CHAPTER - 2

TAMIL NADU, A BACKGROUND

Tamil Nadu the southernmost part of the Indian peninsula is one of the 35 federating units or states of the Indian Union.¹ Tamil Nadu, the land of the Tamils has a hoary past. This Chapter by way of highlighting the Geography and History of Tamil Nadu, attempts to provide a background so as to have a better understanding of the subject, “Kunrakudi Mutt and its Socio-economic impact on Kunrakudi village (1952 – 1995)”.

¹ 28 States and 7 Union Territories

3. Assam 15. Maharastra 27. Uttranchel
5. Chandigar 17. Megalaya
8. Hariyana 20. Orissa 3. Daman and Diu
Geography

‘Kuntrakudi’ is one of the 17,371 villages in Tamil Nadu.\(^2\) Tamil Nadu lies between \(8^\circ\ 5'\) and \(13^\circ\ 35'\) North latitude and \(76^\circ\ 15'\) and \(80^\circ\ 20'\) East longitudes.\(^3\) It is bounded on the east and south by the long sea coast of the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean on the west by the states of Kerala and Karnataka and in the north by the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

The Land

Cape Comerin in Tamil Nadu is at the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent. Tamil Nadu with an area of 130,058 sq.km. is spatially the eleventh largest state in India.\(^4\) It is a great diversity of topography, climate and vegetation. The land slopes abruptly from the Western ghats, on the western border, to the lower plateau and plains region bordering the Bay of Bengal on the east.\(^5\)

The Hills of the state have two natural divisions: the Eastern Ghats and the Western Ghats. The two meet at Doddabetta on the Nilgris. The Western Ghats along the whole length of the western part are the Western Ghats, but only a portion of them is within the

\(^2\) Department of Survey and Land records, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2001.
\(^3\) Institute of Remote sensing, Anna University, Chennai.
state of Tamil Nadu. The hills that are found in the state of Tamil Nadu are the Nilgris, the Anamalai, the Palani hills, the Kodaikanal hills, the Kutramal hills, the Mahendragiri or the Agasthiar hills. Only a part of the Eastern Ghats are in the state of Tamil Nadu. The line of discontinuous hills in the northern parts of the state is known as the Eastern Ghats. The Eastern Ghats extend in the form of detached hills such as the Javadhus, Servoys, the Kalrayans, the Kollimalais and the Pachamalais. Geographically the land of Tamil Nadu is divided into few regions.⁶

Those regions are 1. The Coromandal Plains and the Alluvial Plains of Cauvery Delta 2. The Dry Southern Plains 3. The Mountainous Region and 4. the Central Plateau Region. The Coromandal and the Alluvial plains include the Coastal Plains of Chengalpattu, South Arcot and Kanyakumari Districts and the Delta plains of Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli Districts. The Dry Southern Plains comprise the plains of Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli Districts. The Mountainous region runs into Nilgris and the western parts of Dharmapuri, Salem, Periyar, and Coimbatore Districts. The plains parts of the district of North Arcot, Dharmapuri, Salem, Tiruchirapalli and Pudukottai constitute the Central Plateau Region.
Administrative Divisions

At present Tamil Nadu is comprised of 30 Districts\(^7\), 72 Revenue Divisions, 206 Revenue Taulks, 1120 Revenue Firkas, 17371 Revenue villages, 385 Panchyat Unions, 102 Municipalities and 6 Corporations in Tamil Nadu. Kunrakudi Village is in Tirupattur Taluk in Sivaganga District in Tamil Nadu. There are 521 Revenue Villages in Sivaganga district of which 100 Revenue Villages are in Tirupattur Taluk. Kunrakudi is one of the Revenue villages in this Taluk. Kunrakudi is the 97\(^{th}\) Revenue village in Ilayathakudi Firka of Tirupattur Taluk, Sivaganga District.\(^8\)

Rivers

The major river of the state Cauvery drains the eastern slope of western ghats and flows to a distance of 792 Km eastward and finally enters the Bay of Bengal at Kaveripoopattinam or Poompuhar or Puhar in the Nagapattinam District.\(^9\) The river flows 280Km in Karnataka State and the remaining 512 Km in Tamil Nadu. It has a catchment area of 87900 Sqkm. of which Kerala has 3.3

\(^7\) 30 Districts: They are Chennai, Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Erode, Kanchipuram, Kanniukumari, Karur, Krishnagiri, Madurai, Nagapattinam, Nammakkal, Nilgiris, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, Salem, Sivaganagi, Tanjore, Thiruchirappalli, Thirunelvelli, Tiruvallur, Thiruvannamalai, Thiruvanur, Theni, Thuthukudi, Vellore, Viluppuram and Virudunagar.

\(^8\) Department of Survey and Land Revenue, Government of Tamil Nadu.

percent, Karnataka 41.2 percent and Tamil Nadu 55.5 percent.\textsuperscript{10} Amaravathi, Noyal and Bhavani are the tributaries of the Cauvery. The Kolli dam river branches off from the Cauvery at Thiruchirapalli and flows further east with many tributaries.\textsuperscript{11} The other important rivers are the Palar, the Ponnaiyar and the Cheyyar in the North and the Vaigai and the Tambaraparani in the South. Most of the rivers are dry in summer except the Cauvery. The rivers drain forward the east because the terrain of the state generally slopes downward from west to east.\textsuperscript{12}

The coastline tends to be straight with well -formed beaches and in the environs of Rameswaram island the sea is shallow. There are several other smaller and less important rivers in the state. The rivers of the state flow in broad but shallow valleys, naturally graded almost to their heads with only slight interruptions of profiles when they pass through the Eastern Ghats. Though these rivers are not long by Indian standard, the deltas present extremely distinctive features and power and irrigational developments are outstanding.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p.7
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p.7.
Soil and Season

The soils of Tamil Nadu may be classified into five types. They are Alluvial soils, Regur or the Black soils, Red soils, Laterite soils and Saline soils. The summer season falls between March and May. The incidence of the south west monsoon from July to September in the various districts depends on local topography and its relation to the Western Ghats and its gaps. Tamil Nadu gets full benefit of the North-East monsoon from October to December. It is a blend of depressions, storm and cyclone. The excessive rainfall during this monsoon very often causes floods in the plains. The winter is only a name, being just a little cooler than usual.

Climate

As Tamil Nadu is close to the equator, the climate is tropical with most parts of the state having hot summers and warm winters. The temperature is fairly high throughout the year, often exceeding 35°C during the summer. The eastern part of the state has annual average temperature of 25°C. The western parts of Nilgiri district and Kodaikanal region frequently enjoy temperature below 15°C. The lowest temperature is recorded during December- January and the highest during May- June. Cotton dresses are ideal for the plains at all times of the year. In the hills though, a light sweater or two may be necessary. Umbrellas and rain coats come in handy between October to December.
Rainfall

Tamil Nadu receives most of its rainfall during the monsoon season. The approaching South west monsoon season occurs from June to September and the Retreating North east monsoon season, accounting for about 60 percent of the annual rainfall in the coastal Districts and 40 percent in the interior districts.\(^\text{13}\) During the approaching monsoon only the western parts of Coimbatore, Salem, Nilgris, Thirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts receive heavy rainfall. During the period from May to September no part of Tamil Nadu receives more than 500 mm of rainfall because the higher elevations of the western Ghats tend to obstruct the rain bearing monsoon winds coming from the South west. The average annual rainfall in the state is 1008 mm. Nilgiris, Western parts of Kanyakumari and parts of Coimbatore districts receive the highest rainfall ranging from 1500 to 3000 mm. The Coromandal plains receive an annual rainfall 1000 to 1500 mm. The Central plateau region receives the lowest rainfall ranging from 700 mm to 1000 mm.

Natural vegetation reflects the distribution of rainfall, ranging from lush forests in the Western hills to shrub bush and drought-resistant Palmyra in the Southern and Interior lowland. Agriculture depends on careful storage and redistribution of the limited water supply. Numerous dams, irrigation channels, and tanks (storage

ponds) have been constructed to ensure a stable water supply, earth-embanked tanks, many over 1.6 Km in diameter, dot the surface, chiefly in the southern districts.\textsuperscript{14}

**The Flora and the Fauna**

The exotic species of bluegum, wattle and many varieties or eucalyptus have been successfully developed on the Palani hills, Nilgiris, Shevaroys and Anaimalais. Plantations have sprung up on an extensive scale in these areas. The most popular trees are teak, venteak, rosewood, sandalwood and bamboo. Most of Tamil Nadu is agricultural land and farming differs from area to area depending on the climate and rainfall which is uneven.

Besides a great variety of insect life, there are hundreds of species of animals and birds in Tamil Nadu. The major wildlife sanctuaries of the state are at Mudumalai and Anaimalai. Birds form an important variety of wild life of Tamil Nadu. Vedanthangal bird sanctuary is an important breeding ground for water birds, cormorants, egrets, herons, storks, ibis, spoonbills, grebs and pelicans come here from October to March, depending on the monsoons. At the height of the breeding season (December and January) there can be upto 30,000 birds here.\textsuperscript{15} The best viewing times are early morning and late afternoon. Many varieties of

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. p.251.

\textsuperscript{15} India, Lonely Planet Publications, Austria, 1981, p.1138.
perching, high flying, nocturnal and dirunel birds, pretty birds, singing birds, helpful birds and birds of prey are to be found here.

History

Tamilagam or the home of the Tamils was in the hoary past the southern region of the large Island known as Navalam or Sambu Divu. This Island, one of the first land-formations on either side of the equator, was bounded on the north by the Vindhya mountains and touched Australia, Africa, and China on the South, West and East respectively.

Tamil Nadu has a very ancient history that dates back to more than 6000 years. The region represents the nucleus of Dravidian culture in India, which antedated the Aryan culture in India by almost a thousand years. It is generally held that the architects of

16 “கோலார் உணவுருவால் விளையாட்டாளை”
(near Tamilagam is Sambu Island) – Manimekalai XVII, 62
“இவ்வுறையே கோலார் உணவுருவால் விளையாட்டாளை”
“In the billowy Ocean – girt world to the knowledge of the Tamil Land”

- Silappathikaram III 37

“தலைநாள் வாழ்த்தனைக் கோலாராளை”
(The dwellers in the beautiful big island of Naval – Eugenia Jambolana) – Saint Appar II 62.
“தலைநாளின் வாழ்த்தனே கோலாராளை”
(In the very large Island called Jambu divu) Manimegalai XI. 107
“தலைநாள் வாழ்த்தனே”
(In the well-watered region of Naval divu) – Perum-Kathai Cants. II, XVIII: 76.
and V, iii. 183
“இவ்வுறையே கோலார் உணவுருவால் விளையாட்டாளை”
(For the prosperity of Tamilagam hedged round the billowy Sea) – Pathitru Pathu, Il Pathikam.
the Indus valley Civilization of the 4th millennium B.C. were Dravidians and that at a time anterior to the Aryans, they were spread over the whole of India. With the coming of the Aryans into North India, the Dravidians appear to have been pushed into the South, where they have remained confined to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala which form the repositories of the Dravidian culture.17

The Dravida country of which modern Tamil Nadu formed a part had been repeatedly under the rule of three dynasties Chola, Pandiya and Chera (from Sangam period to 14th Century) The Pallavas of Kanchi rose to prominence in the 4th century A.D. and dominated the south for another 400 years.

In the 9th century A.D. the last of the Pallavas, Aparajitha Pallava (895 – 913) was defeated by Athithya Chola in A.D. 913 and thereby the Cholas again became a great power in the south18.

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17 The name Dravida, a modification of Tīru (v) idam, a land of shrines, was applied to Tamilaham by immigrants for some geographical reason or other, and has nothing to do with the word Tamil or the Tamilar, as some oriental scholars have fondly imagined.

Tamil India, M.S. Pumalingam Pillai, International Institute and Tamil Studies, Chennai. 1999, p.12.

Of all the kingdoms of the south in the 10th century A.D. the imperial Cholas occupy a prominent place. Vijayalaya was the first king of the imperial Cholas. They had their capital at Tanjore. The most powerful Chola kings were Raja Raja I (AD985 – 1012) and his son Rajendra I. (AD1012 – 1044). ¹⁹ They have conquered many countries like Sri Lanka, East India, South East Asian countries, Sumatra, Malaya, and Pandiyan kingdom.

In the 13th century the Pandiyas became dominant. Their kingdom was a great centre of international trade. The rise of Vijayanagar rulers spelt the decline of Pandiyas. The Pandiyas were ultimately defeated by Vijayanagar and their territories were annexed to the Vijayanagar Empire. Thereafter Tamil Nadu was parceled out among several petty kings and Palayakaras.²⁰

The rise of Muslims power in India has had its impact on Tamil Nadu, but by and large, Tamil Nadu remained unaffected by the political convulsions in North and Central India.

The East India company established its settlement at Madras in August 22, 1639.\textsuperscript{21} Slowly the whole of Tamil Nadu and most of South India came under British sway. When India became free, the old Madras Presidency comprising Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and part of Kerala continued as the state of Madras. But the agitation for a separate Andhra state paved the way for the emergence of Andhra Pradesh in 1953. The old capital Madras city was retained by the new Madras state.

After Independence, the Congress party was the ruling party. With the debacle of the Congress party in 1967 general election for the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam took over the reigns of Government. The Dravidian political parties either Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam or its split away group All India Anna Dravadi Munnetra Kazhagam continued to be in power in Tamil Nadu till date.

Under the States Reorganisation Act 1956, Madras lost the Malabar District and the Kasargod taluk of south Kanara District to the newly formed state, Kerala, while Madras gained four taluks of


the Trivandrum District and Senkottai taluk of the Quilon District from Kerala. The four taluks thus gained were constituted into new district, known as the Kanyakumari district, where cape Comerin the tip of Peninsula is located. In the wake of Reorganisation of Linguistic States 405 sq. miles of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh was transferred to Madras in exchange for 326 sq. miles from Chengalpattu and Salem Districts from Madras State in April 1960.  

On January 14, 1968, the name Madras state was changed and it was called ‘Tamil Nadu’ and subsequently Madras the capital city of Tamil Nadu was renamed ‘Chennai’ in 1996.

The People and Culture

The Tamils who belong to the Dravidian race and speak Tamil language as their mother tongue form the majority Tamil. Telugu, Malayalam and Kannadam are the four major languages of the Dravidians and Tamil is the most ancient of the Dravidian

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22 Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur Districts Gazetteers, 2000, p.2.

23 At that time C.N. Annadurai, the founder of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party was the Chief Minister of Madras State. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Party rose to power by articulating language issue and linguistic sentiment.


At that time Kalaigraph M.Karunanidhi, the successor of C.N.Annadurai and four time Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was the Chief Minister.
Family of languages. Linguistic minorities who belong to the Dravidian race and speak of family of languages such as the Telugu, the Malayalam and the Kannada also inhabit the land of Tamils namely Tamil Nadu. Demographically the linguistic minorities form 15 per cent of the total population of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu is a fertile field where the traditional arts grow and flourish. It is a land of enduring heritage, where time has stood still, nurturing the arts and crafts, while simultaneously an upward growth in industry and technology can be witnessed. Tamil Nadu represents a culture that is a unique blend of the ancient and the modern, where dance, drama and music are an integral part of everyday life.

The customs of the people are closely inter-linked with the religions and hence present a picture of colorful contrasts and mixed medley throughout. One will find a group of people doing something auspicious and acceptable to them which another group would consider totally out of place and inappropriate. Generally, early rising and incorporating religious rites into their day-to-day living is not unusual. The door steps are decorated with Kolam, patterns made from rice powder or white stone powder for decorative as well as religious purpose. Friday evenings are allotted for visits to the
temples. It is customary to celebrate the various religious festivals with the accompaniment of pomp and show.\textsuperscript{25}

**Population of Tamil Nadu**

As per census of India 2001, the total population was 62,110,839. Males were 31,268,654 and females were 30,842,185\textsuperscript{26}.

Tamil Nadu is placed eleventh in geographical area and seventh in population among the states of the Indian Union. The men population account for 50.2 per cent and women 49.8 per cent. The distribution of population in Tamil Nadu indicates that, of the 62.1 million people, 34.9 million are in rural areas and 27.2 million are in urban areas\textsuperscript{27}. As for Tamil Nadu, most villages are electrified and connected with the nearby towns. Schools and Medical facilities have been provided almost in all areas of the State 56 per cent of the people live in the villages. The population of Tamil Nadu has

\textsuperscript{25} K.K. Pillai, Tamilaga Varalaru Makkalum Panpadum, (Tamils History the People and Culture), Tamil, International Institute of Tamil Studies, pp. 347 – 351.

\textsuperscript{26} Census of India 2001.

\textsuperscript{27} Census of India, 2001.
grown at slower pace relative to the nation and the states of the southern region.

**Festivals**

Most of the festivals of the state have a religious import. Legends have grown connecting some festivals with mythological events. Every month, when the moon enters the constellation of Krittiga the Tamils go to the temple of Lord Muruga and worship him. The Hindu festivals are Pongal, Chitrai festival, Vaikunta Ekadasi, Vinayaka Chathurthi, Navarathri, Deepavali, Karthikai Deepam, Adiperkku, Panguni Uthiram and etc. Pongal a three day harvest festival is the most celebrated festival of Tamil Nadu. Christians celebrate Xmas, Easter, Good Friday and other Christian festivals. Muslims celebrate Ramzan, Muharam, Each and other festivals. Velankanni Church and Nagoore Mosque stand testimony to the secular and multi religious nature of the People.\(^{28}\)

Tamil Nadu has a rich and hoary tradition in fine arts. Carnatic music and Bharatha Natyam dance of Tamil Nadu have been based and developed on traditional principles. Fine arts had enjoyed royal and religious patronage through the centuries among

\(^{28}\) India 1993, Government of India, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 803, 804.
the Tamils. The temples of Tamil Nadu have been for long, the centres for the encouragement of fine arts and dance formed part of worship in the temple.\textsuperscript{29}

There are thousands of temples in this state which made Tamil Nadu the ‘Land of Temples’ built by various ruling dynasties. These temples are the centres of ancient Tamil culture and civilization.

Folk music, dance and drama have a distinct place in the life of the common people. In Tamil Nadu there is a profusion of folk songs, that are associated with almost every event of life.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{Agriculture}

Agriculture is an important primary sector, providing food to the growing population, raw materials to the agro based industries and various other products to fulfill the basic needs. The economy depends largely on agricultural sector as more than 70 per cent\textsuperscript{31} of the population are engaged in agriculture. Major food crops are rice, jowar, ragi, bajra, maize and pulses. Important commercial crops

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, pp. 349, 350
\textsuperscript{31} India 1993, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1994, p.802.
that are grown in Tamil Nadu are sugarcane, cotton, groundnut, sesame, sunflower, castor, chillies, banana, mango, coffee, tea, rubber, cashew, coconut etc. Major forest products are timber, sandalwood, pulpwood and fuelwood. Minor products are bamboo, eucalyptus, rubber, tea leaves, cashew, honey, ivory etc. Tamil Nadu occupies a premier position in the production and extensive application of bio-fertilizer viz, Rhizobium azosprillum, phosphobacteriam etc.

**Banking services**

The Banking institutions in Tamil Nadu render great service. The Banks offer financial assistance to agriculture and cattle farming through Governmental programmes: they also offer such assistance to industrial development and education of children. While co-operative Banks are engaged in financial assistance to the poor, the private and international banking services offer assistance for infrastructures. They are found almost in all big villages promoting savings and offering financial assistance.

**Industry and Minerals**

In the last years of the twentieth century, industrial development was given much importance and the industries
flourished. In the last two decades or so, there has indeed been a silent industrial revolution in the state. This has transformed a predominantly agricultural state into an important industrial economy, too. The state has made impressive progress in all types of industries, large, medium and small. With water for irrigation in short supply, there has been a slow shift from agriculture to industry. With the arrival of globalization, several industries have attracted foreign capital especially in automobile and electronics industries and also have shown rapid growth.

Major industries are cotton textiles, chemical fertilisers, paper and its products, printing and allied industries, diesel engines, automobile industries and its ancillaries in Chennai, bicycle, cement, sugar, iron, steel, railway wagons and coaches. A number of public sector undertakings are located in the state. Important among them are the Neyveli Lignite Corporation, Integral Coach Factory, High Pressure Boiler Plant, Hindustan Teleprinters, Madras Refineries, Madras Fertilisers, Heavy Vehicles Factory and Pugalur Paper Factory. Tamil Nadu accounts for nearly one fourth of the spinning capacity in India, one fifth of cement, caustic soda and nitrogenous fertilisers and one tenth of the nation’s production of sugar, bicycles and calcium carbide are produced here, besides, safety matches
and finished leather goods.\textsuperscript{32} Lime stone, magnesite, mica, quartz, felspar, salt, bauxite, lignite and gypsum are some of the minerals found in the state. The state is an important exporter of tanned skin and hides and leather goods, cotton piece goods and yarn, tea, coffee, spices, engineering goods, tobacco, handicrafts and black granites.

**Irrigation and Power**

Important irrigation schemes implemented since Independence are the lower Bharani, the Amaravathi, the Vaigai, the Parambikulam - Aliyar, the Krishnagiri, the Sattanur, the Pullambadi – Kattalai. High level canal, the Gomukhi Nadhi, Chittar Pattanamkal and the Pennaniar. Besides, the state has a number of hydro-electric stations and thermal stations. The atomic power plant at Kalapakkam in Kanchipuram District was commissioned in 1983.\textsuperscript{33}

**Transport**

Transport is an important service in Tamil Nadu. It is important for the growth and development of agriculture, industry particularly trade and also for homeward journeys. Transport has


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p.803.
fully developed as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned. All big towns and cities have been properly linked with the remote villages. As a result the rural and urban economies mingle with each other and thereby benefit the people. Also the transport charges are much smaller when compared to the rates of other States of the Indian Union. The length of the road network is nearby 1.70 Lakh Km including about 2002 Km of national highways.34

Aviation

The southern region’s international airport, Chennai, is the main centre of airline routes of this part of the country. Besides there are airports at Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Madurai.

Indian Railways is one of the largest in the World, Kashmir to Kanyakumari. In Tamil Nadu, the rail transport is administered by the Southern Railways. The trains which were once operated using steam engines are now being operated using diesel and electricity and there are now super fast express trains. Main rail junctions in

34 Ibid, p.803.
the State include Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, Salem etc.\textsuperscript{35}

**Ports**

Sea transport is an important service among the water transports of the state. Commodity and people are transported through the ports of Chennai, Nagapattinam and Thoothukudi.\textsuperscript{36} And these are considered as important ports. The internal and international airlines operate national as well as international air transport through the airport at Chennai, capital of Tamil Nadu. Besides transport, information and telecommunications are also involved in serving the people. Postal and telegraph offices and telephone exchanges are now serving every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu. E-mail and internet based telecommunications have grown tremendously because of the use of computers on a large scale.

**Tourism**

In Tamil Nadu, centres of Tourism, cinema, drama and theatre as well as National parks are found in good number.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p.803
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.803
Tamil Nadu is a land of varied beauty. It is mostly famous for its numerous Hindu Temples based on the Dravidian architecture. The temples are of a distinct style which is famous for its towering Gopuram. Popular temple towns include Madurai, Trichirappalli, Thanjavur, Kanchipuram, Palani and Mahabalipuram, Rameswaram, Chidambaram, Velankanni, Nagoor, Narthamalai, Chithannavasal, Kazhugumalai and Thiruvannamalai etc.

Cape Comerin is famous for its natural beauty of sunset, sunrise and the confluence of three seas (Bengal sea, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean) and for the renowned sculptural skill in the statue of Thiruvalluvar which withstood the fury of “Tsunami” in Dec 26, 2004. Hill Stations like Kodaikanal and Nilgiris boast some of the stunning Landscapes in India. The Nilgiris also has one of the two mountain Railways in India and is being evaluated for the UNESCO’s world Heritage site list. Yercaud and Elagiri are also hill stations. The Mudumalai, Anamalai, Mundanthurai, Kalakad are wildlife sanctuaries known for its elephants, tigers and deer and the Pitchavaram Mangrove forests, Vedanthangal and point Calimare (bird sanctuaries) and Vandalur Zoological Park near Chennai. Courtallam, Hogenekkal, Papanasam, Suruli (water falls), Guindy (Chennai) are some of the places of tourist interest.
Education

Education is the sine qua non of the social and economic development of a nation. Having regard to the importance of Education, the Government have been according top priority in allocating funds to education. Once upon a time literature and history were prominent among the institutions of education in Tamil Nadu. Vedic schools and gurukulas became converted into modern educational institutions with the arrival and rule of the British. The rule of Lord Dalhousie, one of the British Governor Generals saw great development in education of India. The Charles Wood’s dispatch of 1854, by Sir Charles Wood,\textsuperscript{37} the full supporter of Dalhousie, formed the basis of large educational developments. In education there were rapid development. A fresh emphasis was laid upon primary education. This was most noticeable at the top, but there were increasing efforts to spread popular primary instruction. Director of Public instruction was formed in Madras, 1854\textsuperscript{38}.

Today the schools, colleges, technological and medical colleges adopt the English system of education and teach a variety of subjects with English as the medium of instruction. Because of

\textsuperscript{37} Vincent A. Smith, The Oxford History of India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1958, p.883.

planned development Tamil Nadu today can boast of a primary school within every five kilometers, a higher secondary school within ten kilometers and a college within twenty five to thirty five kilometers.

Now Tamil Nadu has been in the forefront in implementing educational programmes over the years consistently. The Department of School Education of the Government of Tamil Nadu has formulated the following policies for implementation:\(^{39}\) To Provide primary schools in all habitations where there are no schools if the minimum population is 300 and there is no school within a radius of 1 km. To provide middle school access to all habitations within a radius of 3 k.m. To provide High School within a radius of 5 km and Higher Secondary School within a radius of 8 Km. To enroll all school age children in schools. To provide five years of schooling to all these children before 2007. To provide eight years of schooling for all these children before 2010. To prevent dropouts fully before 2010. To improve the basic amenities in schools. To improve the basic amenities in schools. To improve and enrich the syllabus. To improve the quality of education from the preschool to the higher secondary level. To ensure minimum levels of

\(^{39}\) School Education Department Policy Note 2005-2006, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2005, pp. 53, 54
learning. To impart refresher training to teachers. To remove illiteracy. To remove gender gaps in literacy and enrolment. To recruit meritorious teachers through written examination. To open village libraries. To disseminate health education in schools. To involve parents in the management of schools. To impart computer education to all students so as to transform the society into a knowledge driven and digitally literate one.\textsuperscript{40}

The Directorate under the control of School Education Department implement various schemes promoting these objectives of the Government. The Directorates which shoulder the main responsibilities like the Directorates of Elementary Education of School Education, Directorate of Matriculation Schools, Directorate of Non-formal and Adult Education and other Directorates which provide resource and service support like Directorate of Teacher Education Research and Training, Directorate of Government Examinations, Teachers Recruitment Board, Tamil Nadu Text Book Corporation and Directorate of Public Libraries endeavour to enable Tamil Nadu achieve new heights in the field of education. It may be for this reason educational literacy is considerably high. There are 33470 Elementary schools, 7111 Middle Schools, 5004 High Schools and 4230 Higher Secondary Schools, Totally 49,815

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, p.p 53, 54.
Schools are in Tamil Nadu, including Private and Government Aided Schools also. There are 130.54 lakhs students studying in these Schools. Boys are 67.77 lakhs and Girls are 62.77 lakhs. Their age group ranges between 6 and 18\textsuperscript{41}.

When compared to the All India Level, Male literacy rate of Tamil Nadu forms 82.33 percentage, Female literacy rate forms 64.55 percentage and total 73.44 percentage\textsuperscript{42}.

According to the census estimate of 2001, the rate of literacy in Tamil Nadu was at 73.47 per cent. As high as 82.07 percent of the urban population and 66.7 percent of the rural population are literates. The literates among the males are larger in number than among the females\textsuperscript{43}.

It is common in all the states of India. Of the 82.33 percentage of the male literates 88.4 per cent are from the urban areas and 77.5 per cent literates are from the rural areas. As for female literacy, there are 64.6 per cent. Among the Female literates 75.5 per cent are from the urban areas and 55.84 per cent are from


\textsuperscript{43} Census of India 2001.
the rural areas.\textsuperscript{44} There are 5,14,000 Students studying in colleges and Professional institutions.\textsuperscript{45}

With the introduction of the noon meal scheme the enrollment of students in primary schools has gone up. The universities such as University of Madras and Anna University and Indian Institute of Technology in Chennai, Regional Engineering College at Tiruchirapalli and colleges connected with industries and medical services admit students not only from Tamil Nadu but also from other parts of India as well as abroad.

\textbf{Medical Services}

Tamil Nadu is a socially developed state. Primary health care services are available within a radius of five kilometers of most of the settlements and are generally integrated. The Directorate of Medical services, family welfare, primary health centres and medical educational services administer the hospitals.

\textsuperscript{44} Census India, 2001.

\textsuperscript{45} Tamil Nadu State Perspective Plan, Department of Education, Government of Tamil Nadu, Scheme of Education for all, 2000-2001
Conclusion

Tamil Nadu with its geographical varieties and hoary past and distinct racial and cultural entity was subjected to subjugation by rival political forces such as the Telugus and Marathas after the fall of the Cholas. Besides the advent of Muslims and the European Traders including the Christian Missionaries posed a formidable challenge to the language and culture of the Tamils. However, after the dawn of India’s Independence, Tamil Nadu became one of the federating units of the Indian Union. Tamil Nadu in spite of its growth in agriculture, industry, education, transport, tourism and health, appeared distinct and different from other provinces of India by its separate political culture and behaviour. Tamil Nadu is known for its Dravidian identity and Tamil cultural nationalism even in the age of globalisation.