A Peek at Salliappayaru

Posted on



The temple dedicated to Lord Ganesh

The sun was blazing as it was close to noon. I dragged my friend to go on a walk along the Trincomalee-Pulmoddai road, on and on we walked in the scorching heat to arrive at the quaint village of Salliappayaru.

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Our initial plan was to cycle around the area as it seemed to be the easier way to discover various places and sights around. However, due to my inability to balance myself on a ‘way too high’ bicycle, we decided to walk. Coaxing ‘grumpy’ along, we walked dissecting through an almost deserted landscape except for the occasional vehicle that whizzed passed us. The semi-arid scenery of brownish red soil

peppered with greenery was quiet and calm. The sudden gush of wind blowing from the Kuchchaveli salterns softened the harshness of the afternoon sun.

The saltern spread far and wide and was encircled by a fence. As we approached, a herd of goats scattered, while their shepherdess in a bright red dress looked on. Soon a brightly coloured building captured our attention. It was a kovil dedicated to Lord Ganesh and was known as the Pillayar Temple for the village of Salliappayaru. Green, orange and yellow, with simplistic yet beautiful motifs, the gopuram of the kovil stood out, with an intricately sculptured statue of Lord Ganesh on top.

Apparently, this particular day had proved not to be the best for mud prawns

Two women walked towards us while we were looking around the temple and they explained to us that the tall ‘Madhura’ tree, within the temple premises has an imprint of Lord Ganesh on the surface, reflecting the spirituality of the site. She traced the outline of Lord Ganesh on the bark of the tree to show us, so that we too could witness this phenomenon.

Through a small pathway we entered the Kuchchaveli saltern, which adjoins the village of Salliappayaru. For acres and acres the saltern spread, a panorama of murky lagoon water and grey/yellowish sand and soil. The large square ponds were still being dredged for preparation with water flowing through the channels to subsequent ponds. In one of the outlet channels, we were quite surprised to see a woman scaling the murky, muddy bottom of the waterway. She was looking for saltwater mud prawns. Apparently, this particular day had proved not to be the best for prawn fishing.

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It was extremely hot by now and we were seeking some shade. As we walked towards the village, it seemed as if everyone was indoors during this hot sunny afternoon. A herd of cattle were comfortably settled on the dusty ground and were not at all bothered by our presence. The village consisted of rows and rows of neatly placed houses that were interlinked by earthy dusty roads. This village had been established following the tsunami for those who had lost their homes. A little group of “machos”, were walking hurriedly while deep in conversation. One boy was holding something protectively and we were eager to see what it was. They had

found some ‘paravi’ eggs and wanted to shelter and protect them until they hatched. Smiling and laughing, feeling very important they continued on their journey to find a safe place to keep the eggs.

We were very thirsty after walking in the blistering heat, and as ‘Grumpy’ had been a good sport in accompanying me on my exploration we decided to have a cooling drink at the little shop in the village. It seemed to have everything, from spices, soap, drinks to hair clips and brooms. Walking back seemed too much so we hopped into a three-wheeler and sped off…

