



Figure 2. Entrance to the Thanjavur Temple - now and then.



Figure 3. Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram - now and then.

maintenance, daily worship in the temples continued. Vegetation was removed and leaks in the tower (*vimana*) over the main temple were repaired by the local Nayak rulers around the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries. They also ensured that the main sanctum was saved from Muslim forces. Subsequently, in the eighteenth century, the French and the British used Thanjavur Temple as their barracks (Figure 2). The temple at Gangaikondacholapuram was less famous and the stones of the temple were utilized in the nineteenth century by British engineers in the construction of a nearby dam. Hence, the temple was left in a poor state of preservation (Figure 3). By contrast, the temple at Darasuram suffered less damage than the other two (Figure 4).

Background

Religious practice is a way of life in India and religion plays an important role in the minds of the public. Patronage for maintenance and religious practices is undertaken by several agencies including the government, both at local and national level, and by various groups of people, including the erstwhile royal descendants and several communities.