ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled "Trade and Commerce in Ancient Tamilnadu - A Historical Perspective" attempts to trace the state of commercial activities during the Sangam Age under six convenient chapters.

The first chapter "Introduction" deals with the past history of Tamilnadu, the area, population, geographical features, the sources of commercial history, the typical five-region divisions, occupations, customs, etc., briefly.

The second chapter is "Centres of Trade and Commerce" in which the important commercial centres of the three kingdoms viz Cera, Cola, and Pantiya countries are discussed. Korkai, Pümpukär, Maturai, Tōnti, Kāñci, Pondicherry, Eyirpaṭṭinam, Marūṅkūrpaṭṭinam, etc., were the important centres which are dealt with in detail with the information gathered from foreign notices and Tamil Literature.

The third chapter is "Exports and Imports". This forms the spine of the thesis. The commodities exported and imported are listed with the details thereon, besides discussing the Tamil contact with Greece, Rome, China and other Far East countries with authentic information supplied by various scholars.

The fourth chapter is on "Taxation and Transportation". Since the system of taxation and the modes of transportation are the two important
issues concerned with trade and commerce, they have been discussed in detail with the information culled out from Sangam literature. The Taxes collected, the types of taxes, the way of collection, the remission of taxes, the ratio of tax to that of the yield etc. have been taken for study. The second part of this chapter deals with the modes of transport for internal and external commercial activities of the Sangam Age.

The fifth chapter is on "Business Ethics and Values". Tolkāppiyam and other Sangam works along with the twin epics and Tirukkural in one way or other, openly or suggestively, bring out certain business ethics. How far these ethics in business were adhered to is discussed in this chapter. The views on wealth, ill-gotten money, integrity, crimes, punishments, evils like hoarding and profiteering, rights, duties, certain customs, moral values, profit and social obligations of Trade and Commerce, etc. as mentioned in Tirukkural and Sangam literature are studied here in detail.

The final chapter "Conclusion" points out the salient features of the thesis in a nutshell and also suggests the scope for further study allied with this topic.

One or two aspects have been repeated a couple of times since they were found to be absolutely necessary in their respective contexts.