CHAPTER V
INSTITUTIONS OF KOTTAR DIOCESE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The catholic religious institutions give the people a philosophy of life and a code of behaviour. These help them to remove ignorance, fear, superstitions and misunderstandings and make them free economically, psychologically and spiritually.

The diocese of Kottar and its institutions are based on the spirit of service, charity and communal development. The diocese of Kottar has many traditional and well-established ecclesiastical, charitable, educational, medical, cultural, technical, ethical and economic institutions, which adopt a network of multifarious social and charitable activities. The dedicated service of the priests, nuns and counsellors are highly commendable. These institutions teach and train the faithful the virtues of brotherhood, liberty, tolerance, and understanding. These institutions mould and shape the catholics to be a model to the other people of their surroundings.

Kanyakumari ranks as one of the best districts of India for literacy, social and economic growth and the Latin Catholic faith has been working as the biggest force motivating the people to undertake social welfare services. All the services of these institutions are designed for the social, economic, physical, mental health and care of the weaker sections including women, children, the aged, the infirm, handicaps, the backward communities etc. These institutions help all sorts of people to keep up their mental and physical potentials to share and to help their fellowmen.

5.2 ARMY OF St. MARY

Army of St. Mary, the women catholic organisation was started in Ireland after first world war when depression started in Europe. On 7th September 1921, Frank Duff, an Irish social worker started this movement. It soon spread into all
countries of the world. Army St. Mary is exclusively a women organisation started and it had the aim to lead the catholic church under the shadow of St. Mary. It was first started in India at Chennai on 2nd February 1931. In the Kottar diocese the movement was inaugurated on 2nd February 1937 by Bishop Agnisamy. In 1956, it had 22 curias and 434 presidiums with 7000 members. The 22 curias were formed at Thiruthuvapuram, Mulagumoodu, Mankuzhi, Themanur, Manalikarai, Elavuvillai, Kaliyakovillai, Rajakamangalamthurai, Kanyakumari, Karankadu, Enayam, Francis of Assisi campus, CarmelNagar, Maravankudiyirippu, Kulasegaram, Kadiyappattinam, Colachel, Pillaithope, Palliady, Kandanvillai, Puthenkadai and Ritapuram. The diocese appoints directors to lead the laity. Father Paul Sebastian held office as director of Army of Mary from 1937 to 1939. Father Eprem Gomez was in charge from 1940 to 1946. Father E. Francis from 1947 to 1952, Fr. Barnabas Alexander from 1953 to 1957, Father J.N. Ceasar from 1958 to 1965, Father Josephpath Maria from 1966 to 1969, Fr. Martin from 1970 to 1974, Father Martin S Alangaram from 1975 to 1980, Father Honerius from 1981 to 1983, Fr. Resul Raj from 1984 to 1990, Fr. Soosai from 1991 to 1997, Fr. Francis D. Sales from 1998 to 2003 and Fr. Joseph Justus from 2004 to 2007.

The movement is led by Rev. Sisters of different congregations and these nuns are supported by the laywomen of the parishes. The Army of Mary highlights a ten-

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* The Priests as Directors are supported by a President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Treasurer and these office bearers are generally lay women of the diocese. In 1971, a national level celebration held in Nagercoil. Many participants from all over India attended the conference. In 1973, Bishop Marianus Arokiasamy sent Sr.Mathias Mary, Sr. Annam, and Sr. Maria Natzathiram to Sri Lanka for attending Asian Regional Conference of Army of Mary. In 1997, Sr.Eugine Mary was deputed to Mannar, Diocese of Sri Lanka for doing service from Kottar diocese. On 27th May 1990, Bishop Leon Augustine Tharmaraj celebrated the 100th birthday of its Founder Frankup and a Souvenir was published to honour this organisation and its founder. Source: Report "Army of Mary", Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 2007, pp.1-2.
point programme. The members have to visit the sick at their homes and hospitals and do the needful help. The members donate blood and save the lives of the patients in the hospitals. The movement takes steps to eradicate alcoholism in all the parishes of the diocese. Also it makes a social analysis in the villages and makes studies about the position of the families, the sanitation, economic position, medical needs etc. They also take care of the higher education of the catholics and help them to find employment. The Army of Mary links the catholics and the government and provides opportunities, that the people could get from the government sector. It also propagates the Bible to the non-catholics and pray for the sick, needy and all the oppressed, the children of God.

The representatives of the Army of Mary of the diocese of Kottar participated in an inter-diocesan seminar at Seranmadevi parish of Madurai diocese from 20th to 26th July 1991. This conference held for 7 days and 37 members participated in the conference. In the diocese of Tuticorin at Thalamuthu Nagar parish, another workshop was arranged from 17th to 25th May 1992. In the 9 days conference, 40 members from the diocese of Kottar participated. Fifty six members of the Army of Mary of Kottar diocese took part in a 8 days seminar from 15th to 22nd May 1993 at Azurakattu parish in the diocese of Palayamkottai. Sixty participants attended a 8 days seminar from 20th to 27th November 1993 at Amalapuram parish of Madurai diocese. One hundred and forty four participants attended a 4 days seminar from 13th to 16th October 1994 at Chinthamany parish of the diocese of Tuticorin. Thirty two members attended a seminar arranged at Iruthayarapuram parish of the diocese of Palayamkottai from 20th to 27th May 1995. Twenty two members attended a 6 days

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seminar from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 17\textsuperscript{th} May 1996 at Pettah parish of the diocese of Palayamkottai. Fifty six members attended a 6 days seminar from 27\textsuperscript{th} December 1997 to 1\textsuperscript{st} January 1998 at Kunnur parish of the diocese of Ooty. A 12- member team visited Mumbai and attended a seminar from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 15\textsuperscript{th} January 1999. Thirty eight participants attended a 15 days seminar at Pannakudy parish of the diocese of Tuticorin from 27\textsuperscript{th} to 31\textsuperscript{st} May 2005. Thirty two members attended a 3-days seminar from 13\textsuperscript{th} to 15\textsuperscript{th} January 2006 at Pondicherry diocese. Forty one participants attended a seminar from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 18\textsuperscript{th} May 2007 at Neyyatinkara diocese. Fourteen delegates attended a 7 days camp from 13\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} April 2008 at Puthoor Parish of Madurai diocese. The priests and nuns from other Latin dioceses come and help the missions from Madurai, Pondicherry, Trivandum, Vellore, Palayamkottai, Tanjore, Salem, Quilon, Tiruchinapally, Kumbakonam, Coimbatore, Tuticorin, Mylapore etc. The Capuchin priests of the Universal Saviours Congregation guide seminars in 1964, 1967, 1970, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989 at Mel Asaripallam, Kanyakumari, Kottar, Colachel, Enayam, Ramanthurai, Ritapuram, Vaniyakudi, Vellicode, Pakkiapuram, Konamkadu, Periyakadu, Christunagar, Kurusady, Puthenkadai, Melpalai etc and these seminars are arranged in a regional level and the nearby churches and the members attended these conferences and are benefited much. The representatives meet the families and take a survey, and they create a “Service Society” in each parish.

5.3 CATHOLIC ACTION

On 20\textsuperscript{th} April 1941, the Catholic Action was first started at Mulagumoodu parish by Fr. C.M. Hillary and was blessed by Bishop Agnisamy S.J. It is a council of

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the laity led by the priests of the diocese. Rev. Fathers C.M. Hillary and Fr. Paul Sebastian assisted the bishop in the formation of this union. The bishop appointed Fr. C.M. Hillary as the director of Catholic Action and he was in service from 1941 to 1947. After him the joint director Fr. Paul Sebastian stepped into his shoes and was holding power from 1948 to 1954.

In 1955, Fr. Augustine Fernando succeeded him and continued in power till 1961. In 1957, certain rules and regulations were framed by the diocese. The office of the union was opened in the Assisi Catholic Campus, Nagercoil. Fr. R. Anthony muthu was the director of the Catholic Action from 1962 to 1966. In 1967, Fr. John Valtharis took charge as director, and he was in power for 22 years till 1988. In 1966, the completion of the 25 years service of the body was celebrated at Mulagumoodu. Bishop Agnisamy and Fr. John Valtharis brought the rules regularized and published them in March 1967. The Catholic Action takes care of the oppressed in the society. They raise funds for the clever students studying in the schools and colleges. They also make employment opportunities for the outstanding students of the diocese. They raise poor widow fund every year and help the widows. Every year they distribute dress materials for the poor. This body takes steps to eradicate alcoholism in the society. It also takes steps against the practices of casteism and communalism.

In 1969, Bishop Marianus Arokiasamy’s “Graduation Education Plan” was executed by this body. In 1974 this body was registered under the Tamilnadu Charity Department. In the same year the “Self Reliance Plan”, of Bishop Arokiasamy was executed and the “Post Graduation Education Plan” of Bishop Arokiasamy was opened and the clever catholic students of many parishes were benefited by this

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scheme. In 1987, Fr. Valthari’s “Technical Education Plan” was executed and the
cleaver students were given help for education in the technical and engineering
studies. Fr. C.M. Vensalvas was the director from 1989 to 1993. Bishop Anthony
muthu’s “Higher Secondary Education Plan” was brought to action and many high
schools were promoted into Higher Secondary schools in the diocese. In 1990,
Bishop Leon Augustine Tharmaraj’s, “Higher Education Plan” was brought into
action and the brilliant students of the diocese were sent to the state capital, other
educational institutions of the country and foreign countries for higher education.
In 1991, Bishop Peter Remigius’s (Kumbakonam) “Education Plan for the Handicap
Students” was made as a new plan and many handicap children were benefitted by
this plan. Fr. A. Vallerian continued as director from 1994 to 1996. Fr. N. Servatius
was acting as director from 1997 to 2001. During this time the “Widows Endowment
Plan” was executed in 1997 and “Widow Remarriage Plan” was executed in 2000.
In 2001, “Bishop Lawerence Periera Elders Welfare fund” was created to look after
the old people of this Latin diocese. Fr. Francis M. Borgio was the director who was
in power from 2002 to 2005. The Laity are actively participating in the activities of
this union. On 8th February 2005, the Catholic Action was divided under two
directorates, one for the Kottar and Colachel Vicariates and the other for
Mulagumoodu and Tiruthuvarapuram vicariates. Fr. Xavier Bruce holds charge as
director of Kottar and Colachel Vicariates from 2005 to till date. Fr. M. Peter is

* From 1955 onwards the laity are appointed presidents of Catholic Action. Mr. X. Victor Nayagam
(1955). Mr. S. Augustine (1956-1958), Mr. V. Thansilos (1959), Mr. A. Deva Sahayam (1960-
1962), Mr. S.A. Deva Sahayam (1963 -1965), Mr. A. Devasahayam II term (1966-1968) Mr. S.M.
Ganakannu (1969 -1974), Mr. X. John Mary (1975-1977), Mr. James (1978 -1983), Mr. Jeremias
(1984 -1986), Mr. John Bosco (1987-1989), Mr. S. Philip (190-1992), Mr. Arulam (1993-1995),
Mr. Rajappan (1996-1998), Mr. Fangiras (1999-2001), Mr. G. Maria Nesan (2002-2004), Mr. S.G.
Jesudason (2005-2007), Mr. Justin Xavier (2008 onwards) have been serving the Catholic Action as
acting as director of Mulagumoodu and Tiruthuvapuram vicariates. At Present Kottar–Colachel Vicariates have 13 unions, 175 constituencies and 2625 members and Mulagumoodu – Tiruthuvapuram vicariates have 7 unions, 115 constituencies and 3011 members.\(^\text{13}\)

## 5.4 VINCENT DE-PAUL SOCIETY

Vincent De Paul Society\(^*\) in the Kottar diocese has 18 particular councils, 202 conferences, functioning at Kottar, Colachel, Mulagumoodu and Tiruthuvapuram with a central committee functioning in the Bishop’s House, Kottar, Nagercoil. The 202 conferences arrange meetings at every week end on Saturday and discuss the issues. Each conference adopts 5 families every year and lend all sorts of financial help.\(^\text{14}\)

The programmes are visiting the poor families, the sick, the aged and the oppressed of the local parishes. Each conference has to adopt a poor student for higher education and all the educational expenses are met by the conference.\(^\text{15}\) Also each conference operates a computer training centre, a type writing institute, a book making centre and a book binding centre. The youth, men and women are highly benefitted by these programmes. The society also lends medical help to the poor. The Maravankudiyirippu – Ozanam hospital serves the poor in many capacities. It conducts free medical camp in every conference. “Ozanam Blood Donors Club”

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\(^*\) Vincent De Paul society was started in Paris, the French capital by Antony Fredrick Ozanam in 1833. It aims at helping the poor and the needy. It has been working in 146 – countries. The head quarters of this organization is in Paris. In 1908, at its 75 years of celebrations the society was started in India with Mumbai as the head quarters. In India, there are 6 – regions as North, South, South East, South west, North East and North West Frontiers. In India there are 66 – Central Councils, 503 – Independent Associations and 5781 – Subordinate Associations. Source: Prospectus, Vincent De Paul Society, Kottar, Nagercoil, 2007, pp.1-3.


\(^\text{15}\) Ibid., p.11.
functions actively at Maravankudiyirippu Ozanam hospital, Holy Cross Mission hospital Manalikarai, St. Mary's hospital Colachel, Sahayamatha Mission hospital Pallam, St. Luke's Mission hospital Thengapattanam, St. Micheal Mission hospital Rajavoor, the mission hospitals at Kanyakumari, Kandanvillai, Karankadu, Kadiyapattinam etc. Every year 10 - marriages are planned and financed by this society for the poor women. The 202 conferences are given choice periodically and on consideration marriages are arranged by the society. In 1992, when flood affected Kalkulam and Villavancode taluks, the Vincent De Paul Society constructed 32 houses and helped the victims. Also the society helps the victims in accidents. They help the sick and the poor. During tsunami, they did lot of help to the victims of all villages in the Colachel and Kottar vicariates. Tsunami camps were arranged at Kanyakumari, Kovalam, Manakudy, Kadiyapattinam, Pillaiithope, Colachel, Kodimunai, Enayam and Ramathurai villages.

The Vincent De-Paul Society has been funded by the foreign countries every year. Australia, England, Scotland, Italy, Portugal, America etc. donate money and do material help to this society. For every three months preparatory classes and seminars are organised in the diocesan level and the participants are trained by refresher programmes. The society has planned to open a Blood Bank and Medical Training Centre at Thirumali, Chunkankadai. A priest of the diocese acts as the advisor of the society. A president, secretary and treasurer are the diocesan office

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16 Report, Ozanam Hospital, Maravankudiyirippu, Nagercoil, 2003, pp.3-7.
17 Report, “Blood Donors Club”, Ozanam Hospital, Maravankudiyirippu, Nagercoil, 2005, pp.7-12.
21 Ibid., p. 9.
22 Ibid., p.11-12.
bearers. From 2005, the Vincent De Paul Society has a wide functioning in all the four vicariates of Kottar- Colachel and Mulagumoody – Tiruvavapuram.

5.5 DIOCESAN PRESS

A diocesan press has been functioning in the diocese from 1945. Bishop Agnisamy started a Capuchin press in the diocese on 19th July 1945. The machines, tools and labourers were brought from Thillery, Quilon and the diocesan press was inaugurated in the diocese. This day is celebrated as “Foundation Day” by the whole diocese. Rev. Brother Rockie was the first director as well as co-ordinator of the diocesan press. On 28th March 1948, “Then Oli”, a monthly of the Latin diocese of Kottar, was inaugurated. It reveals many historical data and events. It gives representation about the universal catholic church, the christian life, the worship methods etc.

Fr. John Mary Villavarayan was the editor of Then Oli Journal from 1948 to 1955. It had subscribers from all parishes of Kottar. It also had subscribers from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore etc. Fr. D. Jesudasan was appointed editor from 1956 to 1970. Then it quoted the importance of the catholic associations like “Army of Mary”, Catholic Action”, Indianization of prayers, Bible stories etc. In 1970, Bishop Agnisamy created a six member editorial board. Fr. Christu Dhas was the editor and the 40 pages journal was expanded to 60 pages. It highlighted the Second Vatican Council, the reforms and the participation of laity in the religious activities. Fr. Simporian was the editor in 1973 and Fr. John Kulandhai was the editor from

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25 Report, Assisi Press, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 1993, pp.7-12.
1974 and 1975. Fathers M. John Valtharis and Fr. P. Vincent became the directors from 1975 to 1977. In 1977 this journal had a provincial outlook throughout Tamilnadu and the provincial news was published in this journal.

In 1980, the Assisi Catholic Campus Nagercoil got a new look with the construction of a new church, conference hall, diocesan office cells, book centre, water tank and with other facilities. In 1988, Mr. G. Jeremias was appointed president, Mr. Jesu Francis as secretary and Mr. Micheal Antony as treasurer, M.P. Xavier and A. Mathias as counsellors of the publication committee of “Then Oli”. In 1993, Mr. S. Eugine took charge as editor of the journal.

In 1997, when St. Francis Xavier Higher Secondary School buildings and Assisi campus were extended, the ground floor of the building was used for the press and publication activities of the diocese. The new expanded press building was opened by Bishop Leon Augustine Thamaraj on 15th August 2000. The press was standardized as an offset press and new equipments were installed in the campus. The bishop appointed Mr. S. James M.A, M.Ed and Mr. Xavier John Mary M.A. B.Ed as directors of the press. An executive committee was formed with the diocesan press director, editor, publishers, counsellors and executive members. The cost of the equipments in the press was Rs.7,50,000/-.

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26 * In 1980, when the construction work continued in the Assisi Campus, the press was shifted to St. Lawrence Boy’s Home in the Bishop’s House Campus, Ramavarmapuram, Asaripallam Road, Nagercoil. The press was functioning here from 1980 to 1988. Source, Prospectus, Assisi Press, p.4.
27 Ibid., 2000, pp. 3-7
28 * The 2007 Assisi Press Executive Committee consists of Fr. John Bosco, Mr. S.Eugine (Secretary) Mr. S.Lazarus (Editor), Mr. F. Stalin (Publisher), Mr. Xavier John Mary, Mr. Fangiras, Mr. P. Paulraj, Mr. A.John Antony Rajappan, Mr. A.James and Mr. R.Christopher as executive members, - Source, Report, Assisi Press, 2007, pp. 4-5

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5.6 FRANCISCAN LAITY ORGANISATION

The Franciscan Laity Organisation was first started in Kurusady, a substation of Kottar parish on 12th June 1939. In the beginning it had 12 members. The members celebrate 2nd October*, as the day of its founder Francis Assisi. The members of this organisation are divided into 4 units, as per the four Vicariate sub­stations of the diocese. Fr. John Antony of the Capuchin congregation was its first director worked in Kurusady. The body has a spiritual advisor, who takes much responsibilities of the organisation 29. Seminars, workshops and conventions were arranged for 3, 5 and 7 days. The October 1966 seminar at Maravankudiyirippu, the March 1978 seminar at Pampanvillai, the November 1982 seminar at Kurusady, motivated the laity to do more religious service in the diocese30. On 26th October 1986, Fr. Thomas Fernando was appointed director and a universal religious meeting was arranged in the Assisi campus, Nagercoil and the “Franciscan Peace” was declared in the meeting as the theme of oneness of catholism. In 1989 as the organisation completed 50 years of service, a souvenir was published and it included all the services rendered by the Franciscan peace makers to the diocese of Kottar31. In 1994, an international conference was jointly conducted by the dioceses of Kottar and Tanjure. In 1995, Fr. Joseph became the director of this organisation. On 6th, 7th and 8th of October 2000, a special convention was organised at Maravankudiyirippu. In 2004, Fr. Joseph Justus was appointed director. A flag of Franciscan peace was designed by the committee, and was decided to hoist the flag on the memorial day of Francis Assisi. This organisation does much reconciliation – programmes in the

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* 2nd October is observed as Gandhi Jayanti, Lal Bahadur Jayanti by all the Indians and the memorial day of K.Kamaraj, the Late Chief Minister of Tamilnadu. Source, Report, Editors Board, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 2001, p.19.


problematic places mainly in the coastal villages of the diocese. In 2005, Fr. John Alkanthar took charge as director and led the activities of the organisation. Now it works in all the parishes of the diocese.

5.7 SACRED HEART SOCIETY

The Sacred Heart Society* of the diocese of Kottar carries divine (spiritual) as well as social service to the people since 1951. It has been functioning in all the parishes of the diocese. This society has its head province at Dindigal. It has 35 provinces (centers) in the diocese and has a total representation of 1300 members. The bishop appoints a priest as director and advisor of this body. As it is out and out a women’s organisation all the office bearers are women. There are 7 nuns work as executive members of this unit and all of them are appointed by the bishop. They have contacts with the other units of other parishes and dioceses.

5.8 KOTTAR SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY

India has a long and splendid tradition of social service. Christianity and western education produced a new kind of social work in India. Relief and welfare programmes are launched at the time of natural calamities such as flood, famine, earthquake, sea erosion etc. The Christian missionaries interfere in the activities and bring into existence various welfare and charitable institutions based on christian ideals of service. Voluntary effort is directed towards many kinds of acts like welfare of the needy, neglected, destitute, handicapped, aged and infirm. The Kottar Social

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* The Sacred Heart Society (SHS) was started in Whales (France) on 3rd December 1844 by the Jesuit Priest Fr. Rameo. In 1861 it became a global unit. In 1951, the 261st Pope, Pius XII approved this unit. In 1951, Fr. Paul Vanish S.J. started the unit at Beschi College, Dindigal, Tamilnadu, Source Report, Sacred Heart Society, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 1952.
34 Paul Chaudhry, Social Welfare institutions of India, Delhi, 1971, pp.9-11.
Service Society (K.S.S.S) aims at helping the poor, the needy and to create an independent and judicious society in the diocese. In 1963, a charitable institution was started by Fr. James Themper, a missionary of Belgium to help the downtrodden of the region and it acts as one of the leading social organisation lending service to the poor. The organisation co-ordinates all sort of workers as agriculturists, cultivators, plantain, tapioca, coconut & rubber planters. The union was first started at Parakunnu Latin church in the Melpuram panchayat union.

The R.M.P i.e., Rural Maestro Programme has its headquarters at St. Francis Xavier building, Bishop’s House Ramavarmapuram, Nagercoil. It has eleven agricultural unions, divided into 104 units functioning in the Kottar & Colachel vicariates of the diocese. It looks into the socio-economic progress of the people. It has been improving agriculture, horticulture and the other programmes of the farmers. It demands for permanent jobs, right wages, houses for all farmers and drinking water facility for all. It fights against illiteracy, dowry system, alcoholism etc. Since its formation, the R.M.P has 209 self-supporting organs, and 159 women organisations. As on 2007, it has 10,402 members. Serving the needy and helping the fellowmen are virtues greatly valued in the Indian culture and all Indian religions emphasize

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* The eleven agricultural units are functioning at Arampoly, Rajavoor, Konam, Sahayapuram, Asaripallam, Vadasyer, Kalimar and Alanchi – regions of Kottar and Colachel Vicariates. The Kottar social Service Society (K.S.S.S) functions under one director appointed by the bishop. This movement was started by Fr. James Themper, a dynamic and hardworking missionary from Belgium, who came to work in the diocese in 1950. At Parakunnu, a very underdeveloped parish, he started the networks of palm fibre making, brush manufacturing etc. In this way work opportunity was created for a number of people. The Work of Charity started in Kottar in 1950. The K.S.S.S was registered in 1963 as an organisation with christian concern, and it concentrated its attention in agriculture, fisheries and health. Leveling and terracing of lands and digging of canals were under taken from 1967 to 1979 with the technical assistance from the Public Works Department, Tamilnadu. Source, Report, *K.S.S.S, Kottar*, 2002, pp.4-8.  
charity. The K.S.S.S makes available to the poor farmers necessary fertilizers, quality seeds and pesticides. It also provides loan facilities to the farmers\textsuperscript{37}.

Child Health Development Programme (CHDP) aims at full hygiene, balanced diet and sufficient child health. It recommends natural medicine for children. It has its headquarters at Thirumalai, Chunkankadai. It has five branches functioning at Nagercoil, Colachel, Kanyakumari, Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram. Every year many children are benefited by this programme and in 2006, 5749 children were benefited by this plan\textsuperscript{38}.

During the heavy floods of 1978 – 1979, much relief work was undertaken by the K.S.S.S\textsuperscript{\textstar}. The famines were a tragedy to the peasants and it brought more sufferings. The frequent outbreak of famines and failure of seasonal rains caused much worries to the people and many people died out of starvation and pestilence. During 1987 drought, most of the wells were dried-up and caused a severe drinking water shortage problem. The K.S.S.S deepened the wells and sank new bore wells in the affected places\textsuperscript{39}. The 1934-1938 drought experienced severe effects in the district. In 1969, another drought resulted in water scarcity in both rural and urban areas. The agriculturists and fishermen were thrown out of their occupation. In this critical situation, the diocesan social service scheme supported the victims. The droughts of 1981 and 1982 experienced adverse seasonal conditions and scarcity of drinking water. The study team of the K.S.S.S visited the affected places and


\textsuperscript{\textstar} The 1978 flood destroyed 71 houses completely and 435 houses were partly damaged in the Kanyakumari District. Source, Kanyakumari District Gazetteer, Agriculture and Irrigation Department, Madras, 1979, pp.272 – 279.

recommended the government for remedial measures such as supply of drinking water and digging new open wells\(^40\).

The attention of the K.S.S.S was also with the fishermen societies, who lived along the coast in misery and poverty. In the early days the fishermen used rudimentary tools for fishing. The Kattamarams in the villages were mechanized with board motors. At Muttom, Kadiyapattanam, Colachel and Manakudy 300 Kattamarams were mechanized\(^41\). In 1971, K.S.S.S. began to organise the traditional net making into a proper cottage industry with various centers at Kanyakumari, Manakudy, Midalam, Pallam, Kadiyapattinam, Manavalakurichi, Colachel, Kurumpanai, Enayam, Ramanthurai, where women assured fair wages for their work. In 1974, K.S.S.S also introduced nylon twins for net making and 12,000 women were working in these centers\(^42\). The K.S.S.S wanted to save the fishermen from middlemen, money lenders and big merchants who had been exploiting them. The K.S.S.S helped the fishermen to organize fishermen associations to liberate themselves from the clutches of exploiters. The sangam helped in marketing fish for a fair price directly to the merchants without middlemen. These sangams were formed at Mel-Manakudy, Enayam, Kurumpanai, Pallam, Kanyakumari, Muttom etc\(^43\). Digging of wells and deepening wells in the coastal villages was another major project undertaken by the K.S.S.S. There are 100 – inland fishermen villages in the Kottar diocese, and all these people are backward in their social, economic and educational career. The Inland Fisherman Organisation (IFO) was started in 1995. The IFO performs with the plans of educational upliftment, economic sufficiency and

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p.16.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 1976, p.35.
social welfare programmes of the inland fishermen. It fights against illiteracy, indebtedness and ignorance among the fisher people. This organisation helps the fishermen children through Sunday classes, holiday classes and evening classes to get the right education. It also helps the inland fisher people in their occupational, social, economic and cultural progress and betterment.

The ‘Dalith Development Programme’ works from 1954 in the Kotar diocese. It has been looking into the issues of the converted Daliths into Christianity such as the fighting for the rights and seeking concessions for them. In the diocese there are 48 Dalith units spread in the four vicariates. Among these, the age old units have been functioning at Idalakudy, Aralvoimozhi, Ramapuram, Thazhakudy, Vadassery, Theroor, Murungoor, Eraviputhoor, Kulasegarapuram, Kottaram etc. The bishop appoints a priest in charge of this organisation and it takes care of the educational programmes, housing schemes and occupational aid for the daliths. The movement aims at making more dalith priests, nuns and other religious.

Kaikal is an organisation meant for the poor widows and the abandoned women of the diocese. In 1974, it was started in seven parishes of the diocese like Kurusady, Puthenthurai, Ramanputhoor, Colochel, Kandanvillai, Thiruthuvapuram and Melpuram. In 1985, Fr.J.G Jesudhas regularised this movement with fair rules and regulations. In 1999, when the unit celebrated the completion of 25 years, it had 150 units all over the four vicariates of the diocese. It has been running many women welfare programmes. Every year seminars, workshops and future planning programmes are conducted by this unit. From 2001, Kaikal performs its duty under

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46 Ibid., p.11.
two separate directorates one for the Kottar – Colachel Vocariates and the other for Mulagumoodu – Tiruthuvapuram vicariates. At present it has 204 units throughout the diocese. This organisation seeks equal rights for the women and works for women freedom. It adopts many loan schemes and saving schemes for the women. It makes contacts with the nationalised banks and helps the women to develop their skills.

"Save A Family Plan" (SAFP) works under K.S.S.S of Kottar. The plan helps a poor family of a parish every year. It helps these families by lending Rs. 500 per month. In 1990, 100 families were supported by this scheme. In 2005, 256 families were benefited by this plan. This financial support is continuously done for six years. Apart from this, SAFP lends Rs. 10,000/- for ten families every year for housing, marriage, education and medical support. "Anthee Gilpee" ("Help the poor"), a voluntary German charitable society helps this programme financially. Preparatory classes are arranged in all the parishes by the teachers and guides specially invited to train the candidates to undergo the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission’s examinations. The four vicariates conducted special coaching classes for candidates to prepare for entrance examinations for medical and engineering courses conducted by the Tamilnadu government before 2006-2007 academic years. The Kayal dress makers, Colachel train efficient tailors to make ready made garments and many men and women are benefited by this unit. The K.S.S.S supervises the activities of this unit from 1998.

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48 Ibid., p.8.
49 Report, "Save A Family Plan", (SAFP), Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 2005, pp.6-17.
50 Ibid., 2006, p.16.
The 26th December 2004 tsunami caused a great loss to the Kottar, Colachel and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates of the diocese. The K.S.S.S recovered the material losses and spent Rs. Two and a half crores to buy new fishing net, boats, engines, Kattamarams, clothes, vessels, food materials and so on. The K.S.S.S conducted relief camps for the victims at Kanyakumari, Manakudy, Pillaiithope, Pozhikarai, Colachel, Kurumpanai, Kadiyapattinam, Enayam and Mulloorthurai. Fr. Vallerian, vicariate head priest of Colachel chalked out the camp programmes in these centres.

Holy Cross College Nagercoil, St. Jude’s College Thoothoor, Annai Velankanni College Tholayavattom and the Catholic educational institutions conducted camps at Manakudy, Colachel, Kurumpanai respectively after the tsunami attack. More than 480 - NSS (National Service Scheme) and 380 - NCC (National Cadet Crops) volunteers participated in the camp. The government and the foreign agencies jointly allotted rupees Twenty Eight lakh and Two thousand fund for providing drinking water for the coastal areas in the Kanyakumari, Killiyoor and Villavancode and by this scheme 79 - villages of the diocese were benefited. Tsunami, a human experience and it was a legend in the diocese of Kottar. All the priests, nuns and the religious had a full participation during and after the tsunami incident. The losses of lives, houses, possessions, occupations, tools and the physiological losses are many and this loss can never be remedied by any organisation.

To reach health services effectively to thousands of poor people in villages K.S.S.S articulated its approach to health services on a wider base of family and village. In 1971, the KSSS started “Mother and Child Welfare Programme”.

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53 Ibid., p.21.
54 Ibid., p.14.
56 Native Newspaper, Dinamalar, (Tamil), Dated 28-4-2007.
volunteers visited the villages every week on Saturdays and gave medical help to them. The Catholic mission hospitals came forward and supply medicines to the people. It looked after the facilities like drinking water, latrine, drainage which are required for maintaining the health of the families and the villages as whole. “Health Cooperative System” of the K.S.S.S created a new awareness among the people about health and the responsibility of the people to remove the causes of diseases in their surroundings. The volunteers are selected from the villages to cooperate with K.S.S.S team for the health care of the people. The volunteers do mobile health service in moving from one village to another. The young mothers are provided supplementary food. The mobile team had 23 Health Cooperative Societies in the diocese in 1978. In 2004 the units were extended in 34 units.

The K.S.S.S has a “Society and Health Movement”, started in 1972, by Rev. Sister Goddieve Vande Walle, a Belgian missionary of ICM, (Immaculate Congregation of Mary) Society with the advice of Fr. James Themper. In the beginning the society was functioning in 13 centres. Sister Vande Walle started nylon spinning societies in these centres. The society trained the young women for 6 months. In 1976 the society spread in 126 villages of the diocese and it had 36000 members. The society took care of the general health, hygiene, and food of the people. It provided medical help to the pregnant women and infants. In the early seventies and eighties it could prevent the death rate of children during child birth. The society created awareness among the people about the contagious diseases, skin and eye diseases. From 1982, this society has been training the women to have leadership qualities to strengthen and to co-ordinate the women movements. In 1994,

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Rev. Sr. Dr. Amalavathy started a “Herbal Health Movement” at Thirumalai, Chunkankadai. Twelve patients can stay here and be nursed and forty patients can be benefited daily by this movement. The society prepares a healthy tin food with nine types of corns. The well established diocese builds up a network of multifarious social and charitable activities for the uplift of the poor and the needy.\(^{61}\)

Fr. A. Thobias started the dairy farm in the diocese of Kottar in 1997. The K.S.S.S gave loans to the farmers for transforming dairy forms. In 1998, 750 farmers got such loans and were supplying milk to the society.\(^{62}\) In 2000, Fr. Soosai Antony enhanced this plan and during his administration in 2003, the “Nanjil Milk Society” was started and it could produce 25000 litres of milk everyday. The Nanguneri milk cooling centre was started in 2004. Fr. Robinson took charge as director of the milk society from 2005, and the production of milk was exceeding 30,000 litres everyday in 2005. On 30\(^{th}\) August 2005 the “Nanjil Milk Society” was sharply divided into two units, the first one for the Kottar – Colachel vicariates and the other for the Mulagumoodu, Tiruthuvapuram vicariates. Rev. Father. Petric Xavier became the director of the Kottar – Colachel vicariate milk society and Rev. Fr. T.Wilson became the director of Mulagumoodu-Thiruthuvapuram regions. The scheme works in the whole district of Kanyakumari, supplying milk in every village. Also it is expanded in Nanguneri, Kalakadu and Panakkudy panchayats of Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu. It is extended in the Kerala towns like Parassala, Uchakada, Neyyattinkara and Trivandrum regions.\(^{63}\) The Nanjil Milk Society is certified by ISO 9001-2000. The milk society gives away many prizes for the best students who score highest marks in the S.S.L.C and Plus Two examinations. The society has employed

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\(^{61}\) Ibid., p.17.


\(^{63}\) Ibid., 2005, pp.6-9.
1550 permanent workers. Besides preparing their spiritual duties, the priests and the workers of charity do valuable service to the society. Dynamic societies rely mainly on the co-operation of the youth, and the charitable institutions make use of them. The church guides and prepares the youth to live as responsible members of the family and society. The youth services of the K.S.S.S are commendable in the educational and moral fields that, the youth are sure of themselves about the values and constantly endeavours to live by them. Counselling and guidance are provided to children, the youth, parents, adults etc. Marriage counselling is a mantling need in every society. The church takes the responsibility and prepares the people to lead a successful individual, family and social life.

5.9 KUZHITHURAI INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIAL SERVICES

"Kuzhithurai Integral Development Social Services" (KIDSS) – a new social service organisation was proposed to function in the diocese of Kottar on 7th August 2001 with headquarters at Kuzhithurai. A committee was appointed by Bishop Leon A. Tharmaraj to study about the regional service in Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates. Fr. M. Xavier Rajamony, Fr. Jesu Retinam, Fr. Lawrence and Fr. George Ponnaiah were appointed members of the committee. On 20th September 2002, the trust was registered for social service in this region named “Kuzhithurai Integral Development Social Services”. It got the approval of the government of Tamilnadu on 20-02-2003. The bishop sent a circular letter to be read in all the churches on 09-08-2003, that the new regional social service organisation was to be inaugurated in Thedal buildings, Kuzhithurai and the

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64 Ibid., p.10.
65 Ibid.
66 Indian Family: In The Change and Challenge, Selected papers of a Seminar organised by the "Family Life Centre of the Indian Social Institute", New Delhi, 1975, p.84.
inauguration ceremony took place on 20-08-2003. A survey was taken about the life situations of the Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates of the diocese. Prof. John Joseph, Fr. John Micheal Raj, Mr. Sanal Kumar and eight others were appointed members of the committee. This committee brought the issues of the families, the backwardness, and the needs of the society and submitted a report to the diocese on 19-05-2004. The bishop appointed a core committee of the KIDSS to perform its duties with Fr. M. Xavier Rajamony as its convener. The bishop sent another circular letter to be read in all the churches, that the 204 churches of Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates come under the new regional Social Service Organisation KIDSS. The KIDSS works on the rural, women welfare, backward class, child welfare self-help movements, inland fishermen welfare programmes etc. The R.M.P. Rural Maestro programme has its headquarters at Thedal buildings Kuzhithurai. It has 204 units functioning in all the parishes and substations of the two vicariates of Thiruthuvapuram and Mulagumoodu. These 204 units are reduced under 22 stations at Kandanvilai, Thuckalay, Thiruvithamcode, Palliady, Manalikarai, Madathattuvilai, Mullanginavillai, Mulagumoodu, Vellicode, Amsi, Kappukadu, Kalliyakavillai, Kulasegaram, Siluvaipuram, Thiruthuvapuram, Parakunnu, Puthenkadai, Puthukadai, Maruthamcode, Melpuram, Vencode and Vavarai. The R.M.P looks into the social, cultural, economic and educational uplift of the people of all villages. It has been developing agriculture, horticulture, drinking water schemes etc.
The “Dalith Development Programme”, works in 26 units mainly at Kuttaikadu, Chunkankadai, Manali, Manalikarai, Madathattuvillai, Mullavillai, Velliyavillai, Kadayal, Cheruvalloor, Nagacode, Maruthamcode, Melpalai etc. A priest is incharge of this programme. Education for all, houses for every family, occupational aid for the daliths are the main programmes of the D.D.P. The Director of this movement at present is Fr. Bright Simaraj. Kaikal (Hands) is out and out a Women’s Organisation. It looks for the development of women. It has 101 units all over the two vicariates. It runs many tailoring, embroidery, basket making, matchbox manufacturing, bookbinding, mat and rope making units. Its fundamental aim is to make women to earn for their livelihood and to help their families to share and to lift the family income.

The Inland Fisherman Organisation works in the inland fisherman villages like Puliyoorkurichi, Eranial, Monday Market, Vattom, Eravi-puthoorkadai, Kuzhivilai, Thuckalay, Padmanabhapuram, Thiruvithamcode, Mulagumoodu, Karingal, Thalakulam, Palliyadi, Manalikarai, Samiyarmadam, Villukuri, Thikkanamcode, Vellicode, Attoor, Kadayal, Kaliyakkavillai, Kulasegaram, Ponmanai, Kuruvikadu, Thiruthuvapuram, Vettuvenni, Thickurichi, Puthenkadai, Kesavapuram, Thettiyodu, Puthukadai, Pechipparai, Manalodai, Kuzhithurai, Marthandam, Unnamalakadai etc. The IFO takes care of the inland fisherman settlements to have a better standard of life and helps them in their occupational, educational, social and cultural progress. The Child Health Development Programme (CHDP) is fully concentrating the child welfare activities of the
Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates of the Kottar diocese. It has two main stations at Mulagumoodu vicariate and Thiruthuvapuram vicariate headquarters\(^80\).

5.10 COASTAL PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The diocese of Kottar has 49 fisherman villages. The coastal line is 7.2 percentage of Tamilnadu and there are 1,35,000 fisher people live and among them 48,000 are involved in the fishing occupation. The coastal area is fully catholic and it has the density of 1,690 people live in a square kilometer\(^81\). As these fishermen households are very close to one another, they face occupational, family, street and financial problems. These problems lead to big violence in the coastal villages. The coastal parishes face such disputes often and these quarrels bring woes to the whole community\(^82\). There are parishanal and inter parishanal issues remain unsolved many times, and during the times of such quarrels the villages have a barren look and this temptations bring fear in this location\(^83\). The communal riot between the hindus and the Christians at Manadaikadu from 1\(^{st}\) March to 15\(^{th}\) March 1982 marked a tragedy in Kanyakumari district. Even after 1982, riots continued at Eeethamozhi, Anchugiramam, Krishnanputhoor, Kadayalkadu regions. The Kottar diocese noticed the importance of creating a peace committee to solve the ethnic and communal problems\(^84\).

In 1995, Bishop Leon Augustine Tharmaraj formed a “Coastal Peace and Development Council” to solve, to guide and to manage the issues of the fishermen communities. The head committee functions in the bishop’s house, Kottar called a

\(^{81}\) Census Report, The Diocese of Kottar, 2004-2005, Platinum Jubilee Year, 2005, p.4,
\(^{83}\) Ibid., p.14.
\(^{84}\) Ibid.,
“Central Committee” with the bishop as chairman. A director, secretary, treasurer and members of the executive run this council. The director and secretary of the committee are directly appointed by the bishop and they are priests to lead its members. The executive committee has 49 members, represent the 49 fisherman villages of the diocese. The coastal villages are divided into Five sub-committees, Arokiapuram to Mel-Manakudy form the 1st Sub-committee with Kanyakuamri as centre, Annai Nagar to Rajakkamangalam form the 2nd sub-committee with Rajakkamangalm as centre, Pillaiithope to Puthoor form the 3rd committee with Muttom as centre, Kottilpadu to Kurumpani form the 4th committee with Colachel as centre and Midalam to Mulloorthurai form the 5th committee with Enayam as centre. The general body of the CPDC has 245 members, as it has five representatives form each village. This general body meets in urgent times and times in need to settle the issues of the villages. In a parish, a five member committee works and leads the people and settles the disputes with the guidance of the parish priest. These committees take precautionary measures to avoid such issues when signs seen even before the dispute. The committee rushes to the spot and guide the parish committee when there are issues and disputes. They make contact with the Revenue and Police departments and seek their help. They also meet the person or groups that involved in the issues and seek solutions to the problems. The CPDC has seven service stations at Kanyakumari, Mel-Manakudi, Kesavanputhenturai, Muttom, Colachel, Midalam and Enayam to look after the dropouts in the school level education. It aims at educating all children up to the higher secondary level.

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86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., pp.10-12.
For the weak students and slow learners holiday classes and evening classes are arranged by the CPDC in every parish. It also helps the youth to prepare for the competitive examinations under the Tamilnadu Government and Union Public Service Commission\textsuperscript{90}.

The CPDC helps the fisherman students to get seats for higher technical, engineering education in the diocesan college of engineering and technology. Every year sixteen high scoring students are chosen from the 49 villages to get free education in St. Xavier’s Engineering College, Chunkankadai, Nagercoil. After the completion of education, eight high ranking students are provided job opportunities in Tamilnadu and other cities of India with the direct recommendations of the diocese\textsuperscript{91}.

The top scores are helped by the Jeppiar Educational Foundations, Chennai, every academic year. In 2003 – 2004, twelve students were given free education in the Jeppiar Institutions, Chennai. In 2004-2005, it was raised to thirty five, in 2005-2006, it became one hundred and ninety three, in 2006-2007, it was two hundred and thirteen and in 2007 -2008, it was three hundred and four. This educational help is supervised and scrutinized by the CPDC of the Kottar diocese\textsuperscript{92}. Likewise, the Isabella Institute of Nursing, Chennai helps the women students to have free education during every academic year. In 2004-2005, when the college was started it admitted two female students to have free education. In 2005-2006, six girls were benefited by this programme, in 2006-2007, eight girls and in 2007-2008, nine girls were admitted freely to have education in this nursing college\textsuperscript{93}. “Save A Family Scheme” (SAFS) is operated by the CPDC from 2001 onwards. Accordingly, every

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., pp.12-20.
year, one family is helped with housing facility. House repairing and occupational loans are given to the economically weaker families\textsuperscript{94}. On November 21, 2001, the CPDC announced financial help of Rs. 2000/- to 600 families for the construction of lavatory to their households. Rs. 12,000,00 was spent for this purpose in 2001. Every year during November 21, on the fishermen day some beneficiary programmes are announced for the fisherfolk\textsuperscript{95}.

The “Food and Agricultural Organisation” (FAO), the “Bay Of Bengal Programme”, (BOBP) the Kottar Social Service Society and the Coastal Peace and Development Council have jointly construct houses and make colonies in the fisherman villages like Annai Nagar, Manakudy, Chinnamuttom, Pallam, Pozhikarai, Colochel, Simon Colony, Enayam, Kodimunai, Mulloorthurai, Midalam etc\textsuperscript{96}. The CPDC improves the facilities of fishing in the harbours of Kanyakumari district\textsuperscript{*}. The Colochel fishing harbour has the capacity of employing 700 fishing boats and 2000 kattamarams. The Thengapattinam and Chinnamuttom harbours have the capacity to accommodate 260 fishing boats each. The Kanyakumari, Kadiyapattinam, Manakudy, Midalam fishing harbours can accommodate 200 fishing boats in each fishing harbour. The fisherman use to go to the other states for fishing. They make use of the Paipur, Cochin, Alappuzha, Thangacherri, Vizhinjam, Chennai, Rameswaram, Tuticorin, VerapandianPattinam harbours of the other states of India\textsuperscript{97}.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{*} In 1963, the “Indo-Norwegian Project” was introduced by Mrs. Lourdammal Simon in the Ministry of Mr.K. Kamaraj, The Colachel, Thengapattinam, Chinnamuttom, Kanyakumari, Kadiyapattinam, Manakudy and Midalam fishing harbours were developed under this programme. The Hindu, Madurai, September 8, 1963.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., pp.31-33
5.11 All INDIA CATHOLIC UNION

All India Catholic Union (AICU) protects the rights of the catholics in the political, social, economic spheres of life. It works in all the Indian state headquarters. It was started in Chennai in 1919, and was registered under the government of India in 1966. It works as an instrumental body of the “Catholic Bishop’s Conference of India” and “Political wing of the Indian Catholic Church”.

The AICU was started in the Kottar diocese in 1965, when T.R Agnisamy was the bishop. The first director appointed by the bishop was Fr. Antony Muthu, who served the union from 1965 to 1969. The second director of this union was Fr. Barnabas Alexander who served the union from 1970 to 1977. The first executive of the Catholic Union was elected on 21st December 1970. This executive was elected for a term of 5 years. Fr. Carmel (1978 -1984), Fr.Jesu Rethinam (1985 -1990), Fr. Soosai Marian (1991-1997) were directors of the union. In 1982, the communal conflict between the christians and the hindus at Mandaikadu became a big tragedy for the diocese. Bishop Marianus Arokiasamy and the director of the union Fr. Soosai Marian with the executive members made recommendations to the Venugopal commission appointed by the Tamilnadu government, to protect the rights of the backward communities, most backward communities, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

On 12th September 1998, Fr. A Valerian was appointed director of this union and on 22nd August 1999, a conference of this union held in the Bishop’s House, Kottar, Nagercoil, and Justice Mary Alphonse addressed the meeting. In 1999, the union condemned the murder of the North Indian missionary Fr. Arul Dhas in

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99 Ibid., pp.6-7.
On 5th April 2000, a seminar was organised in the conference hall of the diocese to enlighten the people to have more political awareness. Two leading advocates conducted the seminar on the Indian Judiciary and amendments. On 21st January 2001, a Tamil Nadu state level conference was arranged in Madras on the subject “Christian Minority Rights” and 7 delegates from Kottar attended the conference. On 10th May 2001, a “Non Religious Alliance” was organised by the delegates of Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian religions. This organisation has to coordinate all the people and religious communities of Kanyakumari region. Also it created a fellowship among the Catholics of Latin rite, Malankara Syrian rite, Zero Malabar rite, the Muslims, the Hindus, Christians of the Church of South India, Lutheran Christians etc. This alliance enlightens social and political awareness among the Christians of the Kanyakumari region and protects the Christian minority rights with the central and state governments. The AICU aims at educating and training the people through such conferences and to enlighten them to hold educational, social and economic rights. Fr. A.M. Hillary was appointed director in 2004 and he holds power till date. From 2005, the AICU has 48 units 24 in the Kottar – Colachel vicariates and 24 units in the Mulagumoodu – Thiruthuvapuram vicariates.

5.12 BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

In 1990, the formation of family units became strong in the Kottar diocese.

A newsprint was read in all the churches and it was the humble beginning of family

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100 Report, AICU, 2000, p.4.
101 “Non Religious Alliance (NRA)” of the Kanyakumari district was formed in 1982, after the Mandaikadu conflict between Hindus and Christians. In 2001, it was renewed and enhanced as a friendly agreement between Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Source – Report, NRA, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 2001, p.4.
102 Ibid., 2004, p.6.
units evangelization. On 3rd January 1993, these units were started in all the parishes as remembrance of the 450th anniversary of St. Francis Xavier’s visit to this region\(^4\). Rev. Fr. Arul Raj was appointed chairperson of this association and the senate approved certain rules in April 1993. These family units are to highlight the ecclesiastical duties of the diocese\(^5\). Rev. Fr. M.J. Edwin\(^*\) was appointed director of the diocese, who looked after the family evangelization units from 1988 to 1992. That time there were 642 family units throughout the diocese. Rev. Fr. Arul Raj took charge as director from 1992-1994, and the number of family units rose into 692. Rev. Fr. Micheal Nayagam was the third priest took charge as director, and he was serving the diocese in this capacity from 1994 to 1997 and the family units were 2000. When Rev. Fr. Vincent was appointed director from 1997 to 2001, the number of units increased into 2100. Rev. Fr. John Daison was appointed director from 2001 – 2004 and the number of family units increased into 2465\(^6\). In 2004, the family units of the whole diocese was divided into two directorates, Kottar and Colachel, the Southern vicariates had one director. Rev. Fr. Chellyan was appointed director of the Kottar and Colachel vicariates. For Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates, Fr. R. Paul Richard Joseph was appointed director. In 2004, the Kottar and Colachel vicariates had 1160 family units and Mulagumoodu and Thiruthuvapuram vicariates had 1424 family units\(^7\). Also each vicariate was divided into religious circles. Accordingly Kottar had seven religious circles that included 630 Anbiyams (family units). Colachel had 4 circles including 530 family units, Mulagumoodu vicariate had


\(^5\) Ibid., 1994, p.5.

\(^*\) It is to note that Rev. Fr. M.J. Edwin started the union of seventeen families at Kodimunai in the Colachel vicariate of Kottar Diocese in 1979. These units had its origin in the South American countries of Peru, Argentina and Brazil in 1968. This service is termed as Peter’s Service or People’s Catholism. Source, Report, Clarian Communications, West Thambaram, Chennai, 2003, pp.1-3.


\(^7\) Ibid., 2005, pp.1-8.
seven circles included 720 anbiyams and Tiruthuvapuram vicariate had eight circles with 704 family units. During the time of the platinum jubilee celebrations in 2005, the whole diocese had 2584 family units108. Also the laity are appointed fulltime workers and this body including the officiating priests and laity form the executive committee of the diocese. There are 25 members working as fulltime workers of the family units109.

5.13 THE PARISH COUNCIL

The formation of “Parish Council” in the parishes is another important structure in the pastoral administration of the diocese. Many attempts were made earlier for setting up parish councils in the coastal and interior parishes and these could not take root due to various factors. This structure was viewed by some priests as an unnecessary threat to their free functioning of the parish administration. In the early years the priests took independent decisions of their own found it hard to sit among the representatives or the laity to take decisions in matters of administration of the church. They generally felt that the involvement of the laity was an unwarranted interference in their parish administration110. In some parishes the parish council tried to control the priests and the priests had to act according to the tune of the committee. Often the parish councils were an arena of village politics. Some of the members were selected to the council through their influence in local politics, influence of money or family prestige111. The political influence and regional prestige created groupism in many parishes and it led to many problems in the administration of the parish. In 1971, the “Christian Dominos” made a plan to have

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109 Ibid.,
111 Ibid.,
pastoral councils consisting of priests and lay people to function in every parish, and the law read that it would be the function of this council to investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions concerning the parish administration\textsuperscript{112}. This matter was discussed in the body of the senate of priests and great enthusiasm was shown in establishing the pastoral council in the diocese of Kottar. A pastoral letter was read in all the parishes and a parish council or pastoral committee was formed in all the parishes during December 1971. On 26\textsuperscript{th} December 1971, at 4 pm, the members of the newly formed pastoral council met in the Bishop’s House under the presidentship of Bishop Arokiasamy. It opened a new era of cooperation in every parish and the parish council was coordinated by the parish priest in every parish of the diocese\textsuperscript{113}.

A constitution was framed for the functioning of the council. The President of the council was the parish priest. A vice president, secretary, treasurer and executive members were elected to each council\textsuperscript{114}. This pastoral council had to take decisions concerning matters of finance, administration of local schools, evangelization etc and these parish councils were formed in 68 parishes of the diocese. The parish priests had to summon this committee at important matters of the parish and these became attached to the priest and the people of the particular parish\textsuperscript{115}.

A Diocesan Pastoral Council was setup in the diocese, with selected priests and the laity. It played a vital role in the functions of the diocese. On 30\textsuperscript{th} December 1971, Bishop Marinas Arokiasamy constituted the first diocesan pastoral council and

\textsuperscript{112} “Christian Dominos, Vatican II Declaration” Rome, Dated 27\textsuperscript{th} October, 1971.
\textsuperscript{113} Felix Wilfred, \textit{op.cit.}, p.173.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid.}, p.175.
it functioned for 3 years\textsuperscript{116}. On 14\textsuperscript{th} July 1990, Bishop Leon Augustine Tharamaraj reinstated the functioning of this council to create a smooth administration in the diocese to eradicate injustice, inequality and non cooperation for the establishment of socio-economic cooperation and development of the local churches. The new diocesan parish council consists of the Bishop, Vicar General, Rectors of the minor seminaries, vicariate heads and the coordinators of all commissions. The formation of the diocesan parish council led to the formations of parish councils in each parish of the diocese\textsuperscript{117}.

5.14 St. ALOYSIUS SEMINARY – 1952

Every church needs spiritual men and women who work as pastors in service. They have to govern the people for training the catholic religion. These candidates have to go to a seminary to study theology and philosophy. Seminary training is a requirement for ordinance\textsuperscript{118}. The establishment of a minor seminary* in the diocese of Kottar was a landmark in the vocation of Kottar. In May 1952, during the period of Bishop Agnisamy St. Aloysius seminary was opened in Nagercoil near the bishop's house\textsuperscript{119}. This seminary was named after the former bishop of Quilon Aloysius Maria Benzigar under whose administration the diocese of the Kottar was separated from Quilon diocese. The campaign for fund started in 1946 and this seminary was built with great sacrifice from contributions from the priests and parishes of the diocese.\textsuperscript{120} The seminary could not cater to all for want of accommodation and a limited number of candidates were admitted for training. The

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p.179.

\textsuperscript{117} Report, Pastoral Council, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 2005, pp.9-11.


\textsuperscript{*} In 1948, two candidates were kept in Carmel School, Nagercoil under the management of Salesian fathers to undergo studies for Priesthood. In 1950, 6 boys were trained there and in 1952 they were transferred to St. Aloysius Seminary, Ramavarmapuram, Bishop's House Compound, Nagercoil. Source- Report, St. Aloysius Seminary, Nagercoil, 1953, p.4.

\textsuperscript{119} Francis E., \textit{St. Aloysius Seminary, An Ecclesiastical College of the Diocese of Kottar}, Nagercoil, 1957, p.3.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.,
selection of candidates to the seminary is done during April – May every year. The admission to this seminary is announced in all the parishes and with the recommendation of the parish priest, the candidates have to undergo a ten days retreat programme and they are selected to this minor seminary. The trainees have to study in Carmel High School, Ramanputhoor, Nagercoil and to complete their school education\textsuperscript{121}. The vocation to priesthood increased from year to year and the diocese wanted many priests. In 1966, Arch. Bishop James R.Knox, Apostolic Nuncio of Delhi visited Kottar. He met Bishop Agnisamy and the delegates and proposed the need of the construction of an additional block and made necessary funds available for the same. Thus a new block adjacent to the old came into existence enabling the admission of more candidates whose number increased eighty two in 1970 – 1971 academic year\textsuperscript{122}. The seminary had two wings one for the junior school trainees and the other for the senior college candidates and the inmate trainees of two years\textsuperscript{123}. The seminary fortified, has a new chapel blessed in 1961 by Bishop Agnisamy, a grotto blessed in 1963 and a rosary clock tower blessed in 1964. In 1967, a large extension was made in the seminary and the new building was blessed by the bishop\textsuperscript{124}. The diocese of Kottar is proud as it has many committed, dynamic, educated and talented young priests. It owes to a large extent to Fr. E. Francis, an all round man with a keen intellect and capacity for quick assessment of men and matters. He had been for nearly two decades training the young seminarians inspiring them to the ideal of priesthood. As administrator, writer and spiritual father he could produce multiple talented priests with dedication and merit to serve the diocese. Many priests are pleased to have him as a father, guide and a model. Fr. E. Francis

\textsuperscript{121} Report, St. Aloysius Minor Seminary, Ramavarmapuram, Nagercoil, 1960, p.4.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., pp.7-9.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p.10.
was the rector from 30th May 1952 to 15th April 1973. Fr. V. Soosaimarian succeeded Fr. E. Francis as rector on 15th April 1973. He was the guide of the young seminarians for five years. He with a solid spiritual and intellectual foundation trained the boys in all possible ways. During his time the vast ground of his institution was used for agricultural purpose. Coconut, plantain tapioca, jack, mango and other trees were planted in the campus and it added beauty to the whole atmosphere. Fr. V. Soosaimarian served till 6th May 1978. Fr. Leon Augustine Thamararaj took charge as rector of the minor seminary in 1978. He was calm and continued the great tradition set by his predecessors. Fr. E. John Kulandhai was the rector of St. Aloysius seminary from 8th May 1986 to 28th May 1992. Fr. M. Soosai succeeded him and continued in service till 11th May 1995. Fr. S. Servatius succeeded Fr. M. Soosai and continued in service till 8th May 1998. Fr. M. Peter succeeded Fr. S. Servatius and continued in service till 11th May 2001. Fr. N. Maria Hentry succeeded Fr. M. Peter and served this ecclesiastical institution till 28th May 2005. Fr. R. Xavier Bruce has been serving the seminary as rector from 2005. An amendment in the rules of this seminary was introduced on 25th May 2000 and the seminarians selected, have to undergo their school and collegiate education in their respective villages by residing in their houses, helping the parish priest in every walk of the parish administration. These trainees are well trained in these parishes from their initial life as seminarians.

126 Flows, A Documentary, St. Aloysius Seminary, Ramavarmapuram, Nagercoil, 1984-1985, pp.4-8.
128 Report, St. Aloysius Seminary, 2005, pp.6-7
* The Diocese helps financially the seminarians in their educational endeavor by remitting their fees and meeting transportation charges. Source, Report, St. Aloysius Seminary, 2007, p.7.
129 Ibid., 2007, p.7.
5.15 XAVIER MISSION HOME -1971

In 1970, the apostolic nuncio of India Rev. M.J. Lemieuxs recommended the bishop to have a seminary for mission service. On 19th February 1970, a meeting held in the Bishop’s House, Kottar to discuss about the formation of the mission home in Nagercoil. The Arch. Bishop of Madurai Justin Diraviam, the bishop of Tuticorin Msgr. Thomas Frenando, the Vicar General of Kottar Msgr. Villavarayan, the rector of St. Aloysius, Seminary Fr. E. Francis, the Belgian missionary Fr. Melard and the Bishop of Kottar Msgr. Arokiasamy were the delegates attended the meeting. In the official meeting it was decided that the Mission Home meant for promoting vocation to North India would be called Xavier Mission Home, after the patron saint of the diocese. It was also decided that the Mission Home should recruit students from 1971 and the bishop of Kottar should have immediate supervision over the institution and he will be the chairman of the same. The construction work started immediately at Ramanputhur near Carmel High School, Nagercoil. The First candidates of the mission service to the new building in Carmel Nagar Nagercoil were selected for the mission to the North on 25th May 1971. The candidates had to undergo school education in Carmel High School. There were eight candidates residing in the Mission Home in the 1971-1972 academic year. The Mission Home has flourished and it provided the dioceses of North India with committed and well trained young men. The boy trainees are selected in this mission seminary for their high school level education to class twelve. The trained candidates

131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.

* The proposal of the construction of a Mission Home was presented to Msgr. Joseph Caprio, the Apostolic Nuncio, when Bishop Agnisamy met him at Bangalore in March 1969. Necessary funds for building and other construction works were raised from All India Bishop’s Council. The work started in a plot adjacent to St. Carmel High School, Nagercoil. Report, Xavier Mission Home, Nagercoil, 2004, pp.9-16.
were sent to many dioceses in North India. From 1971 to 1980, the mission could send candidates to twelve north Indian dioceses like Ahamedabad the most populated district in Gujarat, Bhagalpur, another populated district of Bihar, Calcutta, headquarters of West Bengal and Raigunj, capital of Uttar Dinajpur district of West Bengal, Daltonnganj, capital of Palamu district in Jharkhand, Diburugah and Tezpur, the well populated districts of Assam, Simla, a highly populated district of Himachal Pradesh, Shillong in Meghalaya, Varanasi in Utter Pradesh and Jammu in Jammu Kashmir. The candidates were sent to Indore, Sagar and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. Also candidates were sent to Baruipur and Dumka districts. Every year the mission home could send twenty five to forty trained candidates for the North Indian missionary work. Students all over India are trained in this institute but most of the trainees are from Kottar the diocese. The new bishop introduced colour dress for the seminarians of both St. Aloysius Seminary and Xavier Mission Home. The trainees were pleased to have colours trousers and shirts in the junior level and long trousers and shirts in the senior level*. It was then followed in other dioceses and a uniform dress code was introduced internationally for all seminarians.

5.16 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Christianity is in India for more than 20 centuries, and their educational institutions introduce a new spirit of understanding and a better appreciation of life in the community. Christian education is fully student centered, and education is made more assessable to all both the boys and the girls. Students from the lower

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134 Ibid.,
* The old dress pattern was plain dhoti and white full hand shirts for all seminarians of all age groups.
strata are benefited much from these educational institutions. The Christian educational movements have often been imbued with a strong social concern, and this adds much dynamism to the progress of higher education. The Christian education forms a common mind and it is a continuing process of life. It was the Christian missionaries, who provided education to all especially the underprivileged and the economically weak sections of the society. In 1930, when the new diocese of Kottar was blessed by the bishop of Quilon Aloysius Maria Benzigar, there were seventy five primary schools at various stations of the diocese. There were six middle schools functioning at Carmel Nagar, Madathattuvillai, Nagercoil, Kurusady, Kanyakumari and Colachel. The only high school functioning was the Carmel High School, Carmel Nagar, Nagercoil. In 1980, when the diocese celebrated its golden jubilee, it had eighty primary schools, twenty five middle schools, eighteen high schools, nine higher secondary schools, one arts and science college run by nuns, four technical institutes and one teachers training institute. In 2005, when the diocese celebrated the platinum jubilee, it has eighty seven primary schools, thirty two middle schools, twenty two high schools, twenty six higher secondary schools, one arts and science college of Holy Cross sisters, seven technical institutes, one engineering college and three teachers training institutes.

Ibid., p.235.
* The seventy five primary schools functioning in 1930 were at Alancy, Allencode, Amsi (Maniyaram Kunnu) Appattuvillai (Thulay), Arokipuram, Aruguvillai, Asaripallam (Kel), Asaripallam (Mel) Chinnamuttam, Chinnavillai, Christunagar, Colachel, Enayam, Eraniel, Etamadai, Ireniapuram, Kadiyapatinam, Kalkurichi, Kandanvillai, Kanyakumari, Kappukadu (Kunnathoor), Karankadu, Karingal, Kattathurai, Kottar, Kovalam, Kulasegaram, Kurumberai, Kurusady, Madathattuvillai, Manakavillai, Manakudy, Manali Karai, Manavalakurichi, Mangallakunnu, Maravankudiyiruppu, Mankuzhi, Mathiravillai, Melpalai, Midalum, Mullamgnavillai, Mulagumoodu (Two Schools) Munchirai, Muttom, Mylady, Nagercoil (two Schools), Neyoor, Pancode, Padmanabhapuram, Pallam, Palliyady, Parakunnu, Periyakadu, Periyavillai, Puthenkadai, Puthoor, Puthukadai, Rajavoor, Ramanathichanputhoor, Ramanputhoor (3 Schools), Ramanathurai, Siluvapuram, Thuckalay, Thirukurichi, Thiruthuvapuram, Vaniyakudy, Vattam, Vavarai, Velliavavillai and Vencode. Source, Report, Diocesan Schools, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 1980, pp.8-11.

St. Francis School, Nagercoil was founded by Bishop Aloysius Maria Benzigar, the bishop of Quilon on 5th October 1907, for Tamil education. The school is hundred* and one years old. It was a pet child of the bishop, who wanted to make future teachers and community leaders from this school. A boarding was attached to it. Fr. Peter Morris and Fr. R. Maria Silva were the early heads of this school from 1907 to 1923. Students from different quarters studied in this school. This school was manged by the Franciscans from 1901 to 1923. In 1923, Fr. Boniface Reberira, who was the chancellor of the Quilon diocese took charge of the school. He had additional charge of St. Joseph's convent school as chaplaincy. During his time, St.Francis school was upgraded as a Tamil high school139. Fr. Victor Rodriguez was the manager from 1932 to 1946. Fr. J.M. Villavarayan was the manager from 1947 to 1957. In 1980 this school became a higher secondary school and has been serving the people140.

Before the formation of the diocese, the Missionary Cononesses of St. Augustine started St.Joseph’s convent school in the heart of the city, Nagercoil in 1906-1907 academic year. It was the only English School existed in the diocese for girls. It had separate divisions as primary, middle and high school sections141. The other schools established in 1909 were St.Joseph’s school at Mulagumoodu. St. Antony’s school at Cape Comorin, St. Joseph’s school at KelAsaripallam. St.Ursullas school at Kulasegaram, Roman Catholic school at Palliyady and Province school at Ritapuram. In 1955 St. Anthony’s school at Cape Comorin, St. Lawerence at Madathittuvillai, St.Mary’s at Colachel. St. Bernadette’s at Mangalakunnu,

* St. Francis School, Nagercoil celebrated its 100 year celebrations during December 2007.
139 Souvenir, 2005, p.110.
140 Ibid.
141 Report, St. Joseph Convent School, Nagercoil, 1940, p.3
St. Philomena's at Muttom, St. Francis Xavier at Vavarai and St. Joseph's at Thiruthuvapuram, Roman Catholic school at Enayamputhenthalurai, St. Goretie's school at Manalikarai, St. Mary's at Melpalai, Little Flower at Ramanputhur, Roman Catholic school at Kel Assaripallam, Infant Jesus at Mulagumoodu, Amala convent school at Thuckalay, St. Aloysius school at Velliavilai and St. Francis school at Nagercoil became high schools. In 1958, St. Antony's Cape Comorin, Carmel school Nagercoil, St. Joseph's Girls school Nagercoil, Amala school at Thuckalay and St. Lawerence school Madathattuvillai were raised to the high school level. These schools became the best schools in the respective educational districts.

In 1922, when Kottar was part of Quilon diocese, Bishop Aloysius Maria Benzigar started the Carmel school at Ramanputhoor, Nagercoil. The school was started in a modest building of 300-feet long under the management of Fr. Bernard Gonsalvaz and Fr. Antony Pereira as headmaster. In 1927, the school was upgraded into a middle school under the management of Fr. Paul Sebastian. The first Bishop Lawerence Periera of Kottar upgraded the school into a full fledged English High School. A new building was put up and Fr. Vincent Fernandez, the junior became the manger as well as headmaster of this school. In 1935, Bishop Lawerence Pereira made contacts with the Belgium based missionary of brothers of charity and five brothers were sent from the English province of Liverpool to Kottar to assist the administration of the school. Brother Dunston, the superior took charge of the school on 9th May 1936. The other brothers were Lawerence Peter, Alphonse Thadeus, Jerome Justin and Pent Mary. The school became renowned in all scholastic activities, and became famous.

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* In 1955-1957 academic year there were 81 primary schools, 18 middle schools, 5 high schools. In 1958-1963 academic year the primary schools remained 81, middle schools 21 and high schools 10.

Source: Souvenir, Platinum Jubilee Year 2005, pp. 68-70

142 Francis E., op. cit., pp. 54-56.

* The Brothers of Charity gave the best education to the students. The Catholic Christians and the other students were admitted in the school on the merit basis. The school also gave importance to
in the surroundings. After 1942, when the Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Resolution, the missionary found it difficult to get officials from home (Belgium) and in 1943, the brothers returned to England. They served the school for 10 years. They constructed a chapel and a priest’s residence and these constructions were not completed by them. The brothers also donated a well stocked library in Carmel School. They also contributed a set of all – teak church pews, a huge manual organ, an English chiming clock and forty eight desks to the boarders of the school. These brothers were so efficient, self sacrificing and a zealous missionary team. In 1945, the diocese again took charge of the management of the school. In 1947, at the dawn of Indian independence, the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco from Madras took charge of the management of the school. In 1950, they left and still 1959 the diocese once again directly took charge of the management. In 1959, the school came under the Jesuit missionary. Fr. A. Michado S.J. served the school as manager and headmaster. At present the school management is directed by the Jesuit priests.\textsuperscript{143}

5.17 MEDICAL SERVICE

The medical service in the diocese of Kottar is highly commendable. Medical facilities were limited in Kanyakumari region during 1960’s. Bishop Agnisamy centered rural health as the main aim of establishing hospitals in the remote villages of the diocese. The medical and nursing service have been undertaken by the nuns of different congregations throughout the diocese. Many mission hospitals have been functioning in the villages. The catholic mission hospitals have been taking care of the people live in the villages.\textsuperscript{144} Rev. Sister Beneditta Lawrence of Zurich Holy

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p.59.

\textsuperscript{144} Report, Medical Mission, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 1972, p.7.
Cross Mission of Switzerland came for voluntary service in the tuberculosis hospital, Asaripallam, Nagercoil with seven nuns. On the request of Bishop Agnisamy and the Diocesan Council she started a new hospital at Christunagar, Vettumimadam, Nagercoil in 1960. This congregation of sisters visited the homes and gave medical help to the people of the surroundings. These sisters enlightened the people of the rural area about general health and hygiene. In 1972, the hospital building was extended and in patients were allowed for service. The priests of the diocese, the nuns and the clergy undergo treatment in this hospital. This hospital locates in the district capital and serves the people of the whole district. The hospital was extended with new blocks of buildings and in May 2008 the hospital has more facilities like general medicine, child medicine, pregnancy treatment, surgery, neurological treatment etc.

Karingal is a remote place in the Kalkulam taluk of Kanyakumari district which comes under the religious division of Mulagumoodu vicariate of the Kottar diocese. Bishop Agnisamy and the senior priest Fr. Rajappan Anthonymuthu took steps to establish a hospital at Karingal. In 1965 the bishop contacted the Nirmala mission to start medical service at Karingal. In 1966, Sr. Rita Mag John, the mother superior of Madras region gave permission to Sr. Clara Felicita, the head of Tiruchinapally mission to start a clinic at Karingal. Sr. Angella and Sr. James started the medical service in an old building in this region. On 2nd February 1971, a new building and a convent dedicated to St. Nirmala were blessed and opened by Bishop Agnisamy and the parish priest Fr. A. Gabriel. The sisters visited the areas like Colachel, Kurumpanai, Marthandam, Kodimunai, Thengapattinam, Midalam, Kappukad, Thuckalay etc. and gave medical service to the people. This unit started medical as

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145 Report, Holy Cross Hospital, Christunagar, Nagercoil, 1980, pp.3-6.
well as counselling centers in the location of Karingal. The service of Dr. Valsa Peter and Dr. Rose Rajamony are highly commendable in this area. Every year free medical camps are conducted in the church premises of Karingal\(^\text{148}\). During the time of tsunami, Nirmala hospital conducted free medical camps at Pillaithope, Kadiyapattinam, Kottilpadu and Colachel parishes\(^\text{149}\). In the Vilavancode taluk at Mullanginavilai the Sacred Heart of St. Mary’s congregation of Puthucherry administers a rural hospital from 8\(^\text{th}\) April 1967. This hospital was blessed by Bishop Agnisamy at the presence of parish priest Fr. A. Dionysius. This hospital has been serving the people of Nattalam and Tharathattu villages. The service is dedicated to St. Antony and the hospital is named after this patron saint\(^\text{150}\).

The Manalikarai Medical Mission is very important in Kanyakumari district. The Carmelites started the medical service in this region. Rev. Fathers. Stephen Mary and Jerome took pains in starting the medical mission and on 14\(^\text{th}\) September 1971, the hospital was inaugurated by the health minister of Kerala Mr. Baby John\(^\text{151}\). From 1971 to 1991 this hospital was supervised by Keraliate Carmel Mission of Quilon and from 1991, it is being supervised by Tamilnadu Carmel Mission. In 1999, a new building was attached to the old block with all modern medical facilities and the new structure was blessed by Bishop Leon A.Tharmaraj. The medical mission is helpful in the areas of Mavaravilai, Manakkavilai, Chetticharvilai, Verkilambi, Swamiyarmadam, Udaiyarvilai, Kannanoor, Kallankuzhi, Chemparuthivilai, Muttaikadu, Ethavilai, Kumarapuram, Mekkamandapam, Kotticodu, Perumsilampu,

\(^{148}\) Ibid.,
\(^{150}\) Report, St. Antony’, Mission Hospital, Mullanginavilai, 2006, pp.4-9.
\(^{151}\) Report, Carmel Mission Hospital, Manalikarai, 1972, pp.6-7.
Chithiramcode villages. The hospital has general medical treatment, child - medical treatment, pregenancy medical treatment and all sorts of medical facilities.\(^{152}\)

On 1\(^{st}\) October 1971, the parish priest of Karankadu with the instructions of Bishop Marianus Arokiasmy started St.Aloysius hospital to serve the poor in the villages around Kandanvilai. The mission hospital is administred by the S.D.S (Society of Divine Sisters) congregation.\(^{153}\) Bishop Arokiasamy, parish priest of Pallam Fr. Rajappan and Sr. Jose Anne of St. Mary's congregation of Coimbatore started a Catholic Mission hospital at Pallam, on 27\(^{th}\) June 1973.\(^{154}\) The old building was renovated on 22\(^{nd}\) May 1974, and this building was set on fire on 14\(^{th}\) May 1983, after the Mandaikadu communal conflict between the hindus and christians of this locality. In 1985, the Kottar Social Service Society helped the construction of a new hospital building on the ruins of the old one.\(^{155}\) On 12\(^{th}\) July 2002, Bishop Leon Augustine Tharmaraj laid the foundation of a new building and it was blessed on 23\(^{rd}\) September 2003.\(^{156}\)

The historical city Colachel has political, religious, and economic importance. The bishop of Kottar M. Arokiasamy, Fr. J.G. Jesudhas and Sr. Pennijus Alfred started St.Mary's Mission hospital at Colachel on 25\(^{th}\) June 1976. The hospital was functioning in an old building and five sisters nursed the people of this locality.\(^{157}\) In 1989, a new building was constructed and the medical mission has been serving the people. This hospital has special units like child care centre, pregnancy care centre, alcoholists and addicts care and counselling centre. In 2002, this hospital completed

\(^{152}\) Report, C.M.H. Manalikarai, 2000, p.9.
\(^{153}\) Report, St. Aloysius Mission Hospital, Kandanvilai, 2005, pp.1-3.
\(^{156}\) Report, C.M.H., 2004, p.3.
\(^{157}\) Report, Mary's Mission Hospital, Colachel, 1976-1977, pp.4-5.
its 25 years of medical service and a surgery unit was started by the missionaries. When tsunami affected the coastal villages of Kottar diocese, this mission did much service to the people. This hospital at present has homeopathy treatment, yoga treatment, magnetic treatment, musical treatment and care. Kadiyapattinam is one of the coastal villages of diocese of the Kottar. On 27th June 1976, Bishop Arokiasamy, Fr.J.N.Caesar and Fr.Servatius started a new hospital dedicated to St. John and it has been meeting the medical needs of the people of the villages of Kadiyapattinam, Muttom, Chinnavilai, Periyavilai etc. This mission hospital is administered by the sisters of Sacred Heart of Mary’s congregation Pondicherry.

The nuns of S.D.S. congregation administer Mother Mary hospital at Chithanthope, a remote village and the new hospital building was blessed by Bishop Leon A. Tharamaraj on 18th March 1991. It has been serving the children, the women and the aged of the villages of Sadayamangalam, Melapara, Pandaravilai etc. Thengapattinam St.Luke hospital was started by Fr.J. Lucas on 16th July 1993. The Franciscan sisters run this hospital. Sr. Kulanthai Theresa was the director of this hospital from 1993 to 2004. It has been serving the poor and rendering free medical service to many. In 2004, Sister Amalorpavam was appointed director of this hospital. On 19th December 1993, the parish priest of Kandanvilai Fr. S. Salomon laid the foundation stone for the “Little Flower”, hospital. It pays more attention to the women and children of this locality. Sr. Jerome Jose has been serving as the director of this hospital. This rural hospital does lot of service to the people of Kandanvilai. St. Joseph’s Health Centre, Vattakottai near Kanyakumari was

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160 Report, R.Vijaya Kumar, Director of Health and Hygiene, Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 2005, pp.4-16.
161 Report, Mother Mary Mission Hospital, Chithanthope, 2006, p.4.
started on 13th January 1994 by Rev. Sr. Mary Mathew of the Carmelite congregation. The parish priest Fr. Xavier Joseph, Rev. Bishop Leon Augustine Tharmaraj and Mr. Danuskodi Adithan, minister of Tamilnadu opened this health centre for the service of the poor. Pampanvillai is a village near Asaripallam. A health mission centre was opened here by Rev. Fr. J.N. Ceaser, a senior priest of the diocese of Kottar. This hospital has been administered by Sacred of Mary’s congregation of Puthucherry. Rev. Sister Florida Mary, Consilva Mary and Sr. John Baby Mary had been serving as supervisors of this rural hospital. This is a blessing for the economically backward people of this location such as Ananthanadarkudi, SankaranKuzhi, Paruthivilai, Parappuvilai, Thopoor, Vempanoor, Sadayalputhoor, Santhapuram, Arazanvilai, Velipallam etc. This hospital is dedicated to St. Antony the patron saint of Pampanvilai. Rajavoor hails as a historical as well as christian pilgrimage centre of Kanyakumari district. In 1998, Bishop Leon A.Tharmaraj and the Vicar General John Kulandhai started a diocesan mission hospital at Rajavoor. The construction work started on 23rd February 1996 and the hospital was blessed by the bishop on 29th September 1998. Pregnancy care, general medicine and child care are the special features of this hospital. The nuns of St.Joseph’s congregation run this hospital. Dr. Sr. Maria Theresa was serving this hospital for 10 years from 1998 to 2008. The Carmelite sisters run St. Kamilos Hospital at EnayamPuthanthurai, a coastal village on the Arabian shore. The mother superior Sr. Anne Jokim, Sr. Bennet Rani and Freeda Mary were serving the people of this locality. On 22nd May 2002, this hospital was blessed by Bishop Leon A. Tharmaraj. It has all fundamental

165 Report, St.Antony’s Health Centre, St. Antony’s Church, Pampanvilai, 2007, pp.4-8.
166 Report, St.Micheal Mission Hospital, Rajavoor, 2007-2008, pp.4-6.
facilities of medical care and it serves the people of the coastal villages of Enayam Puthenthurai, Ramanthurai, Mulloorthurai, Enayam, Helen Nagar etc\textsuperscript{167}.

Kottar diocese and St. Ann's congregation of the women religious started St. Ann's mission Hospital at Anchukoottuvilai, a nearby village of Kanyakumari. The hospital locates in a vast area of 6.5 acres of land and it has been functioning in 6 blocks designed for general and surgical care with 110 beds for the patients. On 27\textsuperscript{th} May 2005, this hospital was blessed by Apostolic Nunciature of India, Arch. Bishop Pedro Lopez Guintana at the presence of Bishop Leon Augustine Tharmaraj. This hospital has bloodbank, scan facilities, surgery care, urological care, ear, nose, throat treatment etc. At the time of tsunami, this hospital took care of the whole tsunami affected areas of the district\textsuperscript{168}.

### 5.18 ARUL VAZHVU ILLAM

The diocese of Kottar is proud of having "Arul Vazhvu Illam" in the premises of the Bishop's house at Ramavarmapuram. The building erected in 1973 serves the catholics and the people of the whole Kanyakumari region. The services to the youth, the married couples, women and the workers are noticeable. Inter religious talks are arranged by the authorities for all hindu, Islamic and the brotheren of other christian denominations\textsuperscript{169}. The "Catechist Organisation" meant for training fulltime teachers to assist pastoral ministry of the diocese is serving in 26 parish stations in Asaripallam, Chemparuthivilai, Christunagar, Colachel, Kadiyapattinam, Kandanvilai, Kanyakumari, Kappukadu, Karankadu, Kulasegaram, Madathattuvilai, Manalikarai, Melpuram, Mulagumoodu, Palliady. Parakunnu, Puthenthalurai,

\textsuperscript{167} Report, St. Kamilos Mission Hospital, Carmelite Sister's Convent, Enayamputhenthalurai, 2006, pp.2-7.
\textsuperscript{168} Report, St. Mary's Mission Hospital, Anchukoottuvilai, Kanyakumari, 2007, p.6.
\textsuperscript{169} Report, ArulVazhvu Illam, Kottar, Nagercoil, 2007, p.2.
Puthenkadai, Saral, Siluaipuram, Thiruthuvapuram, Thuckalay and Vavarai. These are guided by the "Arul Vazhvu Illam. The "Young Christian Worker's Movement" (YCWM), the "Diocesan Opus Securitatis (Retired Priests Home), where the veterans take rest in peace and reminisce over the past service to humanity matters at the mercy of this institute. "The Catholic Reform Movement" guides the individual, the family and the community life in the diocese. The "Nanchil Natham", a musical academy of the diocese does a great job in the diocese by composing songs, hymns and devotional music\textsuperscript{170}.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., pp.6-9.