CHAPTER – IV

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Introduction

A brief description of the profile of the study area namely Thoothukudi district is presented in this chapter. It provides a backdrop for the analysis. Thoothukudi District of Tamil Nadu has certain rare features. The mixed landscapes of the sea and the ‘theri’ (waste) lands have 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 completed without mentioning the supreme sacrifices of the illustrious 66 sons of the district like V.O. Chidambaram Pillai who brought the first Swadeshi ship ‘Galía’ to Thoothukudi port and Veerapandia Kattabomman who waged war against the British.

Thoothukudi is the capital city of Thoothukudi district. The city is popularly known as Pearl City. It is a seaport which serves India especially the Southern Tamil Nadu including the inland cities of Coimbatore, Madurai and Tirunelveli. It is one of the oldest cities in India today. The name of the city is Tuticorin in English and Thoothukudi in Tamil. The district has three revenue divisions, eight taluks, twelve blocks, one corporation, two municipalities, nineteen town panchayats and 480 revenue villages. Six election constituencies are in the district.

4.2 History and Profile of Thoothukudi District

Thoothukudi is traditionally known for its pearl fishing, fishing and ship building. Thoothukudi became the center of the independence movement in the earlier 20th century, with such leaders as C. Subramanya Bharathy, a pioneering journalist, Veerapandia Kattabomman, a famous freedom fighter and V.O Chidambarampillai the first Tamil Swadesi Ship navigator popularly known as “Chekkizhutha chemmal”.

Shri Muthusami Deekshidar of the trinities of carnatic music, the dumb turned poet Kumara Guruparar, the poet Umaurpulavar Dhansa were other notable personalities. In 1906 the Freedom Fighter V.O Chidambaram Pillai with the help of Bala Gangadhar
thilak, launched the first Swadeshi Ship “S.S Goelia” from this port city in British India. The major harbour of Thoothukudi is also a pearl diving and fishing centre.

**Geography**

Thoothukudi is in south India about 540 kilometers south west of Chennai and is geographically located in the Gulf of Mannar. Thoothukudi district is surrounded by Virudhunagar District in north Tirunelveli in the west and Bay of Bengal in the south and east. It is the administrative head quarters in an urban agglomeration and also one of the Taluk Head quarters within the district.

The district of Thoothukudi was covered out as a separate district in the year 1986 as a result of bifurcation of Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu state.

**Inception**

Thoothukudi District carved out of the erstwhile Tirunelveli District in 1986 has certain rare features. The Government in their G.O. Ms.No.535 / Revenue Department dated 23.4.1986 ordered the formation of a new district called 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. (District Industry Centre, 1993-94) The district has been renamed Thoothukudi district from 1997 as per the G.O. Ms. No. 618/ Revenue Administration (1) Department dated 1-7-1997.

**Location**

Thoothukudi district is bounded by Virudhunagar district on the North, Tirunelveli district on the South and the West and the Bay of Bengal on the East. It lies between 0.80 and 450 of the Northern longitude and 780 and 110 of the Eastern longitude. The total area of the district is 4621 km2 (District Statistical Hand Book, 2008-09). There are three revenue divisions (namely Thoothukudi, Kovilpatti and Tiruchendur), eight taluks and 12 blocks in the district. This district comprises 19 town panchayats, three municipalities and one corporation. There are 468 revenue villages, grouped in 408 panchayats.
Demographic Situation

According to the 2011 census, the Thoothukudi district had a population of 17,38,376 persons of which 8,58,919 are males and 8,79,457 are females (Census Report 2011). The rural population accounted for 9, 07,500 persons (Total population is 15,72,273 in 2001 Census) while the urban population is 6,64,773. The density of population in the district is 340 persons per square kilometre.

Irrigation

There are no big reservoirs in this district so the Papanasam and Manimuthar dams located in the Tirunelveli district under Tamiraparani system are the main sources of irrigation and drinking purposes for the Thoothukudi district also other than the Tamirabarani river, the river tarumet which traverses through Sathankulam and Thiruchendur Taluks also act as sources. In Ottapidaram Taluk there is one small reservoir at Eppodumvendran village.

There are P.W.D. tanks, 52 system tanks, 154 canals and 29022 wells, 9473 electric motors and 1444 engines are used for irrigation purposes.

Tamirabarani, a perennial river irrigates about 19,000 hectares in the Thoothukudi district, through 52 system tanks. The river rises from Agasthiar Malai in Pothigai hills in the Western Ghats, passes down 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 areas of Thoothukudi, there are windblown 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.

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 accounts 1,65,998 hectares of which the net area sown is 1,60,992 hectares and
the rest is 5,006 hectares. (District Statistical Hand Book, 2013-14). The intensity of cropping is rather low because most of the cultivated land is rain fed. Paddy is cultivated in the Villathikulam, Sattankulam and Thiruchendur Taluks. Cumbu, ragi, cholam, kuthiraivali, banana, corn and other food crops are raised in the dry tracts of Kovilpatti, Vilathikulam, Ottapidram and Thoothukudi taluks. Cotton is cultivated in Kovilpatti, Vilathikulam, Ottapidram and Thoothukudi taluks. Commercial crops like cotton, chillies and sugarcane are also cultivated. Groundnut cultivation is undertaken in Kovilpatti, Thiruchendur and Sattankulam taluks. Groundnut cake is being used as manure and cattle food with 35 percent share. The district is the top producer of cumbu in Tamilnadu

**Industry**

The Thoothukudi coastal area is well-known 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 the other at Thoothukudi. The major industrial units in Thoothukudi district are Southern Petro Chemical Industries Corporation (SPIC), Tuticorin Alcaline Company (TAC), Dharangadara Chemical Works (DCW), Sterlite Copper Smelting Industries, Heavy Water Plant and Thermal Power Project.

**Literacy**

The literacy rate in Thoothukudi district is exhibited through the following table.

**Table: 4.2 - The Literacy Rate as per 2013-14 Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>82.33</td>
<td>64.55</td>
<td>73.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoothukudi</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Statistical Hand Book 2013-14, Thoothukudi District.

From the table 3.6, it is known that, the total literacy rate in Tamil Nadu is 73.44 per cent whereas in Thoothukudi district it is 72 per cent only. It is also inferred from the table that the literacy of male is more than the female in Thoothukudi and Tamil Nadu.
Employment

The total workers in the district are 6,78,811, out of which male workers are 4,31,784 and female workers are 2,47,027. The rural workers are 4,32,127 while urban workers are 2,46,684. The employment pattern shows that there are 67,307 cultivators, 1,23,988 landless agricultural labourers, 35,483 persons in 72 household industries, and 3,61,818 other workers. There are 90,215 marginal workers and 89,346 non-workers (District Statistical Hand Book 2013-14).

Fisheries

On the eastern border of Thoothukudi district, there are 24 coastal villages ranging from Vembar to Periathazhai covering 135 kms. Marine fishing is one of the sources of employment to the fisher folk. In 2001 the total population of the fisher folk is 43,707 out of which 21,180 involved in fishing and marketing operations. There are 20 fishermen co-operatives and 13 fisher women cooperatives in Thoothukudi district. Fisher women are found engaged chiefly in marketing fresh and dried fish. The per capita income per family is only `6,573. A Fisheries College with Research Institute has been functioning since 1977 at Thoothukudi (District Statistical Hand Book, 2013-14).

Forest

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

Transport and Communication

The important towns and villages are well connected with a good network of roads. The total length of roads in Thoothukudi district is 4,705 km; of which the length of surfaced and unsurfaced roads is 4,556.373 km and 148.698 km respectively. The length of the National Highways in Thoothukudi district is 112.4 km and that of the State Highways is1, 994.232 km. Municipality and Municipal Corporation roads contribute a total length of 202.106 km. The district has 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 km from Thoothukudi.
Airport

An airport is situated at Vagaikulam from April 2006 onwards Air Deccan started daily flights to and from Chennai. The airport runway is being extended to facilitate landing of large airplanes and the night landing facility will be established soon. The upgradation of the Vagaikulam airport into International standard is under progress.

Rail

The major cities like Tirunelveli, Chennai, Mysore, Bangalore, Madurai and Trivandrum are directly connected by broad gauge rail track. Thoothukudi city railway station is declared as a model station and several infrastructure developments are under progress.

Road

By road this city is connected by highways with Madurai and Tirunelveli at present. The three roads connecting Thoothukudi, with Madurai, Thirunelveli and Ramnad are being converted into four lined highways.

Communication

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 (District Statistical Hand Book, 2009-10).

Media

The city of Thoothukudi has seven local television channels All India Radio Station is located in Thoothukudi. It provides an international broadcasting service. Some new FM radio channels are in the process of coming on air-hello mi by Dinanadhi Group, Kal FM and big FM.

Port

The district has the pride of having a major port; Thoothukudi Harbour Project is renamed as Thoothukudi Port Trust. Exports of certain raw materials and finished products are shipped to about 20 foreign countries. One among the twelve major ports of
India is Thoothukudi. It has one of the best container terminals in India and is operated by the port of Singapore.

On 11th July 1974, the newly constructed Thoothukudi port was declared as the 10th Indian major port and the second largest port in Tamil Nadu. Thoothukudi is a natural port. This is the third International port in Tamil Nadu and is the second all weather port. Due to its strategic location in the southern peninsula and assured round the clock operations, the port has been the nerve centre of economic activity in South Tamil Nadu.

The Sethusamudram Shipping canal Project-a Project to create shipping through the shallow Palk Strait to allow larger ships with its Headquarters at the port of Thoothukudi. The port currently handles 7% of the total container traffic in India and is an important reason for investment in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu.

The port is badly in need of expansion to handle the increase in traffic. The container berths in the port are of the dimension 370 meter length and 10.9 meter depth. This limits the port in competing against Colombo Port, as it has meter depth. The Thoothukudi Port trust is investing one billion American dollars for expansion. This will be done in two phases, the first will deepen the harbor to a depth of 12.8 m and the second to increase it to 14.5 m. Thoothukudi port is the first Indian port to win the quality certificate ISO 9002.

**Salt Production**

The district constitutes 70% of the total salt production of Tamil Nadu and 30 percent of India.

**4.3 Profile of Kovilpatti Taluk**

The present study of socio-economic conditions of domestic workers covers Kovilpatti Taluk Area. Kovilpatti is a first grade municipal town in Thoothukudi district; Kovilpatti stands next to Thoothukudi in population and industrial development.

Kovilpatti is situated 50km north to Tirunelveli, 98 km south to Madurai, 61km northwest to Thoothukudi. As it is situated on Kashmir to Kanyakumari highways there is fast development in the Industry.
Kovilpatti is one of the taluks in Thoothukudi district. Kovilpatti belongs to the Thoothukudi district. Thoothukudi is the district head quarters of Thoothukudi district.

In Kovilpatti more than 60 percent of people are engaged in match factories and 60 percent of them mainly depend on agricultural sector; pulses, cotton, chilies and flowers are the main crops in agricultural production. Among these pulse is the main crops in Kovilpatti.

The important major industries are Lakshmi mills, Loyal mills, Mahalakshmi match factory, Libety match factory, Valli mills and Ramaiah Spinning mills. They required paper for match houses is brought from Sivakasi. They are being sliced cut in the cutting previous and sent to the factories. The trading companies send the matches for various other states. There are eleven units of Industrial estates regarding the match works. They are run under the supervision of SIDCO. There are three textiles mills (Lakshmi mills, Loyal mills, Valli mills). Thousands of people are working in these mills.

Organisation and Governing: Municipal Limits and Origin

As per the order M.S. No.361 dated 11.12.1984 of the local bodies of Tamilnadu government Kovilpatti municipality is upgraded to III grade municipality. Later on 09.08.1971, it was upgraded to II grade as per the order No 1407 dated 14.06.1971. Taking the development of this town into consideration again it was upgraded to I grade on 28.06.1983 as per the order M.S no 651 dated 09.05.1983..According to G.O no 85, Kovilpatti municipality was upgraded to municipality (selection grade). According to 2011 census, the total population is 312825, Male 153425 female159400.

Industrial Development of the Town

Matches in the cottage industry here and matches for the other state are manufactured through the cottage industry. There are above 2500 units in Kovilpatti taluk.

Rubber trees are brought from Kerala. They are being sliced cut in the saw mills into chips and match sticks. There are eleven units of Industrial estates regarding the match works. They are run under the supervision of SIDCO. There are the Textiles
Mills (Lakshmi Mills, Loyal Mills, Valli Mills) Thousands of people are working in these mills.

4.4 Profile of Tiruchendur Taluk

Tiruchendur taluk is a taluk of Thoothukudi district of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The headquarters of the taluk is the town of Tiruchendur. According to the 2011 census, the taluk of Tiruchendur had a population of 3, 08892 with 1, 51137 males and 1, 57755 females. There were 1,111 women for every 1000 men. The taluk had a literacy rate of 87.08. The total number of households was 67,992. Tiruchendur taluk covers three blocks namely, Tiruchendur, Alwarthirunagari and Udankudi. All the blocks are directly linked with every nook and corner of the district by means of a very good network of roads. There is also an airport nearby at Tuticorin. It is 40 km away from Tuticorin, 55 km away from Tirunelveli, and 171 km away from Madurai. Buses via. Is Aruppukotai, Ettayapuram, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli. The town is connected to Tirunelveli by broad gauge train track. This taluk has a Chemical Industry, a large-scale industrial unit. Salt process, coir making, ice manufacturing and mineral water processing industries come under small-scale industries. Fishing is a very important job in this taluk. The main crops cultivated in the taluk are paddy, banana, coconut, groundnut, vegetables and fruits. The Tiruchendur taluk has few infrastructure facilities and the cultivators mainly rely on the channel.

4.5 Profile of Sattankulam Taluk

Sathankulam, also spelt as Sattankulam is a panchayat town in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu. It is 25 km (16 miles) away from Tiruchendur and 59 km (37 miles) from Tirunelveli. It is well-connected with Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Nager kovil and Tiruchendur by road. An airport is in Thoothukudi which is 88 km (55 miles) away from Sattankulam. Sattankulam is located at 8°27ʹN 77°56ʹE/ 8.45°N 77.93°E. It has an average elevation of 19 m (62 ft). According to the 2011 census, the taluk of Sattankulam had a population of 98,583 with 47,444 males and 51,139 females. There are 1216 women for every 1000 men. The taluk had a literacy rate of 84.67. The total number of households is 23,859. The major agriculture is paddy in Sattankulam Taluk. Groundnut cultivation is also undertaken in Sattankulam and near-by places. Groundnut cake is being used as manure and cattle feed. Palm trees are grown mostly in Sattankulam
and nearby villages. Jaggery is produced from palmyrah juice; the production of palm jaggery was the main occupation of the people of Sattankulam at one time. Several people have shifted their occupation to other fields such as agriculture, retail trade, education and jobs. Many youths now work in the larger cities, particularly in Chennai. The T.D.T.A. Hr. Sec. School is a famous and historical school. Now a Manonmaniam Sundaranar Constituent Ladies college and two B.Ed., colleges are also functioning. Totally 14 schools are there in Sattankulam.