CHAPTER-III

MUSIRI AND ITS ENVIRONS

The Tamil name of Trichinopoly is Tri-Sira-Pilly (Tri-Sira-Puram) i.e., place of the three headed demon\(^1\). It is also called Cirtapalli or the holy Rock town and Tiru Cinna-Palli or the holy little town. The Anglicised term 'Trichinopoly' is the modification of Tiru-Cinna-Palli\(^2\) To begin with, Trichinopoly was nothing more than the solid rock around which the city’s economic life bustles today. Around the rock here was a fort; hence the name Rock-Fort or Malaikottai in Tamil.

Archaeological Excavations:

The antiquity of Tiruchirappalli is brought to light by the Archaeological excavations conducted by T.V.Mahalingam, of the Madras University in 1962-63 and K.V.Raman, Uraiyur in 1965 and 1969. A lot of new facts have been brought forth to peep into the early local history of Tiruchirappalli. These excavations had thrown some light on the many aspects of the material culture of the area. These sites also yielded inscribed sheds into Tamil-Brahmi letters which have created new interest in the study of potsherds inscriptions of south India. On the whole five ancient sites in Tiruchirappalli district have been excavated:

1) Alagarai  
2) Tirukkampuliyyur  
3) Uraiyur  
4) Karur  
5) Gangaikondacholapuram

Alagarai, located on the bank of cauvery river in the Musiri taluk was taken for excavation by Professor T.V.Mahalingam in 1961-62.

---

\(^2\) *Archaeological Survey of India*, 1903-04, p.275.
Tiruchirappalli is like an inland located centrally in the State of Tamil Nadu. The district lies between 10° 16' and 11°32' Northern Latitude and 77°45' and 79°30' Eastern Latitude. Tiruchirappalli is surrounded by the districts of South Arcot, Thanjavur, Pudukkottai, Sivaganga, Madurai, Dindugul, Karur, Erode and Salem districts.

Tiruchirappalli is now one of the big districts in the state. Periplus of the Erythrean Sea mentioned Uraiyur the capital of ancient Cholas, as the centre of trade. Sedan founded the city and established the Chola line of kings. He is said to have fortified Uraiyur and his successors ruled from there.

The Tiruchirappalli region had played a predominant role in the history of South India from the beginning. The Cholas were the early rulers of this region right from the period of Sangam Age. Among the early Cholas, Karikala Chola (50-95 A.D.) was the most powerful king. After him, the Pandyas, followed by the Pallavas held sway over this region for short period. The Chola rule was once again revitalised by Vijayalaya Chola. With the succession of powerful rulers, Tiruchirappalli remained under the Chola supremacy.

During 1251 A.D the Pandyas rose to power and Tiruchirappalli was brought under the Pandya rule by putting an end to the Chola supremacy over Tiruchirappalli. The Pandyan rule in this region lasted for half a century followed by Muslim domination which lasted 1334-35 A.D. In the middle of the 14th century, the Muslims were defeated by the Vijayanagar rulers and Tiruchirappalli came under Nayak rule. Mangammal's grand son Vijaya Ranga Chokkanatha assumed the reign of government in 1706. He ruled up to 1732. His excessive involvement in religious
matters made the treasury empty. He did not care for the administration. When he
died in 1732, the Madurai country was like a sinking ship.\(^3\)

In 1734, the Nawab of Arcot, Dost Ali khan sent his son Safdar Ali and son-in-
law Chanda Saheb, to reduce the kingdoms of Madura and Tanjore if they failed to
pay tribute. Bangaru Thirumalai, a cousin of Minakshi (1732-36), the last ruler of
Madurai entered into a settlement with Safdar Ali. Safdar Ali left Madurai and
entrusted Chanda Saheb to execute the agreement. At the same time, Minakshi
entered into an agreement with Chanda Saheb. He had sworn by the Koran and
thereby Minakshi allowed him inside the fort. She remained an idle spectator of
Chanda Saheb’s movements.\(^4\) Having taken the control of the fort, Chanda Sahib
turned to Minakshi after defeating Bangaru. He imprisoned Minakshi. She put an end
to her own life by taking poison.\(^5\) Thus ended the Nayak rule in Tiruchirappalli.

In 1741 A.D., the Marathas made an expedition to Tiruchirappalli and took
Chanda Shaheb as a captive. Chanda Shaheb succeeded in securing freedom in
1748 A.D. He soon got involved in the famous Carnatic Wars against Anwar-ud-din,
the Nawab of the Arcot and his son Mohammed Ali. It was actually a struggle
between the European powers for colonial expansion in South India with
Tiruchirappalli as the pivot which ultimately led to the triumph of the English in the
South.

In 1750 A.D., Hyder Ali came to power in Mysore and his power extended up
to Tiruchirappalli. After the death of Tippu Sultan, the English took the Civil and

\(^5\) Ibid., p.234.
Military administration of the Carnatic in 1801 A.D. Thus, Tiruchirappalli passed into the hands of the English. Tiruchirappalli district was formed in 1801 A.D. with Wallace as the first collector of the district.

**Tiruchirappalli under British Rule:**

When the Tiruchirappalli province was taken possession by the English in 1801, it extended to about sixty five miles from the banks of the river Vellar and Kolliam in the north to the borders of Kallamadu in the south and about fifty five miles from the limits up to Thanjavur in the east and to those of Mysore in the west. The revenue administration of the entire province was not under the direct control of the Nawab. He had appointed Arunachalam Pillai as the manager to look after the collection of revenue. The revenue management of the entire province of Tiruchirappalli was in the hands of Arunachalam Pillai. It was this province which became a district under the English in 1801 with territorial modifications for the convenience of the revenue administration. The first Collector, Wallace, took charge of the province of Tiruchirappalli and dependent Poligars on 31 July 1801. Before assuming responsibility the Collector had sent the order from the Nawab Azim-ud-Doula to the acting manager in Tiruchirappalli for the delivery of the Tiruchirappalli province to his charge. He also produced a proclamation announcing the transfer of the civil and military government of the Carnatic from the Nawab to the English. On 3 August 1801, the Collector received the sanads from the manager to the different civil officers of the Nawab ordering them to give over charge of their respective trusts to

---

6 Under the Nawab, Tiruchirappalli was a province and it became a district on 31 July, 1801. when Mr. Wallace became the first collector.

the officers appointed by the English. These sannads were despatched together with
sannads from the Collector to the amils in the different taluks, announcing the
transfer of authority and ordering them to retain their respective situation until further
orders.

The proclamation issued by the Governor of Madras at the time of transfer was
also distributed by the Collector to the inhabitants in all parts of Tiruchirappalli. Besides this, the Collector himself issued a proclamation on 4 August 1801 stating
that all the jagirdhars, talukdars, poligars, kavalgars, ryots, merchants and other
inhabitants of the Tiruchirappalli province and the dependent palayams were required
to consider themselves henceforth subject to the authority of the English company.
They were requested to remain loyal to the company whose primary object was to
secure for its people the unrestrained enjoyment of their property and religious
freedom. As soon as the Collector assumed the responsibility of Tiruchirappalli, the
authority of the managers and the renters ceased to exist. The collector had taken care
to pay the arrears to the troops and public officers of the Nawab’s government. The
decades long state of chaos and depredations came to an end. At the same time, the
British confronted two major problems in the administration of the district, namely
the disposed Poligars and the collection of revenue.

---

8 Amils were the revenue officials in the villages.
9 Revenue Department Consolation Letter from the Revenue Department Consultation, dated
14th August 1801, Vol.110,p.1450.
10 A full text of the proclamation is given in the Revenue Department Consultation, dated
11 Revenue Department Consultations, Letter from the Collector to the Chief Secretary to
12 Ibid-Para 2. p.1449.
At the top of revenue administration in the district was the Collector. He was assisted by Deputy Collector and Tasildars of the Taluk. Each Taluk was headed by one Tasildar and a Deputy Tasildar. He was assisted by the village accountants or the Karnams. For a long time village accountant and the assistants were paid by the ryots. Hence they extracted as much as they liked. The village accountants and Munsiff were the people who had personal contact with the riots. The agriculture did not improve because of the bureaucratic rudderless and the corrupt practices. A patta was a document which had to tell the amount of land a riot possessed. Unfortunately by the mechanisms of the village accountants the exact figures were not shown in the Ryotwari settlement system introduced by Puckles.

**Geographical Condition of Musiri:**

Centrally located in the state of Tamil Nadu, Tiruchirappalli covers 10 revenue Taluks, which is comprised of 14 Blocks namely Anthanallur, Lalgudi Manachanallur, Manaparai, Manikandam, Marungapuri, Musiri, Pullambadi, Thathayangarpet, Thiruvarumbur, Thottiyam, Thurayiyur, Uppiliapuram, and Vaiyampatti. 33 village Panchayats are there in Musiri Taluk. Musiri Taluk comprises three community Development Bloks viz., Thottiam, Musiri and Thathaiengarpettai. Musiri is the Taluk Head Quarters as well as head quarters of the block. Musiri Taluk lies entirely to the north of the river Cauvery. Its area is 667 square miles. The villages in this taluk along the north bank of the Cauvery, being well irrigated by channels from that river, are very fertile. The centre and northern portions of the taluk are, as a rule, unirrigated.

---

In addition to the Cauvery, the only rivers of any importance in the taluk are the Ayyar and the Karaipottanur; the former of these rises in a gorge between the Pachamalais and Kollimalais, and receiving numerous tributaries from both these ranges of hills, after a course of about 30 miles, falls into the Cauvery near the upper anicut. Of the many tributaries of this river, one worth mentioning is the Taligai. The Karaipottanar flows through the Kattuputtur mittah and a number of villages situated at the extreme west end of the taluk, and falls into the Cauvery.

The surface of the taluk is flat, the only range of hills in it being the Pachamalais, which separate it from Perambalur Taluk. The Kollimalais form its boundary at the north-west corner, but they are entirely in the Salem District. South-west of the Kollimalais is another hill called the Talamalai, which forms the boundary of the district at one point, although it lies entirely outside it. This hill was frequently visited by Europeans from Trichinopoly, as the climate is much cooler than that of the plains, while the view from the summit is beautiful.

There was one zamindari in the taluk, that of Turaiyur, which comprised 33 villages, and paid a merely nominal peishcush of Rupees 700 a-year. The Kattuputtur mittah in the south-western corner of the taluk has already been mentioned. It is the only estate of this description in the district, and was transferred from Salem in 1851. It comprised eight villages, and paid an annual peishcush of Rupees 15,901.

**Irrigation in Musiri:**

The portion of the Musiri Taluk lying along the river Cauvery River possesses a most fertile soil and excellent means of canal irrigation. The country north of the valley of the Cauvery and south of the Pachamalai hills is very uniform in character.
The soil is black in the hollows, and red on the higher levels and in the neighbourhood of the hills. Water is to be found, near the surface, and both tanks and wells abound, especially in the Turaiyur Zemindari. The principal grains grown in the taluk are paddy, Cholum, Cumbu, Ragi and Horse-gram; Varagu is found here and there, but it is not extensively cultivated. The staple food of the people in the villages is rice. Further north dry grains, especially cholum and cumbu, are largely consumed, by the people of Musiri taluk.

The principal sources of irrigation are the Cauvery, Ayyar and Karaipottanar. The following statement gives some details regarding the villages in the taluk irrigated by the more important of the canals from the Cauvery:

1. Nattuvaykkal
2. Srinivasanallur channel
3. Thottiyam periya vaykkal
4. Thottiyam chinna vaykkal
5. Sipilaputtur channel.

There are 53 tanks in the taluk, of which the most important are Jamberi, paying an assessment of 5,768 Rupees a year; the large irrigation tank in the Turaiyur Zamindari, close to the head-quarter village, ayakat 386 cawnies, assessment Rupees 3,066; Tirutalaiyur tank, ayakat 766 acres, assessment Rupees 2,557.

There is no line of railway through any portion of the taluk. The station on the South Indian Railway at Kulittalai is, however, almost exactly opposite the taluk head-quarters, and, as there was a ferry across the river at this point till the
construction of a bridge across the river on the North there is a considerable amount of traffic from the taluk by this station. The Lallapettai Station is very similarly situated with respect to Tottiyam, as there are ferries across the river from Kattapalli to Sipilaputtur and from Katlai to Aiyalur.

Musiri, the head-quarters of the taluk Tahsildar is a moderate, sized village, situated on the Cauvery, almost exactly opposite to Kulittalai. Since 1867 it has also been the head-quarters of the Head Assistant Collector and Magistrate, whose division comprised the two taluks of Musiri and Kulittalai. It is also the head-quarters of the officer of the Public Works Department. Musiri is a neat and healthy town, but it is a place of no importance whatever, was selected as the divisional officer's head-quarters probably because of its central position in the division. The taluk office is an old one. It is, however, in good order, and the accommodation in it is sufficient. A sub-jail, with a latrine and cooking-room and an hospital building, now used as a resting-place for persons who came to the office, were added to the building in 1872. The Police Station was in a small thatched building opposite to the taluk office, but it has now been removed into the centre-room in the sub-jail building. In 1874 the Local Fund Board determined to open a small hospital in Musiri, and built a thatched house for the Hospital Assistant in charge. In 1875 three flights of steps leading down to the Cauvery for the convenience of the villagers for washing and getting drinking-water were built by funds raised by the Tahsildar from local subscriptions, assisted by the Local Fund Board.
Occupation:

The taluk contains few rich people, and pays only a small amount of income-tax. 16% of the pattas are for sums exceeding rupees fifty thousand amount and there are few industries.¹⁵ Men's cloths of good quality are made by a large number of Saliyans and Devangas at Manamedu and Turaiyur; coarse cotton cloth in fair quantities at Turaiyur and Musiri; blankets by the Kurumbans all over the taluk; mats of korai grass in fair quantities at Musiri and Unniyur and to a small extent at Adanur. Tottiyam and Kaduvetti; and bell-metal vessels by a few smiths at Turaiyur and Kirambur. Some ten stone-cutters live at both Nagalapuram and Vellur and five or six wood-carvers of fair skill at Uppiliyapuram.

Roads Network:

State Highways and major district roads connect the Musiri town with surrounding region and other urban centres in the State. There are no national highways passing through this town. The State Highways and major district roads connecting other important urban centres are as follows:

Chennai – Musiri, Thuraiyur, Perambalur, Villupuram.

Musiri - Trichy Road,

Musiri - Namakkal Road,

Musiri - Thuraiyur Road,

Musiri - Kulithalai Road,

¹⁵ Hemingwary, Madras District Gazetteers Trichinopoly (Madras, 1907), p.287.
These roads form a total length of 14.50 kms within the town limit. This town is well connected with other important urban centres in Namakkal and Karur District and nearby major towns like Thuraiyur, Trichy, Kulithalai and Namakkal.

Namakkal is a main road. Trichy road and Namakkal Road is always busy in all seasons. During the festival seasons, the traffic inflow into this town doubles, which create more traffic problems.

Town Panchayat Roads:

Among the Town Panchayat roads, nearly 66.34% of the roads in the town are BT surfaced and 4.33% are Cement Roads and 16.30% are Mud roads, 11.76% Metal roads and 0.37% Pavement stones.

The traffic in the following five major roads namely Trichy-Namakkal road and Musiri-Thuraiyur road are high. The high volume of slow moving vehicles like cycles and two wheelers in the above roads indicate the residential developments along the roads.

Musiri Town Panchayat maintains 51.313 km length of various types of roads as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Road</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BT Surface</td>
<td>34.711 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement Concrete Roads</td>
<td>3.315 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM Roads</td>
<td>4.576 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mud road</td>
<td>8.53 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavement stone</td>
<td>0.181 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.313 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sector Backgrounds Context & Broad Project Rational:

The existing infrastructure:

**Water supply:**

Musiri Town Panchayat supplies water sub-surface sources to the town. Cauvery River, which is two kilo metres away from town, is the main source and supplies about 18.16 lakhs LDCD water to the town. In addition to this, the town has 57 borewells with hand pumps and 5 mini power pumps supplied. For the distribution of treated water, the town has 3 overhead tanks with a combined capacity of 8.90 lakhs. The storage capacity to surface water supply is around 90 percent which indicated that the town has inadequate storage facilities.

All water connection in the town is unmetered. There are 3511 domestic connections. 180 connections are commercial and industrial. Population coverage is an estimated 100 per cent of the total. Total length of roads within Town Panchayat limits is 51.313km. Distribution mains are provided for a length and account for only 31.50km. The Town Panchayat supplies water daily for a duration of three hours. Newly added areas and population remain unserved.

**Solid Waste Management:**

As per the definition provided by the Town Panchayat Solid Waste management includes commercial and residential wastes generated in Town Panchayat or notified areas in either solid or semi-solid from excluding industrial hazardous wastes but treated bio-medical wastes. The solid waste management comprising collection, transportation and disposal of municipal solid waste is
obligatory function of the urban local body. Town Panchayat solid waste comprises households, markets, commercial establishments, hotels, hospitals and industries in the town. The Town Panchayat claims to collect and dispose 6 metric tonnes of waste daily.

In Musiri Town Panchayat, there is no under sewerage system, only storm water drainage is being maintained. There is Pacca drainage being maintained by the Town Panchayat.

The provision and maintenance of streetlight is an obligatory function of Musiri Town Panchayat. Tamil Nadu Electricity Board installs new streetlight poles and draws electric cables and the Town Panchayat is responsible for operation and maintenance.

Musiri has 1135 streetlights spread at an average distance of twenty seven meters, which is well above the prescribed standard spacing of 30 meters and yet, makes the town poorly lit. There are 1016 tube lights spread across the town, which is about 90 per cent of the total street lights; 109 are sodium vapour lamps, Mercury Vapour Lamps are installed in the important places.

In the Musiri Town, there are two Govt.Higher Secondary Schools, one for girls and another for Boys and two middle schools and eight elementary schools are functioning in effective manner. 9 noon - meal centres and 7 anganvadies are also available in the ULB.

There is one Public Library maintained by the District Local Library Authority. There is also Medical Facility, available in the town. In Musiri town, one Govt. Hospital and 30 small private hospitals are serving the public. People for major
operations will have to go to Trichy or Karur city. Earlier there were two cinema theatres but now in Musiri town there is only one Cinema theatre available for Public Entertainment. There are four privately owned kalyanamandabam cum Community hall (i.e. marriage halls) with all facilities situated in ULB. Major entertainment for the people is going to Cauvery River for bathing.

In Musiri block 33 Panchayats functioning.

Musiri Panchayat Union:

Musiri Panchayat union is situated north of Tiruchirappalli town. Among the 14 Panchayat unions of Tiruchirappalli district, Musiri constitutes the one of the most important Panchayat unions. Musiri Panchayat union is located on 25 km from East of Thottiam Panchayat union, 30 km from west of Manachanallur Panchayat union, 35 km from south of Thuraiyur Panchayat union, 30 km from north west of Thathaiengarpet Panchayat union. It has 33 Gram Panchayats. The table shows (See Appendix-A) the Panchayats and village wise population of Musiri Panchayat union.17

Agriculture and Industries:

The district is surrounded by the lush green fertile land. This district is basically an agrarian district. Lands on the basins of the Cauvery were highly priced. Paddy was usually grown in the wet taluks. The high lands of dry taluks were generally sown with kambu, followed by cholam and several sorts were produced such as cotton, castor etc.,. Agriculture, industry and trade play an important role for the economic development of the district.

17 Musiri Panchayat Union Record book, Panchayat Union Office (Musiri), pp.5-10.
The climate throughout the year is moderate. The variation between maximum and minimum temperature is not much. The Panchayats get rain mostly during Northeast monsoon. The maximum rainfall occurs during the month of October to December. May and June are the hottest months and the lowest temperature is recorded in the month of September and January.

**Soil Condition:**

The soils in the study area are not uniform in colour. The alluvium and Reger soil are the major type of soils found in the region. Paddy is the principle crop in the region.

Agriculture is, as elsewhere, the backbone of Musiri. The main source of the income for the bulk of the people comes from agricultural activities. The dry climate and water scarcity present many challenges to farmers who are able to earn only during the six month growing seasons. Those with land grow mainly cash crops such as sunflower, groundnuts, cotton; wealthy land owners cultivate coconut, mango and banana. Both men and women work on those plantations, children must work as well to contribute to their family income.\(^\text{18}\)

Agriculture is the main occupation for most of the people of this Panchayat and it is traditional occupation of the people. Agriculture has been mostly increased due to the encouragement given by the Tamil Nadu Government under the scheme of green revolution. Many innovative schemes have been implemented for the improvement of Agriculture in this area. The farmers are motivated properly recording various innovations and scientific methods of cultivation. Grama sevaks have taken keen

\(^{18}\) Interview *N. Chandrasekaran*, Agricultural Officer, Musiri, dated on 23.01.2007.
interest in the welfare of the agriculturalists. They meet the farmers and visit the lands
now and then and offer their guidance for the improvement of Agriculture.

Agriculture crops may be divided into three major categories: they are,

1. Food crops
2. Commercial crops
3. Garden products

Paddy, cholam, Ragi, are some of the most important food crops cultivated in this
area. Cereals such as black gram, green gram, red gram are also cultivated. People
raise commercial crops not only for food but also to get more income. Some crops are
mainly grown to earn money. Some such crops are cotton, oil seeds, sugar cane,
ground nut, coconut and bananas etc., vegetables and fruit gardens are grown
in many villages. Vegetables such as brinjal, lady’s finger, drumstick, bitter guard,
angle guard, pumpkin, tomato, onions, snake guards, chillies, and greens are
cultivated in this area. They are marketed on every day at Musiri daily market.
Plantains, brinjal, chillies, coconuts are largely grown in and around Musiri.

**Industrial Development:**

Small scale Industrial units like rice mills, oil mills, mat industries, coir
industries are functioning in this Panchayat. Poultry is another cottage industry of the
people. These industries are only seasonal and there is no permanent work force
enjoyed if any of these industrial units. Small pool of capital is invested in trade and
commerce. For employment people go to near by towns such as Karur and
Tiruchirappalli.