CHAPTER II
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CHAPTER – II

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A brief description of the profile of the study area namely, the Thoothukudi district is presented in this chapter. It provides a backdrop for the analysis.

The Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu has certain rare features. The mixed landscape of the sea and the ‘Theri’ (waste) lands has imbibed some special traits in the character of the sons of the soil. Valour, ‘devotion and patriotism are the watchwords of the people here. The story of our country’s freedom struggle cannot be complete without mentioning the supreme sacrifices of the illustrious sons of the district like V.O.Chidambaram Pillai who brought the first Swadeshi ship ‘Galia’ to the Thoothukudi port and Veerapandia Kattabomman who waged a war against the British.
2.2 INCEPTION

The Government in their G.O. Ms.No.535 / Revenue Department dated 23.4.1986 ordered the formation of a new district called the Chidambaranar district which is named after the great patriot and freedom fighter late V.O.Chidambaram Pillai. It was formed on 8-9-1986, with its headquarters at Tuticorin, by bifurcating the erstwhile Tirunelveli district.\(^1\) The district has been renamed as the Thoothukudi district from 1997 as per the G.O. Ms. No. 618/ Revenue Administration (1) Department dated 1-7-1997.

2.3 LOCATION

The Thoothukudi district is bounded by the Virudhunagar district on the North, Tirunelvelli district on the South and West and the Bay of Bengal on the East. It lies between 8\(^0\) and 45\(^0\) of the Northern latitude and 78\(^0\) and 13\(^0\) of the Eastern longitude.\(^2\) The total geographical area of the district is covered by 4621 square kilometres.\(^3\)

There are three Revenue divisions (namely Thoothukudi, Kovilpatti and Tiruchendur), eight taluks and 12 blocks in the district. This district comprises 19 town panchayats, two municipalities and one corporation. There are 468 revenue villages grouped in 408 panchayats.
2.4 CLIMATE AND RAINFALL

The climate of Thoothukudi is neither too hot nor too cold. During the months of April, May and June the Thoothukudi district is hot and warth. During winter, that is, in the months of December and January, the climate is pleasant.

The maximum temperature is 35.7° C and the minimum is 24.5° C. The rainfall is high in the coastal taluks namely, Thoothukudi and Tiruchendur. The normal rainfall of the district is 655.7mm but the actual rainfall varies periodically year to year, and the variation is large.⁴
FIGURE – 2.1

AREA OF STUDY
Table 2.1 reveals the rainfall in Thoothukudi district during 2007-'08. When the North East Monsoon started, the actual rainfall was high, measured asnamely, 319.5 millimetres appropriately. During the cold season the actual rainfall was very low, (i.e. 41.7 millimetres) when compared to normal rainfall.

2.5 IRRIGATION

Tambrabarani, the perennial river benefits about 19,000 hectares in the Thoothukudi district, through 52 system tanks. The river has its origin from Agasthiar Hills in Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats, passes through, Ambasamudram, Tirunelveli, Srivaikuntam and Tiruchendur taluks (the former two taluks are in the Tirunelveli district) (the latter two taluks are in the Thoothukudi
district) and enters into the sea at Punnakayal (in the Thoothukudi district) a place between Thoothukudi and Tiruchendur. The most fertile lands lie on either sides of the river. The rest of the lands in other taluks are dry lands. In the taluks of Tiruchendur, Srivaikuntam and some pockets of Thoothukudi, there are wind blown sandy belts, red in colour, with sand dunes, which are locally known as ‘Theri’. The net area under irrigation through government canal is 3,873 hectares, through tank irrigation 18,040 hectares, through tube wells 256 hectares and by other wells 20,406 hectares.

2.6 AGRICULTURE

The district economy is largely agrarian. Important agricultural crops are paddy, chillies, banana, cumbu, chenna and cotton. The total cultivated area in the Thoothukudi district is 1,65,998 hectares of which the net area sown is 1,60,992 hectares and the rest is 5,006 hectares. The intensity of cropping is very low, because most of the cultivated land is rain fed.

2.7 INDUSTRY

The Thoothukudi coastal area is noted for salt manufacturing. At Thoothukudi, the Central Government has a Research Centre for marine salt in addition to the State Government’s units. There are two industrial estates in the district, one at Kovilpatti and another at Thoothukudi. The major industrial units in the Thoothukudi district are Southern Petro-Chemical Industries Corporation (SPIC), Tuticorin Alkaline Company (TAC), Dharangadara Chemical Works (DCW), Sterlite Copper Smelting Industries, Heavy Water Plant and Thermal Power Project.
2.8 FOREST

The total reserve forest area in Thoothukudi district is 11,012 hectares. In the total forest products, timber contributes 69.857 cu.m., fuel wood 13,273 metric tonnes and cashew 5.24 tonnes.

2.9 DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

In the 2001 census, the Thoothukudi District had a population of 15,72,273 persons of which 7,66,823 were males and 8,05,450 were females. The rural population accounted for 9,07,500 persons while the urban population was 6,64,773. The density of population in the district was 340 persons per square kilometre.
**TABLE 2.2**

CLASSIFICATION OF AREA AND POPULATION BLOCK WISE

*(2001 CENSUS)* (in number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Block</th>
<th>Area (sq.k.m)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoothukudi</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>4,05,363</td>
<td>2,03,368</td>
<td>2,01,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srivaikuntam</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>1,12,440</td>
<td>54,799</td>
<td>57,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karunkulam</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>79,443</td>
<td>38,673</td>
<td>40,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiruchendur</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1,18,862</td>
<td>56,591</td>
<td>62,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udangudi</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>72,415</td>
<td>33,454</td>
<td>38,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alwarthirunagari</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1,16,877</td>
<td>55,669</td>
<td>61,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sattankulam</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>80,396</td>
<td>36,151</td>
<td>44,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottapidaram</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1,14,759</td>
<td>56,989</td>
<td>57,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kovilpatti</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>2,04,371</td>
<td>1,00,254</td>
<td>1,04,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayathar</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1,03,713</td>
<td>50,236</td>
<td>53,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilathikulam</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>91,560</td>
<td>44,936</td>
<td>46,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudur</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>71,810</td>
<td>35,439</td>
<td>36,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,621</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,72,773</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,66,823</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,05,450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.10 LITERACY

The Thoothukudi District ranks second in literacy in the state with 81.96 per cent of the population being literate.

**TABLE 2.3**

**THE LITERACY RATE AS PER 2001 CENSUS (IN PERCENTAGE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>82.33</td>
<td>64.55</td>
<td>73.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoothukudi</td>
<td>88.66</td>
<td>75.64</td>
<td>81.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.11 EMPLOYMENT

The total, workers in the district were 6,73,682, out of which male workers were 4,30,386 and female workers, 2,43,296. The rural workers were 4,28,883 while urban workers were 2,44,799. The employment pattern showed that, there were 71,315 cultivators, 1,67,387 landless agricultural labourers, 45,783 persons in household industry, and 3,89,197 other workers. There were 88,944 marginal workers and 89,206 non-workers.

2.12 FISHERIES

On the eastern border of Thoothukudi District there are 21 coastal villages ranging from Vembar village to Periyathazhai village covering 135 kms. Marine
fishing is the main source of employment to the fisherfolk. In 2001 the total population of the adult fisherfolk was 43,707 out of which 21,180 fisherfolk were involved in fishing and marketing operations. There are 20 fishermen co-operatives and 13 fisherwomen co-operatives in the Thoothukudi District. Fisherwomen are engaged chiefly in marketing fresh and dried fish. The per capita income per family was only ₹6,573. A Fisheries College with Research Institute has been functioning since 1977 at Thoothukudi. 

2.13 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The important towns and villages are well connected with a good network of roads. The total length of roads in the Thoothukudi District is 4,705 km., out of which the length of surfaced and unsurfaced is 4,556.373 and 148.698 km respectively. The length of the National Highways in the Thoothukudi district is 112.4 km and that of the State Highways is 1,994.232 km. Municipality and Municipal Corporation roads contribute a length of 202.106 km. The district has a 106.47 km length of railways. Thoothukudi is connected by Air transport from June 1991 and the airport is located near Vagaikulam at a distance of 15 kms from Thoothukudi.

There are 39 post offices doing postal business alone and 406 post offices doing post and telegraph works. The district has 95,155 telephone connections, with 3,689 public call offices and 69 telephone exchanges.
2.14 PORT

The district has the pride of having a major Port, the Thoothukudi Harbour Project renamed as the Thoothukudi Port Trust. During 2006-07, 1,517 vessels entered Thoothukudi port, and cargo to the tune of 1.36 crore tonnes were handled. Exports of certain raw materials and finished products are shipped to about 20 foreign countries. The Thoothukudi port has been issued the prestigious ISO 9002 certificate for port operation and services by becoming the first Indian major port to get such certificates.

From the foregoing section on the profile of the study area, it is clear that the Thoothukudi district has people of different occupations and the majority of the workers earn their income through agriculture. Most of the villages are rain-fed areas and paddy is cultivated mainly in the delta areas of the river Thamirabarani. Agriculture is found to be the main occupation in the district. As agricultural workers do not have regular employment throughout the year, they have to earn their livelihood through other works during the off-season. The coastal population dwelling in the marine villages along the east coast of the district depends on fishing and other related activities as their sole livelihood.
References


2. www.tuticorin.net/port.htm.


4. www.thoothukudi.tn.ric.in
