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Release of Thoothukudi District Gazetteer by Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, Dr. K. Ponmudi on 26th December 2007 at 12.00 Noon.

The Department of Archives and Historical Research, on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu, prepares and publishes Gazetteers for the districts of the State. As a part of the Gazetteer publication series, the Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, Dr. K. Ponmudi today launches the Thoothukudi District Gazetteer.

The District Gazetteer documents the history, social life, economic and agricultural activities, industrial and educational growth, banking perspectives, trade and commerce, growth and functions of local bodies, dispensation of justice, maintenance of law and order and all other matters connected with the district. This makes the Gazetteer a standard encyclopaedic reference book for scholars, researchers, planners, administrators and the public. They also serve as guidebooks of important places in a district. The chapterisation and the content of the Gazetteer is based on the guidelines framed by the Gazetteer Department of the Government of India so as to provide uniformity in the preparation of Gazetteers for all the districts of India. The sources for the Gazetteer include archival papers, reports issued by various State and Central Government Departments, Boards and Agencies from time to time, all the published material on the district such as books and reports of the various commissions, published/ unpublished research works, local ballads, literature and the research papers presented in the District Seminars conducted specially for the purpose of collecting sources for the District Gazetteer, involving scholars and academicians, who have knowledge about the district. The officials tour the district and contact prominent local persons to get information.

The Editorial team comprising the Editor and Assistant Editors prepares the district Gazetteer under the guidance and supervision of the Principal Commissioner of Archives and Historical Research. The Gazetteer is published after the approval of the Gazetteer Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department with Secretary to Government, Revenue, Commissioner of Revenue Administration, Disaster Management and Mitigation Department and the Professor and Head of the Department of History, University of Madras as members and with the Principal Commissioner of Archives and Historical Research as Member Secretary.

Thoothukudi District, carved out of the legendary Tirunelveli district in 1986, has a glorious political and cultural history. Nature has blessed the district with a serpentine and serene coast studded with fishing villages. This coast was known internationally in the past for its pearl fishing. Like pearl, salt is also a synonym for Thoothukudi as salt industry is as old that of human settlement on land. The coral reef and scenic islands in the Gulf of Mannar are the natural wealth of the district. Adhichanallur, a riparian village in the district is a cradle of ancient civilization on par with the historic riverbank civilizations of the world. Korkai was an ancient port and the second capital of the Pandyas where bustling exports and imports took place, the chief import being Arabian horses for the cavalry of the rulers.

Thoothukudi district has a niche for itself in the freedom movement of India. Panchalamkurichi, now a tourism centre in the district was the headquarters of Veerpandiya Kattabomman, the brave patriot and freedom fighter who along with thousands of soldiers and their commanders became a martyr towards the close of the 18th century. Kayatharu is the place where Kattabomman was hanged to death by the British. The names of the towns Ottapidaram and Ettayapuram in this district have been inscribed in red letters in the history of the National 1st Movement being the birth places of nation. Kappalottiya Thamizhan, V.O.Chidambaranar, the freedom

fighter of the pre-Gandhian era and the National Poet Subramaniya Bharathiar, who made the Swadesi Movement very successful in Tamil Nadu. Vanchinathan assassinated Ash, the then Acting collector of Tirunelveli, who was behind the incarceration of V.O.Chidambaranar and other nationalists, at Maniyachi, now called Vanchimaniyachi. A freedom fighter, Rajagopal hailing from this district was awarded capital punishment in the case of assassination of a British Salt Officer. This was later revoked on appeal to the Privy Council. The people of the district are industrious and hard working.

The Dravidian Movement in the district also did a lot in enlightening the people of their rights, their social responsibilities and in redeeming them from the clutches of superstitions. Tamiraparani, the lifeline of the district makes its confluence in the district. On the banks of the river besides plantain groves and paddy fields are magnificent temples, churches and mosques. The celebrated seashore temples at Tiruchendur, the nine shrines popularly called Nava Thiruppathis around Srivaikundam and rock cut temples popularly called Vettuvar Koil at Kazhugumalai remain intact exposing the marvel and glory of Dravidian culture, art, architecture and spiritual value. Not only the temples but churches and mosques too declare the inborn secularism of the district. Thoothukudi is the southern gateway of Tamil Nadu and is today a major seaport and industrial centre. It is popularly called "**Pearl City**".

Boat building, a traditional industry and the palmyra groves are the symbols of the district. Thoothukudi district has many pilgrimage places. Folk arts, songs, dances, fairs and festivals of the rural folk are distinctive features of the district.

All these salient features in fascinating detail along with a wealth of information on the district have been documented in two volumes of Thoothukudi District Gazetteer.

The Thoothukudi District Gazetteer is published in two volumes containing 17 chapters with a total of 1264 pages. The price of the

Gazetteer is Rs 100/- per volume which is a concessional rate i.e. only 25 per cent of the printing cost as per the Government order. Copies can be had from the Tamil Nadu Archives and Historical Research, No.51, Gandhi- Irwin Road, Egmore, Chennai-8 and the sales Depot of the Commissioner of Stationery and Printing, No. 816, Anna Salai, Chennai-2.

for Principal Commissioner

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