CHAPTER III

KANYAKUMARI A TOURIST DESTINATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Kanyakumari district is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu. Even though it is the smallest in terms of area (1672 sq.km) its density of population is highest. The district occupies a unique place among the districts of Tamil Nadu.\(^1\)

Kanyakumari district was once in the erstwhile Travancore state which was ruled by the kings Chera line consequent on the linguistic reorganization of states in India. The southern part of Travancore state was integrated with Tamilnadu in the year of 1956 and it became a district in the name of Devi Kumari Kanyakumari, the southernmost district of India and the smallest in Tamilnadu is having places of legendary, historical and artistic importance. The Western Ghats ending into green hills perennial rivers lotus filled tanks, dense forests with wild elephants, extensive paddy fields, rich palm grooves, wavy coconut gardens and a carved coastal line at nearly 70 km. length are the unique natural features of the Land’s End- Promontory of India.

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Travelling in such a small, old and beautiful district is not only a feast to the eyes but to the mind also.²

During recent centuries when the district has been under the rule of the Travancore Maharajas, there has been great oppression of the lower castes who constitute the majority of the population in the district. After independence, people’s movement demanding the merger of the district with Tamil Nadu resulted in the constitution of the state Reorganization commission in 1956. Based in its recommendation the then Indian Parliament passed the States Reorganization Act in March 1956, according which four taluks at Agastheeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode were grouped to form a new Kanyakumari district.³

Nature’s beautiful gifts of majestic hills, deals and peaks, as well as the extensive and colourful coast line, undulating valleys and plains between the mountains and the sea coast, so closely interwoven with temples and churches and other edifices of the area impressed Lord Connemara so much that he called this region ‘a fairy land’.⁴

This district owns four municipalities – Nagercoil, Padmanabhapuram, Colachel and Kuzhithirai. Six blocks namely Melpuram, Munchirai, Killiyoor, Thiruvattar, Thuckalay and Kurunthancode form part of Padmanabhapuram development Division and the remaining three are Agastheeswaram, Rajakamangalam and Thovalai come under Nagercoil.

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4.  Kanyakumari District Forest Division, TamilNadu Forest Department.
Development Division. There are 56 Town Panchayats in this district whereas there are only 631 Town Panchayats throughout the State.

This district comprises of seven assembly segments and one Parliament Constituency and the Kanyakumari assembly segment forms part of Thiruchendur Parliament Constituency. The district derived its name from the township Kanyakumari also known as Cape Comorin\(^5\).

Tamil language is spoken by majority of the people. English and Malayalam are also used by different sections of the population.

### 3.2 CLIMATE

The study area has the unique advantage of rainfall during the south-west and north-east monsoons. The period of south-west monsoon is from June to September while that of north-east monsoon is from October to December. The average rainfall is 140 cm per year. The annual average maximum temperature is 31.04\(^\circ\)C and the minimum temperature is 25.03\(^\circ\)C.\(^6\)

### 3.3 LOCATION AND GENERAL BOUNDARIES

Kanyakumari district is the southernmost part of Tamilnadu. The district lies between 80°-3’ and 83°-5’ of the northern latitudes and 77°-05’ and 77°-36’ of the eastern longitudes.

The district is bounded by Tirunelveli on the north and east. The west and north-west is bounded by Kerala. On the south and south west, the

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boundaries are the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea on the south eastern boundary is the Gulf of Mannar.

3.4 POPULATION

The area of this district is 1672 sq.kms. The population density of the district is about 999 per sq.km. The population of the district according to the 2001 census is 16,76,034. From the total population rural and urban population, the male population is 832269 and the female population is 843765. The Kalkulam taluk shows the highest population. Vilavancode, Agasteeswaram and Thovalai follow in that order. The literacy level of the district is very high, it was an 80 percent of males and 70 percent of females during the 2001 census.

3.5 RELIGION

The study area consists of Hindus, Muslim, Christian and others. There is a larger Christian population in the study area. There is also as a separate Hindu religion section known as ‘Ayya vazhi’.

3.6 REVENUE DIVISION AND TALUK

The district has been divided into two division consisting of Vilavancode and Kalkulam and the Nagercoil revenue division consisting of Agasteeswaram and Thovalai.

3.7 SOURCES OF WATER

3.7.1 Rivers

The rivers are the important sources of irrigation in this district. There are five major river sources in the study area. They are,
1. Thamiraparani
2. Pazhayar
3. Valliyar
4. Paraliyar
5. Ponnivaikal

3.7.2 Dam

There are seven dams constructed in the rivers.

1. Pechiparai dam
2. Perunchani dam
3. Chittar dam-I
4. Chittar dam-II
5. Pandian dam
6. Puthen dam
7. Mampazhathuraiyar dam (Villukuri)

3.7.3 Drinking water facilities

Drinking water has not been a problem as far as Kanyakumari district is concerned. All towns and villages in this district have been provided with protected water supply systems. A large number of rivers, canals, tanks, wells, hand pumps, bore wells are able to meet the drinking water requirements at all significant places and points.

3.8 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the main source of income for the people of the
district. Paddy is the main and tapioca is a subsidiary food crop in the district. Horticulture, floriculture and pisciculture are very famous in the district. In TamilNadu Thovalai and Chinna muttom stand first in floriculture and pisciculture. All flowers are cultivated in Thovalai. China muttom has the unique distinction having the highest pelagic fish catches in the entire Indian origin.  

3.9 HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY

Next to agriculture, handicrafts offer the highest employment generation in the study area. The important handicrafts industries in the district are- hand embroidery craft industry, fibre craft industry, lace and embroidery industry, sea-shell product industry, reed mats industry, wood carving industry, stone-carving industry, brass and metal industry, temple jewellery industry, granite quarrying industry, bamboo works, greeting cards and coconut shell products.

3.10 FOREST

As per the season and Crop Report, 28.9 percent of the total area of the district has been classified as forest. There has been eight reserved forest area. The remnants of tropical wet evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist deciduous, dry deciduous and throne forests are also seen in pockets of this district.

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3.11 COMMUNICATION

A well co-ordinate and adequately designed modern communication system is found in the district. In 2004-2005, there are 36 post offices doing postal business, 230 post offices doing post and telegraph business and 4 telegraph offices. The total number of telephone in use is 117715. 1313 public call offices with STD and ISD and 43 telephone exchanges. Cellular phone services and internet facilities are also increasingly available.

3.12 TRANSPORT

A good network of transport system of roads both National and State. Major and minor district roads link all major cities and towns of the State as well as of the nation. State transport corporation buses of both Tamil Nadu and Kerala and some private buses are also plying. The corporation, municipalities, panchayat, panchayat union and town panchayaths also have laid and maintained considerable number of long and good roads. Private bus companies also are in the field with their competitive spirit in promoting quality of services. The total number of mini buses is 407. In 2004-2005, the registered motor vehicles for commercial use is 25901 and non commercial vehicles is 96519.

The length of railways in Kanyakumari district is 78 kms. There are 11 railways stations. The railways are only connected with Broad Gauge. The railways have introduced a number of passenger and express trains connecting Kanyakumari and Nagercoil directly with many cities throughout the country. The distance of the railway line from Nagercoil to Trivandrum central is 66 kms and from Nagercoil to Tirunelveli junction is about 75 kms and from Nagercoil to
Cape Comorin is about 22kms. Thus transport system is a backbone of the development of tourism industry. In Kanyakumari district a well equipped bus station and railway station provides a huge facilities to the tourist of different States of our country.

3.13 BOARDING AND LODGING FACILITIES

Accommodation facilities for a vital link in tourism development in any place. The availability of good food, cold and hot water, ice cream, snacks and modern facilities like attached bathroom and toilet, protected water, furniture, lighting, fan, phone, lift, television, internet travel agency services and other electrical and electronic appliances are also made available. Shopping facilities, laundry and saloon are also provided by many lodging units. Attached bars are also provide by some units.

3.14 SIGNIFICANT TOURIST CENTRES

The important tourist attractions of the district are given below.

3.14.1 Pilgrim Centres

3.14.1.1 Kanyakumari (or) Cape Comorin

The India’s land’s end, Kanyakumari or Cape Comorin is unique in being surrounded by three seas that is Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian sea. Hence the confluence is called “Thriveni Sangamam”. Here one can get a breath –taking view of the sun rise and sunset at their best. The multi

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coloured sand is yet another unique feature of beach here. There is a lighthouse from where one can get a panoramic view. The government museum offers a good collection of sculptural art crafts of Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{10} It is one of the most popular tourist spots in the state in deeds, in the country. People love to see Cape Comorin during Chitra Pournami (full moon day in April.) when the sun and the moon are face to face at the same horizon but other full moon days are also special when one can see sun set and the moon rise almost simultaneously, as if by prior arrangement.

Gugananthaswamy temple is 1000 years old temple is said to have been built by Raja Raja Chola.

Kumari Amman temple is dedicated to Parvathi as Devi Kanya the Virgin goddess who did penance to obtain the hand of lord Siva. Darshan Timings is 4.30a.m. to 12.30 p.m and 4.00 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.

\textbf{3.14.1.2 Suchindrum}

Suchindrum is a small village about 12 km from Kanyakumari. This holy place is located on the banks of the river Pazhayar, adjoining fertile fields and coconut groves and the temple is dedicated to Sri Thanumalya. The word denotes Siva, Vishnu and Brahma as, Sthan represents Siva, Mal represents Vishnu while Ayan represents Brahma i.e., Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma in “One Form”\textsuperscript{11}.

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\textsuperscript{10} The Department of Tourism .,(1998), “\textit{Adventure Trails” India}, Chennai .
\textsuperscript{11} Gazetteers of India, \textit{op.cit.}, 1995, p.1205.
\end{flushright}
The Thanumalyan temple here is repository of art treasures. Musical pillars and a huge 18 feet Hanuman statue are proof of the artistic skill of the time. Inscriptions said to be of the 9th century AD are found in the temple.

Suchindrum means the place where Indra attained purification. Sthalapurana has it that Indra suffered a curse from sage Gowthama, when he stealthily cast amorous glances at Ahalya the wife of Gowthama. Indra had to seek immediate redemption. He came to this place where he attained purification from Lord Siva. The present structure of the temple is the work of a number of persons spread over a number of centuries. It is a complex of many beautiful structures constructed at varies times and is one of the best specimens and a store house of the Dravidian style of art and architecture. Gents tourists who enter the temple should remove their upper garments.

3.14.1.3 Nagercoil – Nagaraja Temple

Nagercoil is the headquarters of the Kanyakumari district. This is the largest Municipal town in Kanyakumari district. It lies at the head of the Aramboly pass about 12 km. from it, on the Trivandrum – Tirunelveli road. It is the largest town in Kanyakumari district. It has an area of 4.80 square miles comprising a number of villages eg. Vadasery, Olukanasseri, Vadiveeswaram and Kottar. Kottar and Vadasery are manufacturing and trading centers. Nagercoil owed much of its present position and importance to the efforts of Christian Missionaries. Park, Stadium, Polytechnic, AIR, TV station, Boarding and

Lodging Facilities, Railway station etc., are available\textsuperscript{13}.

The name Nagercoil is derived from the five headed serpent deity of the ‘Nagaraja’ temple which is situated in the heart of the town. It is said that this temple was originally a Jain temple\textsuperscript{14}. The temple of Nagaraja is surrounded by paddy fields, flower gardens and coconut groves. The garden is famous for its Naga flower (Couroupita guianensis) a symbolic representation of Nagaraja\textsuperscript{15}.

Two separate shrines dedicated to Nagaraja and Ananthakrishna are found here\textsuperscript{16}. Though Nagaraja (serpent God) is the presiding deity, the images of Lord Siva and Ananthakrishnan are also enshrined here. The images of the Jain Theerthanagaras, Mahavira and Parsvanathar are found on the pillars of the temple. The Nagaraja is installed on the ground where it was originally found and the sands are scooped out and given as Prasadam to the devotees. The entrance to the temple is reminiscent of Chinese architecture of a Buddhist Vihara\textsuperscript{17}.

On Sundays lot of people worship the God here. On Sundays in the month of Avani, this temple is wears a festival look. On that day people from the surrounding villages come here and offer milk, salt, and pepper and wooden toys to the deity. Even people belonging to other religions submit their offering to the God. A grand festival is celebrated for 10 days in the Tamil month of Thai.

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\textsuperscript{14} Padmanabhan S., (1969), Kumari Mavatta Kovilgal, pp.50-53.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pp.8-9.
\textsuperscript{16} Brief notes on Kanyakumarai District, District Collecter, Kanyakumari district.
\textsuperscript{17} Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu- India, (1999) - A Land of Enduring Heritage, \textit{op.cit.}, March.
\end{flushleft}
every year\textsuperscript{18}. The Nagaraja temple here is unique in many aspects. Nagercoil is an important bus terminal of TamilNadu and there are frequent buses to Thiruvananthapuram and major centers from here.\textsuperscript{19}

3.14.1.4 Swamithoppu

Swamithoppu, a lovely village is a birth place of Ayya Vaikundaswamy, who born in 1809. Ayya Vaikundaswamy, through meditation became a spiritual leader and crusader. The Swamy attained enlightenment in 1833. The Swamy predicted future happenings about bio-history, politics, religion, caste, puranic sastra, social life, nature, science etc. The Swamy’s prediction were found true in later years. Swamy attained samathi in 1851. Swamy’s preachings and predictions have been described in “Akilthirattu”, which was written by Swamy’s disciple Arigobalan in 1841. A memorial of Ayya Vaikundaswamy is built in Swamithoppu village. Large number of Swamy’s followers and domestic tourists are visiting this memorial. Swamithoppu is 13 kms away from Kanyakumari. Frequent bus service are available both from Kanyakumari and Nagercoil\textsuperscript{20}.

Swamithoppu has got a different type of temple no gopuram, no image, no idol worship no deepa arathanai but a mirror is kept in the sanctorum\textsuperscript{21}. The structure is based on Kerala temple style. It was built 150 years

\textsuperscript{18} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{op.cit.}, p.53-54.
\textsuperscript{19} Rattandeep Sing, \textit{Tourist India: Hospitality services}, Kanishka Publishers Distributors, New Delhi
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p.15.
\textsuperscript{21} Agnes Stephen, \textit{op.cit.}, p.42.
ago. People belonging to different religion come here without any difference. This is called “Swami Vaikunta” temple. There is also a well in front of the temple which was blessed by Swami Vaikunta. The devotees believed that this water has some medicinal effect. Before entering the temple all devotees should wear turban. Thousands of devotees visit the temple from Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

3.14.1.5 Thiruvattar

The temple here is dedicated to “Adi Kesava Perumal” in Ananthasayanam posture and is considered one of the 13 sacred places for Vishnavas. The inscriptions found in the temple fix its age to the 12th century. Remains of old mura paintings belonging to a period not later than the 17th century are seen on the walls of the inner shrines. Wood carvings of exquisite workmanship adorn some of the structure in the temple. It is about 11 kms north of Thuckalay on Nagercoil- Kulasekharam road and 46 kms from Kanyakumari.

3.14.1.6 Kumara Koil

Kumarakoil is at the foot of the Velimalai hills in Kalkulam taluk, about 15 kms. north-west of Nagercoil and 3 kms east of Thuckalay. It lies in the jurisdiction of the Padmanabhapuram municipality. This place is known for its famous temple dedicated to Lord Muruga otherwise known as ‘Kumaran’. The temple is built on the top of small hill about 200 feet height and faces east and can be reached by a flight of steps. Goddess Valli, the spouse of Subramanya, the

presiding deity, is also enshrined in the temple by the side of the main deity. Here, Lord Muruga is in the form a child\textsuperscript{24}.

3.14.1.7 Chitharal

Chitharal is a small village situated at a distance of 7 kms from Marthandam and 45 kms from Kanyakumari. It is famous for the rock-cut temple. Hillock at Chitharal has a cave containing rock-cut sculptures of Thirthankaras and attendant deities carved inside and outside dating back to 9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. It was converted into Bhavagathy temple in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Cars and vans can go up to the foot of the hill. One has to walk for about 10 minutes to reach the temple. The Jain images have been preserved by Central Archaeological Survey of India\textsuperscript{25}.

3.14.1.8 Mondaikadu Bhagavathi Amman Temple

Mondaikadu is situated on the sea coast, north-east of Colachal port. It is connected with Nagercoil and Trivandrum by a motorable road. This place is famous for its temple dedicated to BAGAVATHI Amman. It dates back to the 7\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. The Amman is in the form of anthill which is about 12 feet in height and with five heads and believed to be growing gradually\textsuperscript{26}. The annual festival called Mondaikadu kodai is celebrated in March for 10 days and is the main attraction at this place\textsuperscript{27}. There are several interesting stories on the origin of this temple. It is believed that the sick are cured if they worship this Goddess.

\textsuperscript{24} Padmanabhan, Kumari Mavatta Kovilgal, S., pp.118-119
\textsuperscript{25} In and around Kanyakumari, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 21-23.
\textsuperscript{27} Nagam Aiya, V., Travancore State Manual Travancore, Vol.III, p.590.
Salt, pepper, wooden toys, silk clothes, black bangles, the things obtained from the first harvest are some of the offering made to this deity\textsuperscript{28}.

It is also Sabarimalai for Kerala women because they follow 41 days fasting and they carry ‘Irrumudikattu’ and come to this temple with spiritual feeling. All women makes “pongal” during this festival and devotees used to have a dip in the nearby sea.\textsuperscript{29}

3.14.1.9 Kottar – St. Xavier’s Church

It is situated on the main road from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin. It has been a trading centre from very early days. Rajendra Chola Deva changed the name of Kottar to ‘Mummudi Cholanallur’. It was also called ‘Rajendracholapuram’ after the great Rajendra Chola. Even now it is a busy centre of trade.

St. Xavier’s church situated at Kottar was built during the 15\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Francis Xavier came to India to preach Christianity. He came from Spain some 450 years ago. He showed the way for spiritually. While he came to Kottar he erected a Church that was made by mud walls and wood in 1603. After many alterations and with other extensions the new modern Church was built there.\textsuperscript{30}

The annual festival is celebrated during the month of November-December lasting for 10 days. Car festival in the ninth day is most important.

\textsuperscript{28} Vikraman Thambi, G.T., and Sembagaperumal, “Varalatril Mandaikadu”, pp.30-36.
\textsuperscript{29} Jose Antony Kevin, S.V., \textit{op.cit.}, p.57.
\textsuperscript{30} Jose Antony Kevin, S.V., \textit{opcit.}, pp. 60-61
During these festival days the shrine attracts larger crowd of visitors from all over south India\textsuperscript{31}.

### 3.14.10 Aralvoimozhi – A Pilgrim Centre

It is a pilgrim centre and a fine picnic spot. It is located on the Aralvoimozhi hill named ‘Kathadi Malai’, 15 kms from Nagercoil.

A knight Devasahayam who followed Christianity and became a devotee of Jesus Christ was tortured by the King of Travancore to give up Christianity. He refused and finally Devasahayam was killed at this mountain. The king was surprised of his bravery.

Even today many pilgrim visiting here believe that the diseases will be cured. There is a church on the mountain.\textsuperscript{32}

### 3.14.11 Thirupathisaram

Thirupathisaram is on the main road that leads to Aralvoimozhi and is about five kilometres from Nagercoil. It is famous for its ancient temple dedicated to Sri Thiruvazhimarban. The temple is one of the 108 shrines sacred to the Vaishnavites in India and one among the thirteen Devyasthalams of rest while Malainad. It is also the birth place of Saint Nammalwar\textsuperscript{33}.

### 3.14.12 Peer Mohamed Dargah at Thuckalay

There is a dargha named ‘Peer Mohamed Oliyuiah Dargha’ at Thuckalay named after the great philosopher Mohammed Appa, who was born in

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Gazetteers of India,\textit{opcit.}, p.1193.
  \item Jose Antony Kevin, S.V., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 73-74.
  \item Padmanabhan, S., (1970), Temples in Kanyakumari District, p.53.
\end{itemize}
Tenkasi of Tirunelveli District. After spending sometime in spiritual pursuits in Peermedu of Kerala state he came and stayed at Thuckalay. Being a Tamil poet of great eminence, he wrote many books on philosophy. It was said that he laid foundation stone for the Padmanabhapuram Granite Fort. The anniversary of the great philosopher poet is celebrated every year on a grand scale on the full moon day in the month of Rajap. Both the people of Kerala and Tamil Nadu attend the celebrations in large numbers irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.

3.14.2 Memorials

3.14.2.1 Mahathma Gandhi Memorials

The Gandhi mandpam has been constructed at the spot where the ashes of Mahathma Gandhi were kept for public view in an urn before a portion was immersed into the three seas. Every year on Gnadhiji’s birthday on 2nd October, the sun rays fall at the exact spot where the urn was displayed before immersion.

3.14.2.2 Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial

Vivekananda Rock Memorial is another place in Kanyakumari which attracts large number of tourists. As its name implies, it is essentially a sacred monument, built by the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee to which Shri Mannath Padmanabhan was President and Mananeeya Eknath Ranade was

34. Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu (1999), Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu-India - A Land of Enduring Heritage, March.
35. Brief Notes on Kanyakumari District, District collector, Kanyakumari District op.cit.
Orginsation Secretary and the Executive Committee Members drawn from different States to commemorate the visit of Swamy Vivekananda to “Shripada Parai” during 24th, 25th and 26th December 1892 for deep meditation and enlightenment.37 A meditation hall is also attached with the memorial. Ferry service is available to reach the memorial38

From ancient times, the rock has been regarded as a sacred place. In puranic tradition, it has been known as “Sripada Parai” meaning the rock, that has been blessed by the touch of Shripada feet of the Goddess.39

3.14.2.3 Kamaraj Memorial

Regarded as the “King Maker of India” Kamarajar influenced many political events in the nation. From a humble background he rose to the position of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu through sheer hard work and political acumen. As a tribute to the freedom fighter and “Perunthalaivar” this memorial was constructed where his ashes were kept for the public to pay homage before immersion into the sea40.

3.14.2.4 Veluthambi Dalawah Memorial

Thallakulam is a hamlet in the Kalkulam taluk, about 5 kms from the Monday market –Thallakulam branch road. This place is historically important, since it is the birth place of the great revolutionary leader Dalawai Veluthambi, the then Dewan of Travancore who rose against the British. His

38. A Land of Enduring Heritage, op.cit..
39. The Tale of Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Kanyakumari, Vivekananda Kendra, pp.50 -52
40. Gazetteer of India, op.cit., p.1204.
ancient home once destroyed by the British has been rebuilt by his nephews, in which some of these personal belongings and the weapons used by him in the war against the British were kept.  

3.14.3 Dams  

3.14.3.1 Pechiparai Dam  

Pechiparai Dam is about 43 km from Nagercoil. This dam in Kalkulam taluk, was built during the days of the Maharaja Sri Moolam Thirunal across the river Kodayar. The construction of the dam was designed on the pattern of the Periyar dam in the Madurai District. The length of the dam is 425.1 mts. It has catchment area of 204.8 sq.km. There is a camp shed provided at the dam side for the visitors. The weather is very pleasant and hence attracts large number of tourists. A pleasure boat service is available. The dam is surrounded by dense forests with valuable trees, wildlife etc. The total expense of the construction of this dam is Rs.26.10 lakhs.  

3.14.3.2 Perunchani Dam  

Perunchani is located 85 kms from Kanyakumari. It was built from 1948-53. It was opened on 1953 September 2nd. These dam sites are excellent picnic spots. Boating facilities and dormitory type of accommodation are available.  

42. Ibid., pp.1215  
43. In and Around Kanyakumari, op.cit., p.21  
44. Jose Antony Kevin, S.V., op.cit., p.78.
3.14.3.3 Mathoor Hanging Bridge

The Mathoor Hanging Trough is the tallest as well as the longest trough bridge in Asia, having a height of 115 feet and a length of one Kilometer. Constructed in 1966, this bridge has became a place of tourist importance. The bridge has been constructed at Mathoor across the river Parazhiyar at a cost of Rs. 12.90/- lakhs and the trough canal on the bridge carries water for irrigation from one side of a hill to the other side of a hill. The trough has a height of 7 feet with a width of 7 feet six inches. The canal is being shouldered by 29 huge pillars. The district administration has created tourism infrastructure facilities over here. It is 60 kms from Kanyakumari.

3.14.4 Beaches

3.14.4.1 Sothavilai Beach

This beach is 12 kms from Nagercoil and 12 kms from Kanyakumari through West Coast road. It lies in Puthalam town Panchayat and is one of the best natural beaches of the district. Soft waves of shallow water with lovely sand dunes attract domestic tourists. It is one of the best beaches for holiday lovers. The district administration has provided basic infrastructure facilities like drinking water, shadow shelters, view tower, children’s play equipment and rest rooms etc.


3.14.4.2 Sanguthurai Beach

It is a beautiful beach which is very convenient for the local population at Nagercoil. The beach lies in Rajakamangalam Panchayat Union. It is 13 kms from Nagercoil and 15 kms from Kanyakumari through West Coast road. The district administration has provided basic infrastructure facilities over here. It is a developing beach centre.  

3.14.4.3 Thenkapattanam Beach

Thenkapattanam situated on the West Coast near Painkulam village in Vilavancode taluk is a place of historical importance. It is 35 km. from Nagercoil and 12 km. from Kuzhithurai. As coconuts are abundant in this place, this might have derived this name (coconut-thengai). It is also probable that this name was given to the place, as a result of its being the centre of Thenganad ruled over by members of Ay dynasty.

The village had in ancient times, trade relations with foreign countries like Arabia. There was direct cargo boat service between Thenkapattanam and other foreign maritime towns. Copra, dry fish, coir and shark fin were the main products that were exported.

Thenkapattanam is having the estuary of the lovely river Thamiraparani with its non-salty water entering the sea. The river backwaters are

47. The District Collector, op.cit.
49. Ibid.
surrounded by charming dense coconut grove. Boat riding on the river backwater is really an enjoyable one.

### 3.14.4.4 Theckurichi Beach

Theckurichi, a tiny village with lovely calm seashore lies near the west coast road. It is a lesser known sea-beach of the Kanyakumari district which lies in Rajakamangalam Panchayat Union. Calm seashore with shady casorina trees gives a serene atmosphere. It is an excursion seashore tourist centre. Coir making is a major small scale business of the villagers. It is at a distance of 10 kms from Nagercoil (via) Rajakamangalam and 29 kms from Kanyakumari.\(^{50}\)

### 3.14.4.5 Muttom

Muttom is a delightful place on the coast of Kalkulam taluk, attracting people desirous of having a seaside holiday. It is 17 km. from Nagercoil Via. Rajakamangalam and also can be reached from Colachal or Mondaikadu.\(^{51}\)

The place is well known to the mariners because of the crocodile rock jutting out into the sea. A light house has been built in Muttom village which has a range of visibility of 23 nautical miles in average weather conditions. This light house was originally established in 1875 and improved subsequently in 1909.\(^{52}\) The sunset viewpoint here is one of the most panoramic viewpoints in the district. The district administration developed basic infrastructure facilities

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50. The District Collector, *op.cit*.
52. The Director of light house and Light Ships, Madras, (1986), July 23.
like shady shelters, benches, car parking, solar lighting, risk free fencing on the rocks etc\textsuperscript{53}.

\textbf{3.14.5 Fort}

\textbf{3.14.5.1 Padmanabhapuram Palace}

Padmanabhapuram lies in the Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu, whereas major portion of the old Travancore State belong to Kerala\textsuperscript{54}. This is the ancient capital of Travancore which have been might constructed before 1601 A.D. The palace with an area of seven acres is situated in the very centre of the Padmanabhapuram fort. The art and architecture of the palace is of Kerala origin and atmosphere. The fort was built with mud originally was dismantled and reconstructed with granite by Maharaja Marthanda varma. The place is always cool and quit. A special combination of charcoal from burnt coconut shells, lime, white part of eggs and various vegetables extract were used for the shining block floors. The essential feature of an old Kerala house the Padipura, retain its importance appearance in the place which leads to the garden in front, with an oval lawn at the centre and pathway around. Thaikottaram known as Mother Place said to be the oldest of all edifices in the palace contains ‘Ekanta Mantapa’ which was built of finely carved wooden pillars and decorated with specimens of indigenous wood carving. The most attractive building in the whole palaces is the ‘Uppirika Malika’ which consist of three storey. The Navarathri Mandapa which is a spacious hall of exquisitely beautiful granite pillars with

\textsuperscript{53}. In and Around Kanyakumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p.18.

\textsuperscript{54}. In and Around Kanyakumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p.21.
dropping pendants reminiscent of the Nayaker style of architecture. Apart from them, there are so many temples inside the fort, among which Sr. Subramaniya temple, Saraswathy temple, etc.

3.14.5.2 Vattakottai

Vattakottai, a granite fort 6 km. north-east of Kanyakumari cape, forms the terminal of a line of ramparts known as the South Travancore lines built by Marthnda Varma to serve as defense for Nanjil Nadu. It is rectangular in shape and covers an area of about the three and a half acres. The fort is enclosed by walls 25 to 26 feet high, including the parapet, 29 feet thick at the front, 18 feet at the corners and 6 feet at the rear. The portion running into the area is the most strongly built under the orders of De Lannoy during the reign of Marthandavarma (1729-58 A.D).

The green vegetarian, dense coconut groves on the shore side, shallow sea waves in fine sand beach have become an ideal picnic spot for the tourists. Accommodation, dress changing, toilet facilities etc., are provided. Mini bus service, city bus service, cars, etc. are available to see this spot.

3.14.5.3 Udayagiri Fort

Udayagiri fort is situated near the Padmanabhapuram fort on the Trivandrum- Nagercoil highways road at Puliyoolurkunchy. It is about 14 km.

59. In and Around Kanyakumari, op.cit., p.14
from Nagercoil and 2 km. from Thuckalay and Padmanabhapuram.\textsuperscript{60} This fort was built during the regime of King Marthandavarma (1729-1758 A.D). This fort also had a foundry for casting guns. De Lennoy’s Tomb is in this fort. He was one of the 24 European prisoners taken by king Marthandavarma in 1741 when he defeated the Dutch at Colachal. He joined King Marthandavarma and became a trusted General. He trained soldiers in the European method of fighting. Now, the district administration with the help of forest department has set up a Bio-diversity park over here.\textsuperscript{61}

3.14.6 Falls

3.14.6.1 Thirparappu Water Falls

Thirparappu is a good picnic spot. The Kodayar makes it descend at Thirparappu and the water falls at this place about 13 kms. The river bed is rocky and about three hundred feet in length. The water falls from a height of nearby 50 feet and the water flow for about 7 months in a year. Either side of the river on the left bank of the river in between the waterfalls and the weir, there is a temple dedicated to Siva enclosed by a strong fortification\textsuperscript{62}.

3.14.6.2 Olakkayarui

Olakkayarui water falls in the Western Ghats is about 8 km. north of Azhagiapandipuram and about 14 km. from Nagercoil. The beautiful waterfalls and the natural scenery all around the place attract many holiday

\textsuperscript{60}. The Director of Archaeology, (1988), December 7.
\textsuperscript{61}. Gazetteers of India, \textit{op.cit.}, p.1222
\textsuperscript{62}. Report from the commissioner of Thiruvattar Panchayat Union, \textit{op.cit.}, p.12.
seekers and thus this place has become an important picnic centre. An altar connected with the sage Agasthiar near the falls attracts a large number of religious minded people on full moon days of the month of Chithirai (April-May) and they worship the altar, after a bath in the falls.\(^{63}\)

### 3.14.7 Harbor

#### 3.14.7.1 Colachal Harbor

This sea coast town is situated about 22 km. west of Nagercoil and about 7 km. south west of Eraniel. It was a port of call of European merchants, during the 16-18\(^{th}\) centuries.\(^{64}\) The Colachal port has afforded natural amenities for shipping by its physiographical structure, a group of outlying rocks forming a practical break water. Under cover of these rocks are done loading and unloading and other shipping operations. A variety of commodities is exported from here, prominent among them being palmyrah and its fiber, mineral sands fish and salt.

Small steamers anchor in seven fathoms of water, off the shore.\(^{65}\) Small vessels anchor in about five fathoms, less than a quarter of a mile off the coast. The flag staff in the flag staff compound transmits messages to the ships during day time by international code system. There is no light signaling at this port. A mast headlight is put up in the flag staff compound with red screen to denote the port and another at the port beacon emitting white light to denote the

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63. Gazetteers of India, *op.cit.*, p.1199  
64. District Census Hand Book, *op.cit.*, p.15.  
anchorage. The latter is visible for about 8 km. in clear weather. There is no jetty at this port\textsuperscript{66}.

In the past, this port had its glory and its importance in the industrial and marine fields also. It was the centre for transportation of the fine cotton fibers of Kottar and Eraniel to foreign countries\textsuperscript{67}. Now there are two fiber factories at Colachal and finished goods are sent to Tuticorin for export. The fiber produced is graded and exported to England, U.S.A and other countries. Coir making is a major industry of the poor classes\textsuperscript{68}.

\textbf{3.14.7.2 Chinna muttom Harbor}

This harbor is located at 5kms north of Cape Comorin. This is naturally formed bay and hence an ideal location for constructing fishing harbor. The significance of this fishing harbor is that both Cape Comorin Bank and Wedge Bank are within 50 kms. from the harbor. This harbor is the sixth on the east coast in Tamil Nadu.

\textbf{3.14.8 Government Fruit Farm}

This farm is 2 km from Kanyakumari on Nagercoil Road (NH-47). Variety of fruits and hundreds of plants and different species of trees are nurtured here in a well –maintained nursery here.

\textbf{3.14.9 Thiruvalluvar Statue}

A huge statue of Tamil Savant-poet, Thiruvalluvar is in

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{67} Gazetteers \textit{op.cit.}, pp.1170-1171.

\textsuperscript{68} Report of the Collector Kanyakumari District, \textit{op.cit.}
Kanyakumari on the line of liberty statue of New York. The statue will be refurbished with the Dravidian sculptural details and will be a modern architectural delight raising over the rock situated adjacent to Vivekananda rock memorial. The statue will be of 133 feet height.

The ‘Cape festival’ is celebrated during October every year to entertain the tourist.

Accommodation is available in plenty as the Government of Tamil Nadu and Kerala run hotels of Indian and Western styles.  

A good transport network both by bus and trains facilitate tourists to visit this spot again and again. All tourism infrastructure facilities are available at Kanyakumari.

3.14.10 Museum

The government museum is located near the tourist office on the beach road. The museum contains bronzes, coins, and weapons of former kings, tribal objects, wood carvings and zoological and botanical specimens. The car of the famous Ayya Vaikunda swamy temple, Swamythoppu near Kanyakumari is one of the collections of the museum we can see canons made of iron and of granite used in the war. It is an informative place for the children.

3.14.11 Baywatch

The water theme amusement park at sunset point offers a unique

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70. The District collector, *op.cit.*
way to experience the exotic grancleca of Kanyakumari in its integrals. Baywatch comes up with a whole some family entertainment saga of rapturous experience, which leaves you at a point of nonstop, excitement in a thrilling and bewitching water world. Great fun styles equaling international standards keep you on the ecstatic brink of frenzy, fun loaded rides like bumping car, sky cab, crazy chairs, hot tea cups, giant wheel, Columbus, wave pool, milky way, multiple splash, kids pool, are some of the attractions. The location being a prominent place of national integration, by all means, Baywatch has become the abode of leisure, and multiple entertainment facilities that match with international standards pave the way for introduction of India`s first war museum, which is line with Madam Tussahs was museum at London.

3.15 CONCLUSION

Kanyakumari offers a multitude of experience to the tourist. It is blessed with unmatched natural diversity that provides immense scope for tourism. This virtual paradise holds almost all the tourist attractions of the world i.e. beaches, enhancing back waters, mist clad hill stations, lush forests, scintillating waterfalls, extensive plantation, invigorating monsoons, ayurvedic health centre, magical festivals, spectacular art forms, splendid cultural heritage, spicy cuisine and everything else that enthralls a visitor. It has emerged as the most acclaimed tourist destination of the district in the recent past.