CHAPTER III

DISTRICT PROFILE AND THE SCOPE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN KANNIYAKUMARI DISTRICT

3.1 Introduction

Kanniyakumari is one of the 30 administrative districts of Tamil Nadu located in the southern most region of the state. The district shares common boundary with Tirunelveli District on the North and east. The South Eastern boundary is the Gulf of Mannar. On the South and the South West, the boundaries are the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. On the West and North West it is bounded by Kerala state. The district offers undulating valleys and plains between the mountainous terrain and the sea - coast, so closely interwoven with Temples and Churches and other edifices which are of great tourist importance. Kanniyakumari District is named after the Goddess “Kanniyakumari”. The District lies at the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula, where Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal confluence. It is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu and bounded by Tirunelveli District in the East and North, Kerala State in the west and tri-seas in the south. The District lies between 8 degree 29’ of Northern latitude and from 76 degree 9’ to 77 degree 41’ of Eastern longitude. The District has a total area of 1672 square kilometers. It is once known as the granary of Travancore before its merger with Tamil Nadu in
1956. It is the only place in the world where one can witness both the rising and setting of the Sun. The District has a variety of natural landscapes ranging from the hills to the coast. This district is divided into three natural divisions’ viz., mountains, terrain low lands and undulating valleys. The district is a fertile land having more area under forest and plantations. Rivers and Canals are the important source of irrigation. Favorable agro-climatic condition enables to the cultivation of variety of crops such as paddy, tapioca, vegetables, fruits, plantation and horticulture crops etc. The important feature of this district is the production of off-season mangoes. The important allied activities carried by the cultivators and agriculturists are dairying and goat rearing. One of the richest fishing grounds in the world viz., the wedge bank lies 88 kilometers from south of Kanniyakumari and extend to about 56 kilometers on either side of Cape Comerin. Two out of six minor ports in Tamilnadu viz., Kanniyakumari and Colachel are in Kanniyakumari District. The district has been a land of handicrafts. The important crafts are lace and embroidery works, sculpture, woodcarving and making articles from bamboo, reed, screw pins and seashells. There are six regulated markets. On an average, there are 3 to 9 markets in each panchayat dealing mainly in agricultural products. All the blocks and villages are well connected with all weather roads. All towns, villages and hamlets in the district have been electrified.

3.2 Organizational Set up of the District

The Head quarter of the district is at Nagercoil. The district is divided into two revenue divisions. They are Padmanabhapuram with the head quarter at Thuckalay, and Nagercoil with the head quarter at Nagercoil. It is
divided into 4 taluks. They are Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Agasteeswaram and Thovalai. These four talks consist of 81 revenue villages. There are eighty village panchayats, sixty six town panchayats, nine panchayats unions, three third municipalities and one selection grade municipality. The district has nine blocks, four municipalities and one township. It has seven assembly constituencies and one parliamentary constituency.

Agriculture, small scale industries, cottage industries and fishing are the main occupations. Coconut, palm and paddy are the chief crops. Kanniyakumari has the mixed culture of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Nagercoil is the main trade center. Kanniyakumari beach, Kumari Amman Temple, Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Gandhi Mandapam, Nagaraja Temple at Nagercoil, Sthanumalayawami Temple at Suchindram, Subramanya Temple at Tiruchendur, Kumarakovil, Vattakottai, Thengapattinam beach, Chidaral, Muttam, Pechipparai Dam, Padmanabhapuram Palace, Thriparappu Waterfalls, Kalakadu Wildlife Sanctuary and Olakkay Aruvi Waterfalls are the major tourist destinations. Kanniyakumari District is well connected by road and rail. Nearest airport is at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, is 80 km away from the town of Kanniyakumari.

In earlier days the Kanniyakumari district was a part of the Travancore state. In 1835, when the state was divided in to Northern and Southern divisions, this area was in the Southern division. The district was under the charge of Dewan Peishkar, Kottayam. In July 1949, when the United States of Travancore and Cochin was inaugurated, the present Kanniyakumari area continued to be a part of Trivandrum district of Kerala State.
The areas namely Agasteeswarem, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode Taluks formed the southern divisions of the former Trivandrum District. The people of these areas were predominantly Tamil speaking. They agitated for the merger of this area with Madras State. Also the States Reorganization Commission recommended this. Accordingly, the States Reorganization Act was passed on 1956. On 1st November 1956 the Kanniyakumari District was formed, with the four Taluks, Viz., Agasteeswarem, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode and merged with Tamil Nadu

3.3 Climate of Kanniyakumari District

The District has a favorable agro-climatic condition, which is suitable for growing a number of crops. The proximity of equator, its topography and other climate factors favour the growth of various crops as well. There is distinct variation in the climatic conditions prevailing within the district. Unlike other district in Tamil Nadu, it has a rainfall both during the South West and the North East monsoons. The South West monsoon period starts from the month of June and ends in September, While the North East monsoon period starts from October and ends in the middle of December. The ecological and economic environment of this district is mainly agrarian in nature and style. The climatic conditions of the district are highly conducive to agrarian life. This district is graced with three rainy seasons, south west monsoon, northeast monsoon and the mango showers similar to that of the coffee showers of Mysore. The first two seasonal rains are blessing for seasonal agriculture. The third category provides water for agrarian life during summer season that is the mango season and other hot months. The geographers call it convectional rain. The very favourable rainy
season of the district is the southwest monsoon from June to August, because it is near the Indian Ocean. The North east monsoon brings rain from September to November. The district has a pleasant climate. The factors that influence the climatic conditions are the two monsoon winds, proximity to the seas and the sloping height of the Western Chats. Though, the period of hot season prevails from March to June there are no extremes of temperature.

3.4 Human Resources

This district with an area of 1684.17 square kilometers is densely populated, that is 995 persons per square kilometer. Density of people per square kilometer living area is (1679034/1239.12 sq.km) 1353. The number of females for every 1000 males works out to 1010 as per 2011 census. Tamil and Malayalam are the main spoken languages of this district. Hindus and Christians form a sizeable percentage of the population of the district and there are also a number of Muslims dominated belts in the district. But all the people live here in a friendly manner. There is as such no caste system in the Society. The difference has weakened to a great extent especially after independence. This also became possible because of growth of education and improvements in transport and communication. Some of the communities in the district are Nadars, Nanjil Nadu Vellalars, Paravas, Mukthavas, Vilakki Thalanayar, Kammalar or Asari, Nairs, Chackarevars, Kerala Mudalis etc. Rice is the staple food of all the people in the district. Some among the poorer section also use tapioca. Beverages like tea and coffee are widely spread even in to the rural area of the district. The total population, Literates by Blocks and Municipalities is shown in the following table.
Table 3.1
Area, Population, Literates by Blocks and Municipalities in
Kanyakumari District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Blocks/ Municipalities</th>
<th>Area (Sq.km)</th>
<th>Population Persons (3)</th>
<th>Population Male (4)</th>
<th>Population Female (5)</th>
<th>Literate Persons (7)</th>
<th>Literate Male (8)</th>
<th>Literate Female (9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agastheeswaram</td>
<td>143.35</td>
<td>148419</td>
<td>73260</td>
<td>75159</td>
<td>118778</td>
<td>60120</td>
<td>58658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rajakkamangalam</td>
<td>135.49</td>
<td>137254</td>
<td>68119</td>
<td>69135</td>
<td>108539</td>
<td>55337</td>
<td>53202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thovalai</td>
<td>360.91</td>
<td>110719</td>
<td>55057</td>
<td>55662</td>
<td>85132</td>
<td>44101</td>
<td>41031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kurunthancode</td>
<td>109.54</td>
<td>165070</td>
<td>81823</td>
<td>83247</td>
<td>126882</td>
<td>64369</td>
<td>62513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thuckalay</td>
<td>127.41</td>
<td>167262</td>
<td>82488</td>
<td>84774</td>
<td>131338</td>
<td>66461</td>
<td>64877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thiruvattar</td>
<td>88.37</td>
<td>161619</td>
<td>80220</td>
<td>81399</td>
<td>122710</td>
<td>62524</td>
<td>60186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Killiyoor</td>
<td>138.86</td>
<td>177225</td>
<td>89122</td>
<td>88103</td>
<td>131461</td>
<td>68366</td>
<td>63095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Munchirai</td>
<td>71.45</td>
<td>179535</td>
<td>88578</td>
<td>90957</td>
<td>144221</td>
<td>70560</td>
<td>73661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Melpuram</td>
<td>27.57</td>
<td>208179</td>
<td>102907</td>
<td>105272</td>
<td>175248</td>
<td>88590</td>
<td>86658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nagercoil</td>
<td>19.37</td>
<td>208179</td>
<td>102907</td>
<td>105272</td>
<td>175248</td>
<td>88590</td>
<td>86658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Padmanabapuram</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>20075</td>
<td>9967</td>
<td>10108</td>
<td>16282</td>
<td>8372</td>
<td>7910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Colachel</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>23787</td>
<td>11996</td>
<td>11791</td>
<td>18008</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>8733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kuzhithurai</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>20503</td>
<td>10069</td>
<td>10434</td>
<td>16712</td>
<td>8419</td>
<td>8293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1239.12</strong></td>
<td><strong>1676034</strong></td>
<td><strong>832269</strong></td>
<td><strong>843765</strong></td>
<td><strong>1315242</strong></td>
<td><strong>668667</strong></td>
<td><strong>646575</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Statistical Hand Book.

Literacy of this district is very high compared to that of other districts in Tamil Nadu. In the year of 2005-2006 the literacy rate of this district is 78.47 against the literacy rate 73.5 per cent of Tamilnadu. Female literacy rate is 76.62 per cent and the male literacy rate is 80.34 per cent. Culturally the district has inherited the cultural legacy of both Travancore and Cochin States and Tamilnadu on account of the linguistic composition of the district.

The linguistic and religious background of the population had its impact on its economic life. The Malayalam speaking population had a flourishing land ownership in the river valleys and other fertile regions. The long
administrative legacy of Travancore state favoured it. The fertile Nanchilnadu was mainly owned by the vellala community. The Muslims are mainly engaged in business, the chettiar in money lending and land control. The coastal population got engaged in fishing. The rest of the populations are engaged in agricultural and several industrial activities. Table below shows the distribution of main workers and marginal workers as cultivators, agricultural labourers, workers in household industry and other workers.

Table 3.2
Population by Broad Industrial Categories of Workers in Kanniyakumari District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Industrial Category</th>
<th>District Persons</th>
<th>% to Total Workers</th>
<th>Tamil Nadu Persons</th>
<th>% to Total Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total Main Workers</td>
<td>454378</td>
<td>82.90</td>
<td>23757783</td>
<td>85.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Marginal Workers</td>
<td>93678</td>
<td>17.09</td>
<td>4120499</td>
<td>14.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Cultivators</td>
<td>13434</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>5116039</td>
<td>18.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Agricultural Labourers</td>
<td>56811</td>
<td>10.36</td>
<td>8637630</td>
<td>30.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Household Industry Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs</td>
<td>23922</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>1499761</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Other workers</td>
<td>360211</td>
<td>65.72</td>
<td>12624852</td>
<td>45.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Workers 548056 32.7 27878282 -
Non Workers 1127978 - 34527397 -
Total Population 1676034 - 62405679 -


According to 2001 census, when a comparative study of the working force of this District is made, it reveals that 32.7 per cent are working
force and the balance of 67.3 per cent is marginal and non workers. Among the working force, cultivators and agricultural labourers account for about 50 per cent. The others are mainly engaged in other occupations like construction, mining, transport, communication, industries other than household, livestock, forestry plantations, orchards, fishing and the like. The percentage of working population in this district i.e. is less than the percentage of working population in Tamil Nadu.

3.5 Festivals of Kanniyakumari District

Festivals are held in all the taluks with great pomp and galore. All are organized with various celebrations in the temples, mosques and churches. The car festival at Suchindram attracts large number of crowds in the month of January. The Kodai festival is celebrated in the month of March. It is organized in the Mondaicadu temple in the Kalkulam Taluk. A large number of people gathered to enjoy on this. The Thirukalya Utsavam is another one, which is celebrated in the Kumaracoil temple in the Kalkulam taluk at the month of March-April. It is regarded as one of the important festivals. Pongal in January and Deepavali in November are also occasions for festivity and rejoicing among the Hindu Communities. The Malayalis celebrate Onam in August - September with feasts and sports. Muslims in all the taluks observe Muharram and Ramzan. Christmas is an important festival for the Christians. In the St.Xavier’s Church at Kottar annual festival is usually celebrated in the month of December on a very grand scale and attracts Catholic people from all over South India. Many Folk arts as well as dances are popular in this district. They are played during the time of festivals in temples, and also different celebrations. These are Bow Song,
Thiruvathirai Kali, Kalial, Kathakali, Ottam Thullal, Karagam Dance, Kalari and the like.

**3.6 Employment Pattern**

The social elites for social status and security of income, through social influence got employment under the Government. Education grew steadily and employment opportunities for teaching were extended to the non elite sector. It preferred it for social status and security of income. After the advent of independence, employment opportunities in the realm of Government employment expanded. Higher Education also grew fast. The educated sector had a pleasant berth in Government offices very easily for long. This occupational environment and agrarian background provided a situation creating an area of challenge for the initiative, until 1983 – the year of great drought which challenged, and changed land-based socio-economic agrarian environment. Thereafter people preferred office-based employment to land-based agrarian life. The entire employment pattern of this district is divided into two such as main workers and marginal workers. The employment opportunities available to the workers in the predominantly agricultural district are seasonal in nature and the per capita income is low. This is one of the reasons why the Government takes necessary steps to make the district industrially developed. With the help of industrialization the workers are getting full employment. Also more and more employment opportunities are generated and this will help for increasing per capita income of people which will ultimately raise the standard of living of the people. There was occupational migration from agrarian sector to official sector and industrial sectors. Urbanization and urban growth provided employment to
skilled and unskilled labourers. Modernization in industry and commerce provides employment to educated youth both male and female.

**Employment in Agriculture:** Kanniyakumari district is economically based on agriculture. Agriculture and allied sector offer employment opportunities in the rural areas. The rate of wages paid to the agricultural employer is not par on the wages fixed by the Government. It is more than the minimum wages fixed by Govt.

**Employment in Animal Husbandry and Fisheries:** Employment in Animal Husbandry yields a lump sum short-term income to the people below poverty line. In Kanniyakumari District has vast seashore area. Marine fishing and inland fishing have also its own contribution to make towards the districts economy. Thousands of peoples engage fishing for their livelihood.

**Employment in Mining and Forestry based Activities:** It is ascertained that nearly 4000 workers are being engaged in quarry activities and nearly 15,000 of workers are being engaged in Rubber plantation in forest area.

**Employment in Rural Industries and other Manufactures:** Rural employment in Kanniyakumari District is based on small scale industries like rubber plantations, construction and brick works. The economy in rural employment is low. Village Industry manufacturers doing coir products, handloom and brick products.

**Employment in Services and other Activities:** In Kanniyakumari District, there are many religions and private service organization running Educational, Medical, Industrial Institutions. This service organization has generated employment opportunities to thousands of people.
Employment/Unemployment Scenario, Seasonality and Issue: In Kanniyakumari District most of the people are educated and they have any kind of works or self employment for their daily bread. So, an employment problem has not arisen in Kanniyakumari District.

Table 3.3

Occupational Pattern in the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Workers to Total Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allied Agro activity</td>
<td>9871</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF/Marginal Workers</td>
<td>60195</td>
<td>13.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>59854</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>61567</td>
<td>13.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labourers</td>
<td>177410</td>
<td>38.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household industry manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs</td>
<td>38514</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other workers</td>
<td>53133</td>
<td>11.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total workers</td>
<td>460544</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non workers</td>
<td>1215490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total population</strong></td>
<td><strong>1676034</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Credit Plan, 2010-2011.

Nearly 54 percent of the population have directly involved in agriculture activities, 21.36 percent in industrial activities and others in other common type of activities. Among the total population of 1676034 persons, only 460544 persons were able to find a work of any nature. Therefore unemployment is one of the burning issues in the district.
3.7 Marine Resources

Marine Fishing is carried out all over the coastal belt of 68 km in the district, the fishing trade has flourished in the district, as there is always good demand for fish for local and neighborhood consumption. This trade is increasing rapidly and still has vast potential, one of the richest fishing grounds viz., Wedge bank lies south of Kanniyakumari and is spread over 60 km. annually 63560 tonnes of fish of different varieties are hauled out of the sea. A major part of the fish catch including shark, oyster, prawns and lobsters are transported to Kerala for processing and subsequent exporting, however, there is very little scientific management of the marine resources and systematic approach to the harvesting and replenishment of marine resources, there is also a conflict of interests between the catamaran owners and mechanized fishing boat owners often leading to fishermen clashes, which needs immediate attention and permanent solution. Available statistics show that the fish catch is reducing every year. So there is a need for effective coastal regulation and legal action for avoiding fishing during the breeding season. If the fish caught are processed here that will give employment to many. Fish products have to be promoted and entrepreneurs trained on the subject.

3.8 Live Stock Resources

There are about 938000 livestock like cattle, sheep, Goat, Poultry, Pigs, Domestic Dogs and buffaloes are estimated to exit in the district. The hides and skins available in this district are being utilized for tanning in other districts in Tamil Nadu. Similarly, the animal bones and mutton tallow are not utilized for industrial exploitation in this district, there is definite scope for making bone
meal, poultry feed, bio-fertilizer and the like. The milk produced is not enough for the district. So there is good scope for increasing the milch animals and starting chilling plants, and manufacturing milk products. Kanya Milk Union collects milk from milk producers’ co-operative society for processing it for further sales. There are 70 milk producers’ cooperative societies functioning in the district. One dairy farm is also services to the milk need of the district. The milk production is 84 lakh litres during flush season and 76 lakh during lean season.

3.9 Transport and Communication

The district has a total road length of 6844.504 kms, of which 424.443 km under cement concrete, 3031.314 km under Bituminous, 879.927 km under water bound and macadam totaling 4335.684 km under surfaced road category, unsurfaced road constitute 906.27 km. there are 266 post offices take care of the present communication needs. All the villages are well connected with other major cities of eh State both by road routes and rail. Total length of rail route is 78 km and number of railway stations are 11 in the district.

3.10 Forest Resources

In Kanniyakumari District, 54155 ha are covered by forests, with rich resources of quality timber, spices, creepers, bamboos, medicinal herbs, and so on. Soft wood species like silk cotton, albissia, permaram, malaivemmbu, manjhal kadambu, cane and the like scarce now, as they were all indiscriminately cut down in the past. There is not much scope for forest resources in the near future as environmental degradation is extensive and government has stopped further deforestation.
3.11 Mineral Resources

Rare Earth minerals like monazite, limonite, rutile, garnet, sillumonite, zircon and brown limonite are naturally blessed at Manavalakurichi a coastal village of Kanniyakumari District. Indian Rare Earth Ltd., Manavalakurichi, which is a Government of India enterprise, is engaged in the separation of minerals. Some minerals are exported to Japan and other countries off the Coastal coast. This has secured Kanniyakumari District a place in the mineral map of the world. There is demand for setting up Titanium factory also. Background radiation hazard is the main problem of the district. There is scope for diversification of the industry.

3.12 Industrial Scenario of Kanniyakumari District

Kanniyakumari District, basically an agricultural/horticultural district, is one of the lesser industrialized districts of the Tamil Nadu State. Despite higher literacy rate, large number of educated youth, wide network of roads and railways, telecommunication facilities, an excellent infrastructure of bank branches and abundant natural resources, the district lags behind in industrial entrepreneurship. Historians claim that even in 3000 BC there was trade between the erstwhile Travancore State and countries around the Mediterranean Sea. Age old industries in the District are handloom weaving, wood carving, coconut shell carving, village smithy, stone carving, chalk industry, coconut industry, oil extraction, and so on.

Kanniyakumari District is industrially backward. It has only a few large sized industries. However, there are a large number of small scale, tiny, handicraft village and cottage industries. The district offers good scope for rubber
and cashew based units as well as handicraft and cottage industries. A number of factors have hampered the industrial development of the district. Most of the areas are wetlands. The non-availability of lands for non-agricultural purposes and the high cost of farmlands are other factors. In spite of all these number of small industries has come up in the district. The major industries are Cashew nut industries, Rubber industry, Spinning Mills, Coir industries, Fish net industries and the like. The large-scale industries located in the district are Kanniyakumari District Co-operative Spinning Mills Limited, Morarji Borex Limited (Chemically treated rubber wood), Nagammal Spinning Mills Limited, Indian Rare Earth Limited (mineral sand), Vasanthanam Mono Film Limited, and Kanam Latex, Pallavilai.

Wood carving skills are evidently seen in Padmanabhapuram palace. Further, old churches and houses show that the skills have been flourishing for long. Stone carving is a traditional craft which has flourished under the Pandian Kings. Suchindrum temple (765-815 AD) stands as a monument which excels in exquisite carvings, beel metal industry had flourished in Kottar, for long. Brass vessels, lambs and bells of Kottar were famous. They have images of Gods, flowers and sacred animals etched or carved on them. Temple jewellery, especially gold and silver brocaded fabrics of kottar, was once famous. Temple ornaments of gold as well as real gold coverings had flourished in the District. Costume jewellery made of artificial items are also in demand. The Visvakarma community had this expertise. But due to lack of demand, the industry is slowly disappearing or switching over to exclusive modern jewellery. The District was also famous for musical instruments like nadeswaram, thavil,
harmonium, mridangam and the like, which are vanishing, except in mettukladai and Marthandam. Lace and embroidery industry received the early protestant European missionary backing and were blooming in the yester years.

The region constituting the present Kanniyakumari District had been the domain of the Maharajas of Travancore for more than three centuries before independence. Though these kings were interested in the welfare and economic advancement of their subjects, their long range visions were hampered by their lack of exposure to the industrially advanced regions of the world. They were more pre occupied with literature, education, art, music and philosophy and the maintenance of a large number of Oottupuras (free feeding houses) and the expensive temple ceremonies like murajapam than on the development of industries or building the required infrastructure. The British rule had the minimum impact on Travancore’s social life and industrialization.

During handloom industry crisis, the Government encouraged handloom co-operatives and formed the Tamil Nadu Handloom and Textiles Department as well as the Tamil Nadu Handloom Development Corporation. When the district joined Tamil Nadu in 1956, Nagammal Textile Mills, a private sector medium scale industry manufacturing cotton yarn commissioned in 1950 was the only medium scale industry in the district.

Even after independence and after merging with Tamil Nadu. Unfortunately, there were no major efforts for industrialization in the district. The Travancore – Cochin Government had set up a factory in Manavalakurichi where the beach sand was processed and ilmenite, monazite and the like were mined
and separated. This was taken over in 1965 by the Government of India and the Indian Rare Earths Ltd. Was formed.

In 1963, the Kanniyakumari District Co-operative Spinning Mills Ltd., (KANYASPIN) was set up at Aralvaimozhi and started production from 1965. This gave employment to around 900 persons and almost all of them became share holders. In 1959, an Industrial Estate was established at Kappukadu near Marthandam which is at a distance of 3 km from Marthandam proper in an extent of 7.50 acres. In 1963 another Industrial Estate was set up at Konam, which is at a distance of 2 km from Nagercoil in an area of 20.85 acres of land which now has 45 units, also there are eight regular sheds to cater to the needs under the Tiny Sector programme, which are fully occupied. The industries here are mainly engaged in the manufacture of steel furniture, pipes, drums, electrical goods, rubber products, I.V. fluid and the like.

The setting up of District Industries Centre (DIC), Konam, Nagercoil on August 1, 1978 and opening of office of Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation Ltd (TIIC) at Nagercoil are government interventions which have helped the growth of industries. Due to low wages compared to Kerala, many cashew factories have flourished in the border areas of the district, mostly owned by Keralites. Because of factory workers exceeded the limit of workers for declaring the district industrially backward.

3. 12.1 Industrial Development in Kanniyakumari District

Kanniyakumari district is predominantly an agricultural district. Based upon the agricultural output, mineral resources and vast coastline many agro based industries, major mineral extraction industry and demand based
industry namely fishnet industry came into existence. Because of rural industrialization, many rural, urban and industrial centres have developed. Nagercoil, Shenbagaramanputhoor, Konam, Eathamozhi, Ammandivilai, Manavalakurichi, Vetturmimadam, Eranial, Thovalai, Vellamadam, Kulasekaram, Kappukadu, Karungal, Ramapuram, Aralvaimozhi, Marthandam and Peruvilai are the important places noted for industries in Kanniyakumari District.

Salt manufacture had a long history starting from pre-sangam age in South India, Manakkudy lake region had wider salt pans during the time of Rajendra Chola viz. 1012 to 1044 A.D. Variyoor near Kanniyakumari was also a salt manufacturing region during this age. An epigraph of Kulothunga Chola (1070 to 1120 A.D) refers to the salt pans of Variyoor. At the turn of this century, Variyoor, Manakkudi, Rajakkamangalam and Colachel had grown as important centres of salt production. Each centre had extensive areas under salt production. The salt produced from salt pans has good avenues for chemical industries. But unfortunately salt manufacturing is on the decline at Manakkudi, almost ceased at Rajakkamangalam and totally abandoned at Colachel after 1970.

Fishing is a traditional occupation of the people in Kanniyakumari District. The Government of India in the sixties stepped up efforts to build a Chinnamuttom fishing harbour, near Kanniyakumari to promote deep sea fishing keeping Chinnamuttom as the base. The food processing units depending on deep-sea fishing have a brighter future. They await proper planning and careful execution. The deep sea fishing necessitates large quantities of fishnets in different varieties. This has led to the starting of fishnet units throughout the district.
During the early part of the present century, cashew farming stood next to paddy cultivation. The entire table lands and foot hill regions had verdant growth of cashew trees. Cashew nut production exceeded local consumption and had export markets. After 1920, Mr. Shahul Hameed of Thuckalay, started a cashew processing factory at Lakshmipuram near Mondaikadu of Kalkulam taluk. It has a flourishing history. As irrigation extended and paddy cultivation had expanded on table lands cashew trees were felled down. In the foot hill regions, rubber plantations have replaced cashew plantations from the forties of the present century. Because of these developments, the inadequate supply of raw materials to cashew factory at Lakshmipuram necessitated a change in the fortunes of the industry. Before 1960, the cashew factory was sold to the management of the Lakshmipuram College of Arts and Science.

The history of cashew processing industry did not end with the tragic finale of the Lakshmipuram Cashew Factory. When the cashew industrial magnates of Kerala faced labour problem, they turned to Kanniyakumari District. This district provided cheap labour and the cost of ends in rural areas was very low. Hence, in the sixties of this century, some of the cashew factories of Kerala had a systematic migration to Kanniyakumari district. Following these cashew nut processing industries sprang up in the rural areas of Vilavancode, Kalkulam and Agasteeswaram taluks. Now, it is having a flourishing existence depending on the raw cashew from local supply, from Kerala and imported supply from the continent of Africa. The processed cashew nuts are now exported to the Gulf countries, the United States of America, Japan, England, Australia, Sweden,
Singapore, Denmark, Norway and Thailand. They earn a huge amount of foreign exchange from different countries.

Palmyra tree was the national tree of the Chera kings of the Sangam age. Palmyra plantations were wide spread in the southern districts like many other parts of South India. From the middle of the last century, the Britishers aimed to change the ecological map of India in tune with the demands of industries of England. An attempt was made to rearrange the vegetation background of the landscape, irrigation schemes came one after the other. In this process in the south, paddy, coconut, sugarcane, banana and cotton cultivation expanded. In the extreme south, Palmyra still continued as wide-spread vegetation in the ecological landscape. During the first half of the 20th century, M/s Parry & Co., started a sugar factory in South Travancore. It was located at Puliyoorkurichi, east of Thuckalay. This sugar factory had a very healthy functioning. Local production of jaggery and imported jaggery from Tirunelveli district were the main raw materials. In the bullockcart age, before the advent of four wheeler transport system, trains of bullockcarts daily carried jaggery to Puliyoorkurichi sugar factory. After Independence, the nationalist wave gave a blow to foreign companies. The sugar factory at Puliyoorkurichi was closed in the fifties of the present century. The site was purchased by M/s. Kurian Abraham & Company, a leading rubber products manufacturer of this district and now the same premise is used for rubber processing. The fibre from Palmyra leaf stalk had a flourishing market on account of its utility value. It was the raw material for brush industry. In 1934, at Colachel a British company by name Aspin Wall & Co., started a fibre production unit. After independence it was
closed. Afterwards the Colachel fibre unit was brought under Co-operative sector.

Coconuts supplied raw materials for oil crushing and coir industries. Traditionally, oil crushing and coir production were carried on as cottage industries. Oil crushing was carried on in the village settlements of veniyars and checkalas. They used bullock-drawn country oilchekku. (Oil Press), Asaripallam, Eethenkadu, Kannamagalam, Manavalakurichi, Colachel, Perumcode, Eraniel and Pudukkadai were important centres of production of coconut oil as cottage industry. Since 1970, there has been a phenomenal expansion of coconut cultivation, resulting in increased production of kopra. Though mechanized oil chekku replaced country chekku, Coconut Kernel based industry in this district did not make any headway. Coconut powder manufacturing, oil-crushing and tender coconut packing industries have a bright future now.

Coconut husks formed raw materials for coir and coir based industries. Coir production was being carried on for long on cottage industry basis. Coir based industry has great growing opportunities on the coastal belt from Manakudi in the east to Kollencode in the west on account of soaking facilities in backwater canals, lagoons and the like. Coir was supplied for local use and exported to the commercial centres of Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Tamilnadu and also to foreign countries in the form of mat and mattings.

Thamaraikulam, Pozhikkarai, Eathamozhi, Dharmapuram, Ganapathipuram and Kannakkurichi all in Agasteeswaram taluk,
Manavalakurichi, Parappatu and Colachel in Kalkulam taluk, Painkulum, Eazhudesam and Kollencode in Vilavancode taluk are thriving centres of coir spinning cottage industry. After 1970, the quantity in the production of coconut husks multiplied and husk processing mills have replaced the hand-beaten husk processing units.

Coir spinning and coir-based industries have witnessed many changes and growth. The Kanniyakumari District Central Coir Marketing and Industrial Society Ltd., Eathamozhi was started on 19th January 1977. The cooperative sector and private sector promoted coir and coir-based production. The Central Coir Marketing Society, Nagercoil and its affiliated societies which are 10 in number spread all over the district promote coir and coir-based industries. After independence, especially from 1966 power looms were introduced.

In the private sector, TAC-Floor Co, Ammandivilai, a coir-based and coir products manufacturing company was established in 1975. It is an offshoot of the reputed Allapuzha Company of Kerala. It is totally a mechanized large scale industry engaged in the production of coir mats, matting carpets and rugs for local use and mainly for export markets. With the establishment of TAC floor co, the coir-based industry made headway in this district.

Rubber cultivation was introduced on the mountainous belt and expanded on the foothill regions. The latex available in Kanniyakumari district is of international standard. For convenience of marketing, rubber sheets are made from latex and sent to tyre manufacturing units in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Local industries are manufacturing rubber bands, rubber threads and industrial and medical gloves. The only reason for not starting automobile tyre
units in the private sector in Kanniyakumari district is lack of heavy investment from private entrepreneurs. But the Government of Tamilnadu plans to start a large scale rubber unit in Kanniyakumari district.

Weaving as a cottage industry has a very long history right from the age of Sangam. The Venad rulers and their successors and the Travanore kings were careful protectors of this industry. For rulers had brought artisans from outside. The reforms introduced by Travancore kings regarding agriculture were remarkable. Dewan Rajakesavadoss (18th century) brought a large number of weavers from Madurai and Tirunelveli and they were offered all facilities to settle permanently in Nanchilnadu, Kottar. Krishnankoil, Edalakudi, Kottar, Vadasery, Manavalakurichi, Eraniel, Palliyadi and Melpuram were thriving centres of weaving industry, organised on co-operative basis. Weaving industry during the European period had external challenges. It had caused migrations and even exodus of weavers from south Travancore. During the early part of the present century, the Pallans once a weaving community evacuated their settlement at Pallanvilai near Ammandivilai and they gave up weaving and took to commerce and settled at Valliyoor.

After independence, Nagammal Spinning Mills Ltd., Nagercoil, in the private sector and the Kanniyakumari District Co-operative Spinning Mills Ltd. came into being at Aramboli in the co-operative sector for large scale industrial production. Though cotton the raw material is imported, these two mills have had a flourishing existence ever since their inception. Kanniyakumari district is industrially backward. It has only a few large sized industries. However, there are a large number of small scale, tiny, handicraft village and
cottage industries. The district offers good scope for rubber and cashew based units as well as handicraft and cottage industries. A number of factors have hampered the industrial development of the district. Most of the areas are wetlands. The non-availability of lands for non-agricultural purposes and the high cost of farmlands are other factors. In spite of all these a number of small industries have come up in the district. The major industries are Cashew nut industries, Rubber industry, Spinning Mills, Coir industries, Fishnet industries etc. The following six large-scale industries are located in the district. Kanniyakumari District Co-operative Spinning Mills Limited, Morarji Borex Limited (Chemically treated rubber wood), Nagammal Spinning Mills Limited, Indian Rare Earth Limited (mineral sand), Vasantram Mono Film Limited, and Konam Latex, Pallavilai.

3. 12.2 Medium Scale Industries: As per the current industrial definitions, there is no large scale industry in the district. Some industries, which are really medium industries, have not been included here because their investment in land, building and machinery are declared art reduced values. Of the small scale industries registered only 60 percent are functioning as per the estimate of the District Industries Centre (DIC). Food products offer maximum employment potential. This includes registered bakeries, food processing units and sweet stalls. Hosiery and garment units rank first in terms of numbers but their employment potential at present is comparatively less.

3. 12.3 Agricultural Resources for Industrial Development

Kanniyakumari District is predominantly an agricultural district and of the total geographical area of 14500 ha, the main crops are paddy, fruits, pulses and other commercial crops.
**Paddy:** Paddy offers no scope for any new avenues in industrial applications as there is no surplus.

**Wheat Processing:** A roller flour mill in the private sector with capacity to process 25 tonnes per day has been established by local entrepreneurs at Chungankadai near Nagercoil. A biscuit factory has also been commissioned in small scale sector in Nagercoil.

**Condiments and Spices:** Major items grown under this group are cardamom, capsicum, ginger, pepper, tamarind, cloves, betal nuts, arecanuts, cocoa, tea and so on. There is good scope for setting up units with arecanut as raw material.

**Fruits and Vegetables:** Under fresh fruits, banana, mangoes, jack, cashew apple and pine apple occupy first place. Of the banana grown, about 90 percent is shipped to Kerala. This offers good scope for chips and powder industries. Canning, preservation, pickling industries are also offer good scope. There is only one fruit processing unit under the co-operative sector. Fruit processing also has great potential since many varieties of fruit trees grow well in the district.

**Tapioca:** Tapioca is the major tuber crop grown in this district; a small quantity is utilized for local consumption and the rest goes to Kerala and Salem. Tapioca is also the raw material for eh manufacture of liquid glucose and gum starch. There is only one starch unit in the district. There is further scope for sago, liquid glucose and starch units. The Arokia Match and Starch factory at Pulioorkurichi in Kalkulam taluk is one of the important units which are engaged in the production of starch from tapioca. The starch manufactured here finds a market locally and also throughout India. The factory provides employment for about
100 persons. The annual output of the unit is about 1200 tonnes. Arrowroots for
the manufacture of arrowroot powder are also available here.

**Coconut:** Coconut is a major plantation crop, cultivated extensively in this
district. The estimated cultivation is in 20700 hectares, yielding 21 crores nuts
per year. There is one desiccated coconut unit. By utilizing the husk, 19000
tonnes of retted fibre is produced per year, consuming the entire husks available.
Nuts from nearby districts and Kerala can be used to enlarge the available
capacity. Coconut Development Board, Ernakulam gives guidance for coconut
based industries. Coir Board and District Industries Centre have helped to set up
42 coir co-operatives.

**Areca nuts:** This is another major plantation crop which annually yields 37.8
crore nuts. Much of this is taken to Kumbakonam and Pudukottai for the
manufacture of seevals and scented pan suparis.

**Tea, Coffee and Cocoa:** The cultivation was done in 500 ha., coffee in 40 ha and
cocoa in 15 ha., mostly in the hilly slopes on the northern parts of this district.
Coffee and tea plantations were started in 1860. Now all of them are closed due
to climatic and economic reasons. Though they do not offer much scope for any
industrial utilization, they can help the economic health of the district.

**Rubber:** About 97 percent of rubber cultivation in Tamil Nadu is in
Kanniyakumari in 21000 ha, yielding 22000 tonnes of high quality natural rubber
a year. This rubber in the form of sheets and latex offers ample scope for further
industrial production of various moulded, extruded, dipped and pressed products.
Arasu Rubber Corporation started with 3000 daily labourers and 145 staff
members has plantation carried out in 4279 hectares. Its financial position is
weak and awaits restructuring and rejuvenation. There is great scope for rubber based industries in Kanniyakumari District. A rubber factory/park had been promised to the people of this district several times in the past by different governments. The Rubber Board is giving guidance through its office at Nagercoil.

**Sugar Crops:** The only sugar crop of this district is palmyrah, grown in some parts of the district. This is a seasonal and migratory industry and in practice it is economically not a viable industry for its further expansion. But subsidiary palm products, like palmyrah tender fruits, pulp, fibre, leaf, and so on can generate employment.

**Honey:** Extraction of honey is a major occupation of this district. Bee keeping was introduced in 1909 by Rev. Fr. Newton, a Christian Missionary from Italy, who started propagating modern methods of bee-keeping, which was later popularized by the Young men’s Christian Association (YMCA). This is also a seasonal industry, migratory in nature. Bumper yield is available during the rubber and tamarind blossoming seasons. Annually the yield of honey is estimated at 375 tonnes from 50000 bee hives, after domestic consumption, a major share of production is exported to Bombay and other metropolitan cities for use in pharmaceutical preparations. This industry also offers further scope for industrial applications. There are six Honey Co-operative Societies in the district of which the Marthandam based society is the biggest in the state. In deep valleys and other inaccessible forest areas where bee forage is better, but transport and living facilities are lacking, bee Houses can be installed. This would avoid presence of a daily observer besides providing security for bee colonies. The
zonal Bee-Keeping Extension Centre of KVIC provides support for the development of bee-keeping activities in the district. The Bee-keeping extension centre would supply bee colonies from its four nurseries located at Munchirai, Thuckalay, Rani Thottam and Peruvilai. Under the UNDO project, the Zonal Bee-keeping centre, in association with the Kanniyakumari Sarvodaya Sangh has bee stock multiplication programme to the tune of 300 at Perselvavilai. The centre is currently undertaking basic data collection from bee-keepers with the intention of knowing the existing problems and to find remedies. The bee-keepers in the district, including Marthandam beekeepers cooperative society, process honey in the traditional method. Packaging also needs improvement. KVIB has installed a modern honey-processing unit at Pynkulam. To exploit the unemployed women workforce in the district, Women Bee keeping Co-operatives can be creatively organized.

**Medicinal Herbs and Plants:** Medicinal Plants abound even now in the forests. The old Tamil system of medicine combined with modern technology and research, offers immense scope in the field of Siddha medicinal preparations. With little legal encouragement in patenting medicinal preparations, innovative combinations, permutations and formulations, siddha preparations can be promoted in the modern commercial world with immense export opportunities. It is not a well organized sector.

### 3. 12.4 Agro-based Industries

Kanniyakumari District is one of the predominant districts where there are number of agro – based small to medium scale industries exit. Many cashew small scale factories sprung up in Vilavancode taluk utilizing the cheap
and plentiful labour and abundant supply of nuts. There are about 660 cashew processing units, which provide employment to 1.5 to 2.0 lakh rural women, but they have started saturating due to many reasons. The industries like cashew-processing units, rubber-based industries, tapioca flour industries, oil mills, coir-pith processing units, handicraft units, coconut processing units, banana-processing Small Scale Industries units, and honey processing units are some of the agro-based unites in the district. Besides these agro industries there is good scope for further expansion of Coconut processing units, Banana processing units and Honey based products.

**Cashew Kernal Processing Industry**

As a foreign exchange earner, this industry has a distinct place in the industrial map of Kanniyakumari district. There are 183 cashew industries which provide employment for about 2800 women. The district industries centre, Nagercoil is indentifying prospective industries and issuing certificate for provisional small scale industries registration. They are given financial assistance and technical guidance to start small scale industries. There are 9959 permanent small scale industrial units and 20,136 provisional small scale industrial units.

### 3. 12.5 Sector wise Industries

**Village based Traditional Industries:** The traditional industries such as Lime – Kiln industry and other clay-based industries such as tile industry, brick industry and potteries are out of the purview of most economists and statisticians. However, the survey shows that there are 502 village pottery units and 24 tile units in the district, on an average there are about 20 truckloads of bricks move into the Thiruvananthapuram district alone. Considering the movements to other
parts of Tamil Nadu and the brisk local consumption, brick industry can be said to be a major industry in Kanniyakumari District but causes environmental destruction. There is need for imparting knowledge on energy saving brick kilns.

**Soap Making:** There are about 20 units in this district engaged in the manufacture of washing soaps. Important varieties of soaps produced are washing soaps in bars, cakes and chips and soft soaps. Women SHGs are also involved in bath soap manufacture.

**Handicrafts Industry:** Next to agriculture, handicrafts offer the highest employment generation, sea – shell products, different fibre based products, coconut shell based products are made and sold to consumers, of whom majority are tourists.

**Hand Embroidery Craft Industry:** Christian missionaries introduced this industry from Belgium in the first part of 19th century as part time job at home for women, there is very good export potential for these products, which include cut work, embroidery, shadow embroidery, pillow cover, sofa set cover, table cloth, bed covers, dining table sets, appliqué embroidery sarees, embroidery motifs, bed spreads, curtain clothes and so on. According to an estimate of Handicrafts Marketing and Extension Centre there are 46 units employing 5300 artisans and the craft is concentrated in Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks. Marketing is cone through Government, organized exhibitions and Kanniyakumari District Artisans Welfare Association. However, raw materials like cotton, silk threads, casement clothes and the like are not available in required quantity. The price of handloom cloth has increased manifold, and this has, in turn, affected the demand. Credit availability is very poor except to hose units supported by the church. Quality
maintenance is also a matter of concern. For rural women, hand embroidery offers good scope for increasing their income, adequate training should be organized by the Handicrafts Marketing and Extension Centre. The Government should also help in getting adequate raw materials, tie up arrangements can be made with handloom units. Organizing women into self help groups can tackle the problem of credit. Export potential can be fully utilized if the women can be organized into small cooperative societies.

**Lace and Embroidery Industry:** Lace making was promoted by the Christian Missionaries to help poor widows and destitute, women’s charity programme in Nagercoil. Thus Church of South India Lace Industry, Socio Economic Development Association and Young Men Christian Association in which about 3000 families are employed, are the major organizers for this cottage industry. If there is a coordinated effort among the active units, the production can be increased manifold as there is good demand for these items from abroad.

**Fibre Craft Industry:** Next to Kerala, Kanniyakumari District accounts for the largest manufacture of natural fibre articles in the country, banana fibre, palm leaf, sessile fibre and jute fibre are used. This offers good scope for women. Increased wages, new designs, good marketing support and adequate training will help. Khadi and Village Development Board provide training.

**Reed Mats Industry:** Traditionally, this craft was practiced by the kani tribals. As the Western Ghats is a good source of reed and bamboo, there is good future for this industry. Marketing can be done at Kanniyakumari itself. New products like chopsticks for Japan, and mats for Arab countries, should be creatively considered.
**Salt Industry:** Salt manufacture is an old time industry mainly concentrated in Kanniyakumari and Colachel areas. These salt pans are known as ‘Uppalams’. There are ten salt factories in the district.

**Sea Shell Industry:** Sea Shell is available along the sea coast from Kadiapattanam to Nerodi. Chanku is mainly used for the manufacture of fancy articles such as bangles, rings etc. the Valampuri chanku had a religious significance and those who could afford to possess this rare chanku treasure it and hence fetches a very good price. Small scale industries and handicraft units which use sea shell have also come up in the district. Sea shells are used for the production of calcium carbide and hydrated lime. The good quality shell is a raw material for the manufacture of calcium carbide, coated cement, colour washes and bleaching powder. It is also used in chemical, paper and fertilizer industries. This offers scope for further local industries.

As Kanniyakumari is a famous tourist centre, attracting nearly 1.5 crore tourists per year, there is good demand for shell craft. During the six months of off season, the producers have great difficulty. Government should give some financial assistance and working capital to produce and store the products for few months, innovative designs and new products are required to improve quality and attractiveness and increase marketability.

**Temple Jewellery Industry:** Temple Jewellery is now being revived with Government support. Vadasery is famous for this industry. This industry is facing extinction due to competition from the mechanized sector.

**Granite Quarrying Industry (Blue metal Industry):** Quarrying is a method of taking large solid blocks or broken masses of stone from the earth and preparing
them for construction projects. According to the records of Department of Geology and Mining, there are 39 Government quarries covering 83 hectares of land leased out to private parties, in Kanniyakumari District. There are also 49 patta land quarries covering 44 hectares of land. The government has given license to 14 industries for quarrying dimensional stones, there are 67 legal quarries and 21 legal crushing units, and there are many illegal quarries and crushing units also. There are about 1000 laborers directly involved in the granite quarrying and stone crushing industries.

**Stone Carving Industry:** Besides temples, madams and roadside loadstones in the district, excellent stone carving expertise is evident in Suchindrum temple. Growing dense population near quarries had become a reality and gives rise to issues like pollution including the noise pollution, despite challenges, the stone cutting and polishing industry have immense potential for growth. More employment can be generated if the processing industry for dimensional blocks is also located in the district. Processed dimensional stones can be exported through Thoothukudi Port and Colachel harbor, thus becoming a foreign exchange earning industry. Presently, countries importing granites from India are re-exporting value added granite products, value adding jobs can be retained in India with special entrepreneurial, marketing and value adding skills.

**Brass and Metal industry:** Though these products have been losing market in the past due to stainless steel invasion, the demand is once again picking up. The demand for various sizes of Kuttuvilakku, lamps and brass vessels for making medicine are in demand. With the resurgence of Ayurveda and Siddha, the demand will pick up as huge vessels are needed for making medicines, new
products with artistic skills can be introduced. There is ample scope for value addition in this industry.

**Other Handicrafts Industries:** Jewelleries, bamboo works, coconut shell products, greeting cards, and the like have good scope. Now that Kanniyakumari is declared as an international tourist centre, the inflows of tourists will increase. Keeping this in mind, handicrafts manufacturers have to be guided, old crafts like making musical instruments and articles of wax would be encouraged. The Government should set up a permanent exhibition of handicrafts at Kanniyakumari as well as Padmanabhapuram palace, which will enable prompt marketing of labour intensive handicrafts to national and international tourists.

### 3.12.6 Cotton-based Industries

**Textile Industry:** Nagammal Mills and Kanyaspin are the two spinning mills in the district, their capacity has remained constant. Kanyaspin is undergoing a crisis due to lack of Government support.

**Handloom Industry:** Handlooms provide employment to around 10000 persons though there are 16214 weavers who are members of weaver’s cooperative societies, there are 64 primary cooperative societies, 16 industrial cooperatives and one power loom cooperative in this sector. The Government is providing marketing support through purchase of dhoties and sarees for free distribution during festival seasons. However, sue to low income when compared to masons, carpenters and even agricultural labourers, workers are withdrawing from this sector. If diversification of items, new designs and techniques are provided the handloom activity can be sustained.
Khadi Industries: With a view to promote and develop the khadi and village industries products in the State, the Tamilnadu Khadi and Village Industries Board was set up in April 1960. The Board generates employment opportunities in rural areas by utilizing the raw materials available in the areas concerned which in turn help alleviate poverty. These eleven production centres in Kanniyakumari District are located at Nagercoil, Manavalakurichi, Agastheeswaram, Monday Market, Villukuri, Marthandam, Thengampudur, Pottal, Chemparathivilai, Palapallam and Mylaudy. They supply cotton to the spinners and purchase the yarn produced by them. The Board has been successful in this endeavour in the district. The Rural Textile Centres provide regular employment to rural folk which are managed by trained instructors, appointed by the Khadi and Village Industries Board. The requirements of the centres such as materials and accessories are met by the Board.

Readymade Garments Industry: Besides cotton other synthetic fibres also started dominating the textile industries. As women have a natural liking to tailoring and embroidery works, there is good scope for ready-made garments. Most of the garments currently available are coming from Mumbai, Bangalore and Madurai. The problem faced by entrepreneurs is lack of adequate working capital, poor modernization of designs and dumping by North Indian business persons.

3.12.7 Coconut-based Industries

With the production of 21 crore nuts per annum there is good scope for coconut-based industries. There are 62 oil mills doing very small production. There is one unit producing desiccated coconut. Coir industry is
carried on all along the coastal areas from Kanyakumari to Kollancode. About 95 per cent of the coir produced in the district is sent to places outside. There are 42 coir co-operatives functioning in the district. Coconut shells are used for making eco-friendly ice-cream cups, shell charcoal, activated carbon and the like which have good demand.

**Coconut Oil:** Extraction of oil from copra is an important cottage industry in the district, the main centres being at Kottar, Vadasery, Eraniel, Puthukadai and Mylaudy. The other oils produced are from laurel, maruvettyam, illipa, gingelly, odai, pine, anjili, rubber seed, karinjotta, margosa and lemon grass which also find a good market. There can be many more small units with mini dryers for extraction of oil. There are many coconut oil based products which need to be examined for future industrial exploitation.

**Desiccated Coconut:** This is the disintegrated and dehydrated coconut meat used in biscuits, confectionery, bakery and other food items. The process is available with the Coconut Board. There are other products like coco-sip, tender coconut water in tetra pack, coconut based sweets and so on which can be successfully introduced in the district.

**Coir:** Coir is manufactured by mechanical de-fibering process producing brown fibre and micro biological retting process produces white fibre. Both methods are used in the district. There is a great scope for the development of this industry in the district. Coir industry is carried on all along the coastal areas from Kanyakumari to Kollancode. About 95 percent of the coir produced in the district is sent to places outside, coir Board had developed bacteria for retting but this has not reached all. Nearly 20000 tonnes of fibre is produced. The nuts are
claimed as inadequate to cater to the coir industry in the district. There are coir production units like TAC floor Ammandivialai, Cooperative Coir Society, Eathamozhy and so on., which produces items like mats, mattings, brush mats and carpets. The coir yarns produced are of different varieties mostly of white fibre which are superior in quality. The types are Ashthamudy, Anjengo, Aratory Vaikom and common beach yarn. Coir pith which is available as waste in large quantities can be used for briquetting as well as for producing organic manure and a soil ameliorant. This has to be popularized. There are nearly 500 people who have been trained under IRDP scheme. A permanent training centre as well as research centres for Coir and Coir products should be set up in the district and should work closely with the proposed Horticulture University.

**Coconut Shell:** This can be used for making eco friendly ice cream cups, shell charcoal, activated carbon and so on which have good demand. Technology input and guidance are needed. Pollution from coir retting must be contained, proper care must be taken in setting the retting fields as they are polluting the freshwater bodies, and creating problems for the adjacent habitations due to the obnoxious odour and release of pollutants.

### 3.12.8 Rubber-based Industries

The production of natural rubber in the district is steadily increasing. The yield rate in the district is also good. There are nearly 5000 registered units in the district. Rubber is grown in about 21000 hectares and the estimated annual production is about 22000 tonnes and 90 per cent of the rubber produced goes out of the district. The Rubber Board has launched various incentive programmes to bring additional areas under the cultivation of rubber.
Two companies are presently producing gloves and supplying latex to other industries like MRF. There is still scope for rubber based industries and industries manufacturing chemically treated wood. Already Borax Morarji Ltd is exporting treated rubber wood. However, there can be low cost methods which should be researched. Rubber board offers training and supplies Project Reports. But the Nagercoil office does not have infrastructure and staff for intervening. If the 90 percent of the rubber produced goes out of the district is converted into value added products employment potentials can be retained within the district. Since the district produces a substantial quantity of natural rubber, both latex based and dry rubber based industrial units could be promoted by establishing common facilities like mixing mills, vulcanisers, steam boilers and dryers. Many small units could operate to produce a variety of rubber goods with the help of these common facilities, the setting up of which may prove to be too costly and risky to small scale industrialists, there is a rubber retreating factory. There are a few minor rubber factories producing rubber band, rubber chappals and so on. DIC has acquired land for a Government rubber factory at Chenbagaramanputhoor, and the State Government has announced that Rubber Park would be set up and the process is going on.

3.12.9 Fishing Industry

The Kanniyakumari coast which shares 6.5 per cent of the State’s total coastal length has 10 per cent of its coastal hamlets. Compared to State data, there is a 434 percent increase in population/km of coast or a 352 percent increase in population/fishing village. The district has 16.25 per cent of the state’s mechanized crafts, 21 per cent of the motorized boats and 35 per cent of the
traditional crafts. However, the distribution of fishing harbors in the state is not in line with this trend, only one of the 12 fishing harbors is located in the district. The state has to set right such anomaly and provide adequate service facilities to the district’s coastal fishers.

**Fishnet Industry:** Fishnet making by hand was an enterprising industry in the coastal areas of the district. Fishnet industry in the private sector with the active cooperation of the commercial banks has made impressive headway and Nylon fishnet factories have flourished in the district. There are 81 units with 226 machines functioning in the district. Government should extend guidance for diversification of products by this industry.

**3.12.10 Wind-energy Generation Industry**

In Kanniyakumari District, Aralvaimozhi and Muppandal are the places where mountain ranges of the Western Ghats lay enable the wind to blow with high pressure. Due to this chain of mountain ranges the wind concurrently blows almost for 9 months in a year. High velocity winds that gush through a tunnel between the mountain passes in the Western Ghats and a relatively arid tract have kept vegetation in Muppandal at a low level. Windfarms at Muppandal are a cluster of windmills which is the distinctive feature of Muppandal situated 15 km away from Nagercoil. Wind energy sector in this region is attributed by the Tamilnadu Electricity Board to the favourable wind condition that prevails especially at Muppandal, the second largest wind farm cluster in the world after California and the largest in Asia during nineties. Muppandal windmill was started in March 1990. This windmill was a joint project of DANIDA, Denmark, New Delhi, Tamilnadu Energy Development Agency (TEDA) and Tamilnadu
Electricity Board (TNEB). Tamilnadu Energy Development Agency had selected the area for erection of windmills. The wind flow in the area is 13 to 15 meters per second.

3.13 Conclusion

As far as Kanniyakuamri District is concerned, it is fully resource oriented in agriculture, mineral, forest, marine and also in the availability of human skills. Regarding human resources, it has got a very high rate of literate population having fascination towards white collared and secured jobs. They are reluctant to make investment to set up new industrial ventures. Consequently, the available raw materials are transported to other places to start industrial units, keeping the district as an industrially backward one. Non- availability of vacant lands for industrial utilization and the high cost of land have aggravated the situation further. Hence this district is faced with a slow pace of industrial development. Kanniyakuamri District is an industrially backward district which has only a few large-sized industries. However, there is a large number of small-scale, tiny, handicraft, village and cottage industries. The district is bestowed with natural resources and has a good scope for rubber and cashew based units as well as handicraft and cottage industries. Thus, there exists a good potential for industrial development. But the survival of small-scale industries in the district is very poor due to various problems they are facing in the production and marketing of their products profitably due to competition and globalization. It is in the hands of the policy makers to find a good avenue and revenue for the small scale sector.
References


5. Records of the District Industries Centre, Nagercoil.


14. Potential Linked Credit Plan, Kanniyakumari District, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Chennai, Various Issues