CHAPTER II

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

The Tamil country during the Sangam age, which lasted between third century B.C. and third century A.D. as pointed out by Tolkappiyam\(^1\) was located in the southern part of the peninsular India between northern Vengadam hills and southern Cape Comerin. The Bay of Bengal on the east, the Arabian Sea on the west and the Indian Ocean on the south encircle this land. From the dawn of the Sangam Age to the end of the tenth century it included the modern Kerala region as the Chera country. Majority of the areas of present Karnataka and Andhrapradesh also were parts of the then Tamil country\(^2\). Modern state of Pondicherry was also a part of it. Thus the Vengadam hill of the north and Cape Comerin of the south along with the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea in the east and west respectively were its demarcated boundaries\(^3\).

The Tamil political and economic cultures were the outcome of the five fold divisions of Tamil land\(^4\). Kind of climato-geographical features were available to the Tamil land during its early days. The land involved jungle, scrub land, fertile plain and coastal littoral. Since agriculture was the

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\(^1\) Tolkappiyam, Payiram, 1-3.
\(^3\) N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnadu, Madurai, 1979, p. 12.
\(^4\) Tolkappiyam, Porul: 5.3.
beginning of civilisation\textsuperscript{5} it will be apt to note that marudam region of Tamil land was a most fertile area and cultivation was started even at a very early age of history and other amenities of settled and redeveloped life emerged as progress subsequently due to the prosperous agrarian pursuits\textsuperscript{6}.

All the above mentioned geographical limits were all available in the then prevailed monarchical states such as Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. In addition to them the Tamil country had states of small nature such as nadus and they were called by names such as Katturnadu, Karainadu, Konadu, Mukkavalnadu and the like. as mentioned in the Sangam work called Purananuru\textsuperscript{7}. In all the places the people were the inhabitants of rural centres\textsuperscript{8}. The involvement in agriculture was the primary economic activity of those people\textsuperscript{9}. Under such a pretext it will be befitting to have an analysis of the people of the Sangam age and the villages, cities and towns which formed the basis for the economic activities.

The Tamil society, which was a model by itself for the posterity and prosperity, had its own people of economic as well

\textsuperscript{7}  Purananuru, 61, 80, 122, 150, 389 etc.
\textsuperscript{8}  K. A. N. Nilakanta Sastri, The Colas, Madras, 1975, p. 567.
\textsuperscript{9}  R. Rajalakshmi, Tamil polity Madurai, 1983, p. 195.
as social security. Father led the family, which was the basic fundamental unit of the society, in a meaningful way. The life of the people differed and the people were also varied in their traditions, occupations, settlements customs and conventions. Hence it became a tradition oriented and conventional society which gradually drifted into an occupation based economic oriented society.

The availability of various tribal settlements such as Kuravar Kudi, Vetturvar kudi, Ayarkudi, Kanavarkudi, Ulavarkudi, Parathavar Kudi, Nulayar Kudi, Eyunar Kudi and Maravarkudi will point out that the people were engaged in different occupations. Though these sets of people were divided by professions and occupations, new tribes also came up at a later date and got themselves amalgamated with the existing ones. Tudiyan, Panan, Parayan and Kadamban popularly known as Nalkudi were supposed to be the earliest inhabitants of Tamilnadu. As there were beaters of tudi,

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10 Expert committee for the history of Tamilnadu, History of Tamilnadu-Sangam Age (social), Madras, 1983, p. 3.
12 Narrinai, 189:7.
13 Tolkappiyam, Porul, 23.
15 Ahananuru
16 Ibid., 77:14.
17 Ibid., 77:14.
18 Ibid., 77:14.
19 Ibid., 35:6.
20 Purananuru, 335, 7-8.
singers, drummers and uses of Kadamba tree respectively\textsuperscript{21} it is evident that they were occupants of various professions\textsuperscript{22}. Such facts enable one to note that there were soldiers who were generally called by the name Kudigal. The names Nilappeyar, Kudippeyar and Kulappeyar also inform that the Tamils were accustomed to have their own names on the basis of land, family and group\textsuperscript{23}. The names such as Malayaman, Cholan and Ulavan could be cited with suitable illustrations for that.

Kurinji was the hilly track which was populated by Kuravas, Kurathiyar, Vedar, Kanavar, etc. Hunting was their major profession. These semi agriculturists grew bamboo rice and millet in the barren tracts. They were even wanderers to seek their food. Hence they were even known as Iravalar\textsuperscript{24}. Murugan was their primary deity. They lived in groups at a particular area called Kurichchi or Sirukudi\textsuperscript{25}. Their agrarian activities and hunting allow one to notice that their economy was a simple one.

Mullai land comprised of the jungle tracts and the inhabitants of that land were the worshippers of a God called Mayon who was none other than Vishnu or Thirumal. Idayar,
Idaichchiyar, Ayar, Aychchiyar and Kovalar\textsuperscript{26} were the set of people who populated that area. They also had their own economic pursuits such as cattle rearing, milking and selling of milk and its bi-products. The people were also known as Idayar. They lived in areas called Cheri, i.e., the suburb or cluster of houses\textsuperscript{27}. As cattle bred and rearing alone were their activities and their economy was also a simple one.

Marudam tract was the fertile one due to its paddy fields and prosperous yield from them. This tract due its fertility and richness was much beneficial for agricultural activities. In addition to paddy, sugarcane and other produces it was known for the dwelling of agriculturists. The people called Ulavar\textsuperscript{28}, Ulathiyar, Kadisiyar\textsuperscript{29}, Kalamar\textsuperscript{30} were associated with the tilling of the soil. It is obvious that even women folk were also engaged in agrarian pursuits for executing their activities such as transplantation, weeding, harvesting etc. Being an important land of the five fold land divisions, due to its valuable services to the society its agricultural activities\textsuperscript{31} were highly commendable. They were the inhabitants of specific areas

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Narkaviranabu, Nambi Ahapporul Vilakkam. T.S.I.S.S.N. Kalagam, Chennai, 1963, p. 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Ahananuru, 15:7, 65:4; Aingurunuru, 275:5; Kuruntogai 262:1 etc.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Ahananuru, 30:8, 37:2; Perumbanarruppadai, 197; Kural, 14:1 etc.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Purananuru, 61:1; Cilappatikaram, X. 130 etc.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Narrinai, 125:9; Porunararruppadai, 194; Silappatikaram, X. 125.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Malaipadukadam, 42; Purananuru, 149:2; Tolkappiyam, Porul, 5:5, 8:1, etc.
\end{itemize}
called Ur\(^{32}\), Perur\(^{33}\) and Mudur\(^{34}\). Thus they, though lived in rural areas and villages, they had specific contacts with the urban centres available then due to commercial contacts and also for selling their produces. For having the support of the industries for agrarian activities they had to depend upon the artisans who were the dwellers of town areas. Particularly they had to feed the city dwellers and to satisfy their life needs and requirements. Without their services to the society the later cannot survive. As such their life was also a venerable one and without them a state cannot survive. Neithal was the littoral region or the coastal area which had people called Paradavar\(^{35}\), Paradari\(^{36}\), Valaignar\(^{37}\), Nulayar\(^{38}\), Minavar. They were worshippers of a specific God called Varunan. Their main occupation was fishing and they were the people also engaged in salt manufacturing. They lived in areas called Pattinam, i.e., a coastal town\(^{39}\). There were fishermen colonies which were

\(^{32}\) Ahananuru, 200:3, 220:1; Kalittogai, 58:22; Kural, 397:1; Kuruntogai, 28:5, 32:2, 41:2; Manimegalai II. 17, VII. 125; Naladiyar, 64:3; Nanmanikkadigai, 84:1; Narrinai, 49:10; Palamoli Nanuru, 193:3, 231:4 etc.

\(^{33}\) Narrinai, 153:9.

\(^{34}\) Ahananuru, 165:5; Kurinjippattu, 236; Kuruntogai, 293; Perumbanarruppadai, 411; Cilappatikaram, 109.

\(^{35}\) Ahananuru, 10:10; Aingurunuru, 195:1; Aintinalelupadu, 66:1; Maduraikkanchi, 97; Narrinai, 4:1; Pattinappalai, 90, 112; Sirupanarruppadai, 159 etc.

\(^{36}\) Ahananuru, 30; Siappatikaram, II. 2; Tinaimoli Aimbatu, 45:2 etc.

\(^{37}\) Maduraikkanchi, 256; Pattinappalai, 197; Perumbanarruppadai, 274 etc.

\(^{38}\) Ahananuru, 366:1; Silappatikaram VII. 48; Thinalmalai Nurraimbadu, 45:2.

\(^{39}\) Naladiyar, 250:4; Nanmanikkadigai, 86:2; Paripadal, 10:8; Perumbanarruppadai, 336.
called by the name Pakkam\textsuperscript{40}. They were also even known as minvinaignar or sellers of fish\textsuperscript{41}. So it is evident that the people of this area were having their own economic activities due to their traditional system of fishing in the seas.

The area which had none of the qualities of Kurinji, Mullai, Marudam and Neithal was known as Palai. So it was a corrupted and deserted area\textsuperscript{42}. It was mostly an area populated by ferocious people. The people of this area were called eyinar who were having ferocious speech and activities\textsuperscript{43}. Their women folk were called eyirriyar\textsuperscript{44}. There were another set of people called Maravar, who also served as a community which supplied warriors to the royal armies. They used bow and arrow and even harassed way farers\textsuperscript{45}. Due to their involvement in the activities of waylaying and theft they were termed as aralai kalvar.

The various inscriptive evidences stand to prove the existence of different kinds of people who were engaged in varieties of trades. Even before the birth of Christ i.e., even during the second and first century B. C. itself there were many merchants and professionals. The terms Ponkolavan i.e.,

\textsuperscript{40} Ahananuru, 10:12, 70:2; Kuruntogai, 339:3; Maduraikkanchi, 137; Malaiypadukadam, 162; Narrinai, 101:5, 111:9; Padiruppattu, 53:12; Paripadal, 7:31; Pattinappalai, 27; Porunarruppadai, 210 etc.

\textsuperscript{41} Manimegalai, XXVIII. 31.

\textsuperscript{42} Silappatikaram, XI. 68.

\textsuperscript{43} Ahananuru, 79:14; Pattinappalai, 266; Puranaranuru, 177:13, Perumanarruppadai, 129 etc.

\textsuperscript{44} Perumanarruppadai, 94; Sirumphanchamulam, 175.

\textsuperscript{45} Ahananuru, 35:6, 53:10; Aingurunuru, 352:1; Kalavali Narpadu, 16:1 etc.
goldsmith, Uppu Vanigan Vyakkan Kanatikan. Panitha Vanikan, (sugar merchant), Nedumalan, Ila kantan, the Kolu Vanigan (iron monger), Elava Atan, an Aruvai Vanikan (cloth merchant)\textsuperscript{46} will attest the superior nature of the professional Tamil people even before Christ. Further they reveal that the Tamils of that period offered significance to different professions and that in turn reflected the economic pursuits of the Tamils. The term Velarai Nikamathu Kavithi will explicate the existence of merchant guilds called Nikamam in Tamilnadu even before Christ. The Tamil Brahmi inscription available at Mangulam attests this fact\textsuperscript{47}. The availability of a group of stone masons during the Sangam is brought to light by an inscription at Mamandur\textsuperscript{48}. In the same way the reference about Maniy Vannakkan, an artisan dealing with the precious stones points out the artistic skill of the Tamils in the making of jewels with beads during the third and fourth century A.D. and it is authenticated by the Brahmi inscription available at Araccalur\textsuperscript{49}. The Thirupparankunram Brahmi Inscription datable to second century B. C. reveals the fact that there were separate Kudumbus for those people, who were engaged in palmyrah climbing\textsuperscript{50}. The words ila Kudumbigam makkam... will attest the above fact. Thus the earliest Tamil Brahmi inscriptions available at different parts of Tamil country too exhibit that the Tamils of the Sangam age were having divisions

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 334 of 1908 and 244-45 of 1963.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 460 to 265 of 1906.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 171 of 1939-40.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 139 of 1936-37.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 333 of 1900.
among themselves on the basis of their professional activities, which were related to the economic prospects of the state.

The Tamils of the period taken up for study (200 B.C. to 900 A.D.) were paying attention to wealth and had the belief that those who had no wealth cannot claim any right in this world\(^{51}\). Such an economic value given to wealth will explicate the importance assigned to the wealth which was the cause for the prosperity. Since the people were agriculturists, cowherds, hunters, fishermen, manufacturers of different commodities or traders it is noticed that they attached veneration for engaging in some work or other for earning their livelihood. They never deviated from the economic pursuits and they never led a lazy life. But as the fertile land was an essential one for an ideal state and also for the prosperity of the people, agriculture was venerated as a noble profession\(^{52}\). They were well aware of the fact that all the people of varied categories, who were in the society, should depend upon the peasant for their livelihood\(^{53}\). The fertile Tamil land yielded millets, grains, pulses, cereals, varieties of paddy, coconut, plantain, sugarcane, cotton and huge amount of flowers and fruits as their agricultural produces. The Ulavar worshipped God Indra, as the personification of the monsoon rains. The chapter on Ulavu by Thiruvalluvar in his Thirukkurual attests the superiority and greater value assigned to agrarian pursuits by the then Tamils. The farmers were always expected to be shrewd and brisk and

\(^{51}\) Kural, 242.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 104.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 103.
it is told that the farmers should guard others by their agricultural activities and produces from absentee land lordism\textsuperscript{54}.

Apart from their involvement in agrarian activities the Tamils devoted much attention to minor industries and handicrafts. They were mostly subsidiary industries. As they attached significance to indigenous industries such as sugarcane crushing, jaggery making, salt making, weaving, spinning, dyeing, making of gold ornaments. Basket and mat making, conch cutting etc., the Tamils to enrich their caliber invited experts from different parts of India. The availability of Magadha Vinaignar, (Craftsmen from Magadha) Marata Kanmar (the weavers from Maharashtra), Avanthi Kollar (the blacksmiths from Avanthi) and Yavana Tacchar (the carpenters from Rome)\textsuperscript{55} in the then Tamil country will reveal the superior and highly developed way of life of the Tamils. They were keen on promoting various activities pertaining to economy.

Kalingam was the embroidered cloth\textsuperscript{56} and also used as upper cloth\textsuperscript{57}. Kalagam was also a fine variety of cloth used by the Tamils during the Sangam age\textsuperscript{58}. The high quality cotton cloth was called Tugil\textsuperscript{59}. Men and women changed from silk to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[54] Ibid., 1035.
\item[55] Manimegalai, XIDX, 107-110.
\item[56] Kalittogai, 92:46; Silappatikkaram, XXII. 21.
\item[57] Kolittogai, 69:3; Padiruppattu, 76:13; Purananuru, 383:11, 392:15 etc.
\item[58] Kalittogai, 73:17; Pattinappalai, 191; Purananuru, 41:9.
\item[59] Naladiyar, 354:4; Purananuru, 398:20.
\end{footnotes}
light cotton cloth when they went to bed\textsuperscript{60}. It was also called silk\textsuperscript{61} and embroidery cloth\textsuperscript{62}. Such facts indicate that the Tamils were giving more importance to cloth due to their economic standards. Tunnal or tailoring was another profession\textsuperscript{63}. The terms Tunnusi\textsuperscript{64} meaning sewing needle, Tunnakkarar\textsuperscript{65} (Tailors) and Tunna Vinaignar i.e. people who were engaged in the stitching of cloths\textsuperscript{66}. Such facts will pinpoint the importance assigned to spinning, weaving and tailoring or stitching of cloth etc. They are all proper examples for the cultured life of the Tamils along with their economic pursuits. They even stand testimony to the beauty and fitness of the textile products of the people. There were people who were rope makers, manufacturers of leather-sheaths and bangles\textsuperscript{67}. The washermen were called Kaliyar\textsuperscript{68}. The sellers of sweet meat were also called by the same name i.e. Kaliyar\textsuperscript{69}. In the same way the land owner was known as Kilavan\textsuperscript{70}. Kinaignan or Kinaivan was the one who was an expert in playing the musical instrument called tadari\textsuperscript{71}. The Vellalar were called Kilor i.e., people who were engaged in the activities

\textsuperscript{60} Kurinjippattu, 55; Pattinappalai, 107; Perumbanarruppadai, 329.
\textsuperscript{61} Paripadal, 7:46, 10:80, 12:93; Cilappatikaram, XIV. 108.
\textsuperscript{62} Cilappatikaram, VI. 88.
\textsuperscript{63} Porunararruppadai, 81.
\textsuperscript{64} Aintinal Aimbadu, 21:2, Palamoli Nanuru, 50:4 etc.
\textsuperscript{65} Tolkappiyam, V. 32.
\textsuperscript{66} Manimegalai, XXVIII. 39.
\textsuperscript{67} Maduraikkanchi, 511-521.
\textsuperscript{68} Ahananuru, 89:7; Silappatikaram, V. 24.
\textsuperscript{69} Manimegalai, XXVII. 32; Silappatikaram, VI. 137.
\textsuperscript{70} Kural, 1039.
\textsuperscript{71} Purananuru, 377:14, 379:11.
of the land\textsuperscript{72}. Purananuru informs about the low born ones as Kilpal\textsuperscript{73}. As they were people known for their low birth they were also called Kilmakkal\textsuperscript{74} and they testify to the fact about the existence of ups and downs in the society on the basis of economic standards. Those who played the leather instruments such as mattalam, tannummai, idakkai and sallikai were known as kuiyuluva Karuviyalar\textsuperscript{75}. There were set or band of musicians and were players of flutes, Iyres, drums etc and they were called Kuyiluvar\textsuperscript{76}. Such facts indicate that the Tamil society of that period was known for its distinctive people engaged in different activities for achieving their economic order. The plumbers were known as Kuyinar\textsuperscript{77}, Kuravan was the divine preceptor\textsuperscript{78}. Those who belonged to low caste were called Kurungar\textsuperscript{79}. The Kulapathy was the preceptor of pupils\textsuperscript{80}. Thus the Tamil society comprised of specific set of people known for their particular activities.

Many were associated with Kuthu, a form of entertainment. While Kuttanar were generally dancers\textsuperscript{81}, Kutha Sakkaryan was a dancer who performed a specific dance called

\textsuperscript{72} Tolappiyam, Porul, 144:2.
\textsuperscript{73} Purananuru, 189:9.
\textsuperscript{74} Aharakkovai, 10:3-4.
\textsuperscript{75} Manimegalai, VII. 45; Silappatikaram, XIV. 151.
\textsuperscript{76} Manimegalai, VII. 123; Silappatikaram, III. 130, V:52, VII. 123 etc.
\textsuperscript{77} Maduraikkanchi, 51.
\textsuperscript{78} Silappatikaram, X. 184.
\textsuperscript{79} Naladiyar, 322:3.
\textsuperscript{80} Kuruntogai, 252.
\textsuperscript{81} Purananuru, 28:13; Silappatikaram, XDXVI. 228, XXVIII. 165; Tolkappiyam, Porul 91.
Kottichetam\textsuperscript{82}. Those who danced with drawn swords were known as Adal Kuttiyar\textsuperscript{83}. There were people associated with dance. Manimegalai calls them as Kuthiyal Madanthai. In the same way the ballet master was called Kuthul Paduvon\textsuperscript{84}. Thus each and every activity in the day to day life of the Tamils had its own set of people who were trained in that art of profession.

While the grocery merchant was called kula vanigan\textsuperscript{85} the sellers of cakes were called Kuviyar\textsuperscript{86}. The hunter women were called Kodichchi\textsuperscript{87}. Kolli were specific set of people engaged in lighting the fire\textsuperscript{88}. Generally koil makkal were palace officials\textsuperscript{89}. Likewise the Avayattar were the officials attached to the royal court or avai\textsuperscript{90}. the Brahmins who were engaged in the six fold duties called learning, teaching, sacrificing, officiating at sacrifices and offering and obtaining presents were arutolilor\textsuperscript{91}. The Asan served as preceptor\textsuperscript{92}, Lord of the sacrifice\textsuperscript{93}, Purohita\textsuperscript{94} and they were also served as dance masters\textsuperscript{95}. The

\textsuperscript{82} Silappatikaram, XXVIII. 77.
\textsuperscript{83} Manimegalai, XII. 51; Naladiyar, 191:3; Silappatikaram, XXVII. 77.
\textsuperscript{84} Silappatikaram, XXVI. 125.
\textsuperscript{85} Manimegalai, Padigam, 96; Purananuru, 59.
\textsuperscript{86} Manimegalai, XXVII. 32; Perumbanatruppadai, 377 etc.
\textsuperscript{87} Ahananuru, 58:5; Narrinai, 85:9, 95:8, etc.
\textsuperscript{88} Palamoli Nanuru, 10:$; Purananuru, 325:9.
\textsuperscript{89} Silappatikaram, XXII. 10, XXVIII. 83.
\textsuperscript{90} Kalittogai, 94:42.
\textsuperscript{91} Kural, 560:1.
\textsuperscript{92} Sirupanchamulam, 29:1; Tirikadugam, 26:3.
\textsuperscript{93} Paripadal, 2:61.
\textsuperscript{94} Silappatikaram, XXII. 8 etc.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., III. 25.
Ayurvedar were physicians and doctors\textsuperscript{96}. There were alligators that were called as Idangar\textsuperscript{97}. As the Tamils found no disparity between King and God, both of them were called Iraivan\textsuperscript{98} or Iraimagan\textsuperscript{99} and because of that the residence as of those two were also called as koil. The Tamils of the Sangam age treated the soldiers\textsuperscript{100}, servants\textsuperscript{101}, robbers\textsuperscript{102} and Vettuvar as Ilayar\textsuperscript{103}. Thus the treatment of specific set of people with a particular name reveals the traditional and custom oriented practices of the Tamils. Further it is also obvious that the Tamil society comprised varieties of people engaged in different economic, political and social activities. Such an aspect could be further substantiated by the following facts also.

Iraikudi, which means the royal family, enjoyed its own esteem and veneration in the society\textsuperscript{104}. Umankudi was the community of salt manufacturers\textsuperscript{105}. As salt was the important commodity of exchange under barter economy of the Tamils and as it was an essential need for the food in the daily life, the term Uman was treated as salt traders\textsuperscript{106} and Umattiyar as

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., V. 44.
\textsuperscript{97} Kurinjippattu, 258.
\textsuperscript{98} Kural, 690:1; Palamoli, 201:3, 206:2; Purananuru, 18:26, etc.
\textsuperscript{99} Silappatikaram, XXV. 33.
\textsuperscript{100} Ahananuru, 245:7; Narrinai, 161:6; Purananuru, 191:4.
\textsuperscript{101} Ahananuru, 300:20; Narrinai, 389:5.
\textsuperscript{102} Ahananuru, 375:4
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 248:7.
\textsuperscript{104} Silappatikaram, XXIII. 53.
\textsuperscript{105} Narrinai, 374:2.
\textsuperscript{106} Ahananuru, 159:4, 173:10, 257:17; Purananuru, 386:17.
women sellers of salt\textsuperscript{107}. In general the Umanar were traders in salt\textsuperscript{108}. It also indicates the economic implication attached with a profession. In the society the wise ones who do penance but have not renounced the world were Ulaha nonbihal\textsuperscript{109}. The Acharya or preceptor was given the name Uvathi\textsuperscript{110}. The Tamils were so cautious about safety and security of life. Hence they had a separate set of guards of the people and they were called Ur Kappalar\textsuperscript{111}. It is worth to note here that this tradition continues even today in the cities and towns to have night watchman. The then Tamil society had major divisions such as Andhanar, Arasar, Vaisiyar, who were treated as people who commanded others\textsuperscript{112} due to their social position and economic order. There were Orrar (Spy)\textsuperscript{113} and Osunar (fisherman, sailors or oilmen)\textsuperscript{114} in the Tamil society. The painters of that period were under the name Ovamakkal\textsuperscript{115}. Like Blacksmith, Carpenters and Goldsmiths there were a separate set of bronze smiths with the name Kanjakarar\textsuperscript{116}. The officials, who had to use the official uniform called Kanjukam\textsuperscript{117} and the terms

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{107}Sirupanarrupp padai, 60.
\item\textsuperscript{108}Ahananuru, 17:13, 30:5, 390:3; Kuruntogai, 124:1, 388; Narrinai, 4:7, 1835; Perumbanarrupp Padai, 65; Purananuru, 84:6, 116:7, 307:7, 713:5.
\item\textsuperscript{109}Silappatikaram, X. 24.
\item\textsuperscript{110}Manimegalai, XIII. 4; Nan manikkadigai, 45:3.
\item\textsuperscript{111}Manimegalai, VII. 69.
\item\textsuperscript{112}Tolkappiyam, Porul, 24:1.
\item\textsuperscript{113}Manimegalai, XXVI. 27.
\item\textsuperscript{114}Silappatikaram, V. 27.
\item\textsuperscript{115}Narrinai, 118:1.
\item\textsuperscript{116}Manimegalai, XXVIII. 35; Silappatikaram, V:28.
\item\textsuperscript{117}Manimegalai, XXV. 11; Silappatikaram, XXVI. 138.
\end{itemize}
Kanjuham\textsuperscript{118}, Kanjuhamakkal\textsuperscript{119} and Kanjuhamudalvar will explicate the fact that the Tamils were quite keen and clear in distinguishing various sets of people by specific names even during the Sangam period. Such facts will disclose the superior and cultured way of living of the Tamils. This will be an impetus to probe further into the analysis of the economy of the Tamils of the period between 300 B.C. and 900 A.D. The availability of such distinctive features in the Tamil society during the Sangam age as mentioned in the Sangam classics must be analysed to have a complete picture of the Tamil people.

As the Tamils gave importance to the prosperous future they attached significance to astrology\textsuperscript{120} and even the kings had employed the royal astrologer called Kani\textsuperscript{121} for knowing about the future courses of action. There were Sila Upasikas\textsuperscript{122} who were nothing but Buddhists who observed Panchashila. The Kapalikas who undertook to penance in cremation grounds had the name Sudalai nonbigal\textsuperscript{123}. The Tamil society comprised of a set of people called Sudhar\textsuperscript{124} who were nothing but gamblers. The same name was assigned to the court flatterers, who had the right only to stand down and ply their

\textsuperscript{118} Manimegalai, XXV. 11.
\textsuperscript{119} Silappatikaram, XXVI. 166.
\textsuperscript{120} Ahananuru, 151:15.
\textsuperscript{121} Ahananuru, 131:15; Manimegalai, XXIV:59; Narrinai, 373:6; Silappatikaram, XXI. 138; Tinaimoli Aimbadu, 9:3.
\textsuperscript{122} Manimegalai XXVIII. 12.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., VI. 86.
\textsuperscript{124} Acharakkovai, 98:1.
profession\textsuperscript{125}. The gamester was known as Sudan\textsuperscript{126}. As the Sangam age was known for its scholarship the scholars were known as Sollerulavar\textsuperscript{127}. The executive officials had the name Tantira Vinaignar\textsuperscript{128}. Thayathavar were the members of one’s family who had claim over the property\textsuperscript{129}. Those who suffered due to the complaint of piles were called Turnamar\textsuperscript{130}. The Tamil society had its own slaves. The terms Tolumban\textsuperscript{131} and Toluvar\textsuperscript{132} are terms which indicate the slaves. The Puranuru songs have hailed the tillers of the soil also as Toluvar\textsuperscript{133}. The makers of seabards etc. in leather were named as tolin Tunnar\textsuperscript{134} in the same way Paripadal had hailed the dancer or actor as Nadan\textsuperscript{135}. As the Tamils were giving importance to finearts such as dance and music they called the dancing girls as Natakamadanthai\textsuperscript{137}. The Naikar was the term assigned to leader\textsuperscript{138}.

Since the Brahmins were experts in four Vedas many names such as Nanmarai Makkal\textsuperscript{139}, Nanmarai Mudalvar\textsuperscript{140},

\textsuperscript{125} Maduraikkanchi, 670; Manimegalai, XXVIII. 50; Tolkappiyam, Porul, 91:2.
\textsuperscript{126} Tirikadugam, 81:2.
\textsuperscript{127} Kural, 872.
\textsuperscript{128} Silappatikaram, XXVI. 41.
\textsuperscript{129} Naladiyar, 278:1; Silappatikaram, IX. 31.
\textsuperscript{130} Sirupanchamulam, 76:2
\textsuperscript{131} Paripadal, 22:42.
\textsuperscript{132} Silappatikaram, XXVI. 128.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, XXII. 142.
\textsuperscript{134} Thinaimalai Nurraimbudu, 134:3.
\textsuperscript{135} Manimegalai, XIII. 99.
\textsuperscript{136} Purananuru, 93:17.
Nanmarai Munivar\textsuperscript{141}, Nanmarayalar\textsuperscript{142}, Nanmarayor\textsuperscript{143} etc. were assigned to them. The one who is mad of women was Parathar\textsuperscript{144}. Like Nataka mahalir, Paruthippendu was the woman who spun cotton\textsuperscript{145}. The Palayars were the sellers of toddy\textsuperscript{146} and Pasavar were the sellers of meat\textsuperscript{147}. The sellers of betel were also called Pasavar\textsuperscript{148}. There were snake charmers who were called Pambatti\textsuperscript{149}. The Puraviyar were cavalrymen\textsuperscript{150}. The washer women were Pulathi\textsuperscript{151}. There were priestesses in the temple with the name Peypendir\textsuperscript{152} and Peymahalir\textsuperscript{153}. The elderly lady in the martial family was called peripendu\textsuperscript{154}. Thus the Tamils of the early period were capable of distinguishing different sets of people by calling them with specific names on the basis of their economic activities and profession. Such a practice was applicable to people of all walks of life. The calling of the girls, who played the game of building toy houses, as Poidal mahalir will attest the above fact\textsuperscript{155}.

The scribes who took down the diplomatic dispatches, king’s orders and those who maintained the minutes of private ministerial discussions on state affairs were called

\begin{footnotes}
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\item[Ibid., 6:20.]
\item[Tirikadugam, 2:3.]
\item[Pattinappalai, 202.]
\item[Purananuru, 326:5.]
\item[Ahananuru, 201:7.]
\item[Padirruppathu, 21:9.]
\item[Manimegalai, XXVIII. 33.]
\item[Silappatikaram, V:159.]
\item[Ibid., 11, 62, 356.]
\item[Ibid., 270:6.]
\item[Paripadal, 20:59.]
\end{footnotes}
Mandirakanakkar\textsuperscript{156}. In the same way the ministerial group was known as Mandirasurram\textsuperscript{157}. As in politics in the society there were maruttuvar or maruttuvan\textsuperscript{158} i.e., the physicians or doctors. The Tamil society of the Sangam age had warriors, cattle lifters. The warriors were generally known as Malavar\textsuperscript{159}. The wrestlers or warriors were also known as mallar\textsuperscript{160}. In this regard it is worth to note that the martial tribes were known as Marakkudi\textsuperscript{161}. Likewise the sellers of fish were called Min Vinaignar\textsuperscript{162}. Such facts also prove the fact that the people who were engaged in specific set of activities were called by a particular name.

The Tamil country of the Sangam age comprised of people engaged in different activities and services. There were specific set of professionals. People of each and every section were clearly demarcated and called by specific names by way of their professions and occupations. So it will never be wrong to treat the Tamil society as a composite society. Further it was a society known for the barter economy. For instance purified white salt was sold for paddy\textsuperscript{163}. Honey and roots were

\textsuperscript{156} Silappatikaram, XXII. 9.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, XVI. 137.

\textsuperscript{158} Kalittogai, 137:25; Palamoli Nanuru, 56, 88:4; Ahananuru, 137, 257; Paripadal, 6, 8, 9, 10 etc.

\textsuperscript{159} Ahananuru, 1:2, 35:4, 23:11; Maduraikkanchi, 395, 687; Narrinai 52:9, 387:4; Padirruppathu, 21:24, 54:15; Purananuru, 88:3 etc.

\textsuperscript{160} Ahananuru, 21:13; Aingurunuru, 94:1, 371:1; Kalittogai, 106:10; Kuruntogai, 364:8; Tirumurugarruppadai, 262; Narrinai, 260:3 etc.

\textsuperscript{161} Silappatikaram, XII. 6.

\textsuperscript{162} Manimegalai, XXVIII. 31.

\textsuperscript{163} Pattinappalai, 25 – 30.
exchanged for fish, oil and arrack\textsuperscript{164}. So the Tamil society had its own economic order of indigenous nature. Rope making, manufacturer of leather sheaths dwelling in conches and ivory, production of bangles were few basic industries which stood for the economy of the Tamil country\textsuperscript{165}. So it will never be wrong to approve that the Tamil society was a professional and occupation oriented one.

The Tamil society was one, known for its religious predominance. Much importance was assigned to the different forms of worship which included both native and Aryan or Sanskritic form of worship. The temples and religious philosophies formed the basis for the religious attitude and outlook of the Tamils of the Sangam age\textsuperscript{166}. This Kurinji god was hailed in kunrak kuravai of Cilappatikaram. While he was called Mal marugan\textsuperscript{167} it is evident that, Thirumal was also a popular God\textsuperscript{168} during the Sangam age. Both of them were having the names such as Seyon\textsuperscript{169} and Mayon\textsuperscript{170}. The team Sengathir Kadavul will attest the worship of sun\textsuperscript{171}. Kannan was worshipped as Anjana Vannan\textsuperscript{172}, Anjana Uran etc\textsuperscript{173}. The

\textsuperscript{164} Porunararrupadai, 214, 315.
\textsuperscript{165} Maduraiikkanichi, 511 to 521.
\textsuperscript{166} Thirumurugarruppadai, Paripadal etc.
\textsuperscript{167} Paripadal, 19:57.
\textsuperscript{168} Ahananuru, 59:6; Kalittogai, 52:5; Mullaippatu:3; Naladiyar, 373:2; Palamolnanuru, 48:1; Paripadal, 1:28, 3:35 etc.
\textsuperscript{169} Tolkappiyam, Porul: 5:2.
\textsuperscript{170} Kalittogai, 103:55; Maduraiikkanichi, 59; Narrimai, 32:1; Paripadal 3:1; Purananuru, 29:2, 57:2.
\textsuperscript{171} Silappathikaram, XXVIII. 137.
\textsuperscript{172} Purananuru, 174:5.
Tamils treated the temple as Kadavul Kadinagar\textsuperscript{174}. The term Kadavul\textsuperscript{175} available in various works will indicate the importance assigned to the common term to God and king. God was worshipped in different forms with the use of flowers, sandal paste etc\textsuperscript{176}. Such facts assisted the use of members such as flower gatherers, garland makers and sandal paste makers. He was worshipped in the form of stone image\textsuperscript{177} or even icon\textsuperscript{178}. So there would have been sculptors and stone masons. Sacrifices were also executed in his favours\textsuperscript{179}. God was treated as a one, residing in the hole of the ancient tree standing near a village\textsuperscript{180}. Kadavul was summoned in the local palm tree and worshipped by fisher folk.\textsuperscript{181}

In addition to the above they worshipped Korravai\textsuperscript{182}, Kali and other deities such as Balaraman\textsuperscript{183}. They conducted the festival of the idol in the temple as padivala\textsuperscript{184}. The Tamils of the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \textsuperscript{173} Silappathikaram, VI. 47.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Kalittogai, 84:6
\item \textsuperscript{175} Padirrappattu, 13:20, 21:5; Porunarrappadai, 52; Purananuru, 106:3; Aingurunuru, 182:3; Kalittogai, 46:16; Nanmanikkadigai 57:4; Narrinai, 34:1; Paripadal, 15:37.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Kurinjipattu, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Padirrappattu, 43:6.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Silappathikaram, VII. 383, XXV. 119, etc.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Narrinai, 251:8, 358:6.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Ahananuru, 270:12; Narrinai, 83:2
\item \textsuperscript{181} Narrinai, 303:3.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Thirumurugarruppadai, 257; Paripadal 11:100; Tolkappiyam, Porul 59:2.
\item \textsuperscript{183} Silappathikaram, XX, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{184} Ibid. Uraiperukatturai.
\end{thebibliography}
Sangam age celebrated various festivals in the form of Vilavu\textsuperscript{185} or Vila\textsuperscript{186}. Saru was a religious and social festival\textsuperscript{187}. Such facts indicate that the Tamil society of that period was a pious one and the people were so much interested in worship and venerate the deities by the conduct of festivals.

During the subsequent period i.e., after the termination of the Sangam and the Kalabhra interregnum during the Third and sixth century A.D. respectively the Tamil society also was paying greater veneration and devotion or Bhakti. The Bhakti, which had its foundation during the Sangam age, had a building after the 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. i.e., during the periods of Greater Pallavas (586 A.D. to 893 A.D.) and rulers of the First Pandyan Empire (C. 575 A.D. to C. 920 A.D.). The early rulers of the imperial Chola line who ruled between 850 A.D. to 1014 A.D too also witnessed the development of Bhakti which coincided with the development of temple architecture. The earliest Vaishnava Alvars called Poigai, Bhudam and Pei Alvars and Ko Chengannan, the earliest of the Saiva Nayanmar were also the contributors to the further development of the Bhakti

\textsuperscript{185} Ahananuru, 122:2, 149:16, 352:5 etc. Aingurunuru, 305:4; Kalittogai, 5:20; Kurinjippattu, 192; maduraikkanchi, 98; Narrinai, 50:9, 90:1, 170:4; Padirruppatu 15:18; Palamoli Nanuru 343:2; Paripadal, 11:72, 12:99; Pattinappalai, 158; Perumbanarruppadai, 410; Purana nuru, 29:22, 33:22' Silappathikaram, V. 188.

\textsuperscript{186} Eladi, 62:1; Manimegalai, 1:20; Pattinappalai, 255.

\textsuperscript{187} Kalittogai, 102:4; Kurinjippattu, 192: Thirumurugarruppadai, 282, Narrinai, 200:4; Paripadal, 8:96; Sirupanchamulam, 201 etc.
Movement carried out by the 63 Saiva Nayanmars and 12 Vaishnava Alvars\(^{188}\) in the succeeding periods.

The Tamil society was well known for the availability of many artists belonging to different categories. There were Ahavunar who were panars, dancers and singers\(^{189}\). Generally the dancing girls or the dancers on the stage had the name Arangakuthi\(^{190}\) Adunar\(^{191}\) and Adumagal\(^{192}\) were people involved in dancing. There was a separate individual who had the capacity to write poems with musical notes and he was Isayon\(^{193}\). The one who sang a separate song called Auham was treated as idaippattukuthi\(^{194}\). Cilappatikaram too has given importance to fine arts and that continued through the ages. In the same way this work also offers a vivid account about the execution of the economic activities relating to the native as well as people who came and settled in Tamilnadu. There were grocers, sellers of conch bangles, gold smiths, appraisers of gold, dealers in foreign cloth, textile dealers, sellers of copper wares, painters, dealers in perfumes flowers and sandal paste\(^{195}\). The people were accustomed to use a lot of flowers at times of festivals. Hence the flower bazaar appeared like a forest.

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\(^{189}\) Ahananuru, 97:11, 113:3; Paripadal, 15:42.  
\(^{190}\) Manimegalai, XVIII. 35.  
\(^{191}\) Paripadal, 7:32.  
\(^{192}\) Narrinai, 95:2; Purananuru, 128:6.  
\(^{193}\) Silappathikaram, Ill. 36.  
\(^{194}\) Ibid, 314:4.  
\(^{195}\) Ibid, V and VI.
of flowers\textsuperscript{196}. As they engaged in large scale business and that prompted the possibility of utilizing the ware houses for the storage and preservation of commodities\textsuperscript{197}. The merchants had their own guilds for promoting their business.

Thus the Tamil society had agricultural and non agricultural professionals who were entrusted with many occupations. For repairing the agricultural and other implements there were black smiths and carpenters and they were engaged in the activities relating to subsidiary industries. The use of iron implements, used for crushing sugarcane will substantiate it\textsuperscript{198}. Since ploughing, handicrafts, painting, commerce and trade, learned arts and fine arts were the six groups which enabled the people to have their own activities. Their social and economic life coincided with each other.

The Tamil society was divided into different social groups which comprised of the rich and the poor. Poverty and economic disparity existed then. But the people due to their lack of economic concepts could not understand that poverty was the result of unequal distribution of wealth and the consequence of social mismanagement etc\textsuperscript{199}. As the agrarian produces were in plenty, the Tamil country was prosperous\textsuperscript{200}. It was a customary practice among the Tamils to adore the

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid, V. 111 – 112.
\textsuperscript{197} Manimagalai, Ill. 95.
\textsuperscript{198} Purananuru, 21:8; 150:25, 170:15.
\textsuperscript{199} N. K. Mangala Murugesan, Sangam, Age, Madras, 1982. P. 197.
\textsuperscript{200} Sundarar Devaram; Tiruthuruthi; 4:1-2.
fields with deities\textsuperscript{201}. As the tillers of the soil were essentially needed for a constant life in a common way, the farmers were placed at the apex of the social ladder. It was believed that if anybody led an idle life, they will invite only poverty\textsuperscript{202}. The people were also aware of the fact that the rich agricultural yield will set aside famine\textsuperscript{203}.

Uran\textsuperscript{204}, Mahilnan\textsuperscript{205}, Kilavan\textsuperscript{206} etc., were the titles borne normally by people who were belonging to Ur. They were happy and were rulers. The dependent and undefined folk occupied the areas outside the areas i.e., at the areas outside the fort walls. Such dwelling areas were called as Cheris\textsuperscript{207}. These were the traits of the Marudam folk and the people of the Kurinji land were semi agricultural people. In the same way people of different traits were the occupants of the specific areas of Tamilnadu. Almost all the people were hard working, industrious nature and had contacts with different countries such as Java, Sumatra, Borneo etc\textsuperscript{208}. The trade system influenced the life and the activities of Tamil people. Cities like Madurai, Korkai, Puhar, Tondi, Musiri etc were renowned

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{201} Nanmanikkadigai, 9:1.
\bibitem{202} Thirukkural, 1040.
\bibitem{203} Samy Chidambarnar, Ettutogayum Pira Panpadun, Chennai 1986, p. 200.
\bibitem{204} Ahananuru, 306; Aingurunuru, 47: Kalittogai, 2:5; Narrinai, 100.
\bibitem{205} Ahananuru 376; Aingurunuru, 31; Kalittogai, 73; Narrinai, 70; Cirubanarruppadai, 66.
\bibitem{206} Porunararruppadai, 248:60; Purananuru; 371:27, 399 12 – 14.
\bibitem{207} Tolkappiyam; Porul; Purathinai.
\bibitem{208} K. K. Pillay, Studies in Indian History with special reference to Tamilnadu, Madras, 1976, p. 17.
\end{thebibliography}
centres of trade and every one of them had its own bazaars\textsuperscript{209}. The Tamils had a sound literary development\textsuperscript{210}. It should be remembered that the non availability of natural harbours never hindered the foreign trade\textsuperscript{211}. Due to constant inland and foreign trade and other internal occupations the people led a busy life everyday and the society was always brisk\textsuperscript{212}. The Tamil society was a manufacturing one in varied respects through the ages. They were engaged in the hereditary crafts and engaged their work in an ancestral work spot. The Tamils, because of their pragmatic approach treated the cultivable land as a source of life for all\textsuperscript{213}. The Tamils who depended on their landed properties had a sound knowledge of seasons and were capable of getting sufficient water for their profession\textsuperscript{214}. The Tamils were aware of the fact that seasonal rain will not only offer a good yield but will keep the famine and pestilence away from the mass attack\textsuperscript{215}. The caste system during Sangam age emerged on the basis of profession\textsuperscript{216}. Thus the economy centred on different trade and commerce and agriculture occupied an important place in the then Tamil society.

\textsuperscript{209} Burton Stein, Essays on South India, New Delhi, 1976, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{210} R. Rajan, “Musiri Turaimugam, Cila Puttiya Ceythikal” (Tr) Avanam, No. 4, 1994, pp. 107-110.
\textsuperscript{212} Maduraikkanchi and Pattinappalai.
\textsuperscript{213} Sundarar Devaram; 7; Tirupparupadam; 10:1.
\textsuperscript{214} Naladiyar, 356:2.
\textsuperscript{215} Gnansambandar Devaram: 3; Tiruppatticcuram; 5:1.
\textsuperscript{216} K. K. Pillay, Tamilaga Varalarum Makkalum Panpadum, Chennai. 1972, p. 154.
Here it will be apt and appropriate to note Velankudi, who led a separate life and loved by all\(^{217}\). They were the residents of huts raised up with mud walls and thatched roofs\(^{218}\). The Vellalar generally known as agriculturists\(^{219}\) were the dealers in agrarian pursuits\(^{220}\). The Velavar\(^{221}\) as they were working in the Kalam, the lands associated with agriculture, they were known as Kalam\(^{222}\). They were included in the fourth Varna\(^{223}\). There were Inakkalamar who were engaged in the cultivation of varieties of paddy and sugarcane\(^{224}\). Just after the Kalabhra interregnum during the Pallava and Pandya periods the people who were engaged in the subordinate cultivation were specifically called Kilkaranmai Udaya Kudigal\(^{225}\). In this regard those who were engaged in harvesting were known as arinar\(^{226}\). As they venerated the sickle used for harvesting they had the title nel ari toluvar\(^{227}\). The participants in agricultural activities, to avoid tiredness and to execute their duties elaborately and uninterruptedly, were accustomed to consume paddy and also adhered to the traditional method of singing\(^{228}\).

\(^{217}\) Tirikadugam; 42: 1-4.
\(^{218}\) C. Minakshi, Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas of Kanchi, Madras, 1977, p. 15.
\(^{219}\) South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. III, No. 466.
\(^{220}\) Tolkappiyam, Porul; 625: 1-2.
\(^{221}\) Cirupanchamulam; 60:3; Ahananuru, 13:11.
\(^{222}\) C. E. Ramachandran, Sangakala Varalaru, Madras, 1977, p. 166.
\(^{223}\) B. Arunachalam, Silappatikara Cintanai, Madras, 1971, p. 40.
\(^{224}\) Porunarruppadai.
\(^{225}\) A.R.E. 75 of 1896.
\(^{226}\) Palamoli Nanuru, 177; 2-3.
\(^{227}\) Narrinai, 195:6; Ahananuru, 40:12-13.
assigned to agriculture widened their scope in estimating their economic status. For instance the tillers who were forced to take the paddy kept for sowing as a food stuff they were termed as vilkudi[^229] or people who were fallen from their status. In the same way there was another set of economically downtrodden people, who were serving as security guards, were called by the name Kavalar[^230] and those who protected the ripened paddy were called as enal kappor[^231]. The people, who protected the lands were known as Kalani Kavalar[^232] or Ulupadai. Kalamar[^233] and they were sets of people who were involved in the removal of weeds[^234]. Due to their strength and capacity they were assigned the title Vankai Vinaignai[^235]. The actual owners of the land were known as Kaniyalar[^236]. During the Pallava period as referred to in the Dandamttam (Lines 34 – 37) and Velurpalayam copper plates (Lines 61 – 62[^237]) there were agriculturists involved in the different agrarian activities. Thus the agricultural activities of the Tamil society paved the way for the division of labour which in turn served as causes for social distinction and economic disparities. While the position and status of the ryots were venerable, the conditions of the

[^231]: Ibid., 28:9.
[^232]: Narrinai, 280:2.
[^233]: Purananuru, 35:25.
[^234]: Perumbanarruppadai, 230-231.
[^235]: Padirruppathu, VI. 58:15.
labourers were not at all appreciable. The life of the labourers was a deplorable one.

There prevailed no legal or social equality among the people\textsuperscript{238}. Due to economic considerations the women were employed in different agricultural activities and those who were engaged in agriculture were called Kadaisyar\textsuperscript{239}. At a little later the Vellala women who served in agrarian pursuits had the title Vellath\textsuperscript{240}. The women alone were entrusted with the regular duty of protecting the ripened grains and crops in the fields\textsuperscript{241} and they used the slings for the execution of security duties\textsuperscript{242}. By resting in an elevated place thatched by the shed erected by farmers\textsuperscript{243} they were driving away the birds which were causing damages to the grains\textsuperscript{244}. Due to their qualities of patience and tolerance they were in the transplantation activities\textsuperscript{245} of paddy. The women who undertook the act of harvesting\textsuperscript{246} with the use of sickle\textsuperscript{247} there were Paruthippendir who plucked and collected cotton\textsuperscript{248}. They were employed in various post harvesting activities also. For instance they prepared rice flakes

\textsuperscript{238} N. Subrahmanian, Sangam polity, Ennes Publications, Madurai, 1966, p. 298.
\textsuperscript{239} Silappatikaram, X. 130.
\textsuperscript{240} A.R.E. 542 of 1920.
\textsuperscript{241} Tinimalai Nurraimbadau, 30:3.
\textsuperscript{242} Tinaimoli Aimbadu, 5:1-2.
\textsuperscript{243} Ahananuru, 194.
\textsuperscript{244} Kurinjippattu, 41-44.
\textsuperscript{245} Paripadal Thirattu, 15-17.
\textsuperscript{246} Ahananuru, 156:3
\textsuperscript{247} Porunararruppadai, 242.
\textsuperscript{248} Purananuru, 25:1.
after the removal of the husks from paddy\textsuperscript{249}. Thus in the customary and tradition oriented agrarian pursuits of the Tamils of the early period they were centering on their social as well as economic consideration. The use of the straw as fodder for the cattle\textsuperscript{250} and the taking of food along with guests were unavoidable habits of the Tamils\textsuperscript{251}. All their services and activities were continuous without any deviation or break. The professionals were always zealous and enthusiastic in gaining the proper yield and that compelled them to appreciate and love their deeds\textsuperscript{252}. The singing of Ermangalam\textsuperscript{253} and Muthavaippattu\textsuperscript{254} during agrarian operations to avoid monotony they were engaged in such aspects.

When the Tamils, particularly even the agriculturists had their own traditions it is easy to estimate that the Tamil society was a tradition oriented one. For instance the Kadaisiyar or the womenfolk who involved in agricultural activities were accustomed to coil their hair and decorate it with specific kind of leaves\textsuperscript{255}. The workers were forbidden from chewing while executing their duties\textsuperscript{256}. The flourishing agriculture encouraged the peasants to sing Marudappan to make every

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Kuruntogai, 238:1-3; Ahananuru, 141:6-18.
\item Purananuru, 117:5, 132:4.
\item Tirikadugam, 12:2.
\item Silappatikaram, V. 43.
\item Ibid., X. 135.
\item Idem.
\item Purananuru: 61.
\item Ibid., 62:14.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
one to be joy and happy\textsuperscript{257} and to the work without any
tiredness. It was also a customary practice to convene people,
at times of flood to arrest it, by the beat of the drum\textsuperscript{258}. It will
reveal the importance assigned to maintain the economic
condition in a constant position. The traditional living in
huts\textsuperscript{259}, the constant preservation and protection of oxen which
assisted them in agricultural activities too was a tradition\textsuperscript{260}. In
the midst of the stagnant waters of the paddy field they used to
grow the lotus flowers\textsuperscript{261}. The peasants were always pious to get
a good yield and to be away from distresses such as floods and
other natural calamities\textsuperscript{262}. The problems of mouse to the
grains\textsuperscript{263}, the problems caused by the floods 264, diseases\textsuperscript{265},
insufficient rain or failure of monsoon\textsuperscript{266} were certain
customary drawbacks and difficulties which affected the
farmers. Such common practices were prevalent among others
also and they also met with the personal sufferings along with
economic distresses. The engagement of women in the
collection of cotton from plants\textsuperscript{267}, carding\textsuperscript{268}, processing the
cotton for spinning\textsuperscript{269} etc., stand to prove that the works

\textsuperscript{257} A. M. Paramasivanandam, Tamilagavaralaru, Chennai, 1979, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{258} Paripadal, 10:6-8
\textsuperscript{259} Perumbanarruppadi.
\textsuperscript{260} Paripadal, 20:62-63.
\textsuperscript{261} Kalittogai; Marudakkali, 141:2
\textsuperscript{262} Manickavasagar, Adaikkalapattu, 8:4: 1-2.
\textsuperscript{263} Purananuru, 321:6
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 12; Tirukkarupaiyalur, 7:1
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., 2:1.
\textsuperscript{265} Purananuru, 326:5.
\textsuperscript{266} Ahananuru, 133:6, Cirupanchamulam, 88.
\textsuperscript{269} Purananuru, 326:5.
pertaining to cotton and spinning were conventional\textsuperscript{270}. The Tamils were treating spinning and weaving also as specific industries for economic growth.

In the same way with regard to trade and commerce in the coastal cities of Tamilnadu there were well guarded vast custom houses, where the strong willed stalwarts, customs officials affixed the seals on the commodities\textsuperscript{271}. The officials called Porul Kakkum tolii makkal were in charge of protecting the goods and commodities of the rulers\textsuperscript{272}. The custom officials were quite vigilant, without a wink of an eye and were collecting the taxes devotedly\textsuperscript{273}. So the collection of customs formed a primary source of income of the state. Due to the enormous nature of the goods it was found difficult for the custom's officials to weigh them quickly. So they levied the customs duties by the seals without physically measuring the goods. Such things were generally called mati nirainta kalipandam\textsuperscript{274}. They had their own customary measurement of lands called Ma, Veli\textsuperscript{275} etc. Such facts indicate that the Tamils up to 800 A.D. were having their own customs and traditions even in their economic pursuits. As far as the weights and measures, length and breadh, area and volume etc. are concerned the ancient

\textsuperscript{270} K. K. Pillai, op.cit., p. 233.
\textsuperscript{271} R. Balakrishna Mudaliyar (Tr). The Godlen Anthology of Ancient Tamil Literature, Madras, 1960, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{272} Pattinappalai, 120-121.
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid., 122-125.
\textsuperscript{274} Ibid., 136.
\textsuperscript{275} Porunarruppadai, 180-182.
Tamils were adopting their own individualistic ways\textsuperscript{276}. Thus due to the availability of proper measurements of different categories, tax collection was easier and the processes of tax collection were not always free of violent and oppressive methods\textsuperscript{277}. The terms such as cart, kal or chakkaram, cema achchu, aria, ani available in various sangam works will disclose the methods of transport adopted by the Tamils for transferring the goods from one place to the other\textsuperscript{278}. It also indicates the thriving commercial intercourses in the Tamil country. As the merchants had the fear of attack in the high way by robbers\textsuperscript{279} they were accompanied by warriors as security guards\textsuperscript{280} and that was also a customary practice and it should be remembered that the kings devoted much attention in protecting the different sets of people.

In the Tamil country vegetarianism was preached and practised\textsuperscript{281}. But non-vegetarian dishes were also consumed. While rice was used as a stable food, fruits, curd, ghee, dhall were also used along with vegetables. The custom of serving the food in plantain leaves\textsuperscript{282} and taking lunch after bath\textsuperscript{283} were few other customary practices available then among the majority of the Tamil population. By sitting on a raised plank

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 242-48, Tolkappiyam, Eluttu, 165, 167, 170, 240, 241 etc.
\textsuperscript{277} K. A. Nilakantasastri, Cultural History of the Tamils, Madras, 1957, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{278} Purananuru, 45-50, 60, 87, etc.
\textsuperscript{279} Ahananuru, 157:7-9.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., 89:10.
\textsuperscript{281} Avvayar, Atticudi, 33; Konrai Vendan, 158 etc.
\textsuperscript{282} Periya Puranam, Apputi Adigal Nayanar Puranam, 23.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., Karaikkal Ammayar Puranam, 76.
and serving of water as an initial act were included as part of taking food\textsuperscript{284}. The language was not at all a problem among the Tamils because many people of many languages crowded in the bazaar streets of Madurai\textsuperscript{285}. So it is obvious that the economic considerations enabled the people to know more languages for achieving a successful trade.

As textile dealers, sellers of perfumes, flowers, sandal paste, scented powder, sellers of salt, oil mongers, dealers in bronze and copper wares, carpenters, goldsmiths, artists like painters and sculptors, dealers in dolls, lapidaries, those who sold false hairs of fashionable wigs, traders in sheep, fish and mutton and sellers of cakes and vegetable edibles thronged the bazaar\textsuperscript{286}. Thus the Tamil society had its own economic activities and there prevailed cordiality between the sellers and purchasers. It is also worth to remember that the iron age culture development was the most propitious event that happened in the history of Tamil Country. Further the conduct of individual in their social roles shaped and conditioned the orientation pattern and the political experiment\textsuperscript{287}.

Thus the Tamil society from the period between 300 B.C and 900 A.D. was highly a sophisticated trade oriented one. So the economy was solid and stable. Though no economic

\textsuperscript{284} Kalingattupparani, 556:1-4.
\textsuperscript{285} Maduraikkanchi, 503-522.
\textsuperscript{286} Silappatikaram, V. 13-39.
principles of modern nature were available the people were prosperous and were adopting specific kind of traditional and customary practices regularly without any deviation. Agriculture, trade and commerce were predominant even though the people were pious due to religious affinities. In the field of politics no alternative was found to kingship. Under such a pretext the Tamils were leading a life without any disastrous disparities. The calling of various professionals by specific names and the maintenance of their own respective venerable positions by them in the social ladder speak about the developed economic order. They had their own customary practices at all levels. Both internal and foreign trade existed and they stood for solid status. In the subsequent period i.e., after the termination of the Sangam age and Kalabhra interregnum, there commenced the period of devotion or Bhakthi which too did no cause any drastic change in their economic pursuits. The arrival of permanent monarchies such as Pallavas and Pandyas after the Kalabhra rule too supported the development of Bhakthi and temple architecture. Though the rulers were assisting the promotion of internal and foreign trade the importance assigned to devotionalism the pendulum of the society swung from one end called economic pursuits to the other of religious activities. Anyhow the tradition oriented Tamil society did not deviate from its customary practices except the superceding nature of the religious bent of mind.

Thus the Tamil country during the ancient period was known for its cultural glory. The Sangam age also witnessed the
Augustan age of Tamil literature. During the same period the
life of the people was also a peaceful and joyous one due to the
fertility of the soil and prosperity of the land. The Tamils of
those periods were having their own individual economic
activities. Such as involvement in agriculture, different types of
subsidiary and major industries along with trade and
commerce stand testimony to the economic activities of the
Tamils which were also quite appealing and prominent. There
are no references about the problems of economic disparities
among the people. Although there were economic differences
they did not affect the general coordination among the people.