Research Article

An Analysis On The Natural And Human Resources Of Kanyakumari District

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ABSTRACT

Kanyakumari District is named after the Goddess "Kanyakumari". The District lies at the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula, where Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal confluence. It is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu and bounded by Tirunelveli District in the East and North, Kerala State in the west and tri-seas in the south. The District lies between 8 degree 29' of Northern latitude and from 76 degree 9' to 77 degree 41' of Eastern longitude. The District has a total area of 1672 square kilometers. It is once known as the granary of Travancore before it merges with Tamil Nadu in 1956. It is the only place in the world where one can witness both the rising and setting of the Sun[1]. The District has a variety of natural landscapes ranging from the hills to the coast. This paper highlights the Natural resources including agro-climatic conditions, topography, features that influence the climatic conditions and the human resources by blocks and municipalities, population by broad industrial categories of workers and their employment pattern.

Keywords: Natural Resources, Human Resources, Employment Pattern, Literates

INTRODUCTION

This district is divided into three natural divisions, namely mountains, terrain low lands and undulating valleys. The district is a fertile land having more area under forest and plantations. Rivers and Canals are the important source of irrigation. Favorable agro-climatic condition enables to the cultivation of variety of crops such as paddy, tapioca, vegetables, fruits, plantation and horticulture crops. The important feature of this district is the production of off-season mangoes. The important allied activities carried by the cultivators and agriculturists are dairying and goat rearing. One of the richest fishing grounds in the country lies 88 kilometers from south of Kanyakumari and extend to about 56 kilometers on either side of Cape Comerin. Two out of six minor ports in Tamilnadu and also Kanyakumari and Colachel are in Kanyakumari District. The district has been a land of handicrafts. The important crafts are lace and embroidery works, sculpture, woodcarving and making articles from bamboo, reed, screw pins and seashells. There are six regulated markets. On an average, there are 3 to 9 markets in each panchayat dealing mainly in agricultural products. All towns, villages and hamlets in the district have been electrified[2].

Organizational set up of the District

The Head quarter of the district is at Nagercoil. The district is divided into two revenue divisions. They are Padmanabhapuram with the head quarter at Thuckalay, and Nagercoil with the head quarter at Nagercoil. It is divided into 4 taluks. They are Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Agastheeswaram and Thovalai. These four talks consist of 81 revenue villages. There are eighty village panchayats, sixty six town panchayats, nine panchayats unions, three third municipalities and one selection grade municipality. The district has nine blocks, four municipalities and one township. It has seven assembly constituencies and one parliamentary constituency.

Agriculture, small scale industries, cottage industries and fishing are the main occupations. Coconut, palm and paddy are the chief crops. Kanyakumari has the mixed culture of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Nagercoil is the main trade center. Kanyakumari beach, Kumari Amman Temple, Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Gandhi Mandapam, Nagaraja Temple at Nagercoil, Sthanumalayaswami Temple at Suchindram, Subramanya Temple at Tiruchendur, Kumarakovil, Vattakottai, Thengapattinam beach, Chidaral, Muttam, Pechipparai Dam, Padmanabhapuram Palace, Thriparappu Waterfalls, Kalakadu Wildlife Sanctuary and Olakkay Aruvi Waterfalls are the major tourist destinations. Kanyakumari District is well connected by road and rail[3]. Nearest airport is at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, 80 kilometres away from the town of Kanyakumari.

In earlier days the Kanyakumari district was a part of the Travancore state. In 1835, when the state was divided in to Northern and Southern divisions, this area was in the Southern division. The district was under the charge of Dewan Peishkar, Kottayam. In July 1949, when the United States of Travancore and Cochin was inaugurated, the present Kanyakumari area continued to be a part of Trivandrum district of Kerala State.

The areas namely Agasteeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode Taluks formed the southern divisions of the former Trivandrum District. The people of these areas were predominantly Tamil speaking. They agitated for the merger of this area with Madras State. Also the States Reorganization Commission recommended this. Accordingly, the States Reorganization Act was passed on 1956[4]. On 1st November 1956 the Kanyakumari District was formed, with the four Taluks namely Agasteeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode and merged with Tamil Nadu

NATURAL RESOURCES

Climate of Kanyakumari District

The District has a favorable agro-climatic condition, which is suitable for growing a number of crops. The proximity of equator, its topography and other climate factors favour the growth of various crops as well. There is distinct variation in the climatic conditions prevailing within the district. Unlike other district in Tamil Nadu, it has a rainfall both during the South West and the North East monsoons. The South West monsoon period starts from the month of June and ends in September, While the North East monsoon period starts from October and ends in the middle of December. The ecological and economic environment of this district is mainly agrarian in nature and style. The geographers call it convectional rain. The very favourable rainy season of the district is the southwest monsoon from June to August, because it is near the Indian Ocean. The North east monsoon brings rain from September to November[5]. The district has a pleasant climate. The factors that influence the climatic conditions are the two monsoon winds, proximity to the seas and the slopping height of the Western Chats. Though, the period of hot season prevails from March to June there are no extremes of temperature.

Marine Resources

The coastal belt has a long coastline of 68 kilometres with 42 fishing hamlets and pattinams. Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal provide fertile grounds for fish farming. The fisher folk, for long have used Kattamarans for fishing and the catches were catering to the needs of the local people. Dried fish were sent to Melapalayam and Tuticorin. During the post independent period mechanization of fishing and the discovery of wedge Bank in Arabian Sea became a great boon to fish farming. The Belgium Deep Sea Fishing Project with headquarters at Muttom helped mechanization of fishing and deep sea fishing from 1967. In addition to this, an Artemia Research Centre of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli has been located at Rajakamangalam.

Mineral Resources

Kanyakumari District though not very rich in mineral resources, it is unique in possession of rare earth minerals. The Indian Rare Earths Limited, Manavalakurichi, a Government of India undertaking engages itself in the process of separation of minerals. This has secured Kanyakumari District a noteworthy place in the mineral map of the world. In addition, lime shell is available in the coastal lagoons near Thamaraikulam, Manakudy and Rajakkamangalam which contains high percentage of calcium. This good quality shell is used in the manufacturing the calcium carbide, coated cement, colour washes, bleaching powder and also in chemical, paper and fertilizer industries. This offers good scope for industrial utilization.

Wind and Waves

The Arabian Sea coast is a powerful wavy sea coast. It spreads from Kanyakumari to Nerodi covering 64 kilometres with potential opportunities for power generation. Wind and sea waves are two important natural resources available in Kanyakumari District. The region east and west of Aramboly pass (Muppanthal) is a windy belt. Recently this arid waste area is developing as a power generating wind mill area. The region consisting of Aramboly, Vadakkankulam, Aavaraikulam, Kathaadimalai, Kavalkinaru and Karungulam also has this advantage. The Wind Mill Scheme in Kanyakumari district ranks first in Asia and second in the world.

HUMAN RESOURCES

This district with an area of 1684.17 square kilometers is densely populated, that is 995 persons per square kilometer. Density of people per square kilometer living area is (1679034 per 1239.12 square kilometres) 1353. The number of females for every 1000 males works out to 1014. Tamil and Malayalam are the main spoken languages of this district. Hindus and Christians form a sizeable percentage of the population of the district and there are also a number of Muslims dominated belts in the district. But all the people live here in a friendly manner. There is as such no caste system in the Society[6]. The difference has weakened to a great extent especially after independence. This also became possible because of growth of education and improvements in transport and communication. Some of the communities in the district are Nadars, Nanjil Nadu Vellalars, Paravas, Mukthavas, Vilakki Thalanayar, Kammalar or Asari, Nairs, Chackarevars, Kerala Mudalis etc. Rice is the staple food of all the people in the district. Some among the poorer section also use tapioca. Beverages like tea and coffee are widely spread even in to the rural area of the district. The total population, Literates by Blocks and Municipalities is shown in the following table.

TABLE 1

AREA, POPULATION, LITERATES BY BLOCKS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Name of the Blocks/ Municipalities	Area (Sq.km)	Population			Literate		
			Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1.	Agastheeswaram	143.35	148419	73260	75159	118778	60120	58658
2.	Rajakkamangalam	135.49	137254	68119	69135	108539	55337	53202
3.	Thovalai	360.91	110719	55057	55662	85132	44101	41031
4.	Kurunthancode	109.54	165070	81823	83247	126882	64369	62513
5.	Thuckalay	127.41	167262	82488	84774	131338	66461	64877
6.	Thiruvattar	88.37	161619	80220	81399	122710	62524	60186
7.	Killiyoor	138.86	156387	78663	77724	119931	62173	57758
8.	Munchirai	71.45	177225	89122	88103	131461	68366	63095
9.	Melpuram	27.57	179535	88578	90957	144221	70560	73661
10.	Nagercoil	19.37	208179	102907	105272	175248	88590	86658
11.	Padmanabapuram	6.47	20075	9967	10108	16282	8372	7910
12.	Colachel	5.18	23787	11996	11791	18008	9275	8733
13.	Kuzhithurai	5.15	20503	10069	10434	16712	8419	8293
	Total	**1239.12**	**1676034**	**832269**	**843765**	**1315242**	**668667**	**646575**

Source: District Statistical Hand Book, 2001.

Literacy of this district is very high compared to that of other districts in Tamil Nadu. In the year of 2005-2006 the literacy rate of this district is 78.47 against the literacy rate 73.5 per cent of Tamilnadu. Female literacy rate is 76.62 per cent and the male literacy rate is 80.34 per cent. Culturally the district has inherited the cultural legacy of both Travancore and Cochin States and Tamilnadu on account of the linguistic composition of the district.

The Malayalam speaking population had a flourishing land ownership in the river valleys and other fertile regions. The long administrative legacy of Travancore state favoured it. The fertile Nanchilnadu was mainly owned by the vellala community. The Muslims are mainly engaged in business, the chettiars in money lending and land control. The coastal population got engaged in fishing. The rest of the populations are engaged in agricultural and several industrial activities. Table below shows the distribution of main workers and marginal workers as cultivators, agricultural labourers, workers in household industry and other workers.

TABLE 2

POPULATION BY BROAD INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES OF WORKERS IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Industrial Category	District		Tamil Nadu	
		Persons	percent to total workers	Persons	percent to total workers
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	Total Main Workers	454378	82.90	23757783	85.21
2.	Marginal Workers	93678	17.09	4120499	14.78
3.	Total Workers				
	a) Cultivators	13434	2.45	5116039	18.35
	b) Agricultural Labourers	56811	10.36	8637630	30.98
	c) Household Industry Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs	23922	4.36	1499761	5.37
	d) Other workers	360211	65.72	12624852	45.28
	Total Workers	548056	32.7	27878282	-
	Non-Workers	1127978	-	34527397	-
	Total Population	**1676034**	**-**	**62405679**	**-**

Source: Population Census, 2001.

According to 2001 census, when a comparative study of the working force of this District is made, it reveals that 32.7 per cent are working force and the balance of 67.3 per cent is marginal and non-workers. Among the working force, cultivators and agricultural labourers account for about 50 per cent. The others are mainly engaged in other occupations like construction, mining, transport, communication, industries other than household, livestock, forestry plantations, orchards, fishing and the like. The percentage of working population in this district is less than the percentage of working population in Tamil Nadu.

Employment Pattern

The social elites for social status and security of income, through social influence got employment under the Government. Education grew steadily and employment opportunities for teaching were extended to the non-elite sector. It preferred it for social status and security of income. After the advent of independence, employment opportunities in the realm of Government employment expanded. Higher Education also grew fast. The educated sector had a pleasant berth in Government offices very

easily for long. This occupational environment and agrarian background provided a situation creating an area of challenge for the initiative, until 1983 – the year of great drought which challenged, and changed land-based socio-economic agrarian environment[7]. Thereafter people preferred office-based employment to land-based agrarian life.

The entire employment pattern of this district is divided into two such as main workers and marginal workers. With the help of industrialization, the workers are getting full employment. Also, more and more employment opportunities are generated and this will help for increasing per capita income of people which will ultimately raise the standard of living of the people. There was occupational migration from agrarian sector to official sector and industrial sectors. Urbanization and urban growth provided employment to skilled and unskilled labourers. Modernization in industry and commerce provides employment to educated youth both male and female.

CONCLUSION

The climatic conditions of the district are highly conducive to agrarian life. This district is graced with three rainy seasons, south west monsoon, northeast monsoon and the mango showers similar to that of the coffee showers of Mysore. The first two seasonal rains are blessing for seasonal agriculture. The third category provides water for agrarian life during summer season that is the mango season and other hot months. The linguistic and religious background of the population had its impact on its economic life. The employment opportunities available to the workers in the predominantly agricultural district are seasonal in nature and the per capita income is low. This is one of the reasons why the Government takes necessary steps to make the district industrially developed.

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