CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Tiruchirappalli occupies a pivotal place in Tamil Nadu State. Its natural resources such as water and mineral and strategic location contributed for the development of agriculture, industry, transport and urbanisation. The introduction of the British rule in Tiruchirappalli marked a turning point, for the agriculture sector improved under the British through scientific water management system and other techniques. In the field of industry, except the Golden Rock Railway Workshop, least attention was given to the progress of modern industries. Transport and Communication were also improved for strengthening the colonial policy of the British. The development of industry, marketing and transport facilitated to the growth of urban centres. After India became an Independent Country on 15th August, 1947, the government policies together with other factors led Tiruchirappalli to improve in agriculture and modern industrial system. The growth of agriculture, industry, transport and urban centres in Tiruchirappalli region provided an employment opportunity, economic prosperity of the region and helped to increase the national income. The development of industry, transport and urban centres caused to urban crowding and the growth of slums. The economic history of Tiruchirappalli region from A.D. 1947 to 1991 has not been chosen by any scholar for research. Hence this study will be an addition to the existing horizon of knowledge.

1. The Scope of the Study

The present study on Economic History of Tiruchirappalli Region (A.D. 1947 – 1991) attempts to trace the agricultural, industrial, transport and urban development in the Tiruchirappalli region from A.D. 1947 to 1991. The area chosen for the present study comprises of the present districts of Tiruchirappalli, Perambalur and Karur. After securing independence new
industrial, agricultural, transport and urbanisation policies were initiated by the Government of India and the State Government of Tamil Nadu. The New Economic Policy introduced by the Government of India in 1991 affected the agrarian, industrial, transport and urbanization structure of Tiruchirappalli region. Hence the policy of the government and their impact on the agriculture, industry, transport and urbanisation in Tiruchirappalli region from India’s Independence to the introduction of the New Economic Policy is chosen for the present study.

2. Objectives

The present study is developed based on following objectives:

i. To highlight the agrarian and industrial policies of the British Government and their effects on Tiruchirappalli region for regional setup.

ii. To trace on the agrarian policy of Government of Tamil Nadu and its impact on agricultural sector in Tiruchirappalli.


iv. To discuss the economic aspects of transport and urbanization in Tiruchirappalli region

3. Methodology

The topic chosen for research is mainly focusing to the development of agriculture, industry, transport and urbanisation in Tiruchirappalli region. The archival sources including Government orders, Reports, Proceedings and Tamil Nadu An Economic Appraisal, Institutional records and personal interviews form the major primary sources. Historical method is adopted for completing this study. Based on the available records, the tables showing the production and turnover have been prepared.
4. Review of Literature

A review of the previous studies is useful to frame theoretical basis, formulate the methodology and objectives. Several books on Economic History on the national level have been published. R.C.Dutt, the first Indian who took up the studies on economic history of modern India published *The Economic History of India* in two volumes. Around the same time Dadabhai Navroji published *Poverty and Un British Rule*. R.C.Dutt and Dadabhai Navroji tried to prove the destruction of traditional handicraft under the British rule. Christopher John Baker’s book on *An Indian Rural Economy 1880-1955*, discusses agricultural development, growth of market and towns in Tamil Nadu. It also traces the developments regarding production and marketing of paddy in Cauvery base during the British period. K.Ramakrishna Reddy’s *Irrigation and Agricultural Development in India* traces the major, medium and minor irrigation development and the agricultural productivity due to Green Revolution in the national level. As a regional context he has highlighted the agricultural development in Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh in the post Independent period. R.N.Chopra’s *Green Revolution in India* highlights the background of Green Revolution, components of Green Revolution and impact of Green Revolution in the states of Utter Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Bihar. Promila Suri’s *Impact of British Rule on Indian Economy* traces the traditional agrarian structure in India, impact of British colonialism and rural economy, growth of agricultural labour, rise of modern industry and trade. *An Economic History of India* written by Dietmar Rothermund focuses on the Indian market and industrialization, population growth and economic development in the British period. Girish Mishra’s book on *An Economic History of Modern India* analyses the occupational structure, the development of agriculture and irrigation, rural credit system, impact of famines and foreign trade in the British period. Dilop Mookherjee in his book *Indian Industry* discusses industrial policy and methods and industrial development in national level. G.D.H. Cole’s book on *Introduction to Economic History 1750 – 1950* attempts to discuss the
impact of industrialization, economic imperialism and urbanization in the national level. Ramachanderan’s work on *Urbanisation and Urban Systems in India*, discusses rise of urbanization in South India, city planning, and the relations between urbanization and economic process in the national level. Rajendran K. Sharma’s *Urban Sociology*, traces the measurement of urbanization, growth of population and development of cities in the national level. Satish Sharma’s book on *Economic Development and Urbanisation*, highlights the impact of globalization on urbanisation process and the development of finance, housing and transport in the urban centres in the national level. Ashish Bose’s book on *Studies in India’s Urbanization 1901-1971* deals with the migration and urbanization and urban economy in the national level.

In the regional level a few works relating to the economic developments in Tamil Nadu have been published. Adiseshiah S. Malcolm wrote *Some Notes on Tamil Nadu Economy* which deals with state level policies on agriculture and industries. Arun Bandopdhaya’s *The Agrarian Economy of Tamil Nadu 1820 – 1855*, deals with the State level agriculture, industrial policies and trade in the British period. K.N.Nair’s *Agricultural Change in Tamil Nadu 1918 – 1955* deals with the agrarian structure, land relations, the impact of the depression on the agrarian economy, agrarian markets and agrarian development in the state level. Perumal Samy’s book on *Economic Development of Tamil Nadu* traces the overall growth of agriculture, industry and transport in Tamil Nadu during the first Nine Five Year Plan period. Leonard’s *Tamil Nadu Economy* discusses the survey of natural resources, state level planning and state finance and welfare schemes in Tamil Nadu. Elizabeth Adiseshiah’s *Tamil Nadu Economy* highlights the agricultural policy, cropping pattern, irrigation and industrial development in Tamil Nadu during British period and post Independence period. Arunachalam’s *Agricultural Growth and Economic Reforms* traces the irrigation and agricultural development in Tamil Nadu during post Independent period. Joan. P. Menchei in his work *Agriculture*
and Social Structure in Tamil Nadu traces the water management, condition of landlords, merchants and money lenders, agricultural production and rural employment in the state. C.W.S. Zacharia’s Madras Agriculture deals with the importance of Cauvery river in the agricultural productivity, ryotwari and zamindari settlements and industrial development. T.Sundararaj’s History of Tiruchirappalli upto 1947 provides details regarding the antiquity of Tiruchirappalli, working of Zamindari settlement and the ryotwari settlement in the British period in Tiruchirappalli region. Sundari’s book on Road Transport and Rural Development traces the transport system in Tamil Nadu particularly the development of State Transport Corporation up to A.D.1984. K. Padmanabhan’s book on Urban Shock, traces the development of cities in the Ancient Tamilakam, Urbanisation during the colonial period and the post independent period in Tamil Nadu particularly in Vellore district.

There are a few unpublished theses submitted to the Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli for the award of Ph.D Degrees in various disciplines which also shed information in different aspects of economic development of Tiruchirappalli region. In spite of these works both in published and unpublished, the economic history of Tiruchirappalli region between the post Indian independence to the beginning of Liberalization of economy has not been chosen by any scholar for historical analysis. Hence an attempt is made in this thesis to trace the Economic History of Tiruchirappalli Region from A.D. 1947 to 1991.

5. Sources

The Sources used for writing the thesis entitled Economic History of Tiruchirappalli Region (A.D. 1947-1991) is mostly original sources, which are available in Tamil Nadu State Archives and the Cannemara Library, Chennai and the private institutions. The original sources include both published and unpublished documents. The official records are available in the form of Government Orders, reports and proceedings. Madras State Administration
Reports give detailed information about the agriculture policies, agriculture method and industrial, transport and urbanization policy introduced by the state government. Tamil Nadu an Economic Appraisal also gives vivid account of the development agriculture, industry transport and urbanization. The Collectors reports and the Jamapanthi reports deal with the land measurement system and various revenue settlement introduced by the British administration. Besides the census reports also form other primary sources. The reports available in the Agriculture, Industry and Transport departments shed light on the developments of agricultural, industry and transport in the regional context. The information collected from the local administrative offices provides information on urbanization. The Constituent Assembly debates are useful to understand the policy decision taken by the Government of India to frame the Industrial Policy in the national level. The Legislative Assembly Proceedings of Tamil Nadu also helpful to understand the agricultural and industrial policies of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The Institutional Reports also shed light on the growth of industry. The information collected through interviews also would be helpful for the preparation of the thesis. The secondary sources are available in the form of books, gazetteers, journals and unpublished Ph.D theses.

6. Design of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters including the introduction and conclusion. The introduction chapter deals with scope and objectives, methodology, review of literature, sources of information, a statement of the problem and regional setting.

The British colonial policy towards agriculture and industry and their impact on the regional context of Tiruchirappalli has been traced in the second chapter.

The post-independence agrarian situation is traced in the third chapter. The policy measures adopted by the government and its impact on the agricultural sector in Tiruchirappalli region had been discussed. An attempt is
also given to trace how far the production of cash crop such as, banana, sugar cane and korai became raw materials for the development of agro based industry in Tiruchirappalli region.

The fourth chapter discusses the industrial policy of the Government of India and the state government of Tamil Nadu and the various steps taken by the private sector for the progress of industry in the Tiruchirappalli region.

The fifth chapter deals with the development of transport with a reference to its impact on this region. The urbanization process in Tiruchirappalli region and its effects particularly the emergence of slums in the regional context is traced in the sixth chapter. The findings of the study and critical analysis are highlighted in the conclusion part of the thesis.

7. The Problem of the Study

Tiruchirappalli has a historical past. Its natural settings, soil fertility and irrigation sources contributed to the birth of culture. The region was the seat of early Chola state, with Uraiyur (Woraiyur) as its capital¹. Later the Pandyas, the Nayaks and the Mohammedans established their sway over the region. During the Carnatic wars, Tiruchirappalli became the bone of contention between the French and British and their allies. After the fall of the Carnatic Nawabs, the English East India Company took over the administrative responsibility of Tiruchirappalli and it became a part of the Madras Presidency. After securing independence when the princely by state of Pudukkottai was merged with the Indian Union in 1948, it was added with Tiruchirappalli². However in 1974, district of Pudukkottai was bifurcated from Tiruchirappalli and made as a separate district. Thus during the period which is chosen for the present study from 1947 to 1991, the region of Tiruchirappalli comprises of the present districts of Tiruchirappalli, Karur and Perambalur.

¹ Nilakata Sastri, K.A., Cholas, University of Madras, 2000, p. 80.
Tiruchirappalli has a unique place in the maritime history of Tamil Nadu, chiefly because of its merchandise export value. The Periplus of the Eritrean Sea, a handbook of merchandise (A. D. 81-96), mentions Uraiyur as a trading centre. Periplus uses the term ‘Aragaru’ to refer to Uraiyur. The Greek Geographer Ptolemy (A.D.125-130), speaks of ‘Orthura Regiasornati’, which is identified as Uraiyur. The account of the foreigners also proves that Uraiyur was a flourishing city in the ancient time and its importance contributed Tiruchirappalli developed gradually into a big town later. Now, Uraiyur is a suburb of Tiruchirappalli, which is the fourth important town in the Tamil Nadu State.

The prominent role of Tiruchirappalli is playing in the agricultural sector in the state is mostly due to its irrigation facilities. From the immemorial past it was a seat of rich rice culture supported by natural and artificial irrigation sources. The Cauvery with its tributaries and distributaries enriched the soil with organic matters and water resource. It made agriculture profitable and bulk of the rural population depends upon the traditional agricultural sector. When the British took over the administration of the region, improvements were made in the existing irrigation sources by means of constructing new storage structures and outlets. Revenue maximization interest enforced upon the British to take minute interest in the promotion of agriculture. Paddy, sugarcane and banana were the major crops cultivated under wet conditions. Cotton, cereals and pulses formed the major components of dry crops. Cropping pattern was determined largely by the seasonal rainfall, topography, soil fertility and rational behavior of the peasants.

In the past the district was one of the backward areas in the matter of industrial development. The conspicuous absence of economically exploitable mineral resources in the district has been one of the reasons for the absence of a

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large scale industry. Under the Cholas, Uraiyur remained as the major seat of textile industry and remained so even after the transfer of capital to Kaveripoopattinam\(^5\). Spinning and weaving of cotton and perhaps also of silk had attained a high degree of perfection. The weaving of complex patterns on cloth and silk are often mentioned in literature. According to Periplus, Uraiyur was a great centre of the cotton trade. The muslin produced at Uraiyur, the capital of Cholas was specifically praised by Roman writers. Excavations conducted at Uraiyur brought to light a brick built dying vat used for dying cotton textiles\(^6\).

As stated earlier Uraiyur, the suburb of Tiruchirappalli was known from the ancient past as a trade metropolis, where traders and merchants from different parts of the country and even beyond had assembled and collected merchandise both for inland trade and for external distribution. The rich hinterland and availability of exportable surplus of cotton materials, and handicraft items encouraged foreign trade through the famous seaport at Poompuhar(Kaveripoopattinam). A graphic description of foreign trade at the port city of Poompuhar is given in the Tamil epic Silapathikaram\(^7\). The Chola rulers, taking into consideration of the volume of trade and the rich revenue earned from customs sources patronized trade with all sorts of protectional and promotional schemes.

Inland trade also prospered under the favorable atmosphere created by political stability and communication. The chief exports of the districts are cereals and pulses, chilies, cotton, gingelly, groundnuts, plantains, coco-nuts, betel leaf, jaggery (coarse sugar), tanned hides and skins, castor oil, oil cake, saltpetre, stone and cigars. Most of these were sent to adjoining districts. Tanned hides and skins were sent to Madras and thence to England. Plantains

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\(^7\) Krishnamoorthy, *Silapathikarm*, Indian University press, Chennai, 2011, pp.80-84 (English Translation).
were exported to the state of Mysore and coconuts to the Nizam’s dominions. Cigars were transported to all parts of India and even to abroad and cotton was railed to Madras. Trading and related activities promoted the origin and development of a network of market centre. The centripetal of the network was the main market located at the heart of the town, “Gandhi Market” as is known today. It started functioning from 1868 onwards. A network of small markets adjacent to the big one catered the needs of marketing publics. British policy system, market reforms and birth of retail outlets facilitated in the development of business centre in the region.

In the colonial era, Indian economy exhibited a grave situation, regressive in all counts. British land policy and related aspects affected the peasantry so much so that they were forced to part with their land to middleman and lending class. The agrarian system of British India, in spite of the so many settlements failed to promote agricultural activities because of the inherent weaknesses in the system and the exploitative nature of rent. Trade and trade practices were devised and executed to satisfy their colonial interests and British commercial requirements. Numerous merchandise of commercial value was made monopolistic depriving native traders the right to have access to profitable trade. They were mostly reduced to the status of retail business partners or commission agents. Indian industries suffered the most because of the British policy of import and export. It is argued by eminent thinkers like Dadabhai Navroji and R.C. Dutt that the basic cause of India’s stagnation was the policy of the British Government. It was pointed out that the state apparatus was in fact used in the interest of British industry and against that of the Indian economy. Administrative rules, procedures and laws were made to protect largely the interests of British traders, shippers and manufacturers. Industrial and commercial policies were so designed that not only the existing

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native manufacturing industries were destroyed but also new industries were prevented from coming up. Heavy import duties on Indian goods entering Britain, high excise duties on goods manufactured in India, exemption from inland transit duties to British traders and preference given to British manufactures under the governments were some of the obstacles to Indian industrial interest. But the colonial government towards industrialisation of Tiruchirappalli did nothing substantial. Only a few native craft industries survived, the rest being destroyed by the inflow of British mill made goods and factory products. The national trend had reflection on the regional situation and Tiruchirappalli witnessed a tardy economic picture.

The declaration of Indian independence created a novel economic situation. The highlight of colonial exploitation during independence struggle generated a feeling among Indians that solutions to all economic crises would be nearer. It was this kind of rising expectation, which forced the Indian government to work out strategies for the development of economy. Building up of economic infrastructure and the setting up of basic and capital goods industries had become the urging need of the hour. The first prerequisite for the success of a plan was the setting up of a planning commission, accommodating expert economists, statisticians, engineers and dealing with the various aspects of the economic and scientific development. In March 1950 the Planning Commission started functioning and it continues to be the core of planning machinery in the country. The First Five-Year Plan period, 1951-56 was aimed at bringing about rehabilitation of Indian economy, which was disrupted because of the World War-II and partition of India into two sovereign powers India and Pakistan. Among other things, the First Plan was aimed at solving the food problem, bringing about improvement in the supply of industrial raw materials and to check inflationary pressures in the economy. Irrigation schemes and hydroelectric projects were given their due share in promoting agriculture and industry. The Second Five Year Plan, 1956-61 gave priority to industries and it suggested for the creation of organisation of industrial co-
operatives for the implementation of the industrial programmes. During the subsequent plans attempts were made to achieve balanced and even growth. Agricultural policy assumed greater importance since independence because agricultural sector is considered to be one of the dominant sectors in Indian economy\(^\text{10}\). The trend of growth rate in Indian agriculture required improvement. The acceleration in agriculture requires action on several fronts including raising the levels of investment, resolving problems of land tenure, measuring availability of credit, ensuring appropriate pricing policies, a viable land policy and developing new technology to increase productivity. Emphasis has been accorded on construction of medium and small-scale irrigation projects. With a view to increase the agricultural production, improved varieties of seeds were resorted for. To overcome the problem of middlemen, state governments have encouraged development and expansion of co-operative marketing throughout the country.

The Industrial Policy Resolution 1948 contemplated the establishment of mixed economy. The industries were divided into four categories wherein the cottage and small-scale industries were assigned a significant role to play in the national economy\(^\text{11}\). The Industrial Policy Resolution 1956 laid down the important objectives namely, to accelerate the rate of growth and to speed up industrialization, to develop heavy industries and machine making industries, to expand public sector, to reduce disparities in income and wealth, to build up a large and growing co-operative sector, to prevent monopolies and the concentration of wealth and income in the hands of a small number of individuals. The new industrial policy also raised the upper limit of the participation of foreign private capital in joint ventures from 40% to 51% in equity shares\(^\text{12}\).


\(^{12}\) A detailed Industrial Resolution, 1948 and 1956 are given in Chapter IV.
The state government’s economic policies are mere replica of core strategies of the Central government. The focus of State policy on agricultural development was on achieving self-reliance in foodgrains production over a short period by means of a sustainable increase in the productivity of crops. The strategy for attaining this goal is multi-pronged, touching such important fact as (i) bringing into productive use the degraded / waste lands (ii) increasing further the coverage of high –yielding varieties (iii) popularizing micro-irrigation systems and (iv) integrating nutrient management and pest management system.

The regional economy of Tiruchirappalli is subject to the dictates National and State Policy on agriculture, trade, and industry. The Industrial Policy of the State Government was to develop the public and the private sectors and small scale and the cottage industries. The state level policy decision was taken to start financial institutions and corporations to develop industries. In Tamil Nadu, the first of the major financial institution to be setup in 1949 was the Madras Industrial Investment Corporation [TIIC]. The other principal promotional organizations in the state are the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation [TIDCO], the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu [SIPCOT] and the Tamil Nadu Small-Scale Industries Development Corporation [SIDCO].

Tiruchirappalli is essentially an agricultural district and paddy is the predominant crop grown. The other chief food crops of the district are cholam, cumbu, and varagu. Samai, ragi, korai and maize are produced in a limited extent. Among the commercial crops, pulses, redgram and groundnut deserve special mention. Cotton, banana and sugarcane are also grown. Some quality tobacco produced in Tiruchirappalli was utilised for making cheroots that were exported to various places of India and abroad as well and thereby earned a good reputation. However, in recent decades, there was a decline in the cheroot trade in Tiruchirappalli due to competition from the milder and better-rolled
cheroots, which had been produced at Dindigul and Chennai\textsuperscript{13}. Trade in the sugarcane grown along the banks of the Cauvery is flourishing in the district. Considerable trade in cotton fabrics goes on in the district. Valuable cloths of various kinds made of fixed silk and cotton are produced in the Tiruchirappalli region on a large scale. Uraiyur, Poovalur, and Thiruveppur were noted for the high variety of Kodambakkam, bumber and high count cotton sarees. Besides mats made of korai grass is produced in large numbers in many villages in the low lands of the district. The chief centres of this trade are Woraiyur, Pettavaithalai, Talakkodi, Kattalai, Karambakudi and Unniyur. The articles made in the district include bed sheets, towels, checks and napkins are also famous. A good deal of trading is done in ornamental metal articles. Bell-metal tops for bullocks are made at Vengampatti, a village in Kulithalai taluk. Decorated plates and vessels of brass and zinc are made by the blacksmiths at Tiruchirappalli town and Ponnamaravathi and fancy silver articles of many kinds are made by the silversmiths of Uraiyur in Tiruchirappalli. Manapparai has earned a very good reputation for the manufacture of agricultural instruments like spades, kondalams and plough shovels. These compare favorably with those made by reputed large-scale undertakings. These tools are sent to Coimbatore, Salem and other districts of the state for marketing. After independence Tiruchirappalli has witnessed a rapid growth in large scale, medium scale and small scale industries. Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited, Golden Rock Workshop, Trichy Steel Rolling Mills Limited, Jothi Malleables Private Limited, Kaveri Engineering Industries Limited, Trichy Distilleries and Chemical Ltd, Sugar Industry, Cement Industry, Handloom Industry, Textile Industry, Cottage Industry and Khadi and Village Industry developed in the region\textsuperscript{14}. The development of transport and expansion of bridges and roads contributed for the growth of urban centres.

\textsuperscript{13} Tamil Nadu An Economic Appraisal 1990 (Herein after referred to as T.E.A.), Madras, 1991, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.797.
The region has made rapid progress in all areas of economy as indicated from the growth rate. Agriculture made rapid strides, though in the recent years the production was declined, due to brevity of rainfall and inadequate release of water in the river Cauvery from Karnataka State. Industries of large, medium and small scale record a cumulative progress. Trade, banking and finance accelerate the process of economic development in the region. The whole economy became transformed and diversified to make the region highly urbanized and active in material progress. The direct and indirect effect of this growth in local economy has an impact on the social life of the people and their cultural standards.

8. Regional Profile

The Legends and Puranas associate the origin of the name Tiruchirappalli, with ‘Thirisira,’ a Tri-cheputalous giant, said to be one of the sons of Ravana of the epic ‘Ramayana’. He is believed to have ruled the place, after naming it with his own name ‘Thirisira’ with the suffix ‘palli’, meaning village. Another version is that Lord Siva, his consort and their elder son Vinayaka resided in three peaks of the hills in the area and hence, the name ‘Thirishigram’ or ‘Thirisiva’, meaning three heads. From Thirisiva it became Tiruchirappalli. Maclean traces the origin of the name ‘Trichinopoly’ to the Tamil name of the plant shina and palli [Tiru-tam-holy+siva-Tam-Plant]. In Sanskrit literature, the town is referred to as ‘Trishivapura’ the giant town. In Telugu literature Tiruchirappalli is referred to as Chirutapalli meaning leopard village. However it must to be noted that ‘Tiru’ in Tamil is an honorific prefix and ‘Palli’ is usually associated with Jain educational centre and it indicates the predominate influence of Jainism in the region.

Tiruchirappalli is an inland district, located centrally in the state of Tamil Nadu. The district lies between 10° 16’ and 11° 32’ of Northern latitude and 77° 45’ and 79° 30’of Eastern latitude. The district is bounded in the north

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by Salem and South Arcot districts; in the north-west by Salem district; in
the north-east by South Arcot district; in the east and south-east by Thanjavur and
Pudukkottai districts; in the South by Pudukkottai, Madurai and Dindigul
districts; in the south-west by Dindigual district and the west by Salem district.
It should be also mentioned here that when the erstwhile Pudukkottai state was
merged with the Indian Union in 1948, it was added with the Tiruchirappalli.
Tiruchirappalli district assumed new name i.e Perumbidugu Muttaraiyar in the
month of September 1995, when it was bifurcated into three districts namely
Tiruchirappalli, Perambalur and Karur. Karur, the western most taluk was just
out into Periyar district while the Udaiyarpalayam taluk on the northeast
wedges between South Arcot and Thanjavur districts. Manapparai, the
southwestern taluk protrudes into the districts of Dindigual – Anna,
Pudukkottai and Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Dhevar.

The topography of the district is marked by irregular shape. Hills and
rocks are found in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the district with
their elevation ranging from 15’ and 260’. The area between Tiruchirappalli
and Ariyalur is an area of active erosion and presents bad land topography. The
Musiri and Perambalur taluks are gentle undulating upland area. The Karur
taluk is an undulating plain with the Rangamalai rocks in its extreme south.
The Kulaithalai taluk is broken by isolated hillocks. The taluk of
Udaiyarpalayam and Lalgudi are fairly flat. The general character of the district
is an undulating plain divided east and west by the river Cauvery and dotted
here and there with small hills.

The population of the district indicates heterogeneous elements,
differentiated by race, religion and ethnicity. The earliest attempt to ascertain
the population of the district was made in 1821-22, when it was stated to be
788,196. In 1836-37 the population was returned at 552,477 less than the figure

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16 Bhatt, R.C., *The Encyclopedic District Gazetteers of India*, Gayan Publishing House,
New Delhi, 1999, p. 1171.
arrived at Fifteen years previously. The early attempts to estimate the population was so unjust-worthy, that it would be rash to assume that the population of the district really did decrease between 1822 and 1838\textsuperscript{18}. In 1851-52, a quinquennial census was taken which recorded the population as 709,196. It rose to 10,06,826 in 1866-67. The increase in population during the subsequent years was the normal as 12,00,408 in 1871, 12,15,033 in 1881, 13,72,717 in 1891 and 16,44,477 in 1901. The increase during these thirty-six years had been at about the same rate as in the rest of the Presidency. The very poor growth rate between 1871 and 1881 was due to the great famine of 1876-78. Tiruchirappalli is now one of the half-dozen most densely populated districts in Tamil Nadu.

The average annual rainfall in the district is 844.9 mm. The rainfall in the district is generally directed from the east to the west. The annual rainfall varies from 1148.9 mm at Jayamkonda Cholapuram near the eastern border to 640.6 mm at Arvakurichi near the western border. Siruganur in the eastern part of the district gets an annual rainfall of only 476.3 mm. Sometimes rainfall, mostly in the form of thundershowers occurs during the late summer months of April, May and June. The rainfall in the first two months of the southwest monsoon is much lesser than in August and September. The rains continue in the retreating monsoon season. October is generally the rainiest month, though the variations in the rainfall from year to year are not large. During the 50 years period (from 1901 to 1950) the highest annual rainfall amounting to 150 per cent of the normal occurred in 1939, while the lowest annual rainfall, which was 69 per cent of the normal, was recorded in 1945.

A high mean temperature and a low degree of humidity characterize the climate of Tiruchirappalli. After February, temperature steadily increases till May, which is the hottest month. Occasional afternoon thundershowers during

\textsuperscript{18} Lewis Moore, \textit{Trichinopoly District Gazetteers}, COSMO Publication, New Delhi, 2000, p. 98.
the period April to June bring welcome relief. After the onset of the monsoon by about the end of May or early June, there is a slight drop in the day temperature. September and October are the normally the rainy season. The cooler weather prevails from November to January.

The natural Calamities which have occurred in Tiruchirappalli affected the normal life of the people. The country is hot liable to scarcity as the Cauvery and Coleroon on which the greater portion of the irrigated lands are dependent seldom fail. The chief danger to which the people are exposed is from the floods in these two rivers, especially when accompanied by unexpected heavy rainfall. Breaches of the embankments on either side of the riverbeds cause severe damage to crops. The damage caused by the 2005 flood remained as threatening memory in the mind of the people.

The district is fairly rich in mineral resources. The deposits of crystalline limestone is mainly found in Kulithalai taluk extending between Dholipatti, Devarmalai and Aiyampalayam forming part of the 28km belt covering both Vedasandur taluk of Dindigul district and Kulithalai taluk of Tiruchirappalli district. A total reserve of 15.5 million tons of cement grade limestone is estimated to be available from this region. Out of which the deposits occurring in Devarmalai and Aiyampalayaam area constitute a major share of 12.84 million tons. The sedimentary limestones are of marine origin and are generally massive and uniform in character often containing marine shells. The varieties include shell limestone and restricted to the firings of marine cretaceous formation in the south and west. Similar limestone also occurs near Kovandakurichi and Venkatachalapuram villages intercalated with mar land chalk. Major portions of the deposit has been leased out to the Dalmia Cements (P) Ltd. by the government and the freehold portions are estimated to contain
2.5 million tons of all grades, of which 1.25 million tons of limestone will be cement grade in quality\textsuperscript{19}.

Sedimentary limestone in the form of coral reefs occurs around Kalpadi, Varagupadi, Claipadi, Perali, Paravai and Elumur villages with a total reserve of about 0.66 million tons. These limestone are high grade in quality and can be used as flux in iron and steel industry and also for manufacture of lime based chemicals. A high-grade marine limestone occurs around Reddipalayam village south of Tiruchirappalli-Udaiyarpalayam road. A total reserve of about 0.38 million tons is expected to be available from this area\textsuperscript{20}.

Common salt effloresces from the soil and superficial rocks over a considerable area to the north of Lalgudi are collected by the poorest of the village people for household use. It is very impure, containing apparently a considerable admixture of chloride of calcium. Soda is of widespread occurrence in the Tiruchirappalli district, chiefly on the gneiss and on the alluvium more rarely on the cretaceous rocks. It is however, never derived from these latter rocks, but from the decomposition of the many varieties of horn blendic and flespathic gneiss. It occurs in a whitish soil known as ‘dhobies earth’, which is usually found in marshy places. It was collected by washer men, and used as soap for washing cloth. The soda is frequently mixed with common salt and probably with other soluble salts.

The various soils, which occur throughout the district, may be conveniently classified as (i) Red Soil, (ii) Alluvial soil (iii) Black soil and (iv) Mixed soil\textsuperscript{21}. The ‘Red Soil’ or ‘Lal’, is found in the greatest area, which is for the most part a sandy soil, and is perhaps most typically seen on and in the neighbourhood of the Cuddalore Sand Stones, where it is, on the whole, either

\textsuperscript{21} Arunbandopadhayay, The Agarian Economy of Tamil Nadu 1820-1855, K.P.Begehi & Company Publisher, New Delhi, 1992, p.15.
the result of the weathering of the sands in site, or a loose deposit of materials derived from the adjacent rocks. There it is a highly ferruginous soil, but occasionally clayey, and then of pale yellow and grayish-brown color, and on the whole, not very productive. Generally it is thinly spread over the surface, as in the Udaiyarpalayam taluk, but instances have been observed where it attains a thickness of four feet or more. The red and sandy soils are very largely cultivated for the growth of dry-grain crops.

The alluvium of the Cauvery extends over a very wide area, occupying a considerable part of the Tiruchirappalli district. The northern boundary of the alluvial valley is formed by metamorphic rocks which extend eastward, with a short intervening spread of cretaceous rocks, within nine or ten miles south of Ariyalur along the sides of the delta, as well as on the north bank of the Cauvery, west of Srirangam island. The alluvial boundary extends for a good distance up to the courses of these rivers. On the southern side, almost the whole surface of the alluvial plain is under wet cultivation. In many places the limit of this cultivation coincides with the boundary of the alluvium in others. Two principal varieties of soil, first dark humus and second pale yellow sandy soil occupy the greater part of the surface of the delta. The humus is like cotton soil in appearance, but less friable\(^2\). When wet, it has considerable plasticity without, assuming a clayey character. The sandy areas when irrigated by well became fertile, though vegetation has not quite the same unbounded luxuriance as on the dark soil. Clayey beds are very rare. Black soil or cotton soil is found scattered in the Turaiyur Valley, between the Kollimalai and Pachamalai. It also occurs in several detached and rounded patches about three miles northwest of Kannanur at Badarpetta, from four to five miles south of Uppiliyapuram and Ammapatti and also three miles south of Turaiyur. Other than cotton, dry grains are also extensively raised on it. In general crops can be

\(^{22}\) Lewis Moore, *op. cit.*, p.62.
grown successfully in a verity of soil except the clayey and acidic soils. Sandy loam with good moisture holding capacity is the ideal soil for cultivation. The least important of the four classes of soils that have been mentioned above is that of the mixed soils, which occupy a small area. In this class, the various transitions between red, black, sandy and white soil and vegetable mould are included.

The first race of historical light has been thrown on that portion of southern India of which the present district of Tiruchirappalli is located. The Chola country according to tradition comprised of the modern districts of Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur and part of Pudukkottai. *Periplus of the Erytream Sea* mentions Uraiyur as the centre of trade\(^23\). The Sangam works has attested that Cholas of Sangam period ruled from Uraiyur. Tradition claims that the early inhabitants were kurumbars or warding shepherds. Among the early Chola rulers of this region Karikala Chola (A.D.50-95) was the most powerful. He fought a great battle of Venni in which the Pandyas and Cheras were defeated\(^24\). His power spread beyond Tiruchirappalli. The greatness of the Cholas is echoed in the foreign notices and also in the edicts of Asoka. It was Karikala who constructed the Grand Anicut across the river Cauvery to irrigate the region. The place became famous for its textile, which seems to have attracted the attention of the foreign traders. Puhar served as the outlet for the Uraiyur products. The presence of roulette ware at Uraiyur might indicate its contacts with foreign countries\(^25\). This trade network should have contributed to the wealth of Uraiyur. With the fall of Sangam Cholas in the 3\(^{rd}\) century A.D, Uraiyur lost its political importance\(^26\). A part of western area of Tiruchirappalli was ruled by the Cheras of the Sangam Age. The Chera inscriptions found at

\(^{23}\) Sundaraj, T., *op.cit.*, p.117.  
\(^{24}\) *Census Report* 1951, p.48.  
\(^{25}\) Gurumurthy, *op.cit.*, p.156.  
Pugalur in Karur taluk are able to give sketchy information about the rule of the Cheras in the part of the Tiruchirappalli region\textsuperscript{27}.

The history of Tiruchirappalli from the end of Sangam Age down to the rise of the Imperial Cholas is wrapped in obscurity. With regard to the Kalabhrá interregnum we have archaeological evidence to indicate that people continuously inhabited Uraiyur\textsuperscript{28}. Pandyas in Madurai and the Pllavas in the Cholamandalam threw the Kalabhras out of power in the 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The Pallavas brought Uraiyur and the Cauvery region under their suzerainty. It is said that Simhavishnu (c550 to 600) of the Pallava dynasty conquered the southern region down to Cauvery\textsuperscript{29}. He was succeeded by Mahendravarman (A.D. 600-630)\textsuperscript{30}. We are sure that his sway extended up to Tiruchirappalli. The rock cut temple in the fort of Tiruchirappalli is a testimony to the greatness of Mahendravarman. The South Indian Inscription Vol. I.No.33 and 34 deals with the upper rock cut cave temple of MahendraVarman\textsuperscript{31}. He established two brahmadeyas, namely Nitya Vintia Mangalyam near Lalgudi and Mahendra Mankalam in Musiri taluk. During the reign of Nandivarman II there occurred a power struggle between the Pallavas and Pandyas over the control of Cauvery basin. About the same time, the Pallavas of Kanchipuram rose to power (A.D. 500-800). The Imperial Cholas, who ruled over the Tamil Country for more than 400 years from A.D. 900 to 1300. Of the numerous kings that they must have ruled over the Chola kingdom the most important were Rajendra Chola, Kulotunga Chola, Karikala Chola and Vira Chola. They appeared to have lived in the 11\textsuperscript{th}, 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D the period when the Chola kingdom enjoyed the greatest prosperity. Yet it is most difficult, not only to fix their

\textsuperscript{27} Nilakanda Sastri, K.A., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{30} Nilakanda Sastri, K.A., \textit{A History of South India}, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1975, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{31} Subramanian, N., \textit{op. cit.}, p.133.
dates, but also even to give the order in which they reigned. The feudatories of
the Cholas ruled over a small territory around Paluvur in the Tiruchirappalli
district. Paluvur also known as Mannuperum Paluvur was their head quarter.
The chieftains were figuring in inscriptions from the days of Parantaka-I. There
were an ancient dynasty and had been subordinated to the Pallavas. They
maintained close relationship with Kodumbalur chiefs. Perumpidugu
Muttaraiyar was a vassal of Aditya Chola. The Muttaraiyar were scattered in
different parts of the Chola country from Tondai Mandalam to Tiruchirappalli.
Their territory was known as Muttaraiyarnadu that comprised the portions of
Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli district.32

During the year 1251 the Pandyas under Jaya Sundarakandapandya rose to
power and Tiruchirappalli was brought under Pandya rule33. Pandya rule over
this region lasted a little over half a century followed by Muslim domination
till A.D.1334-35. There is some difficulty in fixing with absolute certainty the
date of the earliest incursion of the Mohammedans into Tiruchirappalli. In the
middle of the 14th century the Vijayanagar ruler defeated the Muslims and
Tiruchirappalli was brought under a Nayak, a Provincial Governor34.
Chokkanath Nayak, (A.D. 1659-1682) declaring a war of retaliation, defeated
and killed Vijaya Rahava, the rule of Thanjavur in 1673 and annexed the
territory with Madurai35. Already in 1665 the capital was shifted from Madurai
to Tiruchirappalli36. Vijayaranga Chockkanatha Nayak was the popular among
Nayak rulers and after his death in 1731, a power struggle followed to the
throne of the Nayak Kingdoms between Meenakshi, the widow of the late King
and Bangaru Thirumalai37, the father of an adopted son and later between

34 Sathyanatha Aiyar, History of Nayakas in Madurai, Madurai,1924, p.55.
37 Sathiantha Aiyar, R., op.cit., p.232.
Meenakshi and Chanda Saheb, the confidential adviser of the Nawab of Arcot. Ultimately, Chanda Saheb, proclaimed himself as the ruler of Madurai including Tiruchirappalli in A.D. 1736.

In 1741, the Marathas invaded Tiruchirappalli and took Chanda Saheb as a captive. Chanda Saheb succeed in securing freedom in 1748 and soon got involved in the famous war for the Nawabs in the Carnatic against Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Arcot and his son Mohammed Ali. What followed was actually a struggle between the European powers for colonial expansion in South India with Tiruchirappalli as the pivot which ultimately led to the triumph of the English. When Hyder Ali came to power in Mysore in A.D.1761 he had desire to annex Tiruchirappalli region from the Nawab of Arcot, Mohammed Ali. The British appeared as the protector of the Nawab of Arcot. After the death of Hyder Ali in 1784, the power struggle continued between his son Tippu Sultan and the British. After the death of Tippu Sultan in 1799, the English took the Civil and Military administration of the Carnatic including the province of Tiruchirappalli in 1801. Tiruchirappalli thus came into the hands of the English and the district was formed on 31st July 1801 under Mr. Wallace, the first English Collector.

Until the Puckle scheme for revision of taluk and village establishments was introduced, Tiruchirappalli consisted of nine taluks which under the new scheme were regrouped into five. Transfer of Karur taluk from Coimbatore district during 1910 and formation of Lalgudi taluk from the parts of Musiri and Tiruchirappalli taluks raised the number of taluks in the district to seven. Subsequently, three new taluks, viz., Kulattur, Alangudi, and Tirumayam were

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39 Rajayyan, K., op.cit., p.41.
40 Bhatt, R.C., op.cit., p.1175.
added on by the merger of Pudukkottai with Tiruchirappalli during 1948. The number of taluks in the district rose to ten which remained unchanged till 1961.

Between 1961 and 1971, three new taluks Ariyalur, Turaiyur and Manapparai were formed from parts of Udayarpalayam, Musiri and Kulittalai taluks respectively raising the number of taluks in the district to thirteen. During the decade 1971-81, a major change in the administrative set up of the district was effected by the formation of Pudukkottai district in January 1974, by transferring Kolathur, Alangudi and Tirumayam taluks from Tiruchirappalli district. In September 1995, Tiruchirappalli district was trifurcated into three districts, (i) Tiruchirappalli Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar district (Tiruchirappalli district) (ii) Karur Deeran Chinnamalai Goundar district (Karur district) and (iii) Perambalur Thiruvalluvar district (Perambalur district).

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42 Census of India, 2001, p. 18.