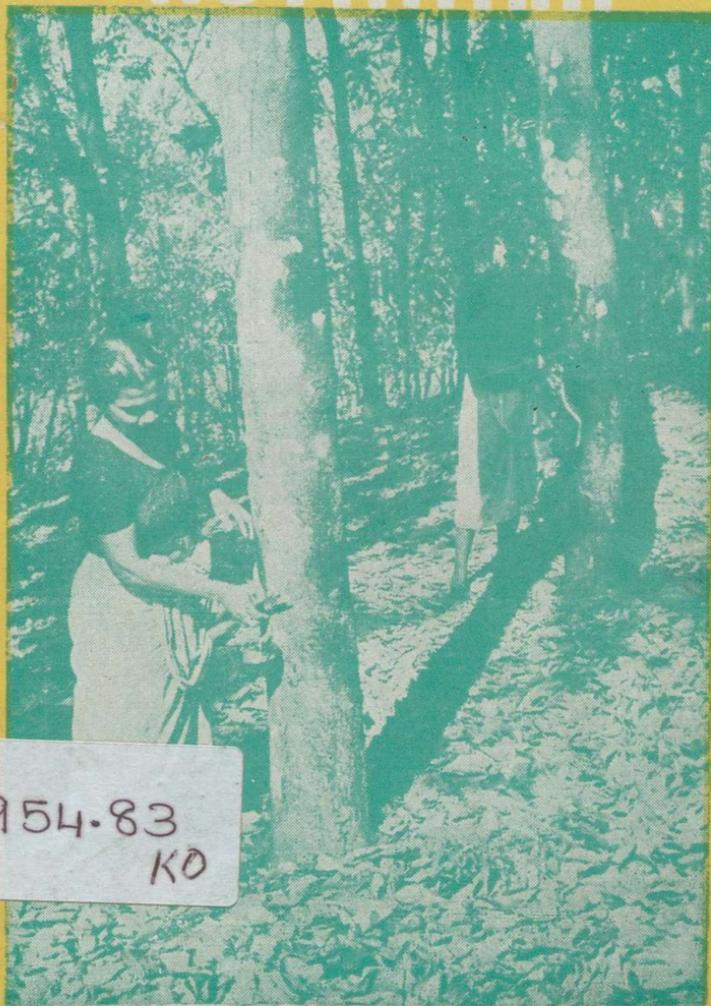


district hand book

KOTTAYAM

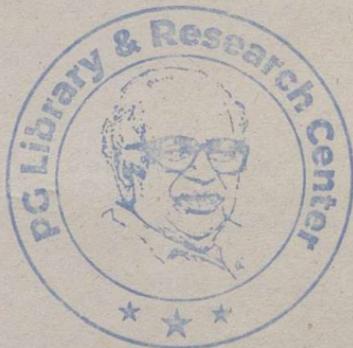


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GENERAL

'Kottayam' is a corrupted form of the compound word Kottayakam (Kotta+Akam) which means the interior of a fort. Rulers of Munjanad and Thekkumkur had their headquarters at Thazhathangadi in the present Kottayam town. Marthandavarma of Travancore attacked Thekkumkur and destroyed the palace and the Thaliyil fort. The remnants of palaces and forts which are still seen here throw light to the fact that the place was the abode of some dynasties. The name 'Kottayam' was later assigned to the district also.

SHORT HISTORY

The present district of Kottayam was previously a part of the erstwhile princely State of Travancore. Earlier the Travancore state consisted of two Revenue Divisions viz., the Southern and Northern Divisions under the administrative control of a 'Diwan Peshkar' for each. Later in 1868 two more divisions—Quilon and Kottayam were constituted. The fifth division—Devikulam came next but for a short period which in course of time was added to Kottayam.

At the time of the integration of the State of Travancore and Cochin in 1949 these Revenue Divisions were renamed as Districts and the Divan Peshkars gave way to District Collectors and that marks the birth of the District of Kottayam.

KOTTAYAM IN HISTORY

The beginning of the 9th century A. D. is the age of the Kulasekharas. At that time Kottayam was a part of Vempolinad which belonged to Kulasekhara Empire (1090-1102 A. D.). The Vembanad Kayal (Lake) itself derives its name from Vempolinad.

The kingdom of Vempolinad split itself into the kingdoms of Thekkumkur and Vadakkumkur by about 1100 A. D. and later these two kingdoms were annexed by Marthanda Varma of Travancore (between 1749 and 1754).

The Portuguese and the Dutch had their business relations with both Thekkumkur and Vadakkumkur kingdoms for pepper and other spices.

In addition to Thekkumkur and Vadakkumkur, Marthanda Varma brought two more petty principalities in Kottayam District under his sway. These were Poonjar and Meenachil.

After Marthandavarma, the resign of Dharma Raja (1758-1798) placed Kottayam in a key place in the new defence system against Haider Ali and Tippu Sultan. Apart from this the Kottayam District afforded asylum to a number of refugee princes who left Malabar in the wake of the Mysore invasion.

Kottayam District had a pre-eminent place in the cultural life of the Travancore Princely court. The main reason for this was the migration to Trivandrum of Ramapurathu Warriar, the famous poet of Vadakkumkur, following the annexation of the territory by Marthanda Varma.

The Kottayam District has played its role in all the political agitations of modern times. The "Malayali Memorial" agitation may be said to have had its origin in Kottayam. The Malayali Memorial sought to secure better representation for educated Travancoreans in the Travancore civil service as against persons from outside. The Memorial which was presented to the Maharaja Sri Mulam Thirunal (1891) was drafted at a public meeting held in the Kottayam Public Library. The event marked the beginning of the modern political movement in the State.

The famous Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25) was an epic struggle which took place in the district for eradication of untouchability. Scheduled Castes and other backward classes in Travancore were not only denied entry into temples but even access to the approach roads leading to temples. Vaikom, the seat of celebrated Siva Temple, was chosen as the place of the symbolic Satyagraha to get the approach roads to temples opened to the Scheduled Castes. National leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, C. Rajagopalachari, Acharya Vinoba Bhava and others were also associated with the Satyagraha.

The 'Nivarthana' agitation of the early thirties had considerable support in this District. The limited objective of the movement was to secure adequate representation for the non-caste Hindus, Christians and Muslims in the State Legislature.

The Kottayam District was also one of the strongholds of the agitation carried on under the auspices of the State Congress for the achievement of responsible government for Travancore. The agitation ended in triumph with the exit of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, the then Dewan of Travancore.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF KOTTAYAM

Kottayam has its place of honour in the cultural map of Kerala. Unnunilandesam, the exquisite Malayalam poetical work is supposed to have been written by a Vadakkumkur Raja. Ramapurathu Warriar (1703-53) is one of the celebrated names in Malayalam literature. The Christian missionaries working in the District in the 18th and 19th centuries enriched Malayalam literature by their valuable contributions. Varthamana Pusthakam or Travel to Rome (1778) written by Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar is the first travelogue in Malayalam. The first autobiography in Malayalam was published from Kottayam in 1870.

In the closing decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Kottayam shot into the limelight as the nerve centre of all literary and cultural activities in the erstwhile Travancore State. Among the dignitaries Kottarathil Sankunni, Kandathil Varghese Mappilai and Kerala Varma Valia Koi Thampuran are worth mentioning. K. C. Mammen Mappilai, Kattakayathil Cheriyan Mappilai, Vaikom Muhammed Bashir, Vadakkumkur Raja Raja Varma, Ponkunnam Varkey, Karur Neelakanta Pillai and K.P.S. Menon are some among many notable personalities of the District in modern time.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

Lying a little south to the Central Kerala, Kottayam district is bounded on the North by Ernakulam district, on the East by Idukki district and the South by Alleppey and Pathanamthitta districts. The Vembanad lake forms the Western boundary of Kottayam. It lies between Latitude 9°, 15' and 10°, 21' and Longitude 76°, 22' and 77°, 25'. The district has a natural division into highland, midland and lowland, the bulk being constituted by the midland. Taluks of Meenachil and Kanjirappally have highland and midland areas while the other three taluks have midland and lowland areas.

Climate

The district has a tropical humid climate with an oppressive hot season in the plains and plentiful rainfall throughout. The hot season from March to May is followed by the South-West Monsoon season from June to September. October and November constitute the post-monsoon or retreating monsoon season when day temperature increases gradually and the heat is nearly as intense as in the summer season. December to February forms the north-east monsoon. Rains cease early in January.

RIVERS

The important rivers of the District are the Meenachil River, the Muvattupuzha River and the Manimala River.

The Meenachil River

This river flows through the Taluks of Peermade, Meenachil, Vaikom and Kottayam. It is formed by several streams originating from the Western Ghats in Idukki District. At Erattupetta, Poonjar River also joins and takes a sharp turn and flows towards the west.

At Kondur, it is joined by the Chittar and at Lalam it receives the Payapparathodu and flows a south-west direction till it reaches Kottayam. Here, it splits itself into several branches before emptying into the Vembanad Lake. The important town in the basin are Palai, Poonjar, Ettumanoor and Kottayam.

The Muvattupuzha River

It originates from Ernakulam District and flows through the Vaikom Taluk of this district and empties its waters into the Vembanad Lake through Ithipuzha and Murinjapuzha at Vadakkemuri and Chembu respectively. The most important town in the basin in this District is Vaikom, the famous pilgrim centre.

The Manimala River

This river flows through the Kanjirapally and Changanacherry Taluks. At Mundakayam another stream joins it and the Chittar also joins on its course further towards the west and flows to Alleppey District. The important town in the basin is Mundakayam.

Population

Kottayam District has a total area of 2204 sq. kms. which forms about 5.7% of the total area of the State.

There is a total population of 1,681,104 according to the Census of 1981. It forms 6.67% of the population of the State. The density of population is 770 per sq. km. The number of occupied residential houses in rural areas is 262,918 and in urban areas it is 25,435.

ADMINISTRATION

Kottayam District has two Revenue divisions viz., Kottayam and Palai, each under the control of a Revenue Divisional Officer. Vaikom, Kottayam, Changanacherry, Meenachil and Kanjirappally are the Taluks in the District. There are four municipalities and 73 Panchayats in the district. Kottayam, Vaikom, Palai and Changanacherry are the Municipalities. Madappally, Pallom, Ettumanoor, Kaduthuruthy, Vaikom, Uzhavoor, Lalam, Erattupetta, Kanjirappally, Vazhoor and Pampady are the Development Blocks in the district.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Agriculture

Agriculture still forms the livelihood of the majority in the district. It is also the main factor of the district economy. Food crops as well as cash crops are cultivated here. Paddy and Tapioca are the main food-crops while Rubber, Coconut and Pepper are the main cash crops. Annual crops like plantain and Pineapple, seasonal crops like ginger, tubers and vegetables and a wide range of perennial crops like Jack, Mango etc., are also grown in this district.

Paddy

Paddy is the most important foodcrop in the district. The area under paddy cultivation is 43,528 hectares. An average of 67,000 tonnes of Paddy are produced in this district.

Tapioca

Tapioca is next to paddy as a food crop. It is cultivated in 30, 714 hectares of land. About 17 tonnes of tapioca are produced here per annum. Now its improved varieties are popular among the farmers.

Rubber

Rubber is the major cash crop in the district. It is grown in about 63,000 hectares of land in Kottayam district which is the highest area under rubber cultivation in the state and it is also increasing gradually. Since the bulk of the rubber cultivation in the state is in this district, the Rubber Board has selected Kottayam for its headquarters.

Coconut

It is another important cash crop in the district. The total area under coconut cultivation is 51,300 hectares of land. Production is being raised by adopting improvement of irrigation facilities and distribution of quality seedlings etc.

Others Crops

Pepper, Tea, Coffee, Ginger, Arecanut, Pulses, Plantains, Pine-apple, Sugarcane, Coccoa etc., are also cultivated in this district.

The Department of Agriculture is rendering services to the farmers in many ways. There are 34 Junior Agricultural Offices, two seed farms and one District Agricultural Farm. Agricultural development activities are implemented through 22 intensive paddy development units, 8 coconut package units and 4 pepper package units.

Animal Husbandry

The main species of livestock in the district are cattle, buffaloes, Goats, Ponies, and Pigs. Majority of the cattle still found in the district are Rangayam, Hallikyr and cross breeds of Jersey, Sindhi and Swiss Brown. Consequent on the introduction of artificial insemination schemes and intensive cattle development projects of Animal Husbandry Department at present in the district, there are a fairly large number of cross-bred Jersey and Brown Swiss animals in the district. Two other breeds met within the district are Murrah and Surabhi.

In the case of goats there are the Kalabari and the local non-descript breeds and a few cross breeds of Jamanapari. Poultry consists of fowls, ducks and other poultry like Turkey etc.

There are 42 veterinary hospitals, 4 veterinary polyclinics, 3 dispensaries and 2 mobile farm aid units in this district. Two artificial insemination centres, one poultry farm and one pig-breeding units are also functioning here.

Fisheries

Since Kottayam is not a coastal district inland fishing only is possible here. About 4000 families are engaged in the fishing activities. The Assistant Director of Fisheries, Kottayam, takes care of the fisheries development of the district. To popularise inland fishing a composite fish culture programme is being implemented giving assistance to fish growers. Seeds of new varieties of fishes like Calta, Rohu etc., are distributed to the farmers according to the suitability of the ponds available. Growers are also given government subsidy.

Forests

Though forests play an important role in the economic development of the state by influencing various sectors like Agriculture, Industry, Employment, Climate etc., its importance is very less in this district.

There are two groups of forests viz. the natural forests and the man-made forests. The man-made forests mainly consist of eucalyptus, teak, softwood, rubber, cashew and other plantations. The forest and forest resource development programmes are carried out by the Forest Development Corporation in the district.

Industries

Industrially Kottayam district is not highly advanced though the growth it has achieved in this sector during the past few years is considerable. At present it has to its credit eight large scale industries, eleven mini industrial estates and more than 3000 registered small scale industrial units.

Growth of industries in this district is a direct consequence of development of agro-resources which has given rise to a large number of agro-based industries. Rubber is the foremost agricultural resource. The increasing output in rubber production and the advent of modern processing techniques of rubber resulted in the establishment of rubber-based industrial units like latex, crepe rubber and latex diversifying into items such as M. C. sheets, footwear etc. There is a major functional estate for rubber and plastics at Changanacherry. The Travancore Cement Factory which produces the unique white cement is located at Nattakom not far off from the town.

The district has a rich forest wealth with good availability of soft wood and other varieties of timber. As a result, many wood-based industries like manufacture of plywood, packing cases, splints and veneers, furniture etc., came to existence. The Hindustan Paper Corporation has set up a factory at Velloor in Vaikom Taluk for the manufacture of newsprint involving an outlay of Rs. 125 crores.

Although rubber is grown in abundance in Kottayam district and this forms the basic raw material for a number of products of industrial and domestic use there are not many units using rubber as the basic raw material.

Coir industry in Kottayam district is more or less confined to Vaikom Taluk. The industry is taken care of by the Coir Project Officer, Vaikom.

Education

The educational status of Kottayam district is fairly high compared to some other districts of the State. It is well equipped with a number of educational institutions imparting general, higher and technical education. Its performance during the last few years also was commendable. According to 1981 Census, the literacy percentage of the district is 81.

There are 234 High Schools and 27 Arts and Science Colleges, one Co-operative College, one Government Poly Technic, two Industrial Training Institutes and two Junior Technical Schools in the district. Besides all these, a number of parallel colleges are also functioning here under private managements.

Out of five medical colleges in the State, one is at Kottayam. Another unique feature is that out of the seven sports divisions attached to high schools of the State, Kottayam district was allotted three divisions—Kottayam, Changanacherry and Palai. The district also has one school for the handicapped. This is the school for the blind at Olassa.

In the 17th century a Dutch school was started at Kottayam which however proved to be short-lived. The first English school in Kerala was started by the missionaries of the Church Mission Society at Kottayam in the beginning of 19th century. To this humble beginning we can trace the pre-eminence of Kerala in education.

The seat of Gandhiji University is at Kottayam.

Transport

Kottayam district is fairly well served in the matter of transport. The main transport modes in the district are roads and railways. Inland water transport is negligible. Out of the two main transport modes in the district mentioned above, road transport constitutes the major part of traffic. It may be noted that the passenger road transport is mainly in the hands of private operators. However the State-owned K.S.R.T.C. is also expanding its operations in the district by taking over new routes, providing additional schedules and stabilising the existing services.

Railway transport system is also acting its roll in the district with 49 kms. of railway lines running through Changanacherry, Kottayam and Vaikom taluks of the district. Meenachil taluk and Kanjirappally taluk are not served by any railway net work. There are 7 stations in the district.

A part of the traffic and cargo is borne in the Vembanad lake and the rivers flowing into it. There are also a few navigable canals in Changanacherry, Kottayam and Vaikom taluks. Kottayam town is connected by a canal to the Vembanad lake. Since the water transport system is slow and time-consuming compared to other transport systems it is gradually losing its importance.

IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS CENTRES

A. Temples

1. Erumeli

Situated about 60 kms. away from Kottayam town, it is the biggest pilgrim centre in the district. There is an ancient temple where 'Sridharma Sastha' is the presiding deity. There is also an ancient mosque dedicated to Vavar who is considered to be the friend of Lord Ayyappa. During the Mandala and Makaravilakku seasons lakhs of pilgrims arrive here on their way to Sabarimalai. Erumeli is famous for Pettathullal. Before the devotees start Pettathullal they offer prayers at the mosque of Vavar. Thus Erumeli displays a very colourful picture of Hindu-Muslim religious harmony and co-operation.

2. Vaikom

Situated about 40 Kms. away from Kottayam town, Vaikom is famous for the Siva temple. Here two Ashtami festivals are held annually, one in Kumbham (February-March) and the other in Vrischikom (November-December) of which latter is more famous. The celebrations last for 12 days and end with 'Arat' at the Subrahmanya temple at Udayanapuram on the day after Ashtami. The 'Panchavadyam' is an attractive item of the festival. 'Prathal' is the main 'Vazhipadu' here. At Vaikom temple there is a school, teaching temple arts known as 'Kshethrakalapeedhom'.

3. Thirunakkara

Siva temple at Thirunakkara is situated in the heart of the Kottayam town. The sanctum-sanctorum is covered with pictures from the epics. Three festivals are celebrated here in Thulam (October-November), Mithunam (June-July) and Meenam (March-April) of which the last one is the most important. The "Arattu" which is conducted in the last day of the festival is the festival of Kottayam irrespective of castes and creeds.

4. Ettumannor

Ettumanoor is famous for the 'Mahadeva' temple which is 12 Km. away from Kottayam town. The golden elephants—7 large ones and a small one—here are well known. Though actually 8 in number these are only considered as seven and a half. These were presented to the Lord by Karthikathirunal Maharaja of Travancore. The festival here is in Kumbham (February-March). On the 8th day of the festival the golden elephants are taken out which attracts thousands of devotees of the lord.

5. Kumaranelloor

Situated 6 kilometres away from Kottayam, Kumaranelloor is famous for the Karthyayani (Devi) temple. Here 'Trikarthika' day is important which is celebrated in the month of Vrischikam (November-December). The display of lights in the evening (Karthika Vilakku) is the highlight of this celebration.

6. Pallipurathu Kavu

Situated in the southern part of the Kottayam town this temple is devoted to Devi. The 'Kumbhakuta Mahotsava' here attracts a large crowd. It is held on the day of Pathamudaya (Tenth day of the month Medam). The 'Garudan Thukkam' at night is also famous.

7. Saraswathy Temple-Panachikkad

Situated 18 km. away from Kottayam town, this temple is famous for Saraswathi Pooja in the month of Thulam (September-October). Saraswathi is worshipped as the goddess of learning. On the day of Durgashtami the "Pooja Veppu" is performed when books are arranged in a decorated room and all sorts of study and work are given up. The Mahanavami day is devoted to worship of Saraswathi. The Vijayadasami day is observed as the day for the break up of the Pooja (Pooja Eduppu). On that day thousands of people arrive at this temple to initiate learning to their children.

8. Thiruvarpu

Situated 6 Km. away from Kottayam town, this temple is devoted to Lord Krishna. The offerings here start as early as 3' O Clock in the morning. The festival here is in the month of April which lasts for ten days. The 'Vilakkeduppu' i.e. carrying lighted lamps by virgin girls during the festival here is famous. Thiruvarpu is also famous for 'Usha' (Payasam) which is the main 'Vazhipadu'.

9. Kidangoor

Situated 25 Km. north-east of Kottayam, the Subrahmonia swamy temple here attracts a large crowd of worshippers on the day of Shashti every month. In Kumbham (February-March) a 10 day long festival is celebrated here. The Chakiarkooth performed here is a speciality.

10. Perunnai (Changanacherry)

About 20 Kms. south to Kottayam town, this is also one of the famous Subrahmonya Temples. The festival is in Dhanu which lasts for 10 days. Hundreds of worshippers especially ladies attend the 'Shashti' here.

Temples at Ramapuram, Kadappattur, Vazhappallil, Udayanapuram etc., are also famous.

B. CHURCHES

Valiyapally at Kottayam (St. George Church)

Situated at Thazhathangadi near Kottayam town this Church attracts people from different parts of the country. Christians from Kodungallur and Kaduthuruthy jointly constructed this church in 1550. The cross made of stone and the writings in ancient scripts on it are attractive items to the visitors. The feast of St. George is on 26th of April.

Good Shepherd Church

Situated behind the civil station at Kottayam, this is the first church of the Diocese of Vijayapuram. The construction work of this church was completed in 1882. It was renovated in 1964. It is constructed in the Italian style. The feast of St. Sebastian is on 20th January and that of Good Shepherd is from 10th to 12th of April.

St. George's Church, Aruvithura

Aruvithura is 35 Km. away from Kottayam town. The St. George's Church here is one of the oldest churches in Kerala. It is believed that this church was constructed by St. Thomas. The reconstruction of this church was done in the 16th century A. D. The feasts of Aruvithura Church fall on 23rd, 24th and 25th of April every year.

St. Mary's Church, Manarcad

Situated 10 Km. east of Kottayam town, Manarcad Church is famous for the 'Ettu Noympu' i.e., the eight-day retreat and fast which begins on the 1st of September every year. The Perunnal (Feast) falls on 8th and 9th of September. The pilgrims participating in the retreat stay in the church itself for these days and spend all the time fasting with prayers. The church has a tank and a cross which are considered sacred.

St. George's Orthodox Church, Puthuppally

Puthuppally is 8 Km. away from Kottayam town. The church in the name of St. George is located at the centre of the famous temples of Vennimala, Kadamuri, Iravinelloor and Vazhakkulam. It is believed that the kings of Thekkumkur had constructed this church when they ruled Vennimala. The perunnal which is in the month of May attracts a large crowd.

St. Mary's Church, Athirampuzha

Situated 10 Kms. north of Kottayam town, though this ancient church is dedicated to St. Mary, it is the feast of St. Sebastian that attracts a large crowd to the church. The statue of St. Sebastian installed here is considered very ancient. During the days of the Portuguese three images were brought to Kerala; the legend says that the smallest of them was brought to Athirampuzha by local traders. This is known as Adiyelpicha Roopam (representing St. Sebastian after being flogged by his persecutors).

The original church here, it is said, was constructed in 1080 A. D. The feast here lasts for 5 days. The display of fireworks in connection with the celebration is very famous.

Valiya Palli at Palai

Situated in Palai about 30 Kms. away from Kottayam town, it is generally accepted that this church was built in 1002, and is in the name of St. Thomas. This church was destroyed by the Muslim invaders in 17th century A. D. and was reconstructed in the next century. Important festival of this church is the 'Rakkulithirunal' which is celebrated on 6th January every year.

Bharananganam Church

Also known as 'Anakkallu Palli', Bharnanganam is an important pilgrim centre in Kottayam district. The mortal remains of Sister Alphonsa is kept here. This church is now internationally known. She died on 28th July 1946. Thousands of devotees reach here on that day every year to observe her death anniversary. Bharananganam is 5 kms. away from Palai.

Church at Mannanam

This church in the name of St. Joseph is another important pilgrim centre in Kottayam district. The mortal remains of Fr. Chavara Kuriakose Elias is kept in this church. Thousands of believers reach here to offer their prayers at his tomb.

Vimalagiri Church, Kottayam

Vimalagiri (Ankathattu Palli) is the cathedral of the Diocese of Vijayapuram. The foundation stone of the church was laid in 1956 and the construction was completed in 1964. This church constructed in the Gothic style is an example of excellence in architectural beauty. The main tower has a height of 172 ft. which is considered as the highest church tower in the State. Vimalambika is the deity here. The main feast is in December. This church is situated near Kottayam railway station.

C. MOSQUES

1. Erumeli

At Erumeli there is a famous mosque in the name of Vavar—a friend of Lord Ayyappa. The 'Chandanakkudam' festival is celebrated here in January every year. This coincides with the 'Makaravilakku' of Sabarimala. At night there is an attractive procession with caparisoned elephants and 'Panchavadyam'. This is an important festival of the locality.

2. Changanacherry

At Changanacherry there are two famous mosques—Pazhaya-palli and Puthurpalli. The Pazhayapalli is said to be more than 1000 years old and it is constructed at the site which was donated by a king of Thekkumkur. A Bhagavathi temple and a Catholic church are situated in the vicinity of this mosque. This shows the religious harmony of the people here. The Puthurpalli is about 400 years old. The festival 'Chandanakkudam' is celebrated by the followers of the different religions here.

3. Erattupetta

The mosque at Erattupetta is also one of the famous mosques. Here also 'Chandanakkudam' festival is celebrated every year. The processions here also attract a large crowd. The people of the locality as a whole join the celebrations.

4. Thazhathangadi (Kottayam)

The mosque at Thazhathangadi is one of the ancient mosques in India. It is thought that Malik Dinar had built this mosque about 1000 years back. Now it is an important pilgrim centre at Kottayam. The artistic value of this mosque attracts tourists also.

MASS COMMUNICATION

In the history of journalism Kottayam occupies a prominent place. The origin of journalistic activities in the district can be traced back to as early as the middle of the last century. 'Jnananikshepam', the first newspaper published by the natives started in 1848, was published from CMS Press at Kottayam.

'Vidyasamgraham', a publication of the CMS College, was started in 1864. Many of the then famous writers had contributed to this. In 1867 '*Sandishtavadi*', another newspaper was started at Kottayam by Mr. W. H. Moor which was later prohibited. 'Malayala Mithram' which started in 1878, continued its publication for about 12 years.

In 1887 'Nasrani Deepika' was started at Mannanam near Kottayam. 'Malayala Manorama' and 'Bhashaposhini' were started in 1890 and 1892 respectively. Contributions of veterans like Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuran, A. R. Rajaraja Varma, Kodungalloor Kunjikuttan Thampuran, Mooloor. S. Padmanabha Panicker, Kattakkayathil Cheriyan Mappila and Moorkothu Kumaran had appeared in the pages of these two publications.

Now Kottayam can be said to be the centre of newspapers and periodicals. Three major dailies and about half a dozen evening dailies are being published from here. The number of periodicals comes to thirty.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Though Kottayam is a commercially important district, its contribution to the cultural advancement of Kerala is not negligible. Kottayam can claim many firsts in the field of education, mass communication, printing and book publication etc. The first English school in the State was started here. The first printing press was set up here by Rev. Benjamin Beily in 1821. The part played by Deepika, Malayala Manorama and Bhashaposhini for the cultural and literary development is worth mentioning. So many printing presses and book publishing companies are functioning at Kottayam.

LIBRARIES

The libraries in the district spread knowledge in all fields to the common man and develop their general reading habit. There are 391 libraries including 5 Harijan libraries.

Kottayam Public Library

Kottayam Public Library is one of the oldest libraries in Kerala. Started in 1882 with the initiative of Shri T. Rama Rao, the then Peshkar of Kottayam, this library attracts book lovers in and out of the district. There are more than 3000 members and a collection of 1,10,000 books. The children's library and the Balbhavan attached to it were started in 1972. About 14,000 books are collected here for children. Coaching classes in music, dance, painting and crafts are also conducted at the Balbhavan.

Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham

The Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham (SPCS) or the Writers' Co-operative Society having its headquarters at Kottayam is a unique co-operative society of men of letters.

The main object of the Society is to ensure economic and cultural stability to the writers. The authors are getting the highest rate of royalty from the society. National Book Stall (NBS) is the sales department of the SPCS having its branches at almost all districts of the State. The Society has its own printing press at Nattakam, started in 1953 and is named as India Press. Now the SPCS has more than 600 members and a capital of Rs. 10 lakhs. It is governed by a Director Board comprising of 17 members.

PLACES OF TOURIST INTEREST

Kottayam attracts the tourists with its landscape, rivers and lakes, green forests, wildlife sanctuaries, temples and churches and historic remnants. The absence of a seashore in the district is compensated by the lake Vembanad which embraces its western parts.

Kumarakam

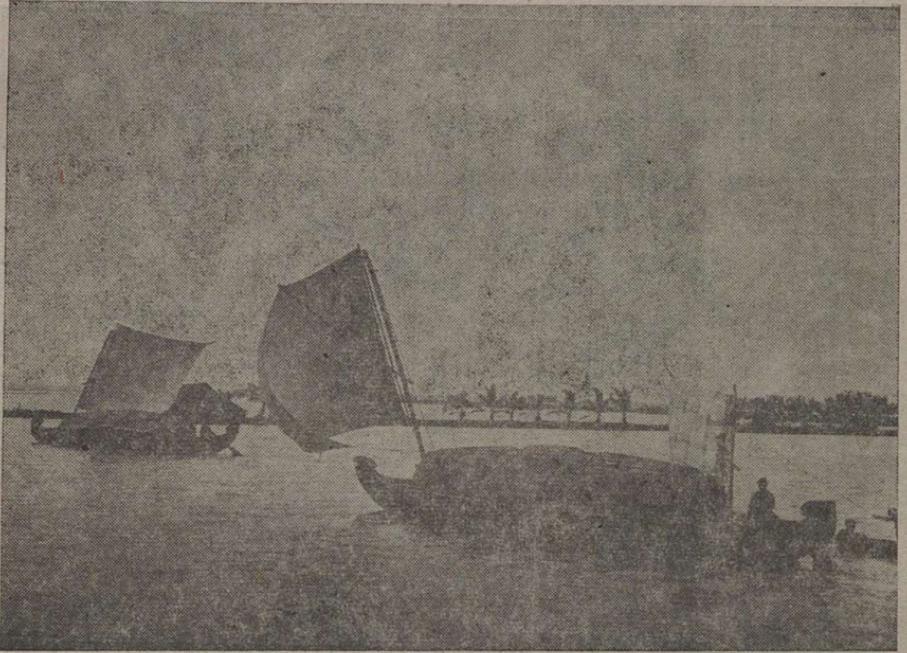
Kumarakam is a small village, 12 kms. west of Kottayam town. It is a part of Kuttanad which is a wonder land lying below the sea level comprising of a number of islands in the backwaters.

Henry Baker, an English man attracted by the beauty of the place, selected Kumarakam to build a bungalow as his residence in the last century. For that he obtained 104 acres of land from the then Maharaja of Travancore. He also made a beautiful garden there. Now the Kerala State Tourism Development Corporation is converting this place into a tourist complex.

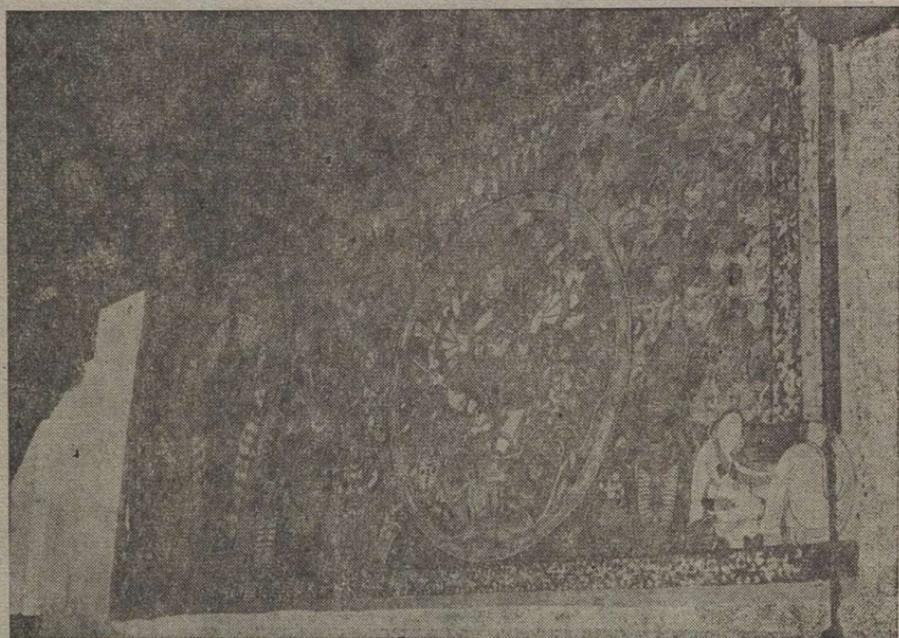
Another attraction of Kumarakam is the bird sanctuary in about 14 acres of land. Birds like waterfowl, cuckoo, wild ducks etc. are seen here in abundance. Siberian storks use to migrate to Kumarakom every year.

Boat Races

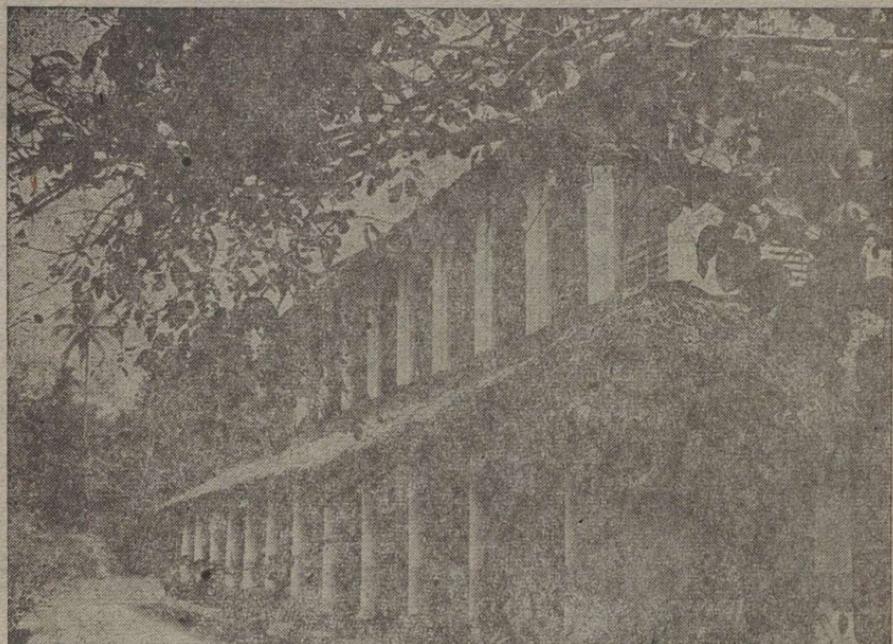
In the festive months of August and September the rivers in and near Kottayam are turned festival centres. Boat races are conducted here. The famous boat race at Kottayam was started about 50 years back. This competition of country boats takes place in the River Meenachil at Thazhathangadi. The main item in the race is the competition of 'Chundans' (snake boats), each boat having an average length of 100 ft. More than 100 men sitting in two rows sing and row as they compete. Various types of boats viz. Veppu, Ody, Churulan etc. take part in the competition.



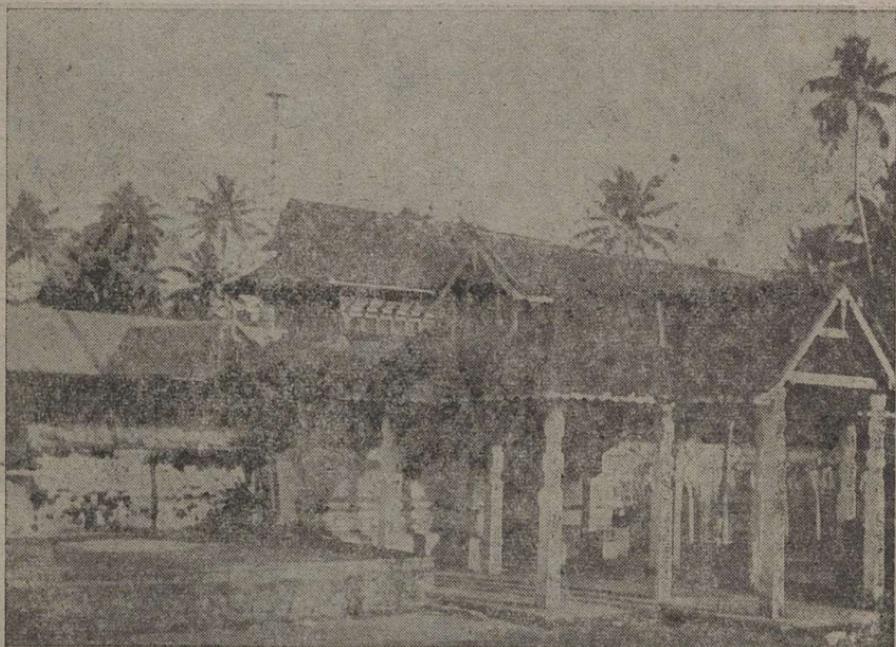
A VIEW OF THE LAKE VEMBANAD



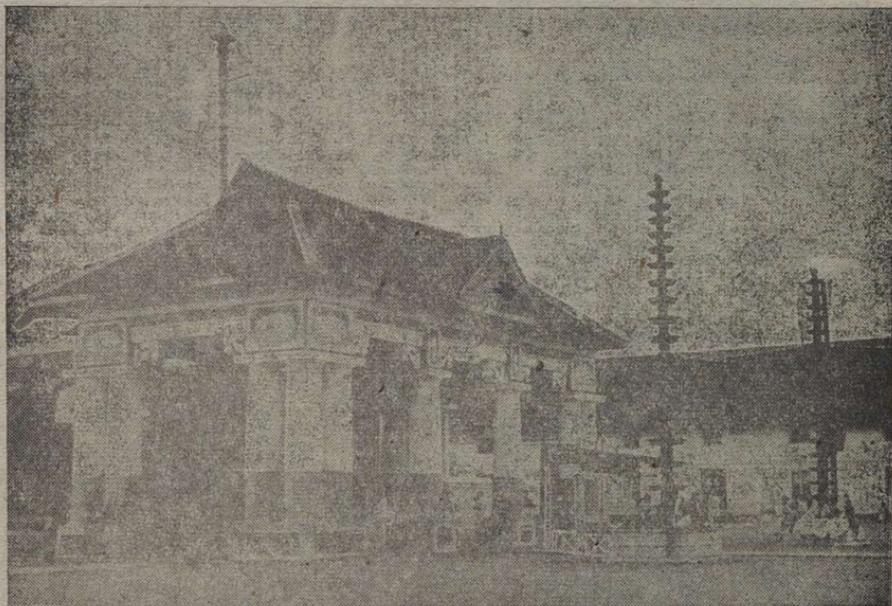
MURAL PAINTING IN THE MAHADEVA TEMPLE, ETTUMANOOR



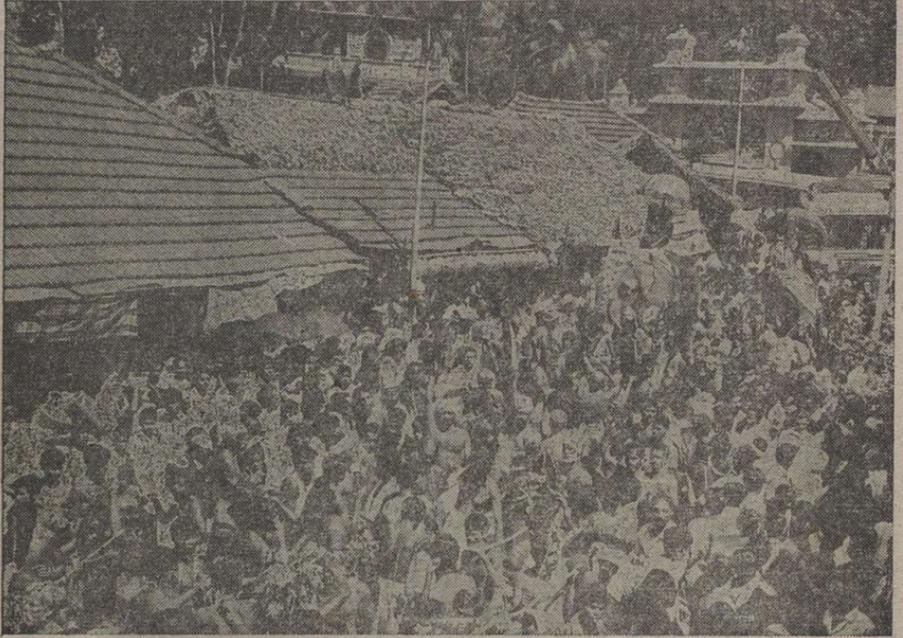
KUMARAKOM TOURIST COMPLEX



LORD SREEKRISHNA TEMPLE AT THIRUVARPU



FRONT VIEW OF THE LORD SIVA TEMPLE AT VAIKOM



PETTATHULLAL AT ERUMELI



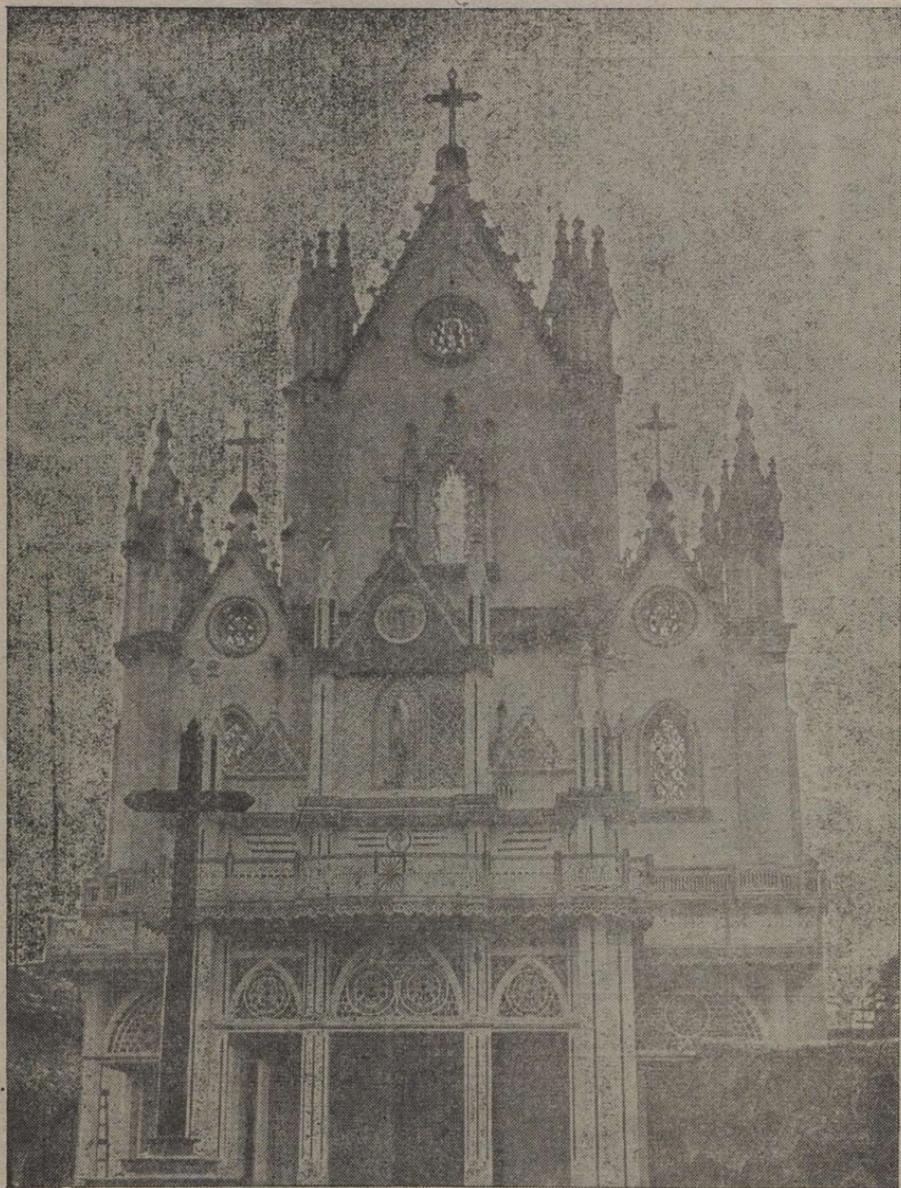
LORD MAHADEVA TEMPLE AT ETTUMANOOR



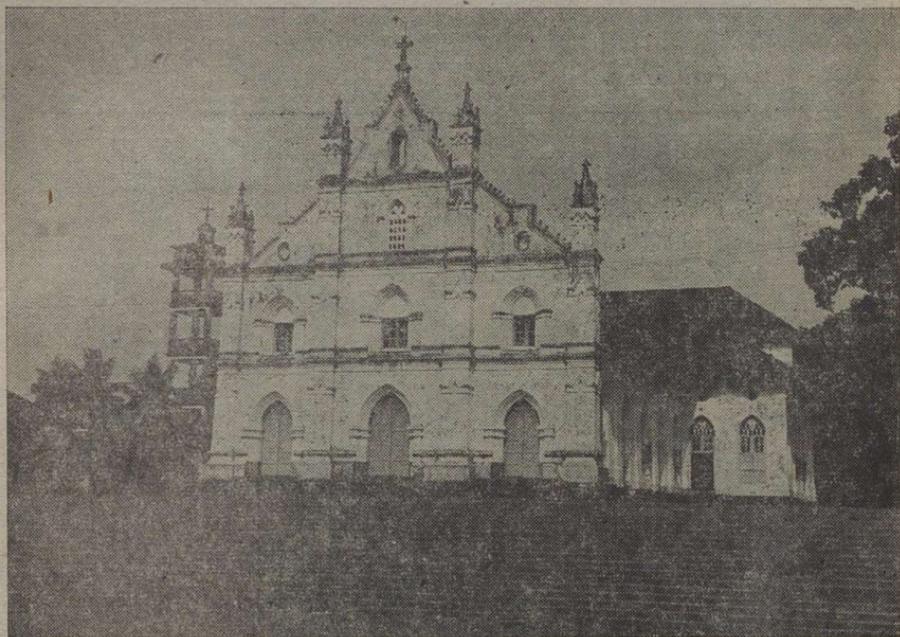
'AMMANKODA' IN THE DEVI TEMPLE AT PANACHIKKAD



CHURCH AT ATHIRAMPUZHA



ST. MARY'S CHURCH AT MANARCAD



CHURCH AT BHARANANGANAM

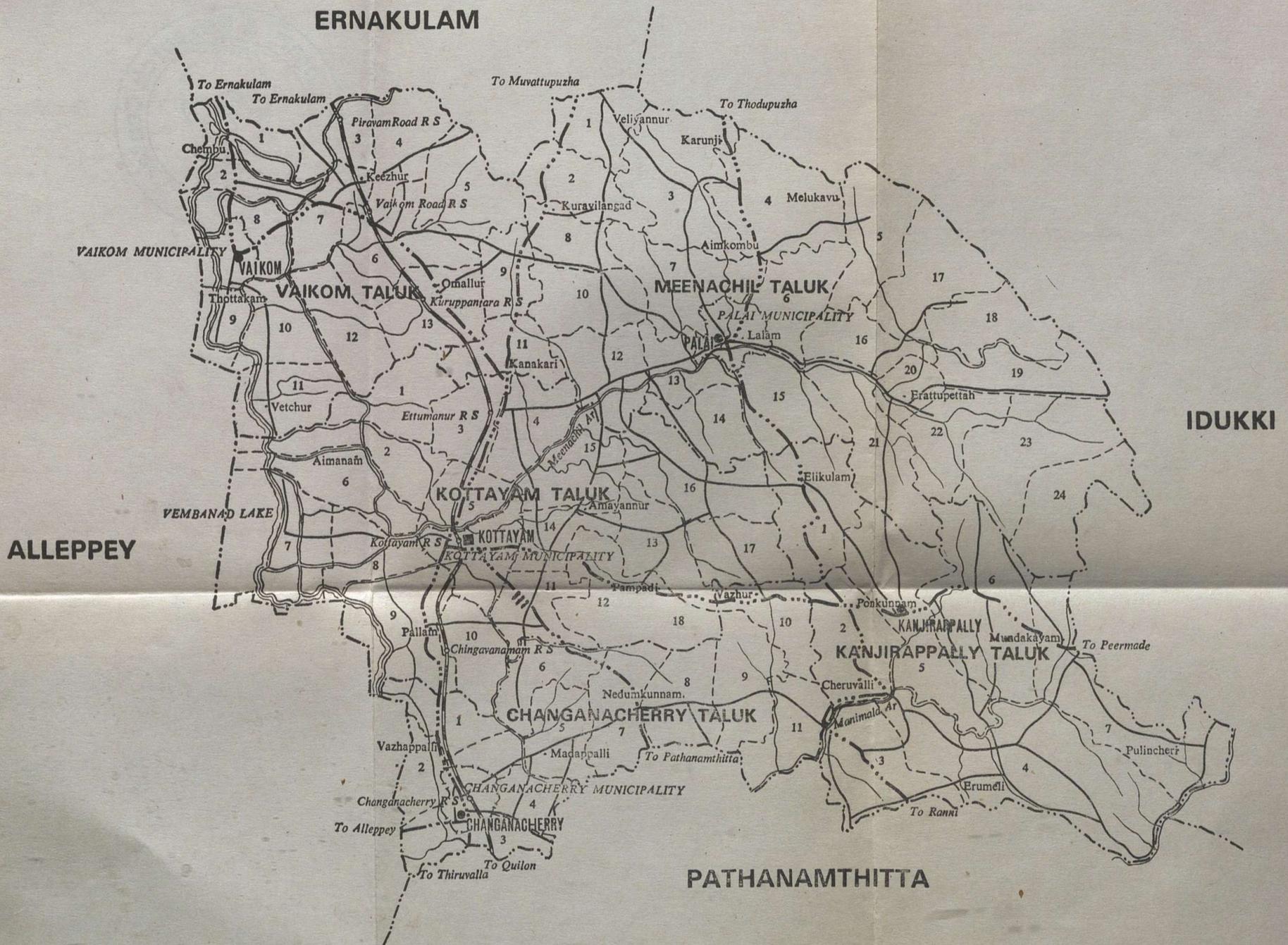


INNERVIEW OF VALIYAPALLI AT PALAI

KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

SHOWING PANCHAYATS

Not Final Subject to Alterations



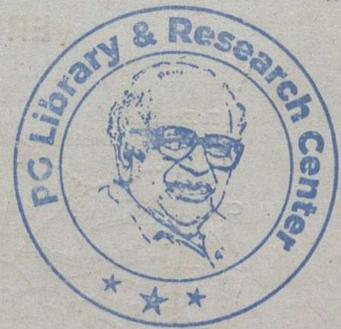
LIST OF PANCHAYATS

REFERENCE

District Boundary	-----
Taluk Boundary	- - - - -
Panchayat Boundary	-----
Municipal Boundary	-----
State Highway	-----
Other Roads	-----
Railway Line	-----
Lakes & Rivers	~~~~~
Taluk Head Quarters	●
District Head Quarters	■

VAIKOM TALUK	CHANGANACHERRY TALUK	KOTTAYAM TALUK
I. CHEMPU 2. MARAVANTHURUTHU 3. VELLOOR 4. MULAKKULAM 5. NJEEZHOOR 6. KADUTHURUTHY 7. THALAYOLAPARAMBU 8. UDHYANAPURAM 9. THIRUMANI VENKITAPURAM 10. THALAYAZHAM 11. VECHOOOR 12. KALLARA 13. MANJOOR	5. MELUKAVU 6. BHARANANGANAM 7. KAROOR 8. ELACKAD 9. KURAVILANGAD 10. KADAPLAMATTOM 11. KANAKKARY 12. KIDANGOOR 13. MUTHOLY 14. KOZHUVANAL 15. MEENACHIL 16. THALAPPALAM 17. VALIYAKUMARAMANGALAM 18. THALANAD 19. TEEKKOY 20. ERATTUPETTAH 21. THIDANAD 22. POONJAR 23. POONJA THEKKEKARA 24. KOOKKAL	1. KURICHI 2. VAZHAPPALLY EAST 3. PAIPPAD 4. THRIKKODITHANAM 5. MADAPPALLY 6. VAKATHANAM 7. KARUKACHAL 8. NEDUMKUNNAM 9. KANGAZHA 10. VAZHOOR 11. VELLAVOOR
MEENACHIL TALUK 1. VELIYANNOOR 2. UZHAYOOR 3. RAMAPURAM 4. KADANAD	KANJIRAPPALLY TALUK 1. ELIKULAM 2. CHIRAKKADAVU 3. MANIMALA 4. ERUMELI 5. KANJIRAPPALLY 6. PARANTHODU 7. MUNDAKAYAM	1. NEENDOOR 2. ARPOOKKARA 3. ATHIRAMPUZHA 4. ETTUMANOOR 5. KUMARANALLOOR 6. AIMANAM 7. KUMARAKOM 8. THIRUVARPPU 9. NATTAKAM 10. PANACHIKKAD 11. PUTHUPPALLY 12. PAMPADI 13. KOOROPPADA 14. VIJAYAPURAM 15. AYARKUNNAM 16. AKALAKUNNAM 17. PALLIKKATHODE 18. MEENADAM

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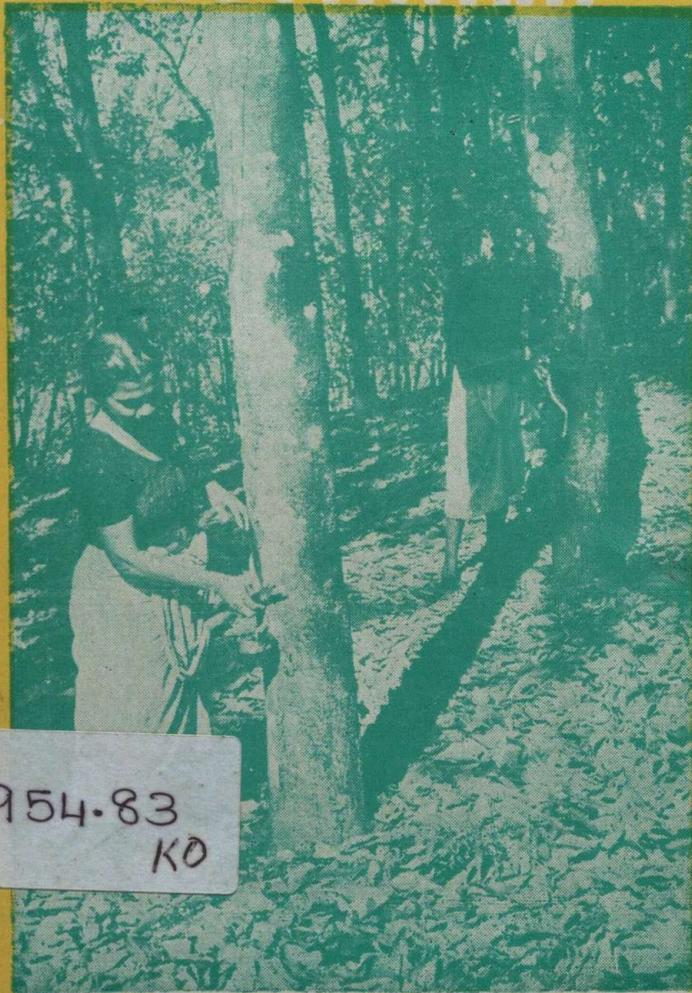


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