The core point of the present research is to establish the ancient life and cultural practices of the Palani region.

CHAPTER – II
THE HISTORY OF THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Palani, the third abode of Lord Muruga, it has been mentioned in the Tamil Sangam Literature as Podhini. It was one of the part of Andanadu or Aviyur or Vaiyapurinadu or Vaikavurnadu in the eastern part of the Kongu Nadu, better known as Palanimalai or Sivagiri or Sivamalai. From the earlier to till date it is the most popular Hindu religious place in South India. The Palani hills forming Northern spur of the Western Ghats ranging in height from 1000 to 2700 Meters. It is situated between 10° 26' 56.10768 North and 77° 31' 15.38112 East. Palaniis a part of the oldest mountain range of the Western Ghats in Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu state of South India (Map.2.1).
The land and the people are the basic sources of this study. The environmental and climatic aspects are the determining factors of cultural forms. The mountains, plain lands and climatic conditions are the determining factors of the settlements. So, in this chapter, the natural environment of the Palani region and the history of the people are discussed.

2. rPj;jhuhk; FUKh;jjp>jpz;Lf;fy; khtl;l njhy;ypay; ifNaL>2007, pp.163-164.
4. rPj;jhuhk; FUKh;jjp>op.cit., p.161.
5. Vaikavurnadu is the Eastern Part of the Amaravathi Bank Villages are called Vaikavur, itahGhp ehL tpUj;jk;> (itfhT+h; ehL Ch;j;njhf)>rPj;jhuhk; FUKh;jjp> NkyJ.> g.163.
6. Kj;J khzpf;fk;>godp jy tuyhW> 1986> g.4.
8. rPj;jhuhk; FUKh;jjp>op.cit., p.161.
9. Gurung Dr. Harka, Mountains of South Asia, Vol. 4, No. 2
Geographical Features

A most impressive back drop to the Palani is formed by the picturesque slopes of an off shoot of the Western Ghats of the Palani Hills. The ranges extending east-west, to the south of the town, frame the town presenting a most inimitable sight. The
view within the town is dominated by the two hills such as, Sivagiri and Sakthigiri, on the former of which lies the famous and much resorted to temple of Lord Subrahmanya as Bala Dhandaayudhapani Swamy. It is the location of the far-famed temple of the Hindu God Murugan, resorted to by more than seven million devotees each year.

Palani (godp) is a city and a municipality in the Dindigul district (Map.2.2). Palani is located about 100 km north-west of Madurai city and 100 km south east of Coimbatore city and 60 km west of Dindigul. In the Palani taluk there are sixty revenue villages found (Map.2.3). From the earlier, Palani was one of the part of the ancient Kongu country (nadu). The Kongu country was made up of so many places, which are currently known as Palani, Dharapuram, Karur, Nammakkal, Thiruchengodu, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Satyamangalam, Nilgiris, Avinashi, Coimbatore, Pollachi and Udumalpet. Kongu country was consecrated with enormous wealth, a pleasant climate, distinct features and ruled over by the Kings of Chera, Chola, Pandya, Hoysala, Muslim rulers and finally the British people.

The Plateau Landforms

The major part of the present study area falls in the Tamil Nadu upland. The Palani hills falls into two geographically distinct zones, the Upper and the Lower Palani hills, along a ravine running from Palani in the north to Periyakulam in the south along Parappar-Thevankarai valley.

10. Gyth; Nfhtpe;jd;>jkph; topghl;by; godp> 1999> g.14.
11. ek;gpA+uhd;>godpkiy> 1994> gf;4-6.
13. rf;jpNty;>ntha;FehL> 2008> g.15.
an off shoot of Western Ghats and is 64 km. in length and 40 km. in breadth, falling between 900 and 1500 m MSL. The land mass that falls above 1500 m is known as Upper Palani hills and the one that falls below 1500 m. is known as Lower Palani hills. The division takes place along the Neutral Saddle. The origin of river Amaravathi and its tributaries owes much to the water shed of Anjanad valley falling between Palani hills on the east and Anaimalai hills on the west.

The Hills

The Palani Hills is an eastward spur of the Western Ghats with a maximum east-west length of 65 kilometres and a north-south width of 40 kilometres. Palani area is 2,064 square kilometres (797 sq. miles). These hills rise in steep escarpments to a high undulating plateau ranging from 1,600 m. (5,200 ft) to over 2,000 m. (6,600 ft) elevation.\(^\text{15}\) The Palani Hills are formed of pre-Cambrian gneisses, charnockites and schists. They are among the oldest mountain ranges in India. In an eastward extension of the Western Ghats hills formed by separation of the India-Madagascar-Seychelles blocks of East Gondwana in the Early Cretaceous period about 120 million years ago.\(^\text{16}\) It is bounded to the north, east and south by the Deccan Plateau formed later in the massive Deccan Traps eruption 66 million years ago as India drifted over the Reunion Hotspot.

The great undulating plateau on top of the Palani is comprising four forest ranges were consolidated under the Indian Forest Act of 1878 and designated by the British Government as a single Reserve Forest, from Kodaikanal town to the Kerala state border in the west and the Bodinayakkkanur town limits to the south, and given the name of the Amphill Downs.\(^\text{17}\) It was over 53 square miles (140 km\(^2\)) in extent and about one quarter of it then consisted of sholas and three quarters was open, rolling and grassy downs. The Amphill Downs area is now named Upper Palani Shola Reserved Forest and totals 145.7 square km. (56.3 sq. miles) (36,000 acres) of forest land. It is the largest reserve forest division in the Palani Hills.\(^\text{18}\)

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The Lower Palani hills comprise an area of 1683 sq. km. towards eastern block with a more rugged landscape. It consists of several steep peaks with wooded valleys gradually sloping towards the north. The Pumparai valley constitutes one of the main water sources for the major tributaries of rivers like Palar, Kodavanar and Porunthalar.

The upper Palani hills, with an area extent of 385 sq. km, forms the western block. It is an undulating plateau, interspersed with occasional peaks and valleys. Most of the plateau consists of rolling downs originally covered with coarse grass and with some streams supporting isolated woods locally called *Sholai*. This plateau is divided into three blocks such as,

1. Parappar-Thevankarai valley with Perumalmalai peak rising to 2,234 m.
2. Gundar valley with observatory hill rising to 2,341 m.
3. Upper valley with Varavu peak rising to 2,531 m. on the border with Kerala state.

Palani valley in the plain is dotted with detached hillocks with varying heights ranging between 350 m and 800 m. Among them, Uraiurmalai (389 m northwest of the Dharapuram), Ponnimalai (610 m southeast of Palani), Vetticalmalai (609 m southeast of Palani, Rangaswamimalai (586 m East of Oddanchatram), Chaklichimalai (724 m east of Amarnath dam), Peandaikaradu (627 m south of Kolumam) and Aivarmalai (589 m West of Palani) are the prominent ones.

**River System and Water Resources**

In the hills of the Palani, there are so many rivers originated. The important rivers in the basin are *Shanmuganadhi, Nangangiar* and *Kodavanaru*. These rivers flow north and northeast ward and join *Amaravathi* river which finally confluences with river Cauvery. These rivers originate in the Palani hill range of Western Ghats and *Sirumalai* hills and are ephemeral in nature.  

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The southern part of the district falls under Vaigai Sub basin. The important rivers are Marudhanadhi, Manjalar and Vaigairiver. These are also ephemeral in nature and receive flow during monsoon period only. In the major part of the district the drainage pattern is sub dendritic and dendritic. The radial and parallel drainage patterns are also seen at places. Most of the streams are structurally controlled.

The river Amaravathi rises 2200 m. above MSL in the Anjanad Valley in Idukki District of Kerala State between the Aanaimalai hills and Palani hills (part of the Western Ghats) in Manjappatti, Kovilkadavu and Gundumalai range (2200 MSL). It flows in thick forest range and it receives nearly thirty streams like Kumbaru and Manalaliaru and Varavani odai before debouches into plains near Amaravathi dam and Kallapuram. From there, it flows in a north east direction through Sambakkalam, Kolumam and Kumaralingam. Where the jungle stream of Kuthiraiyaru joins with Amaravathi and then for a while taking a northern course running past Madathukkulam and Kaniyur. It receives a rivulet at Periyapallam, then confluence with river Sanmuganadi near Alangiyam and Ayyampalayam.

The river runs in north eastern direction through Dharapuram. In the south west monsoon, it flows with regularity from June to August, then almost goes dry in September, but rises again with the north-east monsoon till November. Its banks are low and its water is fully utilized for irrigation along its entire course as the river is not running deep. Amaravathi and its tributaries played a dominant role in shaping the socio-cultural aspects of the habitants. The chief irrigation sources in the area are the canals, followed by tanks, wells and tube wells. The canal irrigation is the highest in Palani block.

The Forests of this Division forms the catchments of important rivers of Kuthiraiyaru, Porundalaru, Palaru, Varadhamanathi, Kodaganaru, Pachaiyaru, Manjalaru and Maruthanathi which drains into Vaigai and Cauveririvers.

The river Kuthiraiyaru originates from Thalavakanal malai of Upper Palani hills and it travels more than 50 km. before confluences with river Amaranthi near Kolumam. This river passes through Parikkombai, Kukkal, Kilanavayal and Kukkavayal and reaches plains at Kuthiraiyar dam. Then, it passes through Lakshmipuram, Naripara and Attur. It receives a small stream named Gajattu odai near Naripparai.  

The river Porunthalaru having tributaries of Pachchayaru, Palaru, Thevankaraiyaru and Varadhamanadi. The river Porunthalaru originates in Atukkam (Kandavarimalai) block of upper Palani hills and it flows in dense forest, reach plains near Porunthal (Palar Porunthalar dam) then travels north towards Thamaraikulam.

The rivulet Palaru originates from Perumal malai between the upper and lower Palani hills, then it receives streams Gundaru and Thevankaraiyaru before reaching plain near Palarpudur. Then it travels through Balasamudaram after receiving water of Varattaru river on Vadakavunchi near Kuruvitalai malai in lower Palani hills.

The river Pachchayaru originates from Vilpatti range and flows in plain through Ravimangalam, Kavalpatti and Pachchayarpudur, then merges with Porunthalaru at Thamaraikulam. Porunthalaru and Palaru merges before Kalayamputthur, and gets new name Sanmuganadi. The river Sanmuganadi merges with Amaravathi near Alangiyam. The rivulet Nallathankal oadi originates from lower Palani hills and it flows in northern direction through Kottayam, Porur, Anaipalayam and Kariyur and it merges with river Amaranthi east of Dharapuram. The river Nankanji originates from Pachchalur zone in lower Palani hills in Adalur, Siruvattukkadu range and then it flows eastwards before reaching plains near Parappalaru dam.


The river *Kodavanaru* is one of the major tributaries of the river Amaravathi. It originates from Kadavu Malai and Kallar reserve forest in lower Palani hills, then flows west and southwards. 29

At the foot of the hills there are so many lakes found. In the town there are so many lakes found such as, *Vaiyapuri kulam*, *Siru Nayakkan kulam* and *Thattan kulam*. The largest of which is the *Vaiyapuri kulam*. The *kulam* was used in days past and to serve as the primary water reservoir to the inhabitants of the Palani town. 30 Its greatest expanse during and immediately after the monsoons rains, the lake drains to the *Sanmughanadi*, a short distance from the town.

The dams in the Palani area, help to increase agriculture production of the district and taluk in particular and helps the National agriculture production at large. The drinking water requirements of the people are met through the water supply from the forests. Hence all efforts are made to conserve and protect these watersheds to augment the water requirements of the people.

**Climate**

The climate of the Palani area is very pleasant. The Palani taluk is lying immediately opposite to the Palaghat Gap. 31 The Palani hills have a montane Tropical monsoon climate which varies from west to east. Generally, as one proceeds from the Kerala border in the west to the foothills in the east, average rainfall decreases and temperature increases. Compared to the Deccan plateau and the south western coastal plains, temperatures vary from moderate to quite cool.

The rain fall in the area is high altitude terrain belong to subtropical and temperate zone. The land is restricted to an altitude range of 1070-1525m MSL with an average rainfall of 165 cm per year. The geographers describe this forest zone as ‘stunted rain forest’. Most of the rainfall takes place during the month of June to
December. During the northwest monsoon, comparing to the plains, is almost double the amount of the surrounding rainfall.


Plain area is very dry in April to June. Some areas are having rain during the south-west monsoon. It’s fairly good in the some places and tolerably good in the low land of the hills. The region is exceptionally dry and its rainfall is scanty, uncertain and ill-distributed. The climate of the Palani has four clearly defined seasons such as,

- The dry season, usually between January and March, which the rain is scarce and limited to around 10 rainy days, the air is crisp, dry and cold, and when ground frost occurs.
- The warm season of April and May, when summer showers and rain may fall on 18 to 20 days.
- The Southwest monsoon season extends between June and September, with around 45 days of rainfall spread over the months.
- The Northeast monsoon season from October through early December, when rain is abundant and occurs over 30 or more days. Depending on the timing of the northeast monsoon, the latter half of December may experience a few days of heavy rain or remain completely dry.

**History of the Land**

In the chapter, history of the Palani through the archaeological point of view is discussed. It is not strictly scientific but consists of different factors such as economics, social customs, religions, technology, environment, etc. The findings of the Pre-history of Palani indicates that the tradition is varied. So, the researcher concentrates primarily on the science and its background behind their unique archaeological findings. For this study, the researcher’s field data is necessary and archaeological evidences must come from secondary sources. The history of the land
is discussed into three subtopics such as pre-historic remains, the history of the land and the people.


The prevalence of exciting huge tombs to pay homage to their ancestors is most common among their different communities in different times, almost through the world.\(^{33}\) It is found in some areas as a living tradition among the tribes. In India, the pre-historic remains are found throughout the country and particularly in Palani, it is found throughout the length and breadth of the area. The prehistory of the Palani has close resemblance with the other regions in South India. The regions have been particular interest to many archaeologists because of the report of individuals like Caption Congreve\(^{34}\) (1847) and the excavation of Breeks\(^{35}\) (1873). However, the Palani possesses several prehistoric remains such as, Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Chalcolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic periods.

The antiquarian remains found in the Palani are round rude stone monuments. The majority of the remains are found on the summits of the hills in the northwestern part and close to the northern rim of the plateau.\(^{36}\)

There are ample evidences to prove that the prehistoric culture had flourished on the hills. The crest of the hills in the lower part were Megalithic cemeteries. These cemetery complexes were viewed as uncommonly, corresponding to the remarkable indigenous inhabitants of this mountain zone. These monuments were diverging from the types characterizing of South India during the Megalithic period. In Palani, iron and bronze artifacts are either found together or side-by-side. The prehistoric monuments at to their age is not clear in them but nature of the relics does not point to a really remote antiquity.\(^{37}\)

The region was first taken note by the archaeologists in the later part of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Large number of British scholars had visited this study area and studied the
prehistoric remains without a proper system of care and without taking trouble to record the result.


The scholars recorded the finds and estimated it, based on the values of lands to give money (*anna*). As early as in the 19th Century Rev. James Hough said that, ‘some of them had been opened’. 38

The prehistoric sites are identified with the emplacement of the cremated remains of the dead in the burial pits filled with earth and capped with stones. 39 The large numbers of sites covered an area of 10 to 100 acres containing numerous burials. The burial complexes were incorporated both small and big circles. But they have not followed constant pattern in the layout of burial chambers. The sites were more than one type of burial and protected above by the stones slabs.

The pottery found among the graves indicates a date consistent with the main stream of Indian Megalithic tradition. So, the prehistoric tradition in the Palani is called *pandukuli* tradition. 40

The potteries were different tradition. Each pot appears stylistically to contain superimposed pot forms. The characteristics arrangements of potteries are black and red ware and black and red pots. The grave goods found within the circles have contain burnt bones, charcoal, brass vessels, spearheads, clay images of female warriors on horseback, stone pestles, pots covers ornamented with human figures and animals. It also includes weapons of iron spearhead, javelin, arrow points, short handled axes, swords, sickles, razors, knives, and shears with spring handles, tweezers and daggers. It also contained terra-cotta figurines of birds and animals including
buffaloes, humped bull, un humped cattle and sheep. Together with bronze vases, basins and saucers, gold and bronze jewelry, agate, carnelian and class beadwork, many of the pieces are showing fine craftsmanship.\textsuperscript{41}

38. K.Rajan, \textit{Archaeology of Tamil Nadu (Kongu Country)}, 1994, pp.49-65.

39. Ibid. p.58.


41. Ibid., p.52.

\textbf{Pre-historic Remains}

The prehistoric remains of the Palani are basically divided into two series such as,

1. Stones piled into circles and
2. Individual stones forming circles.

\textbf{Stones Piled into Circles}

Stones piled into circle walls have inner and outer vertical sides and rising to above one meter in height. A bunch of stones piled in a single layer, or with stones piled somewhat higher with relatively level tops. The inner upright sides and outer sides slope to ground level. Inner circles of upright stones are piled in a single layer or a piled stonewalls slope outward to ground level. With an accumulation of earth in the centre, the outline is similar to five and in some cases they are two.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{Individual Stones Forming Circles}

The loose stones are close to each other and to cover each circle. The circles are either lying or vertically emplacing separated stones in a single circular alignment. Each stone is covered by combining circles and the surrounding circles are separated by laid stones. The two or more adjacent circles are emplaced by of upright stones in each circle, and the upright in each circle is somewhat parallel to each other.\textsuperscript{43}
Types of Circles

Based on the previous survey records of various scholars at over hundred sites, a classificatory system can be established by this study on the Palani. The Palani region has several prehistory remains. These remains consist of walled circles, cairns, earthen circles, burial rectangles, cists, kistavens, tumuli and dolmens.44


Walled Circles

The walled circles are pilled stones and conventionally raised about one meter in height. The upright stones are around the inner side. They are normally found on summits in grass forming sites and forests. Some of the walled circles have inner and outer perpendicular sides and are well preserved. The others exhibit partial collapsing in inward or outward. They are in the use of post construction and probably belong to historic times.45

Cairns

The cairn is a circular enclosure formed by rough stonewalls or heaps, or by single stones. These are coral like structures, built up of sized stones or small boulders open in the centre. The ashes are buried in the circles of stones at the funeral. Cairns are closely connected with the South Indian azarams. They are scattered over the study area and found mostly on the high bare ridges and sometimes occur in groups.46

Barrows

The barrows consist of a mound of earth and are encircled by a ditch or sometimes formed by one or more circle of stones. The circles are originally laid upon the ground, or inserted in a vertical position and the individual stones form the circle.
The laying stones are close to each other and cover the circle. There is no clear evidence as to their age.

**Earthen Circles**

Four loose stones are erected in the earth to form an earthen circle. A single lie behind the summit and the other in the lower. Each stone was erected in the earth over a burial pit. The builders cut the slope and piled earth in to the down to form the circle.


The outer stones are less stones are less important and earth as an came to dominant entirely. The inner side was leveled at a depth of a meter or more below the crest of the surrounding circle. The centered higher portion mostly covers the burial pit.

**Burial Rectangles**

The burial rectangles are surface burials, followed by erection of loose stones and the enclosures are opened to the sky. Burial rectangles are consist stones, forming an enclosure measuring at least 1.25 x 2.5 meter. The largest stone assists in its reconstruction. They were used as capstones in earlier days. The erect stones are so thin with varied height and supported by the capstones.

**Above Surface Cists**

These cists are rectangular in formation and entirely covered by erected stones. Two large stones slopping up from the ground and inside with capstones. It looks as an above ground level, so it is called above surface cists. The surface cists contain various unpolished vessels made of orangish and reddish ware. Many of these vessels
are unique in Indian circles. The cists are considered as religious centers with a ritual arch on upright and circular platforms, under a large old tree.

**Below Surface Cists**

A series of stones are outlined and the circle of stones set apart. Some stones are laid on the surface, but others are erected on the ground. The capstone circles are covered over the capstones. The capstones are laid at ground level. These surface cists are covered by thick forest. In Palani, these type of cists are rare but cists are located in upper part of the hill and along the eastern section of the Palani hills.

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**Kistavens**

The kistavens are unmethodical in construction by four large slabs and standing edgewise in the ground and are surrounded with a circle of single stones. Their tops are just level with the ground and a large slab lay at the bottom. In the middle of the slab was a round hole and the outer side is undisturbed. The earth inside the cist was contains charcoal, loose vegetable soil, burnt bones and broken daggers.

**Tumuli**

Generally the tumuli is the shape of cist or a box like structure. The large flat stone forming the circle was called tumuli. In some other times they are surrounded by flat stones standing on the edge and raised above one meter from the ground. The inner sides are aligned by four perpendicular stone slabs. The tumuli is not usually found isolated or singly. It covers an area of 10 to 12 acres, and these burial places are
close to each other. In the lower part of the hills they are raised up to 2.75 metre and each tumuli is surrounded by a stone circle. It usually contains usual cinerary urns of baked clay and human bones. In Palani, the tumulis are not much raised above the surface of the ground. But few of them are raised upright, and each is surrounded by a stone circle. In some places tumuli is surrounded by large circle of flat stones standing on edge and above the ground. They are found in the foot of the Palani hills.

**Dolmens**

A dolmen or a cromlech is an above ground rock structure with partially enclosed vertical stones, with or without capstones and at least they have one opening. The Cromlechs lie on the lower levels on near the Ghats and the lower plateau sides. These cromlechs face many directions but vary in form. Many of them are made of slabs, and carved tombstones in honour of warriors slain in battle.

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These monuments have no connection whatsoever with the types of monuments found in the Palani. These elements are generally lying within the plain lands or on earthen slopes at lower elevation and mostly found in the agricultural fields. They have served primarily for the memorialization of the dead and for worship. The dolmens have three vertical orthostats at an angle of approximately 90° to each other and with an opening on one side. Its capstone stands at a height of a meter above the surface and seldom is there an underlying stone in a dolmen. Sometimes there is only one dolmen, but others have sculpturing on the interior. These sculptural representations reflect the civilization of the period. It contains
number of iron and bronze armlet, sickles, rings, two small iron hatchet heads and a small rough common chatty but no bones or charcoal is found there.

**Political History of Palani**

The political history of the study area, there is no distinct evidence to rule directly by any kingdom or dynasty or chieftain in particular. From the earlier to till date Palani is a part of the dynasty or country or land or place. So, the land has no proper or distinct history or no definite record to show the political history particularly. The area did not have any urban centres or cities. So, the inhabitants were only graziers and poor cultivators. The earliest available evidences are thin and they did not speak about the human history of the people directly. But due to its environment, difficult passes and feverish jungle, the adjacent invaders might have been tempted to conquer the place. For the reason that, the region became the bone of contention between the kings of the Gangas of the north, the Cholas of the East, the Pandyas of the South and Cheras of the West.55

From the early Christian era, Palani is one of the part of the Kongu Country. The early Sangam works refer to Kongu as an independent territorial division. It was surrounded by the Western Ghats and the hilly regions such as, south of Mysore and included the present day districts of Coimbatore, Erode and Salem (excluding Attur taluk), Karur, Kulittalai taluk of Trichy district and Palani taluk of Dindigul district.56

55. Arokiaswami, op.cit., p.5.


Kongu Nadu remained a separate region either increasing or decreasing in size according to the valour and victories of the rulers. Palani was one of a territorial division known as Vaikavurnadu, named after the main settlement Vaikavur or Aviyur which in the present Palani. The other names mentioned about these territorial divisions were Avinadu, Vaikavinadu, Vaiyavinadu and Vaiyapurinadu, all denoting the same region.57
In the early Tamil text of *Thirumurukatruppadai* Palani has been mentioned as the third *Padaiveedu*. This was the southern end of the Kongu Nadu and edicts refer to this place as *Vaiyapuri Nadu*, which was ruled by the king *Vaiyapuri Kopperum pekan*. One of the important clan group settled in this area was Aviyar kudi. One of the famous *Vel* chieftains who ruled this region was Vel-Avi-k-ko-p-perum pekan.

A legend associated with the Sangam Age, who ruled this part of the territory, speaks on the generous act of the chieftain. According to the Sangam literature *Puranaanuru*, the ruler Pekan swathed a blanket to protect the peacock from the cold. The peacock also became vehicle (*Vahana*) of the Lord *Muruga*, one of the ancient deity of the Tamils. One of the important clan groups settled in this area is called Aviyar kudi. But the association of peacocks with grave is more important and its significance is yet to be ascertained in the present context.

Some Sangam poets who spoke on this chieftain were Kabilan, Van-Paranar, Aricil-Kilar and Perunkunrur-Kilar. The Sangam literature *Akananuru* and *Puranaanuru* mention this place as *Pothini* belonging to the Vel chieftain Nedu-Vel-Avi. Further, the place *Pothini* is noted as a *Pon-udai-nedu-nagar-pothini* (the big town *Pothini* having gold). Which came to be called as Palani later.

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57. V.P.Yatheeshkumar, *op.cit.*, 2011, p.32.
58. *Thirumurkaatruppadai*, S.V. 175-76.
60. *Akananuru*: 1, 61.
63. *Puranaanuru*: 143,147.

As per Sangam poem *Padirruppatu* another important chieftain Vel-avik- kopaduman had matrimonial relations with Cheras who ruled this region with capital at
Karur (ancient Karur-Vanji) located on the confluence of the river Amravathi with Kaveri.\textsuperscript{65} Due to his close relationship with Cheras, this chieftain Velavikkopaduman had a palace near Vanji. The Sangam poet Ponunthil Ilangiranar hails from the village Porunthal. He had sung three songs, two in Akanaanuru\textsuperscript{66} and one in Purananauru.\textsuperscript{67}

In Purananauru, he composed a poem in praise of Chera king Mantharal Cheral Irumporai, who ruled from the Chera country with capital at Karur and believed to be issued inscribed coins with a title Kolliporai\textsuperscript{68} datable to 1\textsuperscript{st} century AD.

After the Sangam period, the region was sometimes ruled over by the Chera Dynasty.\textsuperscript{69} The hill temple was believed to be constructed by the Chera king Cheraman Perumal. There is an interesting story connected to this temple and the Chera king. When the king was touring the Palani hills, Lord Muruga came and gave a darshan in his dream. He instructed the king to rebuild the hill temple. The Chera King went up the hill and really found the idol of Murugan. He with all devotion rebuilt the present temple.\textsuperscript{70}

In the 10\textsuperscript{th} century AD, the imperial Cholas ruled over the entire South India, Palani was also ruled over by the Chola Kings. At that time, Cholas built many Siva temples.\textsuperscript{71} The inscriptions found that the temples found in Palani speaks about the donation of the Kings.

\begin{flushleft}
64. Patiruppathu:21,70,79.
67. Purananauru:140.
68. Purananauru: 143,147.
\end{flushleft}
From the 7th century AD to 12th century AD however they stand out as towering monuments proclaiming the glory of the Chola regime and its commitment to the arts and culture. In the 13th Century AD, the area was under the supremacy by the Pandyas of Madurai. In that connection, the outer shrine wall of the Murugan temple there are many Pandya inscriptions found.

They are made by the Pandya Kings such as, Sadayavarman Sundara Pandiyan and Sadayavarman Veerapandian, The edict of Sundarapandiyan is the oldest of all. He was also Known as Kongu Pandiyan and who was the famous king of the later Pandya Dynasty. He ascended the throne in 1251 AD. From the inscriptions on the wall, he come to know that and donated lands and villages to this temple for the purpose of conducting the Pujas. In the year 1300 AD the king Jatavarman Sundra Pandian, gifted a village for carrying a special and daily Pujas (Avani Vendha Raman Sandhi) in his name. The temple of the Goddess Periyanayaki Amman within the town, acts as the point of reference. The Pandyan emblem of two fishes can be seen on the walls, which makes one to believe that the area was under the domination of the Pandyan kings of Madurai.

The Madurai Nayaks rule in Madurai began after the collapse of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1565. The Nayaks were originally the Governors of Madurai. To facilitate the smooth running of the empire, the Vijayanagara rulers had appointed Governors for its different territories. Once the Vijayanagar Empire began to disintegrate, the Nayaks of Madurai proclaimed themselves as rulers. Madurai began to flourish under the Nayaks. Thirumalai Nayakar was the most prominent amongst the Nayak rulers. Palani was under the influence of the Thirumalai Nayakar and was rule over by the Palayakkarars at various points of time.

73. Mh.;Kj;Jrhp>godpkiy> 1986> g.28.


76. T.V. Mahalingam, *Economic Life under Vijayanagar*, 1951

Who were appointed by the Nayaks of Madurai, to the administration of the city, Palani was then under the rule of the palayakarars of Balasamudram, considering the fact that there are numerous people of the Nayak caste (the same as the Nayak kings of Madurai), who claim descent from what is modern day Andhra Pradesh and who retain some traces of the Telugu tongue, in Balasamudram, it is more than probable that their ancestors were given charge of the fort of that place by the kings of Madurai and held its control long after their sovereigns had been displaced.  

In the year 1742, the Mysore army under the leadership of Venkatarayar conquered Dindigul. He governed Dindigul as a representative of Maharaja of Mysore. There were Eighteen *Palayams* (a small region consists of few villages) during his reign and all these *palayams* were under Dindigul *Seemai* with Dindigul is the capital. These *palayams* wanted to be independent and refused to pay taxes to Venkatarayar. In 1748, Venkatappa was made governor of the region in place of Venkataraya, who also failed. In 1755, Mysore Maharaja sent Hyder Ali to Dindigul to handle the situation. Later Hyder Ali became the Maharaja of Mysore and in 1777, he appointed Purshana Mirsaheb as governor of Dindigul.

In 1783 British army, lead by Captain Long invaded Dindigul. In 1784, after an agreement between the Mysore province and British army, Dindigul was restored by Mysore province. In 1788, Tippu Sultan, the Son of Hyder Ali, was crowned as King of Dindigul.

In 1790, James Stewart of the British army gained control over Dindigul by invading it in the second war of Mysore. In a pact made on 1792, Tippu ceded Dindigul to the English. Dindigul is the first region to come under English rule in the Madurai District.


In 1798, the British army strengthened the hill fort with cannons and built sentinel rooms in every corner. The British army, under Statten stayed at Dindigul fort from 1798 to 1859. After that Madurai was made headquarters of the British army and Dindigul was attached to it as a taluk. Dindigul was under the rule of the British Until India got our Independence on 15 August 1947.

The People

The Palani tradition is characterized by relatively unchanged techniques, limited economic opportunity and attachment to authority, respect for the pastiness of things, dependence on routine and exaggerated respect for precedent. A characteristic feature of the Palani is the ethnic (caste-like) division of people.

The native people of Palani have great tradition and their culture is running back for thousand years and more. Their values make their life style and their material culture are truly sustainable one in the world. They have settled in remote jungle areas and spread over the plateau. They have their own culture and tradition and speak various dialects. The society is built on rock solid foundation of equality. It is based on an unconditional acceptance of all life forms and every one must share it. The people’s culture are tending to dwell mostly on traditions such as custom, tradition, religion and exotic rituals.

Religion and religious practices played a major role in every village. Religion serves as a repository in the villages. Religion plays a vital role in the villages. The domestic space provides the stage for an extraordinary complex range of activities including religious rituals. The religious activities are exclusively practiced in the domestic environments. The rituals and pujas are performed on daily, weekly and
yearly basis, as well as on special occasions and also the Hindu calendar. In every village, they have common temples and hold common celebrations. They walk in procession around temple premises. Every village or every community organize a festival in honour of their Gods. Festivals, rituals and much other community involvements are so strong.


In every village, each community is hereditary and endogamous, based on ethnic elements, clan models, different customs and cultural territories. Their roots are going deep into the Hindu culture system of *jati* (caste), *gotra* (clan) and *kula* (kinship).

The upper Palani hills are mostly occupied by the *Paliyan* tribes. The majority of the group inhabit in the Paraliyar valley and Kodavanar valley in the places like at Thalinji, Mungilpallam, Kuthirayar, Puliyampatti, Pallangi, Sowrikadu, Kadamamdram, Kombikadu, Karuvelampatti, Sambarankulam, Boothamalai, Kadaisikadu, Thalaituthukadu and Puliyangasam. Thus, the Palani cavernous from Palani hills on the southwest and northwest comprises different ecological zones which manifested into varied cultural zones. The occurrences of Iron Age and early historic cultures are to be seen in this background.

Nowadays, the people of Palani, for the major part, belong to the *Vellalar, Pallar, Pillai, Pandaram* and scheduled castes, while there are numerous *Nayakars* (Naidu) in the surrounding village of Balasamudram. The *Brahmins* although dispersed all over the town and also have two particular enclaves namely the Chinna kalyamputthur Agraharam, a short distance from the town, and the Gurukkal Street near the Periyanayaki Amman Temple.

The language spoken is, for the most part, Tamil of the Coimbatore dialect with a strong infusion of the Madurai dialect, which may be attributable to the proximity of Dindigul where the latter dialect prevails.
CHAPTER – III
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS IN PALANI

The archaeological findings in Palani are discussed in this chapter.

Archaeology is one of the ancient study, it analyses the story of the man’s past through his material remains. Archaeology is essentially a method of reconstructing the past from the surviving traces of former societies. Both archaeology and history are concerned with the study of human past. Archaeology is one of the methods to approach history, a learning of human cultures through the material remains.

The custom of erecting huge tombs to pay homage to the departed elders prevailed among the different communities in different times almost throughout the world. This custom was starting from the Neolithic period to till the early part of the Christian era.\textsuperscript{1} It is still found in some areas as a living tradition among the tribes. In India, innumerable megaliths are found throughout the length and breadth of the country with much concentration in the peninsular part. The megaliths are sepulchral and commemorative monuments, which are built of large rude or dressed stones. They associated with a somewhat homogeneous group of black and red ware and iron tools and weapons. They are either individual or collective secondary burials entombing post-excoriated bones.\textsuperscript{2}

The Indian megaliths were dated back to the Iron Age. It is as yet not certain when and how iron technology developed and become an integral part of the