CHAPTER - III

AREA PROFILE

In this chapter, the profile of Kanyakumari District is highlighted on the basis of the information collected from the Office of the Assistant Director of Statistics, Nagercoil, Records and Registers maintained in the Collectorate, Nagercoil, Census Report 2011 and Internet.

Kanyakumari district is the southernmost district in Tamil Nadu state and mainland India. It stands second in terms of population density among the districts of Tamil Nadu. It is also the richest district in Tamil Nadu in terms of per capita income and also tops the state in Human Development Index (HDI), literacy and education. The district headquarters is Nagercoil.

Kanyakumari, a tiny District has been named after the virgin Goddess Kanyakumari. This district lies at the southern-most tip of peninsula India where Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal confluence. This district was formed out of the former princely state of Travancore-Cochin under the Linguistic Reorganization Act of 1956.

Kanyakumari district has a varied topography with sea on three sides and the mountains of the Western Ghats bordering the northern side. Geologically, the landmass of the district is much younger when compared to the rest of state - faulted as late as 2.5 million years during the Miocene, after which numerous transgression, as well as regression of sea, had shaped the western coast of the district. Kanyakumari is one of the 32 districts of Tamil Nadu.
Location

The district of Kanyakumari is the southernmost district in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is situated between 77°15' and 77°36' east longitude and 8°03' and 8°35' north latitude. The district has borders with Tirunelveli district, the Gulf of Mannar, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Thiruvananthapuram District (Kerala). Kanyakumari includes the special grade village of Chinnamuttom, located at the southernmost point of the Indian Subcontinent.

Kanyakumari District is divided into two regions: Edanad and Nanjilnad. Vilavancode and Kalkulam are located in Edanad region consisting of full stretched Western Ghats. Thovalai and Agasteeswaram are covered in the Nanjilnad region. Aravalmozhı gap separates these two regions. Also the boundary of these regions is Velli hills.

Administrative Divisions

For administrative purposes, the district comprises of four taluks: Agasteeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam, and Vilavancode. It has nine blocks; Agasteeswaram, Rajakkamangalam, Thovalai, Kurunthancode, Thuckalay, Thiruvattar, Killiyur, Munchirai and Melpuram and four Municipalities: Nagercoil, Padmanabhapuram, Colachel and Kuzhisthirai. At the lower levels of administration, there are 99 village panchayats and a further 56 special category village panchayats.

The major town panchayats of the district include: Kanyakumari, Agasteeswaram, Suchindram and Rajakkamangalam in Agasteeswaram taluk, Thovalai and Boothapandi in Thovalai taluk, Padmanabhapuram, Thuckalay, Colachel, Kalkulam, Thiruvithamcode, Kurunthancode, Thiruvattar and Kulasekaram, Thingal Nager in Kalkulam taluk and Karungal, Kuzhisthirai, Marthandam,
Vilavancode, Killiyur, Munchirai, Kollemcode, Manjalumoodu, Arumanai and Melpuram in Vilavancode Taluk.

**Demography**

As per Census 2011, the district had population of 18, 63,174 persons, of which 9, 26, 800 were male and 9, 36, 374 were female. The density of the population in the district is 1,106 persons per sq km. One important feature of the population of Kanyakumari District is that the female population outnumbers the male population.

The ratio of male and female is 1000-1010.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanyakumari_district - cite note-dashboard-5 A total of 182,350 were under the age of six, constituting 92,835 males and 89,515 females. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes accounted for 3.97 per cent and .39 per cent of the population respectively. The district had a total of 483,539 households. There were a total of 679,620 workers, comprising 12,229 cultivators, 51,350 main agricultural labourers, 21,078 in house hold industries, 468,001 other workers, 126,962 marginal workers, 3,381 marginal cultivators, 21,517 marginal agricultural labourers, 14,711 marginal workers in household industries and 87,353 other marginal workers.

Average literacy rate of Kanyakumari in Census 2011 was 91.88 compared to 87.55 of Census 2001. If things were looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy was 93.86 and 89.90 respectively.

**Urban population**

Out of the total Kanyakumari population for Census 2011, higher percentage of 82.33 is living in urban regions of this district. A total of 1,539,802 people are
living in urban areas of which 761,407 are male and 778,395 are female. Sex ratio in urban region of Kanyakumari district is 1,022 as per the data found in Census 2011.

**Rural population**

As per Census 2011, 17.67 per cent population of Kanyakumari districts lives in rural areas. The total Kanyakumari district population living in rural areas is 3,30,572 of which male population was 1,64,938 and female population was 1,65,634. In rural areas of Kanyakumari district, sex ratio is 1004 females per 1000 males. Child population in the age between 0 and 6 years is 33,780 in rural areas of which males were 17,262 and females were 16,518. The child population comprises 10.47 per cent of total rural population of Kanyakumari district. Literacy rate in rural areas of Kanyakumari district is 90.76 per cent as per the data found in Census 2011. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 92.39 and 89.16 percent respectively. In total, 269,380 people were literate of which males and females were 136,432 and 132,948 respectively.

**Religion**

During 2011, total population of the district is 18,63,174, among them 9,09,587 (48.83 per cent) are Hindus, 8,74,999 (46.96 per cent) are Christians, 77,590 (4.16 per cent) are Muslims, 738 (0.04 per cent) are Buddhists, 260 (0.014 per cent) are Sikhs.

**Festivals**

**Mandaikadu festival:** The Mandaikadu festival is celebrated in the month of March every year by people of this district and by those who are coming from Kerala. Traditionally, participants would chant while walking and other people would provide them with butter, milk, water, jaggery, and coffee. The festival, which is celebrated
for ten days, later became a social function, especially on Sunday. Today, Mandaikadu festival is more of a departmental festival.

**Navarathri Pooja celebrations:** During Navarathri Pooja, Annai Adi Parasakthi (the divine mother of Lord Muruga) leave Sushintharam temple situate in Nagercoil, and perform a yatra in Pallakku to Trivandrum, the headquarters of the Kerala State, to participate in the Navarathiri Pooja celebrations at the Devi Koil in the vicinity of the Trivandrum Palace.

**Kootalumooudu festival:** The Kootalumooudu festival is celebrated for ten days. In the 10th day festival ends with grand fire works "vana vedikai" which starts in mid-night and ends at early morning.

**Shivrathiri festival:** The great Shivrathiri festival is famous in this district. The devotees run to 12 Shiva temple situated in all around district. This ceremony temple is called Sivalaya Ottam, meaning 'the run to Shiva Temples'. This ceremony starts on the day before Shivarathri by taking a darshan at Thirumala Shiva Temple in Munchirai and ends on the next day by taking a darshan at Thirunattalam Shiva Temple. It is noted that though the devotees are going to Shiva temples, they chant Vaishnava names 'Govinda Gopala'. According to the beliefs, it is establishing that Shiva and Vishnu are both one and the same.

**Ayya Vaikunda Avataram:** The Ayya Vaikunda Avataram is widely celebrated throughout the district. The Kodiyyetru Thirunal is celebrated in the religious headquarters of Swamithoppu Pathi and attracts large crowds from Tamil Nadu and across India.

Besides **Deepvali, Christmas** is also celebrated in Kanyakumari district due to the fact that large number of Christians is residing in this district. On the eve of
Christmas, persons involving in the carol services visit the families and sing songs all night. The carol services usually travel in decorated trucks.

New Year is celebrated with Vana Vediakkai (fireworks) and local games such as Valukku Panai (slippery palm or pole), a game in which a person has to climb the pole that is flooded with oil and grease.

Food
The main source of food comes from rice and rice products. Those are may be used to make dosa, idly, appam and puttu.

Rice is the staple food of the people, although for some people in the hilly areas, tapioca is the main food. Though there are some vegetarians among the populace, majority of the people use meat and fish products. Fish caught in the seas around the district during the night or early morning hours reach the markets in the interior towns and villages in the morning. Oysters are used to prepare Chippi appam. Also they prepare coffee using palm gur (karuppatti) during the winter season. The food ‘Chakkoli’ is spicy, and the people in the district tend to use more grated coconut in their curries and food-preparations.

Highways and Transport

There are two major National Highways (NH) roads emanating from Kanyakumari town. One is the NH 44 that starts from the town and runs through Madurai and the other is the NH 66. The state-owned Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation is the major operator of bus services in the district. Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) also operates frequent services to Nagarcoil and Kanyakumari from Trivandrum. Today, there are 3566.80 km of surfaced roads in the district. Indian Railway operates train from Kanyakumari and
Nagercoil to many important places of Tamil Nadu and India. There was a proposal to build an airport in Nagercoil by Airports Authority of India and at present this proposal.

**Education**

Colleges of higher education are found throughout the district, mainly Arts, Science and Engineering Colleges. The state runs the Kanyakumari Government Medical College at Asaripallam, a Government Engineering College and a Government Polytechnic at Konam, near Nagercoil. Many private Engineering Colleges including a private university were started functioning in the recent past. No fewer than 30 Engineering Colleges are functioning in the district, which are currently affiliated to the Anna University and Arts and Science colleges to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. The Manonmaniam Sundaranar University runs a research unit-Centre for Marine Sciences and Technology at Rajakamangalam, Kanyakumari District. Noorul Islam University is the only private university functioning at Kumarakoil near Thuckalay. Education has changed the cultural, economic and social scenario of the district Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. People from Kanyakumari district occupies many senior level State and Central Government postings and has earned good reputations.

**Rivers**

The **Pahrali River** flows through Mathur Hanging Trough bridge. The major river in the district is Thamirabarani locally known as Kuzhithuraiyar. This river has two major tributaries: Kodayar and Paralayar, with the Pechiparai Dam and Perunchani Dam, respectively, built across them. There are many tributaries for the Kodayar River, of which Chittar I and Chittar II, with their dams, are the major
ones. The origin of Tambaraparani River is in the Western Ghats and the river confluences at Thengapattanam, about 56 km west of Kanyakumari town.

**Valliar**, another small river, along with its tributary Thoovalar, originates from the Velimalai Hills, collects drainage from P.P. Channel and its branches, Ayacuts (irrigated area under a tank) and confluences with the sea at Kadiapattinam.

The **Pazhayar River**, another small river, starts at Shorlacode, about 18 kilometres (11 mi) north-west of Nagercoil. This is polluted as it collects drainage of Thovalai, Ananthanar and Nanjil nadu puthanar channel passing through Thazhakudi, Vellamadam villages. The Pahrali River also flows through the district. The Mathur Hanging Trough Bridge, the highest and longest aqueduct in Asia, was built over it near Mathur.

**Forests**

The forests in Kanyakumari District are about 75 million years old. Of the total district area of 1671.3 km², government forests occupy an area of 504.86 km² which comes to about 30.2 per cent of the geographical area of the district. The forests of the district are administered through the Kanyakumari District Forest Division, with headquarters at Nagercoil, the capital of Kanyakumari District.

**Rainfall**

Of all the weather elements, rainfall is the most dominant one. It influences plant growth and crop production. Kanyakumari District receives good rainfall from two monsoons (south-west and north-east). The four well-known seasons in the district are (i) South-West monsoon period (ii) north-east monsoon period (iii) winter and (iv) summer. Among these, the south-west and north-east monsoons give rain in June to September and October to December respectively.
Fauna and Flora

Fauna
The fauna and flora of Kanyakumari District are vast and diverse. Animals on the hills of the district include Bengal tiger, elephant, sambar deer, porcupines, wild boar, white pied kingfisher, painted stork and cranes are commonly found in the water bodies and wetlands. Reptiles include monitor lizards, pythons, blood viper and other snakes.

In Mahendragiri hills (about 4,000 ft (1,200 m above sea level), one can find elephant, tiger, leopards and deer. Leopard cubs often stray onto the highway near the hills and are sometimes run over by motorists.

The Keeriparai and Maramalai hills are habitats for wild elephants and Indian bison. The Kodayar hills are the breeding centers for the Indian rock pythons and Indian bison. In the Theroor wetlands, one can see several varieties of storks and migratory birds during specific seasons. Trout and other varieties of freshwater fish are found in the Pechiparai reservoir. The district also has a wildlife sanctuary and a bird sanctuary.

Agricultural and allied Activities
This district having favourable agro-climatic condition to grow number of crops particularly paddy, banana tapioca, coconut etc. The district is a fertile one having sufficient rainfall and irrigation facilities. It gets rain from both the north east and south west monsoons. The important subsidiary activities carried on by the cultivators and agriculturists are dairying and goat rearing. The district has a coastline of 68.5km spread over the west coast and east coast. A number of factors have hampered the industrial development in the district. The important factors are lack of
resources, industrial raw materials, inadequate transport facilities and suitable climate. Hence agriculture is the main occupation in Kanyakumari District.

**Physiographic features**

Kanyakumari District is divided into three natural divisions on the basis of physiographic features. They are (i) **High lands** constituting a mountainous division with spurs from Western Ghats running into it. (ii) **Low lands** constituting the coastal area. They are flat and fairly fertile and west portion of the district and (iii) **Mid lands** lying in between the mountainous range and the low lands. There exists strip of undulating valley with a few streams available for cultivation.

**Soil and crops**

The soil in Kanyakumari District can be divided in to three categories namely, sandy, lateritic and red soil. This could be seen in Blocks of Thiruvattar, Munchirai, Karunthencode, Rajakkamangalam, Killiyoor, Thuckalay and Melpuram. The soil $P^H$ generally ranges from 4.5 to 8.06. The red soil which has a low moisture holding capacity is not as fertile as lateritic soil. Mixed type of red and alluvial soil is found in Agasteeswaram and Thovalai Blocks. Very small pockets of alkaline soil are observed in the village namely Mathavalayam, Vellamadam and Shenbagaramanputhoor. There is no saline in the district. The main crops in these soil types are paddy, banana, tapioca, vegetables, rubber, coconut and other spices.

**Minerals**

As far as mineral resources are concerned, the district is in a satisfactory position. Limestone deposits are found in Thovalai and Agasteeswaram Blocks while black stone (metal) is available in Thiruvattar, Thuckalay, Karunthencode and Agasteeswaram Blocks.
Climate and temperature

The general climate of the district is pleasant. Both south-west and north-east monsoons greatly influence the climate of the region besides the proximity of the sea and the dwindling heights of the Western Ghats. The pleasant climate of the region besides the proximity of the sea and the dwindling heights of the Western Ghats are the gift of nature. The pleasant climate, the advantageous physiographic features combined with fertile soil, distribution of monsoons and the coast line adorn prosperity.

The temperature of the district varies between 36° and 24° Celsius. Temperature determines the limits with which particular crops grow. Rainfall and atmospheric humidity determine of plants to particular Zones.

Electricity

In Kanyakumari District, all the towns and villages have been electrified. Neyveli Power Plant and the NEPC located at Aralvaimozhi are the major sources of electric power supply for this district.

Financial resources

In terms of banking coverage, Kanyakumari District could be considered as one of the well-banked districts of Tamil Nadu. There are 114 branches of different commercial banks spread over 103 Centres of the district. Indian Overseas Bank has been considered to be the ‘lead bank’ of the district for distributing the necessary loans and advances to farmers and industrialists of the district.

Apart from the commercial banks which play a predominant role in the agricultural and industrial development of Kanyakumari District, the ‘Industrial Finance Institutions’ such as Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation and Small
Scale Industrial Corporation are also issuing loans and advances for the establishment, functioning and development of small scale and cottage industries in this district.

**Industrial background**

There are only two cotton textile mills in this district. One is in the Co-operative sector (Kanya Spinning Mill) and the other is in private sector by the name Nagammal Mill. The Indian rare Earth Limited factory is operating at Manavalakurichi. Now-a-days, there are a number of private small scale industries. Forty six fishing centre are situated in the coastal area. Next to agriculture, people are engaged in handloom weaving. Coir manufacturing is also to be worth-mentioning. Palm gur production is almost over in the district and cashew processing is advancing and having more than 30,000 workers are engaged in cashew processing industry. A number of factors have hampered the industrial development in the district. The most important among them are lack of mineral resources, industrial raw materials and suitable climate.

**Occupation**

As per the Census 2011, nearly half of the working populations derive employment from agriculture. The major occupations of the people in this district are agriculture. The major occupations of the people in this district are agriculture and allied activities.

(i) **Agriculture**

Paddy, Tapioca, Coconut, Banana, Cashew, Mango, Jack fruit, Pine apple and Ground nut are the important crops being cultivated in this district. Paddy and, Coconut are irrigated while tapioca is the irrigated crop in some parts of this district and dry crop in other parts, grown under rain fed conditions. The net area sown is
86,055 hectares and the gross cropped area is 1, 16, 170 hectares. Paddy accounts for 46 per cent of the total cropped area, coconut 13 percent and tapioca 10 percent.

Rain-fed crops like tea, coffee, rubber and pepper are grown in the hill areas. Banana is grown in the lower slopes of the hills and plains. Paddy, tapioca, coconut and vegetables are grown in the plains.

Rice is the main food crop grown in this district. Normally, two crops are grown in two seasons a year such as Kanni (Karif) and Kumbam (Rabi). The Kanni crop plantation is done during May and harvested during September. The Kumbam plantation is done during October and harvested during February. Paddy cultivation has declined during recent times.

Tapioca is the stable food of the low-income group in this district. The area under this root-crop has fallen in recent times because the people in this district have started replacing this staple food item by rice.

Coconut is the main cash crop grown in this district. The price of coconut is attractive. Adoption of intensive cultivation, supply of high yielding coconut seedlings etc have resulted in an enormous increase in the area under coconut cultivation and its production.

(ii) Rubber plantation

One of the distinguishing features of Kanyakumari District is its vast rubber plantations. This is the only district in Tamil Nadu where rubber is produced. The importance of Kanyakumari District lies in the fact that 94 percent of the State’s rubber production is from this district. The annual production of rubber is estimated to 15,000 metric tones. The area under rubber plantation which was only 2,337 hectares
during 1956-57 increased to 14,170 hectares in 1998-99 and again to 18,203 hectares in 2001-02. Rubber plantation is found in 19,429 hectares in 2010-11.

(iii) Industry

In spite of the non-availability of land for non-agricultural purposes and the high cost of farm land, a number of small scale industries have come up in the district. Important activities of the small scale units are cashew processing, engineering, printing, wooden furniture making and oil crushing. Among the cottage industries, coir industry is the most prominent one. Manufacture of materials from palm leaves and fibre, bee keeping, beedi rolling, pottery, mat wearing, khadi spinning, handloom weaving and sea-shell craft are the other important cottage industries. The district is a land of hand craft.

Fisheries

The district has a coast line of 68 km spread over from the west coast to east coast. Fishing, next to agriculture, is an important occupation of the people in the coastal areas of the district.

Export and Import

Cashew, Monazite, Flowers, Prawn, Banana, Coir and Coir products, Nylon fishnet, Cloves, Coconut kernels are the main items of export from Kanyakumari District. Wood for making furniture is imported from various places to this district.

Health and medicine

Kanyakumari District is blessed with good medical and health facilities with a number of well-equipped Hospitals, Health Care Centres, Primary Health Centres and the like. The installation of medical college has turned out to be an added advantage to the medical field in this district.
Tourist Attraction

Kanyakumari district has various eco-systems, including beaches, mountain valleys and evergreen forests, as well as rubber and clove plantations. The Padmanabhapuram Palace complex is located in the granite Padmanabhapuram Fort, close to Thuckalay and at the foot of the Veli Hills, which form a part of the Western Ghats. The river Valli flows nearby. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanyakumari_district - cite_note-19 *Chothavilai Beach*, near Nagercoil, *Vattakottai Fort* (literally, circular fort) is an 18th Century fort overlooking the sea, located six km from Kanyakumari. *Suchindram* has the Sthanalayan temple with a repository of art treasures belonging to several kingdoms. The temple is famous for its ninth-century inscriptions, musical columns, and 6-meter-tall statue of Hanuman. The main deity in the form of a shivlinga represents Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma, the trinity of the Hindu pantheon.

The Panchappathi, five primary sacred places of Ayyavazhi are all situated within a fifteen-kilometre radius of Kanyakumari. It also includes the Swamithoppu Pathi (headquarters of Ayyavazhi), a famous temple in Tamil Nadu, situated ten kilometres to the northwest from Kanyakumari. It is not structurally massive temple, but is known for its non-idolatry system of worship.

Udayagiri Fort, built by King Marthanda Varma, has a foundry for casting guns. It is also the tomb-site of the king's trusted European general Captain De Lennoy. Udayagiri Fort is now a bio-diversity park, administered by the Department of Forests, Kanyakumari Division.

Mathur Hanging Trough, near Thiruvattar in the District, is an aqueduct that carries irrigation water through a canal between two hills. The canal itself goes above
a small river. Built on very high pillars, is one of the biggest aqueducts, both in height and length, in Asia. The view from the middle of the aqueduct of the surrounding hills and vegetation, and the small river flowing down below, is breathtaking.

The **Chithral Jain Monuments**, situated about 35 km from Marthandam, are rock shelters and idols dating from the 9th to 11th centuries. **Olakaiaarudi** waterfalls, about 20 km from Nagercoil, is on the middle of a hill and requires an hour's trek by foot from the base of the hill (better to go in a group, as it is a forested area)

**Pechiparai Reservoir** is about 30 km from the town, and also Perunchani and Chittar dams. **Thiruparrapu Falls**, is a waterfall near Thiruparrapu. There is an ancient temple near the falls, which is popular among the locals and Keralites. **Sanguthurai Beach**, about 8 km from Nagercoil, is a palm-fringed and sandy beach. **Sothavilai Beach** is another good beach, 7 km away from the heart of Nagercoil town. Both beaches were hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami, but authorities have taken steps to improve facilities again. There is a lagoon at Manakudy, 10 km from Nagercoil.

**Mukkadal reservoir**: Fresh water supply to Nagercoil is from the Mukkadal Reservoir, about 8 km (5.0 mi) from the town, in the interior – itself a scenic place, with a small bushy island in the middle of the dam. The dam is surrounded by hills of the Western Ghats. **Kalikesam** is a scenic picnic spot. The Kali temple situated here attracts many pilgrims. **Marunthuvazhalai, Thangaipattinam Polzhi** and **Edappad Beach** (near Kerala border) are some of the tourist places

**Indian Ocean Tsunami**

Kanyakumari district was one of the worst affected districts in India in the tsunami that ravaged the coasts of various countries in South and South East Asia,
on 26 December 2004. There were nearly 900 deaths and several hundreds missing and injured. Social organizations from several countries and the Government have since been working on rehabilitating the affected people and property.

**Cyclone Ockhi**

The devastating cyclone called by name ‘Ockhi’ occurred in 29th November, 2017. Cyclone Ockhi crossed the sea near Kanyakumari, the southern tip of mainland India, on 30th November, Ockhi caused havoc and destruction in Kanyakumari district. The [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamilnadu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamilnadu) damage was estimated to be more than Rs 1,000 crores for the damage of infrastructure and taking the lives. Ockhi-hit Kanyakumari district had suffered full and partial damage of houses, land properties, fishing vessels and very large number of coconut and banana trees. A government release quoted that 1,687 houses had been damaged fully and 2,814 houses had suffered partial damage. Fatality covered the death of 245 persons and missing of 661 persons. The extent of damages worked out to be more than $ 5.07 billion

**An outline of Fair Price Shops and Family Cards in Kanyakumari District**

The Public Distribution System is being operated with the ultimate outlet of Fair Price Shop (FPS) in Kanyakumari district. In this district, different agents such as cooperative sector, TNCSC sector and private sector involve in the distribution. There are 771 FPSs and 5,52,785 family cards in this district. Among these cards, 5,37,887 are BPL cards, 5836 APL cards, 6292 AAY cards, 2,350 police cards and 420 are ‘No commodity’ cards. The FPSs and number of family cards are ever- increasing over years. Essential commodities are issued through the FPSs to the cardholders. It is a well-known fact that malpractice in the FPSs and smuggling by the anti-social elements are Omni-present in Kanyakumari district.