CHAPTER III

Profile of the Study Area
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For proper understanding of the consumer attitude and their decision, a brief analysis of the study area as become inevitable. It would give the necessary background for the analysis, besides, it would provide an answer to the question like why the consumers behave in certain ways. The description of the study area deals with the brief history of Vellore District, its geography, demographics, economy, prominent industries, businesses education, transportation, media and communication, and a brief description about Tirupattur, Gudiyatam and Pernambut, Ambur, Vaniyabadi, Ranipet and Arakonam

3.1. Justification for the Study Area

The researcher with no specific motive chose Vellore district as the study area. It is solely for the convenience of the researcher. Moreover, the researcher has vast knowledge on the location of the various towns and cities in the Vellore district as he has been associated with the district for the past fifteen years both as a student as well as a professor at Sacred Heart College. Yet, there was an option for the researcher to chose Salem district and Dharmapuri district as the study area. The researcher felt it is difficult to travel to those interior parts of both the districts and it will also prove tedious for the researcher to carry out the collection of data. Hence, the researcher justified himself to restrict his study to the Vellore district.

Vellore is a city and headquarters of Vellore district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The 142-year old municipality was crowned as largest Corporation (area wise) in Tamil Nadu on August 1st 2008. Vellore is ninth corporation converted after Tirupur and Erode. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr. Karunanidhi inaugurated this largest corporation in the state. It is considered to be one of the oldest surviving cities in South India. The city lies on the banks of the Palar river on the site of Vellore Fort.
The city lies between Chennai and Bangalore and the Temple towns of Thiruvannamalai and Tirupati. Some of the important areas in the city include Vellore (centre), Katpadi, Arcot, Ranipet (with BHEL & SIPCOT), Walajapet, Satuvachari, Melvisharam, Gandhi nagar, Tiruvalam, Tarapadavedu, Adukampaarai, etc;

3.2. Etymology

The name, Vellore, is derived from the Tamil words: Vel (spear) + uur (city), means city of spears. Ancient history shows that Vellore was basically a battle field, where the warriors used to fight. Due to the geography of the place, the place was always left with the used weapons like spears all around the year. In another version, the name Vellore is supposed to have been derived from some form of precious stone which had a similar sounding name. There are megalithic, proto-historical evidences in and around Vellore for such a semi-precious stone industry being prevalent in ancient times.

The researcher has collected the data from Tirupattur, Gudiyatam, Ambur, Vaniyambadi, Ranipet, Arakonam and Pernampet. All the towns are similar with the behaviour pattern.

3.3. History of Vellore District

3.3.1. Vellore Fort

Vellore has the blend of rich heritage and culture representing the ancient Dravidian civilization. It was the seat of the Pallavas, Cholas, Nayak, Marathas, Arcot Nawabs and Bijapur Sultan Kingdoms. Vellore was once the capital city of the mighty Vijayanagar empire during 1606-1672. The fort in Vellore was described as the best and the strongest fortress in the Carnatic War in the 17th Century. The monuments found in the district give a vivid picture of the evolution of the city through the ages.

In the region, for about the past 200 years, there were countless changes in the way of formation of kingdoms and their capitals. The 'North' and the 'South' regions of
Arcot came into the political map in 1810 at the time of the last Mughal Emperor. Later in 1908, the two districts namely North and South Arcot came into existence. Chittoor (now in Andhra Pradesh) was the first capital of the North Arcot district. From then on, it was the principal military base of the British. In 1911, Vellore became the head quarters of North Arcot District comprising of Vellore and Thiruvannamalai.

3.3.2. Geography

Vellore is located at 12°56'N 79°08'E 12.93°N 79.13°E. It has an average elevation of 216 metres (709 ft). The city is 200 metres above sea level, situated 135 km South West of Chennai and 220 km East of Bangalore. Vellore is on the plains surrounded by low, rocky hills. Temperature ranges from as low as 10°C in the winter months of December-February to even 43°C in the summer months of April-June. It is essentially a dry climate, rainy and humid only at the times of the two monsoons: June-August and October-December.

Unlike other tier-II and tier-III cities of India, Vellore has a considerably huge area and a population of 900,000. The total area of the city spans across 55 km.

3.3.3. Demographics

As of 2001 India census, Vellore City had a population of above 9,00,000 after elevated as a Corporation. Vellore has an average literacy rate of 74 percent, higher than the national average of 59.5 percent: male literacy is 80 percent, and female literacy is 68 percent. In Vellore, 11 percent of the population is under 6 years of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Population of Vellore District</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Male Population</th>
<th>Female Population</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
<th>Area</th>
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</table>

*Source: India Census 2001*
The Vellore corporation is bigger than Chennai (172 km²) and Coimbatore (105.6), but smaller than Greater Hyderabad (650), Bangalore (800) and Mumbai (437.71). The Vellore corporation will comprise five assembly segments and two parliamentary segments.

The Vellore City consists of Sathuvachari, Dharapadavedu, Kazhinjur, Kangeyanallur, Gandhi Nagar, Shenbakkam, Konavattam, Allapuram, Thorapadi, Sainathapuram, Sankaranpalayam, Bagayam, Ariyur, Thirumalaikodi, Walajapet, Arcot, Ranipet, Thiruvalam, Melvisharam, and Palavansathu Kuppam. Total area spans across 55 km approximately. Based on Area, Vellore is the largest Municipal corporation in Tamilnadu with 392.58 km² surpassing chennai with 180 km².

Tamil is the official language spoken here. Other languages spoken by linguistic minorities include Telugu, Urdu, Malayalam and Kannada. Most of the people in Vellore can converse in English and Hindi.

Most of the people here follow principles of Hinduism. There is a significant amount of Muslim population in the city, particularly in Melvisharam, Kaspa, R.N.Palayam, Saidapet, Hazarath Makkan, Bakiyath Street, Sarbanamedu, which is considerably higher than the state average. Much of the churches located in northern districts of TamilNadu fall under Vellore Diocese - both Catholic and CSI under the territorial jurisdiction of a bishop.

Vellore is one among the least discussed-about cities in India, in terms of Law and Order issues. Also, the city is traditionally known for its religious and linguistic harmony.

3.3.4. Economy

Vellore, an administrative centre is predominantly a market place for its own district and neighboring districts such as Chittoor District (Andhra Pradesh) and Thiruvannamalai District.
The city, along with its nearby industrial towns has witnessed a consistent industrial growth, followed by the implementation of South Asia's second railway track between Chennai Royapuram and Walajah. The Golden Quadrilateral road; has significantly improved the region's industrial activities.

Vellore lies between the IT majors (Chennai & Bangalore) and major pilgrim centres (Tirupathi and Thiruvannamalai). Thousands of men and women from here travel to Chennai and nearby industrial towns everyday for work.

3.3.5. Leather Industry

Hundreds of leather and tannery industries are located around Vellore and its nearby towns such as Ranipet, Ambur and Vaniyambadi. The district is the top exporter of finished leather goods in the country. Vellore leather accounts for more than 37 percent of the country's Export of Leather and Leather related products such as finished leathers, shoes, garments, gloves and so on.

3.3.6. Chemical and other Industries

Numerous chemical industries located in Ranipet-SIPCOT form a major source of income. BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd - one of the nine major Federal Government owned enterprises in the nation), EID Parry (sanitaryware product manufacturing company with 38 percent of world's market share in the segment of bathroom accessories), Tirumalai Chemicals and Greaves are among the many international brands located here. Arakonam, a town near Vellore is the home of major companies like MRF, while TVS Lucas has its major manufacturing facilities in Sholingur (40 km from Vellore).

Asia's biggest explosives manufacturing company TEL (Tamil Nadu Explosives Limited) is located at Katpadi in Vellore. The city is also famous for medical tourism. CMC Hospital which is located in the heart of the city is the biggest private employer in the city. It creates a large floating population, mostly from other states of India and foreign countries. Lodging, hospitality and allied businesses are
among major sources of income generated in the central part of the city. With the advent of hospitals such as Apollo KH Hospitals, Melvisharam and Sri Narayani Medical Research Centre, Ariyur and colleges such as CMC, VIT and other engineering and science colleges, hospitality industry is growing at a rampant pace.

The mainstay for people in the rural areas is not agriculture but industries like weaving, beedi rolling and match-stick rolling. Interestingly, Indian Army has significant number of men from Vellore district. And hence, it is one of the major source of income for the region.

Also, the city is known for its huge expatriate population scattered around the world, especially in Middle east and North America; which forms major source of wealth. Sripuram in the southern tip of the city has interestingly cajoled up at lot of tourism interests in city and the surrounding areas.

3.3.7. Proposed/Future Developments

Tamil Nadu Government has announced its plan to setup a leather goods SEZ on 260 acres (1.1 km²) at Ranipet and another Special Economic Zone at Katpadi. A new IT park is proposed to be set up in Vellore by state owned ELCOT (Electronics limited corporation of Tamil Nadu) in partnership with the private sector in the coming financial year (2008-2009).

3.3.8. Chennai-Bangalore-Mumbai Industrial Corridor

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has accepted in principle the suggestion made by Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi to declare the stretches along the Chennai-Bangalore highway as an industrial corridor, with plans of a bullet train, a six-lane road and an extension of the metro rail from Chennai to Bangalore. It was the considered opinion of the State government that by making the Chennai-Bangalore highway an industrial corridor, the Centre could facilitate the improvement of infrastructure along the highway on par with world standards. Besides, it would help further industrial development of Vellore, Ranipet, Hosur and Krishnagiri.
The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Thursday welcomed the proposed corridor, to be built on the lines of an industrial corridor planned between Delhi and Mumbai. Under its City Connect programme, the CII has held several discussions with senior officials of the Tamil Nadu government to develop the new corridor.

'The Chennai-Bangalore industrial corridor would go a long way in tapping the potential of the two states to attract investment and help creation of a skilled workforce,' Gopal Srinivasan, chairman of the CII's Tamil Nadu Council, said.

3.3.9. Retail Business

Major business districts of the city include Officer's line, Bangalore Road, Arcot Road, Ida Scudder Road, Main Bazzar, Gandhi Road, Long Bazaar, Arni Road and Katpadi Road. Hundreds of boarding and lodging houses are located in and around Ida Scudder road.

3.3.10. Education

Vellore is considered to be one of the best destinations for world class medical and technological education in India. Vellore has a State Government University, a Private Technological University, one Government and one Private Medical School, Various other Engineering Colleges, Numerous Arts and Science Institutions and a large number of both Government and Private Schools.

Total Literacy Rate in Vellore District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Literates</th>
<th>Male Literates</th>
<th>Female Literates</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
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<td>3110.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: India Census 2001
3.3.11. Engineering

The Vellore Institute of Technology University (popularly known as VIT) is in Katpadi, Vellore. VIT has been ranked as the Best Private Engineering University in India by the Magazine India Today. VIT is also the first Indian University to be accredited by the prestigious IEE (Institution of Electrical Engineers), London. VIT University has six schools of study under its umbrella. VIT also houses the VIT Business School which is ranked among the 50 Best in India. VIT has students from all over India and over 20 countries studying in its vast and lush campus.

Thanthai Periyar Government Institute of Technology (TPGIT) is one of the 6 Government Engineering Colleges in Tamilnadu. It is located at Thorapadi, Vellore.

Nettur Technical Training Foundation (NTTF) - the first ISO 9001 technical education centre which known internationally - located in Kangeyanallur, Katpadi. The institution offers courses in 'Design and Manufacturing of Press tools & Plastic moulds'.

3.3.12. Arts and Science Colleges

The Thiruvalluvar University, which was formed by the bifurcation of University of Madras, is at present located in the Vellore Fort campus. The Foundation stone for a multi-crore University Campus was laid at Serkaadu near Katpadi in Vellore by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M. Karunanidhi on 16th Feb 2008. Almost all of the Government run Arts and Science colleges present in Vellore District, Tiruvannamalai District, Villupuram District and Cuddalore District are affiliated to Thiruvalluvar University. The University students take part in various National and International events.

3.3.13. Schools

Vellore has many Government run, Government aided and private run schools (including Matriculation, CBSE & ICSE/ISC).
3.3.14. Transportation

Vellore is served by city bus service, which provide connectivity within the city, suburbs and places 30 km in the radius of Vellore.

The Central bus terminus was in the heart of the city, opposite to the Fort, until it was shifted to its new location near the Chelliamman Temple on the banks of the river Palar. The Old Bus Terminus near the Fort continues to function as a Nodal Centre for all buses plying between the city and its suburbs. Other major City services bus terminals are located at Chittor bus stand, Bagayam and Katpadi.

Autorickshaws and Taxicabs charge a flat rate and supposedly do not abide by government fixed fares. Unfortunately, fleecing of passengers at Railway stations and Bus stands in Vellore is a common sight. But the rates are much more reasonable that there counterparts in Chennai, Coimbatore or Bangalore.

3.3.15. How to Reach Vellore?

- **By Air:** The city does not have a functioning airport of its own, the nearest international airports are Chennai International Airport (130 km), Bengaluru International Airport (200 km) and the nearest domestic airport is Tirupati Airport (100 km). Vellore has an unused airstrip at Allapuram. Proposal to make the airport fully functional by 2009 to allow operation by 45-seater ATR aircraft has been proposed by the government. The Tamil Nadu government has recently announced that it would speed up the construction of terminal buildings and thereby make the airport fully operational by 2009. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has embarked on an "idle airports activation programme" in the Southern region that includes Vellore. The Vellore airstrip, located on 51.5 acres (208,000 m²), was activated recently to facilitate regular flying by trainee pilots of the Madras Flying Club. The proposed Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Aeronautical science will be shifted from Sriperumbudur to Vellore.
By Train: Vellore city has a total of three railway stations. The main railway junction for Vellore lies at the northern part of the city at Katpadi, 7 km from Old Central Bus stand, 6.5 km from CMC and 5 km from the New Central Bus Terminus. The Railway Station is being expanded and beautified to accommodate the ever growing number of passengers. Two more stations, the Vellore Town and Vellore Cantonment are on the line connecting Katpadi Junction to Villupuram Junction. Regular train services from Vellore Cantonment have started from 10 November 2008. Trains are presently being operated via Katpadi to Arakonam, Jolarpettai, Chennai Beach and Tirupati. Once the Katpadi-Villupuram railway line is completed, more services would be operated. Vellore Demanding New Railway line to Tindivanam, Via Kanchipuram for a very long time.

By Road: Vellore is well connected to all major cities in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. Direct buses are available to Chennai, Bangalore, Tirupathi, Salem, Erode, Mysore, Chittoor, Kurnool, Trichy, Thiruvannamalai, Tindivanam, Villupuram, Kanyakumari, Arani, Kanchipuram, Kalpakkam, Gudiyatham and other major towns and cities in South India. Vellore is located on NH 46, which connects Bangalore and Chennai (NH 4 from Ranipet to Chennai) and on Cuddalore - Chittoor highway, thus making it a major transit point for travelers. Golden Quadrilateral (the largest express highway project in India) makes the city extremely easy to access from both Bangalore and Chennai (in an average, 2 hours from Chennai and 3 hours from Bangalore).

3.3.16. Media and Communication

The leading Tamil, English and other regional languages newspapers are available in Vellore. English dailies such as, Deccan Chronicle, The New Indian Express, The Hindu, The Times of India and Deccan Herald are available in Vellore. Tamil dailies; Thinaththanthi, Dinamalar, Dinakaran, Dinamani and Maalaimalar are available in Vellore.
3.3.17. Cuisines

Vellore is famous for its cuisines and food. Its non veg cuisine is famous, especially Vellore Serva, a preparation made from brinjal which is used as a side dish with briyani is extremely famous. Vellore District is a potential business centre, this is mentioned above and the researcher has also justified the statement by showing all the possible evidence in this study area. District Industries Centre is an integral part of the Department of Industries and Commerce functioning at the District Level. Dist. Industries Centre is envisaged as a single window interacting Agency with the entrepreneurs at the district level. Services and support to Small entrepreneurs are provided under Single roof through district Industries Centre. District Industries Centre is the implementing arm of the Central and state government. of various schemes and programmes.

The Vellore district has a dominant presence in the Leather and Leather based industries. Vellore District accounts for more than 37 percent of the country’s Export of Leather and Leather related products such as finished leathers, shoe uppers, shoes, garments, gloves and so on. Leather and Leather products exports by the end of the year 1999 has been estimated Rs.2000 crores from this District alone. The Govt. of Tamilnadu provides all possible capital subsidies and infrastructural support in the form of setting up industrial estate and common effluent treatment plant. Thus Vellore district share of the Leather market in the years to come is ensured.

3.4. Tirupattur

Tirupattur is a town located in Vellore District. The town has mainly small-scale industries and mills. Some people might describe Tirupattur as a satellite town, in which people reside and go to work in nearby industrial towns such as Vaniyambadi and Ambur in the north, but it is a commercial centre from time immemorial (whereas Vaniyambadi and Ambur, which were once smaller towns, have recently flourished).
It is well connected by road and rail to other important cities of Tamil Nadu such as Chennai, Salem and Vellore and to Bangalore in Karnataka. This town is also famous in Islamic religious circles as many great saints "Awliyas" had made it their home town. The name Tirupattur means a group of ten villages/small towns. There exists a village called Aathiur (Aathi means Begin) in the southern fringes of the Town and Kodiur (Kodi means End) in the northern fringes of the town. It is surrounded by several of these villages, making Tirupattur a Taluk. Tirupattur's population and land area are good enough to have political representations in the state legislature of Tamil Nadu (Member of the Legislative Assembly), and part of Thiruvannamalai constituency for the central/federal legislature of India (Member of Parliament as of 2009 elections). Tirupttur is also famous for jewellery, construction, transport and rice cultivation.

3.5. Gudiyatam and Pernambut

Gudiyatham (also called Gudiyattam or Gudiyettram) is a city and a municipality in Vellore district. It is a town located 31 km from the city of Vellore. The city has a population of more than 600,000. Pernambut is a state assembly constituency in Tamilnadu. It is a scheduled caste reserved constituency.

The Republic of India's first national flag was woven here, by South Indian Silk Mills and the shape for the Thiruvaluvar statue was given by the people from here. Gudiyatham has a thriving small scale sector manufacturing safety matches, lungis, and beedis.

The town's Gengayamman Temple is famous and its yearly fair on 14-15th of May (Tamil month - Vaigasi 1st) attracts more than a million people from around the state. The town has many movie halls and has in total, seven pettais or colonies. Gudiyatham is famous for its gold jewellery market. Being on the Katpadi - Jolarpettai railway line, it is connected to Chennai and Bangalore. The handloom lungies which are manufactured in this town are exported to many Arab countries.
Other than these, there are two cotton mills functioning in Gudiyatham. One is Thirumagal Mills Limited and the other is Rajeshwari Mills Limited; both employ a considerable amount of employees. A farmers market is also held near Nellorepet every Tuesday and it has been so, for more than 100 years.

3.6. Ambur

Ambur is a historical town, a municipality in Vellore district. It is famous for its modern leather and shoe manufacturing industries. Ambur is also famous for "Biryani," a tasty rice dish; varieties of chicken dishes, etc. People of Ambur are very traditional.

Factories in Ambur manufacture shoes for world's leading footwear brand names like Floursheim, Lumberjack, Gabor, primigi, caterpillar, Clarks, Fretzmen, Coll Hann, Hi-Line, Hugo Boss, Marc, and many more. Hence, it is also known as a "Leather City". Some of the Indian big names that have set up manufacturing units here are Farida Shoes, SSC, Bonaventure, NMZ, TAW, KAR, etc.; and now FDIs (Foreign Direct Investments) have become very common, to name a few establishments ITARES (Italy Renzi Shoes) of Italy, Allen Bolly of Switzerland etc. These companies provide a major chunk of employment to the local population. Traders of supplying shoe materials to these companies have a huge business over here.

3.6.1. Pollution in Ambur

One of the problems that Ambur faces is polluted ground water which is not potable. This happened due to the chemicals released by the leather tanneries directly into the most-of-the-time-dry Palar River traversing across Ambur before the Common Effluent Treatment Plants that use Reverse Osmosis process were installed. However, with strict measures taken by the State Government, most of the companies have now installed effluent treatment plants to treat the water from harsh chemicals such as hexavalent chromium, trivalent chromium, etc.
3.7. Vaniyambadi

Vaniyambadi is a town and a municipality, part of the Vellore district. The major population comprises people following Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Jainism population. Christianity is a growing community while other are reducing in their respective growth rate. Tamil is largely spoken by the town's population, along with Urdu language spoken by Muslims, Telugu and Kannada is also prevalent due to the close proximity of the neighboring states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Leather tanning is a major industry of the town. Agriculture, especially coconut plantations, is the other major source of livelihood. The tanning industry was recently under pressure because of a governmental crackdown on tanneries which did not have effluent treatment facilities and hence caused water pollution; this forced many tanneries to shut down. The town is also famous for delicious food items like biriyani, kebabs, tandoori items and various types of sweets.

3.8. Ranipet

Ranipet (Ranipettai in Tamil) is a locality and part of Vellore city. It is a medium-sized community located about 26 kilometers from the Vellore city centre and 100 kilometers from Chennai, the fourth largest urban area in India. It is a main junction in the Chennai-Bangalore highway. However, the city has been a victim of serious groundwater pollution by heavy metals and is considered as one among the most toxic places on earth. The locality is situated on the eastern end of Vellore city, on the northern bank of the Palar river.

There are a number of large and medium scale leather industries making both finished leather and leather articles such as shoes and garments for export. There are other small scale industries in Ranipet mostly engaged in chemical, leather and tool making. These industries are the major lifeline for otherwise dry, uncultivatable land. The town is home to the Boiler Auxiliaries Plant of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), a major Central Government owned enterprise. Bavina Cars is planning to setup manufacturing plant at a cost of 300 crores. The company has been permitted to
produce 25000 cars annually. Ranipet also has about 250 small scale engineering units catering mainly to BHEL, Ranipet, probably the second largest fabrication cluster in India.

3.9. Arakkonam

Arakkonam is a mid-sized town with a population of about 77,000. This town is located in the Vellore District about 69 kilometres (43 miles) (via rail) from the state capital of Chennai.

Arakkonam is also one of the biggest junctions in Southern Railway and many trains stop at this station. The town has one of the biggest workshops for the Southern Railway, known as the Engineering Workshop (EWS). A frequent suburban electric train facility is also available towards Chennai. The second biggest FCI (Food Corporation of India) godown is located at Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu. It is used to store all types of food grains for a longer periods. Transport facility by Road is also available to all major cities and towns. The runway at INS Rajali, a naval air base of the Indian Navy in Arakkonam is, at 4,500 metres, the second longest in South Asia and it is Asia's second biggest Naval Training Centre. Industries like the MRF tyres, Ramco cements, UltraTech Cement Limited (previously known as L&T cements), TVS all have their plants in the town. The Arakkonam Fire station is one of the oldest buildings built in 1925 and it is still in good condition.