

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT

Thiruvananthapuram District is the southernmost district of the coastal state of Kerala, in south India. It came into existence in the year 1957. The headquarters is the city of Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) which is also the capital city of Kerala. The district has an area of 2,192 square kilometres and a population of 3,307,284 (as per the 2011 census), the second-most populous district in Kerala after Malappuram district. This gives it a ranking of 103rd in India (out of a total of 640 districts). It is the densest district in Kerala with 1,509 people per square kilometer. Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 2.25%. Thiruvananthapuram has a sex ratio of 1088 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 92.66%. It is divided into four taluks, Thiruvananthapuram, Chirayinkeezhu, Neyyattinkara and Nedumangadu. The urban bodies in the district are the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, Varkala, Neyyattinkara, Attingal and Nedumangadu municipalities. The district is 33.75% urbanised. More than 50% of the total population depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Agricultural labourers constitute 42% of the total labour class. Most of the people are engaged in low-remunerative pursuits which require very little capital. Political and social consciousness, coupled with the efforts of the social, religious and cultural leaders, have helped to pull down the age-old feudal order. Economic changes have also affected the social life and attitude of the people.

Geography

The district is situated between North latitudes at 8.17°– 8.54° and East longitudes 76.41°– 77.17°. The southern-most extremity, Kaliyikkavila is just 54 kilometres away from the southern peninsular tip of India, Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari). The district stretches 78 kilometres along the shores of the Arabian Sea on the West, Kollam district lies on the North with Thirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu on the East and South respectively. Unlike the flat portion of the Kerala coast, at the northern coastal region of the district, cliffs are found adjacent to the Arabian Sea at Varkala. It is the only part in southern Kerala where cliffs were found. These tertiary sedimentary formation cliffs are considered as a unique geological feature. It is known among geologists as the "Varkala Formation" and a geological monument as declared by the Geological Survey of India.

Flora and fauna

The district has a rich variety of plants ranging from rare orchids, medicinal plants and spices to hedge plants, tuber crops, plants yielding edible fruits and fibre. Aromatic plants and spices such as pepper and ginger are cultivated on a large scale on the hilly tracts. Nedumangad taluk is one of the biggest centres of cultivation and trade of pepper and other hill produce. A major portion of the district comes under the middle plain and the region is under the cultivation of coconut, rice, tapioca, tuber crops, plantains and vegetables.

The forests of the district abound in a variety of animals and birds and are excellent wildlife habitats. Elephants, bison, monkeys and rare species of reptiles have the place of prominence in them. The Neyyar reservoir and nearby areas abound in wild life. Nestled in the lap of the Western Ghats, a wildlife sanctuary is quickly growing over an area of nearly 777 square kilometres around this reservoir.

Rivers

Among the three rivers in the district, the Neyyar (56 km or 35 mi), the southernmost river of the Kerala state, has its origin in the Agasthyamala, the second-highest peak in the Western Ghats. The Karamana River (67 km or 42 mi) originates from Vayuvanthol (Vazhuvanthol), another mountain in Western Ghats, and the Vamanapuram River has its origin from Chemunji Mottai of the Western Ghats. There are 10 major back waters in the district. The major lakes are Veli, Kadinamkulam, Anchuthengu (Anjengo), Kaappil, Akathumuri and the Edava-Nadayara lakes. Besides these, there is a fresh-water lake at Vellayani in Thiruvananthapuram taluk, which has the potential to become the major water source of Thiruvananthapuram city in future.

Climate

The climate of Thiruvananthapuram district is generally hot tropical. The large forest reserves favourably affect the climate and induce rains. Cold weather is experienced in the mountain ranges, whereas lower down, the weather is bracing and is generally hot in the coastal regions. The mean maximum temperature is 35 °C and the mean minimum temperature is 20 °C. As the district stretches from north to south with the Arabian Sea in the west side, the relative humidity is generally high. It rises up to about 95% during the South-West monsoon. The total annual average rainfall in the district is about 1,500 mm per annum. The southwest monsoon, from June to September

is the principal rainy season. The district receives most of its annual rainfall in this season. The second rainy season is the North-East monsoon. It is from October to November. The district also gets thunderstorm rains in the pre-monsoon months of April and May. December to February are the coolest months. The average temperature goes down to 20 °C in these months. It is generally considered as the winter season. The summer season starts in February and continues until May.

Agriculture

Agriculture has been the primary occupation of the people of the district. Cultivable land may be classified as wet, dry, garden and plantations. Rice is the most important crop cultivated in the wet lands. Tapioca and pulses are the important dry-land crops. Coconut, one of the most important crops of the district, is cultivated in an area of 843.08 km². The annual production is about 516 million coconuts. Rubber cultivation is mainly confined to Nedumangad taluk. At present, there are about 269.99 km² of rubber plantations and the annual production is estimated at 30,717 tonnes.

Development Blocks

There are 11 development blocks in the district, viz. Parassala, Perumkadavila, Athiyanoor, Nemom, Pothencode, Vellanad, Nedumangad, Vamanapuram, Kilimanoor, Chirayinkeezhu and Varkala. The District Rural Development Agency co-ordinates the work in these blocks. Several welfare schemes are carried out in the blocks, such as: Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Total Sanitation Scheme (TSS), Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awaaz Yojana (IAY), etc.