CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to the History of the Ancient Greeks, "Inquiry", is one aspect of Research and an enquiring mind delves into the sources of history and written records, in order to probe into the minute crevices of knowledge and information.

Trevelyan (1987) defines social history as the history of the people with politics left out. Social history attempts to understand the life of man in the past, in the setting of societies and institutions. Similarly economic history deals with the state of Agriculture, Irrigation and Industry.1

Kulkarni (1957) in his presidential address speaks of "The division of social and economic history of any country or region as quite arbitrary like the periodisation of history".2

The walls between these areas of history are so thin that one hardly realizes where social history enters the area of economic history and vice versa. However, it would be worth while to understand the ingredients of these two areas of history.

Fineberg (1962) categorizes the life of the people in a particular period and their religious, cultural and economic pursuits etc., Economic history conducts an enquiry into the past to understand certain economic
problems, situation or behaviour of the people of a region in a given period. Economic changes are comparatively faster and more visible than social changes. "The studies in economic history are closely connected with the economic policies of the government which influence the economic life of the society. This is particularly true of the colonial period of Indian History."

In order to understand the historical and cultural background of a region or its inhabitants, it is necessary to cull out information regarding the physical features and the geographic demarcations that are so essential for the moulding and modification of human life.

The Statistical Hand book of the Government of Tamil Nadu (1961) acknowledges the fact that the district has derived its name from the township of Kanyakumari also known as the Cape Comorin which is the southern extremity of India.

Maclean (1864) estimates the boundaries of Kanyakumari as the Indian Ocean in the south, the Bay of Bengal in the south east and the Arabian sea in the west. Commenting on Cape Comorin Maclean feels that there is nothing equal to the beauty of Cape Comorin, which is the meeting place of the Gulf of Manner, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

According to Nair (1959) the Coastline is almost regular except for some stretches of land projecting into the sea at Cape Comorin. There are also minor ports in the district such as Thengaipattinam, Manakudi and Leepuram. Mahadevan (1985) holds that the district of Kanyakumari has a pleasant climate. This is reiterated by Sreedara Menon (1962) in the Trivandram District
Gazetteer, who observes that the district of Kanyakumari has a favourable agro-climate, which condition could enable the raising of various food and non-food crops.

Rao and Chandra Kanth (1984) say that there are 40,000 tanks in the whole state of Tamil Nadu, and "if tank irrigation develops there will be development of Agriculture and increases in productivity". The Nagercoil Collectors Office in Kanyakumari District Report (1968) states that the soil in the District is mostly the redloam variety. In the Sea Coasts, however, sandy soil prevails and the mountain regions are gravelly. In the low lands there is neither white sand nor sandloam which is found in the midlands and highlands. This type of soil is fairly fertile and a fine type and is particularly found in the valleys. The mid-land valleys, however, have loamy-clay with a high-sand content.

The Report of the assistant executive engineer on soil conservation scheme, Nagercoil (1985) shows that the heavy rainfall regions in Kanyakumari are prone to soil erosion. This type of soil erosion which occurs in the hilly regions is called sheet erosion which can be minimised by constructing cantour stone walls. The Divisional Forest Office Report (1978), Nagercoil shows that the main source for Agricultural growth in the Agricultural district is canals. The Geological Survey on Kanyakumari District delineates the geological formation of the district to be made up of marine and alluvial sands. Raised beaches of Manavalakurichi Cape Comorin and other coastal regions contain such heavy minerals of industrial use such as rutile, ilmenite and monozite etc.
Nagarajan (1975) holds that Agriculture forms the basic solid foundation of Indian Economy. But Agriculture without irrigation is beyond imagination. Therefore, right from the early times there have been schemes and methods to harness the waters of the river Cauvery, and utilise the same, to the fullest possible extent. Karikalacholan (50-95 AD) is claimed to be the earliest to harness the waters in this regard. Karikalacholan is stated to have been the very first to have constructed the grand Anicut across the Cauvery, which was subsequently strengthened by the later Chola king "Veera Rajendran" also called Karikala.8

According to Ansday (1972) the obstacles to economic growth is found in every day life and social systems. Society, divided on the basis of caste, is given to social undulations and economic disparity. Whatever may be the disadvantages to economic growth Rostow (1980) in his "Stages of Economic Growth" says that such growth is as natural as creations adapting themselves to their natural environments. Thirunavukkarasu (1972) in the Economic History of India, Part I shows how the people are not responsible for the poor economic growth. Tracing the development of taxation from 1793 to 1882, he shows how land tax levy has been at the highest, (80 to 90%).9 In Tamil Nadu state it has been 50% of the production. In fact taxation during the East India Company's period was more than what was levied by the earlier kings. Taxation a part of the economic policy in the eyes of Timberjon(1976) is both qualitative and quantitative. The examples of qualitative policy are

a) **The creation** of monopoly where competitive market existed or the other way round, the dissolution of monopoly if one has existed.
b) The introduction of custom union.

c) The Nationalisation of Industries.

Timberjon (Ibid) expressing the views in connection with the agricultural policy in the U.S.A., states that such objectives ensure an increase in farm income, development of family farms and obtaining higher farm prices, apart from soil conservation. Mateer (1884), states that the farmers are the backbone of a country, yet they are not sufficiently fed. They work throughout the day with the blazing sun beating on their bare heads, and their feet in water. The outcome of their work fills their work masters granary but not their stomachs.¹⁰

The diversified culture of the subcontinent also plays an important role in this economic imbalance.

Ghanasholmsha (1860) in his “Caste Clash in the State” analyses the structure of caste in India. He says that there are only a few among the upper castes who are poor agriculture labourers and factory workers. Similarly only a few among the low caste people are better of. Even the better of households among the lower castes are invariably poorer than the poor in the high caste households. In the dominant class such as the self employed, the educationalist, the professionalist and the bureaucraft; these come from the upper classes.¹¹

MycheluglietmoJorre (1990) has found that the westernised Indians form an autonomous social group which is internally consituted and differentiated from the other component parts of the social body. As a result
terms such as "Westernized middle class" has become every day usage, are interchangeable and synonymous.\textsuperscript{12}

Viswanathan (1990) in her study on caste class and modernism, states that industrialisation has brought about the detachment of caste and economic structure and further states that negotiations are made possible by commuting to the city.\textsuperscript{13}

Bose (1985) in his study on caste Tribe and Female Labour Participation focuses on the caste literacy and sex based division of labour. This study conducted in the four villages of West Bengal, concludes that female labour participation is influenced by caste factors.\textsuperscript{14} Subha (1985) has analysed the caste relation in Nepal and India.\textsuperscript{15}

Siddharthan (1986) has recorded that the Kanyakumari District has four major castes - the Nadars, the Mukkuvars, the Vellalars and the Nairs. The Krishnavakakar, the Muslims, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and others are numerically smaller than the above castes along with Chaliars, Chettlars, Assaris, Ezhavas, Kerala Muddaliyars, Brahmins, Barbers, and Vannan.\textsuperscript{16}

According to the Census of India (1931), the total number of Nadar, Mukkuvar, Krishnavakakar, Nair and Vellalar in Travancore were 402555, 34278, 12032, 868411 and 24093 respectively. These are the major castes of the present Kanyakumari District, Nadars and Mukkuvas are called Non-caste Hindus or Avarnas and the Vellalas and Nairs are called caste Hindus or Savarnas by their occupation and social status. Avarnas are low caste people and Savarnas are high caste people. The high caste people dominate the low caste people socially and economically.
Maurya (1989) has examined the reservation for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. He shows, that though efforts of the government to fill the vacancies reserved for scheduled Caste and scheduled tribes are continuing, the backlog of vacancies reserved for them is yet to be cleared.\(^{17}\)

A study of the Shadol district by Subha (1985) (a Research Scholer) shows that in the industrial sector while the skilled and semi-skilled workers came largely from the middle and upper caste families, large proportions of casual and contract labourers belong to the tribals, harijans and other lower castes.\(^{18}\)

This study shows that, kingship, caste, village, region and religion continue to be effective and tend to drive the workers. Rev. D.Gnanaprakasam (1867) in his letter to the Bishop mentions that the Nadar land lords enjoy ownership of the land. There is also mention of how these land lords buy Paraiabs and Pallars to work in their houses as slaves and thus retain their usual proud customs.\(^{19}\)

Thurston (1909)\(^{19}\) has shown that the scheduled caste people are prohibited from drawing water from the wells of Caste Hindus. They have to dig their own wells near their habitats and place the bones of animals round these wells to prevent access of Caste Hindus.\(^{20}\) Thurston (1909) has further recorded that the Scheduled Caste person when permitted to speak to a caste Hindu was obliged to hold his hand before his mouth, lest his breath contaminates the so-called high castes.\(^{21}\)

Aiyar (1912) in "Cochin Caste and Tribes" Vol.1 remarks on the distance a scheduled caste person must observe with regard to the higher castes. It has been said that the scheduled caste person must keep a distance of 90 feet from Brahmins and 64 feet from Nairs.\(^{22}\)
Mateer (1871) in "Land of Charity" portrays that the Brahmin women alone enjoyed the privilege of covering their bosoms when they went out, though within their homes they moved about exposing the upper part of their bodies.\(^{23}\)

Buchanan (1870) in his "Journey from Madras to the Countries of Mysore, Canada and Malabar" reveals that the Brahmins were rich land lords and the administration of their land was in the hands of Nairs.\(^{24}\)

Elamkulam (1961) in "Kerala Charithrathile Eruladanja Edugal" speaks of the Nairs as having the privilege of going near the Brahmin, but without touching him.\(^{25}\)

Canter (1862) has written that the Brahmins were exempted from capital punishments and their crimes were not viewed seriously but those committed against them were severely viewed and seriously punished.\(^{26}\)

According to Pillai (1956) after the coming of the Aryans, caste divisions took deep roots in the Tamil Society. The Brahmins live on separate streets called Brahmmanacheri.

Kunjanpillai (1931) and Elamkulam (1961) have described the origin of the Brahmin domination and influence in their studies in Kerala History.\(^{27}\)

As a result in the feudalistic ridden society, the influence of the Brahmin has been the result of economic domination and political mastery. It had become unwritten law at this time that kings who were not Nambudiris should be the sons of Nambudiris. Therefore princes of royal families were given education in smritis by the Nambudiris and they developed a hold on
the future kings even from their boy-hood. That was the reason why the Nambudiris were able to establish and maintain, the caste predominance and smriti rule with greater strength and effect here than was possible even in North India. As a result Kerala became the worst example of caste division and caste domination in the whole of India.

The Brahmins maintained from time immemorial the pre-eminence they had established over all other castes of Hindus. They devised a well-framed system of imposture in order to maintain unimpaired their ascendancy over the other castes and to keep the latter in that State of stupidity and ignorance in which they were immersed.

According to Hough (1839) the Brahmins were the only class exempt from all social and religions disabilities. They enjoyed perfect liberty of action. The whole frame-work of Hinduism was for the comfort and exaltation of the Brahmins. "His word is law, his smile confers happiness and salvation his power with heaven is unlimited, the very dust of his feet is purifying in its nature and efficacy".28

The Nambudiris were the Brahmins hailing from Travancore. Iyer (1912) in his Book "Cochin Tribes and Castes", explains the day to day behaviour of the Nambudiris vis-a-vis the Nairs.29

The Nair addressing a Nambudiri must speak of himself as "Adiyen" (foot servant) his rice is called "gritting-rice" or "Kallari", his rupees, "Coppercoins" or "Chembukasu", his house as "Kuppadu", (dung - pit). He must esteem himself very low as he proceeds, lest the least sign of insubordination should provoke and ruin him. He must speak of the
Nambudiris rice as "Pazhayari", (old or raw rice), his coppers as 'rupees' and his house as "illam" or "mana". The Nair must not call his cloth a cloth, but an old cloth or spiders web. The Nambudiris cloth, on the other hand, is called his daily white cloth (Vastram). The Nair while referring to his bathing must say, that he drenches himself in water ("nanayuka"-to become wet), but the Nambudiris on a similar occasion is said to sport in the water (niratuka). Should he speak of eating or drinking, the Nair must say of himself that he takes food or treats himself to the water (Karikadi) in which the rice has been washed; should he refer to the food of the Nambudiri, he must say that he tastes ambrosia (amritham). A Nair calls his sleeping "lying flat" while the Nambudiri is said to close his eyes or resting (went to pallikuruppu) like a Rajah. The Nair must speak of his own death as "Kuttum pizzachu" or died of sins but of the Nambudiri as "mutinnu ezhunnelli" (disappeared forever). When the Nair is ill he says that his limbs have become stiff, but a Nambudiri in a similar state is said to be merely unwell. When a Nambudiri has to be shaved by a barber the expression that his hairs are cut is invariably used. When he is angry he is said to be dissatisfied. A Nair cleans his teeth, but a Nambudiri cleans his superior pearls. Such were the eulogistic terms used by the Nairs and other low caste people in addressing the Nambudiris.30

There is an important interpretation of the Nadar existence given by Pate in Madras District Gazetter (1917).31 According to him the Nadars of Travancore claimed divine origin and believed themselves to have been created specially to carry the crown.
But according to Ravindran (1973)\textsuperscript{12} the Nadars were large in numbers performing agricultural labour and other kinds of useful work. They were always engaged in the active operations of rural economy. They never held office except of the lowest kind. They were treated by the higher orders with scorn and contempt. They were held by them in bondage. Their foreign origin has recently been contested with much force of credulity.

Dalton (1854) has expressed his opinion about Nadars in the south. Their language has been Tamil and when one proceeds towards the north it is Malayalam. Their rough unrefined Tamil language, furnished strong proof cognate with others that these Nadars have been another portion of the great aboriginal Tartar race, which first overran the soil of India.\textsuperscript{35}

There is a record (Matteer 1870) in the missionary chronicle that the Nadars have claimed that they are the children of Bhadrakali Amman, who is held to be an incarnation of "Parasakthi Amman".\textsuperscript{34}

Agar (1903) states in the Church History of Travancore, "the poll tax was imposed upon not only on the living members among Nadars but also on their dead."\textsuperscript{35}

Document III of the Directorate of State Archives (1859) shows how the converted Christians in Travancore began to revolt against the government by disobeying the rules and propagating that they need not serve the Government. In spite of the various repressions and revolts RT.Rev. George Trevor Spencer in the "Journal of Visitation of the Provinces of Travancore and Tinnevelly in the Diocese of Madras" speaks of how the boarding school girl students from the Nadar community have maintained a high standard of excellence in all fields.
Meccanzie (1901) in his book, "Christianity in Travancore, Trivandrum" portrays that the South Travancore mission was predominated by Nadars, thereby emphasising the significant role of Nadars, especially those following the Christian religion, in the development and progress of both Travancore and Tamil Nadu. Pathick (1851) further augments the above facts by holding that the Christians had made many changes in various fields in the lives of the people of Travancore.

The repression exercised, particularly on the socially Backward classes, even in the matters of dress were finally solved after the proclamation of 1859 which permitted the Christian women from the Nadar community and such other socially Backward classes to wear the jacket to cover the upper parts of their bodies. From this the interference is clear that partisan religious patronage was practiced and religious discrimination was very much in vogue.

The retrograde steps towards extracting unremunerated services from the Nadars is chronicled in Document III (1859) of the Directorate of State Archives. The Nittu, (palmleaf record) exempted Christians from rendering services without pay (uliyyam) to the Government (circar). The Madras District Gazetteer shows that the first conversions to Christianity from the Nadar community were made by John Debritto (Christian Missionary).

Apps (1870) records his twenty two years of missionary experience in Travancore, According to him, "the Nadars although in an oppressed and degraded condition, had many proud references to a noble ancestry and
were not only capable of mental improvement, but also exceedingly ambitious to hold positions of importance and take a part in the Government of the country. The Nadar is very exclusive in his feelings, looking with contempt on those below him and with jealousy on those who are his social superiors.

The letter written by Drew in the magazine Chronicle X in July 1846 emphasises that education and Christianity had given the backward classes the hope for an escape from their sufferings under the dominance of the Nair landlords.

Barthalomes (1800) in his “Voyage to the East” points out that the caste Hindus seldom tolerated the conversion of the caste members to the other religions such as Christianity. One exception, however, is that of Neelakanta Pillai, an able officer who belonged to a noble family and was also a friend of Delanoy (Dutch Commander).

After various instances and disturbances which were brought to the notice of the highest quarters, “The House of Commons” in August 1859 ordered that copies of the official papers sent from India touching on the recent disturbances in Travancore be printed. These papers reveal that the Christians were persecuted even for slight mistakes.

There is an interesting (or) important message in the Church of South India Silver Jubilee souvenir where Haris (1872) holds that though the Christian women were permitted to cover the upper parts with Jackets and Cloths, they were hatred by their enemies. But there were those like Haris who stood by them in their hour of trouble and gave them “The watch words “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”.
The domination of the Castes and their adherence to tradition held such sway that Pycroft who was the Chief Secretary passed an order on January 27, 1872 instructing that care should be taken to give countenance to the idea that the British Government of which he is the representative, recognises any exclusive distinctions, or the right of any set of men to prevent others from following in all matters of social or domestic life such course as they may see fit, provided it be not repugnant to public decency and morals.

Buchanan (1807) describes the Mukkuvar as a tribe who live near the sea coast and whose livelihood is from sea fishing.41

Siddhardhan (1985) holds that the Mukkuva Community is numerically next to the Nadars in the Kanyakumari district.42

The four subdivision such as Parayas, Mukkuvas, Murakkan and Pulayan have now coagulated into a homogenous social group.

Corner (1863) in "Geographical and Statistical Memoirs of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States", from July 1816 to the end of the year shows how the masters of the Mukkuvas had powers even to put them to death without being called to account. They had the power to sell them though according to Corner (1863), this was not often done without good reason. Corner (ibid) further holds that one may sell or kill a low caste man or women and Corner (Ibid), further supplements that the first slave to raise his hand to strike his master or mistress, or otherwise injure either him or her may be punished with death.43
Thurston (1909) has held that in the 18th and 19th Centuries, conversion to Islam was very common among this caste. But according to Nambiar (1966) the entire Mukkuva population at present is Roman Catholic by religion.

Next to the Mukkuvas come the numerically strong Vellalars of Nanjilnadu, (Kanyakumari) who were found scattered all over erstwhile Travancore.

According to Thurston (1909) the Nanjil Nadu Vellalas are divided into Classes, such as Saivam in and Asaivam. Most of these Vellalas are respectable men with good education, mathematical training and whose service are utilised for account-keeping in the Civil and Military Departments of the State. The Vellalas live in their own villages and have their own village organisation where office bearers such as Kariasthan (Secretary, or Accountant) function.

The law of inheritance of the Vellalas is a curious blend of the Makkathayam and Marumakkathayam system. (property rights system)

The Vellalas on the whole have occupied a position of social prestige second only to the Brahmins, thereby earning the dubious distinction of being more Brahmin than the Brahmins themselves (Thurston 1909)

Table 2.1 shows the Sex-wise distribution of the different castes in Kanyakumari District.
Table 2.1

Sex Wise Distribution of the different castes (in persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Nadar</th>
<th>Mukkuvar</th>
<th>Vellalar</th>
<th>Nair</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.75%</td>
<td>55.41%</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
<td>59.57%</td>
<td>(56.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14.66)</td>
<td>(17.67)</td>
<td>(12.07)</td>
<td>(12.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49.25%</td>
<td>44.59%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>40.43%</td>
<td>(43.53%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total | 67   | 74    | 44   | 47 | 232   |
|       | 100% | 100%  | 100% | 100% | 100% |
|       | (28.88) | (31.89) | (18.97) | (20.26) |       |

Source: Compiled from various studies with Kanyakumari Census Report I, II and III volumes (1961, 71, 81)

Table 2.1 shows the sexwise distribution of the four castes Nadar, Mukkuvas, Vellalas and Nairs. Among the Nadar and Mukkuvas 53.19% are male and 46.81% are female. At the same time in the other two important castes - Vellalar and Nairs, 61.54% are male and 38.46% are female.

Table 2.2 shows the age distribution among the different castes in Kanyakumari District.

It is observed that the below 15 age groups consists of 22.4% from among the Nadars and Mukkuvas and 19.78% from among the Vellalas and Nairs. In the age group of 15 and 60 and above there are 47% people among the Nadar and Mukkuvar communities whereas from among the Vellalas and Nairs there are about 32%.
### Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nadar</th>
<th>Mukkuvar</th>
<th>Vellalar</th>
<th>Nair</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.85%</td>
<td>17.57%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>17.02%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.62)</td>
<td>(5.60)</td>
<td>(4.31)</td>
<td>(3.45)</td>
<td>(21.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.31%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>38.30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.78)</td>
<td>(15.95)</td>
<td>(7.76)</td>
<td>(7.76)</td>
<td>(42.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>17.57%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17.02%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.60)</td>
<td>(5.60)</td>
<td>(4.74)</td>
<td>(3.45)</td>
<td>(19.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.96%</td>
<td>14.86%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>19.15%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.59)</td>
<td>(4.74)</td>
<td>(1.72)</td>
<td>(3.88)</td>
<td>(12.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>60-75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.48%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.27%</td>
<td>8.51%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.29)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
<td>(1.72)</td>
<td>(3.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(28.88)</td>
<td>(31.89)</td>
<td>(19.97)</td>
<td>(20.26)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid

Table 2.3 shows the education status of the Castes under study.

Table 2.3 shows the educational standard of different caste people. In the low castes, 25.53% are illiterate, 28.37% are with primary education, 35.46% with secondary and 10.64% with collegiate, education. Among the high castes 1.10% are illiterate, 13.19% have primary education, 59.34% have secondary education and 26.37% have collegiate education. The educational status is high among the high caste and lower among the low caste.
Table 2.3

Education Status of the different Castes

(in persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Nadar</th>
<th>Mukkuvar</th>
<th>Vellalar</th>
<th>Nair</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.39%</td>
<td>28.38%</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(547)</td>
<td>(9.05)</td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(15.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32.83%</td>
<td>24.32%</td>
<td>15.91</td>
<td>10.64%</td>
<td>(24.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(9.48)</td>
<td>(7.76)</td>
<td>(3.02)</td>
<td>(2.15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32.84%</td>
<td>37.84%</td>
<td>59.00%</td>
<td>59.57%</td>
<td>(44.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(9.48)</td>
<td>(12.07)</td>
<td>(11.21)</td>
<td>(12.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Collegiate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>29.79%</td>
<td>(16.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.94%</td>
<td>9.46%</td>
<td>(4.31)</td>
<td>(6.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.45)</td>
<td>(3.02)</td>
<td>(4.31)</td>
<td>(6.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(28.88)</td>
<td>(31.90)</td>
<td>(18.97)</td>
<td>(20.25)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Statistics (1986)

Table 2.4 shows the occupational distribution of the different castes under study.

Table 2.4 shows the occupation of different castes among the working population. Among the Nadars and Mukkuvas 3.28% are agriculturists, 26.23% are agricultural and allied labourers, 27.87% are fishing and allied labourers, 9.84% are professionals and 18.03 percent are having other miscellaneous occupations. Among the Vellalars and Nairs 11.43% are agriculturists, 22.86% are businessmen, 60% are professionals and 5.71 are having other miscellaneous occupations.
Table 2.4 shows the percentage distribution of the castes under study according to their occupations.

Table 2.4

Occupational Distribution of different Castes

(in persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Nadar</th>
<th>Mukkuvar</th>
<th>Vellalar</th>
<th>Nair</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Agriculturist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Agriculture and allied labour</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55.17%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Fishing and allied labour</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53.13%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.79%</td>
<td>15.62%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.35%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>46.66%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.79%</td>
<td>21.87%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>(53.85)</td>
<td>(15.38)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Statistics (1986)

Table 2.5 shows the percentage distribution of different castes according to their occupations.
Table 2.5 shows that out of the 6.25% of agriculturists, Nadars are 2.08% and Vellalas are 4.17% respectively. Agricultural and allied labourers are only from among the Nadars. Likewise fishing and allied labourers are only Mukkuvas. Business men are more or less equal in all Castes. But in the professionals, out of 28.12% percentage, 3.13% are Nadars, 3.12 are Mukkuvas, 7.29 are Vellalas and 14.58% are Nairs.

Table 2.5

Percentage distribution of different castes according to occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Nadar</th>
<th>Mukkuvar</th>
<th>Vellalar</th>
<th>Nair</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Agriculturist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.08)</td>
<td>(4.17)</td>
<td>(6.25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Agriculture and allied labour</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(16.67)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(16.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Fishing and allied labour</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(17.71)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(17.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.17)</td>
<td>(5.21)</td>
<td>(4.17)</td>
<td>(4.17)</td>
<td>(17.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.13)</td>
<td>(3.12)</td>
<td>(7.29)</td>
<td>(14.58)</td>
<td>(28.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.17)</td>
<td>(7.29)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.08)</td>
<td>(13.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(30.21)</td>
<td>(33.33)</td>
<td>(15.63)</td>
<td>(20.83)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keynes (1972) holds the view that consumption is the function of income and it increases proportionately as the income increases. Obviously, rich persons spend less in proportion to their disposable income on consumable goods than the poor people.

Angel (1984) in his “law of expenditure” has held the view that the rich people spend less percentage of their income on essential consumable goods than the poor and the percentage of income spent on luxury goods by the rich people is higher than the poor. Thus expenditure pattern has been studied on the basis of different income groups, nature of goods inter industry workers, intra industrial groups, between regions and the like.

Kumar (1975) in "Impact of Motorization of Small Scale Fishermen of Kalkulam Taluk in Kanyakumari District", has studied the income, expenditure and saving pattern of the fishing households.

Pazhani (1984) in “A study Report on the Economics conditions of Fishermen of Uvari in Tirunelveli district, “has assessed the economic condition of fisher folks. A sample of forty have been selected randomly. He has found that 95% of the population received an income only by way of fishing.

Subha (1985) in "Socio - Psychological prerequisites of Rural Development", has discussed the supportive, unsupportive and socioeconomic preconditions of development.

Ramanathan (1977) has conducted a study on Tribal welfare in Salem District entitled the “Role of Government and Voluntary Agencies" Selecting, a sample of 3% of the households, from each of the villages of
the nine taluks, the researcher shows that, 81% of the families borrow for family maintenance. About 85.7% of the households had borrowed for marriage expenditure. The marriage of a son is more expensive than that of the daughter among the scheduled tribes. However, expenditure pattern studies cannot ignore the influence of non-economic factors which are providing significant dispersal values than the economic factors. The study shows that the expenditure pattern is an indicator of the economic welfare of the people. It determines the standard of living, ceremonies and recreation, customs and habits of life, festival and celebration, and the expenditure pattern. The basis for the major economic activities such as production exchange and distribution change very slowly based on the expenditure pattern of the household.50

Society is generally divided on the basis of caste and religion. The Hindu community is further divided in to a number of distinct sections known as castes. Ramanathan (Ibid) further illustrates that a person born of a particular caste seldom changes his caste. Moreover, it is not possible for one to do so.

A poor Brahmin rarely comes forward to address himself as a Paraya who is eligible to enjoy many incentives of the government. A Paraya also will not volunteer to give up his caste identity. Such is the rigid classification that prevails in the real society from centuries ago. Ignoring this caste classification of society and trying to understand the economic behaviour is a futile exercise.

Aiya (1906)51 has summarised the festivals and ceremonies celebrated by different caste people. Ramaswamy (1987), examines the
manner in which the "mala" and the "maliga", the major untouchable castes of Andhra, have progressed during the three decades of preferential treatment. Beteille (1979) has conducted a study on caste, class and power in Sripuram village of Tanjore district in South India. The study depends mostly on primary data. This study deals with the phenomenon of caste, class and power and their changing relations. It has been found that these caste people differ in the manner of their occupation, income and expenditure. And these are also associated with Caste Structure.

Viswanathan (1990) in her study on caste class and modernism, says that the industrialisation has brought about the detachment of caste and economic structure and further states that the migration to the city negotiated the people's status.52

Subha (1985) in her article on "Caste Relation in Nepal and India" has emphasised that the Caste system is presumably adapted to the different ways of life and occupations. She concludes that States like Tamil Nadu and Orissa have quite a strict caste system than in Nepal. The whole society is bound up in caste ideology but the higher castes are even more orthodox.53

Peter (1979) in her thesis, "The History of Ezhavas of Kerala" has studied the Ezhava Caste of Kerala, their occupation, customs, festivals and ceremonies. Thus a few attempts have been made on the line of the social factors like caste and religion, her records that in the Occupational ladder, Brahmin, Nair and Vellalas are called high caste and high caste Hindus and the Nadars, Kammalars, mukkuvas, parayars and pulayas are called the low castes or Non-caste Hindus.54

Kattakayam (1983) has studied the social structure and change among the tribals. The strict observance of caste practices, have given birth to the undesirable phenomenon called untouchability.55
There is a tendency of categorising not only human beings but also their things and occupations as pure and impure, touchable or untouchable, (Kuriyan 1983).

Fuller (1976) in his “Study of the Nairs”, emphasises that even the proximity of certain castes were supposed to defile the higher castes. This extreme notion was carried to the limits of absurdity by the belief that pollution could be transmitted even by the sighting of a person referred to as a low caste. Malley (1934) has demarcated the untouchables as the depressed classes and sometimes they are called as out-caste Hindus.56

Malley (Ibid) commenting on the peculiarity of the system says that an untouchable could himself be polluted by another untouchable belonging to a still lower Caste. This rigid system of caste when viewed parallel to the incidents described in "Admirable Crichton" by Barry (1931) makes one understand that class and caste distinctions are not the prerogatives of any particular geographical locale or specific genre of people.57

Kunjanpillai (1931) in the Census Report says that the people of Kanyakumari district are divided into various castes according to their occupation and vice versa. Their caste determined their occupation. This occupational grading of caste also put certain groups as higher and others as lower. The so-called low caste people are the untouchables, the polluting and depressed classes.58
In the Travancore State Manual, Velupillai (1940), shows that the economic life of the people was on the basis of caste and religion. There were differences, however, among the different castes with regard not only to their occupation, but also their appearance, their dress, their food and drink, their habits, their ceremonies, their recreation, their festivals and even in the use of certain vessels and of course, the laws of inheritance. 

The Economic and Political Weekly vol.XXV NO:2 (July 13 1990) records in the article "Reservation and Class Structure of Caste" that the aim of reservation, is to promote the entry of the lower castes into all sections of society. Ghansyamsha (1990) in his article on "Caste Class and State", analyses the political structure of caste in India.

Shukla (1987) in his "Caste Politics in India", concludes that only a limited number of upper castes, who though numerically socially and economically very powerful, had started taking part in politics. It was only later that the Backward classes such as Yadavas, Kurmis and Koeris whose Socio-Economic position was better than other Backward castes almost parallel to the upper Castes, began to participate in politics.

Having seen the Geographic, Historic, Economic, and Social connotations of the people and areas of the study, it is pertinent to highlight certain social norms and practices as viewed by various authors.

vol:15 No:27 (July 5 1980), speaks of marriage as the most important of all ceremonies, celebrated by the people of all castes and religions and is decidedly held to be the most expensive. Each set of people or caste follow their own traditions, but often there are some who modify these to imitate the practices of the higher castes. The author holds that the prestige and economic status of the family determines the interpretation of these customs either by simplification or by elaboration.

Aiya (1906) in the "Travancore State Manual" has listed the various ceremonies conducted by the various communities such as "Umblical", "Namagarana", "Choorunna", "Karnavedu", "Earboaring", "Vidyarampham", "Thirumugam", "Padaikkuga", "Delivery" and "Funeral" as also, "Thalikettu", "Bethrothel", "Birthday", "Puberty" etc.⁶⁰

The tracing of the social economic practices of the area under study leads to the formulation of methodology and critical analysis of data, collected through primary and secondary sources in the succeeding third chapter.
Foot Notes


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28. James Hough, The History of Christianity in India from the comment of the christian era, 1839-60, 5 volums.

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36. Mecanzie, G.T., Christianity in Travancore, Trivandrum, 1901.


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43. Corner, op.cit.

44. Thurston op.cit.


46. Thurston, op.cit.


49. Junga Bahadur Suba, op.cit.


52. Susan Viswanathan, op.cit


55. Jacob John Kattakayam, Social structure and change among the Tribes, Delhi, 1983.


57. Malley, O., Indian Caste Custom, Delhi, 1934.

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59. Peter, op.cit.

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64. Nagam Aiya V., Travancore State manual, Trivandrum, 1906.