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HISTORY OF URBANO IN KANCHEEPURAM, MADURAI, AND KARUR CITIES

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ABSTRACT

This research paper makes an attempt to trace out the genesis of cityscape in the Ancient Tamil Nadu particularly in Madurai, Kanchipuram, and Karur towns. Urbano is nothing but an environment in which natural surroundings have been dominated but artificial or man-made surroundings, which man builds for himself and to survive. This paper would elucidate that how these towns flourished and illustrates the major articles which influenced the village to turn into Urbanized town in ancient times.

Keywords: Cityscape, Urbano, Man-Made, Urbanized, Artificial, Environment.

INTRODUCTION

A Cityscape is a large and permanent settlement of human with complex system of usage of land, cleanliness, utilities, transport and communication etc.¹ Various factors which plays an important role in the growth and development of urban areas like education, places of pilgrimage, state capitals, Commercial and Industrial activities, ports, administrative headquarters, Cantonments.² This research paper focuses on genesis of Urbano in Madurai and Kancheepuram and Karur of Tamil Nadu.

Pushpayana Thechi

Nagaresu Kanchi

Naresa Ramba

Narena Vishnu

BARTER SYSTEM AND TOWN

The town initially rose along with the barter system. The salt was a necessity in every other region, from early days carts passed along mud roads carrying salt and dried fish into the interior up to the hill.³ Rice and cotton cloth were taken from the valleys to the drier region. The pulse and milk products of Mullai where wet cultivation was carried on. The millets, honey, and other hill products were carried to other regions. The articles were exchanged in large quantities where High lands met the lowlands and the great centres of barter developed into the towns. So, the initial towns were started at the junction when the dry and wet land met. Madurai, Karur, Kanchipuram districts were considered as the early towns of Tamil country.⁴

Umanar

During the early centuries of Christian era in Tamil Nadu when barter was invariably practised in inland trade, salt, being a necessary commodity, must have been on a necessary scale of commodity value in the local markets. Salt has been one of the Oldest Industries on the Coastal tracts of Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, relatively speaking distances were not very great from the sea coast but transport still was a problem in view of paucity of good roads in number as well as in quality. There were only a few trunk roads in number as well as in quality. There were only a few trunk roads one of which is mentioned in early Tamil literature as running from Kaviripumpattinam through Uraiyur and across the river Kaviri to Madurai, this is practically the route taken by the modern Indian railways.⁵ Salt has been mentioned as one of those commodities carried. Umanars (Salt Merchants) went into the villages and exchanged salt for white paddy. Purified White Salt was sold for Paddy and Paddy was sold by mentioning its price in terms of salt.⁶ Thus it seems that salt and paddy were at the same level of dietary necessity since articles of same demand tended to be equated in the barter market.

¹ G.K. Hiraskar, Fundamentals of Town Planning, (New Delhi: Dhanpat Rai Publications(P) LTD, 2010) pp.1.

² Dr.Durga Singh, Urbanization in India: Trends and Issues, (New Delhi: Swastik Publishers, 2018), pp.1.

³ P.T.Srinivas Iyengar, History of the Tamils:from the earliest times to 600A.D (New Delhi: J.Jetley for Asian Edicational Services, 1983) pp.186.

⁴Ibid., pp.189.

⁵ K.V. Jeyaraj, A History of Salt Monopoly: Madras Presidency 1805-1878, (Madurai: Ennes Publications, 1984),pp.3.

⁶ Ibid.,pp.4.



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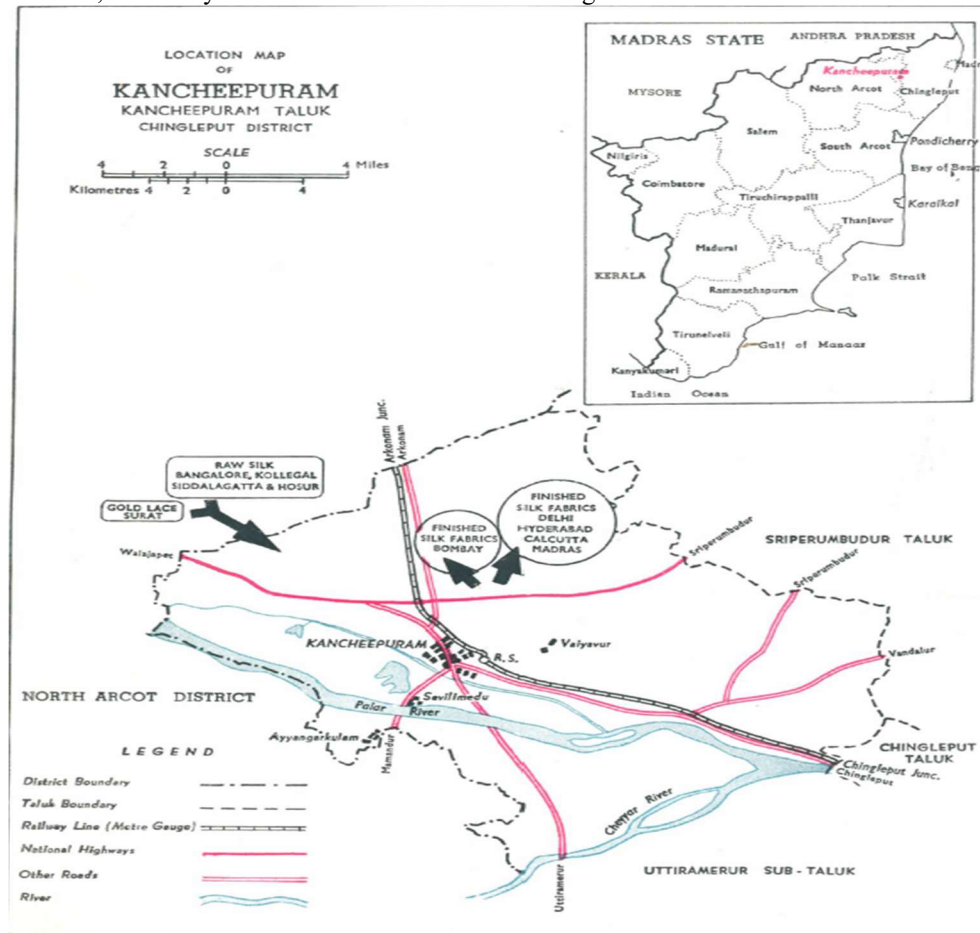
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EARLY TOWNS OF TAMIL COUNTRY

the early towns of Tamil country are as follows

Kancheepuram

Kanchipura is a Sanskrit word which literally means ‘City of the Gridle’, and the word Kacci for the first time mentioned in the Perumbanarrupadai.⁷ The word Kacci resulted from the Tamilization of Kanci. It is popular for its temples and still more famous for its output of silk fabrics. The Kancheepuram as the capital city of the Pallavas, later coming under the sway of the cholas and the Vijayanagar Kings. Kancheepuram conjures up only a dream world of gleaming silks, rich in colour and texture and wondrous to behold. One of the important occupation of the district is weaving, in which the Saliyars, the silk weavers, the Kaikolans or the Senguntha Mudhaliars, the cotton weavers and the Patnulkaras alias Saurashtras are engaged.⁸ It is now clear that the weavers have come to this city during the period of Karikala Chola itself. The silk Fabrics of Kancheepuram are as well-known as those of Benares. The city became an important silk weaving center, it is surprising that the main raw materials, silk and gold lace are imported from Bangalore and Surat respectively. It is stated that the weavers mentioned in Silappadhikaram were really the PattuSaliyars who wove excellent fabrics out of silk and cotton. When the maritime city of Kaveripoompattinam was submerged by the sea, it is said that Saliyars migrated to places like Kancheepuram for safety purpose. This is based on the fact that out of 6500 looms owned by different communities in Kancheepuram, the Saliyars own 1620 looms.⁹ Some of the Original Pattu saliarys of Kaveripoompattinam, which was submerged in the second century AD might have introduced silk weaving in Kancheepuram. As Kancheepuram was the capital of the Pallavas and came under the sway of the Cholas, it is likely these weavers took to silk weaving to cater to the need of the members of the royal family.



⁷ P.K.Nambiar, *Handicrafts and Artisans of Madras State Silk Weaving of Kancheepuram*, Part-VII,A-I,Census of India 1961, Vol. XV, Madras,1964, pp. 1.

⁸ M.Gopalakrishnan, *Gazetteers of India: Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur District*, Vol.I, Tamil Nadu State,2000,pp.203.

⁹ P.K. Nambiar, *Ibid.*, pp.1



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Madurai

Madurai as the temple city and religious center is the second largest city in State and is known from ancient times as the City of Festivals.¹⁰ The Historical Significance of Madurai city would be traced out from the possession of the Pandya Dynasty and the Early Chronicles of the district. The Pandya Kingdom can boast a respectable antiquity and is referred by the classical writers of Greece and Rome. Magasthenes speaks of a country called Pandaia. Pliny mentions the Pandae, King Pandion, and the Latter's Mediterranean emporium of Modoura. Ptolemy 140AD mentions 'Madura the Kingdom of the Pandion'. So many Roman coins have been found in and around Madura that it has been suggested that a Roman colony must once have existed there. The last of three Tamil Sangams was flourished here 2000 years ago. The Meenakshi Amman temple which has become synonymous with the city of Madurai is an Ancient Saivite shrine in the state. the city was built around the temple which acted as the sacred point of the Ancient city of Madura which paved the way as a resource for the people who survived there.

Karur

Karur is one of the earliest and oldest towns in tamil nadu and has played a very significant role in the glorious history and culture of the Tamils. Its history dates to centuries before Christ and has been a vital trading center even in the early Sangam days. The second century Aarnattanmalai inscription in Karur is the most vital archaeological findings which reveal that trade carried out in the town during the Sangam period.¹¹ The inscriptions on Perumal temple walls in Karur, Vedaranyam temple and Thiruvaiyaru temple depict the merchants of Karur, who carried out salt, jewels and oil trade in the town. Epigraphic, Numismatics, Archaeological and literary evidence has proved beyond doubt that Karur was the capital of Early Chera king of Sangam days. It was known as Karuvoor or Vanji in sangam age. There have been rare excavations undertaken which includes mats, design pottery, bricks, mud toys, Roman Amphorae, Russet coated ware and rare rings etc.¹²

CONCLUSION

Some of the towns were situated on the banks of rivers which facilitated enough sources to the people and attracted people to reside and also the people of outsiders and were able to fulfil their daily needs. Coming to the temple towns, temples are considered as the hub of employment opportunities. Numerous jobs were given to the people by the temple authorities like Maintaining Cleanliness, Flowers to decorate the deities, Lighting the entire temple, food, etc. By committing themselves in these jobs they were benefited by which they were able to fulfil their basic need. This gradually led to the increase of houses in and around the temple and that led to the rise of temple town. Some towns were situated at the junction of cotton growing localities and the cottons could be brought down and woven into cloth, for the weaving of which these places were popular in ancient times like today. The flourishing trade of these places enabled them to attain early the dignity of the capital towns of the Tamil kings.

¹⁰ P.K.Nambiar & K.C Narayana Kurup, *Temples of Madras State: Madurai And Ramanathapuram*, Part XI-D, Census Of India 1961, Vol. IX, Madras, 1969, pp.129

¹¹ Aravind Raj, *Karur Sangam Era's Trade Guild of South India turns 26*, The New India Express, 2021

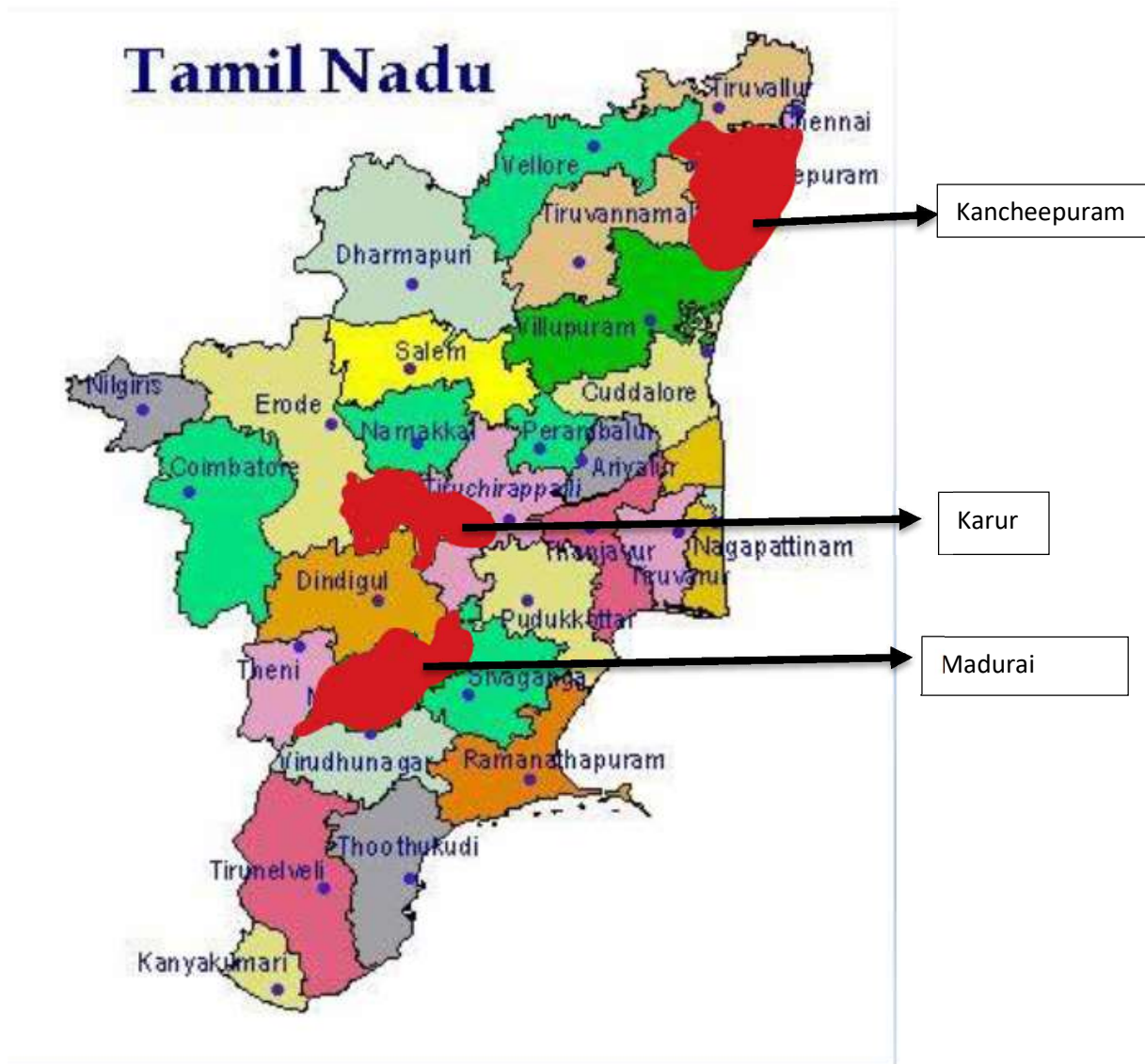
¹² Census of India, *District Census Handbook, Village and Town Directory, Karur*, (Tamil Nadu: Directorate of Census Operations, 2011),pp.4.



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