INTRODUCTION

Travancore was one of the premier princely states of pre-independent India. The name Travancore is derived from the term Srivardhanapuri (or) Srivazhumcode, which means the seat of prosperity.¹ Travancore was known by different names at different times such as Venad, Keralam, Vanchi desam and Thiru Adi Desam. During the pre-independence day it was bounded on the north by the state of Cochin and the British district of Coimbatore, on the east by the British district of Madurai and Tirunelveli and on the south and west by the Indian Ocean. Its extreme length from north to south is 174 miles and its extreme breadth is seventy five miles.² It is about 4/5 of Madurai, 9/20 of Coimbatore, 1/3rd of Tirunelveli, 1/12 of Hyderabad, 1/4th of Mysore, 1/8th of Baroda, 2/7th of Gwalior more than five times the size of Cochin and six times that of Pudukkottai. Among the princely state of British India, the state of Travancore ranked next to Hyderabad and Mysore in point of population.³

Travancore is prominently most picturesque portions of South India. The mountains which separate this region on the north and least from the British district, are clothed with magnificent forests. The Western Ghats which separated

¹ Shungunny Menon, P., History of Travancore from the earliest times, Madras, 1878., p.8
² Political File No.68, A short sketch on Travancore, March 24,1923, p.1
³ The Travancore Directory for 1938, p.107
Travancore from the Madras Presidency conferred a distinctiveness to its history and culture.⁴

Travancore is pre-eminently an agricultural country, 42.2 percent of the population depend for their livelihood almost upon lands. The whole surface is undulating with a services of hills and valleys traversed form east to west by numerous rivers. At the southern end of the state lay Nanjilnad, with its cluster of houses, palm growers and extensive paddy fields, resembling in some respects the neighbouring district of Tirunelveli.⁵

The climatic variations of the whole of India on a small scale, could be experienced in Travancore, though a warm humidity is one of the special features of its climate. The climate although very hot and seldom above ninety five degree is usually equable, and the dampness of the sea air, continually blown over the land by the prevailing south-west breeze, keeps the temperature approximately the same throughout the day and night.⁶ The annual average rainfall is 1833.9 mm. The rainfall in the monsoon months is known locally as edavapthi and the post monsoon rains as thulavasham.⁷ Usually the rainfall is regular and steady. The south west monsoon yields 12.6”, while the north east monsoon supplies 18.8”.⁸

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⁴ Administrative Report of Travancore, 1928-1929, p.2
⁵ Political File No.68 , A short sketch on Travancore, March 24,1923, p.2
⁶ Ibid., p.3
⁷ Sreedhara Menon A. (e.d.). Trivandrum District, Gazetteers, pp.6-7
The land is classified into three divisions, the highland, the midland and the lowland. The highland consists of areas lying 250 feet above the sea level. The midland is the region which lies between twenty five feet and 250 feet above sea level. The lowland consists of the areas which have the attitude below twenty feet above the sea level.\textsuperscript{9} Travancore, being a coastal state with a big coastline of about 575 acres provide facilities for bathing, diving, swimming, surfing and water scootering. Among the several beaches of Travancore, Kovalam is the most attractive spot which is noted for its scenery and calm, atmosphere.

The upper regions of the highland are mostly covered with dense forests and high ranges. The high land region is the area of major plantation crops like tea, coffee, rubber and other spices.\textsuperscript{10} The midland region is a highly fertile land and rich in the produces such as paddy, tapioca, cashew, pepper, ginger and rubber.

The lowland one can come across many rivers, backwaters and lagoons. The important backwaters are Kumbla, Kavvagi, Kayamkulam, Kodungallur, Chittari, Bekkal, Anjengo, Ashtamudi, Perur, Veliyangod, Vembanad and Veli.

The area is benefited with a copious share of both the south west and the northeast monsoons, the former in a larger measure than the latter. The southwest monsoon begins normally in May-June and the northeast monsoon in October-

\textsuperscript{9} Narayanan, K., Census of India 1971, Series 9, Kerala, Part IX-A, p. 3
\textsuperscript{10} Hacker, I.H., A Hundred years in Travancore, 1800-1906, London, 1908, p.12
November. The hills and mountains of Travancore are noted for wildlife sanctuaries and small hill stations. Devikulam, Munnar, Nelliyampathy, Peerumade, Ponmudi and Wayanad are the major hill stations. Munnar is situated at an attitude ranging from 1600 to 1800 metres above the sea level.

The state of Travancore has a number of rivers. The most important of these rivers is the Periyar which offers a course of 142 miles, which facilitates cultivation of crops and abundant growth of trees. The Pamba, Kallada, Kulakada, Muvattupuzha, Thamiraparani, Neyyar and the Vamanapuram are the important rivers.\(^\text{11}\)

The People of Travancore were divided into various caste and religious groups. The Brahmins, Nairs and Vellalar were considered to be the high castes and they were the privileged section of the society. They had their own rituals and deities like Siva and Vishnu. They monopolised education.\(^\text{12}\) The Nairs were the principal owners of land and they possessed slaves. Further, they occupied most of the offices of the government.\(^\text{13}\) Below the Nairs were the Nadars, Vellalars, Ambattans, Vannans, Nayakkany and Parayars who claimed that they belonged to the right hand castes.\(^\text{14}\) The Parayars and the Sambavars were so called untouchable castes. They were the tillers of the soil and were generally very faithful of their masters. They occupied a very low position in the social ladder.

\(^{13}\) Agur, C. M., Church History of Travancore, pp. 418
\(^{14}\) Samuel Mateer, Paraiya Caste in Travancore, London 1884, p.181
and the higher castes believed that their physical touch would pollute them. Their houses were, therefore, situated away from other residential quarters outside the ordinary village limits, and were called paracheries.\textsuperscript{15}

They were found in large numbers in the taluks like Thovala, Agasteeswaram and Eraniel.\textsuperscript{16} The people of the low caste were oppressed and suppressed by the high caste.\textsuperscript{17} The so called low caste worshiped special deities like Madan, Bhoothathan and Kali. Due to their illiteracy and ignorance, they could not ascribe any reason to their diseases, other then the wrath of their deities.\textsuperscript{18} Again the lower classes did not dare to touch even the outer walls of the Brahmin temples and they offered their offerings from a distant place.\textsuperscript{19}

Socially, Travancore at the end of the sixteenth century was feudal in character. The most interesting and repressive characteristic of the feudal structure was the division of society in term of caste. The caste system, in all its severity and rigidity divided the society into a number of groups mutually antagonistic towards each other, co-operating only to degrade one or the other caste. The principles of caste systems made the majority of the people mere slaves of the dominant or privileged classes or the caste Hindu groups. The Nairs who were below the Brahmins, formed the nobility and the magistracy as well as the

\textsuperscript{15} Venkatachalapathy, G., Community Development and Panchayat Raj, Madras, 1978, p.54
\textsuperscript{16} Fra Baratholomeo, Voyages to East Indies, Vol.VI, p.1193.
\textsuperscript{17} Velupillai, T.K., Op.cit, Vol.III, p.403
\textsuperscript{18} Edger Thurston, Caste and Tribes of South India Vol.VI, pp.120-121
\textsuperscript{19} Thomas white House, Lingering at light in a Dark land, Madras, 1986, p.201.
administrative arm of the government. The Nairs enjoyed economic and social privileges. The Nair had social superiority and the fear of being excommunicated, made him kill instantly an Ezhava, Nadar or a Mukkuvas who defiled him by touching his person\textsuperscript{20} and similar fate awaited a pulaya or paraya who did not move away from his path. To a caste Hindu excommunication from his caste was worse than death. Ex communication meant demotion to the status of an untouchable.\textsuperscript{21} The unprivileged or oppressed classes of the population, consisting of the Nadars, the Ezhavas, the Parayars and the Pulayars, were kept by the upper castes in perennial subservience, poverty and ignorance.\textsuperscript{22}

The Brahmins and the Nairs had instituted a system of taxation on the lower classes, which defied rationality and created a massive economic burden under which the majority of the people laboured. The most severe was the poll tax.\textsuperscript{23} There was also a levy imposed against each hut.\textsuperscript{24} A ridiculous extreme of the system of taxation was that the lower classes were also made to pay taxes on the hair they grew and the breasts of their women.

Travancore is known for the traditional system of education. In early times, the village school master known as Asan, imparted education through the village schools. Remunerated by the villagers, the Asan taught reading, writing, arithmetic

\begin{footnotes}
\item[20] Francis Buchanan, Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore and Malabar, Vol.III, London 1807, p. 325
\item[21] Fra Bartolomeo, op.cit., p. 207
\item[22] W. H. Dalton., Missions in India, London, 1854, p. 97
\item[23] Foreign Political proceedings, fort William, July 17,1818, No.20, p. 69
\item[24] Samuel Mateer, Native life in Travancore, p. 292
\end{footnotes}
and the elements of astronomy necessary for the simple calculations.\textsuperscript{25} These schools admitted both boys and girls and were closely inter-women with local customs and habits of the country.\textsuperscript{26} The benefits of education were confined only among the high caste Hindus. The system continued until the arrival of Europeans.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. The principal source of agricultural wealth was coconut. Other sources of income were coffee, tea, paddy, tapioca, turmeric, jackfruit, tember, rubber etc. Travancore had commercial contact coith far off countries and coir, cotton spirit, sugarcane, tobacco etc, were exported. Glassware dyed clothes, spices and liquor were imported from foreign countries. Colachel, Quilon and Cochin served as principal forts. As an agricultural country Travancore had different systems of land tenure, such as Jennies, sirkar Brahmaswom, Devaswom and Madambimar vaka. Land revenue was the chief income of the state.\textsuperscript{27}

Salt manufacture was an important industry in South Travancore. The major salt manufacturing areas existed between Cape Comorin and Kulachal. The salt factories were known as alloms. The salt factories were known as alloms. The salt manufactured in Travancore was of superior quality and it was sold in the frontier districts of British dominion at a higher rate.

\textsuperscript{25} Administration Report, the Department of Education for the year 1932-1933, Tvm, 1934, p.129
\textsuperscript{26} Census of India.1941, part I, Vol. XXIV, Travancore, p.129.
\textsuperscript{27} Narayanan Thampi, Census of India,1941,Travancore, Part II., Report, Trivandrum,1942, p.112
The people of Travancore practised different religions. Hinduism was the religion of the ruling family and the majority of the people. The rulers of Travancore were generally tolerant towards other religion. Hence the Christians and the Muslims enjoyed religious freedom. But in the later stages the Brahmins induced the kings to act against the interests of the christians.28

Similarly Tinnevelly district, 4,326 square miles in extent, forms the southernmost collectorate of British India. It is bounded on the east and south by the Gulf of Mannar, on its northern boundary lies the district of Ramnad, on the west is Travancore.29 To the west of the Thenkasi taluk, where the mountains drop to form the Ariyankavu pass, the frontier turns eastward to include with Travancore not only the slopes of the hills but also the taluk of Shencotta in the low country.30 Again, above Panakudy the boundary descends from the crest of Mahendragiri down the eastern slope of the hills and continues southward along the level country till it meets the sea at a point four miles east of Cape Comorin. The official literature dealing with the Tinnevelly-Travancore boundary would fill a volume.31 The district is made up of the eight taluks of Thenkasi, Tinnevelly, Ambasamudram, Nanguneri, Tiruchendur, Srivaikuntam, Kovilpatti and Sankaranainarkoil.32 The district gets its name from the town which, from the times at least of the Nayakkan rulers, formed the headquarters of the ‘Province’.

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29 Pate., H.R., Gazetteer of the Tinnevelly district Madras, 1970; p.1
30 Caldwell. R. A., History of Tinnevelly, New Delhi, 1982, p.1
31 Pate H.R., op.cit., p.1
32 Ibid., p.2
During the poligar wars Palayamkottai with its fort, three miles from the town of Tinnevelly on the opposite side of the Thamaraparani, assumed importance as a strategical position and from the earliest days of the company’s interference in the district became the military head quarters.33

The hills which form the western boundary of the district are a continuation of the great irregular chain of the Western Ghats. This immense and rugged barrier of hills towering along the western side of the district are visible from almost any point of the level country. Along the sky line the range has an average of 5,000 feet, at least twenty peaks running up to over that height.34 Conspicuous amongst them are the Kallakadai Mountain, the great dark mass of kottimalai over puliyangudi and kuliratti towering up behind krishapuram. South ward from this point the hills lose its height.

The glory of this mass of mountains is the famous Agastyamalai, the place to which the rishi Agastya, after the achievement of his great life work Tholkappium. A perfect cone in shape, standing on a low base in a wide gap on the sky line, Agastyamalai, whether, viewed from Travancore or Tinnevelly but especially when seen from Tinnevelly.35

The climate of the district is peculiar, its principal characteristics being light rainfall and an equable temperature lying immediately under the Ghats, the

33 Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.2
34 Pate. H. R, op.cit., p.3
35 Pate, H. R., op.cit. p.6
plain country receives very little rainfall from the south-west monsoon, though large areas derive the benefit of irrigation during that season from the rivers which rise in the hills.\textsuperscript{36} Early in June strong westerly and south-westerly winds set in. With the wind blowing through the monsoon rains which fall on the hills, the air throughout the district then becomes perceptibly cooler, the country along the foot of the Ghats benefits most, and at places situated near gaps.\textsuperscript{37}

In July and August the winds become more violent and sand storms, which obliterate the sky and often overlay the fields with masses of sand, occur frequently in the red soil tracts. With October or early November the north-east monsoon sets in. The lowest temperature of the year are usually experienced in January.

The flora of the district combines the characteristic features of Malabar and the Coromandel Coast, on the one hand and of Ceylon on the other. At the same time we find some species peculiar to the district and such endemic species are by no means few. Further, we have in this region many plants which very much resemble, but are yet different from, the species found in the Malay Peninsula.\textsuperscript{38}

The soils of the district are divided between the black and red series, the usual gradations occurring in the two classes, according as clay (or) sand predominates in their composition. Along the foot of the hills lies a stretch of red

\textsuperscript{36} Caldwell. R; Op.cit; p.10
\textsuperscript{37} Pate. H. R; Op.cit; p.29
\textsuperscript{38} David Ludden: Peasant history of Tinnevelly, Madras, 1980; p.11
sandy loam. Outside the two main series is the belt of grey sand, varying greatly in width that extends throughout the length of the sea coast. The black soil of the northern plain, a lighter earth than the prevailing type found in the laded districts, is very dark in colour and comparatively easy to plough, opening out in the hot weather into wide cracks.\textsuperscript{39}The marine beds are not always sandy or clayey. In some places they are calcareous, as in the small limestone plateaus.

In Tirunelveli Western Ghats was the birth place of all the rivers. The Thamiraparni, the chief River of the country, drains an area of about 1,7650 miles and from its source in the Periya pothigai to its mouth in the Gulf of Manaar, is 75 miles long. At the foot of this fall the river is joined on the right by the Pambar, which rises in the Singampatti Zamindari, at the lowest end of the kattalaimalai estate, the kariyar flows in on the left.\textsuperscript{40} The chief tributaries of the river in the Ghats, the Periyar, ullar, pambar, karaiyar and servaiyar. The sources of the river is in the hills above kuttalam, into which village it precipitates itself over a succession of beautiful falls, the “Thenarivi or Honey fall”, the Shenbagadevi fall and the well known kuttalam fall itself.\textsuperscript{41}

The people of Tirunelveli were divided into many castes. At the census of 1901 as many as sixty-five distinct castes were enumerated in the region. The social and religious characteristic of a large number of these communities have

\textsuperscript{39} Pate, H.R; op.cit., p.23
\textsuperscript{40} Caldwell. R; op.cit; p.100
\textsuperscript{41} Pate, H. R ; Op.cit; p.24
been investigated in all parts of the district. The Brahmins, Sudras, Vellalar, Maravar, Idaiyar, Iluvar, Chanar, Pallar and Parayar are the major divisions. The only inhabitants of the Ghats are a few Paliyans and Kanis.

Socially, Tirunelveli at the end of the sixteenth century, the villages conform as a rule to a more or less uniform type, consisting of blocks of houses. Each caste inhabited by different castes and divided from one another by streets and lanes, which usually run from east to west or north to south. The houses of the Brahmans stand in one block, arranged as a rule in double rows facing one another across the street. The temple of Siva should be a little distance away and is usually found in the north-east corner of the village.

The sudra houses grouped two or three together in separate compounds, form a compact block. If any particular caste is found in large numbers, it has its own distinct quarter; otherwise, vellalans, Idaiyans, Maravans and so on inhabit the same region. The ‘half polluting’ castes, such as Iluvans and Chanans, always have their separate inhabitations just outside the main villages’ Pallans and Paraiyans live in a still remoter site or Cheri. The Parava people lived in the coastal area. The labouring classes everywhere and most of the poorer agriculturists live in small houses of mud and thatch. The small communities

42 Pate, H.R; op.cit. p.101
43 Ibid., p.102
44 Ibid., p.103
which inhabit these villages possess in themselves almost all the elements which should go to form a strong corporate spirit.\textsuperscript{45}

The people are mostly Hindus, Muslims and Christians respectively. In every hundred of the population eighty four are Hindus, ten are Christians and six are Muhammadans. The Hindus constitute the bulk of the population, and it remains to give some account of their manner of living, their religion and customs. Brahmins worship Siva and Vishnu. Many Vellalar like the Brahmins perform daily worship in their own houses and study the writings of their saints, as Brahmins read the Vedas, Kali, Madan and Sastha are the village deities worshipped by the Tinnevelly people.

The Christians, the Roman Catholic, Anglican churches and protestant denominations exist in equal proportions. In 1532 the Paravans of the sea coast with whom the Muhammadans had recently come into serious conflict over the question of the pearl-fishery. Paravans became Christians and in 1532 was established “the Christianity of the fishery Coast”. In 1542 the celebrated Francis Xavier, a member of the Society of Jesus visited the new Christians, and during the two years that he laboured among them and gave them their first practical lessons in the doctrines of their new faith. From the sea coast Christianity spread into the interior. There were in the year 1600 twenty two congregations scattered over the region of Tirunelveli.

\textsuperscript{45} Pate, H.R; op.cit. p.105
Muhammadans, who constitute only six percent of the population. From their speech customs and dress it is evident that most of them belong to the same race as the bulk of the Hindus. As a rule, members of different divisions do not marry into one another families though in regard to ordinary social inter course with one another the two classes observe no restrictions.

Tamil, which is the language of nine-tenths of the population is spoken with greater purity. Vadugas, kammavas and kambalattas and the Reddis continue the bulk of the Telugu speaking section. The only inhabitants of the Ghats are a few paliyans and kanis. Their language is a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam.

**Period of the Study**

In the 18th century politically Travancore was ruled by many Chera kings. In the meantime many petty chieftains dominated different parts of the country. Chaos and confusion was the order of the day. Similarly British power dominated in the southern part of the Indian continent. To suppress the British power as well as the petty chieftains the Travancore and Tirunelveli rulers formed political association. The Travancore Kings and the Tirunelveli rulers has no cordial relations in the early period. Till 1795 there were constant feuds between the two. Only after the coming of the British cordial relations prevailed after continuous struggle. Marthanda varma and Rama varma were the prominent rulers during the 18th century.
Scope of the study

The relation between Tirunelveli and Travancore had been begun even from the 3rd century onwards. In Aganaanuru and Puranaanuru also we find references associated with the relation between Tirunelveli and Travancore. Because of the exchanges of war activity and commercial activities there were the exchanges of cultural aspects between the two states, Travancore and Tirunelveli Kingdom. The study provides for enormous scope for the research scholars to unravel new facts and figures. It is the share of the research scholars to find out new facts and figures which have not yet been brought out.

Methodology

In the exposition of the dissertation four types of methodology have been pursued. Analytical methodology have been primarily followed in the presentation of the thesis. Collected primary sources and secondary sources have been fully analysed so as to get authenticated information. Different versions have been provided regarding certain facts and figures. In such cases scholars have been consulted, discussion type methodology have been followed and proper conclusion are derived. Regarding certain other facts survey methodology has also been followed. In certain contexts deductive methodology has also been pursued. Through these methodological system an attempt has been made to bring out this dissertation with proper exposition.
Hypothesis

Continuous relations existed between Travancore and Tirunelveli for a very long time. The constant contacts brought in exchange of ideas, exchange of cultures and exchange of inhabitants. How far the constant relations were beneficial to both the kingdoms? Was there any progress as a result of the relations between the two states? Was the attack and depredation responsible for any transition in the behaviour of the people of the two countries? All these hypotheses are answered in this dissertation. There are positive and negative answers for the hypothesis raised.

Review of sources

For the preparation of the dissertation a series of source materials have been consulted. Primary sources such as Ola documents, government records, census reports, departmental reports, cover files, statistical reports and government proclamation are mainly the primary sources consulted. These primary sources are kept in state archives Trivandrum. In addition to these records, records from archival centre in Chennai have also been consulted. The archival record office in Chennai is the repository of innumerable primary sources. Country correspondence between Travancore and Tirunelveli which formed the main source of information have been consulted. In addition to this political consultation records country correspondence, military consultation records and
administrative consultation have been useful for the study. C.M. Agur, Caldwell, Nagam Ayya, Velu Pillai, Shungunny Menon’s works have been of much use to bring about a connected account of the work.

**Research design and chapters**

Leaving aside introduction and conclusion the entre desertion has been divided in to five chapters. The introductory chapter gives a detailed account about the topography of Travancore and Tirunelveli. It gives information about the flora and fauna of these places. The political background of the Travancore state and Tirunelveli have been given in detail. The introductory chapter also mentions about the relations between the two kingdoms. The kings of Travancore and the kings of the eastern region tried then best to overpower the other. As a consequence the fertile region of Kanyakumari district were laid waste.

The first chapter brings out the relation which existed in Travancore and Tirunelveli before 1700. In this chapter the historical background of these two states have been given in detail. The second chapter exhibits the relation between the two states which existed before 1729. This period is known as the pre-Marthanda Varma period. Travancore as such did not exist prior to 1729. There were small principalities. Information regarding the rule of these small principalities under the local chieftains have been given in detail.
The third chapter analyses the relation between Tirunelveli and Travancore during the period of Marthanda Varma. Specific mention is made of Marthanda Varma because only during the period of Marthanda Varma, Travancore as such was created. The first King of Travancore was Marthanda Varma. During his period constant relations existed between Travancore and Tirunelveli. So Marthanda Varma’s period is given special consideration and a separate chapter is allotted.

The fourth chapter analyses the relation which existed between Travancore and Tirunelveli during the period of Rama Varma, popularly known as Dharma Raja. He supported the British and during this period the independent existence of Travancore was lost to Tirunelveli.

The fifth chapter mentions about the contributions which were brought in to both the kingdoms as a result of their relation. Many ideals, concepts and cultural contacts have been exchanged between the two states as a result of the relation which existed between the two states. This goes to the legacy of the two states.

The last chapter brings out all the information in a nutshell. The concluding chapter goes to exhibit all the features associated with the two areas, Travancore and Tirunelveli.