CHAPTER V

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this study an attempt is made to highlight the major changes that have taken place in Pathanamthitta district since its formation in 1982. The study has tried to focus more specifically on the questions how the social and economic arenas of Pathanamthitta district have changed by analyzing various social and economic indicators like agriculture, industry, labour, migration patterns, role of women, education, health, demography, religion etc. Socio economic changes occurred in the district during the past decades were examined using various primary and secondary data. Changes were documented in the social and economic areas. Some of the changes are in tune with changes that have taken place in Kerala State as a whole while some changes deviate significantly from the State wide trends, many a times showing the Pathanamthitta district as a forerunner ahead of Kerala State.

Different aspects of the economy and society of the district have been, at the same time, changed and changing the other aspects of life during the period of study. Mutual influences exerted by developments in each of these areas on the others have played key role in moulding the patterns of changes in the district. The emerging tendencies in the social arenas of the Pathanamthitta district function as a basic force that influence the economic and other aspects of the life in the District. Demographic change generated and shaped by economic factors and education as well as cultural traits author trends in social change and a totally new society is on the rise. Thus, explanations for the trend may be found in socio-cultural and economic factors and ecological changes which are not in the same pattern in different parts of the state.
5.2 Major Findings of the Study

Pathanamthitta district with its peculiar topography and terrain has a history of agriculture and agriculture is suited for it even today. Ecology played an important role in the district’s economy. The agro-climatic conditions suit the cultivation of both cash crops and food crops. But in the study period several noteworthy changes are identified in the agricultural sector of the district. In the case of the land utilization pattern, significant increase in some areas and also vice versa has been noted within a period of three decades. During the first decade under the study, total cropped area expanded but then it started decreasing at a slow rate. A clear decrease is noted in the net sown area and barren uncultivable land. At the same time an increase in the cultivable waste land, land put to non-agricultural use, current fallow land, and fallow other than current fallow land can be witnessed.

Changes can be seen in the major crops of the district. Advancement of the non food crops and simultaneous decrease in the food crops took place in the study period. Area devoted to all food crops was 52869 hectares (51.8%) in 1984-85 but it came down to 39109 (43.25%) in 2003-04 and 30022 in 2009-10 (36.77%). Paddy is the major crop that has lost the most in the area of cultivation. In 2007-08, the district’s share of the area under paddy cultivation in Kerala State is only 0.87%. The proportion of coconut cultivated area and tapioca cultivated area also reduced. Fruits other than mango are the only food item that is cultivated in more land now. On the other side, rubber cultivation is expanding tremendously or in other words active use of dry land under cultivation is taking place in the district. Rubber was cultivated in 16674 hectares of land in the beginning of the period and it rose to 49957 hectares by the end of the period - a threefold increase. In the State level, the increase in land under rubber cultivation is from 271200 to 512045 hectares. Mixed cropping has changed to mono-cropping in the homesteads.
Clearly, there is direct relationship between productivity and choice and preference of crops. Items that stagnate or decline in productivity are generally abandoned and cultivators opt for crops that register a rise in productivity. Changes in the field of agriculture can be reflected in other allied fields like Animal Husbandry. The preferences of cultivators regarding the crops reflect in the choice of irrigation of the crops as well. The profitability of the crop depending upon the demand and price variables becomes the determining factor and accordingly the crop-wise area irrigated changes.

Since the Pathanamthitta district holds only 2 to 3% of Kerala’s Industries, the backwardness of the district in the industrial sector is notable. The once prominent traditional industries also experienced a setback these days. The inflow of foreign money promoted the service sector and more people in the traditional areas shifted to service sector. Only the small scale industries registered a growth. The Industry wise classification of Small Scale Industries (SSI) units suits the peculiarities of the district. In the case of the registered working factories it can be noted that though the share of the district in the all Kerala sphere is increasing the pace of development is slow.

Notable changes can be witnessed in the labour patterns of the district. The composition of workers especially, the combination of main, marginal and non workers changed in the study period. In the first decade under study the share of main workers was more and at the same time, a decrease was experienced in the number and percentage of the marginal workers. In the second decade the number and share of marginal workers marked considerable growth. A corresponding decrease resulted in the number and share of the main workers and the share of the main workers came down. In the third decade under study the number of both main workers and marginal workers increased. Non workers exceed main and marginal workers in all the periods. As the differences in the share of main and marginal workers adjusted against each other, the share of non-workers
remained almost the same with a nominal increase of the share. But in 2011, as per the census report, a reduction in number of non workers can also be seen.

Pathanamthitta district had a higher agrarian nature rather than the rest of Kerala in average as far as the labour distribution is considered. When the share of cultivators in the main workers was considered the higher agrarian preference of labour can be noticed. In 1991, the share of cultivators in the main workers was double in Pathanamthitta when compared to the same in Kerala. In 2001, the cultivators were getting thinner both in Kerala State and in Pathanamthitta district but it had happened in the district in a higher acceleration. This comparatively higher agrarian preference of labour is seen absent when the agricultural labours’ statistics for the year 1991 was considered. There was a heavy decline in the category of agricultural labourers as against the total work force both in the state and in the district almost in the same degree during the period. The difference between the Kerala State and Pathanamthitta district proportions of the agricultural labourers also had become thinner in the two decades. In the last decade also the same trend persists.

The labour pattern of the district is fitting to the rural nature of Pathanamthitta district. It is also seen that the percentage of non workers against the total workers is decreasing both in Kerala and in Pathanamthitta district but the change in the district is slower than that in the state average. The percentage of males in the total main workers of Kerala and the district experiences opposite trends.

The sectoral distribution of workforce signifies a change in the distribution from primary to tertiary overcoming the secondary. This is in conformity with the all Kerala pattern. Here the growth of the district is faster than of the State in the first period and a reverse trend can be seen in the second period. When the age wise classifications of the labourers were analysed both in Kerala and in Pathanamthitta district, above 90% of the
labourers were in the 15 to 59 years age group. But in 1991, 2001 and 2011 census reports a different trend that can be noticed in the District is the higher proportion of main and marginal workers in the 60 and above age group compared to that of Kerala. Here also the female proportion is very less compared to the males.

In 1991, Pathanamthitta’s work participation rate was 1.7% less than that of the state average (31.4%). The male work participation rate was almost 4 times the female work participation rate in 1991. It was the backwardness in the female work participation rate that kept Pathanamthitta below the state average in case of total work participation rate. In ten years from 1991 to 2001, the work participation rate of Pathanamthitta experienced no change and it remained just the same. But the district’s position in the state in this regard further declined to 12th. The work participation rate of Pathanamthitta stagnated over this period when the same of 10 districts of Kerala marked observable growth. In the next ten year, 2001-2011, a minor increase in work participation rate can be noticed in the district. Here the work participation rate increased from 29.7 to 32.8, a 3.1% increase. The State average also grew from 32.3 to 34.7, a 2.4% increase.

Pathanamthitta district is the only district in Kerala that marked a decline in the case of male work participation rate between 1991 and 2001. Changes in the female work participation rate in Pathanamthitta district from 1991 to 2001 show very different tendencies. In this head, Pathanamthitta marked a growth by 0.7% in the first period and 4.3% in the second period. The percentage of male and female workers in Pathanamthitta district employed in the category “Other Workers” show just opposite tendencies when compared with the respective state averages. Unemployment rate is highly increasing. The district had emigration rate above the State average. The district accounts for 13% of the total out migration in the State. Regarding out migrants per hundred households the district is the leading one in the State. In terms of return out-migrants per 100 households, also Pathanamthitta is a leading district in the State. In this district, the
total number of migrants is almost the same as the number of households, the Migration Prevalence Rate being 99 percent. Recent studies point to the fact that Southern districts especially Pathanamthitta has lost the ground as a source of emigrants from the State. Emigrants per household, in which Pathanamthitta once had a lead also decreased considerably. Migration is a prominent change agent in the district and the role of emigrants in the socio-economic structure of the district cannot be underestimated.

The Pathanamthitta district has a strong banking infrastructure. Both Commercial and Co-operative Banks are functioning in the district. District wise distribution of Scheduled Commercial Banks shows that the numbers of banks are increasing at a rapid pace in the district. From 162 in the district formation period the number raised to 272 in 2008. Besides this other banks are also efficiently functioning here and their number too is fast increasing. Regarding the deposits, the district shows a marked improvement in the study period. The deposits and advance statement of Scheduled Commercial Banks say that it was 50491 lakhs in 1988 which was raised to 909600 lakhs in 2008. The NRI deposits play the major role in the increase in deposit rate. When we analyze the Credit-Deposit Ratio of the district we get the dismal picture that the ratio is seen fast declining. In 1988, when the Credit-Deposit Ratio of the district was 17.04 the state had a Credit-Deposit Ratio of 65.65. There after a decline in the ratio can be seen but and it never registered a growth from 13-15 points up to 2004. In all these years the district had the lowest rank among the other districts of the State. In the case of the district the fall in Credit-Deposit Ratio is the result of lower credit growth. Banks are more interested in deposit mobilization than in credit disbursal. Besides this, migration and the remittances of NRIs also contribute to the lowering of the Credit-Deposit Ratio. Since the people are job seekers rather than job givers, as is evidenced from the high unemployment rate of the district, a low Credit-Deposit Ratio is the aftereffect.
The impact of demographic transition has been far greater in the district compared to that of Kerala. Even though the population is increasing slowly in the two census periods, the growth rates showed fluctuations. The district observes a continuous declining trend in growth rate in the study period. In both the periods the district was below the State average and lowest among other districts of the State. One of the peculiarities of the district is the higher proportion of females in the total population (51.5% in 1991 & 52.23% in 2001). In both the censuses in the study period females out number males and the district has the top most position in the State in this regard. When the five year classifications of population were analyzed, in 1991, we can see that up to the age of 40 all the age groups are below the State average. But from 40 onwards Pathanamthitta shows an increase in the population. Up to 80+ the district is above the state average. Clear cut increase in the old aged population and a decrease in student population can be witnessed. A comparison of the district in the two census periods reveals the decrease of 5-14 population groups and an increase of old aged group. The working age population almost remained the same. This has contributed to an age pyramid that has a shrinking base and a swelling top. The shoot up of population in the old age is the most important thing when we compare the population growth of 1991 and 2001. Pathanamthitta leads the state, and perhaps the country, in the old-old (above 70 years) and the oldest-old (above 80 years) population.

The Total Fertility Rate of the district declined from 1.7 in 1984-1990 to 1.5 in 1994-2000, which was the lowest level in the State. This figure was 0.2 lower than the state average. In other words the Total Fertility Rate of district Pathanamthitta was almost 12% lower than that of the state average. Studies reveal that the Infant Mortality Rate of Pathanamthitta District in 1991 was considerably lower when compared to the all Kerala Average. The difference in rural-urban Infant Mortality Rate in Pathanamthitta registers a tendency just opposite to the same in the all Kerala average. Regarding Child Mortality Rate also Pathanamthitta’s figures were low when compared to State average (an absolute
In all the periods the Crude Death Rate of Pathanamthitta is lower than the state average. Life Expectancy at birth for males is higher in Pathanamthitta among the districts of Kerala. The figure is 76 which is 2.3 higher than the state average 73.7 which is quite notable. In most of the studies birth rate is the lowest in Pathanamthitta district.

Pathanamthitta district has a unique position in the educational map of Kerala. The district had consistently maintained a much higher literacy rate compared with other districts. Her literacy rate in 1991 and 2001 were 94.86% and 95.09% which shoulders above other districts except Kottayam. Her female literacy rate of 93.29% in 1991 and 93.71% in 2001 were unique against the State average. When the total student strength is considered there has been a reduction of percentage of students in lower primary school to total students. From 84-85 periods to 2005-06 periods when we analyze the student strength it decreased continuously both in Kerala as well as in the District but the decline is more felt in the district. Gradual decline in the enrollment in standard one as a result of the drop in the birth rate and parents’ desire for western education has resulted in the decline in the percentage of lower primary school in the district.

Families are undergoing rapid changes in their structure, functions and responsibilities. The district which is forefront in demographic transition and migration rates, changes in family structure and functions occur mainly due to these factors. Reduction in population growth occurred due to fertility levels in turn result in reduction in family size. Low growth rate in population, low birth and mortality rate, higher life expectancy, changes such as reduction in the number of children a couple has, changes in the age structure of the population are some major factors that had their impact on the traditional family system. Demographic transition also makes important changes within the family perhaps not always favorable. Pathanamthitta and Kottayam are more advanced than other districts in their demographic transition and naturally have more old age homes than
other districts in the State. Female entry into the labour market made significant familial changes especially in the relationship within the family and between generations. Changes are taking place in women’s roles in families.

Migration both internal and international is yet another major factor that caused changes in the family set up of the district. The migration of the younger generation has a significant impact on the inter-generational contract and the dynamics of the family left behind. It has fundamental implication for women, children and old aged group also. As far as religion is concerned, Pathanamthitta district is special in many ways. This hilly terrain is well known as the headquarters of pilgrim worship in Kerala. The region is rich in places of religious importance and the river beds are venue for conventions of various religious sects. Neither the pilgrimage nor the convention is wholly a religious event. They both have social, political and economic implications and they respond to the material needs of the concerned communities. Demographically speaking Hindus constitute more than half the population in the district in the two censuses which is in accordance with the all Kerala pattern. Regarding the Muslim population Pathanamthitta is the district with the least Muslim population in both the censuses. The Christian population constitutes 40.36% of the total population whereas in Kerala as a whole they constitute only 19.32%. But in 2001 the percentage decreased to 39% of the total population even though it retained the third rank among the districts of Kerala. Christians were the only major religious group in the district that showed a reduction in population proportion. Though all the three major religious groups have grown in numbers, the rate of growth among Christians (0.45%) is the lowest as compared to Muslims (17.82%) and Hindus (5.17%) during 1991-2001. Recently, a number of new sects and new religious formations have either originated or come to prevalence in the district.
The five major Scheduled Castes in the district were Pulayan/Cheramar, Kuravan/Sidhanar, Paraiyan/Parayan/Sambavar, Pathiyan and Thandan. Besides this Boyan, Chakkiliyan, Kakkalan, Pallan, Mannan, Nayadi, Panan, Paravan, Vannan and Velan also exist in the district. According to the 1991 census, the population of Scheduled Castes in the district was 5.47% of State. In 2001 the number increased but the proportion in the State decreased (5.18% of state). Pulayan numerically the largest caste accounts for the highest number among the total Scheduled Caste population in the district in the two census periods. But their number can be seen reduced in the 2001 census. Kuravan the next numerically higher caste shows an increase in population in the 2001 census. All other castes also record the same growth. In 2001 the sex ratio became 1058 which was 10 points above the state average for Scheduled Castes. Regarding the literacy rate of the Scheduled Castes, just like the general population, this group also had the literacy rate above the State average. Even though Pathanamthitta reports a high literacy rate for the Scheduled Castes and above the State average; it is several points below the corresponding rates for the non-scheduled population of the district in 1991. In 2001 also the same conditions persisted. Regarding the work force, it can be observed that in both the censuses Non Workers excel the Main and Marginal Workers just as in the case of non-scheduled population.

Regarding the Scheduled Tribes population, it was 6922 in 1991 census consisting of 3459 males and 3463 females (0.6% of State). In 2001 the total scheduled caste population decreased to 6549 with a male and female break up of 3184 and 3365 (0.5% of State). In 2001 a decrease can be noted in the scheduled tribe population of the district. Regarding the general sex ratio of the tribal population it was 1001, which was lower than the District and the State’s General Sex Ratio. In 2001 the general sex ratio increased to 1057 when the state average was 1021. The age wise distribution of people attending educational institutions signifies that the number of pupils getting higher education is less. After high school level the number is continuously decreasing. As in
the case of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes also register a decrease in the number of illiterates and a corresponding increase in the number of literates when comparing the two census periods.

The indicators which measure the status of women like sex ratio literacy rate and access to education, work participation rate and improvements in the field of health show a positive sign in the district. Pathanamthitta district has a sex ratio favoring the female population (1062 in 1991 and 1094 in 2001). The sex ratio of the district and the rank among other districts of the State (second in 1991 and first in 2001) has steadily increased over the preceding decades. Pathanamthitta district has a high position in the case of literacy especially female literacy. Female education, which enhances women’s knowledge and employment capacity, increased the social mobility of women. The major indicators of good health like more life-expectancy among females, less fertility rate, less maternal mortality rates point to the health standard of women in the district. Changes in the female work participation rates in Pathanamthitta district from 1991 to 2001 showed very different tendencies. In this head, Pathanamthitta marked a growth by 0.7%. This growth is significant because it was achieved when 9 districts of Kerala showed decline in female work participation rates. Even when the female Work Participation Rates of Pathanamthitta marked an exceptional growth during the period 1991-2001, it stood only in the 12th place among the districts of Kerala in this regard in 2001. The state average of change in rural woman work participation rates over the period is -1.0. Thus Pathanamthitta marks a 1.8% positive change when compared to the State average. The growth in urban women work participation rates of Pathanamthitta from 1991 to 2001 fall 0.3% behind the State average of change over the period when the rural woman work participation rates of Pathanamthitta registered an increase of 1.8% above the State average.
5.3 Conclusion

The various trends and major changes related to the topic under investigation presented in the form of findings reveal that within twenty five to thirty years several changes took place in the district. Various aspects of the economic and social changes in Pathanamthitta district during the period of study exhibits trends of urbanization, modernization and development in multifarious realms, but in a complex and peculiar manner.

The factors that work behind the changes are interdependent. They are physical, social or economic in nature and are all influenced by the peculiar cultural and religious aspects of the district. Changes are not monolithic or isolated but multifaceted, holistic and uneven. Change in one sphere affects other spheres of social life. Various factors such as technological progress, demographic changes, cultural diffusion, economic and educational factors alter structural relationships in a society and bring about social change.

The influence of the physical or geographical factors in bringing about socio economic changes in the district is worthy of mentioning. The district with a purely agrarian nature is changing its priority due to social and economic reasons. The number of cultivators and agricultural labourers have been experiencing steep decline over the period of study. The opening of the global job market; international openings available to the youth of the district owing to the historic, religious and social reasons; and the sudden reciprocation of the educational picture of the district in particular and the State in general in response to the international demand have all played vital roles in accentuating these changes. Education provides an opportunity for individuals to realize their potential and frees them from being tied down to the occupation of their forefathers. Those who are fortunate to get higher education are taking up professions different from their traditional jobs. This
shift in occupational pattern seems to have provided them with more social mobility than their fore fathers.

Pathanamthitta, the agricultural district, and a land with an irregular terrain consisting of several hills, slopes and paddy fields have a long and notable history of agriculture. The abundance of rivers in the district and their boon of vast expansions of fertile river basins keep the district apt for agriculture even today. Earlier the district had homestead farming with coconut as the base crop and other crops like tapioca, plantain, vegetables and tubers are grown as inter- crops. In the wet areas too sufficient farming was there with tubers as inter crops.

Pathanamthitta district, being one of the earliest homes of advanced wet land agriculture in Kerala, has been experiencing changes in its agricultural sector during the past three decades, some in tune with the changes taken place in the State and some ahead of it. Changes can be witnessed in the cropping pattern, productivity, cultivation practices etc. An area with a true tropical diversity and scope for raising a variety of crops like coconut, paddy, tapioca, varieties of vegetables and spices changed its nature from multiple crops to mono crop especially rubber, the consideration guided mainly by the market force. The analysis of the land use pattern clearly indicates that the district of Pathanamthitta is shifting its priority from agriculture to other areas. The area of wetlands has declined considerably. A portion of the shift of wetlands has been for non-agricultural activities. But the overall effect of reduction of wetland is the reduction of area under rice. Vast areas previously under a multiple crop system are now covered by the mono-crop system. In the personal investigation made by the researcher also the same has been proved beyond doubt.

The factors that work behind the changes in the labour pattern may be correctly interpreted as the results of liberalization and emerging new trends in job market.
Agricultural field is growing thinner very fast and on the other hand, no industrial or service sector is developing. Female employment also is becoming weaker. All this happens because a considerable section of the workers of the district seek employment abroad and they earn handsomely.

As it was found out, the land holdings were small and family labour was the main mode of labour in agriculture. Hired labour was utilized only in comparatively lesser levels. When labour migration takes place from the peasant families, the agriculture land is left uncultivated in many cases, especially in the case of labour intensive cultivations like that of paddy cultivation which is fast disappearing from the district.

In case of the expansion of the cultivation of cash crops, which is also promoted by the liberal international trade of the period, one can see that the cash crops that are increasingly cultivated in Pathanamthitta district are not labour intensive. When the cultivation of labour intensive crops is replaced by the cultivation of other crops, labour will be freed from the field. Where this freed labour is to be employed is decided by a variety of factors and forces including the socio cultural traits and preferences of the people, their education and the larger economic context. Thus a clear link between the topography of the district that is suitable for labour intensive cultivation like that of paddy and the shortage of work force due to demographic reasons and migration on the one hand and the shift towards crops that need less labour force on the other hand is noticed. It is the physical factors coupled with social and economic factors that author changes in agriculture in the district.

The geography of the district with its fertile river valleys and dense virgin forest which in themselves display two opposite levels of development of civilization is responsible, at least partly, in developing a curious blend of opposite binaries in the trends of change in the district as it is exampled by the fact that the district has the most out-going and
migrating people on the one hand and the most religious and traditional people on the other hand within it.

Biological factors like changes in population, both in number and composition, have far reaching effects on social relationships and is a main cause of social change. Population size and its structure have its impact on many parts of the socio-economic and political systems. The social security system, health care system, food production and distribution are all strongly affected by population size and structure. The reduction in the growth rate of population has some political effects too which will affect the district in a negative manner. When the Constituencies are reconstituted on the basis of population, in future, there are chances for losing Constituencies. This in turn will lead to the reduction in MLA funds and consequently to the reduction in development.

The three factors affecting population growth, especially, fertility, mortality and migration have their effects in the district. Due to the age structural transition as a consequence of demographic transition, there has been a steady and more recently a sharper decline in the proportion of children of school going age, while the proportion of the aged population has increased significantly. Since the proportion of children in the total population is reducing educational system especially primary school system has been seriously affected and has resulted in ‘uneconomic schools’ and ‘protected teachers’. The increase in the number and proportion of elderly also faces challenges especially in a population with more migrating youth. Change in the age composition also matters because different age groups have different economic behaviour which has implications for the overall growth of an economy.

Demographic changes like low growth rate in population, low birth and mortality rate, higher life expectancy, changes in the age structure of the population had their impact on the traditional family system. Reduction in population growth occurred due to fertility
levels in turn result in reduction in family size. Some of the changes due to demographic transition are not favourable in the district. The increase in old aged homes points to the drastic effect of changes in population composition and migration. Status of women, social space of women, self dependence and economic self reliance of women are all showing significant improvement due to the demographic changes. These improvements are ant handicrafts of a lower birth rate alone. The lower birthrate became a significant factor when coupled with the demographic and other impacts of migration from the district.

International migration of the educated from the district to developed countries has far reaching implications for human capital formation and economic development. The occupational mobility occurred due to educational mobility, changes in land holdings etc seems to have helped them in achieving considerable level of social mobility also. The flow of foreign money changed the structure and shape of even villages. Everywhere shops and buildings came and palatial buildings were constructed even in remote villages. When on one side super specialty hospitals and residential schools flourished on the other side hi-tech mortuaries and old age homes show the changed condition of the land. Migration is a major change agent that caused changes in the family set up of the district. The prospect of the younger people living with their parents is becoming increasingly difficult if not impractical, as the search for employment opportunities take these people more to locations away from their homes and to distant lands.

Migration has a major role in the reduction of population growth in the district. It also reduced the pressure of population and contributed in no small measures for the reduction of unemployment in the district. Migration has resulted in some structural changes in the society also. It has reduced the working age population and consequently increased the proportion of elderly. Migration has its impact on family too. When the male from the household migrates women took on increasing responsibilities for managing the
household activities. The female headed households have become a steadily growing phenomenon. In the personal investigation made by the researcher also migration and its effects were examined and the results of the same support that of the district.

Banking development of the study area also can be seen as an outcome of the high international migration rates from the district. Almost all the major banks, both national and even some foreign banks, have their branches in Pathanamthitta district.

A notable trend regarding migration is that as it does generate social changes on the one hand and on the other hand it itself is a result of several socio-cultural and historical peculiarities of the district: these factors are mutually reciprocal.

Now the district with a high demographic advantage, and a lower fertility rate even compared to metropolitan cities in India, the role and status of women is changing. Women had adequate extra time to spend for productive employment outside. Even though the female work participation is low, that does not mean that the supply of female labour is low since a certain percentage of women would be unemployed. Due to educational effects and gender equality more women are changing their traditional occupational structure and this can often be a trigger of change. The changing position of women and roles of women in society have been found in all the three areas studied by the researcher through the survey method. The female headed households, low work participation rate are clear in these study areas.

Significant familial changes especially in the relationship within the family and between generations and especially for the elderly are being witnessed in the district. The district which is ahead of the State in demographic transition especially sex ratio and growth rate of population and female life expectancy, the number of widows are likely to be more. Education, especially female education pioneered by the missionaries has a profound role
to play in the condition of women folk of the district. It is the key factor for women to be employed. Now gender equity opens avenues for more women to higher education. Besides this, education gave a chance for females to go out to work or to study. This triggers social mobility and upward mobilization among the women folk. Female education acts as a good catalyst for progressive social changes in the district like changes in family and life patterns and changing social norms, improvement in scientific knowledge and ability to plan a family.

In the case of education, which is the corner stone of human resource development, various positive changes took place. Modern education is change oriented. Schools with central syllabus came within the reach of rural dwellers in Pathanamthitta district. In the urban areas, the increase in the number of flats and villas can be attributed to the changes in the mind set of the people to send their children to the urban schools with better facilities and better training programmes since parents are eager to give better education to their wards.

Education became one of the intervening variables in the phenomenon of socio-economic changes in the district. It plays an important role for the same and at the same time produces a readiness on the part of the people to work for social change and thus made the change desirable. Educational progress can be seen behind many social changes in the district in a multifarious way. The impact of education can be seen in the sphere of health and education, particularly female education, has a fundamental influence on health and health seeking behaviour. The high ratings of the indicators of health shown in the district can be read together with education. Expansion of education had effects in all round development, besides demographic transition. Female education, a significant catalyst of the progressive social changes in the district, provides a chance for females to go out for work or study. This brings them a changed mindset and they would transmit it to the young generation which in turn hastens the process of social
change. Even though the female work participation is low, more and more women are entering into the labour force from the district due to educational effects and gender equality and this can often be a trigger of change. The change thus initiated provides considerable amount of social mobility also. The educational policies of the State in general and the district in particular helped promote considerable vertical social mobility by making school education accessible to students from all socio-economic strata.

A decline in birth rate would mean a higher standard of living, emancipation of women from child bearing drudgery, better care for the young and perhaps a healthier society. There is also a close relationship between the growth of population and the level of physical health. On the increase in the number of mouths to feed, there is chronic malnutrition and other related diseases. All these affect the quality of population and the social structure and social institutions. A strong correlation can be seen between Education, mortality rates and life expectancy. The achievements in the field of health have helped in achieving much renowned changes in demographic transition. The reduction in birthrate as well as the death rate has reduced the population growth to the minimum. The inverse relationship between education and fertility can be seen in the district. There has been a steady and more recently a sharper decline in the proportion of children of school going age, while the proportion of the aged population has increased significantly which is evitable during transition. Education has facilitated the large scale migration of people from the district whose remittances sustain the economy. The processes of development of education and modernization were mutually reciprocal, complementary and directly proportional. Education was the cause and result of modernization at the same time in this geographical area.

Social systems are directly or indirectly the creations of cultural values and any change in values or belief systems on the part of social group affect social institutions. Families are undergoing rapid changes in their structure, functions and responsibilities. Rise of
smaller families is a major result and cause of social change at the same time and this has altered relationships within the family. The structure of a small family in many ways brings about social change. Absence of grandparents, closer interaction between parents and children, lesser burden on the shoulders of the parents, more importance to the fewer number of children, their better bringing up, more leisure time, etc result and bring about changes in the society.

Every aspect of life here is deeply related to religion, which is like breathing air to this pilgrim district. The geography, history and economy of the district along with migration and such factors influence the religious profile of the district and the change in it over the course of years. Christians were the only community that showed a reduction in population proportion. The number of new sects and new religious formations that have either originated or come to prevalence in the district, exhibits trends of individual expressions and constructions. Religious identities now get closer to the socio-economic identity of the followers and because there is a multitude of the latter, the former also get multiplied and diversified. The identity of the people of the region is first of all related to the religious and caste categories - one may observe that the pre-modern categories persist predominant even today - in this region. Thus, any social or economic upward movement of a lower section of the society needs to have a religious aspect along. Without the creation of a new religious identity, the upward movement or the attempt to upward movement would not probably be complete or even effective. This is also because almost every other aspect of life here is deeply related to religion. This could be a factor working behind the origin and growth of the new sects.

The changes in the general population had its repercussions on the marginalized sections too. These people also show a progress in the indicators studied in tune with the general population. As it was theorized by Max Webber, the values of a particular community can be quite influential in shaping a society and its trends and modes, a fact that is proved
by this study also. The influence of Syrian Christian community in shaping the society of today in Pathanamthitta district amounts to the role of a role model, a trend setter and a forerunner. In lieu of the famous Sanskritization, a kind of Syrianization may be identified in the district. They lead the way and the other communities follow through multifarious ways. May it be the migration, family size and organization, choice of employment and education, origin of new sects, or the role of women and socio-religious practices, Syrianization attempts is noticed.

Development and economic trends in Pathanamthitta are shaped by her history and culture. The demographic trends in the district are in a way moulded by the changes in percentage in Christian population especially Syrian Christians. They are also a major migratory group in the district contributing a significant role in shaping the economy of the district. The direct relation between the Syrian Christian population and emigration in the State is a proved notion. Here this study too substantiate the point and proves it beyond doubt. The reduction in the Christian population is a reason for the reduction in the emigration rate of the district in the recent years.

The reduction in the growth rate of population of the district deserves special attention. The high health standards like low infant mortality rate, low total fertility rate and low rates of crude death rate and mortality rate are some of the reasons attributed to it. Coupled with these the role of migration in this process cannot be underestimated. The role Christian population in this regard is a point worthy to mention. Kerala, with only a Christian population below 20%, is not seriously affected by the reduction in population of that group. But in the case of Pathanamthitta district, which holds the highest proportion of Christians, especially Syrian Christians the reduction in the growth rate of that group is directly proportional to the reduction in the growth rate of the district as a whole. Demographic changes generated and shaped by economic factors and education as well as cultural traits author trends in social change and a totally new society is on the
rise. On the other hand, these emerging tendencies in the social arenas of the Pathanamthitta district function as a basic force that influence the economic and other aspects of the life in the District.

A large segment of the emigrant population from the district is literate and that a sizeable proportion among them is highly educated. The rate of increase in migration in recent years is higher among persons with higher qualifications leading to higher remuneration and consequently larger quantum of remittances. Emigration has been exerting a large influence in the selection of the subjects and courses of studies after secondary schooling. The non-formal education system played a major role in tailoring education to the markets abroad. Subjects like spoken English, foreign languages especially Arabic, travel and tourism management, hotel management etc. came to be offered in the non-formal system. Computer education also received a big boost. Commercialization, communization and politicization are now entering the educational system in a big way with possible long-term consequences. The dominance of non-governmental agencies belonged to religious or caste groups over the educational sector were guided by educational and social needs of not only their own communities but also of the society around. Some of these private agencies were instrumental in taking education to backward regions, castes and socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Girls’ education was also promoted by some of these agencies.

Pathanamthitta has sufficient potential for much faster economic development in the context of globalized world and knowledge society, provided there is a change in the mindset of the people, government, political parties, civil society and the media. Pathanamthitta District has the physical, financial and communication infrastructure for a much faster economic growth. It also has relatively well developed social infrastructure for education and health care. All that is now required is investments to upgrade the quality and to modernize the services. Another positive factor for Pathanamthitta
District is that it enjoys comparatively more social stability and absence of communal and caste conflicts due to the cultural synthesis which dates back to the States early history and the social reform movements in the last two centuries. The rich bio-diversity and the traditional knowledge regarding the many uses of flora and fauna offers potential for development of biotechnology provided the research capacity in this area is enhanced considerably. The non residents had got opportunities for getting exposed to modern technology, global markets, culture, and management skills. But this exposure is not yet leading to any significant transfer of such technology and management skills to the districts economy. Migration has also led to large scale inflow of funds to the district. But, instead of being invested in the district, they are being increasingly diverted to other parts of the country through financial intermediaries. Much of the migrants’ remittances seem to be spent on conspicuous consumption in the absence of other investment outlets.

To sum up, the analyses of various economic and social indicators like agriculture, industry, labour, migration patterns, role of women, education, health, demography, religion etc based on primary and secondary data indicate that fundamental changes have taken place in Pathanamthitta district since its formation in 1982. Some of the changes are in tune with changes that have taken place in Kerala State as a whole while some other changes deviate significantly from the State wide trends, many a times showing the Pathanamthitta district as a forerunner ahead of Kerala State.

Further research can be carried out on migration which forms a major change agent in the district and its effects on elderly people, women and children who are left behind. Moreover future research may be conducted to comprehend the major problems of the expatriates from Pathanamthitta district. The return of the migrants, their resettlement and rehabilitation and the impact of the return of the migrants on the economic, social, political and cultural arena of the district require special attention in future research studies.