Conclusion
CONCLUSION

Musiri region has its own historical significance and glory. It is being part of the dry zone and part of the wet zone did not generate itself within its confine any powerful ruling family like the Pallava or Chola. More than 150 inscriptions bear testimony to the rule of the imperial Cholas over Musiri region. The word Musiri means 'gifted land'. Musiri region does not denote Musiri town or Musiri taluk, but includes the present taluks of Musiri, Thuraiyur and Thottiyam. Moreover, the unique social composition of Musiri area augments the importance of the Musiri region to study the historical importance comprehensively.

Neolithic vestiges are found at Vadakkipatti, Puliyancholai, Venkatachalapuram and Thanneer Pallam. Evidences of Megalithic age culture are available at Alagarai, Ammapalayam, Kottathur, Keerambur, Sengattuppatti, Veliyanur, Kalladippatti, Nagama Nayakkanpatti, Kottappalayam, Top Chenkattuppatti, Perumal Palayam, Chinnasalem Patti, Kattuputhur and Chinnamettukali. These sites have yielded rich deposits of megalithic age tools and utensils.

Besides, there are Megalithic age sites in the Musiri region, particularly between Thuraiyur and Kolli hills and Kattuputhur area. The monuments are innumerable and throw light on the socio, economic and cultural life of the people. Musiri was a very popular
place during the rule of Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas and other rulers. During the time of the Pallavas, the empire was divided into homogenous provinces for the purpose of efficient administration. Mandalams or Rashtras which were subdivided into Kottams or Vishaya, Nadus and Urs. There were 24 Kottams in the Pallava Empire. During the period of Mahendravarma Pallava-I, a Brahmadeyam was created in his name called ‘Mahendramangalam’. It is located west of Musiri in Thottiyam taluk.

The study reveals that there were many Nadu units in the Musiri region such as, Mimalai Nadu, Valluvappadi Nadu, Alagarai Nadu, Anmur Kurram, Mel Valluvappadi Nadu, Pachchil Kurram and Vadavali Nadu. An attempt is made for a detailed study of these territorial divisions and traced their extent and villages located in these Nadu areas.

Thereafter, Cholas and Nayaks ruled this region. During this period, the Chola rulers established Siva temples in various places like Thiruvengimalai, Musiri, Thottiyam, Sriramasamudram, Thuraiyur, Thirunarayanapuram, Thiruthiyamalai, Singalanthapuram, Vellur, Alathudaiyanpatti and Maradi. In the subsequent decades, Vijayanagar kings and the Nayak chiefs were the rulers of the region. At that time, there were some local chiefs like Reddis of Thuraiyur held sway over this area.

An attempt is made in this chapter for a detailed study of Pallavas administration, territorial divisions of Cholas namely
Mandalam, Valanadu and Nadu, Vijayanagar and Nayaks administration. The study is to identify the administration of Pallavas, Cholas, Vijayanagar and Nayaks. During the period of Cholas the country was divided into two major divisions viz, those on the northern bank and those on the southern bank with reference to river Cauvery. In this classification, all the Valanadu and Nadu units of Musiri region belonged to the northern division.

The micro-level territorial units of the study area were called Nadu as elsewhere in the macro-region. An analysis of the number of settlements included in each of the Nadus shows the evolutionary character of these units. It is found that the maximum number of settlements came into existence during the Chola period.

As for the higher level territorial units over and above the Nadu, was the Valanadu. Rajaraja-I introduced the Valanadu scheme to provide bigger administrative division above the Nadu unit. The territories of Valluvappadi Nadu were brought under Karikalakanna Valanadu. There were six Valanadus and eight Nadus by which the Chola administration was controlled by the king. The Hoysalas were influential in the Musiri region. There are four inscriptions of Hoysalas kings are available at T. Kannanur.

During the time of Vijayanagara period more donations were offered by the King Venkata IV to Musiri Chandramouleswara temple. It is displayed in four copper plates and two more inscriptions. Virapratapa Krishnadeva Maharaya, Srirangadeva Maharaja also offered donation to this temple.
According to tradition Thuraiyur Zamindari was founded by one Anna Reddiyar, who came from the north on his pilgrimage to Rameswaram and subdued a local miscreant in favour of a local chief of Chettikulam (Perambalur District) and later established himself as a chief of Thuraiyur. However inscriptions reveal one Erama Reddiyar as the earliest known chief of the Zamin family.

There are number of temples situated in and around Musiri. These temples are of historical importance. Some of the temples are found on the hill-tops and on the river banks of Cauvery. It was found that the godly element was actively at working places of natural beauty. The early temples of Musiri region were built with perishable materials like brick, wood, stone and thatch. The Vedic temples of Musiri Region are classified into two categories viz, Saivite temples and Vaishnavite temples.

The temple centred economy and society can be found throughout this area. The main reason may be the patronage rendered by the local chiefs and wealthy people, besides, of course the kings. Srinivasanallur Koranganathar temple, Pasupatheesvarar temple, Thinnakkonam Nandhikeswara Swamy temple, Kasi Viswanatha Swamy temple, Amarasundareswarar temple, Singalanthapuram Maragathaleswara Swamy temple, Thiruvengimalai Analaadeeswarar temple, Thottiyan Ehapushpanathar temple, Thiruthiyamalai Sri Kameswarar temple, Vellore Chandramouleeswarar temple, Musiri Shri Valeeswarar temple, Sri Ramasamudram Vinayakar temple, Sikkathampur Ravieswarar temple, Amoor Someswarar temple, Alagarai Kailasanathar temple, Kargudi Somanatha Eswarar temple,
Alathudaiyanpatty temples contain historical elements. Sculptures, inscriptions of these temples also added value. Vaishnavite temples such as Alamelumangai Sametha Venkatachalapathi Swamy temple, Perumalmalai Vedanarayana Perumal temple, Thirunarayanapuram Bhojeswara temple and Sundaravaradharaja Perumal temple, Perumal temple, Maradi Prasanna Venkatachalaperumal temple, Gunaseelam temples played a vital role in the history of Musiri. Besides, there is a Buddha statue in Aravayee Amman temple at Mangalam village near Musiri proved the existence of Buddhism in this region. The art and sculptural beauty in these temples contain a great deal of artistic and historical importance.

Village deities and its worship is a common one in Musiri region. The village deities worship made by the rural people is unified on the occasion of the annual festival of the village deities. Thottiyam Madurai Kaliamman temple, Aiyar, Karuppannasamy, Munisamy, Madurai Veeran, Mariamman, Kannimars, Kali Ellamman, Devil worship, Snake worship, Tree worship, Evil Gods, Pidari or Pidari Amman, Ancestral Worship are practiced by the people of Musiri widely and it is quite popular. The village deities' worship made the rural people united. On the occasion of the annual festival of the village deities the whole village will be united. Though they are living in far off villages for their livelihood, during festival time; they mingle with their family members. It implies the real nature of unity among the rural people.

The study of social structure enables to know how the various units of the society, which are in direct or indirect contact with one
another, behave in their social life with one another. The social structure of India in general and of Tamil Nadu in particular, was based on caste system, which had come down from very early times. The important feature of the social history of Musiri region from the early period to the study period is the caste structure. Caste system formed the basis of the society in Musiri region. It has been a widely prevalent institution throughout India and was not confined to Musiri region alone.

The Brahmadeyam or the Brahmin settlement is the most important category of village. Generally the Brahmadeyam included the temples, tanks, residential quarters, meeting places (Ambalam) while the Brahmin landholders lived in the main villages, the cultivators, artisans and other servicing communities like the Paraiya lived in separate hamlets.

Land lords, Vellalas and Pillais purchased lands of Brahmin residents and moved into these villages and the Brahmins migrated elsewhere. All these resulted in radical changes is the original composition of the Brahmadeya villages. In Musiri region, there was a Brahmadeya namely Kumaradi Mangalam. Another Brahmadeyam was Mahendramangalam.

Malaiyalis, Pallars, Paraiyar and Valluvar. Vellalas were the land holders, cultivators and were recognised by the titles of Velan, Vellalan, Kilavan and Udaian. Vellalas served as the revenue officials of the Chola period. They also served as accountants of the village assemblies and temples. The Vellalas of Musiri region now call themselves as Cholia Vellalas. The weaver community called Kaikkolas was one of the important castes in this region. The inscriptions of the 12th-13th centuries mention Kaikkolar engaged in weaving through looms. The inscriptions of the 10th-14th centuries AD mention about Saliyar who was also engaging in weaving.

Inscriptions also refer to the existence of Kallar and other servicing castes such as Kusavar, Vannar, Barbar and Paraiyar. During the Vijayanagar period, the people of Reddi caste came from Andhradesa and settled in this area. The Thuraiyur chiefs belonged to this caste. Inscriptions throw light on the various types of lands, crops, irrigation facilities etc. Large number of individual donors, chiefs and landlords donated it to temples and built tanks, wells, sluices and desalted tanks. All these factors improved the agriculture of this Musiri region.

The belief that people of different castes possessed dissimilar professional abilities was another aspect of character. Chettiyars and Nadars, for example, were believed to have an inborn talent for doing business. When difficulties of commercial life were discussed, their characters were given as the typical explanation for their success in commercial competition. An early training secret business
methods, and support from fellow caste members were considered to be other relevant causes.

People in Musiri Region belonged to a large number of different castes. Caste distinctions were not so unambiguously marked that it was easy to establish the caste membership of a stranger. The stereotyping human character involved a moral evaluation, resulting a moral ranking of castes. The actual ranking varied according to different points of view, but for example intelligence, rationality and responsibility were generally considered as morally superior traits that were associated with higher castes. Similar kinds of ranking between men and women, between adults and children, existed parallel to the moral ranking of castes. In general, low-caste people, women and children were to some degree considered to lack the morally superior traits.