



MAHANANDI



The legend says that, Nanda one of the Kings of Nandyal, once wished to perform Abhisekam to Lord Siva, with milk. He ordered for the supply of milk for Pooja. One of the cowherd of Gopavaram village, who in charge of this duty observed that one of the cows coming empty every day. In order to find out what is happening to the milk of this cow, he followed the cow to forest and hid himself in a thick bush. The cow as usual reached an ant-hill grazed around for a while and began to empty its milk. A young lad was sucking the milk. The cowherd who was astonished at this sight, conveyed the news to the King. The King was amazed and decided to ascertain the fact. The next day, he followed the cow-herd and hid himself in the thick bush. As usual the cow began to give her milk on the ant-hill. The young lad began to drink the milk, when the King was overjoyed at the sight, God disappeared immediately and the cow in its hurry trampled the ant-hill. The hooves of the cow are deeply marked on the ant-hill. Lord Siva appeared in the dream of the King and told him to worship him at that place. The King constructed a temple.

Till today the marks of hooves are clearly visible on the Siva Lingam. The Shivalingam is being touched and worshipped by one and all. The story of King Nanda, the building of the temple may appear to be of mythological interests to the present day historian, But inscriptions on the stones around Mahanandi Temple speak about the antiquity of the temple. A mention is made of this place as Mahanandi Theertha on the copper plate inscriptions of King Krishna Devaraya of the Vijaya Nagaram Empire. King Narasimha Devaraya of Vijayanagaram Dynasty made valuable Gifts to this temple.

The temple is declared as an ancient protected monument and notified as monument and archaeological sites and remain in Act 60 Vol.II of 1960 U/s 30 (1) of the act. The Vimana Gopuram over the sanctum sanctorum is of Chola Style constructed with sand stone having much architecture and engraved with flowers and creepers. Lord Mahanandeswara is SWAYAMBHU. The Goddess is Sri Kameswara Ammavaru. There is a Pushkarini in front of the temple within the compound and this is called Rudra Gundam, the water in Pushkarini is crystal clear always. There is an outlet from the Pushkarini at 405 feet height so that the depth of the Pushkarini is always maintained at constant level. It is believed that spring water with good speed flows underneath the Lingam and falls in the Pushkarini. The spring water here is very famous for its medicinal value because it is curing several diseases besides enabling a worshipper to secure spiritual enlightenment. Pilgrims have to take holy dip in this Pushkarini in which there are Pancha Lingams. The lingam in the centre is called Varuna Lingam. The water which comes out from the outlet of the Pushkarini perennially is utilized for irrigating the lands around the village.



Besides the traditional "Sthalapuranam", this temple has a very good historical background as seen from the inscriptions, construction of the temple and the peculiar type of beautiful nagara style, Vimanam in red sand stone. The holy shrine of Nava Nandi Mandalam situated in this valley of panoramic beauty is attracting pilgrims in large numbers. **The shrine Mahanandi is located at a distance of 15 Km. from Nandyal Town.**



Mahanandi Temple



Railway Tunnel in Nallamala



Nallamala Forest

Mahanandi is a village located east of the Nallamala Hills near Nandyal, Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, India. It is a pictures village surrounded by thick forests. Within 15 km of Mahanandi, there are nine Nandi shrines known as *Nava Nandis*. Mahanandi is one of the Nava Nandis. The Mahanandiswara Swamy Temple, an important shrine, is located here. This ancient temple dates back over 1,500 years. The inscriptions of 10th century tablets speak of the temple being repaired and rebuilt several times.

These nine temples are Mahanandi, Shivanandi, Vinayakanandi, Somanandi, Prathamandi, Garudanandi, Suryanandi, Krishnanandi (also called Vishnunandi) and Naganandi. A festival is held here annually during February and March to celebrate Maha Shivaratri, the Great Night of Shiva.

How to Reach there: Mahanandi is about 14 km from Nandyal Bus Stop. The nearest airport is at Hyderabad, which is about 215 km from Kurnool, and the nearest railway station is at Nandyal.

The temple is famous for its fresh water pools, called *Kalyani* or *Pushkarni*. The architecture of the pools and temple shows the skill of the Vishwakarma Brahmins.

The main temple is surrounded by three pools: two small pools at the entrance and one big pool inside the temple itself. This holy tank is 60 square feet (5.6 m²) with an outdoor pavilion called a mandapa in the centre. The inlets and outlets of the tank are arranged so that the depth of the water is constantly kept at five feet, thus enabling pilgrims to bathe in the holy waters. A peculiarity of the water source is that it has a constant flow irrespective of the change of seasons. The water source originates at the Garbhagruha (inner shrine) just below Swayambhu Linga. One can touch the water near the Shiva Linga (symbol of Shiva). The devotees can offer prayers and touch the Shiva Linga. This is unusual, because traditionally at temples, the main deity is kept away from the touch of the devotees.

The water is famous for its crystalline and healing qualities and is ever tepid. The outgoing water irrigates 2,000 acres (8.1 km²) of fertile land surrounding the village. The surrounding areas are under production with rice fields, fruit, vegetable and flower gardens. The temple is well known for the konneru. The water during the winter season will be very hot and vice versa during the summer.