poetry gives me strength and courage, especially as a woman navigating the societal expectations.	Poetic Empowerment	Feminist Perspectives
Temple Visitor Interview	The Andal temple is genuinely one of the beautiful testaments to her devotion in Tamil Nadu.	Cultural Testament	Cultural Preservation
Temple Visitor Interview	Each carving and painting in the temple tells a story of Andal's devotion and love for Vishnu.	Devotional Art	Architectural Heritage
Temple Visitor Interview	"Standing inside the temple, I feel Andal's presence in the air itself."	Spiritual Atmosphere	Spiritual Influence
Local Vendor Interview	The Andal festival brings together thousands of people, uniting them in devotion from all around the world.	Religious Unification	Contemporary Relevance
Local Vendor Interview	"Thirrupavai recital performances based on Andal's works are a key attraction of the temple"	Artistic Expressions of Bhakti	Cultural Preservation
Local Vendor Interview	We ensure the festival maintains its traditional elements while adapting to modern needs by offering unique items during the event.	Tradition and Modernity	Cultural Preservation
Srivalliputhur Women Devotee Interview (Older Generation)	Andal's poetry, focusing on women's longing for the Lord, is deeply rooted in tradition.	Subversion of Gender Norms	Feminist Perspectives
Srivalliputhur Women Devotee Interview (Older Generation)	"Her works offer insight into how women's voices were so loudly articulated."	Women's Voice in Bhakti	Gendered Perspective

Srivalliputhur Women Devotee Interview (Older Generation)	The way Tamil women now interpret Andal's poetry shows its impact.	Contemporary Feminist Reinterpretation	Contemporary Relevance

Theme Development Process

Theme	Related Codes	Categories	Summary Description
Contemporary Relevance	Enduring Oral Tradition, Cultural Preservation, Spiritual Empowerment, Educational Influence, Community Participation, Religious Unification, Contemporary Feminist Reinterpretation	Contemporary Relevance	Andal's legacy continues through oral traditions, educational curricula, and community engagement. Her influence is evident in festivals, temple rituals, and feminist interpretations.
Gendered Perspective	Female Spiritual Desire, Female Devotional Identity, Spiritual Agency, Subversion of Gender Norms, Women's Voice in Bhakti	Gendered Perspective	Andal's poetry and legacy provide insight into women's spiritual autonomy, challenging historical norms. Her expression of desire and devotion serves as a transformative feminist discourse.
Cultural Preservation	Artistic Representation, Ritualistic Preservation, Temple as Living Monument, Preservation of Art, Ritual Continuity, Devotional Art, Tradition and Modernity	Cultural Preservation	Andal's presence is upheld through temple architecture, artistic representations, and ritual practices that blend tradition with evolving modern expressions.
Literary and Poetic Influence	Literary Influence, Symbolism in Poetry, Everyday Symbolism, Linguistic Innovation, Literary Continuity	Literary and Poetic Interpretation	Andal's poetry remains significant in Tamil literature, combining devotional themes with layered metaphors and linguistic innovation, ensuring its continued scholarly and cultural relevance.
Spiritual Influence	Divine Love & Devotion, Personal Connection to Andal, Andal as a Role Model, Poetic Empowerment, Spiritual Atmosphere	Spiritual Influence	Andal's poetry fosters deep personal and communal spiritual connections, offering strength, devotion, and empowerment, particularly

			for women navigating faith and society.



Participant Information Sheet

My name is <**Palash Gautam**> I am a student at FLAME University in Pune, Maharashtra. As part of the University's Discover India Program, a group of us are doing a project on < **Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint**> and we would like to ask you some questions about the same. The questions will take between 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and confidential. We will not record your name or any personal information you share with us without your approval. Responses from everyone who participates in our study will be used to compile a report and make a documentary, as deliverables of this program, and we will not share your responses with anyone outside of the research team.

You do not have to answer questions you do not want to and can stop answering questions at any time. There are no risks to you sharing your experiences with us, your input will significantly contribute to enhancing our understanding of <**Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint**>

Do you have any questions about the study or would you like further information? Would you be interested in answering our questions?

For any further queries, feel free to contact me at <Palash.gautam@flame.edu.in>

Participation Information Sheet in Tamil

இது உங்கள் பங்கேற்பாளர் தகவல் தாள் (Participant Information Sheet) ஆகும்:

என் பெயர் <**Palash Gautam**>. நான் **FLAME University, Pune, Maharashtra** இல் மாணவன்/மாணவி. University'உம் Discover India Program உடன் இணைந்து, நாங்கள் < **Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint**> பற்றிய ஒரு திட்டத்தை செய்து கொண்டிருக்கிறோம் மற்றும் அதனைப் பற்றி உங்களிடம் சில கேள்விகளை கேட்க விரும்புகிறோம். இந்த கேள்விகளுக்கு பதில் அளிக்க 30 முதல் 45 நிமிடங்கள் வரை ஆகும்.

இந்த ஆய்வில் உங்கள் பங்கேற்பு தன்னார்வமானதும் ரகசியமானதும் ஆகும். நீங்கள் எங்களுடன் பகிரும் உங்கள் பெயர் அல்லது எந்தவொரு தனிப்பட்ட தகவலையும், உங்கள் ஒப்புதலின்றி பதிவு செய்யப்படாது. இந்த ஆய்வில் பங்கேற்கும் அனைவரின் பதில்கள், இந்த திட்டத்தின் அறிக்கை மற்றும் ஆவணப்படம் தயாரிப்பின் பகுதியாகப் பயன்படுத்தப்படும், மேலும் ஆய்வு குழுவிற்கு வெளியே யாரிடமும் உங்கள் பதில்கள் பகிரப்படாது.

நீங்கள் பதில் அளிக்க விரும்பாத கேள்விகளுக்கு பதில் அளிக்க வேண்டியதில்லை, மேலும் எப்போதும் பதில்களை நிறுத்தலாம். உங்கள் அனுபவங்களை எங்களுடன் பகிர்வதில் எந்தவொரு ஆபத்தும் இல்லை; உங்கள் உள்ளீடு < **Echoes of Andal: Exploring the Poetic Legacy, Architectural Heritage, and Contemporary Influences of a Tamil Saint**> பற்றிய எங்கள் புரிதலை மேம்படுத்துவதற்கு முக்கியமாகும்.

இந்த ஆய்வு பற்றி உங்களுக்குக் கேள்விகள் உள்ளதா அல்லது மேலும் தகவல் வேண்டுமா? எங்களின் கேள்விகளுக்கு பதில் அளிக்க ஆர்வமாக இருக்கிறீர்களா?

மேலும் கேள்விகளுக்கு, தயவுசெய்து என்னை **Palash.gautam@flame.edu.in** என்ற முகவரியில் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்.

Consent Form

I have read the Participant Information Sheet/the Participant Information Sheet has been read to me, and I understand the study and the risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and my questions have been answered. I give my voluntary, informed consent to participate in this study.

- To be interviewed - Y/N
- To be audio-recorded - Y/N
- To be video-recorded - Y/N
- To use the recorded information in the DIP report & documentary - Y/N

Participant Name:
Signature, and Date
OR
Researcher Name: **Palash Gautam**
Signature, and Date
(as evidence that the participant gave voluntary, informed consent verbally)

Vishnu

Consent Form in Local Language

நான் பங்கேற்பாளர் தகவல் தாளைப் படித்துள்ளேன் / எனக்கு பங்கேற்பாளர் தகவல் தாள் படிக்கப்பட்டது, மேலும் இந்த ஆய்வின் நோக்கம், அதன் ஆபத்துகள் மற்றும் நன்மைகள் எனக்கு தெளிவாகப் புரிகிறது. எனக்கு கேள்விகள் கேட்க வாய்ப்பு வழங்கப்பட்டு, எனது கேள்விகளுக்கு பதில் அளிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. நான் தன்னார்வமாகவும், முழுமையாகவும் தகவல் பெற்ற ஒப்புதலை வழங்குகிறேன்.

- நேர்காணலுக்கு அழைக்கப்பட வேண்டுமா? - Y/N
- ஆடியோ பதிவு செய்யப்பட வேண்டுமா? - Y/N
- வீடியோ பதிவு செய்யப்பட வேண்டுமா? - Y/N
- பதிவு செய்யப்பட்ட தகவலை DIP அறிக்கை மற்றும் ஆவணப்படத்தில் பயன்படுத்த வேண்டுமா? - Y/N

பங்கேற்பாளரின் பெயர்:
கையொப்பம் மற்றும் தேதி

அல்லது

ஆராய்ச்சியாளர் பெயர்: **Palash Gautam**
கையொப்பம் மற்றும் தேதி
(பங்கேற்பாளர் தன்னார்வமாகவும், முழுமையாகவும் தகவல் பெற்ற ஒப்புதலை வாய்மொழியாக வழங்கியதை உறுதிப்படுத்தும் ஆதாரம்)

Interview Questionnaire

Interview Guide

Opening Script

"Thank you for participating in our research study on Andal's legacy. We want to understand different perspectives on her influence across poetry, architecture, and contemporary culture. There are no right or wrong answers – we are interested in your authentic experiences and views."

A. Religious Scholars and Tamil Literature Experts

Background Questions

1. What was your academic background in writing about Tamil literature or religious studies?
2. Have you been studying Andal's works for a long time?
3. How did you first get interested in studying Andal's poetry and her heritage?

Deep Dive Questions

Poetic Legacy

1. Which was the peculiar feature(s) of Andal's poetic style similar or dissimilar to those of other Alvar saints?
2. Which particular elements of Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumoli can be most extensively studied by the contemporary audience?
3. Has the academic discourse on Andal's works changed in their interpretation?

Symbolism and Themes

1. Can you elaborate more on Andal's poetry, and what do you find its most symbolic elements?
2. Analyzing the relationship between nature imagery and spiritual themes in her works.
3. To what extent does gender contribute to the symbolism in her poetry?

Contemporary Relevance

1. How do you perceive that Andal's works have impacted modern Tamil literature and spirituality?
2. What difficulties do you approach about making Andal's works available to contemporary readers?
3. What is said in her poetry about contemporary socio-cultural problems?

B. Temple Priests and Religious Practitioners

Background Questions

1. How long have you been tied to this temple?
2. In what aspect of Andal's worship do you usually spend your time?
3. What are the customary daily rituals with Andal?

Deep Dive Questions

Religious Practices

1. What significance does Andal's poetry have in the religious life of the temples?

2. What were the special ceremonies during Margazhi month?
3. What have you seen changes in how we worship all these years?

Community Engagement

1. how do devotees generally relate to Andal's legacy at the temple?
2. What are commonly asked questions by visitors regarding Andal?
3. How do you explain Andal's significance for the younger generations?

Cultural Preservation

1. What is done to preserve Andal's traditions in temple practices?
2. What is the line you get to draw between tradition and modern life?
3. How does the temple maintain Andal's literary legacy?

C. Architects and Art Historians

Background Questions

1. How familiar are you with South Indian temple architecture?
2. How long have you been studying the architectural features of Andal temples?
3. what specific features of Andal temples interest you the most?

Deep Dive Questions

Architectural Elements

1. What are the differences between the architecture of Andal temples and other Vaishnava temples?
2. What architectural elements in Andal's legacy are specifically represented?
3. What stage of temple architecture has taken place in the different historical periods?

Symbolic Interpretation

1. What does temple iconography do to represent Andal's poems?
2. Which architectural elements in particular relate to her devotional themes?
3. Spatiality represents the ritualistic aspects of her worship.

Conservation

1. What are the key problems of protecting these architectural structures?
2. How well do modern renovation standards inform, adhere to, or impair historical authenticity?
3. What measures would be taken to improve preservation?

D. Contemporary Women Devotees

Background Questions

1. For how long have you been practicing Andal's devotional tradition?
2. How was Andal's legacy introduced to you?
3. How did you learn about her poetry and her traditions?

Deep Dive Questions

Personal Connection

1. What in Andal's poetry do you feel a connection to in your life?
2. Which of her aspects resonate most with your own experiences?
3. What do you do to make use of her teachings every day?

Gender and Identity

1. Andal's story and what does it do for women's spirituality?
2. How empowering is she through her legacy?
3. How does she play into contemporary women's religious expression?

Modern Relevance

1. In what light do you read Andal's messages/teachings today?
2. How are you practicing these traditions in this time and day?
3. How do you pass these traditions down to the younger generations?

E. Cultural Artists and Performers

Background Questions

1. What is your artistic background?
2. When did you start creating/performing Andal-related content?
3. Why have you taken up Andal's legacy using art?

Deep Dive Questions

Artistic Interpretation

1. How would you translate Andal's poetry into your artistic medium?
2. What challenges do you face as you adapt her works?
3. How do the audiences react to these interpretations?

Contemporary Adaptation

1. How does one bring back relevant themes of Andal to today's audiences?
2. To bring elements of the modern world to traditional presentations, how do you insert what is present today?

Cultural Impact

1. What has been the legacy of Andal upon modern Tamil arts?
2. How does artistically narrating her life help to keep her alive?
3. What would you like to see happen to Andal's artworks in the future?

Closing Protocol (for all interviews)

Final Questions

1. Do you want to share anything about Andal's legacy?
2. Do you have suggestions for other people we should talk to?
3. Would you be willing to be contacted for follow-up questions?

Closing Script

"Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences. Your contribution will help us better understand Andal's enduring influence. We will share our findings with you once the study is complete."