CONCLUSION

The geographical position and historical factors were conducive for development of urban. In early historical period just like Tamilnadu, western Deccan had witnessed well developed urban centres. In these two regions foreign trade was major factor in economic activities. Foreigners had purchased minerals and perfumes which were sifted in these areas.

In Tamilnadu neolithic sites have located at outcrops of Western and eastern ghats and river valley. These patterns of location were on account of pastoralism which predominated. In succeeding period megalithic culture pre dominated. This culture had bridged pre-historic and early historical periods in Tamilnadu. Most of the megalithic excavations yielded urban centres and habitation sites also. All these sites have been located at highways and river banks. According to archaeological finds trade activites are major occupations in all these centres. Cattle breeding and shiftig cultivations were preceded trade. Hence the life was semi nomadic one. The pattern of magalithic sites also reveal the fact that people were on moving for pasture lands and shifting cultivation.

In early historical period Tamilnadu had witnessed trade boom. Development of trade was the root cause of highways had
passed through Tamilnadu. This highways system must have its root in pastoral life. The settlements on these highways had necessarily trade centres. Some of these settlements have coin finds and foreign artifacts. These reveal the facts that these highway and settlements had thrived on trade, particularly foreign trade. All the settlement and trade centre had been located in areas which were famous for mineral wealth.

Mineral wealth find market in foreign countries they must have been exported from ports at west coast. Some of the settlements had been located at strategic position. We can cite Karur, Vellalur Anaimali and Palani. Hence they served as military contonments at times. Of all the above mentioned settlement Karur had enjoyed its strategic position. It had been located on the junctions of the major highways that connected all the important trade centre in peninsular India. Hence it was bone of contentions among Tamil trinity.

Foreign trade had formed the major parts of trade in Tamilnadu. Many forest products, mineral wealth, spices etc were the commodities. Of these commodities foreigners had given out coins in gold, silver and base metals Kongu had yielded 80% of Roman coin finds all over India.
Geographical factors may have influenced the economy in another way as well. As discussed in Chapter I the rugged terrain coupled with uncertain rainfall has made the western Tamilnadu an area of overall low agricultural productivity. Thus dependence on trade may have been necessary to supplement the yield from agriculture. Alternatively subsistence agriculture had to be supported by 'cash crops' has suggested that the real cause of the development of the Konkun coast was the sitting of mineral wealth.

A perusal of the Periplus (sec.49) shows that external demand was primarily for raw materials such as the different varieties of woods, e.g. ebony, teak, backwood, sandalwood and bamboo; aromatics such as bdellium, spikenard, coatus, lycium and saffron; spices like long-pepper, malabathrum and cinnabar; dyes such as indigo and lac; and semi-precious stones like agate, red jasper, carnelian and onyx. Cloth was perhaps the only item which required manufacture. As discussed in Chapter 4, the majority of these products were locally available and did not involve either long-distance transportation or elaborate and complex processes of manufacture. What is more important is that the Arthasastra shows an acquaintance with and use of most of these commodities. It thus corroborates the evidence from the Periplus. The resulting prosperity led to a proliferation of crafts and an improved standard
of living as is evident from archaeological excavations at Satavahana sites.

Commercial transactions were based on a monetary system for large hoards of foreign coins have been found extensively in the Kongu Country, Roman gold and silver coins being presumably used as high-value currency better suited to the needs of the luxury trade. We have seen that the Tamilnadu trade was in both essential as well as luxury goods. The situation may have been different in the eastern Deccan where foreign traders may have been able to introduce Roman currency in circulation.

The development of a state from a tribal system of organization may at times appear to be a continuous process though the change entails a basic alteration in the manner in which the authority of the leadership is enforced and upheld. We have used the term 'tribal system' to refer to a spectrum ranging from primitive segmentary lineage to the more advanced chiefdoms. What these have in common is the generalized nature of economic and social functions. In a lineage system authority cannot be enforced but is dependent on the goodwill of members of the tribe and on traditional ties. In the absence of coercive powers traditional bonds
can only be established and maintained by gift-giving and the redistributive mechanism.

It has been suggested that a similar situation prevailed in the Tamil Country prior to the Mauryan penetration and in Chapter V we have discussed in some detail archaeological and literary references indicating the existence of lineages in the peninsula. It is possible that the Tamil trinity may have been its dominating lineage who on attaining power aspired to religious legitimation. Similarly the recording of donations by different occupational groups at the cave sites may be seen as a means of stating their economic power which in turn would determine their position in the new social hierarchy. This process of social transformation is attested in several periods of Indian history and as late as the eighteenth century which saw state formation in the tribal belt of Central India.

The development in the sculpture and ornaments from Tamil urban centres provides a means of documenting the gradual increase in the prosperity of these urban establishments. In addition to its accepted usefulness in solving problems relating to chronology, settlement patterns, the layout of habitation areas, proliferation in crafts and changes in the modes of their
production, archaeology can also aid in documenting social change, for instance at sites which show a transition from the Megalithic to the Early Historical period.