INTRODUCTION

Admittedly our Indian history embraces various facets of study such as Political, Social, Economic and Cultural. Indian history has been divided into Ancient, Medieval and Modern. Ancient history deals with the several dynastic rule, the medieval history deals with the Delhi Sultans and the Mughals and the Modern history with the Europeans and their rule. The Political history varied according to the geographical region, dynasty and races. Recently, the historical research shaped in a new dimension focusing due attention upon every micro region, which has its own share in shaping general perspective of any country. It also contributes to proper understanding of the basic units of administration and the cultural heritage from its very roots.

The Indian subcontinent was first united by Asoka, the Mauryan king and the Mughal rulers Akbar and Aurangzeb. However, the entire India was completely united by the Britishers in 1801. In south India, the first settlement was effected by them in 1639, and later became permanent. The first settlement region was called as “Madarasapatnam”. They separated their settlement region from the Natives, which was named as “Black Town” renamed as George Town. This “Black Town – George Town” was chosen for an in-depth study on this count.¹

The land of Tamil Country had a hoary past and was under the hegemony of the Chera, Cholas and the Pandyas. The northern part of Tamil country was under the Pallavas and it was called as “Tondainadu” or Tondaimandalam, which served as the Crown of Tamil Country. Tondainadu is acknowledge to have served as the Gateway to the Political activities and cultural growth of Tamil country, which is proved by the interlude of Satavahanas, the Imperial Chola and Later Pandyas, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Banas, the Vijayanagar, the Bahmani Sultans, the Gajapati’s of Orissa, the Kakatiyas, the Sambuvarayas the Nayaks and the Marathas. Since the time of the Pallavas the northern Part of Tamil country served as the administrative and intellectual capital of south India.²

Right from the Age of Sangam it served as the chief centre of diplomacy. The modern city of Chennai or Madras was incepted by the Britishers, and emerged as twin Pattanams viz., “Chennapattanam” and “Madarasapatanam”. The former denotes the settlement of the Europeans and the later the settlement of the Natives or the Blacks.³

ANTITQUITY AND HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PLACE

The Madras region has been infested with several prehistoric remains. The Prehistoric man settled in a large valley to the north west of the city of Chennai, the river Vridhahkshiranathi and River Korttaliyar shows it laid the foundation for a fine civilization.
Tiruvorriyur is one of the places of ancient settlement lies in the proximity of Black Town, which has been sanctified by Tevaram Trios i.e., Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar in 7th A.D. This religious centre attracted saints and scholars like Sankaracharai in C.A.D, 8th Pattinathar (C.A.D 10th) Kambar(C.A.D. 11th) Saint Poet Arunagirinathar (A. D. 15th) and ArutPrahasaVallalar of Tiruvorriyur who played a significant role in the history of Tondaimandalam. The Muthialpettah and PeddanaikanPettah were the two important places settled by the natives and was also controlled by the themselves.

LOCATION:(Map. No. 1)

The present Greater Chennai and Metropolitan city, during ancient times is said to have existed in the form of villages such as Mylapore, Purasaiwakkam, Trivorriyur, before the advent of the British. After the advent of the British in 1639 A.D., the city extended for a length of 9 miles along the coast, with a breadth of about 3 miles and covers an area of about 30sq, miles, lying about 13°.06’longitude and 80°.21” latitude on a sandy beach.

TOPOGRAPHY

The land on which the city formed a level post tertiary formation, not very much above the sea level, the eastern part is built on a sand dune stretching along the coast, with a parallel trough on the west traversed by Cochrane’s canal, formerly known as North River, and R Cooum, which flows through the heart of the city divides it into two more or less equal parts.

The Topography of the region shows, two streams flowing from the west and north respectively had a common outlet to the sea about a mile south of the Village Madrasapatanam. First, it was known as the Triplicane River, now as the R Cooum, passing through the Villages of Chetput, Nungambakkam, and Triplicane. The other smaller stream called the R. North or R. Elambore flowed parallel to and about a mile distant from the coast along the west side of Madrasapatanam, till it reached the site of General Hospital, the first curve was within 300 yards of the Triplicane River and at that point a cut was made, between the two streams, with the object probably of equalising flood levels low lying marshy tract of land lying between the rivers was surrounded by water and formed an Island in 1643. The two streams formed a wide backwater, the communication with the sea. The site chosen for the construction of the site Fort was a point on the surf bank of sand which lies between the Elambore River and the sea, ¾ miles north of the outlet and Just south of the town or village of Madrasapatanam.

THE RIVER COOUM

The River Cooum emanates from the irrigation tank of Kaveripakkam of Kanchipuram District. It runs through Trivallore, Sriperumpudur and SaidapetTaluk and enters the City of Madras near Aminjikarai. It divides the City roughly into two halves, the
northern part and southern part and Joins the sea at Madras after forming a small island near the University Madras, which lies on the east of White Town and empties into the Bay of Bengal.

Regarding the R. Kuvam the following description is given by F.M. Penny “the river was useless. It afforded no shelter for ships and its brackish waters were of no use for irrigation purposes. It often emitted anunpleasant and unhealthy effluvia from the rotting seaweed lying in its loathsome block ooze. The river confined to narrower limits in the presentday, with some of its mud banks reclaimed is scoffingly dubbed “The silvery cooum”. The R. Cooum is remembers for its odour by the Anglo Indians. The river was shrinked and the island and the fort had been expanded on the south west.”

THE NORTH RIVER

The North river otherwise called as Cochrane’s canal, is crossed by the Basin Bridge, the elephant Gate Bridge, the General Hospital Bridge, and the Wallajah Bridge the last leading from the Wallajah Gate of the Fort to the Island and built in 1756. After the river had been diverted to its present more westerly channel. It flows near the northern boundary of Black Town. A small stream flowedthrough the Broadway which, separated Peddanaickenpettah and Muthialpettah. Besides, a small ditch which flowed at the entrance of the Broadway road have been merged with R. North. There was also a vodacal near post office. But all these water bodies have disappeared and we find only the metal road now.

THE BUCKINGHAM CANAL:[Fig. No.1]

There were two canals in Madarasapatnam, known as Cochrane’s canal and South Coast canal existed in the beginning of the 17th C.A.D. The former led from the Cooum northwards and the latter from the Paupanchawadi in Chingleput District, these two rivers forms the Buckingham canal which was also called as Uppuvaykkal. Cochrane canal has been from time to time extended to north so far as to reach PeddaGanjam. The south coast canal has been extended from Maracanam coast in south Arcot District. During the administration of Duke of Buckingham as Governor of Madras, these canals were connected by fresh channels, 5 mile in length, running through the heart of Madras from the mouth of the Cooum to Adayar. The whole canal including, the new central excavation was called Buckingham canal. The bottom breadth of the canal is 30 ft and the depth varies 2 ½ to 3 ½ ft and in Pulicat lake there is from 5 to 8 ft of water. Passengers and light cargoes of firewood, fish, andchunam were carried by thiscanals. This was one of the famine relief works of 1877 – 78, and Passengers went to Maracanam and Cocanade, a distance of 462 miles.
The beach is sandy and the banks of the R Cooumare Saline and swampy. In the surrounding parts even the slopes of the hills have been denuded of trees and shrubs and have become baren earth and rock.

THE SOILS

The Soils bear a very close relationship to the underlying geological formation and are formed almost invariably of the decomposed subsoil alluvial, fluviatile soil found in the river banks of the Korttalaiyar and Cooum region. However, at present there is no cultivable land in the modern city of Madras including North Madras. There was sand dune near the Broadway region. Which was called as Mannady This sand dune was cleared and used for filling up of Attapollam region. The sand dunes are not found now. The sea shore has marshy soil and cultivation and Gardens were erected on the north eastern side of the Town.

CLIMATE

Madras enjoys cold weather from the beginning of December till the beginning of March. The Hot weather season begins from the month of March and extends till the end of June. The south west monsoon lasts for about three months from the end of June. Madras does not derive much of rain fall from this mansoon. From about the middle of September the wind changes in direction and it begins to blow from the north – east across the Bay. This return monsoon gives a comparatively large amount of rainfall all along the coast during the months of October and November. This rainfall is precious and is useful for filling up the Red Hills reservoir which is the source of the city’s water supply. But now the Climatic condition has changed to, too hot throughout the year.

A Spanish priest, named Dominic Navarette, who visited Madras in 1678, records that Fort was “a noble fort” He admired the climate of Madras which he deemed to be excellent and said that “any nice man live there” the convenience of buying cloth is great all those people living upon it. While describing the Madras city “… escorted by a roaring wind and clouds of thick red dust, thundered through the Wallajah gate.”

Madras, like any other places on the coast in this part of the Bay, is liable to severe cyclones and storms, especially during the monsoon winds. There have been very many violent cyclones recorded in the history of the city. In the days prior to the construction of the harbour, the shipping in the unprotected roadstead was frequently and violently injured by various storms.

POPULATION

The Population of Madrasapattinam comprised the Tamil (or) Malabaries next comes the Telugus or Gentoo’s and the Vellalas, the Vanniyars the Balijas, the weavers, the Vaniyars, the Adi - Dravidars formed a larger percentage of the people. The North
Indians like sowcars, Mahrattas, Gujaratis, Rajasthan people also lived here. They contributed their artistic skill in the development of building of this region. Besides the Europeans, such as the English, the Portuguese, the Armenians the Jews, the Dutch were also settled in the region of our study.

**THE BOUNDARY**

The probable extent of the land originally granted as deduced from the village boundaries of map, 1710 drawn out by Sir Thomas Pitt, Where in it indicated the White Town and Black Town. The Black Town located on the north of the White Town, with a few huts are shown in the map. Thus, the Black town is bounded on the east by Bay of Bengal, south by white Town or Fort St. George, Tondiarpet on the north and on the west village Purasaiwakkam and Egmore.

By the end of 17th Century, the Black Town possessed nearly the following boundary lines. On the north and west are indicated by the rampart of bastions and curtains built by Benfield, designed by Call. The easternmost bastion on the north lay near the present Clive Battery, the line of communication within the rampart, is now called Wall Tax Road, on the west side, Old Jail Street on the north face. The river north, outside the western rampart soon after converted into Cochrane’s canal appears to have dwindled into an insignificant streamlet. The area in the northwest angle of the town, westward of the seven wells, given over to cultivation except where the powder mills stood. Cultivation was carried out in the north end of Popham’s Broadway. Popham’s drainage channel is shown skirting Muthialpetta and passing across the Esplanade, except at Parry’s corner the present First Line and second Line beach were non existent. Moore street being the eastern most thoroughfare widely foreshore occupied only by North Paddy Godown, was French Prison, which was converted into the custom house North of the Black Town may be seen several Parallel roads leading northward towards Trivatore much garden and agricultural land the “Washermens’ Town the Village of Tondiarepettah and two or three native Choultiers.

West of Black Town lay an open defensible tract of grant half a mile wide. The southern portion, which has now become the people’s park, was partly waste land and partly cultivable land, the northern section where the railway goods station now stands, which was occupied by salt pans.  

The probable extent of the land originally granted as deduced from the Village boundaries of the map of 1710, 1733, 1750, 1755 has been indicated by the Britishers. In the 18th C. documents refers to Comerpett, Muthialpet and Attapollam, all forms parts of the existing George Town.
ACCESSIBILITY

During the 17th century there was no metalled Road or easy access to this place. The first line beach was the first roadways created by the British for easy transportation of goods from the White town to the Royapuram Railway station and the Port. All important administrative offices business centres were established by the Britishers only in the Beach line streets. The British expanded their settlement in Beach line streets. They used Jutcas, bullock, Palanqueen, tramways and waterways to reach North Chennai or Black Town.

The Black Town remained more or less static; however, its name has been changed as George Town in 1911 and the name Black Town had disappeared. At present it is called as North Chennai, one of the busiest business centres, thickly populated region. The well laid roads and streets provide easy access to this place. All city transport buses passes through these roads leading to Northern parts of India. The unit trains runs from Tambaram to Beach Station. Besides, the trains bounded to North reaches central station, which lies adjacent to Wall tax Road on the west.

CHOICE OF SUBJECT

The northern part of Tamil country was called as Aruvanadu and Aruvavadatalainadu during SangamAge. During the Pallava Period it was called as Tondaimandalam. The Cholas renamed it is as Jayankonda Sola Mandalam and this region was named as Chandragirirajyam under Vijayanagar rule. After the advent of the Britishers the region was called as Madarasapatnam and Chennapattinam. Again for their safety and security the city was divided into two as White Town (or) Christian Town and Black Town. White Town was the settlement of the Europeans and the settlement of the natives were called as Black Town. The first urban development was incepted from this region. All important administrative offices and business centres were established by the Britishers were located in this region. The British expanded their settlements only from Black Town region. Taking cognisance of its importance and first urban centre and First Gateway to south India prompted me to pitch upon the region “Black Town – George Town Through The Ages” for an intensive study.

The present study is mainly concerned with the evolution of Black Town – George Town. Despite the enriched sources both within and outside the limit of the region, an intensive study on the Black Town – George Town has not been made in the light of the development its tremendous change. Hence, a maiden attempt has been made on the comprehensive history of the topic stated above.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of study is spread to the political, social, economic and cultural aspect of Black Town region. Several books have been written on the History of Madras both by
the British historians and the Indian historians. They have focussed Black Town only to a
certain extent. An indepth study has not yet been made on Black and George Town,
which played a vital role in the History of Madarasapattanam. Therefore, it prompted me
to choose a micro region for an intensive study. It will also prompt other scholars to
choose similar type of topic for their research.

METHODOLOGY

Research is broadly defined, a systematic gathering of data and its analysis for
advancement of knowledge. There are various methods of research such as descriptive,
analytical, applied, qualitative and quantitative. This research work is mainly descriptive
and empirical. The original facts about Black Town – George Town have been collected
and compiled it cogently. A systematic analysis and description of the Black Town –
George Town is brought out in a remarkable manner, which would be useful for the
research scholars and to the public.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the etymology of Madarasapatam and Chennapatinam, the Black
  Town, the White Town, the Mahratta Town, the Gentoo Town, the Christian
  Town and the Malabar Town.
- To Study the historical development of the Black Town. The European
  administrators and Indian administrations and their contribution for the
  development of the region.
- To analyse the expansion of British settlement in the neighbouring region.
- To analyse the construction of defensive wall (Black Town Wall) and the Problem
  meted out by the Natives.
- To trace the Socio – Economic condition of Black Town region. especially the
  right hand – left hand disputes, erection of schools – the Quit rent collection, the
  Peddanaigue, KanakkaPillai
- To study the important buildings of Black town region.
- An overall development of Black Town and George Town region.

EARLIER WORKS

The history of Chennai is very peculiar. Several Historians both British and Indians
have made an attempt to focus the History of Chennai, the former Madrasapattinam,
which comprised of white and Black Town. The premier works related to
Madarasapattinam are:

- Dennis Kincaid’s, *British Social Life in India* (1608 – 1937)
- J. Tallboys Wheeler’s *Madras in olden Times*, (1639 – 1702)

Patrick. B. Smollett, *Madras its Civil Administration* (1855 – 56)

*Hand Book for India Being on account of the Three Presidency of the overland Route part* (1859)

Charles Travelyan, *Statement* (1860)

Fanny Emily Penny, *Fort St. George* (1900)

Sir William Foster, *Monograph, Founding of Fort St. George* (1902)

Penny Rev Frank, *The Churches in Madras* (1904)


P. E. Roberts: *History of British India under the Company and the Crown* (1921)


John Cappa, *The Three presidencies of India* (1947)


The following books have been written by Indian historians.

Mr. S. Muthiah has explored much on Madras region. He has written several books on Chennapattinam – Madarasapattinam

a) *Madras Discovered* (1981)

b) *Madras Rediscovered* (1999)

c) *Queen of the Coromandel* (2000)

d) *The RajBhavans of Tamilnadu* (2009)

e) *Madras its Past and Present*

K.A. NilakandaSastri, G.Sirinivasachari, *Advanced History of India*

The High court of Judicature at Madras (1970)

Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume, 1862 – 1962

City of Madras official Hand Book, Corporation of Madras, (1939)


C.R. Srinivasachari, *History of the City of Madras*(1939)

S. SrinivasaRaghavalyaengar, *Memorandum on the progress of the Madras Presidency* During the last 400 years of British Administration. (1988)


Imperial Gazetteer of India (Provincial Series) Madras I, Calcutta (1908).
BOOKS IN TAMIL

- S. Muthiah, C. V. Karthik Narayanan, *Chennai Marukandupetippu*, 2009
- Ramachandra Vaidyanath, *Chennapatnam, Land and People*, 2016

SOURCES

Authentic history has to be supported by solid source materials. The important sources relied for this study is the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data have been collected from the Tamilnadu Archives, Egmore. The records are related to the following departments.

- Public Consultation – 1670
- Revenue Records 1700 – 1854
- Board of Revenue 1843 – 1854
- Railway Department – 1853 – 56
- Public Works Department

Besides, the *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Census of Madras Presidency 1871 – 1891 and Factory Records* by William Foster, were also consulted.

The stone inscriptions engraved on the Temple walls and in the houses, tombs, stone walls, the Newspapers, Published by State Department of Archaeology were also collected and incorporated in this thesis.

The Maps drawn by the British and the French throw valuable light on the extent of the Black Town region.

Besides the above mentioned Primary sources materials, Secondary works such as Printed books, (Both English and Tamil) Articles Published in Journals related to history, religion and architecture enlisted in the Bibliography, have been utilized to the extent possible.

The field survey undertaken by the scholar brought out the present condition of the North Madras *erstwhile* Black Town.

CHAPTERISATION

The thesis enmasse is spilt into six Chapters on the basis of logical implications of the theme constituting the Introductory, the Historical Development, the Extent of the Black Town – George Town, the Socio – Economic Condition of the region, A Survey of...
Monuments in Black Town and Conclusion. The Period of Study is from their entry till exit i.e. 1639 A.D to 1947.

The Introductory chapter comprises the General Topography of Black Town, the detailed discussion of the Source materials, the Scope, the Objectives of Study and the Methodology.

The second chapter portrays “The Historical Development and Administration of Madrasapattinam in Black Town”. It deals with the administration which begins with Sir Francis Day, Sir Andrew Cogan (1639) till the Governorship of Sir Archibald Nye (1948) the contributions made by these Agents and Governors for the development of the Black Town.

The third chapter portrays “The Extent of Black Town – George Town”. The Black Town wall was erected to defend the White Town and Black Town from the invasions of the Mughals, the Marathas, and to prevent the attack of the French forces. These aspects are discussed elaborately in this chapter. The problem faced by the native people in the construction of Black Town wall for the defence of the Europeans.

The fourth Chapter highlights “The Socio – Economic Condition of the Black Town – George Town”. In respect of the social aspect, the settlement of various community people and their contribution to the development of Black Town viz., the Chettis, the Mudalis, the Vellalas, the Naiks, the Pariars, the Vanniars and the Muslims. Apart from the community people, the emigrants from north India like the Sowcars, the Moore and the Europeans the Portuguese the Dutch, the Armenians and the Jews. These community people helped in the development of the region. The status of Indian Women, European Women, the Chief merchants and the Dubash also played a vital role in the development of the region.

So far as the economic aspect is concerned by the Britisherslevied tax on their house and land throws light on the economic condition of the region. The region was developed as an urban centre. New Road was laid in the First Line Beach, a new Railway system was initiated in Royapuram and Beach station. Tramway also plied in this region. The Harbour was also excavated. The system of coinage throws that they used pagodas issued by the Naiks, the Star Pagodas, the Madras PagodasPanam and Rupee. The establishment of Mint in the Fort, at Chintadripet and then shifted to Black Town.

The next Chapter is entitled “The Monuments in Black Town”, such as Pachchaiappa’s Hall, the Royapuram Railway Station, the High Court buildings, YMCA buildings, the light house, are remarkable and significant the public buildings of the Black Town region. The Hindu temples and the Churches were also surveyed and graphically described in this Chapter. An analysis has been made on the street names of this region.
The concluding Chapter embodies the Summary of the findings that emerge out of the investigation made in the preceding chapters.

A well portrayed Map and Illustrations of the buildings are appended in this thesis.