CHAPTER-IV

THE RESEARCH SETTING

The empirical part of this study was conducted in the catchment area of six Primary Health Centers (PHCs) one each from *Palakkad, Malapuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasargod* districts of Kerala State. These districts constitute the erstwhile Malabar region.

With the help of district medical authorities one PHC area of each of districts of the region is randomly selected for the study. In this chapter the geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the districts are briefly portrayed.

Before coming to the specific study area it may be pertinent to highlight the overall socio-economic features of the state of Kerala and the six districts of Malabar region. To a large extend the ancient history of Kerala is shrouded in the mist of tradition. The total area of Kerala State is 38863 square km. The state stretches out between 8°18’ and 12°18’ north latitude and 74° 52’ and 77° 22’ east longitude. The area of the state is 1.27 per cent of the total area of the country. Among the districts, *Palakkad* is the largest with 4480 sq: km,
closely followed by *Iduki* with 4476 sq km. The smallest district is *Alapuzha* with 1414 sq km. of area.

The thick vegetation on the middle land makes the state an evergreen, “Gods own land”. The climate is pleasant with moderate temperature and sufficient rain. Coconut, paddy, aracnut and rubber are the major crops. Lengthy coastline of the state makes it famous for fishing industry. Traditional industries are handloom, cashew, coir, and handicrafts. In the rural area about 50 percent of the population depend upon agriculture.

The growth rate of population during 1991-2001 has declined in all the districts of the state as compared to the growth rate in 1981-1991. The total population of Kerala is 31838619 persons with 15468664 males and 16369955 females according to 2001 census documents. *Kasargode, Wayanad, Kozhikode,*
Malappuram, Palakkad, and Thiruvananthapuram are the six districts having growth rate higher than the average growth rate of the state during 1991-2001. The urban population is 8266925 persons and rural 23574449 persons. The 2001 censes reflect that the state of Kerala is the only state in India where sex ratio is above the equality ratio with 1058 female per 1000 males. The pattern of sex ratio is not uniform in all the districts.

Kerala is the most literate state in the country, 90.92 percent with 87.7 percent female literacy component. Literacy and the education reflect the social development of the community. The highest literacy is in Kottayam district (95.90 percent) and lowest in Palakkad district (84.31 percent).

Kerala is the home of many colourful festivals. Most of them are based on Hindu mythology. Onam is the typical Kerala Festival. The cultural scenario of the state is very attractive. ‘Kathakali’ is very popular in Kerala. In the matter of arts the state stands at the forefront.

The state is to be assessed as very good in social development. The health care system is as good as many other developed countries. There are six medical colleges, five Ayurvedic colleges and four Homeo colleges in the state. The rural people are upholding deep faith in the traditional and folk medicines.
The socio-cultural and political atmosphere of the state also attracts our special attention. The population consists of mainly three religious groups, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Hinduism is predominant religion in the state. People believe in the traditional ways of life, system of treatment and health care. The literacy of the population is high but they still like the traditional system of health care. People have no time to stand in the queue to consult doctors. The rural people of Kerala state believe in black magic, superstition and evil spirits that cause disease and health.

THE SPECIFIC LOCALITIES OF THE STUDY

1. PALAKKAD DISTRICT

Palakkad is one of the 14 revenue districts of Kerala. Its geographical position, historical background, rural nature, educational status, tourist attraction and above all, the developmental activities that are carried out, are wide and varied. The district is situated almost in the centre of the state, has no coastal line. The district opens the state to the rest of the country through the Palakkad Ghat. The area of it is 4480 sq km. representing 11.5 percent of the state’s geographical area. Palakkad is part of the erstwhile Malabar district of Madras Presidency. Ottapalam, Alathur, and Mannarkad taluks are having a climate similar to that of other districts of Kerala, whereas Palakkad and Chittoor are having rather a dry climate similar to that of Tamilnadu. However, the average rainfall is good for cultivation. There are 5 taluks, 163 villages 4 municipal towns and 90 Panchayath in the district. The district is divided into 13
community development blocks for the effective implementation of various developmental activities.

According to census 2001, the population of the district is 2617072. The sex ratio of the district is 1068 females per 1000 males. The district has achieved 34.31 percent literacy in 2001. The Silent Valley area, 40 kms away from Mannarkad town has the distinction of being a rain forest that is very rare in the world. It spreads over 9000 hectares.

Barathapuzha, with her tributaries, sprawls across the entire district. Agriculture is the main stay of the economy and more than 65 percent of workers and 88.9 percent of the district’s population are rural in nature. It is a
land of palm trees and paddy fields. It is known to be rich in flora and fauna. The proximity and easy approach to Tamilnadu have created as admixture of Malayalam and Tamil cultures in the district. The great musicians like Chempai Vaidyanatha Bagavathar and Palakkad Mani Iyer, who have enriched Karnatic music by their contribution, hailed from this district. Palakkad district has a glorious cultural tradition. Kunchan Nambiar the founder of the Thullal and Thunchathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, the father of Malayalam literature spent their last days in Palakkad. Kathakali and Chakiyarkoothu are famous for Palakkad district. Kalpathi Ratholsavam is the famous festival in the district. Nelliyampathi, Malampuzha and Silentvalley are the important tourist places of Palakkad district. Parambikkulam wild life sanctuary is in the district. The district is gifted with the beauty of virgin and verdiant Nelliyambathi hills, the precious and unique SilenValley national park, the famous Parambikulam wild life sanctuary, Attapadi hills and more than half a dozen dams like Malampuzha, Mangalam, Pothundi, Kanhirapuzha, Siruvani and Parambikulam.

PIRAIRY PHC AREA

Palakkad district consist of two revenue divisions, Palakkad and Ottapalam. There are 13 Development Block and 90 panchayaths in the district. The study area is Pirairy Primay Health Centre under the Parali Block P.H.C, in Parali Block Panchayath. Pirairy PHC is bounded by Puthupady Grama panchayath on the North, Parali Gramapanchayath on the west, Palakkad Nagarasabha on the east, Kannady puzha on the south. The total area comprises
130.25 sq.km. The population of the area is 37648 persons. The Parali block PHC consist of Pirairy, Kalliyangad, Podipara, Variyamparamb, Kurichamkullam, Kodomthagapally and Muzhipalam.

The religious composition is made up of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. Most of the area is inhabited by Hindu population.

Coming to health and sanitation of the area, it is to be pointed out that area is very backward in this regards. As the economic status of the people is very low, they depend much on the PHC for the medical support. There is no inpatient. 92 to 101 outpatients are treated in the PHC daily. The staff strength comprises of one Medical Officer, Three Junior Health Inspectors, One Staff nurse, six JPHN, one Pharmacist, one clerk, one nursing assistant, four class IV workers and one leprosy inspector.

Waste disposal method is insufficient in the area. Most of the households have their own wells. Palakkad district is blessed with irrigation facilities. Dams have been constructed across almost all the important tributaries of Bharathapuzha to provide irrigation facility.

There are two lower primary schools, two upper primary schools, one high school, and one higher secondary school in the area. The nearest college is Mercy College, which is 2 km away from Pirairy panchayath.
Electricity supply is not very satisfactory; especially voltage drop during peak time is a curse.

There are three Hindu temples, two Churches and two Mosques in this area.

2. MALAPURAM DISTRICT

The location of Malappuram district is 75° to 77° east longitude and 10° to 12° north latitude, in the geographical map. Malappuram district was formed on 16th of June 1969. The Nilgiris of Tamilndu in the east, Arabian sea in the west, Kozhikode and Wayanad district in the north, and Palakkad and Trissur districts in the south constitute the boundary of the district. The district has a geographical area of 3550 Sq. kms, which is 9.13 percent of the total area of the state. Malapuram district ranks 3rd in the states in area. Malapuram consists of three natural topographical divisions, low land, midland and highland. The low land stretches along the seacoast.
The total population of the district is 3629640 persons with 1759479 males and 1870161 females. The sex ratio of the district is 1063 female for 1000 male. The district has achieved 88.61 percent literacy with 91.46 percent male and 85.96 percent female, literary components.

Four important rivers of Kerala flow through Malappuram district. They are *Chaliyar, Kadalundi puzha, Bharatha puzha* and *Tirur puzha*. The major forest area is concentrated in *Nilambur* and *Vandur* blocks and *Melattur* in the western ghat. Malappuram district is not rich in mineral wealth. Calicut airport situated at *Karipur*, which is 26 km away from Malappuram town. Two railway lines namely *Mangalore-Madras* and *Nilambur-Shornur* are passing.
through the district. The first is through the coastal belt. The district has a good road network. The national highway 17 and 213 passes through the district.

Malappuram district has a good tradition in the field of art and culture. Many of the renowned writers and poets hail from this part of the land. It is a long chain, starting with Thunjathu Ezhuthachan, honoured as the father of modern Malayalam literature, Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, a Sanskrit scholar and the author of the ‘Narayaneeyam’ lived in Ezhuthanchan’s period., Poondanam Namboodiri, Achutha Pisharadi, Vallathol Narayana Menon, Kuttikrishna Marar, Moinkuty Vaidyar, V.C Balakrishana Paniker, Edassery Govindan Nair, Uroob, Cherukadu Govinda Pisharadi, K. Damodaran, Kuttipurath Kesavan Nair, P.V. Krishna Varier were some of the great scholars enlightened the district.

Malappuram district, with its rich natural beauty and historic past has its own tourist attractions. Nilambur is famous for Teak plantation. Beautiful waterfall, Adiyan Para is 10 kms away from Nilambur, is a fast emerging main tourist centre. The famous Kadambuzha temple is not far from Kottakal, where devotees from in and out of Kerala come and pray to remove obstructions in life. Dry coconut is the main offering. Thirunavaya situated on the banks of Bharathapuzha, is a place of historical importance. Navamukunda Temple believed to be constructed by Nava Yogis on the right bank of Bharatapuzha is an important Vishnu Temple of Kerala. Pithrutharpanam is a
ritual, held here on the day of amavas of karkitaka (July). ‘Bali karma’ is offered by people in their wet clothes, after dip in the river, for the salvation of dead parents.

Tirur is one of the business centres of Malappuram district. It is 41 kms south of Kozhikode, on the Mangalore-Madrass railway route. Thunchanparamba in Trikandiyur, 3 kms from Tirur railway station, is sacred for all who speak Malayalam, and is the birth place of Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, the father of Malayalam literature. Hundreds of people reach Thunjanparamba with their children, to initiate them into the world of letters on the Vijayadashami day. Tirur, witnessed the infamous Wagon Tragedy of the 1921 rebellion.

The University of Calicut, which is 23 kms south of Kozhikode city at Thenhipalam is in Malapuram district.

A good network of health care units is functioning under the government sector. Modern medicine, Ayurveda and Homeopothy services are available.

**THE VETTEM PHC AREA**

The Vettem PHC area comes in Tirur Block of Malappuram district. The area is bounded by Tirur and Ponnani rivers on the east, Arabian sea on the west, Mangalam panchayath on the south and Tharamarthur
panchayath on the north. The area comprises of 15.13 sq. km with a population of 222682 persons.

The religious composition of the area shows the dominance of Muslims. Hindus are also present in good strength. Christians are negligible minority. Being a coastal area the population mainly depends on fishing to satisfy their economic needs.

Coming to the health and sanitation of the area it is to be pointed out that the area is very backward in the regards. As the economic status of the people is very low they depend much on the PHC for medical care. The PHC provides 50 beds for in-patient treatment. On an average 250 outpatients are treated in the PHC daily. The staff strength comprises of three doctors, one male health supervisor, five nurses, eight health inspectors, 20 junior health inspectors and 30 junior public health nurses. Waste disposal and water supply systems are deplorably insufficient and inefficient. The district as a whole is a water scarce area. Vettem being a coastal line area, drinking water scarcity is very acute. The problem is solved to a level by Tirur Urban Water Supply Scheme. The area avails the service of nine lower primary schools, six upper primary schools, one high school and one higher secondary school. However, for college education the students have to come down to Tirur (Tunchan Memorial Government College) nine km away from the Vettem area.
The area comes under the Kozhikode telephones district. For rail passage the residents have to come to Tirur. The area is connected to other places by road.

Electricity supply is not very satisfactory, especially voltage drops during peak hours.

There is a Hindu temple the Vettathukavu in this area. Mosques are many, but Churches are very few.

3. KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

Calicut is the anglicized form of Kalikut, the Arabic for the Malayalam ‘Kozhikode’. It is also called the Cock Fort. Topographically the district has three distinct regions, the sandy coastal belt; the rocky highlands formed the hilly portion of the western ghat and lactic middle land. The district stretches out in 2345 sq km on the north part of Kerala. The district has a coastal length about 80 kms. Calicut district is situated on the south west coast of India. The district is bounded on the north by Kannur district on the east by Wayanad district, on the south by Malappuram district and on the west by Arabian Sea. It is situated between north longitude 11° 0’ and 11° 15’ and east longitudes 75° 30’ and 76° 08’. The district has the population of 2878498 persons with 1398674 males and 1479824 females. Of the total area of the district, 2004 sq kms. area rural and 341 sq km area urban. The district has an urban population of 1100946
and a rural population of 1777552. The population mainly consists of three religious groups; Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Migrants from other North Indian states are also present in urban areas. Hindus constitute the majority of the population in the district. The Hindu community is organized on the basis of caste and sub-caste. As elsewhere in the state they worship all the major Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu mythology. Vishnu and Siva are the major gods worshiped. Elaborate rules prescribed by the Sasthas are followed. The ‘Kavu’ dedicated to the Badrakali is a typical example of primitive religious centres. There are also temples devoted to such deities as Ayyappan, Hanuman, and Garuda. Serpent worship has been widely prevalent here. Ancestor worship is also practiced by the Hindus. The Muslims of the district are known as Mappilas.
There are reputed centres of learning and culture in Kozhikode district even in the early and medieval periods. One of the most important such centres was Kozhikode itself, under the rule of the enlightened Zamorins, it became famous all over south India as rendezvous of scholars and men of learning. Kozhikode district has a rich heritage in agriculture. Agriculture occupies a major role in the district's economy. According to the 2001 census total literate and educated persons are placed at 2351548 persons with break-up as 1182906 males and 1168642 females. Literacy rate is 92.45 per cent with male 96.30 percent and female 88.86 percent. The seat of the University of Calicut is 23 kms south of Kozhikode city at Thenhipalam in Malapuram district. There are arts and science colleges of which eight colleges are under private management. The district has four polytechnics and three industrial training institutions. Of the ten professional colleges in the district, one that is Feroke training college is run by private management.

Kozhikode districts now consist of one revenue division three Taluks, twelve blocks, seventy seven panchayath and one hundred and seventeen villages. There are twelve Community Development Blocks in the district. Kozhikode Corporation has a geographical area of 82.67 sq. kms.

Kozhikode city, known as the Second Mecca of football lovers has a fled lit stadium constructed by the Municipal Corporation. There are two urban water supply schemes being maintained by the Kerala Water Authority.
There are eleven government hospitals, ten community centres and seventy primary health centres in this district with total bed strength of 4747. In addition to this there is a government rural dispensary, a district TB centre and two government fisheries dispensaries. Family planning services are available in all the hospitals and health centres. School health services cover all the schools in the district. The district blindness control society is effective by functioning in Kozhikode district. To improve the health status of coastal people, Coastal Health Project was also introduced.

The temples and mosque of the district contains cultures and inscriptions, which are of considerable interest to the people of art. Kozhikode town itself has many temples; the most important one there is the Tali Temple. The district is famous for folk songs known as Vadakkan pattu. The people of the area seem to be more interested to keep alive their traditional socio-cultural practices. The fares and festivals of the district have an affiliation to the ‘little tradition’. Theyyam and Thira are temple art forms staged in the festivals of ‘Kavus’ (temple dedicated to serpent god).

The district has 459049 km of good road and approximately 80 km of railway lines. Water supply and electricity are far from satisfactory. Educational facilities are developing. The NIT, IIM, Medical College, Law College, and Arts and Science Colleges are in countable numbers in the district.
Regarding the rural area, water supply and electricity are poor. Compared to the urban parts of Calicut the rural areas are very poor.

The district was a part of the erstwhile Malabar region, which was ruled by the Zamorins of Calicut with Kozhikode as the head quarters of their kingdom. The district has the significance that it was in Kappad, a place 16 kms away from Kozhikode city, Vasco Da Gama, the Portuguese navigator landed in 1498 which initiated the country’s contact with the west. The urban Kozhikode is primarily commercial centre; industrialization is at lower ebb.

**THIRUVANGOOR PHC AREA**

The PHC area selected from Kozhikode district is Thiruvangoor. Thiruvangoor PHC area is bounded by Anela, Ullur and Thoraipuzha on the east, Arabian Sea on the west, Korapuzha on the south and Moodadi panchayath on the north. The total area comprises of 165.46 sq kms. The population of the area is estimated 113419 persons. The male female break-up is 56318 and 57101 respectively. The religious composition is made up of Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The religious harmony is satisfactory. Agriculture is the main stay of the economy. Coconut is cultivated in a wide spread manner.

Regarding the social overheads available, let us take the health care system. The Thiruvangoor PHC has an in-patient capacity of twenty-five beds. The PHC is attached with a labour room. Around 300 outpatients are treated in the health centre daily. The manpower available in the PHC is three doctors,
three nurses, one health supervisor, four male and four female health inspectors, thirteen junior health inspectors and fourteen junior public health nurses.

Apart from the PHC there are Ayurvedic and Homeo dispensaries. The people of the area have Unani medical centres for their service. In the area there is a private hospital, which is capable of attending to the usual healthcare needs of the people. The Calicut Medical College is only 14 kms away from the PHC and the Taluk hospital Koyilandy is six kms. The area is provided with public water supply system. Most of the households have their own well. The area can avail of the benefits of 35 schools both government and private. (practice owned these schools also.). The government college, Koyilandy is six kms away. So the area is blessed with the services of sufficient number of educational institutions. The area is well connected with other places by road and railways.

There are sufficient number of commercial establishments to meet the needs of the people. Electricity supply is steady and sufficient.

One significant matter is that just behind the PHC is the Kappad beach where the Portuguese Navigator Vasco Da Gama landed. So the place has sufficient exposure to the outside world. An ancient temple on a hillock, facing the deep sea, is an added attraction.
The famous Pisharikavu in this area is a symbol of religious faiths and cultural maturity of the people. There are many mosques in the area. Further there is a Christian church in Koyilandy, a nearby place.

4. WAYANAD DISTRICT

Nestled among the mountain of the Western Ghats, lies Wayand, one of the loveliest hill stations of Kerala. This green paradise, located at a distance of 76 kms from the seashores of Kozhikode, lies at a height of 700 - 2100 mtrs above sea level, on the north-eastern part of the state. The district of Wayanad was curved out, from parts of Kozhikode and Kannur districts and came in to being on the 1st November 1980 as the twelfth district of Kerala. Wayanad lies between north latitude 11° 27’ and 15° 58’ and east longitude 75° 47’ and 70° 37’. It is bounded on the east by Nilgiris and Mysore district of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka respectively, on the north by Coorg district of Karnataka, on the south by Malappuram and on the west by Kozhikode and Kannur. This district is perhaps one of the biggest foreign exchange earners of the state. A large percentage of the population in this region are tribal. The total area and population of Wayanad are 2126 sq kms, and 672128 respectively which account for 5.48 percent and 2.1 percent of the state total. The male/female population are 341958 and 330170 respectively. The female-male sex ratio is 966 per 1000 males. The density of population is 369/sq km. The literacy in the
region is 85.52 percent, male literacy ratio is 90.28 and female literacy ratio is 80.80 per cent.

Its Geographical position is peculiar and unique. Agriculture in Wayanad is equally divided between Paddy and plantation crops except coconut. The hills, which is deep blue in bright sunlight and lie mist-covered most of the time, juxtaposes in the green of these paddy fields. This, in fact, is a splendid sight. East flowing rivers of Wayanad are in striking contrast to the various rivers of the rest of Kerala. The river Kabani of Wayanad is a perennial source of water to Cavery. The Panamaram rivulet, originating from Lakkidi, and the Manthavady rivulet originating from Thondarmodi peak meet six kms north of Panamaram town and after they confluence, the river is known as Kabani. Coffee is ubiquitous in Wayanad it is cultivated in every panchayath, both in the form of large plantation and small holdings.

Wayanad has the highest concentration of tribal population in Kerala. They form 17.1 per cent of the total population of the district. The
Kurichas, of Wayanad have a great marital tradition. No religion can be said to
be predominant in this district. Different religious group of the state are more or
less equally represented. A special aspect of Wayanad is the large Adivasi
population. Though they are in the Hindu fold, primitive forms of worship still
privile among them. Ancestral worship and offering to propitiate the spirits of
ancestors are still prevalent. Two deities commonly worshiped by the Adivasis
are Tamburati and Vetakorumakan. They are worshiped as the Hindu gods of
various temples in the district. Adivasis do not have any temple of their own.
The Thirunelli and Valliyurkavu temples, which are known outside Wayanad as
the temples of the Adivasis, are in the fact, run by Hindu settlers with the help of
Brahamin priests. Adivasis are allowed to worship and participate in the festivals
of these temples. Almost all sections of Christianity are well represented. The
Syrian Catholics have their bishop’s houses at Sulthan Batheri and Roman
Catholics have their own at Mananthavady. Muslims constitute another one
fourth of the population. They are Mappilas who came from Malappuram and
Kozhikode district. A large number of them are labourers.

Railway facility is not available in Wayanad. The nearest railway
station is Kozhikode, about 70 kms away from Kalpatta. The only mode of
transport of goods and commuters within the district is roadways. Bus services
are available in all panchayath. Though there is no national highway touching
Wayanad, the district has a network of road.
Wayanad district administration is aware of the varied health problems of the people especially Adivasis. With the support of various governmental agencies including tribal and health departments, a health action plan has already been implemented. The rural people and the tribes are following the traditional system of medicine like Ayurvedha and Unani.

For the purpose of revenue administration the district is divided into three Taluk namely Sulthan Bathery, Vythiri and Mananthavadi. The study area is in Panmaram PHC in Mananthavady Taluk.

PANAMARAM PHC AREA

Panamaram PHC is bounded in the north by Mananthavady Panchayath, south Kottathara Panchayath, west Vellamada Panchayath, the east two Panchayath Kariyanpatta and Koothadi Panchayath. Panamaram PHC consists of 6 sub centres and one main centre. The population of the area is 32162. The religious composition is made up of Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. Agriculture is the main stay of economy. Agriculture in Wayanad is based on paddy and plantation crops – Coffee, Tea, Pepper, and Cardamom.

The PHC has 25 beds for the in-patient treatment. Nearly 300 out-patients are treated in the PHC everyday. The manpower in the PHC consist of two Medical officers, four nurses, one health supervisor, four male and four female health inspectors, seven junior health inspectors and eight junior public
health nurses. There is one Veterinary hospital, one Homeo dispensary and one Ayurveda dispensary in the area. Near to the main centre there is one Junior Public Health Nurses Training Centre. The people of the area have Unani medical centres for their service. In the area there is one private hospital, which is capable of attending to the usual healthcare needs of the people.

The area is provided with public water supply system. Most of the householders have their own well.

The area avails the benefits of nine schools both government and private owned. The area is connected with other places only by roads.

There are sufficient numbers of commercial establishments to meet the needs of the people.

Electricity supply is steady and sufficient. The area comes under the Mananthavady telephone exchange.

_Pazhasi_ tourist resort at Mananthavady is a good picnic centre in north Wayanad near to Panamaram. There is a good aquarium here. Coin operated toys for children and boating facilities for tourist are available here. _Pazhasi Raja_, the lion of Kerala, who organized gorilla type warfare against British East-India Company, was cremated here in 1805.
5. KANNUR DISTRICT

Kannur district derived its name from the location of its head quarters at Kannur town. The old name ‘Kannannur’ is the anglicized form of the Malayalam word Kannur. Kannur district lies between latitudes $11^\circ 40'$ to $12^\circ 48'$ north and longitudes $74^\circ 52'$ to $76^\circ 07'$ east. The district is bounded by Western Ghats in the east (Coorg district of Karnataka state), Kozhikode and Wayanad districts in the south, Arabian Sea in the west, and the Kasaragode, in the north. The district can be divided into three geographical regions highlands, midlands and low lands. The total area of the district is 2966 sq. km. The density of population is 749/sq.km. The population of the area is estimated 2412365 persons with 1154144 males, and 1258221 females. The sex ratio of the district is 1090 females for 1000 males. The district has achieved 92.80 percent literacy in 2001 census (96.38 males and 89.51 percent female). The language spoken by the people of the district is Malayalam. Tamil, which is next in importance in most of the districts of Kerala, is not of much importance here. Hindi, Gujarathi, Marathi and Kongani are also spoken by the minorities.
The coastal region is a comparatively narrow zone characterised by secondary soil, which is rather loose and sandy. Kannur district is very rich in vegetation. Natural vegetation except in some coastal regions consists of different types of forest. Kannur district is endowed with a fine river system with a length of 110 kms. The Valapattanam River, which originates from the Western Ghats, is the longest river in the district. The main tributaries of the river are Valiyapuzha and Aralampuzha. Most of the rivers are navigable.

The Hindu community in the district, as elsewhere in the country, is organized on the basis of castes and sub castes. *Thiyas* form the majority among the Hindu community in the district. The Muslims, here known as Mappilas, form the second largest community. Christianity is believed to have been introduced in Kerala by the apostle St. Thomas in 52 AD. The major Scheduled Caste is Cheruman and the important tribe is *Kurichiya*. 
Now Kannur district has three Taluks, Kannur, Talipparamba, Thalassery. It has 82 km. coastline from Kavvayi in the north of Kurichiyil in south. The west coast road from Mahe to Thalappady in Kannur district is a national highway. Railways play a vital role in the district in the transportation of men and materials.

Tourism potential for Kannur district is high. The Thalassery fort is an important tourist centre. Kannur beach and Ezhimala are known for scenic beauty. Parassinikadavu Muthappan Temple exhibits the Hindu tradition and belief of the rural people. Kolathiri Kingdom deserves special mention with regard to the cultural heritage of the area. The gift of the district in the field of art and culture is its folk art. The social situation that prevailed here, gave rise to various folk art forms. The cultural life of the folk remains unchanged. Theyyam is a highly ritualistic dance. It represents a glorious period of folk life in Kannur as well as in Kerala.

The rural people believe in gods and goddesses. Vadakkan pattukal and Kalari are most popular in Hindu community. The traditional Hindu in the district observes a number of religious festivals.

The long cherished dream of people of north Malabar region of Kerala is to have a super specialty hospital and Medical college at Pariyaram at Kannur district. In the district health facilities are very high. There are one
hundred and six Allopathic Hospitals, two hundred and sixteen Ayurvedic Hospitals, and one homeopathic hospital. Malabar cancer centre near Thalassery is in the district.

**PAPPINISSEY PHC AREA**

In Kannur district 49.13 percentage of the population inhabit in villages. In the district there are nine development blocks comprising of eighty-two panchayaths. The development blocks are Kannur, Edakkad, Irikkur, Irutty, Koothuparamba, Payyannur, Peravoor, Talipramba and Thalassery. The study area Pappinissery panchayath come under Mangadavu block. The Pappinissery PHC is the main centre and a special grade panchayath. The sub centres of the Pappinissery PHC are Narath, Parassinikadavu, Kaliyassery, Kurumathur, Cherukunnu, Mangadavu. Total population of the PHC is 37819. The PHC has an inpatient capacity of 50 beds. Around 500-600 outpatients are treated in the health centre daily. The boundary of the PHC in the north Kallliassery panchayath, the south and the east Valapattanam River, in the west, Talippiparamba municipality. The literacy rate of the area is above 90 per cent. The religious composition is made for Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The Christians are small in numbers.

The socio-cultural factors of the area are in a poor manner. The man power available in the PHC are six medical officers, one head nurse, six staff nurses, six junior public health nurses, three junior health inspectors, one
health inspector, one health supervisor, one lady health supervisor, one lady health inspector, two clerks, one peon, one pharmacist and a lab technician.

Apart from the PHC area there is one Ayurvedic clinic and one Homeo dispensary in the area. In the area there is a private hospital, which is capable of attending the usual health care needs of the people. The medical college is far away from Pappinissery panchayath. The area is provided by public water supply system. Most of the households have their own well. The area can avail the benefits of two high schools, two upper primary schools and two lower primary schools.

When we compare the other area of the study, the socio-economic and the cultural facility are high in Kannur district. The people of the rural area, practices traditional systems of beliefs and practice of treatment. Hence it is hoped that the effect of the overall development of the rural area of the people also can be assessed by conducting the study in these areas.

**KASARAGOD DISTRICT**

Kasaragod is the one of the backward district of Kerala. Within the district, there are variations in natural conditions and socio-economic and demographic conditions. Some areas in the district are well developed and the
others are in poor condition. Kasaragod district lies between 11° 18’ and 12° 14’ north latitude and 74° 52’ and 75° 26’ east longitude. The district is bounded by Arabian Sea in the west, north and east Karnataka state and south Kannur district.

The district is the northern district of Kerala state. It has an area of 1961.30 sq km. with a population of 1203342 (census 2001). It has two taluks, four blocks, thirty-nine panchayaths and two municipalities. It has about eighty-two km in length and is more than the double of the east west axis; it is 40 km long at its broadest point.

Kasaragode district occupies the northern most part of Kerala state. The area comprises of two taluks Kasaragod and Hosdurg. The districts have
four blocks namely Manjeswar, Kasaragod, Kanhangad and Nileswar. The district extends from the seacoast in the west to the Western Ghats in the east. The major portion of the district lies between 20m and 300 m above mean sea level. The district is drained by twelve rivers, the longest being Chandragiri. The temperature of the district ranges from 20° C to 26° C and the mean annual rainfall of 353 cm are mainly received during the southwest monsoon. Before Kerala state formation in 1956, Kasaragod was part of Malabar district of Madras Presidency. Many people have attained to identify backward area. It is found that the coastal region in the west is well developed, whereas, mid and highlands are less developed. The middle region is occupied by the hard laterite known as ‘duricrust’. People do not occupy these areas as they face water scarcity during summer. Moreover in this area cultivation is difficult.

Health facilities are found high in the coastal panchayath and municipalities. Cultural facilities are found high in the southern panchayath of Hosdurg taluk than the Kasaragod taluk. High density of population is found in coastal panchayaths. High literacy is found in all the panchayath in the southern taluk and coastal panchayath. A few panchayaths in the eastern part have low literacy. The panchayaths in Hosdurg taluk is more developed than Kasaragod taluk. The western coastal plain is well connected by roads and the railways. Kasaragod is less developed, due to the influence of the Port City of Mangalore situated in the north. The distance from the state capital Thiruvananthapuram is 575 Kms.
ANANDASRAMAM PHC AREA

In the district the study area Anandasramam PHC comes in Kanhangad block of Karasagod district. The area of the PHC comprises 160 sq.km. The boundary of the PHC is, in the east Medikai panchayath in the north Pollorperie panchayath in the south Kanhangad Municipality and in the west Arabian Sea.

There is no inpatient facility in the PHC. Around 70 – 80 outpatients are treated in the health centre daily. The staff pattern of the PHC is one doctor, one pharmacist, one nursing assistant, one clerk, one peon, one health inspector, one lady health inspector, four junior health inspectors, and five junior public health nurses.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the population. The area is provided with public water supply system. Most of the householders have their own well and the area can avail the benefit of one LP school and one High school in government sector. The area is connected with other places by road. There is sufficient number of commercial establishments to meet the needs of the people. Electricity supply is steady and sufficient. The temples and the mosques of the district contain cultures and inscriptions, which are of considerable interest to the people of art. In the area there are three temples, one church, one mosque and a cultural centre Anandasramam. In Kanhangad block the National highway 47
crosses the area. Most of the rural people in Kasaragod district are coolies. Their socio-economic status is very poor. The rural people believe in folk medicine. Compared to all other districts of Malabar area Kasargod is the poorest district in Kerala state.