CONCLUSION

The history of the Fishery Coast is the history of the Paravas also. Their history reveals that the Paravas have been playing important roles as fishermen, *pearldivers, chank (conch shell) cutters, salt makers, sea-farers, merchants, traders*, etc., According to Edgar Thurston, the Paravas were once a very powerful people. They had a succession of Kings among them distinguished by the title of Adiyarasen, some of whom seem to have resided at Uttara Kosamangai, a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage in the neighbourhood of Ramnad.

The Paravas also arose the race of ancient Indian sailors who later carried Indian goods in boats to Africa and Arabia in the west and to Malaysia and China in the East. Besides, many among the Paravas engaged themselves in pearl fishing and in collecting conch shells. Highly renowned for its pearl trade, Korkai was the chief town of the leading Paravas of the region. The people of the town consisted of mostly of pearl divers and chank cutters.

Literature dating to the Sangam Age, refers frequently to the Paravas as a group that led a prosperous life on the Fishery Coast. In course of time, as the fishery Coast passed through different fortunes under different ruling Dynasties, the Paravas life also underwent changes.

*S. Manickam* says, “The year 1542 A.D is an important land mark in the history of the Paravas of the Gulf region, for it marks the advent of the saintly and devoted Francis Xavier. His arrival created a, new and powerful influence“. 
The Paravas were encouraged to get educated by the Portuguese clerics who sent them to the college at Quilon. The college was founded by Xavier in 1549. The Paravas students sat along with the resident Portuguese and other native Christians. The rector of the college at Quilon was actually the superior of the Fishery and Coromandel Coasts.

Portuguese language was given priority in the religious instructions and in the liturgical functions, next to the official liturgical language of Latin. The Christians of the Fishery Coast had been trained to recite the prayers and the Divine Offices both in Latin and Portuguese. Fr. Pietro Arboleda was surprised on his visit to the Fishery Coast and Mannar Island in 1501 where the Parava Christians recited the prayers in Portuguese as well as in Latin. He said that it was a wonderful thing to see the Christians in the morning with Rosaries in their hands and around necks and each one recited Rosary.

In Tuticorin and in other coastal villages, the Portuguese language was partly used in the churches for instructions and for singing the Divine Office on Sundays and on feast days in which the people participated with great enthusiasm. As the Dutch Pastor Philip Baldaeus observes, the Paravas, chiefly those living in Jaffnapattanam, generally spoke Portuguese. The Portuguese language was taught and used also in coastal schools and seminary.

The Jesuit Annual letter of 1600 says that the seminarians of the Fishery Coast, studying at the seminary of Tuticorin, were taught Portuguese. As per history, recognized Christian faith came to Tamil land along the Portuguese in the Fifteenth century AD. Their social involvements and Educational endeavours in the missionary and educational endeavors in the missionary fields contributed much for the literary development of Tamil land. They translated the English works into Tamil and the Tamil works into western
languages. Dictionaries and encyclopedias in Tamil were brought out by them. Altogether the foreign and native Christian Tamil scholars readily made their service available to the systematic growth of the various literary systems of language.

The maritime trade of the natives was generally on the decline during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In that the maritime activities of the Paravas of the Coromandel met with drastic changes closely linked with the political conditions of the region.

The maritime trade potential was the chief motive behind the economic invasion of the Europeans on the Coromandel. The local rulers extended a red carpet welcome to all these Europeans and encouraged their trading activities at the cost of the native traditional trading community including the Paravas. The native rulers big and small were fighting among themselves and freely allied with the aliens and they never chose to unite in chasing away the foreign predators. They tolerated their misdeeds political, economic and religious.

The European colonial powers utilised the confused political condition of the region and developed themselves and the local rulers were silent spectators. Thus the interest of their subjects and the economic wellbeing became the first casualty in the efforts of the native rulers to perpetuate themselves in power.

The English who emerged as supreme power in land and sea from the third quarter of the eighteenth century and the native rulers fell a prey to their economic and political ambition. The English who came for trade to our land crowned themselves as custodians of traditional empires. In the confused political condition, maritime trade and other maritime activities slipped from the hands of the natives. The Europeans economic dominance created a new capitalistic order for which the native traders included the Paravas in all trade
and industry. The European administrators prepared the Paravas and other non trading castes against the Muslims and these people became local competitors to the Muslims.

Sociological studies have revealed very interesting aspects about the community. To the converts the Dravidian – Tamil culture was close to their hearts. They retained with them their old and traditional customs and it was not a hindrance to the Christiyanic way of life.

The Paravas enjoyed the monopoly of the fishing, pearl fishing and salt manufacturing which are said to be their chief occupations. Fishing and other works were done by the members of a Parava family together and no wage labour is said to have been associated with their activities. The fishing party consisted of both elders and youngsters of the same family. The technical knowledge - how, whatever they had, was passed on from generation to generation. This suggests that their production- relations had not cut across the limits of their kinship relations. The Paravas as expert boatmen were engaged in bringing the imports from the foreign vessels which must have been employed to take the exporting items like pepper to the distant ships.

The Marakkayar traders of Nagapattanam region continued their trade with the Eastern countries even in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Some of the merchants acquired new ships and passes were issued to such vessels by the English. But the number of vessels in use were lesser than that of the previous quarter. Further the vessels were smaller and the tonnage capacity was also less. A reference to the records of registry of ships in Nagapattanam region shows only a few names of Muslim vessels such as Barakath, Mohideen Bux, Meera Mydeen, Meera Madar, Mohideen bux, Hydroos, Sydo Hydroos, Kadar Bux and Mohamed Ali. Thus the Marakkayar, merchants cum
shipowners were declining the Paravas economic condition, show a downward trend from this period onwards.

The **Introductory chapter** introduces the space, time, theme, sources and objectives of the Study. The objectives of the Study are to focus on the facts about.

1. The antiquity of Paravas society in the Coromandel Region.

2. Vital role played by them in the maritime activities in the coast and their economic life.

3. The interesting features about their *social Organisation, Ceremonies, Customs* and practices.

The **First chapter** discusses the geographical position of the Maabar Coast and its features, the nature of the ports of ancient renown, major and minor ports in the middle ages and modern times are discussed in this Chapter. The majority of the ports had settlements of Paravas.

The **Second Chapter** is a brief survey of the political conditions of the Region since it was closely linked with the trade of the Region. Prior to the beginning of the period of our Study, the political condition of the Coromandel hinterland was very confused. The Europeans and the native powers were engaged in bitter contest for supremacy and this Chapter says about Paravas – Muslim conflict. Muukkuvas, Paravas, Parathavar and Paravars were the same community Kanyakumari coastal area paravas were called as Muukkuvas. The above has been proved in many ways with references.
The social Organisation, manners, customs and practices and religious life of the Paravas of Maabar Coast are dealt in the **Third Chapter**.

The **Fourth Chapter** gives an account of the various maritime activities of the Maabar Coast Paravas. They were *ship owners, ship crew, maritime merchants, pearl merchants, pearl and chank divers, boat builders, fishers, salt manufacturers and merchants* in other marine products.

The **Fifth Chapter** focuses attention on the Social changes, took palace in this region and activities of the missionary services. This Chapter is also discuss about the life style of Paravas in the Maabar Coast.

The **Concluding chapter** summarizes and sumsup the views expressed in the earlier chapters.

We, the fishermen on the coast have a dreams today, that the talents of their children will be recognised one day, and their children will also share the ruling platform of our country.