Conclusion
CONCLUSION

The Pallavas, early Pandyas and later Colas ruled the Tamil country from 6th to 12th century A.D. Most of the rulers ruled the country with great responsibility and suppose they were considered to be equal to God.

This study has identified eclectic religious mystics and ethical philosophers who represent and shape the culture of religious tolerance and holistic growth. They represent the Zen Buddhist notion of “moon of Truth. One and the same moon is reflected in all waters. All moons in the water are one in the one and only moon”.

Tamilagam is the abode of a number of forms of worship beginning from the self-produced Saivism and Vaishnavism to the imported Islam and Christianity.

Religious pluralism is a part of human life at any time. Religion is the law of life. It mixed with social economic, political and cultural factors Living religion will always be in a dynamic process.

The Introduction defines What Religion is and Why Religion is. Religion is absolute faith in a God who is in the other world. While man is rooted in this mundane world, God is believed to be in heaven. Man who is tossed in worldly pleasures and pains finds solace in a religion that has its root in faith, which is opposed to the scientific
reason. Man needs religion to find out peace for the mind. Each religion has some characteristic features that are common to all. A religion should have a God (e.g. Siva for Saivism), a religion has a scripture (e.g. the Koran for Islam), a religion has an organization (e.g. the mathas for the Hindu sects and the papal hierarchy for the Christians) and so on.

Religion is not in talk or doctrines or theories, not in its sectarianism. It is the realization and is the relation between the soul and God.

Religion is an aspiration to grow into the likeness of the divine. It is to help us to love from the depths of spirit. Meditation and worship are the means by which the mind temper and attitude to life are refined. The object of the meditation is the supreme which is in a strict sense ineffable. Religion is an important force which is considered to be the life line and wine of the people. It touches every aspect of human society and upholds moral and spiritual values of life.

Religion can be given and taken more tangibly, more really than anything else in the world. All religions insist on compassion to the suffering Religion at their best insist on behaviour more than on belief. Religion is the social reform movement. Religion is the social cement, a way in which men express their aspirations and final solace for their frustration.
The believer in God loves his fellow men as he loves himself seeking their highest good as he seeks his own by redemptive service and self sacrifice Human unity can be achieved on earth only by the strong religious souls whose dedicated service knows no limits of geography or of history but only those of justice and truth, God and humanity.

The history of religion dates back to the Cankam age in Tamilnadu. During these ages, a vast corpus of literature was profuced of which Tolkappiyam is believed to be the earliest. It talks of five tracts of land, Tinai such as Kurinci, Mullai, Marutam, Neital and Palai. Each region has a presiding God/Goddess of its own such as Murukan, Vishnu, Varunan (Varuna), Intiran (Indra) and korravai, the Mother Goddess.

The literature that followed in sequence is codified under Pattuppattu, Ettuttokai, Patinenkilkkanakku and kappiyam (e.g. Cilappatikaram and Manimekalai). Each of these works talks much of the religious and philosophical systems, known to the ancient Tamils. The worship of Siva, Vishnu, Devi, Murukan, Vajra, Vel, Baladeva, Ganapati, Surya, the Buddha (called puttar) and Mahavira (called Camanar or Amanar, Jina). Temples of the heterodgical sects were known as Palli. The Manimekalai in its Cmayakkanakkartantiramuraittakatai presents a summary of the religious and philosophical systems known to the post-Cankam Tamils.
The history of religion known to the Tamils during the 6th-12th centuries AD. is Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Buddhism and Jainism had their genesis in the Nepalese highlands and migrated to the South after the 4th century BC at the initiative taken by Ashoka Maurya. Buddhist monasteries and stupas were instituted all over the country that exists today in Situ (Nagarjunakonda) or Ruined (Amaravati) in Andhradesa. Monuments in the Tamil country are destroyed though the vestiges could be established with historical documents in Kancipuram and Nakapattinam. Jainism seems to have intruded much earlier as the myths linked with Sravanabelgola in Karnataka would associate the foundation of the Jain temples there with Asoka’s grandfather, Candragupta Maurya. Through the Konku country, Jainism came to Tamilnadu and had long lasting impacts on the Pandya country. Living Jain monuments in stone are spread out all over the Far South from Anaimalai and Nakamalai, close to Maturai, to Kalukumalai in Tirunelveli.

The character of Jainism was such as to enable it to throw out tentacles to help it in its hour of need. It had never like Buddhism cut itself off from the faith that surrounded it, for it had always employed Brahmins as its domestic chaplains, who is presided at its birth rites, at often acted as officiates at death and marriage ceremonies and temple worship. Mahavira’s genius for organization also stood Jainism in good stead now, for he had made the laity an integral part of the community, whereas in Buddhism they had no part not lot in the order. So when storms of persecution swept over the land Jainism
simply took refuge in Hinduism, which opened its capacious bosom to receive it and to the conquerors it seemed an indistinguishable part of that great system. Hence Jainism has survived in Tamilagam, India, while Buddhism has passed away from the land.

The exclusiveness and pride born of caste are condemned by the Jainas. Buddhism and Jainism admit the ideal of negation of life and personality. To both life is a calamity to be avoided at all costs. They require us to free ourselves from all the ties that bind to nature and bring sorrow. They glorify poverty and purity; peace and patient suffering.

The end of the Kalabhra rule was a land mark in the history of the Tamil country because after their decline, the Hinduism grew in strength with the Bhakti movement gaining momentum. The region of the Pallavas and Early Pandyas covers the growth and progress of Jainism, Saivism and Vaishnavism. After the overthrow of the Kalabhras by Kadungon and his successor many Hindu religious Saints and Savants the Saiva Nayanmar and Vaishnava Alwars arose and tried to suppress the Non-Hindu religious sects. As a result of their efforts Buddhism, and Jainism declined in Tamilnadu.

Hinduism is not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the god world endeavour of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages. Hinduism is not based on any racial factor. Though the civilization has its roots in the spiritual
life of the vedic Aryans, and has not lost the traces of its origin. It has taken so much from the social life of the Dravidian, and other native inhabitants that it is difficult to disentangle in modern Hinduism the vedic and the Non-vedic elements.

Hinduism is an inheritance of thought and aspiration living and moving with the movement of life itself, an inheritance to which every race in India has made its distinct and specific contribution. Our values has not changed but the ways and means of expressing them has changed.

Saivism, Vaisnavism, Saktam, Ganapatyam, Kaumaram and allied Hindu sects found ways of progression. The bhakti cult has everlasting effects on the history of Saivism and Vaisnavism. The protagonists of these movements were called Nayanmar and Alwars. They visited the nooks and corners of the Tamil country, extolling the praise of Siva and Vishnu and the ksetras, believed to be 108 for Vishnu and more than 250 for Siva, where the gods are supposed to be resident. The Nayanmar were 63 in number and the Alwars 12. all the Alwars and some of the Nayanmar produced a vast corpus of literature dates since the 6th century AD (Karaikkalammaiyar) and came to be written down to the 12th century AD (Cekkilar’s Periyapuranam) and later. The glories of Saktam are told in a section of the pre-Pallava epic, Cilappatikaram. Adisankara of Kerala broadcasted the glories of Devi in his Sanskritic works, Saundaryalahare.
Bhakti was born in North as exemplified in the Harivamsa of the Mahabharata, *Bhagavat Gita* and the *Vishnu Purana*. It spread to the South around the 4th century AD as its precepts could be found in the *Paripatal* and *Cilappatikaram*. However, the Alwars and Nayanmars systematically propagated the bhakti cult. Appar and Nanacampantar inducted the Pallavas and Pandyas to the bhakti fold, converting the rulers of the land from Jainism and Buddhism. Periyalvar and Tirumankai Alwar converted Srimara Srivallbha and Nandivarman Pallavamalla to Vaisnavism. Even though bhakti was born in the North, it found its full maturity in the South. A 10th century purana, called *Bhagavata Purana*, very much popularized the cult.

The Bhakti movement which swept the Tamil country from 6th to 10th century onwards had determined the course of medieval society to a greater extent. The movement seems to have earned the support and patronage of the monarchy the well-to-do and the rich in the society. Vaishnavism and Saivism and their proponents were at logger-heads, but in the spread of their respective sects they surpassed the Jains and Buddhists. In fact for both of them Buddhism and Jainism were the arch enemies.

The main aim of the movement was to eliminate both Jainism and Buddhism ideologically from the Tamil country and spread Hinduism in its place. The effective propaganda launched by the
proponents of Bhakti movement got the new class of people disillusioned with Buddhism and Jainism to its fold.

During this period the Saiva and Vaishnava hymns witnessed the growth of Tamil and Hindu philosophy and religion in the Tamil country. This period is called the ‘Golden Age of Tamil Hinduism’ wherein we find the Vedic religion and practices held this way but with a reformist content. The religious life of the people centred around the local temple which through its daily programme of worship and services ministered to their spiritual life. The success of the mass movement lay in bringing God closer to human being unlike Buddhism and Jainism. The Nayanmar and Alwars utilized the fine arts like dance and drama to spread the cult of Bhakti in the country.

Family life and the performance of a vocation were not a bar to them to realize of the supreme. Nevertheless they emphasized that the mind must be imbued with the spirit of the God. As a result of this pragmatic view of the worldly life the Bhakti emerge as the popularizing centres of all fine arts. The metrical compositions rendered in Tamil by the Nayanmar and Alwars helped it to become popular. In the case of Saivites, the musical compositions of Tirumular, and Karaikkal Ammaiayar heralded the beginning whereas for the Vaishnavites the harbingers of the movement were Perriyalwar, Putatalvar, and Poigai Alwar. In the medieval period, in the matter of worship, the numerous rituals elaborated in the agamas were systematized and the temple became the most important
institution of the country. Alwars and Nayanmar propagated the
temple cult and were responsible for the creation of many religious
edifices.

The religion accounted for so much of the intellectual, moral
and spiritual for whom the temples served as launching pads of
propaganda campaigns in Tamilnadu during 6\textsuperscript{th} to 12\textsuperscript{th} C.A.D. is
disaggressed as below:

1) The finalization of the \textit{agama} texts which wrote down the
grammar of institutionalized Bhaktism.

2) Primitive Saivism, Proto-Vaishnava Bhutism were thrown
into the melting pot of the Bhakti movement.

3) Growth of mysticism such as the mysticism of Andal,
Manickavachagar and Nammalvar and also the Saiva Siddhanta
mystic thought of Tirumular.

4) The alleged personal disputation between the leaders of
different faith, the conversions and the persecutions which were going
on indicating an intensification of exclusive religious faith. The
temples were the great gift of medieval Hinduism to South India and
Tamilnadu. The art of the Chola period is the continuation of the
Pallava times. The tradition of Tamil fine arts had a glorious era
which almost reached its zenith during the Chola period. In the
medieval period the \textit{devaradiyars} were found very sincere in their
devotion to temples. Religious endowments made by the donars, properly recorded protested and made in proper use of it.

In the Tamil country education was basically religious in character in ancient and medieval times. Ghatikas, Mathas, Agrahara, Gugai, Salai and Buddhist and Jaina monasteries were the educational institutions which was attached to the temples. The temple was a symbolic expression of a religious feelings of the people these educational institutions stood for the propagation of the religious ideals and philosophy. They played a prominent role in fostering the religious and cultural life of people. The process of progressive Sanskritisation was evident.

Brahminism occupied a unique place among the other religions. The Chola kings were unanimously the votaries of Saivism. Yet they patronized all sects of Hindu, non-Hindu religions like Saivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism. Brahminization involving notions of Brahminical superiority was the dominant feature of the period.

In civil life the Brahmins occupied a highly respected position with the exception of the few, who entered the state service in the army and elsewhere, they generally devoted themselves to religious and literary pursuits and lived on voluntary gifts from all classes of people and from the king endowments (brahmadeya) The bhakti movement established a casteless society. It was the golden age of Tamil culture. Temples were built. Mathas were established by all
sects. The Prabanda form became dominant and the systematic treatment of saiva-siddhanta in philosophical treaties began. The hagiology of saivism was standardized in a great *Purana* by Sekkilar. A quantum of vaishnava devotional literature and commentaries on the canon also came into existence. Jaina and Buddhist authors continued to flourish though not in such numbers as in the earlier age many works mentioned in the numerous inscriptions of the period have been lost beyond recovery.

Temples have been for long centres of culture. Artists dedicated their first best works, poets recited their poems and musicians sang first in temple, before they went out. All consecrated forms of loveliness induce in us a feeling for the eternal. Temple worship is used to encourage faith in God, and purity of mind and conduct. The spirit of religion is kept up by family worship in the home. Where women play a leading part. Worship in temples and seasonal festivals attract large crowds. The Bhagavatars, the trained story tellers and reciters traveled from village to village expounding the classics. The *Acaryas* or the heads of ascetic orders preserve the tradition and to train the young.

The organization of the temple as a standard institution of a religious and social importance, with the codification of the agamas with the bureaucratization of the temple services slowly proceeding apace, new religious functions were introduced into the daily routine of temples. Forms of worship were becoming more and more
complicated and apart from Vedic chants and tantric rituals new forms of devotional rituals were being introduced.

The sacred Hymns composed by the religious leaders came to be invested with the status given to the Vedas. Along with the Vedic chants, the Padigams and the Pasurams should find a place in the devotional worship in the temples.

Exaltation of Siva, Visnu, Devi, Ganapati and Skanda-Murukan is prevailed. The Vaisnava lyrics to begin were in pristine Tamil, codified under the Nalayirativviviyaprapantam. These are supposed to be 4000 by tradition but actually a little less. After the 9th century, the Alwars were followed by the Acaryapurusas who wrote their works either in Sanskrit or Manipravalam, a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit. These works cross the meridian and are in tens of thousands. No other religion in the world, excepting Hinduism, has such a rich storage of religious devotional literature.

Saivism on doctrinal grounds broke into several groups such as Kapalika, Kalamukha, Pasupata, Kashmir Saivism, Vira Saivism and so on. Siva is supreme to all of them. Some believed in caste and the brahmanical priesthood while others rejected it. The Vaisnava schism was two-fold, called Pancaratra and Vaikhanasa, mainly based on the agamas that each group followed. Another typical contribution of Tamil Vaisnavism is Srivaisnavism that laid its stress more on Sridevi than on Vishnu. Another factional division was Vatakalai (northern order) and Tenkalai (southern order). The northern order laid its
stress on the Sanskritic sources of the Lord and did not preach the scriptures, including the *astaksara* (Om Na Mo Na Ra Ya Na Ya) to the non-brahmanas. Ramanujacarya broke the guardian knot of this domineering group and taught the scriptures to the down trodden and preached the *astaksara* from the top of the *gopura* of the Tirukkottiyur temple so that every one, including the *pancama*, could recite it. The *tenkalai* laid their stress on the Tamil sources, e.g. the *Nalayiram*.

In arriving at religious harmony, the rulers of the land and the mass took an active participation. This could be proved with the enormous number of epigraphical testimonies that forth come since the Pallava times. Harmony prevailed in day-to-day life, worship in temples in villages or cities, festival organizations and public service. *Mathas* and *cattirams* were instituted all through the land for benefit of the needy, the poor and the rich alike, providing free boarding and lodging. The kings, *mathas* and nobles took an active participation in nurturing the *cattirams*. Largely the Hindu factions were for “live and let live” or “love thy neighbour as thyself”. Religion is a token of unity rather than a force of disintegration. eg. Kanchi and Nagapattinam are considered to be the place for their religious harmony. There prevailed Jainism, Buddhism along with their religions of Saivism and Vaishnavism.

Religious conflicts arise mainly due to prioritization one religious group to another. This was the norm in the West and Middle
East. Hindu religious groups do not accept conversion from alien religions or even from Buddhism or Jainism. On the other hand, they viewed with each other for popularizing their sectarian ideologies on other sectarian factions within the Hindu fold. The most popular way of defeating one sectarian by the other was by religious arguments. If one fails, he had to embrace the God of the victorious.

Sectarian animosity was displayed by persecuting the pontiffs of other religious groups. Krmikantha Cola invited Ramanuja for a religious dispute but fearing persecution, the pontiff migrated to the Hoysala country. The irate Cola took to task the disciples of Ramanuja and destroyed the Vishnu temple complex within the Nataraja temple at Citamparam. The image of Vishnu was also thrown into the Bay of Bengal.

Another way of exhibiting sectarian animosity was to design sculptural models that bring under one religion to the other; e.g.

The Saivites designed various sculptural forms that assigned a degrading status to Vishnu or Brahma; Tirupurantaka, Kalyanasundra, Lingodbhava are good examples. However, the most degrading was Sarabhamurti who is supposed to devour Nrsimha. Virabhadr according to the *Saiva puranas* beat Vishnu in a battle.

If the Saivas dare bring Vishnu under the aegis of Siva, they did not hesitate to subordinate Siva to Vishnu. A number of sculptural illustrations in the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanci and the
Narasimha cave at Namakkal show Siva and Brahma, paying *anjali* to Vishnu. The most fanatic among the sculptural illustration is Astamukhagandabherunda Nrsimha who is supposed to devour the adversary of Narasimha, Sarabhamurti.

The Saktas did not remain quite. A number of puranic myths and sculptural illustrations were designed in which Siva, Vishnu and Brahma were subordinated to Devi. They inculcated the sectarian idea that Siva without Sakti is a saiva. Few iconographical illustrations of the Vijayanagara-Nayaka time show Devi seated on the corpses of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma.

Ganapati and Murukan started claiming a superior status for them in comparison with Siva. Under the pretext that Siva did not pay homage to him, Ganapati did break the wheels of the chariot in which Siva was moving to dislodge the triple-fort demons as Tripurantaka. He laid obstacles to Murukan who went to the hill country to woo Valli. When both repented, their efforts came to a success. Ganapati in Indian tradition is Vignaraja “king of obstacles” and Vignesvara, the Isvara who removes the obstacles came to known to Tamil during the Pallava period onwards.

Murukan to his part claimed superiority over Brahma and Siva. When Brahma refused to divulge the meaning of the *Pranavamantra*, Murukan threw Brahma into the gutters and started functioning himself as the Lord of Creation, thus appropriating Brahma’s destined duty. When Siva childed Murukan for his audacious deed, the latter
would not yield. Siva wanted him to tell the meaning of the *pranava*. Murukan said it is possible if only Siva behaves as a student with mouth shut and the hands fastened to the body. Thus, Murukan subordinated his own father who was a professor of professors as in the Daksinamurti form.

Studies in religion reveal to us not only the bewildering variety of religious beliefs and practices but also the many points of resemblance between religious systems, which treat themselves as opposed to each other. Some of the most significant features like in carnation, miracles and festivals are found in common. The festival celebrating the renewal of life in the spring (*vasanta vizha*) is found in many religions. It is an occasion for prayer and praise for thanks giving.

Life today in spite of our material possess and intellectual acquisitions moral codes has not given us happiness. The future is bound up with the later alternative. Loyalty to the spirit of the previous systems of philosophy requires us to possess an outlook that always broadens.

For the spread of religious skepticism historical religions have to bear heavy measure of responsibility. In spite of the great contributions religions through the ages, have made for the promotion of Art, culture and spiritual life. They have been vitiated by dogmatism and fanaticism by cruelty and intolerance and by the intellectual dishonesty of their adherents. So long as religions adopt
their principles to the ruling interests of this world, so long as they support the established order however iniquitous it may be, those who revolt against such practices are the truly religious people.

We cannot build a society of nations by fostering economic and political ties alone. We have to give to the new society a psychological unity and a spiritual coherence. To sustain a world community, we need unity if not identity of spiritual outlook and aspiration.

Unfortunately religions tend to keep people apart. Humanity is broken into a number of separate worlds each with its particular religious tradition. Take efforts to co-ordinate moral and spiritual forces to shape the future are being sterilized by the rivalries of religions.

The study established the fact that there were several religious factions prevailed at that point of time. They did not co-operate with each other. There was a move to dislodge one by another. They took to milder modes of conflict such as debates, quarrels, torture by words, ridiculing other sects, destruction of places of worship, confiscation, religious persecution, punishment, proselytisation and mild clashes etc. Fortunately in the name of religion there was no armed conflicts as it happened in the west.

As far as religious harmony is concerned, the historical India as well as Tamilnadu of the medieval past was a Garden of Eden. Even
in the Garden of Eden, there may be few thorns and shrubs that harm the true believers. This was India’s as well as medieval Tamilnadu’s religious disharmony.

The moral principal on which the civilization rests is equality and fraternity; truth and love. If people follow these moral code, it would help us to minimise all sorts of strife, restlessness, violence and hatred. The world will be brought closer together and the darkness of violence and ignorant may be dispelled.