CHAPTER - V

Social Conditions of the people in Kancheepuram District
CHAPTER V
SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT

The term ‘society’ is used to refer to a large human group of people. It applies only to human groups and not to that of animals. Among men society serves to demarcate certain equations and relations. Human society is different society of other animals in matters relating to flexibility. The relation and a modes of behaviour, though unique among men, undergo occasional changes. The rigidity which is found among animals is completely absent in human societies. This concept gives birth to culture, which becomes a salient and unique feature of a society.

The word ‘society’ has been derived from ‘socius’ a Latin word which means ‘companion’. Society can be defined as “The totality of social relationship among human life, a group of human beings broadly distinguished from other groups by mutual interests, participation in characteristic relationship, shared institutions and common culture. The institution and culture of a distinct self perpetuating group.”

From this definitions it can be concluded that a society is a group of individuals that is united by certain relations. And that the group is different in behaviour from other groups and all belonging to that group share generally common modes of behaviour under the given circumstances. Of course, a society need not have a definite boundary, nor does it need to be living under the same geographical environment.

As such societies are not an aggregate of persons brought together by chance. In every society there runs a cord of organizational order. But then
there are cultural elements such as social norms, beliefs, and philosophies and like, which comprise the parts of society according to Madan. So it becomes difficult to define precisely what society is, whereas it can be pointed out how a society maintains its individuality as a separate social entity.

In any given society its members arrange themselves in groups. Such group consists of small families and clans. Then there are professional associations, and residential groups in the form of villages. Finally we have groups divided according to age and sex. In spite of all these arrangements each society remains homogeneous.

Formation of society is not a new phenomenon. There had been societies even in primitive age when man was subservient to geographical conditions, completely at the mercy of climatic changes. The one change found between a primitive society and a modern society is openness. The earlier societies were more closed all the time trying to keep themselves away from all outside influences.

In shaping a society economic conditions as well as geography play a dominant role. The people living in the bygone days, like the Sangam age, led a very simple life with limited needs to fulfill a person’s living in that age. With the passage of time there came many changes in the life of an individual which in its turn reflected in a society.

Invention of currency led to the practices of converting human labour into money and storing it for future use, which made a man self-centered. The rustic simplicity was lost.
Summing up the characteristic of a society, G.R. Madan says, “All societies whether animal or human have certain things in common which lead to their being classed together.

They are:

1. Involvement of social relationship
2. Interdependence
3. Division of labour
4. Likeness and differences as well as co-operation and conflicts and units holding together not as cells or organs but individuals⁴.

Abundance of wealth always results in making a person fun loving, lethargic and above all, selfish. That is what happened in this part of the country during the medieval age. The pleasure loving and self centered nature came to the fore in an ordinary Indian and the old values crumbled under the weight of the new values of life. It was brought into this country by the English conquerors. The victims of this change were the economic conditions and social life of ordinary Indians. Even after India’s independence there has been no radical change in the life of people in the rural areas. Traditions and customs continue to hold their life. It is with this background in mind this topic Socio-Economic Conditions of the people in Kancheepuram District has been chosen for investigation. This District is partially rural and partially urban oriented district. The urban culture has spread to only the town areas in the district. In most of the interior villages of this district the society its static and transforming to the modern ways of living only at a slow pace.
5.1. Origin of the name

Chengalpattu, which literally means `lilly pond village (br ’f GeRg L)` has been mentioned in Sanskrit literature as Kuvalayapura means water lilly town. The British mostly called a district after the name of the town in which the headquarters of the district was located. But, in the case of Chengalpattu, it was not so, Karunguzhi, now administratively an insignificant village near Madurantakam, served as the headquarters of the district from the beginning up to 1859, when it was shifted to Saidapet. Since then, (except the decade between 1825 and 1835 during which Kancheepuram, the historical capital of the Pallavas and other kings, served as the headquarters of the district) Saidapet was the headquarters of the district until 1967. The headquarters of the district was shifted to Kancheepuram in 1968, from where it still functions.

Chengalpattu district, the first of the districts demarcated by the East India Company for their revenue administration in the state, continued to bear the name till 1990 when it was renamed as the Chengai-Anna District, after C.N.Annadurai, a former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu who hailed from Kancheepuram, the present headquarters of the district. The `prefix` Chengai was shortened form of Chengalpattu. Later in 1997, the district was rechristened as Chengalpattu-MGR district in memory of late M.G.Ramachandran, who was also a former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu.5

The Kancheepuram District is one among the coastal District of Tamil Nadu State and it is bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal and the city of Chennai, on the North by the Thiruvallur district (Former Chengai-MGR
District) on the South by Villupuram and Vellore districts. The nomenclature of the district has been changed thrice in the recent past. The district was known with the name Chengalpattu till 1981 Census. It changed first to Chengalpattu-MGR and thereafter, to Chengai Anna, now it is called as Kancheepuram District.

5.2. Location and Area:

This chapter analyses the profile of the study of area, the Kancheepuram District. The Socio-economic and demographic aspects about the district are analyzed with the help of a historical and current perspective. These include the nature of climate and rainfall, the hills, rivers, the type of soil found in this district, the kind of flora and fauna, and the pattern of land utilization. Moreover, a brief note about the primary, secondary sectors and also about the trade and commerce is presented in this chapter. This provides a basic introduction about the status of this district vis-à-vis the State in respect of economic and demographic aspects.

The area of the district is 4433 Sq.Km. and the length of the coastal line is 87.2 Km. Kancheepuram district came into being after the bifurcation of the Chengalpattu district into Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts on 18.11.1997. It is situated at 12° 50’ North Latitude and 79° 42’ East Longitude at a distance of 76 kilometers(kms) south-west of Chennai, on the banks of river Vegavathi, a tributary of Palar river at an elevation of 83 meters above the mean sea level. The district consists of 8 taluks, 6 Municipalities, 13 Panchayat Unions and 28 Town Panchayats. It is surrounded by Bay of Bengal in the east,
Chennai, Thiruvallur and Vellore districts in the North. Thiruvannamalai in the west and Villupuram district in the south. The district is well connected by both roads and railways. The National Highway NH-45 runs through this district and the Broad Gauge line which goes from Chennai to Villupuram also runs across this district. The map showing the location of the district is presented here.

5.3. Demographic Profile:

According to the 2011 census data, the district had population of 39,90,897 of which male population of 20,10,309 and female population of
19,80,588. Table 6.1 provides the demographic details, literacy rates of 2011 census and also the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities’ population along with the sex ratio for all the categories at district levels in 2001.

### Table 5.1 Demography and Literacy Rates in Kancheepuram, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2010309</td>
<td>1980588</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>730454</td>
<td>722618</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1279855</td>
<td>1257970</td>
<td>983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SC Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>362097</td>
<td>359892</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>249258</td>
<td>247674</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>112839</td>
<td>112218</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ST Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13267</td>
<td>13241</td>
<td>998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>9066</td>
<td>8966</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4201</td>
<td>4245</td>
<td>1010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Literacy Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89.01</td>
<td>77.78</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>84.18</td>
<td>68.96</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>93.85</td>
<td>86.60</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Demographic Atlas of Tamil Nadu, Census of India, 2011.


Data shows that in the district’s total population, the proportion of male population is 50.37 percent, which is 50.26 percent among the total rural population and 50.43 percent among the urban population. The male population
of the district is higher than that of the state average in general population and general literacy rate.. For example, in case of the state, the male population proportion stands at 50.32 percent, 50.20 percent and 50.46 percent in total, rural and urban population respectively. According to 2001 census the population of the SC and ST is also provided in the same table. It shows that the proportion of these marginalized sections of the population is higher in the district compared to that of the state. In total population of the Kancheepuram district, 25.09 percent belongs to SC community, against the state average of 19 percent. In both the rural and urban areas also, the same trend exists.

In the total rural population of the districts, 37.01 percent belongs to this community, while it remains 23.79 percent at the state level and in the urban areas it is 14.66 percent and 12.91 percent respectively. Though it is a state level phenomenon, it is particularly found in this district, since among the total rural population more than 37 percent belongs to the SC community, while in the total urban population only 14.66 percent is SC population. In the case of ST population, it forms a very small proportion at both the state and district levels in 2001 census report. (2011 census report has not published yet).

The climate of this district is characterized very hot summer and good seasonal rainfall. The year may be divided into four seasons; the summer season from March to May is followed by the South-West monsoon season from June to September. October and November constitute the post monsoon or retreating monsoon season. The pattern of rainfall in the district during the last 12 years along with that of the state is presented in Table 5.2.
Table 5.2 Pattern of Rainfall in Kancheepuram district (1997-98 to 2010-11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Normal (in mm)</th>
<th>Actual (in mm)</th>
<th>Deviation (+/-) from Normal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>1139.1</td>
<td>1459.7</td>
<td>28.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>981.3</td>
<td>1084.0</td>
<td>10.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>1213.3</td>
<td>1133.0</td>
<td>-6.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>1213.3</td>
<td>1068.1</td>
<td>-11.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>1210.5</td>
<td>973.2</td>
<td>-19.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>1159.8</td>
<td>797.0</td>
<td>-31.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1354.3</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1038.5</td>
<td>-17.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1825.5</td>
<td>45.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1055.0</td>
<td>-15.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1419.5</td>
<td>13.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1219.2</td>
<td>-2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1252.1</td>
<td>1219.2</td>
<td>-2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>1255.0</td>
<td>1389.0</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>1209.8</td>
<td>1202.5</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Statistical Handbook, 2010-11, Kancheepuram District, p.26

The actual level of rainfall against the normal level is shown for every year from which the percentage deviation is derived. The actual level of rainfall in the district ranges from 819.8 millimeter (mm) in 2001-02, the lowest level in the last 12 years, to the highest level of 1354.3 mm in 2004-05. In between these two extreme levels, the actual rainfall level has varied a lot. The percentage of deviation of the actual levels gives a better picture about the extent of variation or the level of deficiency / surplus in each year. Out of the 14 years, the actual rainfall level has been deficient in 10 years, with the exception of 2005-06 and 2007-08, during which year the district has received the highest rainfall. This
implies that the district is normally a deficit district. When compared to the pattern of rainfall at the state level, the district’s situation is a lot to be desired.

**Rivers:**

Palar is the main river of this district. Cheyyar and Vegavathy rivers are tributary and join the Palar river at Thirumukkoodal. The rivers Palar, Cheyyar, Cooum, Coratalaiyar or Kusasthalaiyar, Arniar, Kiliyar, Kallar, Ongur, Nandi and many rivulets run through the district. Of these, the river Palar is regarded as one of the major rivers of Tamil Nadu on the lines with Cauvery, Vaigai, Pennai, Porunai and Tamirabarani. These rivers though not perennial, get inundated by monsoon rains.

**Land Utilization Pattern:**

The pattern of land use explains the nature of the economy in a brief manner and its basic thrust in general. The Kancheepuram district’s pattern of land use is explained with the help of the data in Table 5.3, pertaining to the year 2010-11. The table shows that the total geographical area of this district is 443210 hectares, of which 5.3 percent (23,855.840 hectares) is under forest cover. The barren and uncultivable area is 10,948.420 hectares, which is 2.47 percent of the total geographical area. The proportion of current fallow is also only 7.4 percent that is 32,802.044 hectares. The total cropped area or the gross cropped area is 29.89 percent of the total geographical area, which is 132483.160 hectares in absolute terms, of which 118635.323 hectares is the net sown area. This shows the significance of the agricultural sector in the overall
economy of the district. Area sown more than once which indicates the degree of intensive cultivation is 13847.837 hectares, which forms 10.45 percent of the gross cropped area.

Table 5.3 Pattern of Land Use in Kancheepuram District, 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Area (in hec.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>23855.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Barren and uncultivable uses</td>
<td>10948.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Land put to Non-agricultural uses</td>
<td>147350.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Cultivable waste</td>
<td>11007.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Permanent pastures and other grazing land</td>
<td>18285.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Land under Miscellaneous Tree Crops and Graces not included in Net Sown Area</td>
<td>13419.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Current fallows</td>
<td>32802.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Other fallows land</td>
<td>66904.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Net area sown</td>
<td>118635.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Geographical Area according to Village Papers</td>
<td>443210.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Total cropped area</td>
<td>132483.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Area sown more than once</td>
<td>13847.837</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Statistical Handbook 2010-11, Kancheepuram District, p.27

Land Holding Structure:

The structure of land holding in a society is an important indicator and aspect of its economic and social well-being. Land possession, at the micro level, helps a particular household in attaining social and economic empowerment. In this background, Table 5.4 provides the data about the land holding structure among the households in the Kancheepuram district, and it also shows the pattern of land possession among the social groups.
## Table 5.4 Number and Area of Operational Land Holdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Size Class (in hectare)</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>AREA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC &amp; ST</td>
<td>OTHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44176</td>
<td>148397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 – 1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9678</td>
<td>46511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 – 2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4168</td>
<td>30612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 – 4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>13221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 – 10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>4821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL CLASSES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59344</td>
<td>244267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R %</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C %</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** R % - Row Percentage; C % - Column Percentage.


According to the number of land holders, 63.4 percent possess only less than 0.5 hectares of land. The community-wise break up shows that the proportion of these tiny-land holders (possessing less than 0.5 hectares) is higher among the SC & ST community than among the others (non SC & ST community). In the case of the farmer, 74.4 percent of the total land-owners
belonging to this group fall in the less than 0.5 hectare size class, while only 60.7 percent of the non SC & ST community falls in this category. Apart from this category in all the others, the proportion of land holders is higher among the non-SC & ST group than that of the SC & ST group. That is, as the size of land holding increases, only less and less number of SC & ST land holders could be seen in each category. For instance, in the 0.5 – 1.0 hectare category, 16.3 percent of the SC & ST farmers and 19.0 percent of the non SC & ST farmers could be found. In the 1.0 – 2.0 hectares class, the proportions are 7.0 percent and 12.5 percent, in the 2.0 – 4.0 hectares class. 1.9 percent and 5.4 percent, in the 4.0 – 10.0 hectares category, 0.4 percent and 2.0 percent and in the more than 10.0 hectares class, the proportions are 0.02 percent and 0.3 percent for the SC & ST community and non- SC & ST community respectively. This implies that the degree of land inequality is higher among the SC & ST land owners than that of the non SC & ST group.

Agriculture

Agriculture still occupies the dominant place in the economy of Kancheepuram District. The total area of the district is 2,03,81,109 acres of which 8,94,322 acres have been brought under cultivation. 6.5 percent of its working population is engaged in agriculture.

There are three agricultural seasons Sornawari (April - August), Samba (August – February) and Navarai (December – May). Paddy is cultivated in all these seasons. In Sornawari season, short duration crops are grown and in Navarai, short and medium duration crops are raised. During Samba period,
medium and long duration crops are cultivated. Paddy is cultivated on a large scale using tank and lift irrigation. It is also cultivated on dry lands under rain fed conditions. The cropping pattern of the Kancheepuram district in the last few years is analyzed with the help of the data in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Area under Principal Crops in Kancheepuram District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Paddy</th>
<th>Cholam</th>
<th>Cumbu</th>
<th>Ragi</th>
<th>Sugar Cane</th>
<th>Cotton</th>
<th>Ground Nut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>155369</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>6097</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>31001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>154694</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1036</td>
<td>6735</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>29227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>149881</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td>7965</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>144902</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>7586</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>27232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>132855</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>7016</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>26622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>135160</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>6165</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>27151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>97420</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>5371</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>23529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>97117</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1362</td>
<td>4819</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>34112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>101674</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>4174</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>25137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>95678</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>4365</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>91356</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>4847</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>90874</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>91020</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>95739</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Kancheepuram District, Various years.

It shows that as far as area under cultivation is concerned, paddy is by far the most dominant crop, followed by groundnut, sugarcane and ragi in that
order. Apart from these crops, cotton, Cholam and Cumbu (jowar and bajra) are also cultivated, though at a lesser level. The general trend among the major crops is that the cultivated area under each crop has been falling over the years.

**Irrigation:**

Agricultural activity in the district is entirely dependent on the seasonal rainfall. Canals, tanks, wells, springs and channels are the main sources of irrigation. The district has 1,942 major tanks. Besides these, there are over 4000 minor tanks. The source-wise irrigation pattern being adopted in the district includes similar details for the State. In Kancheepuram district, well irrigation (both tube and surface wells) is quite predominant, as 53.3 percent of the total irrigated area is being irrigated by this method, which amounts to 65137 hectares in absolute terms. Well irrigation consists of both tube wells and surface wells. The share of tube well irrigation in total irrigated area is 7.44 percent, that is 9096 hectares and the other 56041 hectares are irrigated by surface wells.

**Industry**

Kancheepuram, district which surrounds Chennai City, is a shadow region of Chennai metropolitan area. In the view of its advantageous location, this district commands requisite industrial climate and attracts entrepreneurs from different parts of the country. Availability of power, transport and communications, water, labour, market, proximity of a major port and other infrastructural facilities pave way for springing up of a large number of industries
in the district. Major industries such as automobiles, leather tanning, transport, metallurgical, electrical, engineering, chemicals, fertilizers, car manufacturing, mobile phone manufacturing etc., are concentrated in this district. In addition to the existing industries, the famous handloom weaving industry is famous in Kancheepuram district. Handloom is an important traditional craft of India. The handloom industry is of particular significance to the economy of Tamil Nadu.

There are about 15,224 small-scale industries in Kancheepuram district employing about 90,532 people. 1,903 factories in the district that employ 80,030 workers and 4,775 employees in the private sector. The total value of output is Rs.94,36,057 lakhs and there is a value addition of Rs.14,62,169 lakhs, in the year 2010-11. District industries Centre is the implementing arm of the Centre and State Government of various schemes and programmes. District Industries Centre is an integral part of the Department of Industries and Commerce functioning at the district, which have given employment to 90,532 persons and there are 8,242 cottage industries and 89 large-scale industries in this district.

**Trade and Commerce**

Kancheepuram is an important commercial centre in the State. Most of the inward and outward trade movement is carried through road transport by lorries and carts drawn by bullocks. The mercantile consignments include all items from iron and steel and sundry shopping goods. Most of the commodities
which move out of the district are grains, coconut, sugar, jaggery, fertilizers and chemicals. The commercial banks, co-operative banks and private leading money lenders provide finance for the trade. Indian Bank is the lead bank for the district. It co-ordinates the lending activities among the Government departments, banks and non-governmental organizations which are involved in the implementation of various schemes for the overall development of the district. There are 217 banks and among them 151 are nationalized banks, 162 primary co-operative banks, and 36 private sector banks functioning in the district.

**Workforce Structure in Kancheepuram District**

The nature of workforce in an economy explains its structure of employment and the pattern of employment distribution among various sectors. The data regarding the Kancheepuram District’s occupational structure pertaining to the year 2001 is presented in Table 6.6 alongwith that of the state and all-India for the purpose of comparison. The workforce structure is classified on the basis of nature of employment, that is main and marginal workers and also on the basis of industrial classification. Table 5.6 shows that the percentage of main workers in Kancheepuram district as 80.27 percent of the total workers, which is less than the state average of 85.16 percent, but higher than that of the national average (77.80) percent. Thus, the proportion of marginal workers in the district is marginally high at 19.73 percent, which is around one-fifth of the total workforce. This is considerably higher than that of the state average (14.84 percent), though less than the all-India average (22.2 percent).
Table 5.6 Occupational Structure of Kancheepuram & Tamil Nadu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Kancheepuram</th>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Workers</td>
<td>9,17,194(80.27)</td>
<td>2,36,84,611(85.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Workers</td>
<td>2,25,468(19.73)</td>
<td>41,27,036(14.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Workers</td>
<td>11,42,662(100.00)</td>
<td>2,78,11,647(100.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>1,20,143(10.51)</td>
<td>51,14,384(18.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Labourers</td>
<td>3,05,155(26-70)</td>
<td>86,65,020(31.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Industry</td>
<td>63,490(5.56)</td>
<td>14,58,546(5.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other workers</td>
<td>6,53,914(57.23)</td>
<td>1,25,73,697(45.21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


District Income

Kancheepuram, which is adjoining the capital city of the State, Chennai, is the location for many world renowned companies like Hyundai, Nokia, Motorola, Samsung, Capara, Saint Gobain, etc. Moreover, one of the big industrial estates of Tamil Nadu, Sriperumbudur is situated in Kancheepuram. Thus, it is natural that the domestic product of this district and its contribution to the State domestic product is considerable. Table 5.7 provides the data
regarding the income of the district, that of the State and also the share of the former in the latter, apart from the annual growth rates. It can be noted that the annual growth rate of the district’s income and State’s income is more or less similar over the given period. In the last three years, that is since 2004-05, income has grown in double digits in both categories. The share of district’s income has grown from 4.99 percent in 1999-2000 to 5.24 percent in 2001-02 then to 5.33 percent in 2003-04, but declined to 5.25 percent in 2006-07. This clearly indicates that Kancheepuram district contributes more than 5 percent of the State income.

### Table 6.7 Income of the District and State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kancheepuram</th>
<th>Tamilnadu</th>
<th>District’s Share in State’s Income in (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount (in Lakhs)</td>
<td>GR (in %)</td>
<td>Amount (in Lakhs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>637542</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>12634927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>649591</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>12390102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>643123</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>12452136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>704561</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>13228127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>775431</td>
<td>10.06</td>
<td>14799350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>865654</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>16595252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>975370</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>18530974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** *District’s Income is available only upto 2006-2007*

**Source:** Statistical Handbook, 2010, Government of Tamil Nadu.
Male and Female workers in Kancheepuram District:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Workers</th>
<th>Female Workers</th>
<th>Total No.of Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,70,897</td>
<td>5,74,032</td>
<td>11,44,929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organised and Unorganised Sector Workers (Gender wise):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organised</td>
<td>22,323</td>
<td>21,184</td>
<td>43,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unorganised</td>
<td>5,48,574</td>
<td>5,52,848</td>
<td>11,01,422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total       | 5,70,897| 5,74,032| 11,44,929 |

(Source: District Statistical Handbook 2010-11)

(a). Total number of workers identified in Kancheepuram District are 11,44,929 out of them 5,70,897 are male and 5,74,032 are female workers. Male workers are less than the female workers.

(b). In the case of organized sectors, the male workers (22,323) are more than the female workers (21,184).

In un-organized sector the female workers (5,52,848) are more than the male workers (5,48,574).

The female workers in un-organized sector are more (96.3%) than the organized sector (3.7%). This is mainly due to the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in agricultural sector related field work.
### EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PRESENTLY OPERATING IN THE DISTRICT

#### SCHOOLS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION (STUDENTS AND TEACHERS) IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT

(Year 2010-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Name of the Institutions</th>
<th>No. of Institutions</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total No.of Primary Schools</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>34477</td>
<td>36122</td>
<td>70599</td>
<td>3381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total No.of Middle Schools</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>12994</td>
<td>13853</td>
<td>26847</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total No.of High Schools</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>49654</td>
<td>49873</td>
<td>99527</td>
<td>1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Total No.of Hr.Sec.Schools</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>87266</td>
<td>95747</td>
<td>183013</td>
<td>3910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total No.of Mat.Schools</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>89730</td>
<td>75567</td>
<td>165297</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: O/o the CEO., Kancheepuram.

### COLLEGES FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (STUDENTS AND TEACHERS) IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT

(Year 2010-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Name of the Institutions</th>
<th>No. of Institutions</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Govt.Engg.Colleges</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Govt.Aided Engg.Colleges</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self Financing Institutions</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Govt. Aided Polytechnic Colleges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Self Financing Polytechnic Colleges</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COLLEGES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION (STUDENTS AND TEACHERS) IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT
(Year 2010-2011)

Table 5.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the Institutions</th>
<th>No. of Institutions</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Govt.College, Chengalpattu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>1238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aided Colleges</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5362</td>
<td>6272</td>
<td>11654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-Finance Colleges</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3303</td>
<td>4594</td>
<td>6987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>9259</strong></td>
<td><strong>11410</strong></td>
<td><strong>20669</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: O/o the Collegiate Education, Joint Director, Chennai Region.

LITERACY LEVEL OF THE KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT
(YEAR 2011)

Table 5.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>734979</td>
<td>724937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Literates</strong></td>
<td>546994</td>
<td>441384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 2011.
According to education for all each village Panchayat in Kancheepuram district has a primary school. There is hundred percent enrolment drives in these primary schools. Each child enrolled in these primary schools is provided with free mid day meal and free text books as per the instruction by the policies of the State Government. All the children are enrolled in these classes complete their education and there is no failure. The children who complete their Primary School education either move to Middle Schools or to High schools and Higher Secondary Schools. There are some Matriculation Schools in the district for the children who can afford education by paying minimum prescribed fees structure.

There are educational institutions both aided and self financing to provide higher education facilities for the students who complete their school education. Kancheepuram district has close proximity to Chennai a metro and highly industrialized with latest technology in all fields. So the higher educational facilities are available equivalent to Chennai and attract the students to study in these institutions.

The average literacy level for the rural male population is 83.83 percent and for female is 68.20 percent. The average literacy level for the urban male population is 93.49 percent and for female is 85.24 percent. Among the 31 districts of Tamil Nadu Kancheepuram district lies in the 4th place regarding the literacy level. From 1995 to 2005, the National Literacy Mission with the support of State Literacy Mission implemented total literacy, post literacy and continuing education programme.


5.4. Social Life of the people:

There are different communities speaking different languages living in Kancheepuram district. However, in several pockets of this district people belonging to particular community dominate the others in some areas. The majority of the local population consists of Hindus belonging to different castes such as Vellalas, Mudhaliars, Vanniyars, Adi-dravidars and Brahmins. Tamil speaking Labbai Muslims and Christians also form a sizeable number in this district.

The social characteristics of this district mostly depend on the character and culture of its people. Though there live people belonging to different castes, all of them contribute to the culture and the development of the district. The major communities that lived in this district are the Vanniyars, Kamma Naidus, the Reddis, the Vellalas, the Senguntha Mudhaliars, the Muslims, the Brahmins, the Thattans, the Karumans, the Kammars, the Kalthachans, the Beri Chettis, the Vania Chettis, the Gramanis, the Irulas, the Yenadis, the Adi-dravidars, the Chakkiliars, the Arunthathiyas and the Valluvans etc. These communities are engaged in different occupations. They work as cultivators, agricultural labourers, artisans and traders etc.

The important communities engaged in cultivation are the Vanniar, Vellala, Gramani Kamma, and Reddi. The first three communities are Tamil speaking people. While the rest are Telugu speaking. Vanniar is a leading caste almost in all the taluks in this district. Vanniars are also known as Vanniakula Kshatriyas who also assume the title of Naickers. The Kammas who are
popularly known as Naidus, and Kapus who are called Reddis were originally soldiers by profession but have now become cultivators. The Rajus who claim to be kshatriyas are the descendants of the Kammas. This caste is found in large number in Chengalpattu. It is perhaps, during the Vijayanagar period, that these people might have migrated into Chengalpattu district.

The Vellalas – the two important branches of which are the Tondaimandala Vellalas and Tuluva Vellalas, are by general consent, held in high esteem. The former, who are leading landlords in places like Cheyyur, Chunampet, etc., are vegetarians. The Thuluva Vellalas are also otherwise known as Arcot Mudaliars. The Vellalas are not noted for their hard work on farms, but they cultivate through labourers. Agamudaiyan is another cultivating community found in Kancheepuram Taluk.

The members of the scheduled caste particularly the paraiyas or Adi Dravidars form bulk of the labour force. The other members of Scheduled caste who take up agricultural labour in the district are Adi-Andhra, Chakkilians, Arunthathiyars and Valluvans. The other important occupation of the district is weaving, in which the Saliyars, the silk weavers, the Kaikolans or the Senguntha Mudaliars, the cotton weavers and the Patnulkaras alias Saurashtras are engaged. It is evident that the weavers had come to Kancheepuram during the period of Karikala Chola. Kancheepuram is treated as the place, where the community is predominant. In the days of the Nawabs of Carnatic, they were forced to flee from Kancheepuram to place like Thanjavur, Madurai and Tirunelveli. Senguntha Mudaliars are predominantly found in the taluks of Kancheepuram and Madurantakam. These people are the devotees of Lord Muruga.
The Kammalas are the main artisan’s caste of this district. They are divided into occupational subdivisions according to their work in gold, brass, iron, wood or stone. The goldsmiths are called Thattans, the blacksmiths – Karumans, the carpenters Thatchans, the brass-smiths and the stone masons Kalthatchans. The last named, with the little of Mudaliar or Naicker, are noted for their skill even from the days of the Pallavas. They now work on stones collected from places like Mamandur, Palayaseevaram, etc. A number of Kalthatchans have moved to cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Hyderabad to work in temples and projects like Tungabhadra. Deviating from the established customs, nowadays a number of castes are engaged in trade. But the principal trading communities are the Komutti, or Vysya, Beri Chettis, Kamma Naidus and Muslims. The Vaniya Chettis trade generally in oil.

There are many other castes whose members are small in number, but are economically sound. The Brahmins who live in this district either have own lands and do personal or tenancy cultivation, or work in offices or practice as lawyers in places like Chengalpattu, Madurantakam and Kancheepuram. The vaishnavite sect among the Brahmins predominates in Uttiramerur, Madurantakam and Srirperumbudur. It is interesting to learn that there was a long standing dispute between the two sects of Vaishnavites of this district, especially in Kancheepuram, the vadagalai and Thengalai (The former refers to the northern sect, while the latter refers to the southern would not read sacred books or chant except in Sanskrit but the Thengalais although revere that language, but use only their mother tongue. While the former believe in salvation being
secured by good work the latter assert that it could be got through grace. A number of disputes between these two groups came to before the courts of law.

Muslims engaged in trading and mat weaving are found in considerable numbers in Sriperumbudur Taluk. There are good number of Christians converted from castes like Reddis and Naidus who are engaged in cultivation. A large number of people belonging to the fishermen community of Pattanavans living in kuppams on the sea coasts, are found in the district. A caste called Gramani, corresponding to that of Nadar community of Tirunelveli district found in this district. These people were originally toddy tappers but now engaged in different trades and other occupations. Each village in this district has got barbers, washermen and potters. Apart from these, are a few other community people whose strength is insignificant. All these people account for the population of the district.

**Density of Population**

The density of population of the district per square kilometer shown by the 2011 census is 927 as against 555 for the state. The higher density of population is due to the fact that a large number of persons, either by profession or business in Chennai city, owing to paucity of accommodation there, could find better and cheaper accommodation in the suburbs of the city, which fall within the Kancheepuram district limits. Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram accommodate quite a large number of office goers for whose transport convenience; trains are operated to Chennai from these two places, at very frequent intervals.
Sex Ratio

Sex ratio represents the number of females for every 1000 males. The sex ratio of the district is very interesting aspect. In this district, it is 985 females for every 1000 males. The corresponding figure for the State is 995 according to 2011 census.

Language

The main language of the people of the district is Tamil, spoken by a large number of people as their mother tongue. Telugu is the second largely spoken language in the district. A section of the Muslim population speaks Urdu. In the order of frequency, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Malayalam and Kannada are the languages spoken largely in the district. Tamil spoken by 84.43 percent; Telugu spoken by 11.45 percent; Urdu by 1.65 percent; Malayalam by 1.17 percent and Kannada spoken by 0.32 percent of the population of the district. The population that speak other languages is 0.98 percent.¹¹

A number of people in the district speak more than one language as they have acquired working knowledge of language other than their mother tongue. Nearly 13 percent of the people speak a second language other than their mother tongue. The prevalence of bilingualism would provide an interesting study. Most of the mother-tongue groups enumerated in the district have adopted easily to various other languages in use in the area and have acquired working knowledge of them. Thus, as presented in the Census Reports, a large number of the people whose mother-tongue is either Telugu or Urdu or
Malayalam or Kannada, speak Tamil as the subsidiary language. Similarly, people having Urdu as their mother-tongue speak other languages like Telugu or Malayalam, etc., as their subsidiary languages. There may be found multilingualism.

The use of subsidiary language is quite often, due to force of circumstances and acquaintance. The people who speak Tamil, as mother-tongue, usually, do not acquire the knowledge of a subsidiary language. Exceptions are not, however, ruled out. The Telugus, Muslims and the Malayalees (of course small in numbers) acquire the working knowledge of Tamil quickly, as it is the main language of the region. Telugu, which is the second largely spoken language has been the subsidiary language of a fairly large number of people, Next to Telugu, English is spoken, irrespective of any mother-tongue, as a subsidiary language by a large number of persons, especially the educated.

Though Tamil is the mother-tongue of a majority of people of the state, the spoken language varies from district to district and even within the district from region to region. The colloquial usage in the spoken dialect of Tamil in the district has some peculiarities of their own. It may be found in the ordinary spoken language of the district, a fair mixture of Telugu words, owing to the contiguity of the district with Telugu speaking areas which border the district. In pronunciation too, there is corruption. The work ‘j ṭ ṭṛi (Festival), for example, is pronounced as ‘j ṭ ṭi and ‘ṛ ṭṛ (fruit) as ‘gak’. Even within the taluks, there are differences in pronunciation as the accents of the people of
Tambaram and Sriperumbudur vary from those Kancheepuram and Madurantakam, and those of Uthiramerur and Thirukalukundram from the rest of the taluks. Variation in spoken dialect from class to class and from strata to strata give rise to a division into dialects, viz, upper class dialect and lower class dialect.

**General Structure, Religious Belief, Manners and Customs of the people of Kancheepuram District.**

The majority of population professes Hinduism. The other religions that exist here are Christianity, Islam and to a very small extent Buddhism and Jainism. The Hindus constitute the major population of the district and are found numerically high in all the taluks, while the bulk of the remaining people are Christians and Muslims. The latter are numerous in Chengalpattu, Madurantakam, Cheyyur and Thirukalukundram are also found Muslim population. Though the concentration of Christians is more in St.Thomas Mount, Tambaram, Kancheepuram and they spread over the entire district but meagerly. A few jains are also found in and around Kancheepuram.

Generally, there is no marked difference in the characteristics of the people, their religious beliefs, customs and manners from the rest of the people of the state. However, there may exist marginal differences which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

**The Hindus**

The Hindus, who form the majority of the population, worship, in addition to Siva or Vishnu, numerous local deities of their choice. Hinduism has
produced many philosophers and seers, who, in addition to propagate the Hindu philosophy, propounded different schools of thought. One such philosopher is Sri Sankaracharya, who, in the beginning of the 9th century, advocated the Advaita philosophy. He is said to have sojourned at Kancheepuram, where he did many miracles. He was the founder of the Smartha Sect. Sri Sankara’s philosophy inspired a new religious force among the people. The development of Bhakthi Movement played a vital role in the religious beliefs of the people of the district.

The large numbers of Hindu temples, which are associated with the religious beliefs of the people, have been built all over the district. These temples vary from very small street temples to very big temples. A few internationally famous temples are located in this district. The Varadharaja Perumal Temple, the Kamakshi Amman temple the Vaikuntha Perumal temple, and the Ekambaranathar temple at Kancheepuram, Kothanda Ramar temple at Madurantakam and the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Thirukalukundram are a few that deserve special mention. These temples, which are very old and famous for their construction, attract thousands of devotees and tourists. They are in fact, architectural beauties to enjoy. Historical background of these temples is dealt with the previous chapter. As elsewhere in the state, the observance of fast on particular days of the month is an important aspect in the religious life of the Hindus in the district. The observance of fast is spread on particular day of all over the months in a year and is intended as an occasion for intensive contemplation of God. The day known as Vaikunta Ekadasi is sacred to Vaishnavites and the holy night Sivarathiri for the Saivites, for the observance of fasting.
The chief deities worshipped by the devout Hindus of the district are Siva, Vishnu, Ganesh, Murugan and Ambal. Besides these, village Gods like Mariamman, Veerabadran, Iyyanar etc., are also worshipped. The rural people worship different deities of their choice and beliefs.

Caste is an important consideration in the social structure of the society in this district. To perfect the caste system, caste organizations have found their roots which, as they stand, are endeared by many of the communities which have a reasonable strength. A brief account of the important castes and communities of the district is presented in the following paragraphs. Though, detailed note on the customs, manners, beliefs, etc., of each community is out of bounds, a brief account of each of the principal castes in the district will depict a picture on status of castes in the district.

**Mudaliars**

In Kancheepuram district, the Mudaliar community is numerically high, spreading in almost all parts of the district. Their role in the public life is very vital. They are, of course, divided into many subsects like Senguntha Mudaliar, Thondaimandalala Mudaliar, and so on. The Sengunthar, otherwise known as Kaikolar is the principal weaving community in the district, producing large quantities of cotton clothes. The Kaikolars, particularly of this district, maintain that they were first brought into Tondaimandalam by Adondai, -a King, who placed them in charge of the various temples that he built in the country. Even among Sengunthars, there are several subdivisions. Most of them are Saivites. Tamil is their mother tongue and they employ Brahmins as priests for
their religious observances. Murugan is their chief deity of worship. Once, they had hereditary headman called Periathandakarar or Pattakarar who was assisted by two subordinates sangili or Gramani and Ural. The Kaikolars divided into seventy two Nadus or Desams which were subject to the authority of four thaisainadus which, in turn, were controlled by the Mahanadu at Kancheepuram, the residence of the patron deity Kamakshiamman.

The Tondaimandalam Mudaliars are also known as Kottai Katti Mudaliars, who belong to Vira Saiva sect. They are numerous in Cheyyur and Chunambedu. Agriculture is their mainstay and they are noted for their skill in land management. This district has a good number of landlords and farmers as well. The Thuluva Vellalas are a subsect of the Mudaliar community who call themselves as Arcot Mudaliars and Poonamallee Mudaliars depending on their habitats. Their main occupation is agriculture. But unexpectedly nowadays they left their agricultural work and moved into urban side.

**Brahmins**

In the Kancheepuram district Brahmins constitute a small percentage of population, but occupy a unique position in the society. They are the repositories of vedic knowledge, priests, purohits and astrologers. They are divided into two well known religious sects, like the Saivites and the Vaishnavites. The Saivites are either Saivites proper of the Smarthas. The Saivites proper believe that there was only one God, i.e.Siva who is self-existent and that He is not liable to lose His personality, while the Smarthas, on the other hand, recognize the Tirumurthis, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva as equal
manifestations of the supreme spirit and believe that the soul of man (Jeeva) is only a portion of the infinite spirit Atma and that Jeeva is capable of being absorbed into the Atma. Even among the Vaishnava sects, there are two principal sects in the district viz. i). the follower of Sri Ramanuja and ii). The followers Madhvacharya (the Madhvas). The Brahmins of the district belong, mostly, to Smaartha and Vaishnava sects, each of which is divided and subdivided into a number of smaller groups based on sectarian, occupational, territorial, ritualistic and other differences. The Vadamas, the Brahacharana, the Ashtasastram, the Vathima or Madhma are some of the important sects of the Smarthas. Religious customs and beliefs do not vary greatly among these subsects. The Vadamas claim superiority over other sects. The Vathimas are famous for their economic habits and sense of corporate unity. The Kaniyalars are mostly temples servants and they wear Vaishnava marks.

The Vaishnavites in this district are divided into the Vadagalais and the Tengalais. These two groups are distinguished by the sacred mark on their foreheads. While the former put a ‘U’ shaped mark, the latter a ‘V’ shaped mark. Each one of these groups is divided into Srivaishnavas, the Vaikhanasas and the Pancharatras.

Though the Brahmins are supposed to learn Vedas and teach them to others and their profession is expected to be linked with religious activities, the current trend shows their engagement in superior, executive and clerical grades of government service besides having occupied high positions in private business houses and concerns. The Brahmins of the district are also land lords
who, besides supervising cultivation, work in offices or practice as advocates in places like Chengalpattu, Madurantakam and Kancheepuram etc. These people are predominate ones in Kancheepuram, Uthiramerur, Sriperumbudur and Madurantakam.

Marriage Customs and Rituals of Brahmins

The marriage customs and rituals differ from community to community. Several rituals which should be followed in a marriage are conveniently ignored, nowadays though it would be impossible to describe the marriage customs of each and every community, it would be pertinent to describe for some of the important communities which are predominant in this district.

The marriage of the Brahmins is, usually, held at the bride’s place. But nowadays, these marriages are conducted in marriage halls which are common to both the sides. The ceremony start with mock pilgrimage performed by the bridegroom who is dressed like a pilgrim and who sets out on mock pilgrimage to Kasi, which is known as Kasi Yatra in a procession with all fan fare. On his way, his would be father-in-law, intercepts the procession, dissuades the groom from going on the pilgrimage and requests him to marry his daughter. Thereupon the groom signifies his consent, returns to the marriage hall where the bride and the groom are seated together and offered milk and banana. Then the purohit, who officiates at the wedding, pronounces some mantra and proclaims the names of the parties and their Gotras. After this, the girl is given away through a ceremony to the groom and then tying of tali commonly known as ‘thirumangalyam’ takes place, when the girl is seated on the laps of her father.
While tying the tali, the priests pronounce Vedic verses. After performing certain oblations in the sacred fire, the groom takes the right foot of the bride and makes her touch the grinding stone thrice. This is known as Ammi Midhithal and has reference to the legend of Ahalya in Ramayana. This is followed by the ceremony. Arunthathi Parthal gazing the pole star during which the Arunthathi star, en emblem of chastity, is gazed by the bride. After these ceremonies, the couples go round the sacred fire seven times which marks the end of wedding ceremonies.

**The Reddis**

The Reddis, Telugu speaking people, who are found in large numbers in the taluks of Madurantakam, Sriperumbudur and Thirukalukundram are a cultivating class, have farming as their main occupation. These hardworking people wield wide respect and influence in the district as an agricultural community. The Reddis of the district have several subdivisions, chief among which are Desur, Marasu, Pakanati, Palli, Panta, Pedaganti, Pokanati, Velanati and Yeslam. These names are derived either from the original place they hail from or the occupation they are engaged in. The Desur Reddis were so called as they are supposed to hail from Desur and the Morasus are so called because they used to weave mats and baskets. But, at present they are only cultivators.

The Reddis are neutral to both Vaishnavism and “Saivism and hence, show no discrimination in following both the religious faiths. They worship a variety of deities like Thallamma, Nagarapamma, Puttamma, Ankamma and
Muneeswara. They do not encourage widow remarriage, nor do they support intercaste marriage. Like their male counterparts, the Reddis womenfolk are also hardworking. But, for working on the land, the womenfolk undertake all responsible work connected with agriculture. The Panta Reddi women wear a characteristic gold ear ornament called Kammal, a flat nose-ring and they have tied the ‘tali’ and the ‘pottu’.

The Reddis follow the customs of other people of the locality in disposing of the dead bodies. At the funeral pyre, the local barber goes around the corpse, thrice, carrying a pot of water, followed by the son who makes holes in the pot. The ashes of the burnt bones are collected after the gap of a day, in a new pot, and consigned to the river or lake.

**Marriage Customs and Rituals of the Reddis**

The Reddi’s marriage, almost on the line of the Brahminical marriage, starts with betrothal when the party of the groom go in procession accompanied by musicians and women carrying betel, coconut, plantain and other fruits and turmeric, on plates. The bride is presented with a new set of clothes which she wears. A female relation gives her three handfuls of areca nuts, a few betel leaves, and the bride price and jewels tied up in a turmeric smeared cloth. Then, the fathers of the contracting couple exchange betel. On the wedding morning, the groom’s party accompanied by a Purohit, goes to the bride’s house and takes her from there. A club of a tree is set up and is usually made of Minusops hexandra. A party then proceeds to the house of a washerman and obtains from him a framework made of bamboo or sticks, over
which cotton threads are wound, which is otherwise called thoranam and an idol of Ganga, in exchange of some food and gingelly oil. Then the washerman who brings the thoranam, is asked to tie it to the pandal where the marriage ceremony takes place. The Reddiars then get the Tali from a Goldsmith and 13 marriage pots from the potter. The pots are placed in a room along with the Ganga idol and the contracting couple are seated with the ends of their clothes tied together, on the marriage dais the kankanam is tied around the wrist of the boy and the girl. The bridegroom stands facing the girl in whose neck, he ties the tali. Then they gaze at the pole star i.e. Arunthathi.¹³

The Kammalars

The Kammalars, noted artisans community, are numerically strong in the taluk of Kancheepuram. They are also called Asaries, and pathars, whose main profession is making ornaments. There are members of the community who are blacksmiths and carpenters.

The original form of the name Kammalan appears to have been Kannalan or Kannalar both of which occur in Tamil poems. Kannalan denotes one who rules the eye or one gives the eye. When an image is made, its consecration takes place at the temple. Towards the close of the ceremony, the Kannalan who made it comes forward and carves out the eye of the image. The name is also said to refer to those who make articles and open the eyes of the people, i.e., who make articles pleasing to the eyes¹⁴. The Tamil Kammalars are divided into three endogamous territorial groups, like Pandya, Sozhia or Chola and Kongan. The second named are found spread over the district. Kammalar,
which is a general term, also refers to five occupational sections, viz., Tattar or Porkollar (goldsmith) Kannar (brasssmith), Thachar (carpenter), Kal Thachar (stone mason) and Kollar or Karumar (blacksmith). Kammalars are also called viswakarma, viswakarmala and viswa Brahmin.

The Kammalars are Saivites and worship Lord Ganesa, the son of Lord Siva. The caste has its own Goddess Kamakshi Amman, who among the Kammalars, is known as Vrithi Deivam. The deity is worshipped by all sub-sects of the caste and girls were, till a couple of decades ago, frequently named after Her. She is represented by the fire place of the smithy and bellows at which, the castemen work. Their own priests officiate at marriages, funerals and other ceremonial occasions. Like Brahmins, they also wear a sacred thread.

The corpse is, as a matter of convention, usually buried in a sitting posture, but now, they resort to cremation sometimes. Death pollution, as in the case of some other non-brahminical castes, lasts for 16 days. Usually, a pandaram officiates at the death ceremonies.

**Marriage Customs and Rituals of Kammalar**

In Kammalas community child marriage is not permitted. Widow marriage is not banned. At the wedding of a widow, the tali is tied at night. Prior to the marriage ceremony, they worship the female ancestors. Kammalas adopt Brahminical gotras. Five sections among them have five gotras, each of which has twenty five sub-gotras. In their marriage, they imitate the Brahminical ceremonies. Even among the Kammalas, the dowry system prevails as it is in other communities. The impact of Anti-Dowry Act is yet to be watched.
Gramani

The Gramanis, otherwise known as Shanars, are the toddy drawing community. They are also called Nadars. This caste is scattered all over the district. They are industrious and hardworking. They were, in former days, employed as foot soldiers and body guards. They are said to be the immigrants from the northern coast of Ceylon, where a similar caste exists under the name ‘Shandrar’. There are several sub-divisions in the community. There is nothing peculiar about their marriage or death ceremonies. The dead, except the first born infant, are generally buried or cremated. Widow remarriage is permitted in some sub-divisions, but not permitted in others. Though they are mostly Saivites, they have faith in their local deities.

Dr.Caldwell considers the Nadars as immigrants from the Northern coast of Ceylon in very early times. The Nadars were called "Nadalwars" in the old inscriptions of Travancore, which shows that they were once great landlords. They used to describe themselves in documents as "Valamkai Uyir Konta Irvikula Kshatriyar" which means "Kshatriyars" of the Solar race belonging to the right hand faction.\(^{15}\)

According to Bate, (1917) the Nadars of Travancore were identical with those of Madras or Tirunelveli. They claimed a divine origin and believed themselves to have been made to carry crowns.

According to Raveendran (1973) the Nadars were large in numbers, performing agricultural labour and other kinds of useful work. They
were always engaged in the more active operation or rural economy. They were
treated by the high orders with scorn and contempt. Their foreign origin has
recently been contested with much force at credibility. They are a well built and
hardworking people. Their girls are married at puberty.\textsuperscript{16}

Nowadays, a large section of the community has embraced
Christianity. The suppression and ill-treatment given to this community, in the
past, by the so-called high castes of the Hindus, might perhaps be one of the
reasons for such large scale conversions. They are agriculturalists or land
owners and are also engaged in salt trade in Cheyyur taluk. Now, there are
many top officials in the educational and various other fields from this community.

\textbf{The Vanniars}

The Vanniars, an important farming community, are found
numerous in Kancheepuram, Madurantakam, Cheyyur, Chengalpattu and
Sriperumbudur Taluks. They constitute a large population and have an exalted
influence in the political and social life of the district. They claim to be kshatriyas
and hence, call themselves Vanniyakula Kshatriyas. As recorded by Nelson in
the Manual of Madurai District, “in former days, these Vanniys held a good
position among the people of South India.\textsuperscript{17}

Armies of Vanniys are often mentioned in Ceylon Annals and
Hindu History of Ceylon. It is stated that a Pandya princess went to Sri Lanka
and married its king and was accompanied by sixty bands of Vanniys. After the
fall of the Pallava dynasty, the Vanniys became agriculturists and agricultural
labourers under the Vellalas. Barring a little percentage of Vanniyas who are engaged in trade and public service, the rest of them are mainly agriculturists. The Vanniyas of the district are also known as Naickers, Vanniyakula Kshatriyas, Vanniya Gounder, Kander or Padayachi. They are a united community. They are frugal and do not spend much on marriages. In some parts, they allow divorces, and widow remarriages. The Vanniyas of the district follow either Saivism or Vaishnavism but do not fail to worship their local deities like Mariamman, Ayyanar, Muneeswarar etc. In their social life, the panchayat system which is still in vogue, plays a vital role. The caste people have a headman called Periadhanakkaran or Nattamaikaran, whose decision on all matters affecting the community, is final. He heads all the ceremonial functions.

Their habits and customs resemble, generally, that of the other Hindus. The woman gave birth to a child, except the first one, in her husband’s house, as the first birth takes place in her mother’s home. The mother and child are kept in a separate room for eleven days after birth and on the 11th day, she is given a bath and allowed entry into the house. During the postnatal period, the mother is given rich diet of jaggery mixed with ghee and spiced with dried ginger. When the child becomes three years old, it is taken to the family temple for tonsuring the head. Ear boring ceremony is conducted with the help of the local goldsmith. When a girl attains puberty, the maternal uncle is invited to make a partition in the Verandah of the house, using coconut leaves. The girl would be kept in seclusion for 11 days. A bunch of margosa leaves is kept at the entrance of this portion. On the eleventh day, the girl is given a ceremonial bath for which
all the relatives are invited. They would bring with them a bag containing fruits, sweets, etc. A grand feast is hosted to these relatives. The dead are either burnt or buried depending upon the situation.

The Vanniyas of this district rank high in their social status. They are growing day by day and their development is phenomenal in all walks of life. A very good percentage of them have now entered Government service due to the quota system and are in the forefront. Equally higher is their status in public and political sphere and hence, they enjoy respect in the district.

**Scheduled Caste**

The general population of this district includes members of Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes also. In this district Paraiyars, Pallars, Chakkiliars, Kuruvars and Valluvans fall under scheduled castes. According to 2001 census this district comprises 7,21,989. Among these 3620977 males and 359892 females are the total population. Whereas the total population of the Scheduled Tribe in this district comprise 26508. Among these 13267 males and 13241 females are the total population.

**The Paraiyars**

The Paraiyars are agricultural labourers found numerous in all the taluks of the Kancheepuram district. According to Caldwell, the word ‘Paraiyar’ is derived from the word ‘parai’ (drum) as the caste played on drums at marriages, funerals, village festivals and on occasions when Government or commercial announcements are proclaimed. However, the 1891 Census Report,
contradicting the view states that it was only one section of the community which acts as drummers and that the occupation was not confined to Paraiars alone. It seems in the highest degree improbable that a large and at one time powerful community should owe its name to an occasional occupation, which one of its divisions shares with other castes. W. Francis, who authored the Madras Census Report, 1901, writes that the old Tamil poems and works of the early centuries of the Christian era did not mention the name Paraiyar, but contain many descriptions of a tribe called the Eyirs who seem to have been quite distinct from the rest of the population and did not live in the villages, but in forts of their own. Ambur and Vellore are mentioned as the places where they lived. They may have been perhaps the ancestors of the paraiyars”. 19

The Paraiya population of the Kancheepuram district was described by Tremenheere, in 1891, thus:

Always bad nourished, clad, if at all, in the vilest of rags; eaten up with leprosy or other horrible diseases; hunted like pigs; untaught; uncared for and unpitied. 20

This might be so, when he saw them, at his time. But due to various Acts and measures by Government, their position has highly improved. No longer would such descriptions be right nor would it hold water.

In times, prior to British Rule, the whole of the Pariah community, without exception, were the slaves of the superior castes. The British administration freed this class as a community from the yoke of hereditary
slavery and from the legal disabilities under which they suffered but they still remained (1878) at the lower depth of social degradation.\textsuperscript{21}

“The Hindu” dated 7\textsuperscript{th} August 1891 admitted that they were outside the pale of Hindu Society, but they had looked to the higher classes as their guardians and masters, who, however, could assign to them no higher position than that of labourers of the lowest order, generally doing the meanest and the most repulsive work of the village or town. It added that the Hindu religion recognized no provision for their spiritual needs as indeed the Hindu Industrial System allotted to them any particular industry and that the material, as well as the spiritual well being of the Pariars had been from time immemorial outside the solicitude of the Hindu legislators and philanthropists. Indeed, the writer of the Times employed no exaggeration when he charges the Hindus as looking upon these despised people as an altogether inferior race of mankind.

Though Saivites, the Paraiyars worship the female deities like Mariatha, Kali, Ponniammal and Mandaiyammal in whose temples they offer rice, flowers, turmeric and on important occasions, a fowl. Subsects among Paraiyars in this district is Malas, it is said, were once weavers, but had given up this profession in course of time and had begun to work as labourers in business centres of the district. These people claim to be migrants from Telugu State i.e.Andhra Pradesh. Their customs and manners differ very much from that of the Tamil Paraiyars as they follow the customs and manners of the Telugus. Like the Telugu people, majority of the Malas are Vaishnavites but they pay allegiance to the demons and village deities. Their own caste priests called Mala
Dasaris perform offerings to the deities on behalf of the Malas. Even among the Malas of the district, we find subdivisions like Arava, Bova Marikimati, Morasa, Reddhibhumi, etc. Though divorce is common among the Malas, the man has to pay the compensation to the wife if he wishes to send her away on no serious fault on her part. Widow remarriage is generally permitted but such marriages are performed with lesser ceremonies.

The Paraiyars who had held high positions in the social scale, later on, appear to have gone down. But they are coming up gradually due to Government’s efforts to uplift them by showering several concessions. In olden days, as a rule, their houses were far away from those of the other community people in village. But nowadays most of them mingled with other caste people in the urban areas. Most of them were illiterates and ignorant in the rural areas still. Now, the Christian missionaries also have made great endeavour’s for their social and material uplift.

Among the scheduled caste people, the Chakkiliars are another caste group found irregular in the district. They work on leather and eke their livelihood mainly out of this. However, many of them are also engaged as agricultural labourers. In social position and economic standards, most of them continue to occupy a lower rank in society. Their customs and manners do not vary much from that of their brethren caste men in other parts of the state. They are devil worshippers, paying allegiance to village deities. Widow remarriage is allowed among them.
Marriage Customs and Rituals of Scheduled Caste

Among the Scheduled Caste, marriage formalities are very simple. Marriages are generally arranged by parents. By exchange of clothes, rice and vegetables between the families of the bride and groom, marriage is fixed. The marriage ceremony is very simple, nothing but only tying the tali around the neck of the girl, by the bridegroom in the presence of a Valluvan, who blesses the couple. But the educated society has made their marriage in the modern style.

Scheduled Tribes

As presented in the 2001 census, the total Scheduled Tribe population of Kancheepuram district is 26,508 of which 13,267 are males and 13,241 are females. Among this population, majority belongs to Irula community which is the second largest tribe in Tamil Nadu. Villian is another name for the Irulas of Kancheepuram district. Irulas are found in all the taluks of this district.

The name Irulas is derived from the Tamil word Irul which would mean darkness or night. They may be called so because of the colour of their skin (dark) or the place they inhabit and hunt. The term Irulas, Kasabas, Uralis and Villians or velliyanas are used in different regions of the State to denote the same tribe. Villian is common name for Irulas of Kancheepuram district as well as South Arcot, Salem, North Arcot, Dharmapuri, Trichirapalli and Thanjavur districts.

According to Neil Thin, “most Irulas work intermittently subject to the vagaries of immediate need for each and important seasonal variations in the
availability of work. Vast majority of Irulas eke out their cash and non-cash income by catching snakes, rats, termites and other wildlife.\textsuperscript{23}

Although the Irulas of Kancheepuram district today have not heard these particular myths, they believe that they have a special relationship to animals and snakes, and non-Irulas value the powers of the Irula Pujaris to heal minor snake-bites. Though vague, they have an idea of having originated as a snake-catching and hunting section of a royal family. They say that they are rajas and some other say that this was through marriage of their women into royalty, while a few others claim direct descent royalty in the male line. These people are experts in identifying and gathering medicinal herbs, particularly so, the ones which are useful in snake, rat and insect bites. They are experts in snake medicine which is kept as a secret known only to the elderly people.

The Irula marriage takes place only among the Irulas. Though they say that they find the spouses from all over the district, it seems, in practice, that they intermarry within a fairly narrow range of other villages. Rarely, they arrange marriages between two peoples living in the same settlement, except occasionally in some of the very large settlements. Now Irulas have become largely labourers working in agricultural lands, brick making, etc. As stated earlier, some of them still continue to be hunter gatherers in village forests.

The Christians

The Christians are standing the second to the Hindus in the district. The British rule in India was the cause for the spread of this religion. Like other
districts, Kancheepuram district has found the roots of Christianity through the Britishers, whose influence, due to proximity of the district to Madras city, the headquarters of the British Rule, over the people of the district, was greater. Christians are found almost in all the taluks of this district.

**The Muslims**

The Muslims are third in population strength and are concentrated in Kancheepuram, Madurantakam, Cheyyur, Mahabalipuram and Wallajabad areas. The Muslims of the district are largely of two mixed races – the Marakkayars and Labbais. Pathans, Arabs, Sayyids and Sahibs are also found in this district. The Muslims of the district are ardent. They adhere to the injunctions of the Holy Kuran and observe the five principles preached by it. All pious Muslims of the district observe fasting during Ramzan. On the day of ‘Idul Fitr’ which is the first day of the month following Ramzan, the Muslims wear new clothes and give up the fast, by joining the feast. They observe Bakrid, the feast of sacrifice, too, with great devotion. Bakrid and Ramzan are the two important festivals for them. Muharram is celebrated in the first month of Mohammaden era.

**The Buddhists**

Buddhism had once found its root in this district particularly in Kancheepuram which is one of the seven sacred cities of India and is the headquarters of the district. Hieun Tsang, the Chinese traveller-scholar from China who visited Kancheepuram has recorded that Buddhism in the city had a
strong influence. He refers to several hundreds of Sangharamas and a large number of priests at that time.\textsuperscript{24} History speaks of the deep root that Buddhism took in the city of Kanchi about the first century A.D. Its influence began to decline in South India, when there was great awakening among the Hindus under the influence of Alwars and Nayanmars. Kanchi has produced Dignaga, Bodhi Dharma and Dharmapala who set high standards in the mastery of Buddhist learning. Acharya Dignaga is said to have served in the Nalanda University with great distinction. He is such a great scholar that he was well versed in Mahayana and Hinayana systems and has produced many standard works which are admired and appreciated by the Chinese and Japanese even today. Bhodhi Dharma, the founder of Dhyana system of Buddhist philosophy, which is known a Zen system in Japan, is greatly respected and reversed. Dharmapala, also belonged to Kanchi, who abandoned worldly life in his youth, became a great teacher at Nalanda. He has written many books on Buddhistic logic and metaphysics.\textsuperscript{25}

The glory of Buddhism diminished gradually and its popularity declined owing to several reasons. At last it found its zenith in the district and mauled thoroughly by Hinduism. There is nothing to show at present, the existence of Buddhism in this district save that of the old and interesting group of monuments on the seashore of Mamallapuram.

**The Jains**

Kancheepuram was a centre of Jains for centuries past as evidenced by a number of ruined Jain cave beds hewn in rocks found in the
district. The Jain temples at Arpakkam and Makaral are ancient temples where the Jains pay their devotion. The present day Jains are the migrants from other States, who are engaged in money lending business. It flourished in this district during the Pallava period i.e.300 – 866 A.D. The Jains in the district are idolators, their idols being always male figures similar in appearance to those of the Bhuddhists. Their extreme veneration for animal life is remarkable. They do refrain from eating flesh; nor do they take food or drink water after twilight. They have scripts of their own, and their customs are generally in conformity with those of the Brahmins.

**Joint Family System**

Kancheepuram district is predominantly rural in character, despite its proximity to the city of Chennai. The rural character has enabled the joint family system to have stronghold among the people from very early period. The joint family system known for economic benefits and integration, homogeneity and stability had worked so well for a very long period in rural areas. But, of late, this system, like any other system, by compulsion of time, due to Industrialization, Urbanization and individuals’ disinterest in the system, apart from losing its value, has lost its ground as well. Several industries have sprung up in places like Sriperumbudur, Maraimalainagar, Chengalpattu, Perungalathur etc., which opened new avenues of employment to the people of the district. This has resulted in large scale migration of people, particularly from the rural parts of the district which, in turn, has caused a break in the joint family system. Spread of modern education is another cause. The emancipation of women and
their employment in the city as clerks, officers, teachers, labourers, etc., has quickened the process of decline of this system. This joint family system has been gradually replaced by individual families.

**Property and inheritance**

The law relating to inheritance rights is almost common in the State in that the matrilineal system of inheritance among the Hindus is in vogue. It is the widely prevalent and predominant system of inheritance and succession. Among the Vanniyyars, Mudaliars and Brahmins, lineage is traced only through male members and the property of the father normally goes to the sons. But, the Government of Tamil Nadu has enacted a law, in 1990, to enable even the daughters to have a share in the father’s property. Among the Muslims, though lineage is traced through the male members of the family, women are also entitled to one third of the property. As for the Christian community, it adheres to the matrilineal system of inheritance. Among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people, there is no organized pattern of inheritance.

Many legal enactments were made in recent years which influenced the social life of the people to a great extent. At present, child marriage is almost non-existent, widow remarriage is not prohibited, and intercaste is not a taboo. A number of Acts have been passed from time to time to legalize marriages between members of different castes. This enactment eradicates the evils of caste rigidity, through civil marriages.
Monogamy and Polygamy

Before the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, polygamy was prevalent among some sections of the society, especially among the higher strata of society. But, this Act which was codified and reformed the law relating to Hindu marriage all over the country, has made monogamy both general and compulsory among all classes of Hindus. Inspite of this, sporadic occurrences of polygamy cannot be ruled out. Among the Muslims of the district, marriage is not regarded as religious sacrament but a secular bond, and for them; polygamy is not prohibited either in law or by custom, though the public opinion is always different. For the Christians of the district, monogamy is the rule and polygamy is tabooed by religion, law and custom. Among the scheduled castes, polygamy was not a sin in the past. But now, morality has changed very much and they do not permit polygamy. Among the Scheduled tribes, polygamy was in vogue for a long time and the Irulas and Yenadis allowed polygamy according to the social status of person concerned. Even those tribal’s have now switched over to monogamy.

Traditional Marriage Customs

Marriages, traditionally, take place only among the same caste people. Intercaste marriage is neither common nor is encouraged. Intercaste couples are generally treated with contempt. This normally happens, when a caste Hindu marries a Scheduled caste. Neither the children of brothers nor those of sisters could marry. Save that of Muslims, other communities observe
this practice. It is general custom among the people of the district to marry within
relations. It is considered that proper match for a boy is the daughter of his
maternal uncle or his paternal aunt or his sister. Almost all the communities of
the district are split into endogamous sub-divisions outside which marriage is
prohibited.

In the Muslims, the marriage is commonly between a boy and his
maternal or paternal uncle’s daughter. Marriage between a boy and his sister’s
daughter is strictly prohibited. Among the Christians, marriage between a boy
and his maternal uncle’s or paternal aunt’s daughter is the established custom.
They follow, in this respect, the customs of the Hindus. Widow remarriage is,
though not generally accepted, in vogue among some communities.

Dresses of the People of Kancheepuram District

Kancheepuram district people’s dress habits are simple. But, it
may vary from person to person depending upon the economic status.
Occupation is another factor which determines the mode of their dress. The
village males prefer to use cotton dhoties and shirts but the shirt materials of
today are of polyester cloth, which though may not be cheap, has become the
habit of the people. Men wear dhoti tucked up along the loins. They put on over
the shoulder, a towel which is also used as a headgear when they work on the
field. Only a few working class women do not wear blouses, but the rest
normally wear blouses along with sarees which are made of cotton only.
Generally, the women’s dress consists of a saree, wound round the waist with
one end hanging down in folds, while the other end is drawn up over the breast
and passing over the shoulder and drawn across the back and tucked in the
waist. School and college going girls wear modern dresses which are found to
be very convenient. Not only the office goers but even those who live in town, a
good number of them, wear pants and shirts in European style. In dressing
among the male, there is no marked difference, as they wear either dhoti and
shirt or pant and shirt.

**Ornaments of the people of Kancheepuram district**

The common and usual ornaments of women are a pair of ear
studs called kammals, bangles, either gold, glass, plastic or gold plates – worn
on the wrist, ear and neck. Married Hindu women wear compulsorily, the tali,
wearig of ornaments made of gold is the desire of even an ordinary woman.
During marriages and other ceremonies, women wear all the available golden
ornaments. As thieving is fast spreading and waylaying and threat to life, for the
sake of gold, the cost of which has been on the rise, is on the increase, women
are of late, afraid of wearing these ornaments. But to exhibit a bare neck is not
liked by any woman, they wear gold plated ornaments. The male members do
not wear, normally, any ornaments. Wearing gold chain around the neck by a
few is not uncommon.

**Staple food of the People of Kancheepuram District**

The staple food of the people of the district is rice. Apart from this,
the laboring class takes other millets like cumbu, ragi, milo, etc. Majority of the
people except the Brahmins and Vellalars, take non-vegetarian foods. The
normal custom of the people is to take two meals a day, viz., lunch and supper,
and breakfast in the morning. This breakfast consists of idly, dosa, chappathi,
poori, pongal etc. The poor sections take porridge along with pickles as breakfast. Lunch is served with hot rice and curry, sambar, rasam and butter milk. Night food is usually light consisting of cooked rice with some left over’s of the noon food. The rich peoples’ food consist other items.

**Ceremonies of the People in Kancheepuram District**

Various ceremonies celebrated by the people belonging to different castes in Kancheepuram district are birthday; name giving, ear boring, puberty, betrothal, Marriage, pregnancy and Funeral. Certain ceremonies are celebrated only by some cases, whereas some others are common to all castes.

**Birthday**

Birthday is an important ceremony devoted to thank the almighty for the past help and invoking his/her special blessings for the future.

Birthday celebration is common to all castes and is celebrated by people all over the world irrespective of caste and religion. The ancient Greeks, Romans and Aryans have given special importance to the anniversaries of their birthday. The people of modern lives of highly civilized nations of Europe and America also celebrate their birthday.

Birthday in Kancheepuram district is celebrated differently by different castes. Birthday is celebrated in a grand scale and people spend a lot of money on food, clothes, sweets, and miscellaneous items. However, the
expenditure on these items may differ according to the social and economic status of the people.

**Attaining Puberty**

A girl’s coming of the age is yet another occasion for parents to spend a lot. In olden days this occasion was celebrated to make aware of the whole class or community became aware that a girl had attained marriageable age that resulted in proposals from parents of eligible boys.

Now there does not exist a necessity for such a celebration. Yet most of the parents still cling to the habit of celebrating the coming of age of every girl even if there are many daughters. This celebration also involves much expense. Whereas the broad minded town and city dwellers have confined this occasion within one’s family this celebration of a daughter, the villagers still make it a grand affair. It is only some poor parents who are forced to avoid this celebration due to abject poverty.

Though the Tamil Nadu Government has stipulated the marriageable age for girls as 18 years and for boys 21, yet in most of the villages the girls are being settled in marriage immediately after attaining puberty. Most of these girls are illiterates or semi-literates and bring forth children without any spacing. These girls become physically weak and they are over burdened with domestic and occupational responsibilities and fall as a prey into the vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy, ill health and civic inertia.

**Weddings**

It is a common practice followed down the ages among all communities and castes that the elders arrange most of the marriages. This tradition is being followed even now. Generally the girl’s parents initiate the marriage process. They consult their elders. The contacts are made with bridegroom’s parents through elders. After everything is settled, the girl's parents express their consent for engagement. In the past fertility among the
female members of the girl’s family and hard working capacity of the girl were the
criteria for selecting a girl. With the passage of time and changes in social
values, materialistic considerations like girl’s parents’ wealth, income and other
things have gained precedence over other values.

Among the lower income group people the custom of conducting
marriages in simple way in temples continues. But those who have steady
income, moderate salary or those who possess some material wealth the extra
expense of conducting weddings in marriage halls is not a strain.

Buying gold jewellery for the bride has been the custom.
Nowadays a groom’s parent’s demand items such as gold chains, costly
wristwatch, a four wheeler or two wheeler for the groom etc. Receiving such
items has become a matter of prestige. Normally, breakfast or lunch has to be
provided by the groom. Now there appears to be a reversal of this custom. In
the name of convention the bride’s parents are made to meet out all the
expenses connected with conveyance, hospitality and food. All these have
made marriages very costly at present. Every bride’s parents have to undergo
the ordeal of spending more than their means and suffer as debtors for years.

Funeral

Finally the funeral is also connected with certain rituals. Though
death is a tragic incident, there prevails a belief that the death attains moksha, a
state of bliss. And achieving bliss is an occasion performing some rituals.
Hence there is the custom of giving a touch of ostentation to a funeral. There are
many rituals connected with the funeral, which are conducted over a period of
time. As a result every death results in exorbitant expenses also. The people of Kancheepuram district are no exception to these customs. Almost all irrespective of caste and religion spend money in observing the rituals.

The dead are buried on the first or second day after the death. The dead body is laid on its backs, head to the south, feet to the north and face turned to the east; on the second day, poured over the grave. Both these actions are considered to clean the sins of the deceased. On the sixteenth day, the family is fed a meal with meat, from which it abstains from the sin of death. However, these elaborate ceremonies are performed depending upon the capacity of the family to spend. It ranges from lavish spending to very meager spending.

Main festivals in Kancheepuram District

The important festivals celebrated in Kancheepuram district are Deepavali, Pongal, Saraswathi Pooja, Karthigai Deepam, Vinayaka Chathurthi, Christmas, New Year, Easter, Ramzan, Bakrid and Muharram apart from other Sikh, Buddhist and Jain festivals celebrated by a fragment of the population. Some of the important festivals of the people of Kancheepuram district are as follows:

The Hindu’s Festivals:

Deepavali:

Deepavali, the festival of lights, comes close on the heels of Dasara. It is festival that marks the victory of good over evil. Deepavali means a
“row of lights”, and it brings along with it glowing happiness and the touch of sparklers all around. In India, Deepavali is synonymous with the nightly bursting of fire-crackers and the beautiful decoration of the houses with earthenware lamps which is a feast for the eyes. It begins at dawn as early as around three in the morning. The family members are given an oil massage, followed by aarti and then the children burst crackers to mark the joyous day. New clothes and exchange of gifts goes without saying. On Deepavali day, everywhere in India, at dusk when darkness unfolds itself, you can see a spectacular illumination of tiny flickering lamps adorning in rows – at homes, buildings and streets. And watch out as you look up to the sky. Hundreds of fire crackers can be seen glowing and then bursting as though it was a battle of glows and sparks in the skies. Deepavali is incomplete without the multi-coloured and noisy fire crackers. From simple colored sparklers, pencils, flower pots, ground chakras, Vishnu chakras, rockets to the long lady/garland crackers, you have a wide range of choose from. The festival of lights is one of the most beautiful of Indian festivals.

Deepavali is universally observed by the people of all classes high and low, rich and poor. All the Hindus celebrate this festival on a large scale. This festival is celebrated in commemoration of the happy incident of the destruction of the demon called Narakasura by lord Krishna.

Thai Pongal:

Pongal is one of the major festivals for Tamils and often referred to as “thamizhar thirunal”. At the beginning of the tamil month “thai” it is celebrated
for three days: first day devoted to getting rid of old things (Bhogi), second day involves main Pongal celebrations followed by Mattuppongal on the third day. Many extend these to a fourth day called “kannip pongal” or “kanum pongal” when younger’s go around and seek the blessings of the elders. On Bhogi day, a bonfire is lit with all the agricultural and household wastes.

Mattu Pongal is a celebration by the agrarian community that thankfully acknowledges the participation of the animals mainly bulls in ploughing the fields and assisting the farmers in raising a good crop. The animals are decorated and are included in some races, both to entertain and to boost their endurance capacity. The festival is known as “Jallikattu”. These races include cock fights, built fights and ram fights. “Thiruvalluvar Day” is celebrated on this Mattuppongal day when Tamilnadu Government announces awards for the best tamil literary works.

Vinayaka Chathurthi

Vinayaka Chathurthi festival is celebrated by the people belonging to all Hindu community. When celebrating this festival clay image of the deity and of a mouse, his vehicle, are made and duly consecrated and worshipped in every family. This festival incurred some expenditure due to purchase of food articles, preparing sweets, flowers and some pooja things.

Karthigai Deepam

Karthigai Deepam is an important festival of the Hindus. It is a festival similar to Deepavali. This festival is celebrated on the full moon day in the Tamil month Karthigai, when the moon enters, the constellation Karthigai. The
main important feature connected with this festival is the display of lights. People of different castes spend ways according to their economic situation.

**Christian Festival:**

**Christmas**

Christmas is the popular festival of the Christians. All Christians celebrate this festival in a grand manner. No other celebration is so spectacular and jovial and so enriched with so many customs and ceremonies. People spend huge amount for buying expensive dresses, greeting cards, fire crackers, Christmas gifts, decorative papers and food items. Christmas cake is a special feature of this festival in most of the Christian families. People decorate their house with various type of things.

The Roman church finally fixed December 25\(^{th}\) as the birthday of Jesus Christ after the great persecution that took place around A.D.31; which connects the visitation of the wise men from the East, being celebrated twelve days later. Though questioned for several generations by the Eastern Church, the Roman day became universal in the fifth century.\(^{26}\)

**Easter**

Easter festival is celebrated to glory of the resurrection crucified Jesus by the Christians. Easter is also so spectacular as Christmas and therefore so familiar to the general public. Easter commemorates the central fact of the Christian religion. To celebrate the Easter festival people spend a lot of money on food, sweets, new clothes and other miscellaneous items.
New Year’s Day

This is one of the festivals of all castes and religions. But mostly the Christian celebrates this festival with importance on a large scale. New Year is the first day of January and is associated with the Christian religion and it is reckoned as a Christian festivals. The New Year is a festival of beginnings. It is one of the most ancient and universal of mankind’s feasts. Many Hindus also celebrate this as a beginning of the year. People spend money for buying new clothes, sweets and other food items on this day.

Muslim Festivals:

Ramzan

The holy month of Ramzan is very auspicious to the Muslims the world over. It is believed that God will shower his blessings on those who pray to God whole heartedly, with complete devotion, surrendering themselves totally to His will. It is believed that the holy Quran, the holy book of Muslims, came into existence during this month. Prophet Mohammad who compiled this was an illiterate person. But he was chosen by God to be His messenger. Whenever any problem arose, He would get “Vahi” (inspiration from God). He would become red and would speak out spontaneously. All these utterings were jotted down by His disciples and during this month they were compiled in the form of the holy Quran. It is a message from God to the mankind.

This is the holy month of Ramadan, the month of fasting; Soum (fasting) is called Rozah in Urdu. Fast is observed for the entire month (Lunar) of Ramadan every year by the followers of Islam. Fasting throughout the month of
Ramzan is compulsory for all Muslims. But exceptions are made in the case of the sick and the travelling.

Id-ul-Fitr

Celebrates the end of Ramzan, the Muslim month of fasting. It is an occasion of feasting and rejoicing. The faithful gather in mosques to pray; friends and relatives meet to exchange greetings.

Bakrid

Bakrid, the festival of sacrifice is an important celebration, which falls on the last month of the Islamic Calender. The Muslims traditionally offer the sacrifice of goats/sheep/camel as part of the festival. Bakrid, also known as Id-Ul-Zuha coincides with the Haj pilgrimage at Mecca. The significance of the festival is the commemoration of the ordeals of Prophet Ibrahim. According to popular belief, Prophet Ibrahim was put to a tough test by Allah to prove his faith. He was asked to sacrifice his son Ismail and without any hesitation Prophet Ibrahim blindfolded himself and made the offering on the Mount of Mina near Mecca. When Prophet Ibrahim opened his eyes, he was astonished to find a goat lying upon the altar and his son Ismail standing in front of him. Ever since, faithful of Islam the world over offer sacrifices on the festival day.

Muharram

Muharram is about the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his family by laying down their lives at Kaabala for the protection of democracy. Their selfless sacrifice, service to humanity and protection of their religious order
resulted in their giving up their own lives. Remembering him and following the path shown by him is the greatest tribute that humanity can pay him. This in fact is the greatest message of Muharram. Commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the holy Prophet Mohammed, and observed by the Shi‘ite Muslims, who take out processions of colourfully decorated ‘Tazias’, which are paper and bamboo replicas of the martyr’s tomb at Karbala in Iraq. The processions are especially impressive at Lucknow. In parts of the South, tiger dancers-men painted over with stripes and wearing tiger masks-lead the procession.

**Miladi Nabi**

Milad-un-nabi marks the birth of Prophet Muhammad. It is believed that Muhammad was sent by God as the last messenger for the renaissance of Islam.²⁷

**Folk arts and dances of the people of Kancheepuram District**

**Karagaattam**

Karagam is a folk dance with musical accompaniment very popular in whole of Tamilnadu, performed balancing a pot on the head. Traditionally, this dance was performed by the villagers in praise of the rain goddess Mari Amman and river goddess, Gangai Amman, performed with literature with water pots balanced on their heads. In Sangam literature, it is mentioned as 'Kudakoothu'. This dance has two divisions - one, Aatta Karagam and the other 'Sakthi Karagam'. More often it is danced with decorated pots on the head and is known
as ‘Aatta Karagam’ and symbolises joy and merriment. The former is performed only in temples, while the latter is mainly entertainment in nature. This is one of the more popular rural dances today. Earlier it was performed only with a compliment of the Naiyandi Melam but now it includes songs also.

**Mayilattam**

This is done by girls dressed as peacocks, resplendent with peacock feathers and a glittering head-dress complete with a beak. This beak can be opened and closed with the help of a thread tied to it, and manipulated from within dress. Other similar dances are, Kaalai Attam (dressed as a bull), Karadi Attam (dressed as a bear) and Aali Aattam (dressed as a demon) which are performed in the villages during village functions of this district.

**Kolaattam**

Kolaatam is an ancient village art. This is mentioned in Kanchipuram as ‘Cheivaikyar Kolaatam’, which proves its antiquity. This is performed by women only, with two sticks held in each hand, beaten to make a rhythmic noise. Pinnal Kolaatam is danced with ropes which the women hold in their hands, the other of which are tied to a tall pole. With planned steps, the women skip over each other, which form intricate lace-like patterns in the ropes. As coloured ropes are used, this lace looks extremely attractive. Again, they unravel this lace reversing the dance steps. This is performed for ten days, starting with the Amavasai or New moon night after Deepavali.
Kavadiattam

The ancient Tamils when they went on pilgrimage, carried the offerings to the gods tied on the either end of the long stick, which was balanced on the shoulders. In order to lessen the boredom of the long travel they used to sing and dance praising the gods. Kavadi Aattam has its origin in this practice. Special songs were created to be sung while carrying the Kavadi Sindhu. This dance is performed only by men. It is done by balancing a pole with pots fixed on either end, filled with milk or coconut water. The poles are made from Purasai or Teak wood. On top, bamboo strips are bent like a half-moon, covered with saffron cloth and further decorated on the sides with peacock feathers. This is mainly a religious dance, performed in worship of Lord Murugan, the second son of Siva. The dance is accompanied by Pambai and Naiyandi Melam.

Poikkal Kuthirai Aatam

This is the Dummy Horse Dance where the dancer bears the dummi figure of a horse's body on his/her hips. This is made of light-weighted materials and the cloth at the side's swings to and fro covering the legs of the dancer. The dancer dons wooden legs which sound like the hooves of the horse. The dancer brandishes either a sword or a whip. This folk dance needs much training and skill. This dance is accompanied by Naiyandi melam or Band music.

Silambattam

Kol silambam or fighting with a long stick and even with swords is a martial art from the days of Tamil Kings. Fights were characterized by moves of
self defence, practice of skillful methods of approaching the opponent, overpowering and subduing him, and finally teaching him a lesson, all to put an end to violence. A violent fighting art has metamorphosed into a non-violent form of folk dance, adding stepping styles following the measure of time. It also teaches the performer the methods of the self defence in modern day world.

**Theru Koothu**

Normally conducted during village festivals, during the months of Panguni and Aadi. This is performed where three or four streets meet; in open air, the place being lit by gas lights. A wooden bench is set up to seat the singers and the musical troupe. Here, make-up and costumes are considered of prime importance. Only men take part; the female roles also played by them. The performance consists of story-telling, dialogue-rendering, songs and dance, all performed by the artistes. Thus the artiste should have a very good performing ability, being an all-rounder. The stories are taken from Puranas, epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, and also local folklore. The play starts in the late evening and gets over only during the small hours of the nights. The performance is so captivating that the audience are spell-bound unaware of the longs hours. Theru Koothu is more popular in the northern districts of Tamilnadu. The Koothu can be categorised as Nattu Koothu, including Vali Koothu, Kuravai Koothu etc. Samaya Koothu dealing with religious topics, Pei Koothu including Thunangai Koothu and Porkala Koothu dealing with martial events.

Now a days due to the urbanization, the above said folk arts and dances are appeared slowly.
Role of Self Help Group (SHG) in Kancheepuram District:

Tamil Nadu Corporation of Women Development under MahalirThittam is implementing Self-Help Group (SHG) as a micro level institution to empower rural/urban women in groups. Each Self-Help Group (SHG) has 20 members hailing from the same village of the same economic background. Most of them are from Below Poverty Line families. The Self-Help Group encourages its members to save money and take loan for emergency and repay the same in easy installment. These Self-Help Group members are trained by NGOs and helped to acquire the skills to become entrepreneurs. Self-Help Group’s in the village level are federated at the Panchayat Level.

### SHG Formation and Savings Details in Kancheepuram District

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Source: [DRDA](#), Administrative Report, Kancheepuram District, 2011-12
Contribution of Prominent Personalities in Kancheepuram District:

Kancheepuram district has to its credit the freedom fighters, educationists, social workers, political leaders, and administrators, whose contribution to the development of the district were great. Biographies of such personalities which are presented here would throw light on their career and contributions. Considering the limitation of space, only the biography of very prominent personalities, who were the livewire of the district at one point of time or the other are presented here.

Dinnaga and Dharmapala:

Kancheepuram, the headquarters of the district, shone as an illustrious learning centre in the past, is comparable to the ancient towns of Taxila and Nalanda. Kancheepuram had academic link with the Nalanda University, established in 425 A.D. in modern Bihar. Dinnaga and Dharmapala, who had their education in Kancheepuram were two eminent scholars associated with the history of the University of Nalanda. Dinnaga hailed from a suburb of Kancheepuram flourished as an eminent teacher of the University from its very inception. He was invited there by the University, to deliver a lecture on Buddhism, impressed by his performance Dinnaga was offered a lectureship by the university to teach ‘Abhithamma’(Budha’s teachings). Dharmapala was the son of a high official of Kancheepuram. He was a famous Buddhist scholar who held the Chancellorship of this University during the early part of the seventh century.
Sekkizhar and Pugazhendhi:

For the development of ancient Tamil literature, the contribution of this district was munificent. **Sekkizhar**, the author of Periyapuranam which describes the lives of ardent Saivites (63 Nayanmars), belonged to Kunrathur of the district. **Pugazhendhi** another celebrated Tamil poet who wrote Nalavenba was born in PonvilaindhaKalathur near Thirukazhukundram lived in 17th and 18th centuries, who rendered invaluable services to the cause of Tamil language and literature.

T.V.KalyanasundaraMudaliar (ThamizhThendralThiru-Vi-Ka):

Popularly known as Thiru-Vi-Ka, Kalyanasundaram, son of VridhachalaMudaliar was born in 1883 at Tallum, in Kancheepuram District, in a low income group family belonged to Hindu Mudaliar Community. In 1912, he married Kamalambigai who passed away after six years. Since then he stayed with his brother, devoting himself to religion, literature and politics.

His work for the development of Tamil literature and journalism is more striking and conspicuous than his contribution towards freedom struggle. Thiru-Vi-Ka had abundant faith in giving equal importance to all languages of the country and retaining all linguistic regions their political individuality. He opposed centralization of political power at the centre. He was a great and well known scholar in Tamil and a leading trade unionist.
M.Bhakthavatchalam:

Dr. M. Bhakthavatchalam was born on October 9, 1897 to Kanaga Sabapathi Mudaliar and Malliga in a small village called Nazarethpet situated three kilometers west to Poonamallee in Sriperumbudur Taluk in Kancheepuram district.

- Bhakthavatchalam’s tenure as Chief Minister in Tamilnadu State witnessed severe anti-Hindi agitations in Madras State. He supported the Union Government’s decision to introduce Hindi as compulsory language and rejected the demands to make Tamil as the medium of instruction in colleges saying that it was “not a practical proposition, not in the interests of national integration, not in the interests of higher education, and not in the interests of the students themselves.

Dr. C. N. Annadurai:

Dr. C. N. Annadurai endearingly called ‘Anna’ was born on 15th September 1913 in a Hindu lower middle class family of the weaver community at Kancheepuram. He is the founder of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) a political party in Tamil Nadu. He was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Government from 1967 to 1969. As the Chief Minister he introduced the following programmes for the growth and development of Tamil Nadu which includes the district of Kancheepuram.
C.N. Annadurai legalized Self-respect marriages for the first time in the country. Such marriages were void of priests to preside over the ceremony and thus did not need a Brahmin to carry out the wedding.

Self-respect marriages were a brainchild of Periyar, who regarded the then conventional marriages as mere financial arrangements which often caused great debt through dowry.

Self-respect marriages, according to him, encouraged inter-caste marriages and caused arranged marriages to be replaced by love marriages.

Annadurai was also the first to subsidize the price rice for the poor to mark the State election victory. He promised one rupee a measure of rice, which he initially implemented once in government, but had to withdraw later. Subsidizing rice costs are still successfully used as an election promise in Tamil Nadu.

Annadurai’s government renamed the Madras State to its present day form declaring officially as Tamil Nadu.

Another major contribution of C.N. Annadurai’s government was to introduce a two language policy over the then popular three language formula. The Three language formula, which was implemented in the neighbouring states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, entitled students to study three languages, the regional language, English and Hindi.

The two Chief Ministers who ruled the Tamil Nadu State were from Kancheepuram District. Their contribution to the economic growth and development of the state is remarkable by introducing programmes and
policies with adequate financial allocations in the areas of agriculture and industries.

M.C.RajahRaoBahadur:

M.C.Rajah, a distinguished leader of the Adi Dravida Community was born in 1883 at St.Thomas Mount, to ChinnaThambiPillai, a Manager of the Lawrence Asylum Press, Madras. After a brilliant academic career at the Wesley College and the Christian College, Madras he joined the Teachers’ College, Saidapet, as a School teacher in 1906. He was the first member of the Scheduled Caste to enter the Madras Legislative Council (MLC). Rajah reorganized the Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha in 1916. He emphasized the need for setting right the social injustice done to the Indians. He enforced among the people, the glamour for political equality, political liberty and political fraternity. This, he thought, should be achieved only through constitutional agitation to wrest political concessions from the British.

From a humble beginning, M.C.Rajah rose to a high position and held several responsible posts. His unstinted hard work for the welfare of the backward classes especially the depressed deserves to be recognized. He did not lack patriotism. His overwhelming concern for the depressed people guided his thinking of India’s Independence.

RettamalaiSrinivasan:

RettamalaiSrinivasan born in Kozhiyalam village of Kancheepuram district on July7, 1859. He started his career as a lawyer and a journalist. Having devoted himself to the cause of alleviation of problems of his
community, the Dalit leader set up the Madras Adi-Dravida Mahajana Saba in 1891. Two years later, he founded a journal, which attracted an extremely good response from the community.

In 1895, he led the first deputation of Adi-Dravidas to the Viceroy. In 1923, he was nominated to the Legislative Council. A recipient of the titles of Rao Sahib and DiwanBahadur, Srinivasan represented the community in the First and Second Round Table Conferences in London 1930 and 1931.

He along with Dr.B.R.Ambedkar he had established a federation of depressed classes in the then Madras Presidency in 1939. Until his death, he was the member of the Upper House of the State Legislature.
References:

3. Ibid., p.93
4. Ibid., p.92
22 Statistical Hand Book of Tamil Nadu - 2011, p.45
26 http://tamilculturewaterloo/tamilfestivals.htm
27 Ibid.