An Analysis on the Population Growth of Kanyakumari District

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Abstract

During 1901, the Population in Kanyakumari District 359248 formed 12.2 percent of the total population of the Travancore State. From then onwards a steady increase was recorded in the next three decades. In the present investigation, an analysis and comparative study on the population growth of Kanyakumari district is being studied. In 1941 census, the decadal variation showed a slight decrease of 16.35 percent and 1.63 percent every year. The next decade 1941-51 witnessed two important events in the population growth. The first is the doubling of population 3.6 to 8.2 lakhs and the second, an increased percent variation with 22.07 and 2.2 percent annual growth. From 1951-61 the growth was slightly reduced probably due to the disturbances in political situations of the district.

Keywords: Population, Census, Population density, Sex ratio

Introduction

The first available evidence about Kanyakumari is found in Taitriya Upanishad which belongs to the 6th century B.C and 'Periplus of the Eraythrean Sea' of the 1st century A.D. It mentions about the existence of Cape Comerin.[1] This district was a part of the ancient Travancore- Cochin State especially the southern part of Travancore State. The Tamil and Malayalam literary works refer to this area as 'Nanjil Nadu' and 'Edanad.[2] In 1956 Kanyakumari District was declared a part of Tamil Nadu. For the next fifteen years the growth was steady with around 2 percent increase every year. After 1971 a steady decrease was recorded in the decadal variation showing an average decrease of 6.1 percent every decade and the decade 1991-2001 witnessed the lowest growth rate

of 4.33 percent. This may be due to the impact of health education imparted, which consequently reduced the birth rate. As a whole, the trend is healthy while considering the state average 11.19 percent for the decade and 1.1 percent annual growth rate.

Population Rate

The Kanyakumari district had a total population of 16,76,034 with the male population of 8, 32,269 and female population of 8, 43, 765 as per 2001 census. It accounts for 2.7 per cent of the total population of the Tamil Nadu with 1.29 per cent of geographical area. It reveals that the density of population was much higher in the district (999) than that in the state (408). The total population of Tamil Nadu, as per the 2001 Census, was 62,405,679. Of this, 19 percent belong to Scheduled Castes (SCs). The SCs in Kanyakumari formed 4.04 per cent of total district population, while ST population formed 0.32 percent[3]

(a) Trends in Birth/Death Rate and Infant Mortality

The birth rate during the last thirty years has been steadily decreasing from 25 to 13.7 and has a close correlation with that of the state. The death rate has declined from 7 to 4.5 per thousand in the same period. This gives a reliable stabilizing trend. The infant mortality rate is substantially low. When compared to the state average of 30.1, the IMR in Kanyakumari District is 15.6 during 2005. Among the births 8.4 percent are of higher order births that is more than two living children, while the state average is 17.8 percent.[4] These are signs of stabilizing population and are reliable indicators of future stability. Besides the above narrated indicators, it is worth considering a few more health related indicators which are useful to understand the health status of a particular population. Growth through natural increase occurs when the birth rate exceeds the death rate. The rate of natural increase of a population depends on birth and death rates, which are strongly influenced by the population age structure.

(b) Population Density

The number of persons living in a kilometers square area is considered as the density of population, when that is above 200 per kilometers, it is considered as dense. In the district the population is dense even from the beginning of the last century and was steadily increasing to almost five times dense by 2001. By 2021 it may be more than 5.5 times dense in the normal case. While excluding the 446.5 km reserve forest land from the available space the density may be more than 7.5 times dense. It is projected that by the year 2021, the district may have a density of 1504.9 percent km^2. This is definitely an alarming fact that it may lead to more pressure on living space and all other basic and essential resources. Further it may lead to over exploitation, and threatening the sustainability of all available resources. Very high density, combined with high literacy but poor economic conditions, are straining the natural resources particularly the forest and coastal regions. The demand for housing and infrastructure had led to a sharp decline in the area under rice cultivation, water scarcity and all round pollution. A comparative analysis of census figure of Kanyakumari District for the past five decades clearly shows that Kalkulam taluk had always the highest population followed by Vilavancode and Agastheeswaram whereas Thovalai always recorded the lowest. This may be due to the rugged terrain, more of forestland and absence of coastal zone. The other three taluks have densely populated coastal zones.

BLOCK WISE POPULATION IN KANYAKUAMRI DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Name of the Block / Municipality	Area (Sq.km)	Population
1.	Agasteeswaram	143.26	148419
2.	Rajakkamangalam	135.49	137254
3.	Thovalai	360.91	110719
4.	Kurunthencode	109.54	165070
5.	Thuckalay	127.41	167262
6.	Killiyoor	88.37	161619

7.	Munchirai	138.86	156387
8.	Melpuram	71.45	177225
9.	Thiruvattar	277.51	179535
10.	Nagercoil	19.37	208179
11.	Padmanabhapuram	6.47	20075
12.	Colachel	5.18	23787
13.	Kuzhithurai	5.15	20503

The above table indicates that the blocks, Thovalai block is rich in area with 360.91 square kilometres and the same for Padmanabhapuram is 6.47 square kilometres, Colachel 5.18 square kilometres and Kuzhithurai, it is 5.15 square kilometres. populations wise, Melpuram block and Thiruvattar block have recorded the highest density whereas the Municipalities Padmanabhapuram, Colachel, and Kuzhithurai have lower populations comparatively.[5]

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**	**-**

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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.[6]

(c) Distribution based on Topography and Resources

In the up lands, the reserved forest is having a scanty population of just 4228 habitat people spread over 47 settlements, distributed over 1257.35 ha area of forest land. More than 15 villages with a total area of 3277.79 ha are abuting the forest. The total population of these villages amounts to 144101. This shows that on an average 4396 persons shall have one ha of land in these villages. In the midlands the towns are having the maximum concentration. The agricultural lands and abundant water facilities in most of the areas reduce the population pressure. However, the environment is very badly affected due to the lack of planning in the developmental activities, uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and careless waste disposal. The most thickly populated area is the one km coastal belt where the resource they are looking for is from the sea and the basic needs like fresh water and fuel for day to day life are scarce. The sanitary conditions and health requires immediate care. Considering separately along with the buffer zone of 5 km probably gives a totally different picture, but the coastal belt always require special attention as it is more fluid and sensitive.

(d) Future Trend in Population of Kanyakumari District

While projecting the future growth, the population of 2001 will be considered as the base line data. An analysis of various averages shows that century growth average (1.67 percent), doubling time average (1.529 percent), average of the last three decades (1.106 percent), state average of the last decade (1.119 percent), district average of the last decade (0.433 percent). Taking the average of the entire above, one may get a maximum of 1.171 percent every year. But the average trend is decreasing to the extent of 0.61 percent. Therefore the annual net increase is estimated as 0.561 percent, which is the projected index. On the basis of the analysis, it is estimated that the population will be around 19 lakhs and it is sure that it will not cross 20 lakhs by 2020. There will be a probable stability in population by 2030, if the same trend continues.

The attainment of improved health levels would be significantly dependent on population stabilization, as also on complementary efforts from other areas of the social sectors like improved drinking water supply, basic sanitation, minimum nutrition and the like to ensure that the exposure of the populace to health risks is minimized. A stabilized population may be an ideal situation where careful planning for resource utilization is possible.

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of census figure of Kanyakumari District for the past five decades clearly shows that Kalkulam taluk had always the highest population followed by Vilavancode and Agastheesaram whereas Thovalai always recorded the lowest. This may be due to the rugged terrain, more of forestland and absence of coastal zone. Comparatively, Population Density is more in Kanyakumari district, decadal Population Growth is less but the Sex Ratio is very favourable in the district as it has 1013 female for every 1000 males. The Literacy rate and the Female Literacy are higher in Kanyakumari

district than in Tamil Nadu and India. Hence the district is placed in a favorable situation

except population density as the area in the district is lesser against the population growth.

Reference

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