CHAPTER - III

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

3.1 General

Kanyakumari district consists of two revenue divisions viz., Nagercoil and Padmanabhapuram, each headed by a Revenue Divisional Officer. The Nagercoil revenue division consists of two taluks, i.e. Agasteeswaram with its headquarter at Nagercoil and Thovalai with headquarter at Boothapandi. The Padmanabhapuram revenue division consists of two taluks i.e., Kalkulam with its headquarter at Thuckalay and Vilavancode with its headquarter at Kuzhithurai.\(^1\)

3.2 People and Culture

The culture, religion, aptitude, habits, beliefs, talents, etc., of the people of the district have a bearing on how the district presents itself to others. Tamil and Malayalam are the main languages of this district. Hindus and Christians form a sizeable percentage of the population of the district and there are a number of Muslim dominated belts in the district. The caste system in the society has weakened to a great extent especially after independence because of the growth of education and improvements in transport and communication. Some of the communities in the district
are Nadars, Nanjil Vellars, Paravas, Vilakki Thalanayar, Kammalar or Asari, Nairs, Chackarevars, and Kerala Mudalis. Rice is the staple food in the district. Beverages like tea and coffee are widely spread even in the rural areas of the district.²

3.3 Population

The population of Kanyakumari district according to 2011 census is 16,76,034 persons, male being 8,32,269 persons and female 8,43,765. In rural areas live 5,82,107 persons and in urban areas 10,93,927.³

3.4 Education and Literacy

Kanyakumari district ranks first in the literacy level in Tamil Nadu. Literacy level in rural area is 90.95 percent, urban 92.40 percent and female literacy rate in rural area is 89.42 percent and urban 90.67 percent. Many educational institutions are functioning in this district to cater to the educational needs of the people.⁴

The forests in Kanyakumari district is verdant and virgin and said to be of 75 million years old. The area covered by forests is 50,486 hectares, which comes to about 30.2 per cent the total district geographical area. The forests were previously managed by the District Forest Officer, Tirunelveli South Division with headquarter at Tirunelveli. Consequent to the formation of Kalakad and Mundathurai sanctuary, Kanyakumari division was formed exclusively to manage the forests of Kanyakumari district with headquarter at Nagercoil from 01-04-1977 as per G.O. M.s.No.261 dated
26.03.1977. There are good trekking routes in these forests. Tourists and people who love trekking undertake trekking in the forest areas.5

3.5 Climate and Rainfall

The district has a cool humid climate. The summer is from March to May followed by the south-west monsoon season from June to September. October and November constitute the post-monsoon or retreating monsoon season with frequent thunder showers. The period from December to February is the north-east monsoon season. The rains are confined to the first half of the season and the rest of the period is of clear bright weather generally. Of all the weather elements, rainfall is the most dominant one. It influences plant growth and crop production in the district. The four well known rain fall seasons in the district are south-west monsoon period, north east monsoon period, winter season and hot summer period. Among these, south west and north east monsoon influence the cool climate of the district. The south-west monsoon occurs in the month of May, June and July and the northwest monsoon in September, October and November. The district is benefited mostly by the south west monsoon.

3.6 Transport and Communication

Bus transport services are operated by the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation Division III. Kanyakumari district is provided with good bus transport facilities. As far as communication is concerned, this
district is provided with good communication facilities such as Post and Telegraph and Telephone offices.

Banks play a significant role in modern tourism. The use of travelers’ cheques and drafts or ‘near money’ is found widely. Tourists prefer these types of ‘bank money’ because they ensure greater safety and convenience. ‘Credit cards’ have also become very popular these days. Banks are able to help tourists efficiently with their teller system, foreign exchange sections and money transfer and changing facilities.\textsuperscript{6}
3.7 Pilgrim Centres

a) Kanyakumari (or) Cape Comorin

Kanyakumari was once referred to as the Alexandria of the East. It forms the southernmost end of mainland India. This place has been a great center for art, culture, civilization, and pilgrimage for years. It was also a famous center for commerce and trade. Kanyakumari is named after the virgin goddess Kanyakumari whose temple is situated here. India’s land’s end, Kanyakumari is unique in being surrounded by three seas that is Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. Hence, the confluence is called “Thriven Sangamon”. Here one can get a breath-taking view of the sun rise and sun set at their best. The multicolored sand is yet another unique feature of the beach here. There is a lighthouse from where one can get a panoramic view. The government museum offers a good collection of sculptural art crafts of Tamil Nadu. It is one of the most popular tourist spots in the state and indeed, in the country. Cape Comorin is at its best during Citra Pournami (full moon day in April) when the sun and the moon are face to face at the same horizon but other full moon days are also special when one can see the sun set and the moon rise almost simultaneously, as if by prior arrangement.7

b) Kumari Amman temple at Kanyakumari

Kumari Amman Temple is dedicated to Devi Kanya. She is a symbol of sanctity. Devi did penance to marry Lord Siva. However, owing
to some misfortune, the wedding did not take place. She vowed to remain a virgin. Devi Kanyakumari is revered as ‘the protector of India’s shores’. One can even see the footprints of Devi Kanyakumari on a rock called “Sir paadha paarai” in the Vivekananda Rock Memorial complex. Men tourists who enter the temple should remove their upper garments. The temple is open for the devotees and tourists early in the morning from 4.30 am to 12.15 pm & 4.00 pm to 8.15 pm. Many Indians come here and worship at the Kumari Amman temple. There is an underground room in this temple that no one other than the Hindus is allowed to enter. 

\textit{c) Suchindrum Temple at Suchindrum} 

Suchindrum is a small village about 13 km from Kanyakumari. This holy place is located on the banks of the river Pazhayar, adjoining fertile fields and coconut groves and the temple is dedicated to the trinity of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma as, Stan represents Siva, and Mal represents Vishnu while Aryan represents Brahma i.e., Siva, Vishnu and Brahma in “One Form”. The ‘Than Malayan temple’ here is a repository of art treasures. The temple’s captivating gopuram, musical pillars and a huge 18 feet Hanuman statue are proof of the artistic skill of the 9th century A.D. It has an unique bas relief carving of Vandyke (female vinayaka). Men tourists who enter the temple should remove their upper garments.

Suchindrum means the place where Indra attained purification. Sthalapurana says that Indra suffered a curse from sage Gowthama, when
he stealthily cast amorous glances at Ahalya the wife of Gowthama. Indra had to seek immediate redemption. He came to this place where he attained purification from Lord Siva. The present structure of the temple is the work of a number of persons spread over a number of centuries. It is a complex of many beautiful structures constructed at various times and is one of the best specimens and a store house of the Dravidian style of art and architecture.\(^9\)

\textit{d) Nagaraja Temple at Nagercoil}

Nagercoil is the headquarter of Kanyakumari district. This is the largest Municipal town in Kanyakumari district. It is situated at 8.11 ‘N. Latitude and 77 28’ 41” E. Longitude within seven miles of the Aramboly pass through which runs the highway from Tirunelveli to Trivanduram and 19 Kms from Kanyakumari. It has an area of 4.80 square miles comprising a number of villages like Vadasery, Olukanasseri, Vadiveeswaram and Kottar. Kottar and Vadasery are manufacturing and trading centres.

Nagercoil owes much of its present position and importance to the efforts of Christian missionaries. A park, a stadium, several colleges, AIR and T.V station, boarding and lodging facilities and Railway Station are there.

The Nagaraja temple is situated here. Though Nagaraja (Serpent God) is the presiding deity, the images of Lord Siva and Ananthakrishna are also enshrined here. The images of the Jain Theerthangaras, Mahavira
and Parsvanathar, are found on the pillars of the temple. The Nagaraja is installed on the ground where it was originally found and the sands are scooped out and given as Prasadam to the devotees. The entrance to the temple is reminiscent of Chinese architecture of a Buddhist Vihara.

On Sundays lots of people come for worship. On Sundays in the month of Avani, this temple wears a festival look. On that day people from the surrounding villages come here and offer milk, salt and pepper and wooden toys to the deity. A grand festival is celebrated for 10 days in the Tamil month of Margazhi i.e., December-January, which attracts people from all over the district. The Nagaraja temple here is unique in many aspects.  

**e) St. Xavier’s Church at Nagercoil**

St. Xavier’s Church situated at Kottar in Nagercoil was built during the 15th century A.D. Although India has been mainly associated with Hinduism or Buddhism and even Islam, the fact is that India is also one of the pillars of Christianity in the world. Due to the fact that India was a former British Colony, it has many different churches and temples that are of interest to the Christian community. St.Xavier’s church is definitely one of them. The church records show that the church was built in the year 1600 AD. St.Francis Xavier came to India to preach Christianity. He showed the way for spirituality. When he came to Kottar he erected a church that was made by mud walls and wood in 1603. In the year 1865,
the church was enlarged. In 1930, the church was raised to the status of a Cathedral.

The annual festival is celebrated during the month of November-December lasting for 10 days. Car festival in the ninth day is the most important. During these festival days the shrine attracts a larger crowd of visitors from all over South India.

\textbf{f) Swamithoppu}

Swamithoppu is 13 Km away from Kanyakumari. Frequent bus services are available both from Kanyakumari and Nagercoil. Swamithoppu, a lovely village is the birth place of Ayya Vaikundaswamy, who was born in 1809. Ayya Vaikundaswamy through meditation became a spiritual leader and crusader. The Swamy attained enlightenment in 1833. The Swamy predicted future happenings about bio-history, politics, religion, caste, puranic sastra, social life, nature, science etc. The Swamy’s predictions were found true in later years. Swamy attained Samathi in 1851. Swamy’s preachings and predictions have been described in ‘Akilthiraattu’, which was written by Swamy’s disciple Arigobalan in 1841. A memorial of Ayya Vaikundaswamy is built in Swamithoppu village. Large number of Swamy’s followers and domestic tourists visit this memorial.

Swamithoppu has got a different type of temple with no gopuram, no image, no idol worship, no deepa arathanai, but a mirror is kept in the
sanctorum. The structure is based on Kerala Temple style. It was built 150 years ago. People belonging to different religions come here without any difference. This is called “Swami Vaikunda” temple. There is also a well in front of the temple which was blessed by Swami Vaikunda. The devotees believed that this water has some medicinal effect, before entering the temple all devotees should wear turban. Thousands of devotees visit the temple from Tamil Nadu and Kerala.  

**g) Aadhi Parasakthi Siddhar Peedam Temple (Shakthi God Shrine)**

Aadhi Parasakthi Siddhar Peedam Temple is located at Krishnankoil in Nagercoil. The concepts, ‘all are one’, ‘Humanity is the prime one’ are preached before the powerful God Shakti. Darshan timing is 4.30 am to 11.30 am and 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm.

**h) Adi Kesava Perumal Temple (Thiruvattar)**

This temple is dedicated to “Adi Kesava Perumal” in the Ananthasayanam posture and is considered as one of the 13 sacred places for Vaishnavas. The inscriptions found in the temple fix its age to the 12th century. Remains of old mural paintings belonging to a period not later than the 17th century are seen on the walls of the inner shrine. Wood carving of exquisite workmanship adorns some of the structures in the temple. It is about 11km north of Thuckalay on Nagercoil-Kulasekaram road and 46 km from Kanyakumari.
i) Kumarakoil

Kumarakoil is at the foot of Vellimalai hills. It is 15 km from Nagercoil, 3 km from Thuckalay and 34 km from Kanyakumari. The temple is built on the top of a hill about 200 feet high and faces east and can be reached by a flight of steps. Here Lord Muruga is in the form of a child.13

j) Mondaikadu Bhagavathi Amman Temple

Mondaikadu is situated on the sea coast, north-east of Colachel minor port. This place is famous for its temple dedicated to Bhagavathi Amman. The Amman is in the form of Ant Hill, which is about 12 feet in height and with five heads and believed to be a growing deity. The annual festival called Mondaikadu Kodai is celebrated in March for 10 days. There are several interesting stories about the origin of this temple. It is believed that the sick are cured if they worship this Goddess. Salt, pepper, wooden toys, silk cloths, black bangles, things obtained from the first harvest are some of the offerings made to this deity.

It is also called “Sabarimalai” for Kerala women because they follow 41 days fasting and they carry ‘Irumudikattu’ and come to this temple with spiritual feeling. All women make “pongal” during this festival and devotees have a dip in the nearby sea.14

k) Thiruppathisaram

It is situated 6 km from Nagercoil, with a beautiful temple. This
temple is also one of the 108 sacred temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is also the birth place of Saint Nammalwar.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{l) Peer Mohamed Dargar at Thuckalay}

There is darga named “Peer Mohamed Oliyullah Dargah” at Thuckalay named after the great philosopher Mohamed Appa, who was born in Tenkasi of Tirunelveli district. After spending sometime in spiritual pursuits in Peermedu of Kerala state, he came and stayed at Thuckalay. Being a Tamil poet of great eminence, he wrote many books on philosophy. It is said that he laid foundation stone for the Padmanabhapuram granite fort. The anniversary of the great philosopher poet is celebrated every year on a grand scale on full moon day in the month of Rajap. Both the people of Kerala and Tamil Nadu attend the celebrations irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{m) Thirunandhikarai Cave Temple}

Thirunandhikarai is a small village situated at a distance of 10 kms from Marthandam and 55 km from Kanyakumari. Perhaps, India is one of the countries where a large number temple in the world exists. Thirunandhikarai Cave Temple is definitely one of the hundreds of temples that are found in the southern most region of India. Thirunandhikarai Cave Temple is a very ancient temple. There is a symbolic pillar of Indian religion and culture. There are many sculptures inside the temple which are extinct now. The Thirunandhikarai Cave Temple is one of the founding
stones of the Jainism. Currently the Thirunandikarai Cave Temple is under the purview and care of Archeological Survey of India.  

n) Chitharal

Chitharal is a small village situated at a distance of 7 km from Marthandam and 45 km from Kanyakumari. It is famous for the rock-cut temple. Hillock at Chitharal has a cave containing rock-cut sculptures of Thirthankaras and attendant deities carved inside and outside dating back to 9th century AD. It was converted into Bhagavathy temple in the 13th century AD. Cars and vans can go up to the foot of the hill. One has to walk for about 10 minutes to reach the temple. The Jain images have been preserved by Central Archaeological Survey of India.

3.8 Memorials

a) Mahatma Gandhi Memorial

The Gandhi Mandapam has been constructed at the spot where the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were kept for public view in an urn before a portion was immersed into the three seas. The memorial reminds one of an Oriyan temple and was designed in such a manner that on Gandhiji’s birthday on 2nd October, the sun’s rays fall at the exact spot where the urn was displayed before immersion.

b) Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial

Vivekananda memorial is perched on one of two rocks separated by about 70 meters. Built in 1970, the memorial is dedicated to Swami
Vivekananda, the greatest social reformer and saint, India has produced. It is essentially a sacred monument, built by the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee to commemorate the visit of Swamy Vivekananda to “Shripada parai” during 24th, 25th and 26th December 1892 for deep meditation and enlightenment. This great Indian spiritual leader and philosopher, who stunned the world in the religious parliament at Chicago, preached the religion of the mind and the power of meditation. This memorial, constructed on one of the twin rocks jutting out from the sea about 200 meters offshore, provides an apt setting in a serene atmosphere where people from all over the world come and meditate. Vivekananda Rock memorial is open every day and attracts many visitors constantly.19

c) Thiruvalluvar Statue

A huge statue of Tamil Savant-poet, Thiruvalluvar has come up in Kanyakumari on the line of liberty statue of New York, The statue is refurbished with the Dravidian sculptural details and is a modern architectural delight raising over the rock situated adjacent to Vivekananda rock memorial. The statue is 133 feet high.

The ‘Cape Festival’ is celebrated during October every year to entertain the tourists. Accommodation is available in plenty as the government of Tamil Nadu and Kerala run hotels of Indian and Western styles.
A good transport network both by bus and trains facilitate tourists to visit this spot again and again. All tourism infrastructure facilities are available at Kanyakumari.20

**d) Kamaraj Memorial**

Another monument, Kamaraja Manimandapam is also very famous. This is dedicated to late Sri. Kamarajar. He was a freedom fighter and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He was also the President of Indian National Congress. Regarded as the “King Maker of India” Kamarajar influenced many political events in the nation. He was popularly known as ‘Black Gandhi’ among the masses. From a humble background, he rose to the position of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu through sheer hard work and political acumen. As a tribute to the freedom fighter and ‘Perunthalaivar’ this memorial was constructed where his ashes were kept for public to pay homage before immersion into the sea.21

**e) Velu Thambi Dalawah Memorial**

Thalakulam is a hamlet located in Kalkulam taluk of this district, 30 km away from Kanyakumari. This place is historically significant since it marks the birth place of the great revolutionary Velu Thambi Dalawah, a Dewan in the former Travancore state who opposed the British. His ancient home at Thalakulam village was once destroyed by the British. Later on, the home was rebuilt by his nephews, in which some of his personal
belongings and personal weapons employed in his fights against the British are kept.  

3.9 Dams  

a) Petchiparai  

This dam has been constructed about 62 kms from Kanyakumari and 43 kms from Nagercoil. This dam in Kalkulam Taluk was built during the days of the Maharaja Sri Moolam Thirunal across the river Kodayar. The construction of the dam was designed on the pattern of the Periyar dam in Madurai district. This 425.1 mts lengthy dam has a catchment area of 204.8 sq.km. There is a camp shed provided at the dam site for the visitors. The weather is very pleasant here. This place often attracts a large number of tourists. A pleasure boat service is available. Dense forests that are famous for their valuable trees surround the reservoir. These forests are also full of wild animals such as tiger, elephants, deer, etc. ‘Kanikars’ is the tribe that lives in this place but they are very small in number. The total expense of the construction of this dam is Rs.26.10 lakhs.  

b) Perunchani  

Perunchani is located 85 kms from Kanyakumari. It was built during 1948-53. It was opened on 1953 September 2nd. These dam sites are excellent picnic spots. Boating facilities and dormitory type accommodation are available.
c) Kodhayar

Kodhayar is one of the places of interest that is situated on the southern tip of India in the region of Kanyakumari. Kodhayar is a natural habitat in which you can see a variety of fauna and flora. Kodhayar is also called Kodhayar Lower Camp and it is possible to see bison and bears along with different wild animals. Kodhayar is about 60 kms Kanyakumari. However, Kodhayar is definitely a very nice park and a habitat that needs be seen when in India.

d) Mukkadal

This is a natural dam. T.Chitirai Maharaja constructed this. It supplies water to Nagercoil Municipality and it is also proposed to get water from here for Suchindrum and Kanyakumari. It is a very picturesque spot and ideal for picnics by groups.

3.10 Beaches

a) Sothavilai Beach

This beach is 12kms from Nagercoil and 12kms from Kanyakumari through West Coast Road. It lies in Puthalam Town Panchayat and is one of the best natural beaches of the district. Soft waves of shallow water with lovely sand dunes attract district tourists. It is one of the best resorts for holiday lovers. The district administration has provided basic infrastructure facilities like drinking water, shadow shelters, view tower, children’s play equipments and rest rooms.
It is a fine picnic spot. Frequent bus services are available from Nagercoil. The tourists can reach the beach through the newly laid West Coast Road which is a very beautiful drive along the sea-coast. It is about 7 kms from the main town. Sothavilai Beach was damaged in the big tsunami that took place a couple of years ago. However, now it has been rebuilt as a popular tourist beach attraction.\(^{24}\)

**b) Sanguthurai Beach**

It is a beautiful beach which is very convenient for the local population of Nagercoil. The beach lies in Rajakkamangalam panchayat union. It is 13kms from Nagercoil and 15kms from Kanyakumari through West Coast Road. Frequent buses are available from Nagercoil. The district administration has provided basic infrastructure facilities over here. It is a developing beach centre.

It is located in the southernmost part of India, and you can feel the fierce power of the Indian Ocean there. However, Sanguthurai beach is a pretty tranquil place with white sand beaches that sets a perfect background to the coastline. It is also possible to see Vivekananda rock from here in the coastline of Sanguthurai beach. You can also see a white pillar protruding from the sea at Sanguthurai beach. In addition its lukewarm temperature it is perfect for swimming especially in the summer time.\(^{25}\)

**c) Thengapattinam Beach**

Thengapattinam situated on the West Coast near Painkulam village
in Vilavancode Taluk has a fine beach adorned with coconut grove. As coconuts are abundant in this place, this might have derived the name Thengapattinam. The village had in ancient times, trade relations with foreign countries like Arabia. There was direct cargo boat service between Thengapattinam and other foreign maritime towns. Copra, dry fish, coir and shark fin were the main products that were exported.

Thengapattinam has the estuary of the lovely river Thamiraparani with its non-salty water entering the sea. The river backwater is surrounded by charming dense coconut grove. Boat riding on the river backwaters is really an enjoyable one. It is 35kms from Nagercoil, 12kms from Kuzhithurai and 54kms from Kanyakumari. Frequent bus services are available. Although it is the smallest of the world’s oceans, the Indian Ocean is definitely the most calm and most peaceful oceans that one can swim in. Thus, many people and tourists, who come to India, definitely go and visit the many beaches that are stationed especially in the southern most part of India. It is one of these beautiful beaches with its white sand and calm waters. Besides being a beach, it is the perfect picnic spot with its background trees which provide shade and comfort to the visitor.  

**d) Thekkurichi Beach**

Thekkurichi, a tiny village with lovely calm seashore lies near the West Coast Road. It is a lesser known sea-beach of the Kanyakumari district which lies in Rajakkamangalam Panchayat Union. Calm seashore
with shady casurina trees gives a serene atmosphere. It is an excursion seashore tourist centre. Coir making is a major small scale business of the village.

It is at a distance of 10kms from Nagercoil (via) Rajakkamangalam and 29kms from Kanyakumari. City bus services are available from Nagercoil.

e) Muttom

It is 16kms from Nagercoil and 32kms from Kanyakumari. Muttom is a delightful place on the coast of Kalkulam Taluk, attracting people desirous of having a seaside holiday. The seashore looks majestic because of huge beautiful rocks jutting out into the sea. The waves touch the rocks and create a mystic atmosphere. Muttom beach is a famous shooting spot for both Tamil and Malayalam movies.

This seashore has a rich heritage value for its ancient light house, which was originally established by the British in 1875 and subsequently improved in 1909. The sunset view point here is one of the most panoramic view points in the district. The district administration developed basic infrastructure facilities like shady shelters, benches, car parking, solar lighting, risk free fencing on the rocks etc. Frequent bus services are available from Nagercoil.
3.11 Fort

a) Vattakottai

This small 18th century fort overlooking the sea is worth visiting. It is located at a distance of 6kms from Kanyakumari. The sea is not rough and suitable for bath. It is a circular serene tourist spot overlooking the sea. It is a seaside fort near Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India. It was built in the barracks in the erstwhile Travancore kingdom. It was constructed under the supervision of Captain Eustachius De Lannoy during the reign of Mathandavarma (1729-58). About 1810 A.D. the British forces under the command of St. Leger marched into Nanjilnad through the Aramboly pass and demolished the defence lines.

A granite fort, 6kms north-east of Kanyakumari lies on NH-7, forms the terminal of a line ramparts known as the South Travancore lines built by King Marthanda Varma to serve as defence forts. It is rectangular in shape and covers an area about 3½ acres. It is also famous for the black sand beach that is situated across its coast. The green vegetarian, dense coconut groves on the shore side, shallow sea waves in fine sand beach have become an ideal picnic spot for the tourists. Accommodation, dress changing, toilet facilities etc, are provided. Mini bus service, city bus service, cars etc. are available to see this spot.


**b) Udhayagiri Fort**

This fort was built during the regime of King Martanda Varma (1729-1758 A.D), as a foundry for casting guns. The king’s trusted European general De Lennoy’s grave is located within this fort. He was one of the 24 European prisoners taken by King Marthanda Varma in 1741 when he defeated the Dutch at Colachel. He joined King Marthanda Varma and become a trusted General. He trained soldiers in the European method of fighting. Now, the district administration with the help of forest department has set up a bio-diversity park over here.²⁹

**3.12 Falls**

**a) Thirparappu Waterfalls**

Thirparappu means a pavilion of beauty and sacredness. It is located 40 km from Nagercoil. Children’s swimming pool and dressing room have been constructed and maintained by the town panchayat. The Mahadever Kovil located near this falls, is the third one of the twelve Sivalayas. This temple was built around A.D 9th century. This is famous for its Kerala Architecture. And the cave temple near this temple, belongs to the age of first Raja Raja Chola.³⁰

**b) Olakkayarvi**

Olakkayarvi waterfalls in the Western Ghats is about 8kms north of Azhagiapandipuram and about 14kms from Nagercoil. The beautiful waterfalls and the natural scenery all around the place attract many holiday
seekers and thus this place has become an important picnic centre. An altar connected with the sage Agasthiar near the falls attracts a large number of religious minded people on full moon days of the month of Chithirai (April-May) and they worship at the altar, after a bath in the falls.

3.13 Harbour

a) Colachel Harbour

A town situated on the sea-coast in Kalkulam Taluk at 8°10’ 45” N. Latitude and 77° 13’ 30” E. Longitude is about 25 kms from Nagercoil. It is in the southern most part in the state and a port of call for coasting steamers. During the time of Raja Kesava Das the port was considerably improved. Ocean going steamers also call sometimes to load monazite, palmyra fiber and other articles. Large quantities of paddy and rice are being imported through this port. There is a group of outlying rocks in front of the town, which forms partial break water under the shelter of which landing and shipping operations are carried on. Bartdomeo speaks of this place as “Choachy well known to the ancients”. It was a Dutch colony which came under Travancore after the defeat of the Dutch by King Marthandavarma in 1751. The Colachel battle is famous in the history of Travancore.

b) Chinna Muttom Harbour

This harbour is located at 5kms north of Cape Comorin. This is naturally formed bay and hence an ideal location for constructing fishing
harbour. The significance of this fishing harbour is that both Cape Comorin Bank and Wedge Bank are within 50 kms from the harbour. The project work which commenced in 1984 was completed by 1990. This harbour is the sixth on the east coast in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{31}

3.14 Palace

\textit{Padmanabhapuram Palace}

Padmanabhapuram is in the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, whereas major portions of the old Travancore state belong to Kerala. Padmanabhapuram (city of Lord Vishnu), the ancient historical town is situated 37kms from Kanyakumari. It was the ancient capital of the erstwhile Travancore (Venad) state from about 1555 A.D. to the later half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. King Marthanda Varma, the maker of modern Travancore (A.D.1729-1758) after achieving self reliance of the state, constructed temples, palaces and forts. As a part of the work, the mud fort around Kalkulam palace was demolished and a granite fort was built with four bastions on four corners. In 1744 A.D. Kalkulam fort and palace were renamed as Padmanabhapuram fort and Padmanapuram palace respectively.

The palace is situated at the very centre of the padmanabhapuram fort with an area of 180 acres of land amidst Veli hills, dales and rivers. The exterior of palace is simple and unpretentious like other secular and religious architectural specimens of Kerala. The interior is enriched by
wood carvings and conspicuous murals. There are 13 categories of portions. Mantrasala (council chamber), Manimalika (clock tower), Uppirikka Malika (four storey building), Anthapuram (lady’s Chamber), the long corridor, Indravilasam palace, Navarathri Mandabam, Archaeological palace, Archaeological museum etc are worth seeing.

Apart from them, there are many temples inside the fort, among which Sri Ramaswamy temple, Sri. Subramaniya temple, Saraswathy temple are a few. In the Ramasamy temple scenes from Ramayana are carved in wood.32

3.15 Bridge

**Mathoor Hanging Bridge**

The Mathoor hanging trough is the tallest as well as the longest trough bridge in Asia. This bridge is 115 feet high and one kilometer long. This was constructed in 1966. This bridge has become a place of tourist importance and hundreds of tourists visit this place every time they visit Kanyakumari. This is situated in Mathoor, hamlet of Aruvikkarai revenue village in Thiruvattar panchayat union. The trough has a height of seven feet with a width of seven feet six inches. 28 huge pillars are shouldering the canal. At the time of Thiru.K.Kamaraj, who was the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, this canal was constructed as a drought relief measure and for the development of agriculture in Vilavancode and Kalkulam taluks. The district administration has recently put up a staircase
from top to the bottom of the bridge and also built children’s park and bathing platforms over here. This place is very popular among the tourists as both aged and children can enjoy at the same time.\textsuperscript{33}

3.16 Natural Centers

\textit{Maruthuva Malai}

The Maruthuva Malai is also known as the Marunthu Vazhum Malai. This place is known as the abode of medicinal herbs, forms part of the Western Ghats. According to tradition, the Maruthuva Malai is a fragment of the Sanjeevi Mountain, a piece of which fell down here, when it was carried by Hanuman from Mahendragiri to Srilanka for healing the fatal wounds of Lakshmana. It stretches for more than a km, reaching a height of 800 feet at the highest point. It is about 11km from Nagercoil.\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{Kalikesam}

It is a developing picnic spot. This is located nearly 69kms from Kanyakumari. This is famous for its enchanting and eco-friendly environment. Kalikesam is a small foresterised hilly picnic spot with aqua water stream. The stream in Kalikesam is flowing in a majestic manner. To develop the tourism potential one private party has already got the permission from the government.

\textit{Keeriparai}

Keeriparai is one of the most beautiful natural attractions that one can come and see. Keeriparai is actually a natural habitat that has been
transformed into a natural trek spot for those international visitors who wish to see the lush jungles of India. Keeriparai has a wide variety of fauna and flora. It is very easy to see big roaring wide elephants in the plains of Keeriparai. In addition, many herbal and medicinal plants can also be found there.  

**Boat Jetty**

In Cape Comorin there is also a natural boat jetty which has been in use for centuries. All the mechanized boats used for deep-sea fishing are docked here. Visitors who are interested are taken in boats meant for pleasure at an affordable and reasonable rate. Hence, visitors from far and near go around in the boat almost every year.

**Bay-Watch**

Bay-watch is a water amusement park, located at a distance of 2km on Kanyakumari-Kovalam road. This is very near to the bus stand. This park has been promoted by Sree Bhadra Parks and Resorts Ltd., Kerala. Flying Elephants, Crazy Cruise, Milky way, Family Pool, Aqua shuttle, Sky train, Wave Pool etc, constitute some of the main tourist attractions here.

**Kids’ Park**

Kids Park is located at a distance of a km from Kanyakumari near new bus stand on Kovalam road. Aquarium, video games, dashing car, skill games, columbus ship, caterpillar, aqua dance, baby train, inflatable
balloon, swimming pool, swing zigzag etc, are all fun spots which attract visitors to the place.\textsuperscript{36}

3.17 An Overview

Kanyakumari district is an agrarian society with a high density of population and 100 percent literacy rate. Some of the notable features of this district are the high mountain ranges, perennial river basins and picturesque sea coast. It is seen that the climate, soil, temperature, rainfall and moisture content prevailing here are suitable for the tourists. This is the detailed analysis on the area profile of the Kanyakumari district.
REFERENCES


4. Ibid.


6. Ibid.


8. Incredible India, Pamphlet, Tourism Department, Tourism Office, Kanyakumari, 2011.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Padmanabhapuram Palace, General Editor, Department of Archaeology, November 2004, pp.3-9.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.