CHAPTER IV
SETTING OF THE STUDY

Overview

Since the research study is about the voting behaviour of Tamil Nadu with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency, it is essential to have a comprehensive knowledge of the area of the study in order to understand the setting of the findings of the study. Therefore, in this chapter an attempt has been made to explain the setting of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.

Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency

Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency consists the six Assembly segments. They are Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Palayamkottai, Vilathikulam, Ottapidaram and Srivaikundam. In them, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi are the Municipal Corporations. The rest are rural areas.

Boundaries

The constituency is bounded on the North by Sivakasi and Ramanathapuram Constituencies, on the West by Tenkasi (SC), on the South by Tiruchendur Constituency and on the East by Bay of Bengal. This Constituency is located in South side of Tamil Nadu.

Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency

The details realting to the Assembly segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency consisting of six Assembly segments are provided in the following pages.

Tirunelveli Assembly Segment

Tirunelveli, and historically as Tinnevelly, is the sixth-largest City after Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy, and Salem in the State
of Tamil Nadu in India, and the Headquarter of the Tirunelveli District. It is situated 612 kilometres Southwest of Chennai and 140 kilometres East of Thiruvananthapuram.

Tirunelveli is an ancient City with rich cultural heritage, and is home to many temples and shrines, including the largest Shiva Temple in Tamil Nadu, the Nellaiappar Temple. The City is considered to be one of the oldest in the Indian subcontinent, with a history that dates back to 1000 BC. It is located on the Western side of the perennial Thamirabarani river, whereas its twin municipal City Palayamkottai, is located on the Eastern side. The City is also famous for its reputed educational institutions and hence Palayamkottai is known as the "Oxford of South India".

Tirunelveli is an Ancient City, as evidenced by the findings of archaeological excavations which have been going on since 1840s, in the outskirts of the City in Adichanallur (now in Tuticorin District). At this site, the archaeologists have unearthed an urn which could date back to 500 B.C.\(^1\) containing a complete human skeleton and clay vessels with some rudimentary Tamil Brahmi script inscribed on them. Other ancient urns in which the elderly were buried have also been found in the same District.\(^2\) Along with skeletal finds, husks, grains of rice, charred rice and celts have also been found.\(^3\) More recent excavations at this site have led to the discovery of a habitation site of the Iron Age people. Archaeologists opine that it is about 3000–3800 years old, from the Neolithic period.\(^4\) This has assured us that Tirunelveli has been an abode for human

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\(^1\) The Hindu: National: 'Rudimentary Tamil-Brahmi script' unearthed at Adichanallur
\(^2\) The Telegraph - Calcutta: Nation
\(^3\) Tamil Nadu / Tirunelveli News : More pre-historic burial sites found in Tirunelveli District, The Hindu, 2010-03-09.
\(^4\) Stone Pages Archaeo News: Iron Age settlement found in India.
habitation for 3000 years or more. Now, Adichanallur has been announced as an archaeological site for further excavation and studies.\textsuperscript{5}

The history of Tirunelveli was extensively researched by Bishop Robert Caldwell.\textsuperscript{6} Christian missions in the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century in Tinnevelly played a significant part in the development of education as well as religious conversion.\textsuperscript{7}

The known history says that Tirunelveli had been under the prominence of the Pandya kings, serving as their secondary capital while Madurai remained its primary capital. It was an important City of the Chola Kingdom and of the Vijayanagar empire. The City was the chief commercial Town in the period of Arcot Nawabs and Nayaks. They were among the various ruling dynasties of Tamil Nadu. In fact, they called the City "Nellai Cheemai", with cheemai meaning a developed foreign Town. It was the Nayaks who, in 1781, granted its revenues and local administration to the British. In 1801, it was annexed by the British, who governed it until India achieved independence in 1947. On acquisition from the Nawab of Arcot in 1801, the British anglicized its name as Tinnevelly and made it the headquarters of Tirunelveli District. This happened despite the fact that their administrative and military headquarters was located in Palayamkottai (which was also anglicized as Palankottah), during their operations against the Palayakars. Post-independence, both Towns reverted from their anglicized names to their original names and grew together as twin municipal cities.

The City's historic heritage includes the Swamy Nellaiappar Temple and the Sri Kandimathi Ambal temple, both of which are ancient Saivite temples. It is also the site of Asia's second largest two-tiered

\textsuperscript{5}The Hindu: National: Iron Age habitation site found at Adichanallur.
\textsuperscript{6}History of Tinnevelly by Bishop R. Caldwell.
\textsuperscript{7}A brief history of Tinnevelly By Rev. Dyron B. Daughrity.
bridge. Nellaiappar temple Car festival is conducted every year in the month of Tamil month Audi. Nellaiappar car is third largest temple car in Tamil Nadu next to Tiruvaroor and Srvilliputtur. Also, a Golden Temple car will run during important festivals like Thirukalyanam, Kaarthigai, Aaruthra Festival etc. Panoramic view of Tirunelveli as viewed from the Palayamkottai bank of river Thamirabarani.

Tirunelveli is also called Nellai. The translation in Tamil for paddy (rice fields) is "Nell". Both the names, Tirunelveli and Nellai, directly associate it to rice fields. Even on satellite imagery, it can be seen that the City is surrounded by fertile paddy fields, enriched by the perennial river "Tamirabarani". The river has a wide network of canals and waterways which irrigate numerous rice fields and support the villages around the District which primarily thrive on cultivating rice. The region is also heavily dependent on the monsoon rains.

The etymology of Tirunelveli has a Puranic association also. It is said that a devotee was invited by God in his dream to settle with his family near the Tamirabarani river. There was a famine in the region for a long time, and the man had to beg and collect paddy from other people. He spread out the paddy to dry under the sunlight and went for his ritual ablution in the river. He then continued to pray to the Lord for rain. Suddenly a thunderstorm broke out and it rained heavily. Although his prayer was answered, he was worried about the paddy he had spread out to dry in the sun. So he ran to collect it but what he saw was nothing short of a miracle. Not a drop of rain had fallen on the paddy he had laid out to dry. Since then, the City has been called Tirunelveli -- 'Tiru' meaning respectable, 'Nel' meaning paddy, and 'Veli' meaning a protective fence. In other words, the etymology relates to the City having paddy fields as a protective fence. The name Halwa City is the a more
contemporary nickname of Tirunelveli. A wheat-based sweet called halwa has brought it fame across the Southern Indian states.

Tirunelveli is located at 8°44′N 77°42′E. It has an average elevation of 47 metres msl (154 ft). It is located in the Southern-most tip of the Deccan plateau. Tirunelveli is an important junction in the National Highway No.7 connecting India from the North to South (Kashmir to Kanyakumari). The nearest pivotal Towns are: Gangaikondan in the North, Tuticorin in the East, Tenkasi and Alangulam in the West, Kalakkad in the Southwest and Nanguneri in the South. It is also flanked by the State of Kerala to the West, Gulf of Mannar and the Districts of Virudhunagar, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari. Thamiraparani river roughly divides the City into the Tirunelveli quarter and the Palayamkottai area. The major lakes in the City are Nainar lake and Udayarpetti lake. Three rivers (Chitraru, Thamirabarani and Kothandarama river) converge at a place called Sivalai, making the area very fertile. The closest Town to this location is Alangaraperi.

The Agasthiyamalai hills, cut off Tirunelveli from the Southwest monsoon, creating a rainshadow region. The climate of Tirunelveli is usually tropical- generally hot and humid. The average temperature during summer (March to June) ranges from 23 to 36°Celsius and 18 to 30°C during the rest of the year. The average annual rainfall is 680 mm, most of which occurs during the Northeast monsoon (October–December). Since the economy of the District is primarily based on agriculture, fluctuations in the monsoon rains or flooding of the Thamarabarani river has an immediate impact of livelihood in the area. There have been no earthquakes in the recorded history of the region. However, there have been a few instances of floods and cyclones caused by the monsoons.
As of 2001 India census,\textsuperscript{8} Tirunelveli had a population of 411,298. Males constitute 49% of the population and females 51%. The City has an average literacy rate of 78%, higher than the national average of 59.5%, male literacy is 83%, and female literacy is 73%. In Tirunelveli, 10% of the population is under 6 years of age. Among the Municipal Corporations, Tirunelveli has been identified with a gender ratio skewed towards males, with 1024 females for every 1000 males.\textsuperscript{9} The growth rate of Urban Agglomeration is 20.22%.\textsuperscript{10}

The City spreads over an area of 128.65 km\textsuperscript{2}. The population density of the City had increased to 3781 persons per km\textsuperscript{2} in 2001 from 2218 Persons per km\textsuperscript{2} in 1971. The disabilities in the City as per the 2001 census are 1308246, out of which 645142 are males and 663104, female. Hindus are the most in urban population. They are followed by Muslims and then Christians. Tirunelveli District is third highest muslim populated District after chennai and vellore respectively. The language mainly spoken in the City is Tamil. The usage of English is relatively common. The vast majority of official dealings and the medium of instruction in most educational institutions is in English. The Tamil dialect spoken in this region is very lucid and is popular throughout Tamil Nadu.

The population of Tirunelveli on July 24, 2010 is approximately 502,480. (Extrapolated from a population of 411,298 on 2001 and a population of 498,054 on February 16, 2010.\textsuperscript{11}

The economy of Tirunelveli District is chiefly agrarian in nature and people are engaged in the cultivation of spices and condiments, groundnut, pulses, gingelly, coconut, chillies, indigo and

\textsuperscript{8}Census of India 2001.
\textsuperscript{9}Census of India 2001.
\textsuperscript{10}Urban Agglomeration Growth Rate.
\textsuperscript{11}Population of Tirunelveli, Census of India, 2001.
cotton. It is rich in mineral resources like limestone, sulphides and ilmenite-garnet sand. The City of Tirunelveli has quite a number of industries in its area like cement factories, cotton textile mills, spinning and weaving mills, beedi (tobacco) companies, steel products and so on. A large number of small scale industries supported by NELSIA (Nellai Small Scale Industries Association) are active. Tannery industries in small scale are also found here. In addition to these industries, a few small scale units of brick kilns and oil mills exist in the industrial area.

A vast majority of the middle class population in Tirunelveli City are either Government employees, teachers, professors or others working in educational institutions. The living cost of the City is considerably low when comparing with other large cities in Tamil Nadu. Food items are easily available at affordable prices. Recently the Tata Group has signed for the opening of a titanium dioxide plant estimated at 2500 crore in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin Districts. The project is expected to create job opportunities for over 1000 people directly and an estimated 3000 indirectly. It was drop out project because it could spoil the soil. Tirunelveli Assembly Constituency is part of Tirunelveli (Lok Sabha constituency). The City is a Municipal Corporation as well as the District Headquarter. Now the population in this City is above 5 lakh. The City has a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and several councillors elected by people representing administrative wards, as well as a corporation Commissioner to administer the City headed by the District Collector. The total population in Tirunelveli City Corporation as per 2001 census is 411,832 of which the male to female ratio is in favour of women. In correlation, Tirunelveli has a relatively large number of womenfolk in the working community, right from teachers to civic administrators.\footnote{List of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies, Tamil Nadu, Election Commission of India, 2001.}
Tirunelveli, being a major City in the Southern part of Tamil Nadu, has an extensive transport network. It is well-connected to other major cities by road, rail and air.

The City is located on NH 7, 150 km to the South of Madurai and 91 km to the North of Kanyakumari. NH 7A, an extension of NH 7, connects Palayamkottai with Tuticorin Port. Now 4 lane track has been under progress and NH 7A stretch is almost in finishing stage. Tirunelveli is accessible by road from Madurai or Nagercoil. Tirunelveli is also connected by major highways to Kollam, Tiruchendur, Rajapalayam, Sankarankovil, Ambasamudram and Nazareth.

The main mofussil bus stand is located in Veinthaankulam {New Bus Stand}. This bus stand was opened for public usage in 2003. There are regular bus services from and to the City. The other bus stands for local services within the City are the Junction Bus Stand and the Palay Bus stand. Both Government and private buses are being operated for City travel round the clock. A large network of interstate and intrastate buses ply to various destinations from Tirunelveli. There is a good co-existence of both private and public transport networks in the City round the clock.

The State Express Bus Corporation (SETC) operates express services to Chennai, Bangalore, Salem, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Nagapattinam, Erode, Villupuram, and Tirupati. The new Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation Tirunelveli division is formed after Villupuram, Madurai, Coimbatore, Salem, Kumbakonam. This City is having 25 Semi low floor buses running within the City limits. And it is the one of the cities having semi low floor buses in Tamil Nadu.

A majestic looking structure with a high elevated façade, Tirunelveli Junction (TEN) is one of the oldest and popular railway stations in India. It is one of the busiest and important stations in Tamil
Nadu. It is connected to major cities in all four directions, Madurai/Sankarankovil to the North, Nagercoil to the South, Tenkasi/Kollam to the West and Tiruchendur to the East. The railway station is facilitated with computerized ticket booking and touch screen to know the train schedule and train running status. A computerized ticket booking center at Palayamkottai has been proposed to clear the extra rush at Junction station. It is also going to become the "world class" station as the fund has been given by the Indian railways to this station.

The nearest airport is the Tuticorin Airport (TCR), located at Vaagaikulam in Thoothukudi District, about 22 km East of Tirunelveli City. There are daily flights to Chennai provided by Kingfisher Red. The Madurai Airport (IXM) is about 150 km and Thiruvananthapuram International Airport (TRV) is about 130 km away by road. An unused runway at Gangaikondan, which is 22 km North of the City, will become operational once the IT park at Gangaikondan is set up.

Tirunelveli being the District headquarters hosts many events pertaining to entertainment. The Government Exhibition, a popular attraction visited by thousands of people from in and around Tirunelveli takes place annually. Other major events of entertainment include an annual circus which draws huge crowds and many State and even national level sporting events in VOC ground and Anna Stadium.

Tirunelveli has numerous cinema theatres which are mostly constructed in the Art Deco style, and are popular landmarks in Tirunelveli. Popular theatres include the Bombay Theatre Full AC DTS, Poornakala DTS, Parvathi DTS, Perinbavilas Full AC DTS, Ram and Muthuram Full AC DTS, Sri Rathna Full AC DTS, Senthivel, Arunagiri DTS, Ganesh DTS. The most recently constructed, and perhaps the best

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13Railway Map of India – 1893.
14List of Popular Railway stations in India.
in Tirunelveli is the Bombay Theatre, Ram and Muthuram Full AC DTS. Some of the old theatres that lie between Tirunelveli Town and Junction are the Central, Rathna and Parvathi. It has been decreased to make the viewers of theatre. Dina Thanthi, Dina Malar, Dina Murasu, Dinakaran, Dina Mani, Dina Vel, Tamil Sudar, Kathiravan, Tamil Murasu, Malai Malar, Malai Murasu are the prominent Tamil news dailies currently printed in the City. The Hindu is the most widely read English daily.

Air Media Network, Nellai TV, Karan TV, Sathya TV, abi TV, Vaigai TV, AMN TV and Krishna TV are the local cable television networks.

Tirunelveli is served on the FM dial by Suryan FM, run by Sun Network (frequency 93.5 MHz), Hello FM, run by the Malai Malar Group (frequency 106.5 MHz) and Tirunelveli Vanoli Nilayam (All India Radio), by the Government of India. Tirunelveli is among the 40 cities in India to have an FM station. IGNOU has planned to air its distant education lecture (named Gyan Vani) via FM Tirunelveli. Another significance is that the Suryan FM was started in Tirunelveli.

Many sport events such as Hockey, Kabbadi, Volleyball, Kho-Kho tournaments are conducted at Anna stadium and VOC grounds. Both are situated in Palayamkottai and primarily used by school students for playing cricket during their leisure hours and holidays. An excellent public swimming pool and a well-maintained hockey field are among the facilities of the Anna Stadium in Palayamkottai.

Tirunelveli has a rich religious heritage. Though the roots of the City is associated with Hindu mythology, Tirunelveli has a harmoniously pluralistic society with followers of all the major Indian religions - Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Jainism. Consequently, the City has places of worship for people of all these religions, several of which are of historical importance like the Nellaiappar Temple and the
Cathedral. Some areas of Tirunelveli have a disproportionately large religious demographic, like Melapalayam and Palayamkottai. While the former is a predominantly Muslim quarter the latter has a large proportion of Christians and Christian educational institutions. Palayamkottai was a Christian missionary hub in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Nellaiappar Temple is famous as one of the largest Shiva Temples of Tamil Nadu, steeped in tradition and also known for its sculptural splendours. The temple is situated in Tirunelveli Town, in the centre of the City at a distance of 2 km from the railway station. It is a twin temple dedicated to Goddess Parvathi and Lord Shiva. Even from a considerable distance, one can have a good view of the gopurams (towers). Both the gopurams were built according to the rules laid down in the agama sastras by Rama Pandyan. Rare jewels, the Golden Lily Tank, Musical Pillars, and the hall of Thousand Pillars are worth seeing. The temple dates back to 700 AD and contains inscriptions made around 950 AD. It is believed there were two distinct temples, built separately for Shiva and Parvathi, the consort to Lord Shiva, by the Pandyan kings. The Sangili Mandapam, a big terraced hall, linking both these temples, was built in the 17th century. The towers also date back to the early 17th century. Vishnu and Agastya are believed to have worshipped Shiva here.

The Nellaiappar temple car weighs approximately 400 tons and is the third largest temple car in Tamil Nadu. It is also said to be the largest human-powered car in South India. The car's axle was fabricated in steel during the British colonial period. Recently, steel rims were also used to reinforce the gigantic yet ageing wooden wheels. The Aani Car festival is the most popular festival associated with the temple, and the five cars (for Vinayakar, Murugan, Nellaiappar, Kanthimathi and Sandikaeswarar) by themselves are minor landmarks in the City.
Nindrasir Nedumaran, who reigned in the seventh century AD, contributed by constructing and renovating important parts in the temple. A beautiful garden next to the Mandapam, designed by Thiruvengadakrishna Mudaliar in 1756, welcomes visitors with many colourful and fragrant flowers. A square Vasantha Mandapam with 100 pillars is situated in the midst of this garden.

The Nellaiappar Temple is bigger than the Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple, though the latter is much more popular owing to its historical importance. Near Tirunelveli, are the nine Vaishnavite temples dedicated to Vishnu (the Alwar Nava Tiruppatis), the Krishnapuram Venkatachalapati temple with its brilliant sculptural work, Tiruchendur with its grand and imposing temple dedicated to Subramanya, and Kutralam a popular tourist resort with its charming waterfalls and abundant natural beauty. The region between Tirunelveli and Kutralam abounds in natural splendour. Mention must be made of Tenkasi, Papanasam and Ambasamudram. Further, Kanyakumari the Southernmost tip of India is only a couple of hours away from Tirunelveli.

Bishop Corrie named it as Holy Trinity Church on 30 January 1836. Bishop Stephen Neill raised the status of the Church into a cathedral. The church at Samathanapuram was renovated, extended and rebuilt. The congregations in the Pastorate are Holy Trinity Cathedral, Palayamkottai, Christ Church, Kokarakulam, Christ Church, Vannarpettai and St. John's Church, Adaikalapuram. In 1996, Rev Anand Asir, Rev Vedanbu and Rev Joshva Raja were the priests in the Cathedral. There are around 1500 families in this congregation which is around 6000 believers/members - the largest congregation in the Tirunelveli diocese. The four part (treble, alto, tenor and bass) singing of the Holy Trinity Cathedral Choir is popular. The choir follows the CMS
and Anglican tradition in all its activities. Mr. Samuel Gunaseelan is the present choirmaster.

Sri Varadharaja Perumal Kovil is situated in Tirunelveli Junction, on the banks of the Perennial River Thamirabarani. It is an ancient and reputed Vishnu temple. Tenkasi is a great City of Nellai, it contains a Kasiviswanathar Temple.

The Mela Thiruvenkatangapuram Temple is located 7 to 10 km South West of Tirunelveli, on the banks of Perennial River Thamirabarani. Also known as Thirunankovil, it has Lord Srinivasa as the deity.

It resembles the Thirupathi. Near this temple about ¼ Km., to the East lies the “Taen Kalahasthi” Temple which crowns Lord Shiva. First Lord Shiva is prayed followed by Varadharaja Perumal and then the “Taen Thirupathi Perumal”.

The Holy Trinity Cathedral, Palayamkottai, a big, elegant and beautiful Church, was built in 1826 by Rev. CTE Rhenius — the Apostle of Tirunelveli (Charles Theophilus Ewald Rhenius), and opened to public for worship on 26 June 1826. Bishop Corrie named it as Holy Trinity Church on 30 January 1836. Bishop Stephen Neill raised the status of the Church into a Cathedral. The Holy Trinity Cathedral Church is also known as "Needle Like Tower" (Ousi Kopuram) referring the structure of the tower. Many renovations and additions were made to this structure. This church still serves as a nucleus for this massive Cathedral which developed in later years. Church of glorinda is located one kilometre East to holy cathedral.

Tirunelveli District, or more specifically, Palayamkottai, is called the Oxford of South India as the City has excellent educational institutions. The Manonmaniam Sundaranar University is named after the famous poet who penned the Tamil Thai Vazhthu, the official song of
the state. This University has more than 24 Departments, and offers some unique courses in Tamil Nadu, like Criminology and Criminal justice. Prof. R.T. Sabapathy Mohan is the current Vice Chancellor.

To improve the quality of technical education in the Southern parts of Tamil Nadu, Anna University Tirunelveli was established in 2007. The University offers a variety of engineering and technology courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate streams. Research facilities are being established in a start-of-the-art campus near Palayamkottai. Einstein College of Engineering at Sir C.V. Raman Nagar, in Tirunelveli.

The City has many prestigious old Government and private colleges in the medical, legal, engineering, arts, pharmaceutical and physiotherapeutic fields. Tirunelveli Medical College and the Government College of Engineering, Tirunelveli are professional colleges run by the Government of Tamil Nadu. St. Xavier's College run by Jesuits, St. John's College and Sarah Tucker College run by CSI Diocese, MDT Hindu College and Sadakathulla Appa College are well-known arts colleges. St. Xavier's College Palayamkotai is one of the few colleges which became autonomous very early. The college takes pride in having amongst its large alumni, eminent people like the politician Vaiko, Peter Alphonse and Arunachalam.

Popular higher secondary schools in Tirunelveli are Jayendra Golden jubilee, Jayendra silver jubilee, Pushpalatha School, Rose Mary Schools, Bell School, MDT Hindu College School, Schafter School, St. Xavier's School, St. John's School, Angelo, Cristuraja, Little Flower School, Chinmaya Vidhyalaya, Sarah Tucker School and St. Ignatius' Convent Higher Secondary School. Some schools like Bell School, Jeyendra golden jubilee school and Sarah Tucker have managed to make international connections with foreign schools and run active student
exchange projects. Jayendra golden jubilee school have regular interactions with "Mill Hill" School in London, UK. Educational activities of this kind, make learning in Tirunelveli a unique experience for the local students.

In the outskirts of Tirunelveli near Krishnapuram on the Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur State Highway, one of the premier research organizations of the country, the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), whose Headquarters is at Navi Mumbai, operates its regional centre, the Equatorial Geophysical Research Laboratory (EGRL). IIG is fully supported and funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India and functions as an autonomous research institute. The equatorial observatory of IIG located near Tirunelveli pursues state-of-the-art research in the areas of geomagnetism and atmospheric and space sciences with well-equipped library and excellent infrastructure for research. With its state-of-the-art instruments, the centre finds a prominent place in the global networks of geomagnetic observatories and atmospheric radars.

The City has a District Science Centre, a satellite unit of Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, Bangalore.15 The centre is committed to the cause of science education through fun and entertainment. The centre has an evergreen science park in sylvan surroundings and is located adjacent to the perennial river Thamirabharani, along the highway to Kanyakumari. Permanent exhibitions, science shows, interactive guide tours, a mini-planetarium, sky observation through a telescope are some of the activities of the centre. Many scientific experiments prototypes planted in the campus. The building has two floors. Exhibitions and Competitions are also

conducted here up to school levels. The visiting charges are nominal. ‘Fun science gallery’ inaugurated in Tirunelveli — The Hindu.

Traditionally, it has been noted that the Tamil language originated from the Pothigai Malai, a hill situated in the Western Ghats near Papanasam, a small village in the Tirunelveli District. As per Brahminical legend, Lord Shiva sent two saints, Vyasa and Agatyar to create the divine languages of Sanskrit and Tamil. Agatyar came to Papanasam first and established the Tamil culture from the Pothigai Malai. Today, the Tamil language as spoken in the Tirunelveli District is called as Nellai Tamil. Nellai Tamil uses words like Annachi, unique to the region. Nellai Tamil is also spoken relatively fast, in comparison with other dialects of the language. The Tirunelveli accent appeals to all Tamil speaking people and it is considerably different from the Madras Bashai, which is a more anglicized Tamil dialect. Since Tamil is believed to have originated from the Pothigai Malai, Nellai Tamil is considered to be the first and purest form of Tamil. It is also said to be the sweetest form of Tamil. However, Tirunelveli accent is often satirically mocked in Tamil films.

Tirunelveli is popular state-wide for its famous halwa. The sweet dish is made primarily from wheat and sugar. Tirunelveli halwa is golden brown, has a jelly-like texture and contains a ghee, which gives it its distinctively greasy appearance. Best served hot, this popular sweet is generally enjoyed as a dessert. Tirunelveli halwa is said to owe its uniquely rich taste to a special recipe of this region, blended with the renowned sweetness of the Thamarabarani river.

The best places to buy Tirunelveli halwa is around the Nellaiyappar temple and avenue leading to the central railway station. The most famous halwa stores are Irutu Kadai Halwa, situated near the Nellaiyappar temple, Santhi sweets and Lakshmi Vilas. The name Irutu
Kadai of the former store derives itself from the fact that the looks of the store have been kept unchanged from the date it was started. Till date, there are no bright electrical lights or even a board to display the shop's brand. Besides this, there are also many other excellent sweet stalls in Tirunelveli Town that sell this delectable local delicacy.

Some of the unique and popular dishes in Tirunelveli are Nadar Cuisine, Sodhi, Kootan Choru and Ulunthamparupu choru with yellu thovayal. Sothi is a delicious gravy made of coconut milk and vegetables. This is served at marriage feasts, especially during the Maruveddu (reception) ceremony which takes place the day after a marriage. Kootan Choru is a hot spicy vegetable rice made with dhal, rice, vegetables and a mixture of coconut and red chillies. Ulunthamparupu choru is rice and ulunthamparupu (Urad Dhal) cooked together. Ulunthamparupu choru is taken with yellu (sesame seeds) and thovayal(spicy chutney). Amongst vegetarians, avial is a local variant of spicy stir-fried local vegetables. Tirunelveli avial tastes a bit sour and sometimes called as Nellai avial.

The Thiruvalluvar Bridge at Tirunelveli Junction was constructed in 1973 to ease the heavy traffic at the railway junction. The two tier bridge has a length of 800m. The first of its kind ever constructed in India, it consists of 25 spans, of which 13 are bowstring arch (each with a width of 30.3m) and 12 are single tier RCC girders, each with a width of 11.72m.

Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai being located on either banks of the Thamirabarani River, they are often referred to as twin cities. Palayamkottai is widely known for its educational infrastructure. The City has a rich heritage in pedagogy with its wide array of highly competitive and dynamic schools, colleges and institutions of higher education. Some of these institutions have been in existence for more than 150 years, and
have had their eminence during the British Raj. Amongst the most eminent are the Tirunelveli Medical College, Government Siddha College, Government Engineering College, St.Xavier's College, St.John's College and Sarah Tucker College.\textsuperscript{16}

Tirunelveli is one of the Software Technology Parks of India. With major cities like Madurai, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, in close proximity, and with good rail and road connectivity to various parts of India, the State Government has laid the foundation stone for the emerging software park. STPI has registered Rs.0.43 Crores of software exports during 2003-04 and the Software Development activity is expected to grow in the coming years. STPI-Tirunelveli is one of the international gateways of STPI-Chennai, which is located in premises of M/s. Global Software Solutions (TVL) PVT LTD. Moreover, BSNL is ready to provide high speed data communication facilities for STPI and thus Tirunelveli is on the verge of becoming an emerging IT destination. The STPI centre, Tirunelveli is situated in Vasanthapuram Tirunelveli bypass road.

A tiny village in the far South, Koothankulam Bird Sanctuary in Nanguneri Taluk of Tirunelveli District is favorite of the migratory birds. It is just 38 km away from Tirunelveli and is in the nearby Nanguneri Taluk. This village is sparsely populated. Migratory birds start coming by December end and fly away to their Northern homes by June or July after they lay eggs, hatch them and the young ones grow old enough to fly with the older ones. About 35 species of birds visit this calm but congenial village for breeding. It is under Tamilnadu Forest Department. The birds called Painted strokes are coming from North India and East European Countries to this place. Similarly the

\textsuperscript{16}Sarah Tucker College Palayamkottai - 627 007, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.
flamingoes which flew in mainly from the Rann of Kutch have hatched and reared their young ones in the village.  

**Thoothukudi Assembly Segment**

Thoothukudi, also known as Tuticorin, is a port City and a Municipal Corporation in Thoothukudi District of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Thoothukudi is the headquarters of Thoothukudi District.

Tuticorin is also known as "Pearl City". It is a commercial seaport which serves the inland cities of Southern India. Tuticorin is one of the sea gateways of Tamil Nadu. It is also one of the major seaports in India with its history dating back to the 6th century AD. It is located about 190 kilometres (118 mi) Northwest of Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) and 590 kilometres (367 mi) South of Chennai.

Tuticorin is traditionally known for its pearl fishing and shipbuilding industries. Thoothukudi became the centre of the Indian Independence Movement in the early 20th century, with leaders such as Tyagi Mohanavalli Vavdivu and Thalapathy Vennikalady, Veerapandiya Kattabomman, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, P.Kandasamy Pillai (popularly known as 'Pena Kana'), Tamil poet Subramanya Bharathy, Vanchinathan and Maveeran Sundaralinga Kudumbanar. In 1906, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai with the help of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, launched the first Swadeshi ship S.S. Gaelia from this port Town against the British. Freedom fighter Vanchinathan killed the then Tirunelveli District Collector Ash during the freedom struggle in Maniyachi.

The major harbour of Tuticorin is well known as a pearl diving and fishing centre. Tuticorin, one of the oldest seaports in the world, was the seaport of the Pandyan kingdom after Korkai near Palayakayal. It was later taken over by the Portuguese in 1548, captured

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17IT park to be operational on 2008.
18Upgrading of Tuticorin municipality, Chennai, India, 2007.
by the Dutch in 1658, and ceded to the British in 1825. The lighthouse built in 1842 marked the beginning of the history of harbour development in the City. Tuticorin was established as a Municipality in 1866 with Roche Victoria as its first chairman. It attained the status of Corporation on August 5, 2008 after 142 years.

There are three theories as to the origin of the name. They are Thoothu (Dig) and Kudi (Drink) - "Thoortha" means land "reclaimed" from sea while "Kudi" also stands for "settlement" or "colony". Hence "Thoortha Kudi" or "Thoothukudi" could mean a settlement built on land reclaimed from sea; and finally, the name "Tuticorin" was used by Portuguese who came here. Today the City is referred to as Thoothukudi in Tamil and in English.

Thoothukudi is South India about 590 kilometres Southwest of Chennai's and is geographically located in the Gulf of Mannar. The climate of Tuticorin is extremely hot and humid.

Tuticorin was a part of Tirunelveli Lok Sabha constituency. Tuticorin was separated from Tirunelveli Lok Sabha constituency and became a new Lok Sabha constituency. The constituency comprises the whole of Tuticorin District, which includes Vilathikulam, Thoothukudi, Tiruchendur, Sri Vaikuntam, Ottapidaram and Kovilpatti.

The economy of Thoothukudi revolves around shipping, fishing, salt pan, and agricultural industries. Thoothukudi has a host of other industries including power, chemicals and Information Technology. The availability of skilled labour, an electric generating plant, a container facility and a major port has made Tuticorin an important centre for industry and business. The Sethusamudram project, the airport at Vagaikulam, Koodankulam Nuclear Power plant, improved road and rail infrastructure and Nanguneri SEZ are expected to make Tuticorin an attractive choice for business investment. Tata Steel
recently announced plans to set up a titanium dioxide project in Tuticorin. Four national brand products are made in Tuticorin. They are VVD Coconut Oil, Agsar Paints, BIO FOOD CO’s HIP TEA and GENKII TEA (herbal Teas) and Venus Water Heaters. Earlier SPIC, TAC were large employers having an impact on the local economy. Nowadays the port and Sterlite Industries seem to be the major employers.

The Thoothukudi Thermal Power Station (TTPS) is the biggest power station in Tamil Nadu under the control of Tamil Nadu ElectriCity Board with five units of 210 M.W. each generating 50 million units of energy daily. The first unit was commissioned in July, 1979, the second unit in December 1980 and the third unit in March 1982. This power station is feeding about 1/3 of the total power demand of Tamil Nadu.

Tuticorin has been a centre for maritime trade and pearl fishery for more than a century. Its natural harbour with a rich hinterland, facilitated development of the port. Tuticorin was declared as a minor anchorage port in 1868. In 1906, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai launched the first swadeshi ship S.S.Gaelia in British India from Tuticorin Port. After Independence, the minor Port of Tuticorin witnessed a flourishing trade and handled a variety of cargo.

To cope with the increasing trade through Tuticorin, the Government of India sanctioned the construction of an all-weather Port at Tuticorin. On 11 July 1974, the newly-constructed Thoothukudi port was declared to be the tenth major port in India Second only to JN Port (Mumbai) in size. Thoothukudi is an artificial port. This is the third international port in Tamil Nadu and its second all-weather port. The port is also helping increase the tourism in the region. A new ferry has been commenced between Tuticorin and Colombo.
Tuticorin is also known to produce some of the best sailors and marine officers of the world. Sailors from Tuticorin are highly regarded by all crewing companies. Tuticorin is one of the very few ports of India where Mechanised Sailing Vessels are operated. These vessels are operated at the Old Port which is termed by the port authorities as Zone B. NYK logistics India Ltd is one of the leading logistics company in Tuticorin. Team Cargo Services is one of the leading customs house in Tuticorin.

Marine fishing, Pearl and Valamburi Chunk fishing are famous in Tuticorin District from the time immemorial. Thoothukudi is the main centre for deep sea fishing in Tuticorin District which has a lengthy coast-line of about 140 km. Prawn culture is very flourishing in Tuticorin District and earning considerable amount of foreign exchange. Now the prawn culture has been banned by the Supreme Court of India due to pollution issues. Tuticorin Fishing industry thrives since this is the place known to attract varieties of fish daily unlike other centres. Fishes caught here are either sold locally or exported. Tuna which is caught here is dried and sold as Maasi. Dry fish from Tuticorin is sent to Sri Lanka and many parts of South India. The fish-cake produced here are used for food for prawns and other fishes. There are 11 marine fishing villages.

There is one Joint Director of Fisheries and Assistant Directors of Fisheries in charge of Pearl-chunk fishing, Fishermen Training Institute and for technical guidance. There is fish-seed farm at Kadamba. Service centre/Base workshop of Tuticorin District is situated at Thoothukudi. Fish is produced and supplied to the poor at cheaper rates. There is a fish curing centre at Palayakayal, Punnakayal. There are 450 mechanised boats, 1300 vallams and 900 Kattamarans in Tuticorin District. About 5,428 Fishermen families are directly engaged
in fishing in these vessels. There is a Fisheries College at Thoothukudi. The estimated inland fish catch is 1,583 MT and Marine fish catch is 34,066 MT in the year 1999.

Next to Chennai City, Tuticorin has all the four means of transport viz Roadway, Seaway, Railway and Airway. Tuticorin is the only City in the world which has all of its public transport facilities like Bus Stand, Sea Port, Railway Station and Airport on a single road; traffic congestions are more likely to happen as the City expands rapidly.

Tuticorin City is well connected by road. The Major Highways are Tuticorin - Madurai - Trichy - (NH 45-B), Tuticorin - Palayamkottai (NH 7-A), Tuticorin - Palayakayal - Tiruchendur (state Highway) and Tuticorin - Ramanathapuram (state Highway). Was recently upgraded as part of the East Coast Road (ECR) Project which will soon connect Tuticorin with Chennai through coastal line.\(^{19}\)

There are seven railway stations located in Tuticorin Assembly Constituency. They are Tuticorin is one of the oldest railway stations in India; South Indian Railway began Madras - Tuticorin service connecting with the boat to Ceylon in 1899; Tuticorin City Railway Station is declared as a Model Station and several infrastructure developments are in process; Tuticorin City has two Railway Stations Tuticorin Melur and Tuticorin; currently the proposals for double lining from Dindugul to Tuticorin is approved by the Ministry of Railways and funds are allocated for electrification of the Madurai - Tuticorin line which is expected to be completed by March 2012; a proposal for connecting Karakudi - Kanyakumari through Ramand, Tuticorin and Tiruchendur is under survey; and the demand for overnight Train to Coimbatore is under consideration by railway authorities as local people have done protests and have demanded to union minster M.K. Azhagiri.

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\(^{19}\)ECR Expansion Work Soon, The Hindu (Chennai, India), 12 February 2010.
Tuticorin Airport is at Vagaikulam, 14 km from the heart of the City. It is an approx 20-25 min drive from the City. After several years of shutdown, Tuticorin Airport was reopened for commercial operations on April 1, 2006. Currently a daily Kingfisher Red, formerly Air Deccan Flight service between Chennai and Tuticorin is active. Flight arrives at 12:15 PM IST and leaves after half an hour. The State Government has planned to extend the runway (nearly 600 acres (2.4 km²) of land is identified by District Administration) and modernize the airport to handle more traffic and bigger aircraft. Paramount Airways is planning to start their air services to Tuticorin from various cities in South India. Chennai based 14.85-billion Consolidated Construction Consortium (CCC) is bidding for the construction and operation of greenfield airport in Tuticorin. The nearest international airport is Madurai Airport at Madurai which is about 150 km North.

Tuticorin Port is a natural deep-sea harbour formed with rubble mound type parallel breakwaters projecting into the sea for about 4 kilometres. The harbour basin extends to about 400 hectares of protected water area and is served by an approach channel of 2400 metres length and 183 metres width. Tuticorin Port boasts of 9 Cargo Berths, 1 Shallow Water Berth, 1 Passenger Jetty, 1 Oil Jetty and 2 Coal Jetties in Tuticorin Port. Works are being carried out to increase the depth of the canal and basin to handle vessels of up to 12.8m draft. The present capacity of the Tuticorin Port is 20.55 million tonnes.

Tuticorin has two main bus stations namely Anna Bus Stand (Old Bus stand) and New bus Stand. City buses connect both of them with other parts of the City. A network of Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation and private City buses along with mini-buses makes getting around Tuticorin a lot easier. Share Autos are another convenient mode of transport within Tuticorin.
In the recent years, the City has seen growth in the hospitality industry. Due to the growing industrial development these top rated hotels have come up in the past few years. Some of the notable Star rated hotels in Tuticorin are GRT Regency (3 Star), DSF Grand Plaza Hotel (3 Star), Sathya Park and Resort (3 Star), Jony International Hotel and Geetha International. There are a few standard hotels such as Sahana hotel, Sangeetha Restaurant, Bell Hotel and a lot of small hotels on the roadside that offer you delicious food for minimal price South Indian cuisine especially Sea food is the specialty of the City. Thoothukudi is also famous for all kinds of foods especially parotta which is one of the best in Tamil Nadu.

There is a tradition that the Tamil language originated from the Pothigai Malai, a hill situated in Western Ghats near Papanasam, a small village in the Tirunelveli District. As per Brahminical legend, Lord Shiva sent the two saints Vyasa and Agatyar (in Sanskrit Agastya) to create the divine languages Sanskrit and Tamil. Agatyar came to Papanasam and established the Tamil culture from the Pothigai Malai.

The famous eatables in Tuticorin are Tuticorin is famous for Macaroon (a biscuit or cookie made up of egg white, cashew, sugar and yeast), Plum cakes, Ghee candies, Fruit Mixer juice (Pazharasam in Tamil), Dried Ginger water (Chukku Veneer in Tamil), are also popular here, "Tuticorin Paraota" (roasted bread) is special as the roasted wheat is deepfried in oil and the curry (salna) is spicy and tasty and late night eateries can be found near Fishing Harbour in Beach Road.

Tuticorin has All India Radio Station which Carries AIR External Services for South Asia in English, Sinhala and Tamil (1053 kHz). FM Radio Stations in Tuticorin City include Suryan FM (93.5 MHz), Hello FM (106.4 MHz). CCL got the FM Radio License for Tuticorin under Phase II of FM Radio Licenses by Government of India.
Tuticorin City is the landing point for the first undersea cable of BSNL, Ltd. Connecting Tuticorin with Colombo. The optical fibre cable runs between Mt. Lavinia (Sri Lanka) and Tuticorin (325 km) with bandwidth of 20 gigabits per second, will be upgraded to 160 gigabits per second. This will promote the IT investment in South India by improved Telecom infrastructure.


There are 23 colleges in Tuticorin City. They are V.O.Chidamabarm College (of Arts and Science), Chanddy Engineering College, A.P.C.Mahalakshmi College for Women, Annammal College of Education for Women, Annammal Training College for Women, Bell Teacher Training Institute, Bishop Caldwell College, Chanddy Polytechnic College, Fisheries College and Research Institute, Holy Cross Home Science College, Nettur Technical Training Foundation (NTTF) - Technical Training Centre, Govt. College of Engineering, Govt. Medical College, Govt. Polytechnic College, Kamaraj College, Rajalakshmi College Of Education, Samuel Polytechnic College, St. Mary's College, St. Thomas College Of Education, St. Ann's School of Nursing, Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute, V.O.C. College of Education and POPE's College of Arts and Science.

Tuticorin and its surroundings is called the nursery of volleyball. Kamaraj, former student of St. Xaviers Higher Secondary School, represented India in volleyball. Moses Jeevanandam, former student of Caldwell Higher Secondary School, represented India in basketball. In the 1980s, Tuticorin basketball coach Renga Chari, or "Chari", trained many basketball players in this region. Moses Jeevanandam is among them. Piramanayagam, former student of St.
Marys Boys Hr. Sec. School, represented India in Kabbadi. Tharuvai stadium hosts most of the local matches and is maintained by Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu. It includes 400m Athletic Track, 25m Swimming Pool, a Basketball Court, a Boxing Ring a Football Ground, 2 Hockey Grounds, a Multi Gym, a Squash Court, a Synthetic Hockey Training Ground (25x30m) and a Volleyball Court. Tuticorin Gymkhana Club has two Synthetic Turf Tennis Courts, Tuticorin is the only other place after Chennai in Tamil Nadu to have this modern facility. There are very few shopping malls in the City and a few more are under construction. Notable malls in the City are DSF Grand Plaza and Mangal Mall.

There are 5 Parks in Tuticorin City. They are Roche Park is situated on the Southern corner of the City on the way to harbour, Harbour Beach park is situated near the harbor guest house. Locals throng this beach on weekends, Nehruji Park is in the Northern side of the City. Its maintenance is in a pitiable condition now, Rajaji Park near Government Hospital which is full of trees and Teppakulam park around the Sundara Vinayagar Temple tank in the heart of the City.

There are 5 Main Cinema Halls in Tuticorin City. They are Raj cine complex, Balakrishna Talkies, Cleopatra, KSPS Ganapathy kalai arangam and Mini Charles.

There are eight important notables in Tuticorin City. They are India’s second largest producer of salt, Gateway of Tamil Nadu, largest power producing City in India by 2015, one of the India’s major port, India’s largest copper smelter plant located, one of the oldest Railway station in Tamil Nadu, Athimarapatty, one of the most beautiful village in the District, has very vast paddy field, this village attracts many birds during summer from foreign countries and Tuticorin is believed to have many natural resources to utilize.
Palayamkottai Assembly Segment

Palayamkottai "Oxford of South India" - is a Town in the Tirunelveli District in the State of Tamil Nadu. It is a part of Tirunelveli Corporation. It is on the Eastern bank of the Thamirabarani river, while its twin Cities Tirunelveli is on the Western bank.

The archaic word Palayam in Tamil means a small administrative region or District. A Kottai is a fort. The portmanteau Tamil word Palayamkottai was hence derived historically from an ancient fort that was in the centre of the region. Today, the fort lies in ruins and is almost camouflaged by its surrounding old residential edifices. To anyone who reads about Palayamkottai for the first time, it may be surprising to see that atlases and other books refer to the City with both, an M or an N. This uncertainty is because the actual Tamil word for the City uses an alphabet that is phonetically between M and N, and sometimes even completely substituted by G (pronounced Palayangkottai in colloquial Tamil). Natively speaking, it is hence correctly pronounced as Palayamnkottai. Historically during the British Raj, the area was referred to as Palancottah, Pallar(n) Kottai (Devendra Kula Vellalar) and also Palamkottah. The anglicization of the word was dropped by the locals immediately after independence, and the City is now called both Palayankottai and Palayamkottai according to official Government documents and records. For disambiguation, the City is referred to as Palayamkottai in this article.

Palayamkottai is situated on the Eastern bank of the perennial Thamirabarani river. The region is very fertile and supports a thriving agrarian community in the midst of many urbanized areas. Regular monsoon rains coupled with the Thamirabarani water, support the purely agricultural villages around the City. Palayamkottai is located
on the National Highway in close proximity to many bigger cities hence supporting trade and commerce.

Popularly called the Oxford of South India, Palayamkottai is indeed a splendid little student City. A typical midweek morning traffic jam would be because of thousands of school and college students rushing to their classes. However, traffic jams are rare because the quiet little City does not have too many vehicles on the roads in comparison to the much bigger metropolises of Chennai and Bengalooru (Bangalore). For more information about the educational institutions of the City, and the significance of it being called an Oxford in South India, read the Education section of this article.

Palayamkottai has always been a rather laid-back little City. Among the elite population, it is sometimes called as a Pensioner’s Paradise. However, in recent years, businesses are rapidly developing and local businessmen are opening up major outlets in capital cities in response to their regional successes. However, it was only in late 2004 when the first ATM was installed in Palayamkottai and it was an instant success. In 2005, the Government project of Underground drainage was undertaken and finished in about mid 2006. Similarly it was only in early 2006 that the City had its first traffic lights. In 2007, the City had a popular landmark - the District Police Headquarters, a remarkable purple building in the City centre. Close to it, is also one of the first Ladies’ Police stations in the Southern Districts. Although broadband (256 kbit/s) was introduced in 2005, it was only on New Year’s Day 2007, that BSNL announced 2 Mega bites broadband access in the City commercially.

The little City also has a Government Museum with a huge and realistic fibreglass Tyrannosaurus Rex which is very popular among the young people of Palayamkottai. The museum houses a small
collection of ancient artifacts found in the areas surrounding the City. Some of its literary collections include ancient Tamil inscriptions in palm leaves. Although the museum is well known locally, it is rarely crowded and somewhat badly maintained.

Palayamkottai also has one of the most popular Science Centres in South India, a satellite unit of Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, Bengalooru. Since the Science Centre lies between Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli and as it is difficult to mark a border between the two, it is often called as the Tirunelveli District Science Centre. It is a popular hangout area for young people, and is frequently visited by teams of school students to explore and learn the principles of science through the centre’s interesting outdoor equipment and experiments.

Palayamkottai has many hospitals and other medical facilities. Among them, Our Lady’s Hospital, founded nearly 50 years ago by a Belgian nun called Sister Delphine Bruyndonx, was and still remains one of Palayamkottai’s popular hospitals for people who are poor or disadvantaged. Sister Delphine was popularly called the Teresa of Tirunelveli by all the people who knew her, because she had served this society since a time when it did not have any electricty.

Government Siddha Medical College Hospital is the a leading siddha hospital, established in the year 1964.

CSI Bell Pins Mission Hospital and the recently renovated CSI Jeyaraj Annapackiam Hospital in Palayamkottai provide free and reduced cost medical services to the local community. Dental clinics like Captain Manickam, Doss, Charli dental and Raakshak are popular among the locals. The Tirunelveli Medical college Hospital - a tertiary referral center, located in the High Grounds provides free services to poor people. Many nursing homes like Annai Velankani, Kartheek,
Pushpalatha and Celin hospital are famous for their maternity care with all the latest medical equipment. Other eminent hospitals in the region are Shifa, Galaxy, Devi and Sudharsanam hospital. Muthu Damian Hospital near the Palay bus-stand offers both traditional Siddha treatment and modern medicine. Palayamkottai also has a specialized kidney care centre and heart centre. The City also has three blood banks. They are Aarthi, Bethel and one at the Government Medical college hospital.

Being a student City, Palayamkottai has many playgrounds filled with hyperactive young cricketers. Palayamkottai has two major public playgrounds: the Anna Stadium and the VOC maithanam. The latter holds field hockey and Kabbadi matches at both District and State level. Grand celebrations during the Republic day and Independence day are conducted by various schools in the Anna Stadium. The stadium has an excellent professional German Hockey Turf, which trains a lot of young and energetic teams. State Level Hockey tournaments sponsored by Bell Pins are held in VOC grounds annually. Anna stadium also has a very good public swimming pool. VOC ground is one of the notable ground here. A beautiful park had been built here in this ground, in order to cover the small children and youngsters.

There is a big market in central Palayamkottai, serviced by many bus routes. Also very popular among locals, is the Ulavar Santhai where farmers sell their products directly. The produce is very fresh and very cheap, and the market is usually very crowded in the morning with eager housewives excersing their haggling skills with the illiterate farmers. The success of the Ulavar Santhai market in Palayamkottai was under a deep speculation during the changing of Governments. Now, with the ruling party DMK back in power, (which originally introduced
the concept) the Ulavar Santhai is maintained well and is a popular grocery market for the locals.

Supermarkets like Aryaas and Spencer’s Daily Supermarket have revolutionized shopping in Palayamkottai by bringing all homeneeds into a common commercial zone. Although there are not many supermarkets in Palayamkottai, there are practically all kinds of shops catering to the local people’s needs. For example, electronic superstores like Viveks, Sathya and Vasant and Co., are prime hotspots for the digital lifestyle. Eagle Book Centre, Shyamala book centre and Velavan are exclusive choices for good books and stationery. Aryaas, Arasan and Supreme are probably Palayamkottai’s best contemporary bakers. The list is however, easily exhaustive. Palayamkottai being a small City, brings a visitor back to square one in terms of shopping for quality goods. Palaymakottai is also a very clean City with beautiful trees situated in the bank of thamirabarani river.

Palayamkottai has excellent schools for the blind, deaf and mentally handicapped children. These organizations are predominantly run by the Tirunelveli Diocese of Church of South India (CSI), they are Askwith School for the Visually Handicapped, Florence Swainson School for the Hearing Impaired, Bishop Sargent School for the Mentally Retarded and Shalom Home for the Aged and the Needy. Leprosy missions, orphanages and medical missions are also very active organizations in Palayamkottai. Palayamkottai also has an efficient firefighting service which conducts camps in local schools annually. The postal service is also a reputed and historic department with its statues of Nandhis (mascot of the Indian Postal department) at the facade. It also has the post offices, police stations, big malls, markets, etc.

Palayamkottai has an efficient bus network. Palayamkottai bus stand, or Palay Bus Stand as it is popularly called by the locals, was
the major connecting hub of the bus network. In 2004, Ex-Chief Minister Jayalalithaa inaugurated a major new bus terminal in the highway near the Tirunelveli bypass road. The new bus terminal connects Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli in an extensive network of neighbouring towns, cities and also the major metropolitan cities of Chennai, Bengalooru and Hyderabad. The Palayamkottai bus terminal is also a major stopover for all buses going to Kanyakumari and Nagercoil. There are also numerous connections between the local Palayamkottai bus-stops and Tirunelveli Town.

Share-autos ply extensively along Palayamkottai’s streets and are easy to flag down. The regular yellow-black Greaves Garuda autorickshaws, although plenty in number, are considered to be the common man’s taxis of Palayamkottai. Autorickshaw drivers are known to overcharge tourists. Cars as taxis, are generally only available in taxi stands where tourists and locals use them to travel to short distances outside of the City. As a common practise, people of Palayamkottai or Tirunelveli do not use taxis as an alternate public transportation to buses or trains.

The City has several famous Hindu temples. The Gopalaswamy Temple, Siva Temple, Ramar Temple, and Amman (goddess) temples. Dasara is a popular Hindu festival in this region. The renovation of the lord Gopalaswamy temple was completed by the Government of Tamil Nadu recently. It is a Vaishvanite temple symbolizing the cultural and architectural ancestry of the City. The herbal wall paintings found inside the sanctum sanctorum are considered rare. After renovation, the Azhagiyamannar Rajagopalswamy Temple, built in 11th century, popularly known as Gopalasamy Temple celebrated Kumbhabhishekham. Popular temples in Palayamkottai are also located in Maharajanagar, Perumalpuram and Shanthi nagar. In
particular, Aayirathamman temple and Thoothuvari temple (in its vicinity) are notable temples. Aazhigudi Maradachan with a monolithic 20 ft (6.1 m) high Ayyanar statue is also popular.

A popular mosque in the City is located in old Police Hospital road, with hundreds of Islamic followers chanting their prayers regularly. Melapalayam is the exclusive Muslim quarter of the City, with numerous mosques and schools for children of Islamic parents.

The City is a main hub in South Tamil Nadu for Christian missionaries and there are a lot of churches affiliated to Tirunelveli Diocese Church of South India (CSI), Society Of Jesus and others.

The biggest and most widely recognized church in Palayamkottai is The Holy Trinity Cathedral of CSI at Murugankurichi. With its prominent centenary 35m high steeple, it is fondly called the 'Oosi Gopuram' (Needle Tower). Extensive renovations of the church were done during the period of Rev.Anand Asir, Rev.Dr.Joshva Raja and Rev.Vedhanbu, who worked as priests in the Trinity Cathedral in Palayamkottai. The District's first church, Clarinda Church was founded and consecrated in 1860 by a Brahmin lady who was the first convert in the Southern Districts. The periphery of this tiny church has a cemetery with wonderfully decorated tombstones from England.

St.Francis Xavier who was responsible for propagation of Christianity in the 16th century in Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu had travelled to Palayamkottai. Fr.Joseph Constantine Beschi SJ, better known in Tamil as 'Veeramaamunivar', propagated Christianity in the area. St.Xaviers' Cathedral church, situated at the heart of St. Xaviers' College and established by Jesuit priests, now belongs to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Palayamkottai. It is one of the earliest Catholic Churches in Palayamkottai. The St.Xaviers' College church is dedicated
to Our Lady of the Assumption. It is an architectural amalgamation combining Christian, Hindu and Muslim architectures.²⁰

Palayamkottai is rightly called the Oxford of South India. Almost all the best schools, colleges and institutions of higher education in and around Tirunelveli District are located in Palayamkottai, some of which date back to more than a century. The architecture of many of these old institutions are said to resemble the majesty, elegance and academic fortitude of the real Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The imperialistic old stone buildings maintain their name and fame after so many years of creating dynamic young individuals. These educational precincts with large squares, verdant gardens, elaborate cathedrals, strict headmasters and white-robed fathers create the ambience of an Etonian or Harrovian education.

The District Educational Officer (DEO) and Chief Educational Officer (CEO) control the activities of all the educational institutions in the City. Their offices are in Kokarakulam (behind the District Science Centre) and in Tirunelveli Town respectively.²¹

Most schools in Palayamkottai were founded by the Christian missionaries almost a hundred years ago. Today, it is these Christian institutions that own vast areas of prime properties of Palayamkottai. Schools like St.Xavier’s Higher Secondary School, popularly known for its discipline and good education, St. John’s High School, MDT Hindu College Higher Secondary School and Schafter High School have roughly 12,000 boys altogether, M.N. Abdur Rahman Higher Secondary School, High Ground Girls Schools like St.Ignatius’ Convent Higher Secondary School and Sarah Tucker have over 10,000 girls

enrolled. These girls' schools are very popular for their strict code of conduct and extraordinary skills level of their huge young girls' population. It is mostly these institutions that employ the large teaching community of Palayamkottai.

In recent years, schools in Palayamkottai have gained a state-level recognition and some are even known all around South India. Schools like Bell School have an excellent infrastructure that rival international schools in the cities. With about 2500 elite students, some of whom have represented the State in National Level Athletic Championships, the school has had a tremendous recognition in less than 15 years. Bell School is also very popular for its extraordinary children's activities, extravagant celebrations and educational excellence. Other popular schools in Palayamkottai like Rose Mary School, Magadalene, Chinmaya, Francis Xavier, Jeyandra, Angelo and Little Flower are all private institutions that compete with each other for State ranks among their higher secondary students.

Soon after completing Higher Secondary education, most young people opt for a college education right within the City. Their wide range of options include excellent medical colleges like the Tirunelveli Medical College and Govt. Siddha Medical College; engineering colleges like the Government Engineering College and Francis Xavier Engineering College; Arts and Science colleges like St. Xavier's College, St. John's College, MDT Hindu College and Sarah Tucker College (STC), most of these being over 100 years old. St.Xavier's College recently celebrated its 150th anniversary of the Jesuit Priests who founded the great institution. The college truly resembles those in Oxford and Cambridge, with huge, historic and monumental stone structures. The college has also opened up a stunning new library in 2005 with many modern amenities for the student generation of today. The campus also has halls
of residences for its large number of resident students. St.Xavier's co-
education and St.John's boys-only college with an age restriction for
admission, similar to most other colleges in India. Sarah Tucker College,
established in 1895 by the Christian Missionary Society, was the first
college for women in South India. It is named after Ms. Sarah Tucker, a
physically challenged lady confined to her room in England, who was
moved by the reports of the appalling condition of the women in this
region due to their illiteracy. She stepped in with a crusading spirit to
provide education and uplift them. This girls-only college has over eleven
departments of education today. The Government Siddha Medical college
and Hospital is a pioneering institution in Siddha Medicine in Tamil
Nadu, established in the year 1964. Tirunelveli Medical college, also
located in Palayamkottai, is a leading institution in the field of medical
studies.

Palayamkottai also has a jail, which housed several eminent
people during the pre-independence era and afterwards. Tamil language
poet Subramanya Bharathi spent a part of his life here. The District
Central Jail is notable for its large capacity and tight security. The
prison is a popular landmark along the periphery of the City. Even the
present Chief Minister, Dr.Kalaignar Karunanidhi was once held in
Palayamkottai jail.

The City is expected to grow rapidly in a few years because of
the large number of professional students that it produces from its
Engineering and Medical colleges. Young entrepreneurs are now
abundant and the environment is rapidly modernising with huge
billboards, great restaurants, popular malls and big retail shops. The
City has already revamped its police headquarters, telecommunications
offices, District Court and many other Government bodies - which are all
positive signs of a modernizing metropolitan society. Residential areas in
Palayamkottai are getting to have unique styles, excellent roads and public utilities, along with numerous high-rise apartments in the horizon. Beautiful villas with swimming pools are becoming commonplace, along with many gyms, modern eateries and stocked libraries. Palayamkottai Assembly Constituency is a part of Tirunelveli (Lok Sabha constituency).  

**Vilathikulam Assembly Segment**

Vilathikulam is a panchayat Town in Thoothukudi District in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is a small Town near the Southern tip of mainland India. Vilathikulam is located in the heart of the Karisal Kaadu region. The soil in this area is black and has a clay-like stickiness.

The climate of Karisal Kaadu is semi-arid, with hot and dry summers. Both the temperature and humidity are usually high, being close to the equator and barely 25 kilometres from the shore. The clay-like soil retains moisture well; although crops like paddy and sugarcane can never be grown in this area, many 'punsei' crops such as green chili and sunflower can be grown. Only a few kinds of tree grow in the Vilathikulam region: palm trees, umbrella-like thorny trees called "Kuda maram" in Tamil, and thorny bushes.

Vilathikulam is a peaceful little Town, on the Northern bank of the Vaipar river, which has water flowing only 15 to 25 days per year. But it is a major attraction as the bridge connecting the Vilathikulam Town on the Southern side to the Kovilpatti and Tuticorin routes gets submerged completely. It is a single lane bridge constructed during the British Era and is about 1.5 km in length. When there are buses or trucks needing to cross, they flash their lights and the other side, the

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traffic waits. Since the traffic volume is very low, it does not result in traffic snarls. As the panacea of water problem a dam has been constructed across Vaipar in 2006.

Vilattikulam is located at 9.17°N 78.17°E9.17; 78.17. It has an average elevation of 31 m (102 ft). Kovil Patti Near 35.3 km.

Vilathikulam owes its name to a temple pond. "Vila" + "Athi" + "Kulam". Meenakshi Amman Temple The temple has a temple pond, which had a "Vila" tree and an "Athi" tree. Hence the name. Every year during Chitrai month, ( same day and dates as of Madurai Meenakshi amman Temple), Chitrai Festival is celebrated and ended with a Car Festival crowded by the people from nearby villages.

As of 2001 India census, Vilathikulam had a population of 13,540. Males constitute 50% of the population and females 50%. Vilathikulam has an average literacy rate of 72%, higher than the national average of 59.5%; male literacy is 77%, and female literacy is 67%. In Vilathikulam, 12% of the population is under 6 years of age.

Absence of industries around Vilathikulam makes its economy to be solely dependent on agriculture. Main business of this area is dry chilly. Another main business of vilathikulam is Wood charcoal.

In sharp contrast to yesteryears, there are good private schools in Vilathikulam that provide quality education. People of upper middle class and upper class send their children to big cities near by for education. Despite this, from this little Town every year a minimum of 5 to 10 students join the Professional Institution. The panchayat Union school for primary education which is more than 100 years old, has brought out many brilliant administrators/educationists over the years. The people of this Town necessarily needs a College and Polytechnic for further development of the Town.
The schools which offer up to higher secondary education are Government higher secondary school, Kaviarasar Annamalai Reddiyar Memorial (Co-Ed Now) Higher Secondary School (Tamil and English), Sharon Matriculation Higher Secondary School (English) and S.A.N.Hr.Sec. School (Nagalapuram near) (Tamil and English).

There is only one talkies and it shows some old movies 2 shows, Evening and Night now the talkies was closed due to tax problem

The Vilathikulam people's major expectation is that the proposed Railway line connecting Madurai with Tuitcorin through Vilathikulam and Arruppukottai, should bring in more developments to the region. The project not confirmed yet.

People here should be fortunate enough to have good doctors around. Dr.Athimuthu, Dr.K.R.Rajamohan, Dr.Wellwisher, Dr.Mrs.Nalini Wellwisher, Dr.Rosaline Thayammal Dr.Padma nathan,Dr.Sangra Nathan and Dr.Balamurugan are notable among them. Even Government hospital is doing a great service. Most of the people still depends on the Government's medical service. A small concern of worry is that there is no any specialty hospital available here. Something is better than nothin..! People value this quote highly.Vilathikulam near another villages is Nagalapuram even Government hospital is doing good service and maintenance. Vilathikulam Assembly Constituency is part of Thoothukudi (Lok Sabha constituency).23

**Ottapidaram Assembly Setment**

Ottapidaram is the biggest Taluk in Tamil Nadu state. It is a small Town in Tuticorin District. Ottapidaram continues to be a tourism centre, but has accessibility with many places from Tamil Nadu. One can reach Tirunelveli or Tuticorin easily from anywhere and Ottapidaram is

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23*List of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies, Commission of India, 2001.*
very close to these two places (45 km from Tirunelveli and 22 km from Tuticorin). It is the birth Place of Freedom Fighter Maveeran Sundaralinga Kudumbanar, World first Human Suicide Bomber and the great freedom fighter V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, fondly called as V.O.C. V.O.C. is also called as "Kappalottiya Tamizhan" because he launched the first shipping company which operated ship between Tuticorin and Colombo against the British during the British regime in India. 'Kollankinar' amongst the Panchayats in Ottapidaram Taluk., famous in the Taluk for its agriculture activities. the surround areas are vanchimaniyachi South East about 1.2 km, the railway junction connecting Tirunelveli and Tuticorin. The railways will connect in 45 minutes of journey to each of the corporation cities. (Tirunelveli and Tuticorin) Southern railways is planning to lay double line for smooth to and fro movement of trains from vilupuram to tuticorin and the other phase from "vanchi maniyachchi" to kanyakumari, since long years.

The main attractions in Ottapidaram are the house of V.O.C. converted to a Library which houses some rare photographs of Sh.V.O.C., Ulagamman(Goddess) temple, Panchalankurichi is one other main attraction which is just 3km from Ottapidaram. It houses a fort constructed by the Tamil Nadu Government in the place of ruined fort constructed by Veerapandiya Kattobomman, the famous king who ruled from this place in the 17th century and fought against the British colonial rule. Even the portions of ruined fort can be seen and Jakkammal temple in Panchalankurichi, dates back to the 17th century. This is the temple in which Veerapandiya Kattabomman has worshipped regularly. The main agricultural plantations includes Bananas, Rice, Sugar cane, Greengram, Blackgram, Cotton and Sesame, are the major cultivation and there are more than 9 type of plantations are practiced along with those major crops. The people here are mostly farmers and
allied business people, as well sizable Government employees are also living here. The people here known for their bravery and courage in Tamil Nadu. P. Mohan is the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) since 2006 and he is one of the youngest MLA in Tamil Nadu. Ottapidaram has Two Schools. They are VOC Government Higher Secondary School and Mc Voice High School.

**SrivaiKuntam Assembly Segment**

SrivaiKuntam is a panchayat Town in Thoothukudi District in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is located on the banks of the river Thamirabarani.

SrivaiKuntam is located at 8.62°N 77.93°E. It has an average elevation of 17 metres (55 feet). The Town is located on the North bank of the Thamirabarani river. It is 30 KM East of Tirunelveli and 30 KM West of Tiruchendur.

As of 2001 India census, Srivaikuntam had a population of 16,214. Males constitute 48% of the population and females 52%. Srivaikuntam has an average literacy rate of 77%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 81%, and female literacy is 72%. In Srivaikuntam, 11% of the population is under 6 years of age.

The places of interest in Srivaikundam are Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal Temple, Sivan kovil, Muthavilul Hayrath Majlish, Kuris Kovil and Sri Narayana perumal temple Narayananapuram.


Sri vaikuntam Assembly Constituency is part of Thoothukkudi (Lok Sabha constituency). Srivaikundam Town Panchayat President Mr. Kanda Siva Subbu 'Bold text' of DMK.

**Evaluation**

In this chapter an attempt has been made to explain the details relating to the segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency, boundaries of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency, Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.

The details relating to the location of Tirunelveli, history of Tirunelveli, Cityscape, etymology, geography, climate, Courtallam, Papanasam, demographics, economy, administration, transport, roads, bus stands, railways, airport, media and communication, cinema theatres, cable television, radio stations, sports facilities, religion, tourist places, education, science centre, language, halwa, local dishes, major structures, Tirunelveli's twin City, software technology parks, Adichanallur and Koonthankulam are explained under the heading Tirunelveli Assembly Segment.

The details relating to the location, history, major harbour, origin of the name of Thoothukudi, lok sabha constituency, economy, fishery, road facilities, railway facilities, airport facilities, Thoothukudi port is a natural deep-sea harbour, bus stand facilities, hotels, religious importance, famous eatables, radio station, educational institutions, colleges, sports facilities, shopping malls, parks, favourite past time, main cinema halls and notables are explained under the heading Thoothukudi Assembly Segment.
The details relating to the location, history, monsoon and rainning, road, airport and railway station facilities, educational importance, popular landmarks, important places, Science Centres, hospitals and other medical facilities, sports facilities, market facilities, supermarkets, special schools, transport facilities, important temples, educational institutions, jails, development of assembly constituency are explained under the heading Palayamkottai Assembly Segment.

The details relating to the such as location, climate, peaceful little town, geography, etymology, demographics, economy, educational institutions, entertainment facilities, expectation and health institutions are explained under the heading Vilathikulam Assembly Segment.

The details relating to the location, historical importance, railway facilities, main attractions, main agricultural plantations, member of the legislative assembly and the number of schools are explained under the heading Ottapidaram Assembly Segment.

The details relating to the location, population and literacy rate, places of interest, educational institutions and Assembly Constituency are explained under the heading Srivaikuntam Assembly Segement.

The details relating to the profile of six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency reveal that three Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency viz., Tirunelveli, Palayamkottai and Thoothukudi form part of Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation area and Thoothukudi Municipal Corporation area. Therefore, the electorate in these Assembly Segments consists of more literates, Government employees, business people and private employees. The other three Assembly Segments namely Vilathikulam, Ottapidaram and Srivaikundam of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency form part of agricultural area. Therefore, the electorate in these three Constituencies
predominantly consists of less educated, agriculturists and agricultural labourers. As a result the selection of respondents in these six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency could reflect the voting behaviour of the electorate belonging to rural and urban areas.