CONCLUSION

Having an area of 108.65 square kilometres the twin city Tiruneveli and Palayamkottai the former located in the west bank and the latter located in the east bank of river Tambiraparani has eleven Taluks and nineteen Panchayat Unions. Tirunelveli has been rich in paddy cultivation. Hence the invaders from the Pandyan Kingdom, the Pandyas, the Cholas, Nayakkars and Muslims constantly tried to possess Tirunelveli. Likewise, the sovereigns of the Malabar coast familiarly known as the Cheras also tried to possess Tirunelveli. During the period of the Carnatic Nawabs, the Tirunelveli area was divided into Palayams under the reign of the Poligars. The prominent poligars were the Poligar of Nelkattansevel and the Poligar of Panchalankurichi. These poligars opposed the British and refused to pay tributes. Hence there were continuous wars between the British and the Poligars. No doubt the British won. But the worst result was the sufferings of the poor people.
The poor people became destitutes. Beggars were common. Widows were left uncared for. Unemployment became a necessitated evil. Hence the poor people had no other way but to become slaves. Slavery led to bonded labour. Education became the privilege of the rich and the royal family members were considered as high caste people. The rest became unprivileged low caste people. To safeguard the such neglected groups a series of Non-Governmental Organisations came forward to ameliorate the grievances of the destitutes.

The forerunners of these Non-Governmental Organisations were the Christian missionaries. Many Christian missionaries, Robert De-Nobili, Constango Beschi, Robert Caldwell and G.U.Pope visited Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli, formed Organisations, known as Christian Mission Organisations, mingled with the people, studied Tamil and conversed with the natives in their tongue. They started schools, asylums, orphanages and colleges to educate the people and tried to free them from the local bondage. As a consequence of their services many, schools and
colleges especially St.Xaviers college and St.John's college were started to educate the people.

Following their foot steps many Non-Governmental Organisations have been started in Tirunelvely, Polayamkottai and a nearly suburban area Cheranmahadevi. The prominent Non-Governmental Organisations, Social change and Development Non-Governmental Organisation (SCAD). Arumbugal Non-Governmental Organisation, Vaan Muhil Non-Governmental Organisation, Vidyarambam Non-Governmental Organisation, Siva Non-Governmental Organisation, TirunelvelI Social Service Scheme (TSSS) Non-Governmental Organisation, Puratchi Non-Governmental Organisation and Peace Trust Non-Governmental Organisation have been organized to redress the grievances of the poor people.

The Non-Governmental Organisations have been taking steps to educate the underprivileged. The Non-Governmental Organisations began to concentrate their attentions on the villages. These NGOs organized schools in villages. The SCAD Non-
Governmental Organisation started 174 village schools and 22,752 students of the villages in Tirunelveli District have been educated. The Tirunelveli Social Service Society imparts vocational and technical skills through its educational institutions. Separate Institutes have been founded in Kuruvikulam, Kayathar and Palayamkottai to impart technical knowledge to the village students. The NGOs take care of the Gypsy children and the children of the snake catchers. They are also brought within the purview of education.

The Puratchi Trust has highlighted the position of children in bonded labour to the District Administration and School Education Department in Tirunelveli. The Arumbugal Trust takes remarkable steps to fight against poverty and unemployment in rural areas. Likewise the Vidyarambam Non-Governmental organization has also come forward for the development of education among the rural students. This Trust has developed a special curriculum to teach languages, arithmetic environmental sciences, life skills, yoga basics of computers, art and culture and indoor and outdoor games.
Activity based learning methodology has been followed to teach the children.

To develop the practice of reading, a children's library has been set up by the NGOs in every chosen village with 300 books in Tamil and in English. Even dropout children are also given chance to continue their education. At present the Non-Governmental Organisations have been much interested in the formation of model schools in remote villages. But for the Non-Governmental Organisations in Tirunelveli, the amazing educational progress could never have been achieved. Today Palayamkottai is generally called the 'Oxford of South India' thanks to the dedicated service rendered by the Non-Governmental Organisations.

These organisations in Tirunelveli have been doing a lot in the uplift of the poor desolated women. Women are unable to lead a life on par with men in spite of their urge for equality. Women underwent almost a kind of servitude during the medieval period and their position went on improving during the British period and after independence. Today women are treated on par with men. Yet
in many places in Tirunelveli their position seemed to be very weak. Hence the Non-Governmental Organisations which have been functioning in Tirunelveli District have come forward to redress the grievances of women in Tirunelveli District.

The foremost step taken by the Non-Governmental Organisations is the formation of Self Help Groups. The Self Help Groups formed by the Non-Governmental Organisation for women have laid the seeds for economic and social empowerment of women. The members of the Self Help Groups have been taught by the NGOs how to earn their livelihood. Thanks to the initiative taken by the SCAD, The Self Help Groups in Tirunelveli have organized a Bank known as "Surabhi" to promote income generating programmes. Arumbugal has introduced a Life Insurance Scheme called 'Jeevan Mathur'. Special initiative has been taken to form special groups for the welfare of the differently abled, HIV and AIDS affected patients and transgenders. Thus the Non-Governmental Organisations have put forward a venture to bring to light the depressed position of women.
The progress of any country is gauged by the social and health services provided to the people. Tirunelveli is one of the worst hit epidemic areas in Tamil Nadu. Unhygienic condition is a common factor in Tirunelveli which is susceptible to diseases. Diseases arising from poverty, ignorance, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of safe water supply, inadequate housing, and low level immunity are very common in Tirunelveli District. Children and women, in particular, remain seriously underprivileged with regard to health. The Tirunelveli Social Service Society has established a 'Care and Hope' centre for women and children infected with HIV and AIDS at V.M. Chatram in Palayamkottai. The TSSS also has established a Siddha medicine centre at Sankarancoil. There is also an outlet for sale of Siddha Medicines at Palayamkottai. The TSSS is licensed by the Government to manufacture siddha medicines. The TSSS has also facilitated operation of dispensaries at remote villages where nuns attend to basic ailments. A special clinic for Acupuncture treatment has been established at the TSSS premises in Palayamkottai.
The rural people in Tirunelveli District are living in villages with unhygienic conditions. The Non-Governmental Organisations particularly the SCAD gives training to the villagers to keep their area clean. If only the living area is kept clean the diseases caused by micro-organisms could be prevented. The SCAD's attempt to impart training in cleanliness has brought in remarkable changes in village areas. In order to maintain a clean and hygienic campus, SCAD has constructed new toilets in village schools. This scheme has now been introduced by the present administration in the Centre in the name of, 'Swach Bharath' (Clean India) Now the children in the village schools in Palayamkottai are using toilets regularly and eventually the village school areas look clean and tidy.

Hemophilia is a dreaded disease throughout India. A branch office of the Hemophilia Foundation of India, known as Tirunelveli Hemophilia Society was founded in Tirunelveli in 1997. The SCAD Trust has been taking all the steps to cure the patients afflicted with dreaded diseases. Cancer has been another dreaded disease prevalent in Tirunelveli. Peace Trust Non-Governmental
Organisation in Tirunelveli has been taking steps for the eradication of cancer. The Peace Trust Non-Governmental Organisation has been organizing medical camps in the remote areas not in the outskirts only in Tirunelveli but also in adjoining districts.

Leprosy, yet another ugly disease has also been common in Tirunelveli District. SCAD Non-Governmental Organisaiton has been helping the leprosy affected people since 1987 onwards. The lepros sufferers are considered untouchables and they are isolated by the general public due to their complexity of illness and their deformed appearances. They are prevented from leading a normal life. After seeing the pitiable condition of these leprosy patients the SCAD Director, Cletus Babu started a community base in Sathyanagar near Pettai in Tirunelveli in 1990.

SCAD organization thought that it was very important to provide housing facilities for these neglected people because all of them are homeless and they sleep in public pavements. In Sathyanagar houses have been erected for the leprosy patients by the SCAD Non-Governmental Organisation. The health condition
of the leprosy patients has been highly improved and their children are studying at the SCAD school in Pettai near Tirunelveli.

The Non-Governmental Organisations in Tirunelveli have the aim of starting a geriatric outpatient ward in all the medical colleges especially in the medical college at Tirunelveli. In addition to this, the Non-Governmental Organisations, especially the Tirunelveli Social Service Society, the Arumbugal Society, the SCAD and the SIVA Trust have been taking all the steps to provide support services such as surgery and insurance coverage. They have a plan of adopting old age homes in hospitals in Tirunelveli District.

Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in the area of blindness control since 1972. It is a significant fact that this achievement is possible through Non-Governmental Organisations. The Non-Governmental Organisations in Tirunelveli have been taking earnest steps to improve tribal health, expand the projects for biomedical waste management and control of cervical cancer and cardiac diseases. The Non-Governmental Organisations are also taking steps for the reduction in maternal and infant mortality.
Agriculture is the main profession of more than 70% of the population in India. Yet owing to the increased cost of the inputs and heavy investments, small and marginal farmers struggle for their survival. Many are being alienated from their lands and most of them have become landless labourers and migrated to urban centres for seeking potential employment.

It is at this context the Tirunelveli Social Service Society took efforts to prevent migration and support farmers. The Tirunelveli Social Service Society has organized the farmers into groups and federations. The Tirunelveli social Services society offers technical and financial support to small and marginal farmers to carry out cultivation, animal husbandry and allied activities. It promotes organic farming vermi compost making and offer sustainable farming practices with the support of a demonstration farm.

In order to encourage sustainable farming, the farming community has been encouraged to organize organic markets. The Tiruneveli Social Service Society has organized one organic outlet
(market) in Polayamkottai. Women are given assistance to cultivate greens, vegetables and fruits which are brought to the organic market. Such organic produces and organic market have improved the livelihood of the farmers and at the same time the fertility of the soil has also been sustained.

The Tirunelveli social service society has been organizing orientation programmes to the farmers on how to carry out soil testing. To maintain the fertility of the soil, solar powered fences and machines are used by the Non-Governmental Organisations. Chemicals are avoided by the NGOs. The NGOs avoid middle men whenever the produce are brought to the market. The system that focuses on redesigning of the farm are highly sophisticated, the most environmental and economically sustainable over a long term. As these farm systems recycle resources to the greatest extent possible little is wasted, a few pollutions are generated and the input costs are reduced substantially.

Environmental issues are one of the primary causes of diseases, and health issues and they have a great impact on the lives
of the people of Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai. Agricultural degradation of land, resource depletion, public health, loss of resilience in ecosystems and livelihood security for the poor are the important environmental issues. The sources of pollution include the rampart burning of fuelwood and biomass such as dried waste from livestock, lack of organized garbage and waste management services, lack of sewage treatment operations, lack of food control and monsoon water drainage system, diversion of consumer waste into rivers, cremation practices near major rivers, government mandated protection of highly polluting old public transport and continued operation by government owned high emission plants. Water supply and sanitation issues are related to many environmental issues.

Drinking water is a scarce commodity in the dry areas of Tirunelveli District. SCAD, with the collaboration of village and Government Departments has restored and renovated traditional water harvesting structures in the villages. More than 100 irrigation tanks and drinking water ooranies (ponds) and check dams have
been constructed by SCAD. Rain harvesting tanks are promoted in schools.

As a noble initiative to save the planet Earth from global warming, SCAD has initiated many eco-friendly measures. Tree planting programme has been carried out by the SCAD. Arrangements for watering the sapling are also done to sustain them. Awareness is created among the students and they are motivated to plant saplings in their school gardens.

Climate change and poverty are serious challenges and issues to the earth and the people. The climate change creates more damages in temperature and precipitation patterns. It has increased the frequency duration and intensity of extreme weather events like flood, drought, heat waves. The effects of climate change include glacial retreat, reduced summer stream flows, species extinctions and outbreak of diseases. This should never happen again in future. Taking this into account, the Arumbugal Trust being one of the field level NGO partners of earth-net, conducted training
programmes for the coordinators, staff and Self Help Groups. The participants gained awareness about global warming and its effects.

The Non-Governmental Organisations in Tirunelveli, Palayamkottai and Cheranmahadevi have been doing appreciable performances for the uplift of the poor and the down trodden in the society. People of varied categories, destitute children, widows, orphans, depressed people, low caste people, neglected children are taken care of and they are sent to schools and colleges. Special accommodation centres have been provided by the NGOs for the upbringing of the society. Even the Gypsies and the snake catchers have also been taken care of. Their children are sent to schools. Even HIV patients, cancer patients and leprosy patients are also accommodated. Employment opportunities are being provided. Many Schools, Engineering Colleges and Arts and Science Colleges have been run by these Non-Governmental Organisations.

The NGOs educate the people of Tirnelveli area to keep the city and the suburban areas clean so as to be free from contagious diseases. They teach the people how to preserve the fertility of the
soil and to maintain properly the environmental factors of the Tirunelveli area. On the whole the position of Tirunelveli, in education, social uplift, hygiene, medical facilities, agricultural progress and maintenance of the environmental system has been considerably developed and Tirunelveli today is considered to be one of the clean cities in South India because of the undaunted efforts of the Non-Governmental Organisations which got themselves fully involved in the progress of Tirunelveli area without expecting any reward. In fact, the Tirunelveli District of today is different from the Tirunelveli District of yester years thanks to the devoted and dedicated services rented by the Non-Governmental Organisations.