CHAPTER VII

STATE AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING

The Tamil society is not an exception to such estimates. Their looks, dress, food occupations, habits etc., varied in the different Kurinji, Mllai, Marudam, neithal and Palai regions as mentioned in Tolkappiyam, the earliest Tamil extent\(^1\). The people of all these lands were the adherents of self sufficient economy. As pointed out by Thirukkural every one was keen on acquiring wealth because this world is one for those who possess wealth\(^2\). There were desirable disparities between the rich and poor communities\(^3\). While importance was assigned to wealth, poverty, which was available then, was also realized and repented\(^4\). Anyhow they never felt that the poverty was the outcome of the mismanagement and mal distribution of wealth but karma or evil deeds as the causes\(^5\). In the same way they attached significance to charity mainly to attain fame and name. As the kings were philanthropists and offered grants and other things, it is evident that humanitarianism was not the cause for their charitable pursuits. But attainment of fame was the basic cause. So it becomes a must to have an analysis of the role of state in the economic well being of the society.

\(^{1}\) Tolkappiyam, Porul:5.
\(^{2}\) Tirukkural, 247.
\(^{3}\) Kurntogai, 137.
\(^{4}\) Purananuru, 376, Nanmanikkadigai, 30.
\(^{5}\) Naladiyar, 31.
Actually the king was the owner of the land and that was the basis for the economic outputs. Those who had no material prosperity were not regarded in the society. The cowherd community counted cattle a wealth. Among agriculturists number of ploughs was the standard of measurement of wealth\textsuperscript{6}. Since food was the prime importance of the people agricultural operations, fishing, hunting etc. there were other economic activities such as weaving, making weapons and tools and shipping. Anyhow industrial economy was a secondary one to agrarian economics. Further the industries were all available only in the urban centres.

The kings were keen on offering lands as gifts to the poets during the Sangam age. The bards were also granted lands and movable properties such as cattle etc. The Brahmins were granted lands as iraiyili lands by the rulers\textsuperscript{7}. Such grants were irrecoverable\textsuperscript{8}. The kings rendered absolute rights over the lands to others in two forms. When generally lands were made over they were known as murruthu and the cultivated lands when transferred it was called as Pattankal\textsuperscript{9}. During the Sangam age the market place and the records pertaining to land transactions too were called by the same name avanam\textsuperscript{10}.

\textsuperscript{7} Padirruppathu, Il ten, Padigam.
\textsuperscript{8} Kuruntogai, 349.
\textsuperscript{9} Kalittogai, III. 4.
\textsuperscript{10} Subrahmanian, N. op.cit., p. 234.
The transactions of such as pledging or pawing were done under panayam\(^{11}\). Loans called tanisu\(^{12}\) were obtained and repaid. But it was happily received and returned with difficulties\(^{13}\). Accounts were also maintained for debits. The terms such as Kanakkar\(^{14}\), Kanakkiyal Vinaignar\(^{15}\) too will exhibit the value and importance of accounting in transactions of different types. Such facts stand to prove that the general economy was a satisfactory one during the Sangam age due to the righteous and proper efforts undertaken by the then rulers. But it is also worth to note that there were famines and droughts at times. Under such circumstances the farmers were protected by the kings and the farmers consumed the seeds of paddy maintained for sowing\(^{16}\). Such facts too reveal the relationship which existed between the rulers and ruled with regard to the economy of the state.

As pointed out by Manimegalai when Magadan Vinaiganar (artisans) Maratta Kannar (Smiths), Avantikkollar (blacksmiths), Yavana tachchar (carpenters) were engaged in the factories in Tamil Country\(^{17}\), it is evident that the Tamil economy was maintained by the support of artisans from areas other than Tamil Country. Here it is worth to note that such

\(^{11}\) Palamoli, 52:1.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., 98.
\(^{13}\) Kalittogai, 22.
\(^{14}\) Naladiyar, 397:1.
\(^{15}\) Silappatikaram, XXVI. 40.
\(^{16}\) Prananuru, 230.
\(^{17}\) Manimegalai, XIX. 107-110.
activities would have been possible with the acknowledgement and approval of the rulers.

The development of trade and commerce was another economic pursuit of the Sangam age. When traders moved in groups it was a practice among the merchants to employ warriors for protection\(^{18}\). The kings never interfered in the activities of the traders. The merchants who acquired huge profit “did not pervade the society improving the overall standard of living but only added to the wealth of certain segments of the society”\(^{19}\). Thus the trade and commerce developed without any intervention of the state.

The Yavanas, the Romans including the Greeks and Egyptians had their own settlements in Tamil Country. So there were opportunities for them to get mixed with the native politics in Tamil Country. For such untoward activities they were severely punished by the Chera ruler Imayavaramban Neduncheralathan\(^{20}\). But such commercial contacts enabled the Tamil rulers to know about the military discipline of the Roman soldiers, who safeguarded the Tamil merchants from the sea pirates during their sea borne commerce and that in turn allowed them to appoint as guards at the gates of the fortresses\(^{21}\). The ancient native tradition of the reputation of sea borne activities was continued by the subsequent Tamil

\(^{18}\) Ahananuru, 104.
\(^{19}\) N. Subrahmanian, op.cit., p. 258.
\(^{20}\) Padirruppathu, Il ten, Padigam.
\(^{21}\) Cllappatikaram, XIV, p. 67.
rulers. The Sangam Chola rulers piled a navy across the seas\textsuperscript{22}. The various references about Karikalan in Pattinappalai of Uruttirar Kannanar will testify to the contributions of the Chola ruler to the Tamil society.

As the kings were war time as well as peace time leaders and assumed commendable command from the society. The king, who was the embodiment of administration offered grants on the day of his coronation. While the kings were serving as enlightened rulers the state authorites contribution to the economic well being of the people.

The assembly of Tiruttaniyal offered a remission of taxes on 1000 kuli of land. The land was purchased by a private individual from the farmers of that village and handed over that to the Dharmigal, a body which managed the charitable endowments and trust property of that village\textsuperscript{23}. In the same way the assembly of Porpondai of Kalattur Kottam had the right of collecting one kadi of paddy per crop for the upkeep of a tank at Malai Vellapperum kulam\textsuperscript{24}. In the same way for giving donations to as Vaidhya bhoga a tank duty called Erikkadai was levied and it was collected in the form of one Kadi paddy and transferred to the work mentioned\textsuperscript{25}. While such measures were undertaken by bodies which, as economic measures offered grants, a private individual remitted certain taxes as

\textsuperscript{22} Mullaippattu, 59 to 66.
\textsuperscript{23} 435 of 1905.
\textsuperscript{24} 402 of 1923.
\textsuperscript{25} 116 of 1923.
Padikaval, Kasayam to the state mainly for the welfare of the rulers\textsuperscript{26}.

It was a customary practice of the state to issue gifts of specific quantum of land to the temple of Udaiyar Tiruppanichchaitturai Udayanayyar at Nerkunram not only for the sacred perpetual lamp but also for maintaining a garden called Sembur Kilavan Tirunandavanam\textsuperscript{27} certain taxes called kasayam, ponvari, alamanji and antarayam were exemped at the village Gunamangalam, mainly for bringing the areas of that village into cultivation\textsuperscript{28}. Such facts reveal that tax exemptions were granted mainly to establish nandavanam and reclamation of land for cultivation.

Private individuals also lent 6 ma of land as endowment for offering one ulakku of ghee everyday to the temple at the hill of Srikantha Chathurvedimangalam. The land was made as a tax free one and it was maintained by a Sabha\textsuperscript{29}. The land offered to the Tirumerrali Mahadeva of Pullalur was purchased back and reassigned for the regular conduct of the rituals in that temple and also to grow a flower garden to that temple. This was done by Piranadhi Karigal to be executed by the Vaniyapperumakkal of that village.\textsuperscript{30}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} 51 of 1922.
\item \textsuperscript{27} 214 of 1934-35.
\item \textsuperscript{28} 122 of 1926.
\item \textsuperscript{29} 117 of 1914.
\item \textsuperscript{30} 47 of 1923.
\end{itemize}
Such economic transactions were common among the rulers of Tamil Country and they were mostly centering on temples. These facts also suggest that economic activities were existed between state officials, private individuals and temples. Even for the maintenance and upkeep of a gardener of a flower garden of the temple of Thiruvidamarudur\textsuperscript{31}, agreements were also made by the Perungini Sabha of Srikantha Chaturvedimangalam for getting a lump sum, as payment of taxes for half veli and half ma. The perunguri Sabha of the same place sold a land for digging a channel to carry the water to the land by means of a sluice\textsuperscript{32}. The assembly of Peruvengur too received a specific quantity of land and a lump sum as iraikaval dravyam towards the payment of taxes on the gift land\textsuperscript{33}. The Perunguri Mahasabha, mentioned earlier, in a meeting held at a place called brahmasthana transacted the sale of 45 Kalanju of gold with the cultivators of that place\textsuperscript{34}.

Another inscription refers to the sale of land as kudinikka devadanam by the Sabha, the Ur and the devakanmis to one Kamban maniyan, the head man of Suralur with the condition that he will be offered 150 Kalams of paddy annually as Kanikkadan for clearing the forest and reclaiming the land\textsuperscript{35}.

Thus the above facts reveal that the Sabhas of particular areas played a vital role in the economic transactions of the

\textsuperscript{31} 215 of 1907.
\textsuperscript{32} 102 of 1914.
\textsuperscript{33} 104 of 1914.
\textsuperscript{34} 105 of 1914.
\textsuperscript{35} 683 of 1919.
land. They were involving in such activities mainly to execute welfare activities such as construction of canals, flower gardens and clearance of forests, land reclamation etc.

The inscription available at Sendalai too attests these facts. It refers to an endowment of veli of land for the maintenance of a hall called ambalam after purchasing that land from the Perumguri Mahasabha. Another inscription from that place records an endowment of two plots of land by Rudra Divakaran for the daily feeding of seven Brahmanas of that place\textsuperscript{36}.

The Sabhas of varied nature were important bodies, attached with the Government, in dealing with the different economic aspects of the state. They, with their role in temple administration, were dealing with the endowments made on behalf of the temple services. Due to the orders of the rulers they looked after the repairs, upkeep and maintenance of the village tanks. A vast body of skilled labourers was engaged for such activities. The various Pallava canals and voykkals used for irrigation were bearing the names of the Pallava rulers. Mahendra tadaka, Vairameha tadaka, etc., could be cited as suitable illustrations for them. Even during the later periods a separate board called eri variyam was constituted to look after the tanks\textsuperscript{37}. Thus during the early period through the Ur Sabhas and Sabhas and through the village level local bodies, the rulers developed the economic well being of the state.

\textsuperscript{36} 202 of 1926.
\textsuperscript{37} R. Gopalan, History of the Pallavas of Kanchi, Madras, 1928, p. 155.
The early Tamil rulers of the Chera, Chola, Pandya regions and minor chieftains devoted much attention towards maritime trade and its control by serving as main consumers of luxury goods. By developing ports, issuing coins, levying tolls and customs under such circumstances it is no wonder to note that the rulers were protectors of the production and manufacture of trading commodities commercial goods (or) contacts\(^{38}\). Specialised craft production developed and that included metal working, weaving, salt manufacturing etc. The Vendar by means of gifting were capable of introducing the distribution system of the commodities. The items such as gold coins, gold lotuses, gems, muslin cloths, elephants, horses and landed areas were gifted and they in turn became the prestigious items of exchange with ideo as well as socio techni values\(^{39}\). Thus in addition to the agrarian pursuits, the Tamil rulers for achieving socio-political authority depended on maritime trade.

Though no regular system of tax or tribute was available regarding war, the rulers glorified the warriors by rewards of issuing a great meal and rice cultivating lands\(^{40}\). As the rulers were philanthropists they caused influences over the traders

\(^{38}\) R. Chempakalakshmi, Trade, ideology and urbanization in South India, Madras, 1996, pp. 93-94.


such as Painta Vanikan, Uppu Vanikan, Kolu Vanigan, Aruvai Vanikan, Pon Vanikan to be donars to the saints and monks. The Tamil rulers of the early periods were much fascinated in enlarging, fortifying and enriching tours with beautiful buildings. For instance Karikal Peruvalathan brought glory to Uraiyyur, the strongly defended city and capital of Sangam Cholas. The availability of abundant epigraphic evidences around madurai, the Roman coins excavated at Madurai, the graphic descriptions of Madurai available in Tamil Sangam works such as Maduraikkanchi and Cilappatikaram, the references about nal angadi and al angadi in Madurai etc. prove that the Pandyas were maintaining the status of Madurai, their capital city in all possible ways. Korkkai, another major port of the Pandyas was a far famed port known for its pearls. It was also a centre of pearl fishing and pearl trade and these facts reveal the economic prosperity of the Pandya country due to the pearl fishing activity.

Puhar, or Kaverippumpattinam, the Sangam Chola port superseded all the ports of South India developing the Chola rulers “as the port of destination and embarkation for the major resources of Tamilakam, Srilanka, and South East Asia and stationed their officers to oversee the import and export of

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41 244, 245 of 1963 and 334 of 1908.
42 Pattinappalai, 285, Cirubanarruppadai, 83.
43. R. Nagasamy, Tamil coins, Madras, 1993, p. 75.
44 R. Champagalakshmi, op.cit., pp. 122-123.
45 Ahananuru, 27:9, Aingurunuru: 185:1 etc.
commodities\textsuperscript{47}. Thus the Cholas too maintained their economic position by improving their ports.

Like the Pandyas and Cholas, the Pallavas had Kanchi, the renowned Sanksrit centre and their capital as an important trade centre of art\textsuperscript{48}. The Sangam work Perumbanarruppadaí\textsuperscript{49} ha soffered a graphic description about this mudur, the old town and has described the tall buildings of brick with fortified high walls. The description of the palace of llamtirayan, the chief of the Tondayar is an appealing and abosrobing one. It is a known fact that the Pallavas contributed a lot to promote their capital city Kanchi and there existed a Ghatika\textsuperscript{50}, a higher education centre.

Thus the Tamil rulers of the early period were keen on promoting the chief cities under their control in many ways such as economic growth, literary development and cultural uplift.

The Tamil rulers maintained their own independent system of economic activities. They were capable of distinguishing the lands as patti which was a land\textsuperscript{51} and padagam, an area which was brought under the cultivation in a

\textsuperscript{47} R. Chempakalakshmi, op.cit., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{48} T. V. Mahalingam, Kanchipuram in Early South Indian History, Bombay, 1969, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{49} Perumbanarruppadaí, 371-76.
\textsuperscript{50} M. Rajamanickan, Pallavar Varalaru, Kalaga Vellyidu, 1971, pp. 254-55.
village. As the fertility of the soil had changed with the passage of time, the rulers were necessitated the reclassification and reassessment of the lands. Though the property taxes on houses and house sites, cow, sheep, cart etc, were available the rulers were kind enough to exempt the unoccupied houses from taxation. The remission made by the local assembly was known as urkil iraiyili. But when lands were made tax free by the kings it meant a definite reduction in the revenues of the Government. The kings were also adopting the policy of commutation of variety of taxes into consolidated lump payments. This measure enabled the tax payer to get himself relieved of his burden of payment of tax and to use the land in any way he liked. The responses and the conduct of the individuals in their social roles shaped and conditioned the pattern of political experiments. In this regard it is worth to note that private individuals, temples, religious personalities and institutions were exempted from taxes at their request to the rulers of the contemporary period.

During the ancient period the temples were busy in carrying out the economic well being and pursuits of the state. Due to the agreements made with the state varieties of people “who were left in charge of land, money and livestock, which formed the donations made to the temple, brought to its

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52 3, 5, 31, 72, 80 of 1898.
53 113 of 1927.
54 E.I. Vol. VIII, p. 304.
55 59 of 1914.
56 114 of 1914.
57 204 of 1921.
courtyard, at fixed hours, ghee for burning lamps or for feeding Brahmins, flowers and garlands to the God, rice for offerings, cleaned and pounded several times, fruits of various kinds vegetables, sandal paste and incense, scents such as Pachaikkarpuram, musk, rose water etc., and in short all the requirements of the temple and gave them away to the authorities according to the terms of contract by which they were put in possession of temple holdings\textsuperscript{58}. The land transactions involving grants and endowments were exempted from taxes. Thus the rules and regulations enabled the rulers to transact their economic activities through the temples and they in turn relieved the problems of dealing with the grants and endowments directly. This was not the shirking of the responsibility but the adoption of decentralization of power.

The state had the authority to deal with the misappropriation of charitable endowments. By such measures stress was made for the proper utilization of public properties. Regular enquiries were conducted by the committees appointed by the ruler. By the discovery of defaults and misappropriations fines were imposed on the incumbent who was involved in it. The priests attached to the temple and the village assemblies were enquired and such cases were decided\textsuperscript{59}. Such facts indicate the adoption of a just rule in all possible ways for the welfare of the people. From the different types of transactions relating to lands, grants etc., it is obvious that the rulers of the

\textsuperscript{58} K. V. Subramania Aiyar, Historical Sketches of the Ancient Dekhan, p. 334.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 346.
early period had made the village as a basic unit to deal with such measures because the villages had their own cultivated lands, cultivable wastes, uncultivased lands and lands set apart for public welfare such as wells, tanks, religious activities, Brahmans etc. Among such allotments, the burning ground, the burial ground and the dwelling sites of the polluted castes too had their own treatments. The temple areas of folk deities such as Pidari, Ayyanar, the village granary, paraicheri, burning grounds of different community people etc, will testify to the fact that such apportionments and appropriations were made purely on economic considerations mainly to maintain peace and order within the society. Such facts also prove a harmonious blending of economy and social set up.

It was a customary practice among the rulers to offer special permission or licence to establish a perum chekku. Since oil was obtained from gingelly and sesame by crushing through chekku. Hence to regulate agricultural produces the kings restricted the cultivation of commercial crops. Such measures were undertaken mainly to regulate commerce.

As the cities were all busy centres of trade and commerce the rulers had made sufficient arrangements for the constant traffic flowed through city gates. The sellers of various commodities were flocking the bazaars. The kings had provided

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60 S.I.I., Vol. II, p. 44.
61 Ibid., p. 50 and 55.
63 Naladiyar, 374:3.
with necessary infrastructural facilities for the transport of commodities and to those who were indulged in such activities\textsuperscript{64}. The kings had made proper arrangements for foreign trade by way of contracts. For instance paper document in Greek available in the museum of Vienna refer to contract for shipment of merchandise from Musiri to Alexandria\textsuperscript{65}. The foreign trade continued to exist throughout the period taken up for study\textsuperscript{66}. Thus, the commercial contacts between Tamil Country and countries of east and west were undertaken by the efforts of the rulers of the different dynasties of the Tamil country even from the Sangam age and they testify to the flourishing commercial prospects of Tamil Country during the ancient period.

It will also be convincing to notice the various reasons which could be attributed to the remission of taxes and to minimize the burden of taxation. Tax remission was granted for the maintenance of a flower garden belonging to the temple near the east coast. Since the land was so close to the sea the land became filled with sand and over grown weeds\textsuperscript{67}. The remission was also granted due to failure of crops because of floods or scarcity of rain\textsuperscript{68}. The village assemblies were pressed to make good of the taxes which were not paid by private

\textsuperscript{64} Burton Stein, Essays on South India, New Delhi, 1976, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{65} Avanam, No. 4, 1994, pp. 107-110.
\textsuperscript{66} K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, A History of South India, Madras, 1976, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{67} 289 of 1913.
\textsuperscript{68} Pudukkottai State Inscriptions: No. 281.
individually and had absconded\textsuperscript{69}. Whenever a surety was involved in any such default in payment of tax, the amount was recovered from him by the sale of his land\textsuperscript{70}. Even the Secretary of an official was not spared. When a servant of an official failed to pay his dues his lands were confiscated\textsuperscript{71}. 

It is worth to note here that though the number of taxes was a bewildering one the taxes were not heavy and they were not collected at all times. As such there were no references about the resentments of the people against taxes. If they felt that there must be remissions or reductions they made appeals to the rulers through the Ur Sabha. The peasant oriented and commerce centred economy continued to exist\textsuperscript{72}. As pointed out by Pattinappalai the reduction of forest and expansion of regularly cultivated land was a continuous process. It is worth to note that the state had allowed demarcated boundaries of lands by stones and shrubbery mainly to avoid boundary disputes\textsuperscript{73}. The state had deputed certain officials to look after the dams and sluices and the cultivators had to purchase water for irrigation at specified rates\textsuperscript{74}.

The Tamil rulers through the ages were judicious and considerable while handling public finance. The heirless property and unclaimed property alone became the property of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{69} Ibid., No. 396.
\item \textsuperscript{70} 426 of 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Pudukkottai State Inscriptions: No. 354.
\item \textsuperscript{72} R. Rajalakshmi, Tamil polity, Madurai, 1982, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{73} 28 of 1919.
\item \textsuperscript{74} 26 of 1916.
\end{itemize}
the state\textsuperscript{75}. The kings had a well guarded vast customs house at Kaveripumpattinam. There were strong willed stalwarts, customs officials affixed their seals on the commodities which passed them aside\textsuperscript{76}. As pointed out by Pattinappalai the customs officials who protected the goods of the kings were called porulkakkum tolil makkal\textsuperscript{77}. Kavithi was the chief financial authority of the state and his duty was to ensure the collection of taxes in season in a proper way\textsuperscript{78}. All these facts reveal that the state under the king was scrupulous and cautious with regard to the adherence of revenue policies.

The land transactions also were approved by the state. The farmers and cultivators were granted permission to transfer the possessive rights by way of sale or mortgage of the lands. A land had been mortgaged by a temple to two private individuals who were prepared to offer a loan of 150 ottai of paddy\textsuperscript{79}. The interest for that loan was paid by priests and authorities of the temple for the regular execution of the rituals of the temple\textsuperscript{80}. To pay the regular tax to the state private individuals mortgaged the lands\textsuperscript{81}. To settle the fines imposed on individuals they used to sell the lands to the village assembly\textsuperscript{82}. The kings were accustomed to exchange the public lands with

\textsuperscript{75} P. Mukkan, Thiruvaluvuarum Poruliyal Cintanaikal, NCBH, Madras, 1994, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{76} R. Balakrishna Mudaliar (Tr.) The Golden Anthology of Ancient Pattinappalai, 120-121.
\textsuperscript{77} Pattinappalai, 120-121.
\textsuperscript{78} V.R.R. Dikshitar, Studies in Tamil Literature, Madras, pp. 208-209.
\textsuperscript{79} A.R.S.I.E. 382 of 1916-17.
\textsuperscript{80} E.I. Vol. VIII, p. 296.
\textsuperscript{81} S.I.I. Vol. XIII, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{82} A.R.S.I.E. 277 of 1919.
commoners for digging irrigational canals for the welfare of the common public of the village\(^83\). The village assemblies too executed the transactions of selling common lands for various seasons such as reclamation\(^84\). Private individuals, only with the village assembly could execute joint documents of sales for carrying out the common good\(^85\). By selling the lands the kings alone had the privilege of selling the land\(^86\). The village sabha authorities and the Devakanmis (the temple authorities) had the right to exempt the buyer from the payment of taxes\(^87\). The Sabhas of the villages after purchasing lands improved the irrigation facilities\(^88\). To part with the lands producing eatable grains only after registration\(^89\) and that informs the restriction of lands. For maintaining lighting facilities in the temples money was realized by the sale of lands\(^90\). Thus even the land transactions were carried out along with their economic implications to avoid economic distresses. Further such measures were undertaken even to the improvement of public facilities such as irrigation and worship in the temples. In such matters private individuals, Ur Sabhas, Devakanmis temple priests, state officials were involved and that will speak for the state’s attachment towards the public.

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84 42 of 1903.
85 104 of 1914.
86 369 of 1922.
88 Ibid., XIX, p. 114.
89 Ibid., V, p. 667.
90 Ibid., V, p. 575.
The Tamils of the early period combined agriculture with the monarchical form of Government. The farmers were interested in bringing all the other aspects under the control of the state, particularly the ruler\textsuperscript{91}. It is worth to note here that during the Sangam age agriculture was the predominant occupation and other industries were subsidiary. The Pandyas too were patrons of professionals. The Cholas during the Sangam age devoted to irrigation and Karikalan constructed the Kallanai. When the Pandyas and Cholas devoted much to agriculture and other subsidiary industries the Pallavas started their rule in the Tondaimandalam region, due to their varied and distinctive qualities, in addition to their contribution to agriculture, started a lot of big works, which offered employment for both skilled and unskilled labourers. The introduction of many improved arts by the Pallavas enabled them to lead the Tondaimandalam region towards economic prosperity and general welfare\textsuperscript{92}.

The Tamils of the ancient period were well aware of the fact that a rich agriculture yield will keep the state away from famine\textsuperscript{93}. That stressed the kings to concentrate on agriculture and the kings were also aware that majority of the income of the state at that time was from agrarian yields. When the Sangam poets witnessed the superior quality of paddy the rulers were hailed as produces of high quality of paddy\textsuperscript{94}. Such

\textsuperscript{91} Thirukkural, 1034.
\textsuperscript{92} K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyar, op.cit., pp. 366-367.
\textsuperscript{93} Samy Chidambaranar, Ettutogayum Pirappanpadum, Madras, 1986, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{94} Maduraikkanchi, 87-88.
an aspect will expose that agricultural pursuits and the rulers were inseparable during the early history of Tamil Country. The Tamil society attached greater veneration to kilavan, who is none other than a crowned ruler\textsuperscript{95} and this too suggests the significance assigned to kings.

It is worth to note that the political rivalries never interrupted the economic prosperity of all the individual dynasties. The Pandyas and Pallavas when they issued Brahmmadeya and Devadana grants they resulted in the founding of new village settlements\textsuperscript{96}. As the rulers were keen on the welfare of the people they executed them with the assistance of state officials, village communities, private individuals and the temple\textsuperscript{97}.

Thus the economic well being was harmoniously a joint venture. The kings had made the temple to play a predominant role in the economic pursuits centering on land, agricultural activities. While the villages were the major centres, the economy was a rural one. Those who were engaged in various industries comprised of a rural population. The developed nature of the Tamil society centred on not only temples but also agricultural prosperity. Offering of land as a gift or grant will indicate the superiority assigned to land. The involvement of the Tamil country in native as well as foreign country was mainly because of the encouragement rendered to trade and

\textsuperscript{95} Purananuru: 13:12-13, 30:15 etc. Porunararruppadai, 248:60.
\textsuperscript{96} T. M. Srinivasan, South India 200 B. C. 1600 A.D, Madras, 1991, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 68.
commerce next to agriculture. The economic prosperity achieved by the rural economy was an impetus for the rulers to devote on other economic activities. The kings were not willing to approve any misappropriation of state fund or the defaulters in paying the states share of taxes. Thus the economic activities of the state were always positive, honest and straightforward. No references are available regarding crooked or unwanted or unlawful deeds either in literature or inscriptions. So the economic well being was the prime objective was the state during the early periods of the Tamil country. Only during the arrival of the imperial Cholas, greater Pallavas and Pandyas the economy of the state began to witness widened prospects due to expanded contributions of the rulers.