Chapter - III

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

Historical Brief

Pudukkottai was formerly one of the princely states on India. It was under different dynasties during the first half of the 15th Century and under Mughals till the 17th century. Thereafter Pudukkottai came under the sovereignty of the Thondaiman Kings who had reigned the state till it was merged with the Government of India after Independence. The Thondaiman Kings were noted for the able and clean administration. During their rule they have augmented creation of irrigation sources for agriculture, evolved a sound revenue administration, education systems etc., The palatial administrative building for public offices constructed during their period still remains as a monument and serving the same purpose. The noted British administrator Alexander Loftus Tottenham was the administrative executive under the Thondaiman rulers. He evolved the famous “Tottenham System” of file maintenance and other office procedures, which
is still being followed by government departments with a little change then and there.

**Geographical Position**

Pudukkottai District was formed on 14.1.1974. The total area of the district is 4663.2 sq.km (466329 Ha). The District is bound on the North and North West by Tiruchiappalli District, West and South West by Sivaganga District, on the East and North East by Thanjavur District and on the South East by Bay of Bengal.

Pudukkottai District is situated in between latitude 9°50' and 10°40' and longitude 78°25' and 79°15'. It is almost a Coastal District. The Western portion is 600 feet above M.S.L. tapers towards the East and reaches the Sea level. The land slope almost gentle except slight undulation particularly in Ponnamaravathy area. There are no big hills except Narthamalai hillock in Annavasal block and Piranmalai foothills in Ponnamaravathy block.
DISTRICT MAP OF PUDUKOTTAI DISTRICT
LOCATION AND AREA

Pudukkottai is one of the new districts formed after the 1971 census, on 14th January 1974. It is one of the small districts of Tamil Nadu with an area of 4661 sq.Kms. The district lies between 78 degrees 25' to 79 degrees 15' of the eastern longitude and 9 degrees 50; to 10 degrees 40' of the northern latitude. This district is bounded by Tiruchirappalli in the north, Thanjavur in the north-east, Bay of Bengal in the east and Ramanthapuram in the south. It has a coastline of about 39 Kms. Total area of the district is 4651 sq. Kms. Headquarters of the district is Pudukkottai.

Revenue Administration

There are two revenue Divisions namely Pudukkottai and Aranthangi. There are seven taluks and thirteen Panchayat unions with 765 revenue villages and 498 village panchayats. There are also two Municipalities and eight town panchayats in this District.

Population

According to 1991 population census the total population of the District is 13,27,148 out of which 6,61,782 are males and 6,65,366 are
females. It has increased in 2001 census. The total of the District is 14,52,269 out of which 7,20,847 are males and 7,31,422 are females.

Table 3.1

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<th>Details</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>6,61,782</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Source: District Report, Pudukottai 2001

Note: The District Sex ratio is 1015. The Population Density is 312 person per Sq.kms.

SOIL TYPE

According to Geological reports, rocks, granite, stone and limestone occurs in this district. White clay and other building stones are available in plenty. Previously private parties took the mines on lease. They have exploited both the mine and quarry workers with meager payment. Now groups of women under DWCRA scheme have leased the mines for a period of three years. This system has now brought a great
change in the lives of the poor by providing them reasonable age and hours of employment.

INDUSTRIES

Pudukkottai is one of the industrially backward districts. It is having 1259 small scale industries and 56 medium scale industries and 16 large scale industries.

HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS

There is one famous Shiva Temple at AVUDAIYARKOIL. It is internationally famous for its beautiful sculptures. Viralimalai in Trichy road is a pilgrim centre where a beautiful temple for Lord Muruga is situated over the hilltop. Sithannavasal is a place of historical importance. Tourists from the different parts of the country visit the rock beds and cave temples which were carved during the Samana period. The paintings done during the 6th century are still afresh and depict the ancient culture and artistically skill.

ROAD COMMUNICATIONS

This District is sufficiently linked with other parts of the country with Railways and Highways.
GENERAL

Alangudi is a famous centre for Groundnut. The nature of the district is purely agrarian with the major crops of Paddy, Banana, Sugarcane, Groundnut and cashew nut. There is one All India Pulses Research Station at the village “Vamban” and one State agricultural farm at Kudumianmalai.

Pudukkottai was organised as a separate district, on 14th January 1974, comprising the former Pudukkottai Division of Tiruchirappalli district with some additions from Thanjavur district. At present, this district is composed of two Revenue Divisions, namely, Pudukkottai and Aranthangi and nine Taluks, namely, Kulathur, Illuppur, Alangudi, Pudukkottai, Gandarvakottai, Thirumayam, Aranthangi, Avudaiyarakoil and Manamelkudi. There are 765 Revenue Villages. The area of the district is 4663 Sq.Kms. The population of the district is 14,52,269 (as per Census 2001 Provisional figures). The district depends a great deal on the monsoon for its water supply.

Many of the villages are of ancient foundation. The district was one of the homes of pre-historic man. A very large
number of burial sites found in the northern and western parts of the district attest this fact:

A very brief sketch of political history is given here in order to appreciate and understand the mixed legacy of antiquities, monuments, epigraphs and the like. The history of Pudukkottai is an epitome of the history of South India. In and around Pudukkottai, there are many vestiges of the oldest habitations of man and some of the lithic records known in the south. The Pandyas, Cholas, Pallavas, Haysalas, Vijaynagar and Madurai Nayaks ruled over this part of the country and fostered its communal organisations, trade and industries and embellished it with temples and monuments of outstanding merit.

Sangam Tamil literatures mention some place names of the district. Oliyamangalam (Thirumayam Taluk) is called as Ollaiyur in Purananuru. It was the birth place of poet Ollaiyur Kilan Makan Perumchatan and Ollaiyur Thantha Budha Pandyan. Agananuru also mentions Ollaiyur. It seems to have been an important city of the Pandyas. Four other places also find place in the Sangam classics. They are Ambukkovil, the ancient Alumbil, referred
to in Agananuru; Avur the home of the poets Avurkilar, Avur Mulamkilar; Erichi, the ancient Erichalur which had been identified with Erichi Village in Pudukkottai - Aranthangi road (But according to recent researches a village near Illupur). It was probably the home of the poet Madalan Madurai Kumaranar. Avayapatti is traditionally associated with Avvaiyar, who is believed to have lived here for some time.

This district was under the Pandyas of the first empire during Sangam period, but some part of it's northern boundary had been under the influence of the Cholas of Uraiyr, since a few villages here bear the prefix like "killi" and "valavan" both of which are the titles of the Cholas.

The district shares the large prosperity of the maritime trade of the Tamils, Karukkakurichi, the place of find of a treasure trove of more than 500 Imperial Roman Gold and Silver Coins, the largest ever recorded from a single hoard deserves notice in the context of the early history of the district. This place lies in Alangudi taluk, with in a short distance north of Aranthangi and the adjoining old ports of Mimisal and Saliyur in the same area and Tondi further south. The site of find would mark an important Indo-Roman
trading centre, through which the inland trade route ran between the western and eastern ports during that time.

This is indicated by a chain of such Roman coin hoard sites such as Korkai, Kilakkarai, Alagankulam all on the eastern sea coast. While Karukkakuruchi is a bit inland but not far away from port like Mimisal. There are also few other sites of such finds in the east coast. These, while pointing out the exchanges of the exportable products for Roman gold and silver currency would also indicate the places mentioned to have been active trade centres. The Karukkakurichi hoard contained the issues of the Roman emperors and their queens, successively from Augustus (BC 29 - AD 14) upto Vaspasianus (69-79 AD).

From about the end of fourth century about the last quarter of sixth, the district, like many other parts of Tamil Nadu was under the Kalabhras. It must have come under the King Kurran, inscription of whom has been found in Pulankurichi near Ponnamaravathi in the district.

The next phase in the history of the district, follows the overthrow of Kalabharas by Kadungon in Pandya country about 590 AD. The first Pandya empire inaugurated by
Kadungon spread in to the district. This is shown by the presence of inscription of the rulers of this dynasty in Kudumianmalai, Thirugokarnam and Sittannavasal. The poem, Pandimandala sathakam states that Pandya land’s northern frontier was river Vellar. The Vellar that flows north of Pudukkottai town has been from the ancient times was the traditional boundary separating the terrains of the Cholas and Pandyas. This dividing line formed the Konadu and Kanadu, on the north and south respectively.

Thus the district became a kind of marchar land between the Pandyas and Pallavas. The Pandyas and Pallavas carried on the wars by proxy through their subordinate chiefs the Mutharayars and Velirs. Among the Velirs the most well known are the Irukkuvels of Kodumbalur. The Kodumbalur Velirs located in the political buffer zone between the kingdoms of the Cholas and Pandyas and formed the family of nobility from which kings and other chiefs made matrimonial alliance.

The period of three centuries between C 600 and C 900 AD relates to the reign of the Pallavas of Kanchi and Pandyas of Madurai who ruled over the entire Tamila Nadu
with their boundary in between their empires oscillating on either side of river Kaveri the bone of contention being Cholamandalam the home of Cholas and the fertile Kaveri delta that was the granary of the south and as such always been the cynosure of all powers contending for supermacy during the entire historical period. The Cholas themselves were in eclipse and hibernating only to revive again in the ninth century, when the Pallava power came to an end, the Pandyas were holding on for some more time to yield place ultimately to the waxing Chola power.

Though Mahendravarma Pallava (604-630 A.D) inherited the Pallava empire from his victorious father Simhavishnu that reached up to the bank of the Cauvery, Cholamandalam could not be retained by his immediate successor, as it was over-run by the Pandyas of the further south. The tract north and south of river Vellar were in the hands of the Mutharayar chieftains who till their annihilation by the resurgent Chola line of Vijayalaya, were owing alternate allegiance to the super powers. The Irukkuvelirs, at the end became the firm allies of the Cholas.
Thus, one cannot expect to find early Pallava monuments, antiquities and inscriptions in Pudukkottai region but only those of the contemporary Pandyas along with those of Mutharaiyars and Irukkuvelirs. Later Pallavas wrested the tract from the hands of the Pandyas. The tract come under the Pallavas from the time of Nandhivarman-Il (730-796 AD) when the Pallavas power reasserted itself in Cholamandalam and the tract south of Kaveri, reaching a little south beyond Vellar, comprising the northern half of the Pudukkottai district. This period is thus marked by the presence of rock cut cave temples of the Pandyas and Mutharaiyars.

The available historical evidence under the first Pandya empire is rather scanty. The best known is the inscription at Sittannavasal in the reign of Srimara Srivallaba (851-862 AD) and at Kudumianmalai in the reign of Kochadayyan Ranadheeran or Sadayan Maran (C 700-730 AD). In the reign of Maravarman Rajasimha-I (C 730-760 AD) a number of battles were fought against the Pallavas, one of the sites was Kodumbalur. The inscription of the reign of Nedunchadayyan, (C 768-816 AD) the greatest king of the
dynasty is found in Thirugokarnam and Nirpalani. Of the reign of three successors of Srimara Srivallaba ending with Rajasimha-II (C 920 AD) who lost his kingdom to the resurgent Cholas, there is no reference about the Pandya rulers in the district.

The Pallava references to places and incidents in the district are equally scanty. The earliest reference of the historical events in the district find place in the Pandya records of Velvikudi and Sinnamanur plates which say that Maravarman Rajasimha defeated Nadhivarman Pallava Malla at Kodumbalur. The inscriptions of his successors are found in Kunnandarkoil, Malayadipatti and Rasalipatti.

The age of Pallavas and Pandyas of the first empire, the Mutharaiyars and Irukkuvelirs was the age of Tamil Bhakthi Movement. The Thevaram mentions several temples in the district. The three Nayanmars from this district were, Idangalinayanar of Kodumbalur, Perumizhalai Kurumbanayanar associated with Devarmalai and Kulachirai Nayanar of Manamelgudi.
Jainism well flourished in Pudukkottai area up to 11th century. There are a number of Jaina vestiges in the district.

The Buddhist vestiges in the district come from the former Thanjavur district. Buddha idols are found at Kottaipattinam and Karur.

With the exit of Pallavas from the political scene and the subsequent elimination of the Pandya power by the Cholas who established themselves at Thanjavur as their capital at the close of 9th century. By 11th century they extended their sway even beyond, Tamilakam. Pudukkottai among many other places come under them. Their rule extended till about the middle of 13th century when the Pandyas staged a comeback.

Under Chola Vijayalaya, this district formed part of his dominion but perhaps fitfully. The notion that some temples of ninth century in the district, belong to early Chola period, is erroneous. The Pandyas still held power in the region. It was not until the reign of Parantaka-I (907-955 AD). Vijayalay's second successor, that the Cholas conquered the entire Pandya land. The Kodumbalur chiefs helped Parantaka
in his campaign and remained faithful to the Cholas thereafter.

The rule of Rajaraja-I shows a brilliant part in the history of the district in common with that of Tamil Nadu. The full benefaction of the Chola rule is revealed in their inscriptions in the district. These inscriptions are of great value in showing how effectively local administration functioned in this part of Chola Kingdom.

Rajaraja-I appointed his son the viceroy of the conquered Pandya and Chera lands. The entire district formed part of the Chola kingdom until the last year of Kulothunga-III (1178-1218 AD). At the death of Rajaraja-II and the succession of Rajadhiraja-II, the Chola power began to decline.

The Pandyas began to assert their independence from the time of Kulothunga-I. Towards the end of the reign of Raja Raja-II, Kulasekara one of the two contenders for Pandya throne pealed the Chola for help. His rival Parakrama turned towards Srilanka. Pudukkottai also become seat this civil war. Parakrama Babu the Srilanka king sent an army to
assist Parakrama Pandya according to Culavamsa, the Sinhalese chornicle the Sinhalese army engaged itself in the war in the parts of the district and burnt down the three storeyed palace at Ponnamaravathi. The outcome of the civil war became disastrous to the Cholas.

The history of the district after the fall of Cholas could not be told in detail for the records are comparatively minimal. The Pandyas of the second empire spread their influence in the district gradually.

The Pandya power reached its height in the district under Jatavaranma Sundra Pandya-I and Jatavaraman vira Pandya-I the joint rulers. The inscription of Virapandya in Kudumianmalai, throws much light on his relationship with Srilanka and his kingdom across the seas. During the reign of Maravarman Kulasekara-I who acceded in 1268 A.D, Marcopolo the Venetian traveler visited Pandya country. Towards the end of Kulasekara's reign Jatavaranma Virapandya-II and Jatavaranma Sundara Pandya-II, the brothers quarreled. This led to a civil war in Pandya country resulting in political unrest and confusion.
Malikafur the general of Alaudeen Khalji the Sultan of Delhi took advantage of this and invaded Pandya country. This led to the incorporation of the Pandya country in the Delhi empire in subsequent years. A sultanate was established at Madurai. There are two inscriptions relating to the period of the Sultans of Madurai in the district, one at Rangiam (1332 AD) and another at Panaiyur (1344 A.D).

The brief spell of Muslim rule (Sultanate of Madurai) at Madurai lasted for about 75 years and again there was political unrest and chaos and Pudukkottai region also shared the fate. Minor princes ruled small territories here and there. By about 1371 AD. Kumarakampana, the Vijayanagar prince took over Madurai and the Sultanate came to an end. But the Pandya power did not survive on the Hindu conquest and slowly it ceased to be a historical force in the district.

The Hoysalas of Karnataka arrived in the southern part of Tamil Nadu and actively intervened Chola - Pandya feuds and soon they came to occupy the region on either banks of river Cauvery with the capital at Kannanur (modern Samayapuram). They established themselves in the area by
the middle of 13th century and much of the Pudukkottai area was under their sway till the end of 13th century.

The Vijayanagar Rayas centered in Hampi took over Madurai, from the Muslims when the whole of southern Karnataka, Andra and Tamilnadu came under one rule - the Vijayanagar empire.

Under the Vijayanagar Sangama dynasty (1336-1485 A.D) the inscriptions in the district refer to many local chiefs such as Suraikudi, Perambur, Sendavanmangalam, Vanadaraiyar, Gangaiaraiyar and Thondaimans of Aranthangi. During the brief Suluva rule (1485-1505 A.D) Narasimha Raya the first Suluva emperor, during a tour of his dominions passed through Pudukkottai country on his way to Madurai. Vira Narasimha Nayak, the Tuluva usurper and the general of Saluva Narasimha-I, led a campaign against the Pandya chiefs and marched through Pudukkottai.

A great Personality of the Tuluva dynasty (1505-1570 A.D) was Krishna Deveraya (1509-1529 A.D). He had visited Brahaddamba Gokarnesa temple at Thirugokarnam on his way to Rameswaram and gifted many valuable presents to the temple. Under his successor eastern part of Pudukkottai
district formed part of the Thanjavur kingdom for some time and the rest was under the Madurai Nayaks. The Thondaimans of Pudukkottai rose to power by about the end of 17th century.

The provincial viceroys of the Vijayanagar empire, the Nayaks of Madurai and Thanjavur asserted independence after the downfall of the empire. The Pudukkottai area thus came under the Nayaks of Madurai nominally and under the Thanjavur Nayaks frequently.

The Thondaimans of Pudukkottai came to rule with full sovereignty over the Pudukkottai area from the middle of the 17th century till it's amalgamation with the rest of India after Indian Independence in 1947.

The ancestors of the Pudukkottai ruling line of Thondaimans, are migrants from Thiruppathi region in the Thondaimandalam, the northern stretch of the ancient Tamil Kingdom, along with the Vijaynagar army, which was in engagement in this part of territory in the early 17th century. It is probable that one among them got some lands assigned to him by the local Pallavarayar chieftain and settled down at Karambakudi and Ambukovil area, and became the chieftain
of the area, later came to be called as the progenitor of Thondaimans of Pudukkottai ruling house. According to the legendary account found in a Telugu poem, Thondaiman Vamasavali, the Thondaimans belonged to Indravamsa and the first ruler was Pachai Thondaiman.

Avadi Raya Thondaiman, the successor of Pachai Thondaiman, with the favour of Venkata Raya-III (1630-1642 A.D) the king of Vijayanagar got extended the land in his possession in the region and he was also conferred the title Raya. The Avadai Raya Thondaiman inherited Vijayanagar tradition and the Thondaimans of later period adopted it.

His son Ragunatha Raya Thondaiman came close to the Nayak of Thanjavur and Rangakrishna Muthuvirappa Nayak of Tiruchirappalli. He was appointed as the arasu kavalar of Tiruchirappalli. Vijaya Raghunatha Kilavan Sethupathi (1673-1710 A.D) the Sethupathi ruler of Ramanathapuram married Kathali Nachiar the sister of Thondaiman. This marriage strengthened the ties between these dynasties. The Sethupathi presented the tract of land to the south of Vellar to the Thondaiman. Thus the Pudukkottai territory was enlarged. This account is called the Sethupathi
origin of Pudukkottai country and expansion of Thondaiman rule. The Thondaiman's rule was established south of Vellar and Raghunatha Raya Thondaiman was in estimation to the status of a bigger territory by about 1686 A.D., and he ruled up to 1730 A.D. About the time that Raghunatha Raya Thondaiman became the ruler of Pudukkottai, Namana Thondaiman, his brother became the chief of Kulathur Palayam (present Kulathur taluk area) with the blessings of the Nayak king Ranga Krishna Muthuvirappa of Tiruchirappalli (1682-1689 A.D) and Kulathur continued as separate "principality - with it's ruler known as Kulathur Thondaiman " till about 1750 A.D when it was annexed to Pudukkottai. Reghunatha also got some territories by victory, consolidating Pudukkottai rule roughly constituting the former Kulathur, Alangudi and Thirumayam taluks. The tract contained in these taluks, later came to be known as Pudukkottai State (Pudukkottai Samasthanam).

Vijaya Raghunatha Raya Thondaiman (1730-1769 A.D) was the second in the line of Thondaimans. During his period the whole of India come under the umbrella of the Mughals. The Nayakdoms of Ginjee, Thanjavur and Madurai
were subjugated and became tributaries of the Mughal rule so also the smaller palayams which were under them. The Nizam of Hydrabad was appointed as the Mughal representative of South India, in turn the Nizam entrusted the Tamilnadu region then known as Carnatic, to the Nawab of Arcot. Many of the tributary states did not remit the tributes regularly and such provinces were invaded by the Nawab's forces. Nothing like this happened in the case of Pudukkottai and was left undisturbed by the Nawab.

The famous war of succession to the office of Nawab of Carnatic between Mohamad Ali and Chanda Sahib, became in due course a war of supremacy between the English and the French in South India which resulted in the Carnatic wars. The French supported the cause of Chanda Sahib and the English were on the side of Mohamed Ali. The war lasted for many years mainly around Tiruchirappalli. The Thondaiman was firmly on the side of the English at his time while the rulers like Thanjavur Marathas wavered. At last the English emerged as the masters of this land. This firm help of the Thondaiman to the English was rewarded by the
exemption of tribute by the victorious Nawab and later this was continued by the English.

The Thondaiman's act of friendship towards English continued by the next ruler Raya Raghunatha Thondaiman (1769-1789 A.D). Because of this the Thondaiman had to encounter the strong forces of Hyder Ali.

Vijaya Raghunatha Thondaiman (1789 - 1807 A.D) helped the English and the Nawb. The Nawab Mohamed Ali conferred up on the Thondaiman the title "Raja Bahadur". The political wind was in favour of the English. The entire Carnatic region was taken over by the English by 1800. During the process of consolidation of the English rule, the Thanjavur Maratha kingdom was taken away, Ramanathapuram was reduced to a Jamindari but Pudukkottai was on the firm grounds and it was allowed to be separate principality (not as a part of British India) with honours and was high in British favour. Pudukkottai was treated as a State and the Raja was quasi-independent ruler with full powers of administration.

It was during the time of this ruler Vijaya Raghunatha Thondaiman, the Poligar war took place between
the English and the rebellious palayakars of Thirunelveli, the most significant of whom was Veerapandia Kattabomman or Kattabommu Nayak. Kattabomman defied the authority of English in collecting revenues on the Sicar lands and also in remitting the tribute regularly. Hostilities commenced against him, and Panchalamkurichy fort was attacked. Kattabomman escaped and was proceeding to Sivaganga through the forest in the Thondaiman country. At the request of the English administration Kattabomman was captured near Thirumayam by the soldiers of Thondaiman and handed over to the English at Madurai. Later Kattabomman was hanged at Kayattar. The defiant valour of Kattabomman came to be better appreciated with the passage of time. While Kattabomman has risen in general estimation as a hero, the image of Thondaiman as reflected in the events of the time, has suffered a fall because capturing and handing over of Kattabomman and come to be regarded as betrayal and as an unpatriotic act. Seen however in the political backround then prevailed in the context of Thondaiman's fidelity to the English in prosperity and adversity and to the fact that Kattabomman never sought asylum with Thondaiman and hence the Thondaiman's role
may objectively summed up as the reflex action of the ally and does not amount to betrayal.

The next ruler Raja Vijaya Regunatha Raya Thondaiman (1807-1825 AD) was crowned when he was a minor and the British Government appointed Major John Black Burn, to undertake the management of the province of Pudukkottai. Since he was the former Resident of Thanjavur he brought to Pudukkottai a good deal of Thanjavur administration of Maratha mystique and Marathi was the language of administration of Pudukkottai for about seventy five years. Revenue and Judicial administration of same method and complexity were introduced in Pudukkottai. A palace with citadels and broad moat was constructed for the Thondaiman (the old palace in the centre of the town). The town was planned with straight roads bisecting each other in the four directions of the palace and thus Black Burn laid the foundation for modern town of Pudukkottai. (This palace, "The old palace" has disappeared completely, we can see the remains of the high wall in a few places in the vicinity of the present west main street and south main street (Rajaveethi)).
Raghunatha Thondaiman (1825 - 1839 A.D) was conferred with the title "His Excellency" by the British Government. He planned in 1830 to bring the Cauvery water to Pudukkottai through a new canal but could not succeed due to paucity of funds. Raghunatha Thondaiman was succeeded by his son Ramachandra Thondaiman (1839 - 1886).

His long tenure of office was marked by extravagance and gross mismanagement. An administrator Sesaiah Sastri arrived at the scene as Dewan in 1878 and carried out many reforms. Among them was the remodelling of Pudukkottai town incorporating the principles of town planning which were little followed in the country at that time.

The towering administrative office building in red brick colour in Pudukkottai was constructed under the supervision of Sesaiah Sastri. The Pudukkulam, the big lake in the town was another creation of Sesaiah Sastri. Ramachandra Thondaiman has renovated many temples in the State. He was succeeded by Marathanda Bhairava Thondaiman.

Marathanda Bhairava Thondaiman (1886-1929) became the ruler of the state at the age of 11. The
administration was looked after by a council with the approval of the British Government. He toured in Europe extensively. He married an Australian lady. A son was born to him though this marriage (later known as Sydny Marthanda). But his succession was opposed by the public. The British administration also refused to recognise the marriage. Hence the Raja abdicated his throne and settled in Paris and died in 1928 and cremated at London.

Raja Rajagopala Thondaiman (1928 -1948) the last and ninth in the line of Thondaiman rulers, was selected by the British Government and was crowned when he was six years old. The administration was looked after by English administrators, among them Alexandar Totenham was noteworthy. The important architectural contribution of this period is the New Palace - which was built in 1930 in Indo- Serasenic Dravidian architecture. This beautiful granite structure now houses the District Collector's Office. After Indian independence in 1947, the Pudukkottai Princely State was amalgamated with Indian Union on 04/03/1948 and
became a division in Tiruchirappalli district. The long history of the Thondaimans rule came to an end.

Such a brief historical sketch covering a period of time of over two millennia will beside acquainting one with the political forces and trends of the area located at the centre of Tamil Nadu, will help to appreciate the nature, variety, origin chronology and importance of the monuments their inscriptions architecture, sculptures iconography and other aesthetic contents.

COMMUNICATIONS

There are no national highways passing through the district. The total length of roads in this district is 3243 Kms. Comprising of 78.10 Kms. of state highways, 434.30 Kms. of major district roads and 2730.60 Kms. of panchayat roads. The total length of metre-guage railway line in the district is about 84 Kms. with 12 railway stations connecting Pudukkottai town with Tiruchirappalli as also Karaikkudi and Manamadurai in the adjacent Ramanathapuram district. Arantangi is connected with Thiruvarur in the adjacent Thanjavur district. The metre-guage railway line from Madras to Rameswaram passes through this district. The transport
handled by the railways in the district is very meagre on account of the low route length and limited potential for transportation in the hinterland.

INDUSTRIES

Pudukkottai district is not gifted with manorial wealth. There are no mineral deposits worth mentioning in the entire area of the district. However, a narrow belt of good grade feldspar and quartz is reported to be available in Kulattur taluk pink granite deposit is reported to be available in Ponnamaravati area of Tirumayam taluk. The reserves of limestone reported to be available in Adanakottai area of alangudi taluk is estimated at about 8230 tonnes and the present level of exploitation is only 200 tonnes. The district is industrially backwards and the three taluks, viz. Alangudi, Tirumayam and Kulattur had already been declared by the State government as backward area entitling industrial units to be set up there for a central subsidy of 15 per cent on fixed capital investment. There are six large scale industries in the district as given below: (1) M/s. Cauvery Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd., Cauvery Nagar. (2) M/s. Pudukkottai Textile Mills Ltd., Pudukkottai. (3) M/s. Sri Nadiambal Textile
Mills Ltd., Arantangi. (4) M/s. Ramachandran Chemicals (P) Ltd., Kiranur. (5) M/s. Sundaram Industries Ltd., Pudukkottai. (6) The State Government Printing Press, Pudukkottai. Among the six large scale industries mentioned above, three are located in Pudukkottai itself. There are 392 small scale units. The main industries in which they are engaged are wood based industries, tinkering, fabrication of metal products, printing and binding, manufacture of agricultural implements, manufacture of agricultural implements, manufacture of cement tiles and other cement products, automobile servicing and repairing and safety matches. A few oil and rice mills are concentrated in Alangudi taluk, Thiruvarangulam a Pudukkottai blocks. In addition to the small scale industries, there are a number of village and cottage industries. Prominent among them are pottery, blacksmithy, carpentry, small lime kilns, small brick kilns, basket making, rope making and synthetic gem cutting.

IMPORTANT INDUSTRIES, 1996 National Oxygen Ltd. : No. 1 : Trichy Pudukkottai Road, Mathur Village, Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu. Manufacturer and traders of industrial gases such as Oxgen gas, dissolved acetylene gas, medical Oxygen, Nitrogen
gas, liquid Oxygen, liquid Nitrogen high purity Nitrogen. SRF Ltd. : (Formerly known as Shriram Fibers Ltd.) Viralimalai, Dist. Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu. Manufacturer : Nylon industrial yarn tyre cord/fabrics leather auxiliaries, fluro carbon refrigerant gases and hydrofluoric acid, besides nylon moulding powder in technical collaboration with chemtex fibres INC. USA. M/s. SRF Nippondenso Ltd. is a joint venture with Nippon Denso Co. Ltd. of Japan for manufacture of automotive electricals. M/s. SRF Transnational Holdings Ltd. is a subsidiary company.

TOURISM

Sri Kokaraneswarar temple : The rock cut cave temple of Sri Kokaraneswarar and Brahadambal at Thirukokarnam is of Mahendravarma Pallava's period. Government Museum : The rare collections in the sections of Geology, Zoology, Paintings, Anthropology, Epigraphy and Historical Records etc. are very interesting and informative. The beautiful sculptures and bronzes of various periods are attractive items of this museum. Sittannavasal : This ancient abode of Jains dating back to the 2nd century B.C. is about 16 kms. from Pudukkottai. The rock-cut cave temple with its
beautiful frescoes and paintings in natural colours as in Ajantha in Maharashtra and stonebeds known as Eladipattam, a cave in which the Jain monks were said to have sought refuge in those days are the main attractions. There are a few sculptures of Jain Thirthankaras in the Ardhamandapam and the inner shrine of the cave temple. The ceiling of the Ardhamandapam contains fresco paintings of the 7th century A.D. Inscriptions of the 9th-10th century A.D. are also found in the cave. The cave temple is said to have been excavated in the 7th century A.D. by the Pallava King Mahendravarman. In the area around Sittanna-vasal, there are many historical burial sites consisting of Kurangupatarai, cairns, burial urns and casts etc. Kudumiyamalai : It is 20 kms. from Pudukkottai. There are beautiful sculptures and thousand- pillar hall in the temple. The presiding deity is Sikhagiriswarar. The temple is noted for numerous inscriptions. Remarkable among them is the one relating to a musical treatise of the Mahendravarma Pallavan who experimented the sapthaswara in a veena called Parivardini with 8 strings. there is also a rock-cut temple called Melakkoil which was excavated during the time of Mahendravarma
Pallavan. The Anna Agricultural Farm and Agriculture Research Institute are the other interesting features of this place. In fact these institutions took shape as a result of the special efforts of the former Director of Census Operations, Shri K. Chockalingam who was the then Collector of Tiruchirappalli in the pre-bifurcation period of the two districts of Tiruchirappalli and Pudukkottai. Kodumbalur: This place, also known as Muvarkoil is 36 kms. from Pudukkottai and 42 kms. from Trichy. It was formerly the seat of Irukkavelirs who were related to Cholas. Out of the three shrines of Muvarkoil, only two exist now. These temples were built by Budhi Viramakesan in the 10th century A.D. The architecture of this temple is unique among the South Indian temples. The sculptures of Kalarimurthi, Gajasamharamurthi, Ardhanari and Gangadara-murthi etc. are interesting masterpieces of art. This place was noted for the production of metal vessels and plates. Nearby is the Muchukundeswarar temple of the early Chola period. Viralimalai: This town lies north-west of Pudukkottai about 40 kms. Throughout the district and even outside, this place is well known for the Subramania temple on the hill here and is said to exist before
15th century A.D. The principal idol is eated on the peacock with his consorts on either side. There is a peacock sanctuary here. Viralimalai has been mentioned in the Tamil book of hymns Thiruppugazh. Narthamalai: This is a place of historical importance and the head-quarters of the Mutharaiya chieftains. The earliest structural stone temple, circular in shape, built by the Mutharaiyar and the Vijayalaya Choleeswaram cave temple built by the Vijayala Chola, the first king of the later Cholas are located here. The pre-historic burial grounds and the Kadambar-malai temple of this place are also of tourist importance. Tirumayam: This place, a taluk headquarters is 19 kms. from Pudukkottai, the district headquarters. The fort, the Siva and Vishnu temples are the tourist attractions here. The famous Vishnavite saint Thirumangai Alwar is supposed to have lived here before the 10th century. The ruins of an old fort exist here and it is said that the Poligar of Panjalankurichi was imprisoned in this before he was handed over to the British by the Tondaiman. The Sengirai forest near this place is significant for it is believed that this forest was the abode of the demoness Tataka.
who was killed by Sri Rama. the fort played an important role in the history of Tondaiman rulers of Pudukkottai and the British. The erection of this fort in 1687 A.D. is attributed to Sethupathy Vijaya Raghunatha Tondaiman, the Sethupathi of Ramnad. Avadaiyarkovil: This place is a village in Arantangi taluk 14 kms. away from Arantangi and 48 kms. from Pudukkottai. This place is noted for sculptures. It is famous for its Siva temple which is dedicated to God Athmanatha and associated with the Tamil Saint Manickavasagar. The temple is supposed to have been built by this saint whose image is installed in it. It is famous as an exquisite structure. The temple is noted for its granite roof work. The sanctum sanctorum is covered with copper plate and is similar to the Chidambaram Natarajar temple. A peculiarity in this temple is that it contains no images of the principal deities-Siva and Parvathi and that the worship is done to their pedestals. It is an important pilgrimage centre in South India.

EDUCATION

In the urban areas Pudukkottai, there are 0.59 Higher Secondary Schools, 0.85 Secondary Schools, 1.24 Middle Schools and 2.02 Primary Schools per every 10000
population. Kiranur, Alagapuri and Alangudi have the highest proportion of Higher Secondary Schools (1.51), Secondary Schools (3.27) and middle Schools (3.47) respectively per 10000 urban population. But the case of primary schools the highest proportion of 9.93 schools per 10000 population is found in Kadiapatti. UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGES, 1996 V S Sivalingam Govt. Arts College, Pulankurichi, Pudukkottai. Ganesar Senthamil Kalloori Melaisivapuri, Pudukkottai. Government Art College for Women, Pudukkottai. Government College for Education, Pudukkottai. HH The Rajah's College, Pudukkottai. K B Y S College of Physiotherapy, Pudukkottai.