CHAPTER - IV

Historical Importance And The Heritage Of Kancheepuram District
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Need for the study of the Historical background of the Kancheepuram

Kanchipuram or Kancheepuram or Kanchi (previously romanized as Kāñci-pura, Conjeevaram) is the administrative headquarters of Kancheepuram District in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, India. Located on the banks of river Vegavathy, which served as the capital city of the Pallava Kingdom during the 4th to 9th century. Kancheepuram is located 72 km (45 miles) from Chennai, the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Kancheepuram is the headquarters of the Kanchi matha, a Hindu religious institution believed to have been founded by the Hindu saint and commentator, Adi Sankaracharya.

Kancheepuram is believed to be of significant antiquity and has been ruled, at different times, by the Pallavas, Medieval Cholas, Later Cholas, Later Pandyas, Vijayanagar Empire, Carnatic kingdom, and the British. The city has a number of historical monuments, the Kailasanathar Temple and Vaikunta Perumal Temple being the most prominent among them. Kancheepuram was an ancient education centre like Banaras and was also known as the Ghatikasthanam or place of learning. Kancheepuram acted as a religious centre of advanced learning for Jainism and Buddhism during the 1st to 5th century.

As per Hindu theology, Kancheepuram is one of the seven cities in India to reach final attainment. Being home to major Hindu temples like the
Varadharaja Perumal Temple, Ekambareswarar Temple, Kamakshi Amman Temple and Kumara Kottam, the city is considered a holy pilgrimage site for both Saivites and Vaishnavites. Out of the 108 holy temples of Hindu God Vishnu, called the Divyadesam, 14 are located in the city. Kancheepuram is well known for its hand woven silk sarees and a majority of workforce in the city is involved in weaving industry.

In this connection it is better to study the historical background of the Kancheepuram District.

4.1 HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT

The antiquity of Kancheepuram district dates back to ages. In Markandeya Purana, (Verse 27 of the 55th Chapter) it is mentioned that Kanchi is a resort of penance for sages hailing from a number of places. In the Bhagavata Purana, (vide Verse 4 Chapter 7) mentions Kanchi as “Kamakotipuri.” The Kanchi Mahatmiyam and the Kamakshi vilasa speaks of Kanchi as “The navel of earth.”

In Sanbhagya Chintamani (Chapter 3, Verse 24) a tantric text which describes Kanchi as “a seat of Sakthi Pita.” Kancheepuram is referred by many Tamil poets in their works. In “Kancheepuram” written by Sivagnana Munivar, (vide Verse 31 of Veera Attahasa Patalam of Kancheepuram) refers Kanchi as the navel spot of mother earth and to the billa (cave like space) in the Kamakshi Temple.

The Saiva Nayanmars, Thirunavukkarasar has described the city as a place of limitless learning. Sambandar has noted Kanchi as “City of High Buildings.” Purananuru the Sangam poems speak of Kancheepuram as a place where festivals
are celebrated throughout the year. Thirumangai Alvar mentions the stone ramparts of the city.¹

In Manimegalai, a Tamil epic poem of the Sangam age describes the migration of people from destroyed city of Puhar to Kanchi as Puhar was destroyed by erosion of Sea. Some historical records states that Tamilagam was divided into 13 nadus or provinces. The two provinces of Aruva and North Aruva were together known as Mavilankai. The capital city was Kanchi, which was the chief town during that time.²

According to some epigraphically information Kancheepuram region was originally called Tundapa Vishnya or Tondaimandalam, which means the neck region of South India. Tondaimandalam had twenty four Kottams and its capital was called Kanchipedu, Kanchi and Conjeevaram. According to Saint Avvai, the land in Tondaimandalam covered twenty Kavathams, the Eastern Ghats in the west, Venkatam to the north, the sea board to the east pinakai or Cheyyar to the South.³

The earliest historical inscription about Kanchi is found in Ashoka’s Rock edit No.2 at Girnar (Gujarat) dated 272-232 BC. It states that Kanchi was the capital of Pallava Kingdom since the time of Simha Vishnu. The Chinese scholar Hieun Tsang who has been at Kanchi by 5th decade of 7th Century AD found Kanchi, as the capital of Dravida Country of about 6 miles in circumference, the people were far superior in bravery, learning and piety to others that he had met with, in his travel all over India.

Albert a foreign traveller, who did not visit South India, but had made references to Kanchi, states that, the city was well linked with roads. Kanchi at that
time has roads that connected Prathistana (the capital town of Satavahana) and extended up to Ujjain in the North. Kanchi had roads that connected Madurai (the Pandiya Capital) Kanchi was on the high way roads that connected Rameswaram and Cape Comorin.⁴

Moreover, Kanchi was the birth place of many literary scholars and religious saints. It had been the capital city of great rulers who ruled South India from time to time.

Kancheepuram District is situated in the Northeast of Tamilnadu, adjacent to the Bay of Bengal. It is bounded in the west by Vellore and Tiruvannamalai Districts in the north by Tiruvallur and Chennai Districts, in the South by Villupuram District and in the east by the Bay of Bengal. It lies between 11°00’ to 12°00’ north latitudes and 77°28’ to 78°50’ east longitude. Kancheepuram District is spread over a geographical area of 4393.37 hectares and has a coast line of 57 kilometers.

The climate of Kancheepuram can be divided into 2 seasons, summer and winter. In summer, the temperature shoots up from 21.1°C to 36.6°C. In winter, the temperature varies from 19.8°C to 28.70°C. The Pre-monsoon rainfall is almost uniform, throughout the year. The Coastal taluks get more rain. The north east monsoon donates 54% of the total rainfall and the south west monsoon provides 36% of the total rainfall in the district. Red loamy soil is found in Kanchipuram and Uthiramerur blocks. Black soil is also spread over all blocks of the District. Red sandy soil is also found in Kancheepuram urban blocks.
According to 2001 Census, the District had a population of 2877468 which is about 4.61% of the total population of the state. The density of population in Kancheepuram district is 668 persons/sq.km. The total literacy rate in Kancheepuram district is 76.85%. The scheduled Caste literacy rate is 57.46% and the Scheduled Tribe literacy rate is 30.12%. Languages spoken here are Tamil, English and Telugu.

The total forest area in the district is 23,586 hectares. It is spread over interior regions in and around the districts. In this forest land 366.675 hectares are for reserved land. Only few hills are found in the district with considerable elevation. The southern part of Madurantakam Taluk contains small hills. Rivers supply ample drinking water to people in the nearly towns and villages. It also serves the purpose of irrigation.

The Palar is the Chief River in Kancheepuram District. It rises in Nandidurg of Karnataka state and it enters Tamilnadu after flowing about 93 kilometers in Karnataka State. In Tamilnadu, it runs about 295 kilometres through the North Arcot and Kancheepuram District. It enters the district about a few kilometers west of Kancheepuram. The River Cheyyar joins the river Palar at Thirumukkudal about 13 kilomteres east of Kancheepuram. The rivulet Vegavathi which runs in Kancheepuram joins the River Palar after running 48 kilometers from Thirumukkudal and it confluences with the Bay of Bengal at a place 5 kilometers south of Sadurangappatinam (Sadas). A dam has been built in Wallajabad. The Cheyyar river originates in the Javvadu hills of North Arcot district. It flows in Kancheepurpam district and confluences with river Palar at Thirumukkudal. Some
rivers have changed their courses, owing to natural or artificial causes. The Palar which formerly flowed through the bed of modern Kodu-thalaiaaru has quitted its old bed near Tiruvellum. Now it flows in the south easterly direction and enters the sea at a place nearly 60 miles south of its former mouth. The old bed of the river is still known as Palaiya Palaru or Vriddhakshiranadi.  

Kancheepuram district has been divided into 3 Revenue Divisions, comprising of 8 taluks, namely Sriperumbudur, Tambaram, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram, Uthiramerur, Thirukazhu Kundram, Madurantakam and Cheyyur with 1137 villages for administrative reasons. It is also divided in to 13 development blocks with 648 village panchayats for development reasons. Hospitals provide treatment for the sick people in this district. Especially in Kancheepuram there are Government hospitals that provide treatments to the sick. The important ones are Government Arignar Anna Memorial Cancer Hospital, Karapettai and Government Head Quarters Hospital, Kancheepuram. Arignar Anna Memorial Cancer Research Institute is situated adjoining Chennai – Vellore Road. In India during 1965-69, there was no idea about the extent of Cancer problems.

Arignar Anna, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu approached World Health Organization for setting up a cancer control pilot project Centre at Kancheepuram, so that cancer would be detected at early stage. Following an agreement between the World Health Organization and the Government of India and Tamil Nadu, a cancer control pilot project was inaugurated on 23rd March 1969 at Kancheepuram and it was named as Arignar Anna Memorial Cancer Institute.

This institute and hospital are the one and only Government institution in the entire state specially constructed for the treatment of cancer patients. This
institute has been recognized as a teaching and training centre for cytology (a term used for detection of cancer). This institute and hospital are fully fledged in all aspects, for early detection, diagnoses and treatment of all types of cancers with Radio-therapy, Teletherapy and Chemotherapy facilities.

Government Head Quarters hospital is situated in the heart of the town. This hospital was started in 1863, as a Municipal hospital. A maternity block was opened by Honorable M.A.T. Arundel in 1899. Subsequently, it was taken charge by the Government as Taluk hospital in 1928. The Government head quarters hospital at Chengalpattu was converted to a teaching institution attached to Chengalpattu Medical College, Government hospital Kancheepuram, was renamed as Government Head Quarters hospital from July 1965.

At present the following special departments are functioning. Obstetrics and Gynecology, Orthopedics, Tuberculosis, Pediatric Medicine, Surgery, Psychiatrics, STD., ENT., Dental, Family welfare, Leprosy, Neo-natal unit, Blood bank, Public health and laboratory. The Kancheepuram Municipality is running three free dispensaries, seven maternity and child welfare centres and one aided Ayurvedic dispensary.8

This district is predominantly agricultural in character. This district gets its rainfall from the north east monsoon. Fine varieties of paddy are raised in this district find ready market in Chennai City. Out of the total population of this district, 47% of the people are engaged in agriculture. Groundnuts, cereals, pulses, millets are the other major crops cultivated here. The government has taken various measures and has set up many institutions in this district to encourage farmers and to boost up their cultivation.
The major small scale industries in the town are handloom spinning, silk weaving, dying etc. About 30,392 hand looms are located within the Town and Municipal area and the other industries are printing press, metal works and engineering works. Agro based units like rice mills and a sugar factory are spread all over the District. The Kancheepuram District has become one of the largest industrial areas in Tamilnadu. The large scale industries are located outside the Kancheepuram town. This District has the pride for being the home of international industrial groups like Ford, Hyundai, Saint Gobain, Nokia, Motorola and L & T as well as many export houses in and around Madras Export Processing Zone (MEPZ). The products from these industries are cars, mobile phones, float glass, air conditioners, auto spare parts etc. The reason for establishing large scale industries in Kancheepuram District is due to its proximity to Chennai urban area, proximity to airports, sea ports, its connectivity to National Highways and moderate cost of land etc.

Transportation forms the basis for trade development in any state. In Kancheepuram district the means of transport, such as railways and road ways are maintained to facilitate trade and other activities of the people.

Kancheepuram is one of the ancient cities in South India, which is at the present day, retains its past greatness. Out of the seven sacred Mokshapuri’s (i.e.) the cities of liberation in India, Kancheepuram is one among in South India. It is visited by number of domestic and foreign tourist throughout the year. The proximity to Chennai city and Mamallapuram and Vedanthangal add to the tourist attraction especially the foreigners. The Hindus who visit Tirupathi also visit Kancheepuram, Sriperumbudur and Madurantakam. Foreign tourist visit many
places in Tamilnadu. Domestic tourist come from other states of India (i.e.) Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka, Bihar, West Bengal etc. The local and regional tourist comes for purchasing of silk sarees. As a result, many enterprises in Kancheepuram are benefited. They are the hotels, transportation vehicles and temple managements. The main places of interest in Kancheepuram District are the following famous temples namely Ekambaranathar Temple, Kamakshi Amman temple, Varadaraja Perupmal Temple, Vaikunda Perumal temple, Kailasanathar Temple, Thiruppparuthick Kundram, Eriakatha Ramar Koil at Madurantakam as well as Thirukazhukundram, Sriperumbudur, Kunrathur, Mangadu etc.

C.N. Annadurai, popularly called Anna or the elder brother, the former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, was a native of Kancheepuram. His residence is situated next to Varadaraja Perumal Temple. The Government of Tamil Nadu has converted his residence as a memorial, after his death. This is also a place for tourist attraction. Many tourists who visits Kancheepuram purchase silk sarees. Hindu marriages are not performed without silk. So during marriage seasons, local tourists flock the market streets for purchasing silk sarees. The other places which attract tourists outside the town are:

4.1.2. Vedanthangal Birds Sanctuary

The Vedanthangal Birds Sanctuary is one of the oldest bird's Sanctuaries in the country. A British Collector declared it as a protected area in 1798. It is situated in a small village of the name located in the northwestern part of Kancheepuram District in an extent of 73.06 acres. It is at a distance of 86 km.
Southwest of Chennai. After proceeding about 76 km. on the National Highways – 45, passing Chengalpattu, and turn right wards and proceed 10 km further to reach this sanctuary. Special bus services from Chennai are available to go to Vedanthangal during the season in addition to the regular bus services from Tambaram and Chengalpattu.

The early history of the Sanctuary is not very clear. The area was under dispute in those days. There is documentary evidence to show that during the closing years of the 18th century, the villagers of Vedanthangal obtained a ‘cowl’ from the first Collector of Chengalpattu, Col.Lionel Place recognizing their right to safeguard the nesting colony in their tank from those seeking the snare or shoot the birds. It seems that the villagers lost the ‘cowl but in 1858 it was renewed. This 1858 document refers to the first ‘cowl’ and also to the baringtonia trees in the middle of the tank where the birds use to nest.

It is evident that Vedanthangal has been a bird’s sanctuary for at least 200 years. In 1936, the Collector of Chengalpattu officially recognized the place as a sanctuary and sanctioned the first Governmental expense towards its maintenance. In recent years, the government has taken charge of the entire responsibility of the sanctuary. The shooting of water birds in and around Vedanthangal within a radius of 35 km has been strictly prohibited. A good road has now been built right up to the bund of the sanctuary.

The Sanctuary serves as a resting-place to a number of birds. Many different kinds of water birds breed every year in large numbers in the grove of baringtonia trees in the heart of the village side tank. Migrants like the Sandpipers
and Teals are not uncommon like the indigenous visitors. Black winged stilts may usually be found in a small party at the southern edge of the water, facing the village. A pelican arrive singly, in pairs or in parties and appear to sojourn here for days together and seems to breed, during certain years. Those are spotted, billed or Grey pelicans. Occasional coots may also visit the tank and at times, the river term may be found patrolling the water Kingfishers is quite common. Birds like Gargarcy, Teals, showellers, pintains etc., cover thousands of kilometers in their migrating orbit.

When the winter becomes inhospitable in the cold countries of Northern Asia and Europe, compelling the migration of the winter birds it is rainy season here. Soon after the winter and soon after breeding as summer approaches, they fly back to their homeland. This sanctuary is, thus, the temporary aboard of thousands of migrating birds, which are in search of nesting and breeding grounds during the period from October to early March.

To provide an exact figure on the number of birds that visit Vedanthangal is difficult as it varies from year to year. The factor that influences the migration or rather which attracts the birds from far off places is rainfall, which is plenty, helps the bird’s resting and breeding. The number of species breeding here, too, seems each year but this variation is conspicuous only in those species which are to be found to be comparatively very small in number. Such as the large egret, the large cormorant and to some extent the darter, night herons, little egrets and little cormorants are the species that are numerically strong, open billed storks, Grey herons, spoonbills, cattle egrets, median egrets and pond herons follow more or less
in that order. The large cormorant is the resort of the birds found here. In most of the season, only two or three pairs seem to nest in the colony. The panorama of colors presented by the different species is to be seen and musical symphony heard to be believed. This refugee in about 0.3 sq.km. in extent is a partly submerged land grow consisting mainly of natural baringtonia accutangula and artificially planted Acacia milobica.

**The birds that migrate here are listed out below:**

They are Spoon bill, red shark, Grey pelican, curlew, black winged stilt, Darter or snake bird, little ringed ploceoros, gullpilterm, little stint, pintain duck, gargany teal, common pochard, gad wall, lesser whistling teal, stone curfew, green shark, brown headed seagull, little tern, shavelles, marsh sand piper, whiskered tern rubb, blacktaioled gad wit, ring necked duck, golden plower, bar tailed gad wit, track sand piper, whim brea, black billed, term wigeon and mallard.

These migratory birds apart, the Sanctuary are filled with permanent local birds, a list of which presented below:

Common Myna, Spotted stork, Jungle babbler, Horse crow, Brain fever bird, Ring dove, Pied Kingfisher, Spotted dove, Indian robin, Keel tree pine, Large pied wag tail, Black trange, Little egret, Tailor bird, Pied kite, Common green bee, Paradise fly catcher, Ried hemies, Rosoe ringed parakeet Indian roller, Common Kingfisher, White breasted Waterhen, Hoopee, Indian skylark and White breasted Kingfisher.

Many visitors including tourists from foreign countries are attracted by the splendid sight of the birds in multifarious colors, nature, habit etc., A well
equipped rest house with a few suites is available for those who wish to stay overnight, and the advance reservations for rooms could be made with the wildlife Madras Office at Adyar.

Even though it is one of the oldest bird’s sanctuaries, Vedanthangal has no status as a Sanctuary under the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972. It is considered as a reserved land, while the neighboring twin lakes of Karikili have been declared as birds Sanctuary in 1989. There is therefore every justification to declare Vedanthangal also as a Sanctuary.

Ornithologists express the view that being closer to Chennai and with the bird’s season coinciding with the peak flow of tourists and a string of festival holidays falling within the season, there is great potential for developing Vedanthangal as a tourism centre.

A watchtower, a viewing platform and powerful-mounted binoculars are provided and a band of forest guides help the tourists in identifying the birds at the sanctuary. Vedanthangal is connected with Madurantakam and Tambaram by bus. There is direct bus link to the city of Chennai now.

Just seven kilometer from Vedanthangal lies neighbouring twin lakes of Karikili, which is a bonus to the Vedanthangal visitors. It is all calm and tranquil, and a walk along the lake is really an experience to cherish. This water spread lake of 60 hectares is the winter home for several hundred ducks, pond herons, pintails, cattle, egrets and common swallows. Several Indian coarser could be sighted in Karikili scampering amidst the stand of over 1,000 baringtonia trees. For a bird’s-
eye view the watchtower provided by the forest department helps, though the ascent on the vertical ladder is really for the daring. The growth of wild flowers along vineyards of fruits and vegetables gives a spectacular sun set vista. Nearby is the temple town vaiyavur, with the Vaishnavite temple perched on the hill. To climb up the steps to the hilltop is another enriching experience. Karikili is however, not connected by bus. It is an excellent place for bird trekking.

The Madurantakam Lake is very vast. It is situated closer to Vedanthangal Lake. It does not have trees. But it provides countless number of fishes, prawns, crabs, snails, frogs and water snakes etc. Apart from Madurantakam Lake, there are a number of lakes around Vedanthangal Lake. All the lakes are filled with lots of small living creatures, which solve the food problem of the birds.9

**Colony of Integration:**

Strong species like open Billed Stork, White ibis, Spoon bill, Grey pelican, Grey Heron and weak species live together in the same tree (colony) nesting together like a joint family, thus setting up a very good example of national integration.

**Enemies to Birds:**

Monkeys, wild cats, snakes, fitchews, mongooses are the main enemies to the birds. But it is very rare that these can swim and reach the Kadappa trees (barringtonia acutangula) to disturb the birds. But there is a danger to the eggs
and the younger ones from the non water birds like crows, eagle, mynas and falcons etc.

The Forest Department and the people of Vedanthangal join hands in fighting against these enemy birds and animals.

**Manure Water:**

As days pass by, the water in the Vedanthangal Lake becomes greenish. The tiny scarlet flowers of Baringtonia trees whither and ridge beautiful saffron border of the water. The small waves, which dash on the banks, lull them gently.

The dried baringtonia leaves soaked in water and the droppings of the birds make the water manurial. Sometimes it smells bad, which disturbs our happy moods. This fertilized water makes the fields of Vedanthangal fertile. It is better than the chemical fertilizers.

**Loss and Disturbances:**

It is true that the droppings of the birds make the soil rich and increase the harvest. At the same time, there are lot of disturbances and loss due to these birds. As the birds come in search of their prey like crabs, snails, frog’s etc., they walk along the fields causing damage to the crops. The stamped seedlings do not grow thereafter. The flocks of Common Teal snatch away the paddy from the fields. It looks as though the paddy had been robbed. Due to these damages, farmers face heavy loss. Therefore they have to guard their fields night and day from these birds.
In the lake once there were more than 5000 baringtonia cutangula trees, which are called Kadappa trees. An additional 1000 trees were planted in 1969 and 100 more in 1973.

When water fills the lake these trees appear to us as small hills consisting of leaves and branches. At present there are not much trees. For the past twenty years due to droughts and storms most of the trees were destroyed. To compensate the loss, new trees have been planted. A number of artificial shelves are built up. Presently there are about 100 big trees and around 660 young baringtonia acutangula trees aging between 10 to 15 years. There are some other acacia trees (Karuvelan Trees) in the lake. The Bamboo and cane bushes and thorny trees on the bund make this a beautiful place full of greenery.

The Postal Department has honored this tourist center by issuing special postal covers with the pictures of birds.

From 3rd June 1974, all the mailings, which go out of Vedanthangal, bear the special seal with an outline of a bird. Thus the Postal Department paid its respectful reverence to the birds of Vedanthangal.

4.1.3. Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram):

Mahabalipuram, which is now called Mamallapuram, is on the coast about 60 kilometers south of the city of Chennai. This is the direct route. The other route, which is circuitous, is via, Chengalpattu and Thirukazhukundram and is about 86 km., long. The nearest railway station is Chengalpattu which is at a distance of
30 km. There are some of the most famous ancient monuments in India which are appealing even to the occasional visitor. It is a treasure for the students of South Indian Arts and Architecture. This is one of the most important places in South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu and more so in Kancheepuram District from two angles (i) for the study of architecture and through which the study of history and (ii) as a place of tourist importance.

In the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., Kings of the Pallavas dynasty created cave temples, monolithic shrines, structural stone temples and expensive relief panels carved on the open rock-face of the hill side. The Mamallapuram town was a flourishing sea-port during the time of the Pallavas. The monuments at Mamallapuram are excellent specimens of Dravidian temple architecture and Pallava art. A group of sculptures at Mamallapuram are listed out by UNESCO as World Heritages.

Mamallapuram has fifteen cave temples, 10 monolithic shrines, three structural stone temples and four relief sculptured rock panels. These were the creations of Pallavas in the seven and early eight centuries A.D. As a sea port, Mamallapuram has been very famous since the beginning of the Christian era. This has been referred to as Mamallai. Ptolemy, the Roman geographer, refers to it as Malange. The finds of Roman Coins in the neighbourhood testify to its importance as a trading centre.

It was Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller of the Seventh Century A.D. wrote that Kanchi was the sea port of the Pallava rulers of South India. By this, he might have, most probably, referred only Mamallapuram and not Kancheepuram as
the latter is situated far away from the sea. The monuments at Mahabalipuram were mostly erected during the reign of Narasimhavarman-I. They can be classified, based on the mode of construction, as (i) Monoliths, i.e. free standing temples cut out of solid rock, most of which are locally called as Rathas; (ii) Caves, excavated in hill scarps and used as temples, some of which are called mantapas or Canopies;(iii) Temples, i.e. built up masonry temples; and (iv) Sculptures and Sculptured scenes carved on the hills edges.

These monuments bear testimony to the Pallava architecture and style. The monoliths have been wonderfully created to enthrall the hearts of the architects and their admirers. It may perhaps be confusing where to start with, at Mahabalipuram. A visitor to this place may be guided, to start with the group of the five monoliths in the extreme south, thence proceed towards north to see the monuments on and at the edge of the hill up to the ‘balance rock’ and finally towards the sea to see Shore Temple.

**Five Monoliths:**

Five monoliths, in a group, is cut out of solid rock hewn to form five free standing monolithic temples, close to, but separated from, each other. The temples are associated without any historical evidence, with the five pandava brothers of the Mahabharata. They were excavated during the reign of Narasimhavarman-I and are the earliest monuments of their king in India. The superstructures, each of which varies from one another, illustrate the varieties of roofing system that were followed.
Dharmaraja Ratha:

This is the southern most of the five temples and is the highest. It is a pyramid structure with a square base, the upper part consists of a series of diminishing storey’s, each having a row of pavilions above a row of Kudus arranged immediately above brackets of pilasters which divide the actual portion of the temple into riches with carved images.

Arjuna Ratha:

This monument which belongs to the 7th Century A.D., is a typical dvitala vimana of Dravidian style. It consists of a sanctum and a mukha mantapa. These carved panels between the pilasters on the three sides of the exterior of the wall have five panels on the each side. The central panel is flanked by either of muthurna couples or other sculptures which are in fair flanked by Dvarapalas.

Draupati Ratha:

These rathas, like other temples, are associated with the heroes of the Mahabharatha without any historical basis. These were the creations of the Pallava ruler, Narasimhavarma-I. Though this ratha is called ‘Draupati Ratha’ this monolithic ratha is dedicated to Durga.

Nakula - Sakadeva Ratha:

The temple, named after two of the five heroes of Mahabharata, Nakula and Sakadeva is of 7th Century. It is apsidal on plan and resembles the shape of gajaprishta with a dvitala ashtanga vimana with aspitaharas on both talas. The
temple consists of a mukha mantapa with two pillars and a cella which is devoid of any icon. The exterior walls of the sanctum are plain.

**Valayankuttai Ratha:**

It is to the west of Mamallapuram village near Buckingham Canal. It is so called as it is located near a pool (kuttai in Tamil) called Valayankuttai. It is facing east with a mukha mantapa in front. It is the dvitala Vimana with all the eight angas. It is square in size. Like the other Rathas, the excavation of the ratha was started from the top but at the adhisthana level the work was discontinued.\(^{11}\)

**Shore Temple:**

Adjoining Arjuna’s thapas is a path opposite the Krishna mantap, which leads to the sea, very close to which almost on the slash of the waves, we see shore temple an example of masonry of Rajasimha’s time. It is a temple complex consisting of three temples, - two of them dedicated to Lord Siva and the other one to Lord Vishnu. The temple which faces west and having tritala Vimana is called “Rajasimheswara”. The other temple, facing east, consists of a Chatusthala Vimana called ‘Kshatriya Simheswara’.

**Mahishasura Rock:**

An ancient temple, with a miniature shrine dedicated to Lord Siva, has recently been unearthed from the shore temple complex at Mamallapuram. There is a sculptured panel of Mahishasuramardhini behind the miniature shrine and inscriptions on the temple wall. It is unique because it is considered to have been built earlier than the shore temple.
**Arjuna’s Penance Panel:**

This monument, located north-west of Sthalasayanaperumal temple, is one of the biggest base reliefs in open theatre, carved over two large natural boulders with a narrow fissure in between, have been chosen to represent a series of rows of gods and goddesses. It is generally; taken to depict the scene of Arjuna’s penance, flow of the Ganges and other related sceneries on the banks of the Ganges. Arjuna is depicted in the emancipated form doing penance standing in one leg with hands raised. On one side of the four armed Siva carrying a trident in one of his hands and attended by dwarf Ganas. The central cleft has been used to depict the flow of the Ganges and besides this, in the centre, Surya and Chandra, celestial like Kinnaras, Siddhas, Kinopurusha, Gandharvas, Apsaras, etc., are shown rushing towards the Central point of the cleft. This monument belongs to the 7th Century A.D.

Likewise, a number of inscriptions are found in the monuments in Mahabalipuram. However, “it is to be regretted that the inscriptions of Mahabalipuram, as yet deciphered, furnish no clue to the date of history or history of these remarkable structures.” Looking at the place as a whole, its architecture, its sculptures, and its inscriptions we get here a suggestive religious history of the south carved in the imperishable rock. It is found to be much more in accordance with the evidence to accept these remains as records left by the Buddhist faith, and to assign them to an age nearly concur with the zenith of Buddhist architecture and sculpture or a period commencing couple of centuries or so before the Christian era.
From November 1964, Government has constituted a township committee which is headed by the Collector of the district as Chairman. Mahabalipuram has tremendously improved, thanks to the patronage of the tourists, very particularly the foreigners who evince great interest in the stonic beauty. Several schools of architecture, mostly run by the private people, have spring up where one could hear, while passing through, the cling of the chisels as dashed against the raw stone to bring out a beautiful figure. The State Government maintains a Tourist Home under the guidance of Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation.

4.1.4. Melmaruvathur:

Melmaruvathur which came into prominence since the last two decades situates near Madurantakam on the NH-45 on the Grand Southern Trunk road at a distance of 92 km., from Chennai. All the south bound buses from Chennai, Chengalpattu etc., pass through Melmaruvathur which also has a railway station of the same name.

‘Macha Puranam’ a famous Tamil classic sings the fame of this holy place which is being considered holy for the past 2000 years. This is the place where 21 Siddhars, men as well as women, have their Jeeva-Samadhis. These Siddhars belong to various religions. In this holy land, a lady Siddhar resides and blesses. Melmaruvathur shot into fame because of the Arulmigu Adhiparasakthi Siddhar Peetam where 2007 years ago was an old temple which is believed to have been worshipped by Gandharwas. This is referred to in ‘Matsya Purana’ written in Tamil Vadamalayappa Pillai. It is the ‘Swayambu’ which was in that place now worshipped in the Siddhar Peetam. In course of time the old temple was ruined and covered by
ant hills and there arose a neem tree dripping milk. In 1966 the ‘Swayambu’ was exposed consequent on the fall of the neem tree in a cyclone.

The basic principle of this Peetam is ‘one mother, one race’ i.e. there is no distinction between human beings on any basis. Here one belonging to any caste, religion or race can, without any restriction, enter into the sanctum sanctorum offer prayers and worship. The day-to-day activities of the peetam are performed by the weekly prayer centers of the Adhiparasakthi Movement by rotation. This is the first prayer centre in India that gave priority to women to enter the sanctum sanctorum to decorate the deity to perform Aradhana, Abhisheka and Archana and even to participate in the yagas. The most praiseworthy practice obtaining here is that the incantation chanted during worship or yagnas (velvi pooja) is only in Tamil in order to enable the devotees understand it.

Several devotees’ congregate on the days when the Adigalar pronounces oracles, the first of which was given in 1970. Devotees both men and women dressed in full red, assemble in several thousand on festive occasions, like Aadi Pooram, Navarathiri, Thai Poosam, Chitra Poorhima, Adigalar’s birth day, Tamil and English New Years’ Days.

Besides several social service activities, the Trust runs Educational Institutions like Polytechnic, Engineering College, Schools as well as Arts and Science College. Melmaruvathur has thus become a centre of not only religious activities, but educational activities as well.
4.1.5. Religious Movements in Kancheepuram District:

Till about the fifth Century A.D., harmony and tolerance characterized the relations between the different religious sects. Worship of Nature, primitive godlings, performances of elaborate vedic sacrifices, the worship of the popular pantheon included many deities like Muruga, Siva, Vishnu, Indra, Krishna and others. Practicing of Buddhism and Jainism co-existed in Kancheepuram, and then shone as a centre of Philosophical learning. In the story of Manimekalai, for instance, we find the heroine was advised to study the philosophical systems of Muruga, Siva, Vishnu, Ajvika, Jaina and of the Sarkhya, Vaiseshika and Lakayata at Kancheepuram.

Betokening the renaissance of Hindu religion in the 7th Century A.D. there arose a group of Tamil Psalmists who sang brilliant prayers to Siva and Vishnu and this energized Saivism and Vaishnavism. They were Nayanmars and Alwars.

Nayanmars:

Later tradition counted sixty three Nayanmar as the most prominent saints of this revival on the side of the Saivism. The most prominent among them were the three great men, Appar, Sundarar and Thiru Gnanasambandar whose hymns are collected together in the Devaram.13

Alwars:

The Vaishnava wing of the movement is represented by twelve Alwars. The ‘Nalayira Divya Probandam’ is the compendium of the devotional hymns of the
Alwars. Of the twelve Alwars two belonged to the district; Poigaiyalwar belonged to Kancheepuram, Buthathalwar hailed from Mahabalipuram.

The Sankara Math:

The Sankara Math in Kancheepuram has added further religious importance to this city, besides the Colossos temples built by the early Tamil Kings. The math renders social and educational services also in addition to its role as a saviour of Hindu religion.

Sri Ramanuja:

Sri Ramanuja, the greatest of the Vaishnava Acharyas, was born in Sriperumbudur situated in Kancheepuram district in the first quarter of the 11th century. He had his early philosophical training under Yadavaprakasa of Kancheepuram who belonged to the school of Shankara. The Ahobila Math at Madurantakam in this District spread the Vaishnavite philosophy and encourages oriental education. Vedanta Desika was another Vaishnavite Scholar born in Kancheepuram.

Thondaimandalam Adhinam Math, Kancheepuram:

Thondaimandalam Adheenam Math is one of the ancient maths of Tamil Nadu which traces its origin back to the period of Karikalchola. It is said that this math functioned in the Sri Ekambaranatha temple, Kancheepuram and later was shifted to the present place. The heads of the math have been all along the religious preceptors of the Vellalars of the Kancheepuram and neighbouring districts. Many
heads of the math were profound scholars and authors of religious books in Tamil. The services of the math for the Tamil language and religions, especially for the Saiva sects of Hinduism, deserve mention.¹⁴

The famous personalities from this district are C.N. Annadurai, Vallal Pachaiyappan and M.C. Rajah. C.N. Annadurai (C.N. stands for Conjeevaram Natarajan) was born on 15th September 1913 in a Hindu lower middle class family at Kancheepuram. His father was Mr. Natarajan who was a handloom weaver; Anna completed his school final in 1929 at Pachaiyappa’s high school at Kancheepuram. He had a break in his studies for a while, later he joined Pachaiyappa’s College, Madras and passed his intermediate examination in 1931. He continued his studies in the same college and he obtained his B.A. Honours and his M.A. Degree in Economics and Politics in 1934.

After obtaining his M.A. Degree, he worked as an English assistant in Govindappa Naicker School for four months. Then he shifted his interest to journalism and labour union activities. Anna had been the editor of Balabharathi and Navayugam – Tamil Weeklies published in Madras. In his early life, he was associated with the South Indian Liberal Federation, founded in 1917, known as the Justice Party. As an active member of the Justice Party, he opposed the congress.

Anna had deep interest in the welfare of the poor and the down trodden and small organized labour units. Anna started “Navayugam” and revolutionized the labour fields. Anna met the revolutionary Periyar E.V. Ramasamy in 1934 at Tirupur and was attracted to him by his ideal thoughts. Anna recognized him as the only leader, even after parting with him in 1949 to form the Dravida Munnetra
Kazhagam (DMK). Anna was arrested in 1938, for taking part in the first anti Hindi campaign and was imprisoned for four months. The Justice Party which had been confined to a small class, got mass acceptance due to the efforts of Periyar and Anna. They spread radical ideas to its members. Their efforts bore fruits at a confederation held at Salem in 1944. Then the party was renamed as Dravidar Kazhagam (Dravidian Federation).

A split came in 1949 when the followers of Anna started Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam under Anna’s leadership. Anna who assumed the post of the General Secretary of DMK and the post of the President was kept vacant for Periyar to occupy as and when he desired.

Anna became the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu after his party was voted to power in 1967 assembly elections. In a short span of two years he introduced many reforms in Tamilnadu. He toured too many countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Cambodia, U.S.A. and Japan. Anna was a dramatist, novelist and an actor. He had also acted in several dramas written by him. Anna had a cancerous growth in the gullet. He was treated in U.S.A though he underwent two surgical operations in U.S.A. and India he was not cured. He died in the midnight of February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1969. His mortal remains were cremated in the Marina Beach, where a huge memorial has been erected by the Government. The Government of Tamilnadu has also converted his Kancheepuram residence as a memorial.\textsuperscript{15}

Vallal Pachaiyappan donated gifts to Ekambaranathar temple and Chidambaram temples; he was married in 1792 and had a daughter, within two years. But he fell ill and died on March 31\textsuperscript{st} 1794. Pachaiyappa Mudaliar left a will
before his death wherein he had set aside his wealth to be spent for Hindu religious 
institutions and educational institutions. In 1909 the court appointed a board of 
trustees and formulated a scheme for smooth running of the trust. At first 
Pachaiyappa’s school was opened at Madras. Now the Pachaiyappa’s trust 
administers religious charities and many schools and colleges.

The Pachaiyappa’s college for men was opened at Kancheepuram in 
1953 with the joint efforts of the Pachaiyappan trust board, Thiru C. Kandasamy 
Mudaliyar. Now the college offers under graduate courses of B.A., in History and 
Economics, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology and Commerce, Post- 
Graduate courses in Economics. The trust also runs Pachaiyappa’s College for 
Women at Kancheepuram.

The students participate in National Service Schemes (NSS), National 
Cadet Corps (NCC) and other social service activities every year. The library, 
laboratory and hostel facilities are available in this college. This College is aided by 
the Government and run by the Pachiyappa’s Charitable Trust, Madras.16

M.C.Rajah, an untiring leader of Adi-Dravidas and an active member of the 
Justice Party, hailing from St.Thomas Mount of the present Kancheepuram District, 
who had the distinction of being the first Adi-Dravida representative in the Madras 
Legislature, was not satisfied with the attitudes of the Justice Party towards Adi- 
Dravidars. He voiced his grievances in the Council itself in 1921. Later, he left the 
Justice Party in 1923.

While Justice Party was in power in the Madras Council, non-Brahminism 
was riding high on a tide of reforms towards the betterment of the non-Brahmins of
the Madras presidency. These reforms included the establishment of the quotas, based on the caste and religion for civil service posts, ensuring the rights of non-Brahmins in seeking government office etc.\(^7\)

### 4.2 HERITAGE OF THE KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT

The word “Heritage” means anything transmitted from ancestors or past ages which indicate the continuity of thoughts from one generation to another. Kancheepuram District was regarded as great city in ancient times. It attained fame in many fields like history, art, architecture, spiritualism, religion and literature.\(^8\)

#### 4.2.1. Political Heritage:

In the ancient geography of Tamilnadu, Kancheepupram and its neighbouring districts were called Aruva and Aruvavadathalai nadu. This place was inhabited by tribes called Kurumbas. Later this area was called Tondainadu by adding the neighbouring territories and Kancheepuram was its capital. The political history of the past ages can be gathered from lithic records in the structural monuments. A few important dynasties that ruled here are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The political history of Kancheepuram would have been started by 3\(^{rd}\) Century B.C. under Mauryan Empire. A Pallava inscription at the Vellurpalam plates, mentions of Ashoka Varman among the earliest ruler of Kanchi. The Mauryan Empire was built by Chandra Gupta Maurya, Ashoka the great, the first Emperor of Maurya dynasty tried to unify India.

One more reference to Mauryan rule in Kanchi was made by Hieun Tsang. When he visited Kanchi, he noticed a stupa about 100 feet in height, built by King
Ashoka. More over the rock edicts XIII of Ashoka, mentions about Pulinda tribes who were spread over many provinces. But some historians like R.Sathianathaier associates Pulindas with Kurumbas, and the people conquered by Mauryas in Tondaimandalam were Kurumbas. These facts emphasise Mauryan rule at Kanchi but it is not certain that Mauryan Empire extended up to Kanchi.

The history of Chola’s was mainly written based on Sangam literatures. The greatest King of the early Cholas was Karikala. His Kingdom extended beyond Kancheepuram, a town which he enlarged and beautified. According to Thiruvalangadu plates of Parakesari Rajendra Chola I (1012-44 A.D.), Karikala rebuilt and embellished the city of Kanchi with gold.

The Pallavas were the leading dynasty of South India. Their rule started from 250 A.D. and continued till 900 A.D. Mahendravarman the famous Pallava ruler succeeded his father Simhavishnu to the Pallava throne. His empire extended from Tiruchirapalli in the south, to the banks of river Krishna in the north. His greatest foes were the Chalukyas. He lost his northern province in a battle with Chalukya King Pulikesi II.

Mahendravarman was a Jain by religion during his early years of reign. Saint Appar (Thirunavukkarasar) with his efforts converted the King as a Saivite. The history of rock cut architecture in the history of Tamilnadu was probably started with Mahendravarman, who carved the first temple to Brahma, Vishnu and Ishwar without using bricks, timber, metal and mortar. His monolithic rock cut temples are found at Vallam, Mahendravadi and Pallavaram. He might be called as the founder of Hindu architecture of South India. He was also a distinguished poet and was the author of a Sanskrit play called “Mattavilasa Prahasana.”
Mahendra Varman was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman – I to the Pallava throne. Narasimhavarman – I wanted to revenge on the Pulikesin II by whom the Pallavas lost their northern province. The opportunity came when Chalukya King sent his army to fight with Narasimha Varman. But he in turn defeated Pulikesin II in several battles, including one in Manimangalam, 32 kilometers east of Kancheepuram. Narasimhavarman led a huge army to the capital of Chalukyas (Badami or Vatapi) and destroyed the city and put it into flames.

Narasimhavarman was regarded for his good friendship, because he had helped Manavarman, a Ceylonese King twice, when the latter took asylum under Pallavas. Another important event during Narasimha’s reign was the visit of Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese Buddhist scholar and a pilgrim to the Pallava Court.

Hiuen Tsang described the country around Kancheepuram as Dravida. The soil was fertile and produced good yield. He found that the climate of the region tropical and the people were courageous. He also estimated that the people lived with the principles of truth and held learning and the learned in high veneration. He also noted the condition of Buddhism in South India.

Narasimha Varman developed the port at Mahapalipuram and named it as Mamallapuram after one of his surnames (Mamallan). Thirumangai Alvar, a Vaishnavite saint, sung praises about this port, as it was always seen with vessels laden with precious gems, elephants etc. Narasimhavarman was well known for his contribution to art and architecture, because many monolithics of Mahabalipuram.
have been carved during his reign. In short Narasimhavarman I raised the Pallava power to a glory.

Rajasimha, the grandson of Narasimhavarman I ascended the Pallava throne in 690-729 A.D. His reign witnessed remarkable achievements in the field of temple building, religion and literature. He encouraged Sanskrit language by patronizing the Sanskrit poets and scholars. Dandin the author of Kavyadarsa is believed to have spent some years in his court.

Rajasimha was a staunch Saivaite and he constructed the Kailasanathar temple, which was called Rajasimheswara, named after him. This temple contains a number of numerous small shrines constructed by his queen and his son. He also constructed the shore temples at Mahabalipuram. This Pallava King was at the top of his political power by about 720 A.D. According to a Chinese source Rajasimha sent an Embassy to China, expressing his willingness to place his war elephants and his cavalry at the disposal of the China Emperor, who was waging war against the Arabs and Tibetians with the request of Chinese Emperor, Rajasimha built a buddhist Vihar at Nagapattinam for use of the Buddhist, who visited the place for commercial purpose.  

After the downfall of the Pallavas, the cholas emerged as the supreme power and brought the whole of south India under the sway of a single government. Vijayalaya Chola ascended the throne and his successors glorified the history of Chola dynasty. The accession of Raja Raja I to the Chola throne was an epoch in history of Tamilnadu. Raja Raja intended in recapturing every province owned by his ancestors.
He sent a military expedition to the north during his early reign. During Raja Raja’s rule, Tondaimandalam was called Jayamkonda Cholamandalam after one of his titles Jayamkonda Cholan. Raja Raja’s inscriptions have been found in Pallavaram, Kancheepuram, Poonamallee etc.

Rajendra-I inherited a vast empire from his father. A set of thirty one copper pates found at Tiruttani which belonged to the 6th reigual year of Rajendra-I (A.D.1018) describes the political history of the Cholas from their ancestors to Rajendra-I. The Thiruvalangadu inscription states that Rajendra started an expedition from Kancheepuram to Ratta country and the march was victorious. It is also said that when Rajendra returned from his Ganges expedition. He brought Shiva Linga idols from the banks of Ganga and established them at Kancheepuram and other parts of Chola country.23

Jatavarman Sundara Pandiya, the famous Pandiya King brought whole of South India upto Nellore and Cuddapha, including Tondaimandalam, under his supremacy. He made Kancheepuram as his second capital. The King launched a policy of expansion which met splendid success. He celebrated the new conquests by title such as Kancheepuram Varadisvara and Kanchikondan.

After the descent of the Pandiya rule from Tondaimandalam, an enterprising Travancore ruler was found to be in occupation in the whole of Chola country. He was Ravivarma Kulasekara, who was born in the year 1266-67 A.D. In the year 1313-14 A.D. he came to Kancheepuram and celebrated his coronation ceremony on the banks of the river Vegavathi near Kancheepuram. On the fourth year he called himself as Vegavathinathan or Lord of Vegavathi.
The two Poonamalle inscription shows that two fishes of Pandiya’s surmounted by an elephant goad are a certain indication of Kerala’s ascendancy over Pandiyas.  

4.2.2. Religious Heritage:

Religion was a part of man’s life right from ancient times. The role of Kancheepuram in the field of religion is vast. From the beginning of the Christian era, Kancheepuram had been the quarters for all religions that flourished in India. With the rise of Pallava and Chola dynasties, many temples were built and Kancheepuram continued to flourish as a religious centre.

Saivism in Kanchi:

Saivism is one of the most ancient religions in India. One who worships Lord Shiva and Parvathi and respects the symbols like the rudraksha, sacred ash and matted hair is called a Saivaite. In olden days six branches of Saivism were prevalent in Tamil country.

They were Pasupatam, Mahavartam, Kapalikam, Vamam, Bhairavam and Saivism.  

Silapathigaram refers to a military expedition to North India by King Karikalan, who worshipped a deity called Sattan of Kamakshi temple at Kanchi and obtained a weapon called Chendu. This weapon enabled him to achieve victory over the northern kings and engrave his insignia on the Himalayas. This incident shows the prevalence of Saivism during that period.

During the 6th century B.C. Thirumoolar, who was the first preacher of Saivism wrote a divine work called “Thirumandiram” which consisted of 3000
stanzas. Traditions asserted that he visited Kanchi Ekambareshwar Temple on his way to Tiruvadurai. During 5th century B.C. Parana Devanayanar, the author of Sivaperuman Anthathi referred to a Saiva shrine by name Ekambaram, which refers to the present Ekambareshwar temple at Kanchi. This supports prevalence of Saivism in Kanchi during that period. In one of the hymns of Thirugnana Sambandar which associates Karikala as one who defeated and possessed the city of Kanchi and it embellished with gold.

The “Mattavilasa Prahasana” of Mahendravarman-I contains references to Kapalikas, Kalamukhas and Pasupathas. Appar or Thirunavukkarasar visited the Kamakshi temple at Kanchi and worshipped Goddess Parvathi, the consort of Lord Shiva and praised her in the name of “Umainanga”. He also worshipped in the Ekambaranathar Temple. He mentioned the strange way of how the Lord in Kanchi was worshipped by the devotees. In those days there was no priest between the devotees and the Lord. The devotees went directly into the sanctum and offered flowers and worshipped the Lord without any middleman.

During the period of 6th and 7th century, The Nayanmars, the vowed devotees of Lord Shiva contributed very much for rise and spread of their religion with their soul stirring songs. The Pallavas were staunch Saivaites. The six lithic records of Pallava period are from Ekambaranathar, Kailasanathar, Kamakshi and Muktheesvara temples at Kanchi. In Kamakshi Amman temple inscription, the queen of Rajasimha, Rangapataka and his son Mahendravarman-III is stated to have built a small shrine in the Kailasanatha temple.
Kancheepuram is also called as Satyarata Kshetra – a city of many temples. It is also a place associated with many saints and scholars. One of the greatest exponents that India had ever produced was Sri Adi Shankaracharya. He was a Namboodri Brahmin from Kaladi in Kerala, a small village on the banks of river Alwaye in the north of Travancore. He was a great thinker, Philosopher and a sage. He was a staunch believer of Monism (Adavaita) and his Philosophy was derived from the Upanishads. He regarded Buddhism as Hinduism’s chief enemy.

Adi Shankaracharya founded 5 mathas or Vidya Pithas in India. They were at Kanchi, Sringeri, Dwarka, Badrinath and Puri. The legendary story about Adi Shankarar was about his influence on the Goddess Kamakshi at Kancheepuram. Traditional belief was that this Goddess took the form of Kali at night and caused havoc to people and the country. Adi Sankaracharya did penance and consecrated a yantra in the Sri Chakra, which is being re-fixed periodically by the successive pontiffs of the matha in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. The sixty three Nayanmars, devotees of Lord Shiva contributed their prayers to their Lord by heart throbbing songs called “Thevaram”. They helped to the spread of Saivism during the 6th and the 7th century A.D. which paved a way for decline in Jainism and Buddhism.

There are three nayanmars associated with Kanchi. Alasundarar or Sundarar or Nambi Aroorar was the son of Sadayanar and Isainayniyar of Thirunavalur. When he was about to be married, an old man came to the wedding hall and proved that Sundarar was his slave. Then the old man vanished into the temple. Sundarar realized that the old man was Lord Shiva in disguise. From then
on he travelled widely and sang hymns in praise of the Lord. Then he married two
women, namely Paravayaar and Sangiliyaar.

At Thiruvotriyoor, Sundarar fell in love with Sangiliyaar a devotee of Lord
Shiva. She prompted by the Lord Shiva, got a promise from Sundarar. The promise
that Sundarar should not leave her after their marriage. But Sundarar wanted to visit
other holy places in South India and so he broke his promise and left Sangiliyaar. As a
result, he lost his eye sight. He travelled with great difficulty to Kanchi and sang
praises about the Lord Ekambaranathar at Kanchi. On hearing his hymns, the Lord
gave vision only to his left eye and a walking stick. Then he travelled to Thiruvarur
with great difficulty and sang praises about Lord Thyagarajar and the Lord blessed
him and gave vision in his right eye. The faith he had in the Lord gave him
success.

In Kancheepuram, a great Shiva devotee was born in a washer man’s
clan. He was called as Thirukuripu Thondar because he did services to Shiva
devotees (who were called mobile temples) by looking at their facial expressions.
Thirukuripu Thondar was a follower of Saivaite faith. His profession was to wash the
dirty clothes of Shiva devotees. Once Thirukuripu Thondar happened to meet an old
Brahmin wearing dirty clothes, he was Lord Shiva in disguise. Thondar requested
the old man to give his clothes for washing.

The old Brahmin gave the rag and said that it should be returned by the
evening. The Brahmin also said that if the cloth was not returned by evening it
would mean that Thondar had harmed his body. Thirukuripu Thondar washed the
old man’s clothes and set it to dry. Suddenly it began to rain heavily. Thondar thought that the cloth could not be dried by evening and he had failed in his promise given to the old Brahmin. So he began to dash his head on the washing stone. The Lord’s hand stopped him. The Lord Shiva and his consort on the bull appeared before the Thondar and blessed him to come to heaven\textsuperscript{30}.

Ayyadigal Kadavarkoon was born in Pallava dynasty at Kanchi. He ruled the country in a righteous path. He mastered both Sanskrit and Tamil languages and spread Saivaite faith. At a point of time he realized that it was grief to rule the world. So he handed over his crown and his powers to his son and indulged in holy services of the Lord Shiva.

He visited the Shiva temples and worshipped the Lord with melting heart. He performed many services and sang songs at the rate of one for each temple. The songs composed by him were easy to understand and recite by people. The verbal songs sung by Ayyadigal gave sweet flavours of wisdom Ayyadigal continued his service by singing hymns on Lord Shiva and at the end he attained the golden feet of the Lord\textsuperscript{31}.

**Vaishnavism:**

Sri Vaishnavam the oldest monotheistic religion of South India has its roots in Vedas and Upanishads. Vaishnavism has set its foot in Kancheepuram from the ancient times. The worship of Lord Vishnu and his consort was prevalent during that period. The beliefs about various incarnation of Lord Vishnu like the
Rama, Krishna etc., lead to the spread of Vaishnavism in the country. There are relevant evidences to support the presence of Vaishnavism in Kanchi during Sangam period.

The Pathupattu was a collection of songs composed between 2nd and 3rd centuries of the Christian era. Perumpaanaatrupadai a poem included in Pathupattu was composed by Uthiran Kannanar. He narrated about a suburb in Kanchi called Thiru-Veh-Ka, where in Lord Vishnu was sleeping on a serpent couch, like an elephant resting on a hill.

In another context, King Thiraiyan the ruler of Kanchi was described as the descendant of Lord Vishnu who has a beautiful mole on his breast and his colour resembling that of the sea. During Pallava period, Vaishnavism enjoyed honour and privilege as evidenced by the structural and rock cut temples built by them. The rise of the Bhakthi movement represented by 12 Alwars led the people to Vaishnavism and thereby it gained impetus at Kanchi.

Yadava Prakasa was one of the eminent religious leaders who were born near Kanchi. He was the preceptor of the famous Vaishnavaite leader Ramanuja, who was the propagator of the Visishtadvaita philosophy. The teacher Yadava Prakasa, who was the follower of advaitic faith was converted to Vaishnavism by his pupil (i.e.) Ramanuja. The Vaijayanthi the earliest works on lexicography (writing of dictionaries) was attributed to Yadava Prakasa.

Sri Ramanuja, the Vaishnava Acharya was born during the first quarter of the 11th century in Sriperumbudur near Kancheepuram. He had his initial
philosophical training under Yadava Prakasa of Kancheepuram, who belonged to the school of Shankara. There was a disagreement between him and his teacher regarding Advaitic faith\textsuperscript{33}.

The Origin of twelve Alwars according to traditions states that they were divine incarnations of the weapons of Lord Vishnu. The Poigai Alwar was regarded as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu’s Sankha (conch). He was the earliest among the Alwars. He is said to have born from a lotus flower in a tank near the Yathoktakari temple at Kancheepuram. He is named so, because of his birth in a Poigai tank. He is also known as Sarayogi indicating his birth in Saras (Tank).

Poigai Alvar, Pei Alvar and Boothathalwar, without the knowledge of each other travelled to Thirukkovalur. They craved for the direct vision of the Lord Vishnu. On a rainy day, the Alwars by chance took shelter in a small room in which only one person could lie, two could sit and three could stand.

When the three Alwars stood there, meditating on the God. They suddenly felt the presence of a fourth person who had squeezed into the room. They were curious to know about the intruder, who was pushing them, to their dismay it was Lord Thirumal (Vishnu), who was among them. They at last had the direct vision of God and as a result they sang spontaneous hymns about the Lord, known as Thiruvandhathi.
Buddhism in Kanchi:

When Fahien visited India during 339 to 414 A.D. he referred to the influence of Buddhism in Andhra Pradesh (i.e) in Krishna, Guntur and Nellore Districts. So Buddhism must have entered Tamil Country through Andhra Pradesh\textsuperscript{34}.

It is said that Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi and stayed there for a few years. He had stated that the city of Kancheepuram had hundred Buddhist monasteries, with ten thousand monks in the capital. Many Buddhist luminaries of North India are known to have contacts with Kancheepuram\textsuperscript{35}.

Manimegalai is one of the five famous Kaviyas in Tamil Literature. This epic poem written during 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C. by Sitalai Sathanar. Manimegalai, the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi was the heroine of the poem. It is stated that Manimegalai visited Kancheepuram during a famine. She was received by Illankilli and was accommodated in the south west corner of the city, in a grove called Darmadavana and she fed the hungry people affected by famine with her miraculous bowl.

Ilankilli, the younger brother of the Chola King was said to have erected a big monastery at Kanchi. In Kanchi, Manimegalai learnt the doctrines of Buddhism from Aravana Adigal. This poem associates Aravana Adigal with famous cities like Puhar, Vanji and Kanchi providing indirect proof for his activities to propagate Buddhism in these places. It is also stated that when Kaviripoompattinam was engulfed by the sea, its inhabitants emigrated to Kanchi and followed a new faith
called Buddhism. Aravana Adigal, a popular Buddhist monk attained Nirvana at Kanchi\textsuperscript{36}.

In the 7\textsuperscript{th} century Hiuen Tsang and Itsing came from China. Itsing mentions about a prince from Kanchi called Bodhi dharma who travelled to China is 520 A.D. He was regarded as the founder of Chan and was the 28\textsuperscript{th} Apostle of China from India. Temples were erected for him. He became the head of monks and spent his life in a famous monastery called Kiu-Kiang.

Vajrabodhi (661-730 A.D.) was a native of Kanchi and his father was the preceptor of the King of Kanchi. He travelled to Nalanda, Kapilavastu, Ceylon and China for his religious pursuits. He is credited to have translated many works in to Chinese\textsuperscript{37}. Dharmapala (7\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.) was a Buddhist celebrity of Kanchi. He was born as an eldest son of a high official. The epigraphical resources of Burma mentioned about Dharmapala and his association with Kanchi. Hiuen Tsang also mentioned about Dharmapala in his travel accounts.

According to Tibetean traditions, Siddha Nagarjuna was born at Kahora, a part of Kanchi. He was a tantric guru and was regarded as one of the eighty four Siddhas. His earlier education was brahmanical learning and his Buddhist studies were at Nalanda. He practiced and propagated Siddhis (occult sciences).

He attained the excellence by the divine grace of the Goddess Tara at Kanchi. His performance of miracles and his mastery in Mayuri-Vidhya (alchemy-a medieval form of chemistry attempting to turn other metals into gold) earned him a distinctive name called “Siddha”. He spent his last years in Sri Parvata in Andhrapradesh\textsuperscript{38}.
Jainism in Kanchi:

Jainism brought changes in philosophy and literature particularly in Tamil country. Kancheepuram was a cradle of Jainism during ancient period. When Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi, in 642 A.D. he had found 40 Jain temples in the city. The Jain literary works refers to Samatabhadra of 2nd century A.D. the first and the fore most Jain scholar from the Digambara School who had definite links with Kanchi. He had been described as the “naked ascetic of Kanchi”. This scholar had participated in theological disputes at various religious centres and Kanchi was one among them. Akalanka a famous Jain philosopher (3rd century) from Belagola is believed to have vanquished the Buddhists at Kanchi.

The Pallavas of Simhavishnu line also extended their support to Jainism. The bi-lingual Pallan Koil inscription of Simhavarman dated 550 A.D. provides important data about Jain settlements at Tirupparuthikundram near Kancheepuram. According to a grant there existed a Jain monastery named Nandi Sangha, at a holy place (Dharmatirtha) of Lord Sri Vardhamana which consisted of many virtuous teachers. Among them Vajranandi was well versed in all sacred literature. Simhavarman donated the village of Sramanasram to this ascetic for worship of Jaindras and Munindras groups.

The same grant mentions that Simhavarman, in the 6th year of his reign also donated the Village Amanserkhai in Pernagaranadu to Vajranandi. This inscription also mentions the gift of other sixteen and half patties of land in Daman village to Vajra Nandhi. This record makes it clear that this temple of Sri
Vardhamana was considered a sacred place for Jains even in 6th century A.D. Later inscriptions from Thiruparuthi Kundram shows that Nandi Sangha continued to be there for a long time41.

King Mahendravarman, the successor of Simha Vishnu was a staunch follower of Jainism in his early ages. Even under changed political situations and oppositions from other religions, Jainism managed to retain its individuality for centuries in and around Tamil country. Graphical evidence reveal that the spread of Jainism ceased by 16th century at Kanchi. But even today Jainism flourishes in Tiruparuthi Kundram, a part of Kancheepuram significantly known as Jina Kanchi42.

4.2.3. Linguistic Heritage – Sanskrit Education:

Sanskrit like Tamil is regarded as one of the most ancient language in India. It is evident from facts and inscriptions that Kancheepuram was a seat of Sanskrit education in the ancient period. In Sanskrit literature too, the earliest reference to Kanchi is found in a book called Mahabashya written by Patanjali43.

Patanjali who lived about 200 B.C. singled out the name of one town in the Tamil country called Kancipura, and explained the grammatical rule for the formation of the word, Kanchipuraka viz., the name of a native of that place. Why should Patanjali, who was a northerner, must have thought it necessary to explain the formation of the word Kanchipuraka? This may be because Kancheepuram was the southernmost seat of Sanskrit learning in those days.

Kanchipuram is a Sanskrit word and the town though situated in a Tamil country has no Tamil name. The ancient Tamil capitals were Uraiyur, Vanji and
Madurai and Tamil traditions does not connect Kanchipura with the earliest Tamil Kings. It is situated far from the heart of the Tamil country, on its outer most borders.

The District of Kanchipura in early times, had no specific name like the other eleven Tamil Districts, but was just called as Aruvadudalai, (i.e.)the region lying North of Aruva. It was long after the period when the Pallava dynasty had established itself; the District became centre of Tamil culture, and came to be called by a specific name called Todaimandalam. When the Aryan culture intruded into Andhra, its rulers were the earliest to absorb Aryan culture. Kanchipura was on the outer most fringes of the Andhra domination and was just outside the genuine Tamil province. So the Aryan influence would have penetrated into the District of Kanchipura. After Andra was Aryanised, Kanchipura became the southernmost of Aryan culture and was not the seat of Tamil culture before sangam period.

The agamas and Agamikas forms of worship were fairly widespread in India in the centuries that immediately preceded the Christian era. There were seven great temple cities of Agamika worship which radiated rays of Bhakti to Lord shiva or Vishnu and Kanchi was one among them. This confirms the theory of early affiliation of Kanchipura to northern culture.

During the rule of early Pallavas (4th century A.D.), there existed a college for teaching Vedic and other Sanskrit lore at Kanchi. Those ghatikas at Kanchi became the centre of Aryan learning and sent scholars to North India to take part in Sanskrit scholarship there. Neither the city of Kanchi nor the early Pallava rulers are referred in the early Tamil poems which now exist. This was because the city though within the borders of the Tamil country, was in early times a home of Sanskrit and not Tamil culture and was ruled over not by Tamil Kings but (Aryanised) Rajas.
4.2.4. Educational Heritage:

Education builds up man’s intelligence and character. Kancheepuram was a seat of higher education even earlier than the period of its association with the Pallava Kings. The Hindu, Buddhist and Jain educational institutions flourished at Kancheepuram. There also existed many Ghatika’s – a centre for learning where in students of higher learning from different places came for completing their studies.

Ghatikas of Kancheepuram were composed of learned Brahmins as referred in the Kasarkudi plates. The Velurpalayam plates referred Ghatika as “Dvijanam Ghatikam” that consisted entirely of the Brahmins, Kshatriyars and Vysias only. The numerical strength of the Ghatika at Kancheepuram must have varied from time to time and a considerable number of scholars must have joined the institution in its different branches of study. The Kancheepuram inscription of Vikramaditya II, calls the members of the Ghatika as the “Mahajanam”. Inscriptions dated in the 52nd reignal year Nandivarman Pallavamalla mentions the phrase “Ghatikai Elayiravar” (i.e.) the seven thousand members of the Ghatika.

So this information reveals that Kanchi was a place of higher learning which was conducted through those Ghatikas. It was presumed that the study of the Vedas, were conducted in temples and the learned members of the Ghatika at Kancheepuram conducted their studies and discussions in the contemporary temple halls or mathas attached to them\(^{47}\).

An inscription found on the western face of one of the pillars of the maha mantapam of the Kailasanathar temple in Kanchi belonging to the reign of
Vikramaditya Satyasraya, a Chalukya ruler indicate the existence of a Ghatika at Kancheepuram. One of the Kasarkudi plates points to the Construction of the Ghatika for the Sake of Brahmins studying the four Vedas. An inscription found in Vaikunda Perumal temple at Kancheepurpam refers to the role played by the inmates of the Ghatika at Kanchi in Coronation of Nandivarman the ruler of Pallava Kingdom.

An inscription at Velurpalayam situated about 7 miles to the north west of Arakonam belonging to the reign of Nandivarman III (Pallava Ruler) of the latter half of the 9 century A.D. refers to the revival of the Ghatika at Kanchi and also the construction of Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi by Narasimhavarman Pallava (Rajasimha) and connecting the Ghatika with Kailasanatha temple.

These sources reveal that the Ghatikas of Kancheepuram imparted advanced learning in all branches of Vedas and had pretty large number of students and teachers. The members of the Ghatika devoted themselves of the critical study (Pravachanam) of the sacred lore. Some inscriptions from Mysore confirmed that the object of establishing Ghatika was to promote the study of Samaveda. The Kasarkudi plates recorded that Narasimha Varman gave his wealth to Devas and Brahmanas. He brought the Ghatikas under his control so as to render full benefit to Brahmanas who studied the four Vedas.

An epigraph found on a pillar of the temple of Paramesvara at Talagunta in Karnataka, stated that Mayooravarman, the first notable ruler of the Kadamba dynasty travelled to Kancheepuram accompanied by his preceptor Virasaraman in
order to learn the entire Pravachanam. Mayooravarman was fully equipped with prior study of the Vedas. He had gone to Kancheepuram Ghatika only to get a special training and to complete his Vedic studies. The study of four Vedas was included in the Ghatika curriculum. This reveals the high standard of education which was imparted at Ghatikas of Kanchi.

The Ghatikas were a powerful force in political sphere too. According to Vaikunda Perumal temple inscriptions the Ghatika members were partly responsible for electing the King Nandi Varma Pallava Malla (then only 12 years of age) to the Pallava throne. The material prosperity of these Ghatikas largely rested on the members of the Pallava royal house who exercised intimate relationship with the members of the Ghatikas. Their interest in the working of Ghatikas by Palava Kings is supported by their inscriptions which refer to their close association with the Ghatika.

4.2.5. Literary Heritage:

The greatness of Kancheepuram has been stated in the puranas, devotional hymns and in Sangam literatures. The literary heritage deals with ancient literary works written by some ancient authors in and around Kanchi and about Perumpanattrupadai – one of ten collected songs written by Kadiyalur Uruthirangannanar. The poet has sung about Kancheepuram and its ruler Tondaiman Illanthirayan.

About Illanthirayan the ruler of Kancheepuram, there were three legends. According to Nachinarkkiniyar, a Chola King espoused a Naga woman and the child
born to them was put adrift on the sea with a Tondai creeper around its neck for identification. The child was washed ashore in the Chola land. It was said that this child was Illanthirayan. Another story was that the Chola King of Kaviripoompattinam, lost his child in a ship wreck. It was assumed that King Illanthirayan was the lost child of the Chola King.

Another story was that Illanthirayan was the chief of a maritime tribe called Thirayar (sea men whose home land was Bengal. They migrated to various parts of the east and some settled down on South India. Illanthirayan was given the title Tondaiman because the Thirayar adopted Tondai creeper as their emblem. Illanthirayan was not only a patron but also a poet and his odes are found in the collections known as Purananuru and Natrinai. He strengthened Tamil culture by patronizing Tamil poets and Tamil learning. This poem gives an account of five Thinais, the occupation, diet and the behaviour of the inhabitants together with a graphic description of the King and his capital. The poet sang the praises of the Lord at Thiru-Veh.Ka a place of pilgrimage near Kanchi.

The description of Kancheepurpam with its perennial festivals, its broad streets, traffic, its busy bazaars, its military quarters, its numerous groves, full of playful monkeys snatching morsels of food made out of rice mixed with ghee and served to the elephants and the boundaries of the city and its brick wall were brief and pointed.

Kandapuram was written by Kachiappa Sivachariar, a native of Kancheeepuram. He was the son of Aathi Saiva Brahmin, Kalathiappa Sivachariar, Kachiappa Sivachariar mastered Tamil and Sanskrit language in his early years and
became a scholar in grammar, literature and Vedic lore. He became the priest in the holy Kumara Kottam temple at Kancheepuram. His book Kandapuranam was based on Sanskrit Siva Sankara Samhithai in six cantos and consists of 10,346 stanzas. The first line in the first stanza in this purana is believed to be written by the God Kandaswamy.

Kachiayappar took the complete work to Kumarakottam and rendered it before learned men. They asked Kachiayappar to explain the combination “j φ H; + j r f f u k; = j φ l r f f u k,” and to quote a chapter and verse from any grammatical authority to justify it. Kachiyappar defended himself by saying that the first line was not his but God Kandaswamy’s (Subramaniam).

This explanation was not accepted. But to the surprise of all, he was helped out of the difficulty by a genius from the Chola Kingdom. Kandapuranam comprises of six cantos and describes the story of Lord Subramaniam and his feasts and abounds in profundity of thought and beautiful imaginary. It is full of wild legends and stories in Virutha metre.

Nannul was written by Saint Pavananthi, a Jain ascetic of Janakapuram in the vicinity of Kancheepuram. He lived about A.D.1205. He was the son of Sanmathi munivar. Nannul treats the letters and words and though based on the Tolkkapiam, it closely follows the arrangement of Pani-niyam. This popular treatise contains canon of criticism and pedagogies derived from the Tolkkappiam.

Kalukuntra puranam was written by Vira Raghava Mudaliar. He was a native of Poothoor near Kanchi and was the son of Vaduganatha Mudaliar. He went
to Kanchi, when his kith and kin left the village Pon-Kalanthai. He composed Pillai Tamil in honour of Ammayappa Mudaliar of Seyyur. He travelled to Jaffna and obtained many gifts from King Para Raja Singan and returned home. On his way home, he composed an Ula in praise of the ruler of Kaittar in the Tirunelveli district. Records states he must have lived in the first half of the 16th century\textsuperscript{54}.

Siddhi Vinayaga Thiru-Irattai-Mani Malai was composed by Kulam-kai Thambiran, a vellala of Kancheepuram. He visited Jaffna and settled there for some time at Vannar-Pannai and taught grammar to Nellainatha Mudaliar. His arm was by nature too short and hence he was nick named as Kulam-kai. Nel-kuntavanam was a Vellala of Kancheepuram had left his home town and made pilgrimages to Shiva shrines and composed an Anthadhi in praise of the Lord of Thirupukalur temple\textsuperscript{55}.

4.2.6. Archaeological heritage:

Archaeological wealth of a country confined mainly to the materials that lie buried in the womb of the earth for centuries which also adds to the aspect of our heritage. Archaeology is an important aid to understand the panorama of human life in various stages in different parts of the country. The department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Madras took up excavations at Kanchi in the heart of the ancient city. The excavations unearthed archaeological materials belonging to cultural periods covering the pre-Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagar periods. Period I (A,B) (3rd B.C. to 4th A.D.).

The period I.A was represented by the fine black and red ware with some of the shreds bearing painted design and second sub division B was marked by the
use of roulette ware thick black and red ware, beads of semi precious stones, one of
the grey ware was found to bare five Brahmi letters (Put a la tu Su) of the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Century A.D. This seems to represent the name of a Buddhist monk, Putalatusa. The evidences so far obtained not only confirm the antiquity of Kancheepuram but its association with Buddhism in the early centuries of the Christian era.

A few brick structures possibly forming part of a Buddha shrine were also found belonging to this period. Period II-Circa (4\textsuperscript{th} A.D. – 9 A.D.) this period was distinguished by the occurrence of amphora jars, a fine bright red and orange slipped glassware and stone objects were found. Period III was represented by the use of polished red wares, coarse red wares; few shreds of the Chinese celadon ware were obtained\textsuperscript{56}.

In KCM 4, remains of a stupa like structure were formed in the lower most layers. The structure consisted of four courses of baked bricks. The bricks in the lower two courses formed a segment of a circle, while the upper courses were found to run straight. Further the structure consisted of two walls running in north south direction and lying one above the other. While the upper wall was straight (brick size 56 x 23 x 8 cm) the lower wall was curve-linear on plan, forming a segment of a circle. Around the structures there were a number of post holes, which resembled some kind of roof on the brick structure. This according to the excavator indicates the remains of a Buddhist stupa at Kancheepuram.

The evidences so far obtained confirm the prevalence of Buddhism in Kancheepuram during the early centuries of the Christian era. Other excavated findings were roulette ware, terracotta coin moulds, terracotta ornamented figures,
glass beads and amphora jars indicate the ancient cultural heritage of Kanchi. The discovery of double fish motif and coin mould with an Ujjain symbol indicates the influence of the Satavahanas rule in this region.

The Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu carried out excavations at Vasavasamuttiram at the mouth of the Palar River. Two ring wells were located close to each other and were exposed in the digging. It was gathered that a brick lined pit with a drain had existed near the ring wells which had been dug away by the land owner. Other finds in this excavation were roulette ware, amphora jars. The site seems to have been remained under the use only for a short period (cir-2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D.), but has revealed vestiges for Indo Roman contact\textsuperscript{57}. In the excavations conducted in the premises of the Kamakoti matha near Kamakshi amman Temple and in some parts of the city revealed two ancient cultural periods.

From the upper half of these earlier deposits were obtained the shreds of roulette ware and conical amphora of numbering more that 50 placed in a row. Punch marked coin moulds, copper Satavahana coins, one of them bearing the name Rudra Satakarni of Circa 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D. were found in this level. Among the other notable finds were terracotta figurines showing a cult Goddess, a royal head, folded hands of a lady in rhythmic dance pose, sturdy and graceful bulls\textsuperscript{58} etc.

This megalithic period coincides with the Pallava period (4-9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.) as indicated by the relevant lead coins, the ceramics consisted of a bright red slipped ware. The medieval period, was characterized by a thick dull red pottery and glass beads and bangles. These excavations show that the megalithic people in this area used iron for their weapons. The pottery mostly consisted of black and red
wares. They stored water in shallow basins and developed the tank irrigation systems. Many of the existing tanks in the District would have been built by the megalithic folks, Cultivation of crops and tending of animals were their favourite occupation. Some groups in the society buried the dead and others cremated them. The ashes and bones collected after some time were given a secondary ceremonial burial later\textsuperscript{59}. The archaeological evidences obtained from these excavations provides much confirmatory evidence and also provides profound insight into the different aspects of material culture and day to day life of the people of this area in the past centuries.

4.2.7. Art and Architectural Heritage:

Tamilagam was the cradle of fine arts during the past ages. Fine arts like, music, dance, literature, painting, sculpture and architecture probably had their roots in Tamil soil. It is said that Indian architecture is frozen music or poetic utterance in stone, wood or metal\textsuperscript{60}. Kancheepuram, the city of famous temples is known for its art and architectural elegance.

The Kailasanathar Temple was built by a Pallava King named Raja Simha during the end of 7\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. The paintings and the art poses in different temples built by the Pallavas had similar resemblances. In the right of the entrance of the main cell of Kailasanathar shrine there is a large painting of Lord Shiva dancing in Lalatalaka pose (foot touching forehead) and he is multi armed. Unfortunately in this painting, the form is almost faded. In the cells surrounding the court yard of temple, there is a painting with remains of a princely figure and a Somaskanda. The resemblances of the same paintings are found at Sithannavasal.
On the walls of the Pradakshina Patta in cell no.9, fragments of painting portray the upper and lower right arms of Shiva and the rest being lost. In the 11th small cell, there is a fragment of a beautiful face of Shiva with only a part of the left eye, nose, lip, cheek the kundala on the ear and the sacred thread on the shoulders are preserved. The most important painting here is drawn in red and all colours have vanished and the one representing Somaskanda on the back wall of cell no.41.

The Somaskanda pose is a favourite theme of Pallava art, which is the only representation of it in this period preserved for us. In this painting Lord Siva is seated and his left leg bent on the seat. The jata (matted hair) is lost. The sacred thread of Lord Shiva flowing in a curve and hanging in tassels is matched only by the elaborate girdle and pleasing fold of the silken garments. The bracelets show the most pleasing arrangement of jewellery.

The baby Skanda beside him is a noble representation of the age of innocence. A tiny coronet adorns his head. Devi Parvathi is seated on a coach with her right leg on the seat and the left leg rested on a cushioned foot stool. The face of Devi in the painting is obliterated and her right hand caresses the child and the left hand rests on the seat. The body shape and features of the Devi is an elegance of feminine grace. Only a pendant in a necklace and armlets and bracelets worn by her show the beauty of the ornaments. The silk garment worn by the Devi is an excellent piece of art. The Addata, a forceful ghana, is seated next to Shiva and Lalitha is seated next to the Devi.
When the Vijayanagara dynasty ruled over Kancheepuram, paintings like other arts were encouraged. The Varadaraja temple was once completely painted, but now there are only fragments left. The sculptured ceiling of the Andal unjal mandapam in this temple is painted on a theme of sports of Lord Krishna. There are pictures of Vishnu seated with his consorts, dancing figures; riders on palanquin were composed of feminine figure.

The pictures of elephants and horses as vehicles of Rati and Manmata are found in triangular strips at the corners. In the mandapam, around a central square, a band is painted in the ceiling where Rati and Manmatha are the principal figures painted on all the four sides.

Rati rides a parrot and Manmatha, the God of love bending his sugar cane bow to shoot flower arrows, or passionately caressing Rati or violently dancing with Rati is painted on all the four sides. Colours such as yellow, green and black can be easily made out but some colours in the painting have faded. This painting is dated to the end of 10th century.

At the back of the main shrine, of Varadaraja, close to a window, there is a painting which covers almost the entire wall area. This painting is a representation of the Garuda Vahana of Varadharaja with a large temple umbrella held on either side, churi and other symbols are present. There is another painting presenting Vishnu from Tiruvandandai attended by his three consorts – Thirumagal, Bhoodevi and Niladevi. The colours in this painting are better preserved than that on the wall. These paintings are dated back to the 17th century.
Architecture:

The temples at Kancheepuram reveal the level Architectural elegance attained during the early period of history. Among them, the most architecturally designed temple is the Kailasanathar temple. This is one of the earliest temples built on sand stone. It was built by Raja Simha. His other structural temples are shore temple at Mahabalipuram and Talagriveswara temple at Panamalai etc.

The plan of this temple is comprised of a large and a smaller court yard with central group of shrines placed towards the western extremity of the large ones. The shrine is surmounted by lofty pyramidal tower. At the centre of large prahara is a vimana housing the sanctum with the axial mandapas. In the prahara, there is another shrine built by Mahendra Varma –III the son of Raja Simha. The entrance to the temple is on the eastern direction. There are seven east facing sub shrines in a row near the entrance which were built by the queens of Raja Simha including his chief queen Rangapataka. The central shrine is called Raja Simheswara known after the king, the two courses of the plinth are built of granite to withstand the load of the structure. The temple has a square pradakshina padha (Perambulatory passage) and the seven sub shrines which are attached to the outer walls three on the actual sides and four at the centres, each of them having images of the God.

The sanctum consists of a panel of Somaskanda (i.e) the depiction of Shiva, Parvathi and Skanda in the centre, carved at the back wall, which is a characteristic feature of all temples, built during Raja Simha’s period. The wall of this temple is surfaced with sculptures. The shrines are topped by shikaras. The sanctum is crowned by an octagonal shikhara and a stupi.
The shrine of Mahendravarman is simple one. The prahara has a series of fifty eight shrines attached to the inner face of the wall which were once profusely carved and painted all over. The pillars of this temple are either Simhapada (lion based) or Nagapadas (Serpent based) or Vyalapada (mythical animal) based. The sculptures on the wall surface of the entire temple represent the Dravidian form of Saivaite Brahmanical deities.

Sculptures:

The ardhanareeshwara (i.e.) half Siva and Parvathi sculpture in this shrine is very beautiful. The feminine part of the sculpture has a veena in one of the hand. The male aspect of Shiva is seated on a ball.

Iravataneswara Temple belongs to the period of Raja Simha. The Mahamandapam and the porch were additions made during the rule of Vijayanagar dynasty. This Shiva temple was built of sand stone and faces the east. This temple consists of dvitala vimana with a square shikhara and a griva. The niches at the cardinal points have shrines attributes to God Brahma in the North, God Vishnu in the East and God Dakshina Moorthi in the South. The other important sculptures in the mandapa are various forms of Shiva like the orudhera Tandava, Shada kesa Gangadhara etc. Inside the sanctum, the Linga is installed in a Somaskanda panel on the wall.

Piravataneswara Temple was built during the reign of Pallava Nandi Varma – II. It is constructed out of sand stone. It consists of a square dvitale vimana with octagonal shikhara. It has a sanctum and a rectangular mukha
mandapa axially. Inside the sanctum there is a Linga with a circular peta. On the back wall a Somaskanda, along with Brahma, Vishnu and other divinities are depicted. The exterior wall of the sanctum contains the sculptures of Durga, Lingodbhava, Brahma, Vishnu, Gajalakshmi and others.

Mukteswara Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva which is also known as “Dharmamahadevi Ishwaram” which was named after Rangapataka, the chief queen of Rajasimha. This temple built of sandstone and face the east direction. This temple has a three storied square vimana with circular Shikhara. It also consists of a sanctum and a pillared mukha mandapa. Somaskanda, panel with Vishnu and Brahma are seen on the exterior wall of sanctum.

Elegant sculptures depicting Ravana lifting Kailas, Gangadhara, Surya, Karthikeya and Durga are found in this temple. The sub shrines dedicated to Chandikeshwara and Nandi mandapa are addition made during later periods. The origin of this temple is dated to the 8th century A.D. but later additions to this temple are made during 13th and 14th centuries.

Jvarahaeswar Temple was probably built during the rule of Kulothunga Chola – III (1178-1218 A.D.). It is known for its structural ornamentation and decorations. This temple faces east and consists of a sanctum, ardha mandapa, mahamandapa, Nandi mandapa and a large bali peta. The Vimana is a two tiered elliptical one. The grilled windows with various figures, the pillars filled with tiny figure sculptures, floral carvings are some of the artistic examples which make the temple a master piece of architecture.
Uthiramerur Inscriptions

The most important inscription that highlights local self-government in Tamil Nadu is an Uthiramerur inscription. It is found on the west wall of Vaikuntha Perumal temple. A record of the Chola King Madurai Konda Parakesari Varman, dated in his fourteenth year and contains a letter from the King to the villagers regarding his qualifications for appointments.65

The Inscription is one of the most valuable documents in South Indian constitutional history. It throws a flood of light on the committee system of village government, the method of village administration by the assembly, the qualifications for membership, etc. Inscription on the south wall of the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple records that twenty first year of the “Ganga – Pallava” King Danti Vikramavarma, a resolution of the village assembly.

Inscriptions on the same wall, recorded in the eighth year of Chola King Raja Kesarivarman, contains a resolution of the village assembly. Inscription on the same wall, contains a record of the Rashtrakuta King Kannaradeva (Krishna – III), “Who conquered Kanchi and Thanjai”, in his twenty fifth year, and also a resolution of the village assembly, regarding imposing fines. The Ur or sabha had an executive body known as Alunganam or the ruling group. There were learned Brahmanas or Bhattas among the ruling members of this body.

The village assembly functioned through its committees called variyam, a word with varya as root, meaning ‘selected or chosen’. The numbers of the variyams or executive committees of the village assembly differed according to the
size of the village and its population. The Maha sabhas carried out many functions including fiscal, ministerial and judicial.

The Uthiramerur inscription has record on the resolution of the sabha regarding the constitution of the variyams or the board. We learn from these resolutions the qualifications prescribed for membership of the committees. The village consisted of thirty wards and selection to these wards was done by Kudavolai system. It refers to an electoral process followed in Cholas period. All the names of the candidates were written in separate strip of palm leaves (Olai) and put in a pot (Kudam). On the day of election the head who conducts the election asks a boy to pick up a strip in the presence of villagers. The names of candidates selected are announced by the head who conducts the election. The qualifications are; He should posses one veli land and a house built in a taxable land on his own site. He should have knowledge about Vedas and mantras. His age should be between 35 and 70. Persons who killed brahmins or women or cow or children were disqualified. The drunkards and people who had undergone punishments were also disqualified from contesting from Kudavolai System. The committees were allocated to them according to their duties and they were called variyapperu makkal related to one function or another.
References:

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24 Ibid. pp.115 & 116

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26 Srinivasan C.R., Kancheepuram through ages, pp.243 & 244.


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62 Sivamurthi C., South Indian Paintings, p.98.


66 The Hindu, dated 17.08.2009.