

district handbook

PALGHAT



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PALGHAT

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PREFACE

This is the revised edition of the District Handbook on Palghat. Also, this is part of a series of revised editions of district handbooks of Kerala to be brought out by the Department of Public Relations. An attempt is made here to collect and present as much information as possible, all updated. It has been designed to satisfy the needs of the average reader as well the tourist who may look for a handy volume containing essential information about the District.

We hope that the book will serve this purpose. Suggestions for improvements are most welcome.

Trivandrum,
March 1986.

T. N. JAYADEVAN
Director of Public Relations

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PART I

SALIENT FEATURES

Palghat district, one of the fourteen revenue districts of Kerala, has got its own characteristics in many fields. Its geographical position, historical background, rural nature, educational status, tourist attractions and above all developmental activities are vivid and varied.

This district, situated almost in the central part of the State, is one of the five districts in the State with no coastal line. Palghat district provides the inlet for the rest of India to the State through the Palghat gap. This 32 to 40 km. wide natural gap in the 960 kms. long Western Ghats is perhaps the most influential factor in the unique characteristics of the district. The gap has influenced the climate of the district. It has also contributed to the commercial as well as cultural exchanges between the State and the rest of the country. Palghat witnessed invasions of historical importance that have left indelible impressions on the history of Kerala. The gap in the Western Ghats in Palghat district provided easy access to all invaders.

Bharathapuzha, the longest river of Kerala which flows through the whole district has a length of 374.40 kms. Its tributaries originate from the highlands of the district.

Historically too, Palghat district has got its own peculiar characteristics. The Fort of Hyder Ali tells us the story of Mysore invasions and the advent of the Britishers to this part of the country. The Victoria college started in 1866 reminds one of the beginnings of higher education in Malabar. The Jain temple near Chunnarnputhara reminds the magnanimity of the King of Palghat who provided shelter to the people escaped from the religious persecutions of the King of Mysore, five hundred years ago.

The District is one of the granaries of Kerala, and its economy is primarily agricultural. Agriculture absorbs more than 65 per cent of the workers in the district, and 88.9 per cent of the district's population is rural in nature. The proximity and easy approach to Tamil Nadu have caused the admixture of Kerala and Tamil culture.

This district is perhaps the foremost in fostering Carnatic music. Great musicians like Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar and Palghat Mani Iyer who have enriched the Carnatic music by their contributions hailed from this district.

The forests and numerous streams, several dams and the gardens attached to them have all made this district the tourist paradise of Kerala

PART II

A SHORT HISTORY

Palghat district lies between north latitude $10^{\circ} 46'$ and $10^{\circ} 59'$ and east longitude $76^{\circ} 28'$ and $76^{\circ} 39'$. It is bounded on the east by the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, on the north and north-west by Malappuram district and on the south by Trichur district.

The ancient history of Palghat is shrouded. According to William Logan, the author of the 'Malabar Manual', the Pallava dynasty of Kanchi might have invaded Malabar in the second or third century. One of their headquarters was a place called 'Palakada' which could be the present-day Palghat i.e. Palakkat. Malabar had been invaded by many of the ancient South Indian rulers. For many centuries it was ruled by Perumals. They had under them some powerful 'Utayavars' who held authority in their respective territories. After the rule of Perumals the country was divided among these chieftains. The Valluvakonathiri (ruler of Valluvanad), the rulers of Vengunad (Kollengodu Rajas) and Sekharivarma Rajas of Palghat were the prominent rulers of this region after the Perumals.

When the Zamorin of Calicut invaded Palghat in 1757, the Raja of Palghat sought the help of Hyder Ali of Mysore. Hyder Ali's help forced the Zamorin to retreat. Later, Hyder Ali subjugated all territories in Palghat which were under the possession of Zamorian. Thus the whole areas possessed by the Raja of Palghat passed into the hands of the Mysore rulers, Hyder Ali and his son Tippu. The war between Tippu and the East India Company ended with the treaty of 1782 and all the possessions of Tippu in Malabar were ceded to the British. Gradually these formed part of the Malabar district of the Madras presidency.

The present Palghat district as an administrative unit was formed on the first of January 1957, consisting of the taluks: Palghat, Perinthalmanna, Ponnani, Ottappalam, Alathur and Chittur.

When the Malappuram district was formed on the 16th June 1969, Ponnani taluk excluding Thrithala firka and the villages of Vadakkekad, Punnayur and Punnayurkulam and Perinthalmanna taluk consisting of Mankada firka and Perinthalmanna firka excluding Karkidamkunnu and Chethalloor amsoms were transferred to Malappuram district. A new taluk namely Mannarghat was formed grouping 19 villages of the erstwhile Perinthalmanna taluk. While retaining the Thrithala firka with Ottappalam taluk, the villages of Vadakkekad, Punnayur and Punnayurkulam were brought under Chowghat taluk of Trichur district. The Paradur village of Tirur taluk was added to Ottappalam taluk. Recently some portions of Karavarakund village of Malappuram district were added to Palghat.

At present the Palghat district consists of two revenue divisions, five taluks and 145 villages. The revenue divisions are Palghat and Ottapalam. Palghat, Alathur and Chittur taluks form the Palghat revenue division and Ottappalam and Mannarghat taluks form the Ottapalam revenue division. There are twelve development blocks and eighty-nine panchayats in the district. The total area of the district is 4480 sq. kms.

PART III

TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Physical Features

Based on the physical features, the district is divided into two natural divisions namely midland and highland. The midland region consists of valleys and plains. It leads up to the highland which consists of high mountain peaks, long spurs, extensive ravines, dense forests and tangled jungles. While Ottapalam taluk lies completely in the midland region, all other taluks in the district lie in the midland and highland regions. The road and rail links between Kerala and Tamil Nadu pass through the Palghat gap.

The Western Ghats has an average altitude of 5000 ft. except for two peaks of more than 6000 ft. The important peaks above an altitude of 4000 ft. are Anginda peak (7628 ft.), Karimala peak (6556 ft.), Nellikotta or Padagiri peak (5200 ft.) and Karimala Gopuram (4721 ft.)

Soil

The soil of Palghat district is mainly of four types namely peaty (kari), laterite, forest and black soil. The peaty soil is found only in Thrithala firka of Ottapalam taluk. Laterite soil is seen in the major portions of all the taluks. Forest soil is confined to Mannarghat and Ottappalam taluks, the narrow strip of land along the western boundaries of Palghat and Alathur taluks and along the Southern boundary of the Chittur taluk. The black soil is seen mainly in the eastern sector of Chittur taluk and a small part of Palghat taluk.

Climate

The climate of the district is tropical. The most obvious fact which strikes an observer, according to Logan, is the uniformity of temperature in the Malabar area. During the dryweather, hot winds blow from the burning plains of Coimbatore through the Palghat gap. Palghat district has uniform rainfall as well,

Rivers

Bharathapuzha, the most important river in the district with her tributaries, sprawls on the entire district. The river takes its origin from Anamalai hills and flows through the districts of Palghat, Malappuram and Trichur and falls to the Arabian sea at Ponnani. Its four main tributaries are the following:—

Gayathripuzha.—This river which originates from Anamalai hills, after traversing Kollengode, Nenmara, Alathur, Wadakkancherry and Pazhayannur joins Bharathapuzha at Mayannur. This tributary has five main sub-tributaries. They are Mangalam river, Ayalurpuzha, Vandazhipuzha, Meenkara river and Chulliyar.

Kannadi river.—It is also known as Chitturpuzha or Amaravathi river. The Kannadi river which also starts from the Anamalai hills, flows through Thathamangalam and Chittur and joins the main river at Parli. Three main streams combine to form this river. They are Palar, Aliyar and Uppar.

Kalpathypuzha.—This river starts from the place called Chenthamarakulam in the hills north of Walayar. This is also known as Korayar. Kalpathypuzha is formed by four streams namely Korayar, Varattar, Walayar and Malampuzha.

Thuthapuzha.—Thuthapuzha, otherwise known as Pилanthol river, starts from the Silent Valley hills and joins the main river about two kms. off Pallipuram railway station. The important streams which feed this tributary are Kunthipuzha, Kanjirapuzha, Ambankadavu and Thuppanadipuzha.

The length of Bharathapuzha is 374.40 kms. and its catchment area is 6186 sq. kms.

The Bhavani river originates from the Kunda mountains in Nilgiris, makes a circuitous course through the Attappady Valley and returns to the shadow of Nilgiri mountains. The catchment area of the Bhavani river in Kerala is 220 sq. miles yielding an annual run off of 27,000 million cubic feet of water. Out of the rivers of Kerala, Bhavani river is one among the three which prefer Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea.

Minerals

Low grade iron ore (magnetite) is found at Kollengode, Mannarghat and Muthalamada. Limestone deposits are found in the Chittur and Kozhinjampara tirkas. Muscovite mica is reported to be present in the Sholayar villages. Large quantity of limestone deposit is found in Walayar forest area where the Government has started a cement factory.

PART IV

FLORA AND FAUNA

The flora of Palghat district is characteristically tropical owing to the seasonal rainfall, moderate temperature and the mountainous eastern border. Major portion of the district comes under the midland region and is under cultivation. Some of the dominant trees in the region are Eppothi (*Macaranga indica*), Mavu (*Mangifera*), Parangimavu (*Anacardium occidentale*), Pilavu (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), Elavu (*Cieba Pentandra*), Ezhilampala (*Astomia scholaris*), Urakkam Thoongi (*Enterolobium saman*), Mullumurikku (*Erythrina indica*) and Aranamaram (*Polyalthia longifolia*). Intermingled with these are other plants like *Osboekia ostandra*, *Lantana sculeata*, etc. Rubber and teak plantations are common in the hills. The midland region gradually merges with the hilly forests.

No animal can be mentioned peculiar to this district. Elephants are common in almost all parts of the forest area of the district. Wild animals like tiger, leopard, gaur, bear, etc., are sometimes found in the thick forest. Sambar and spotted deer are seen in large numbers.

Nilgiri langur, bonnet monkey, slender loris, jungle cat, different types of mongoose, jackals, squirrels, hares, etc., are all found in the forest area. The birds are well represented by jungle crow, king crow, myna, woodpeckers, sunbird, king fishers, skylark, paradise fly catchers, parrots, peacocks, pigeons, etc. Among reptiles, poisonous and non-poisonous snakes are common in the district.

The Silent Valley area, 40 km. from Mannarghat town, has the credit of being a rain forest, very rare in the world. It is spread over an area of about 9,000 hectares. The thick forest is rich in some of the rare species of trees and animals.

PART V

PEOPLE

The total population of the district according to 1981 census is 2,044,399 of which the male population is 994,196 and female 1,050,203. The density of population in the district is 456 per sq. km. The population of Scheduled Castes in the district, 376,424 and that of the Scheduled Tribes 28794 according to 1981 census. The vast majority of the people in the district live in villages. The highest rate of growth of population in the district is recorded in Mannarghat for the last decade. The large scale immigration of people from other parts of the State to the virgin soil of this taluk is an important factor in this spurt in population.

Literacy

The literacy rate in Palghat district was 58% in 1981 which was the lowest in the state. It was only 46.69% in 1971. Thus there was an appreciable growth in the literacy rate in a decade. This is still below the State literacy rate of 70.42 per cent. The literacy rate of women in the district is only 51.55 which is second lowest in the State, as the first place is kept by Wynad district with 51.55% in women literacy. Ottappalam taluk stands at the top in the district with a literacy rate of 63.21 per cent.

Socio-economic conditions

In Palghat district, 35.89 per cent of the population are workers. The work participation rates of males and females are 49.06 per cent and 23.42 per cent respectively. Among the total workers 15.74 per cent are cultivators and 48.42 per cent agricultural labourers.

As in any other part of the State, the social and economic status of the people in the district is undergoing changes. The breaking up of the joint family system and the increasing partition of old 'Tharavads' have led to the disappearance of the importance of High-caste Hindus in the society. A survey of the social and economic scene shows that the values based on caste and land have been replaced in recent times by those of education, employment, trade, commerce and industry.

Religion and Customs

Hinduism is the predominant religion in the district. Nearly 76 per cent of the population belongs to the Hindu community. All the sub-castes of Hindu community are well represented in the district. The Vellodis and Nedungadis, two sections of the Nair community peculiar to Malabar area represented in this district also. Sections of the Hindu community peculiar to this district are 'Muthuvan' 'Mannadiar', 'Guptan' and 'Tharakan'.

Vishnu and Siva are popularly worshipped. 'Kshethrams' and 'Ambalamis' are dedicated to these major deities. The 'Kavus' and 'Kovils' are dedicated to minor deities like Ayyappan, Subramonyan, Bhadrakali, Hanuman and even malignant demons. Snake worship has been widely prevalent in this part of the State. The worship of ancestors is also practised by Hindus. Offerings are made to departed souls on new moon (Sankranthi) 3 days.

The second largest community in the district is Muslim forming 21.2 per cent of the population. A particular section of Muslim community in this district whose mother tongue is Tamil is known as 'Ravuthars'. These people came here as traders and soldiers. They belong to the 'Hanafi' sect of Islam. Most of them reside in Alathur, Chittur, and Palghat taluks. The way of life of this particular section is much influenced by Tamil culture, especially in marriage customs and food habits.

There is another sect of Muslims in Palghat known as 'Pattanis'. They are also called Deccanese. They came from Decan with the Mysore rulers and settled here. Traditionally they are well-trained horsemen. Their influence in Palghat can be seen from the fact that a street is named after them as Pattani street. But at present more Pattanis are found in Dayara Street. They also belong to 'Hanafi' sect of Muslims. The rest of the Muslim community is known as Moppilas.

The numerical strength of the Christian community in the district according to 1971 census was 45,426. Almost all sections of the Christian community are represented in this district. A good number of Christians have moved to the hilly tracts of the district in search of land and living.

The ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death differ from one community to another. The restrictions based on caste and religion are observed generally by all communities. Marriage alliances are made usually among members of the same caste or community though inter-caste marriages also take place occasionally.

The forest region of Palghat district is notable for its tribal population. Irular, Kurumbar, Mudugar, Eravalas, Malamalasar, Malasar, Kadar, Malayar, etc., are the tribals living in these forests. Attappady is an important centre of tribal people. The beliefs, customs and way of life of these tribal people are distinct, each class following its own traditional customs and way of life.

Art and Culture

Palghat district has a glorious cultural tradition. It is said that Thunchathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, father of Malayalam literature spent his last days in Chittur. To commemorate this, there is the 'Thunchathu Acharya Madom' at Chittur. Kunjan Nambiar, the most popular poet of Malayalam and the founder of Thullal, strictly a Kerala art form, had his birth in a small village called Killikurissimangalam (Lakkidi) in this district.

Worthy contributions have been made by talented artistes of this district for maintaining and enriching the classical dance forms of Kerala such as Chakkia Koothu, Thullal, Kathakali, Mohiniyattom, etc. Mani Madhava Chakkia for 'Koothu' and Vazhenkada Kunju Nair for Kathakali are two names to be remembered in this context. The "Kalluvazhichitta", the most popular school of 'Kathakali' had its origin in the Palghat district and its exponent was late Shri Vazhenkada Kunju Nair. The musical tradition of Palghat District is unchallenged. The district has become blessed with the birth of late Shri Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, the exponent of Carnatic music and Shri Palghat Mani Iyer, the inimitable master on mridangam. Sri C. Sankaran Nair belonged to Mankara in this district.

Among the eminent personalities of the district are late K. P. S. Menon, diplomat and author who won the Lenin Prize, and late K. P. Kesava Menon, the great freedom fighter, celebrated author and journalist. Swadeshbhimani Ramarkshna Pillai spent his life in exile at Vadakkanthara near Palghat town. Some of the old temples in the district have in them beautiful paintings and sculptures of great artistic value.

Important Festivals

Sivarathri festival at Kallekulungara Bhagavathy temple.—This festival is conducted for nine days and ends with an 'arat' of the deity Hemambika in Kalpathy river.

Kalpathy Radhotsavam (Chariot festival).—It is celebrated at Siva Temple at Kalpathy, the Tamil Brahmin settlement in Palghat. This festival attracts a very large crowd.

Manappillikavu Vedi.—The main festival of Manappillikavu at Yakkara is the annual 'Vedi'.

Arat festival in Kachamkurichy temple.—Kachamkurichy temple is an important Vishnu temple in the district. The arat festival here in the month of May attracts many people.

The Nenmara Vallangi Vela.—The festival at Nellikonangara Bhagavathy temple is known as Nenmara—Vallangi Vela. It is celebrated in the pattern of Trichur Pooram.

The Kongunpada at Chittur Bhagavathy temple.—The festival depicts a historical event of thwarting an invasion of Kongas by the ancient local ruler.

Nercha festival in the mosque at Ottappalam.—This annual festival is celebrated to commemorate the death of a saint who lived and died there.

Navarathri festival in Pallavur Siva temple, Amavasi festival in Thrippalur Siva temple, Pooram festival in Kongad Bhagavathy temple and Radhotsavam at Kodumba Subramonya temple are some of the important festivals which attract a large number of devotees. Mahamakom is also held in the Kodumba temple once in twelve years.

PART VI

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Agriculture

Palghat district is also called the 'rice bowl' of Kerala. The net cultivated area of the district is 2.84 lakh hectares ie. 64% of the geographical area. Major portion of the cultivable land is used for raising food crops. All food crops together account for about 80% of the gross cropped area and paddy alone accounts for about 60% of it. Coconut, groundnut, cotton, sugarcane and cashew are some of the major cash crops raised in this district.

The Intensive Agricultural Development Programme, popularly known as the package programme was started in the district in 1962-63 in five development blocks. The programme was implemented in stages in the whole district except Attappady tribal block. The introduction of high yielding varieties of paddy seeds has considerably augmented the production of paddy.

The intensive paddy development unit programme or the 'Ela' programme was sanctioned for the district in 1971. The T and V programme was introduced in the district in 1982. The existing Ela units were discontinued and sub-divisional agriculture units and agriculture development offices started functioning. The programme is attaining good momentum in the district. Special units for sugarcane development and cashew development are also functioning.

There are a number of agricultural institutions in this district, like the Central Rice Research Station, Soil Laboratory, Farmers Training Centre at Pattambi and Agricultural Engineering Workshop at Malampuzha. The Orange and Vegetable farm at Nelliampathy is an important one. The total area of the farm is 325 hectares. Apart from orange, coffee, cardamom and mango, vegetables are also cultivated in the farm. The fruit processing unit in this farm is popular for its squashes, jams and jellies.

The integrated seed development farm at Erithiampathy is mainly intended for multiplication of green manure seeds, sugarcane, cotton and groundnut. The central orchard and the soil testing laboratory at Pattambi and the horticultural development farm at Malampuzha are some other important institutions functioning in the district for the development of agriculture. Another seed farm in the district is at Ananganadi. The seed farms produce adequate quantities of foundation seeds of paddy to meet the requirements of registered growers for multiplication and distribution.

Animal Husbandry

There are a number of animal husbandry institutions to take care of the live-stock in the district. The district has 37 veterinary hospitals, 15 dispensaries, four polyclinics, three mobile farm aid units and a mobile veterinary hospital. The district has a Regional poultry farm at Malampuzha, a Poultry Extension centre at Kottayi, a goat farm at Agali and two artificial insemination centres one each at Vaniyamkulam and Kanhirapuzha. There are two regional artificial insemination centres functioning in the district under the Intensive Cattle Development programme. The Intensive Cattle Development Programme covers the entire Palghat District and part of Trichur district. The State headquarter of the Rinderpest eradication scheme is situated in the district.

Dairy

The Dairy Development encourages and helps the farmers to produce milk economically by raising their own fodder crops. The department is having an extension service unit to educate the farmers on better animal husbandry practices.

The District has 95 registered Milk co-operative societies out of which 68 are functioning well. The Dairy development department is having administrative control over these societies.

The Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation runs a 6000 litre capacity dairy at Kalleppully and a 2000 litre capacity Chilling plant at Agali. The livestock and poultry feed factory at Malampuzha which is under the management of Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation. There is a Bull Station at Dhoni running well under the control of Kerala Live Stock Development and Milk Marketing Board.

Co-operation

Demonstrating healthy growth, the co-operative movement is gathering momentum in the district. A central cooperative bank, four land mortgage banks and eight urban banks are functioning in the district. The district has 88 agricultural credit societies out of which 85 societies are service co-operative societies and three multi purpose co-operative societies. 39 Harijan credit co-operative societies, 32 employees credit co-operative societies and seven primary co-operative marketing societies are also functioning.

In addition to these, there are three co-operative societies for adivasis, one at Mukkali and the other at Attappady and the third at Vattuluki. A wholesale co-operative store functions in the district with 16 branches, besides two departmental stores and two multi-room shop. There are 31 primary co-operative stores, twenty housing societies, one co-operative printing press, four co-operative dispensaries and a group hospital in this district under the co-operative movement.

The number of school co-operative societies are 203 and college co-operative societies are seven. There are four labour contract societies, two Women's co-operative societies, one each of Taxi drivers' Co-operative society and Autorickshaw Drivers' Co-operative Society. There is a co-operative training college and a co-operative training centre at Kalmandapam in Palghat city.

Industry

Though the mainstay is agriculture the district is making good strides in industrial sphere. There is a new awakening in this field. Medium and large scale industries are coming up at Pudussery about 12 km. from Palghat town. A 500-acre industrial development area has been earmarked there by the Government.

Near the industrial development area, on an independent plot is located a unit of the Instrumentation Ltd., a Government of India undertaking. This plant manufactures control valves, pressure reducing valves, safety relief valves, actuators etc.

The Electronic Exchange unit of the Indian Telephone Industries is making indigenously designed small capacity electronic exchanges. (PABX 50 to 100 PAX 10, 25, 50 and 100). The factory is expected to have a very high turn-over.

The Carborandum Universal factory for making high alumina electro-cast refractories for the glass industry is the first of its kind in India and is being set up in collaboration with Carborandum Universal Ltd. at a cost of about Rs. five crores. The Malabar Cement Factory at Walayar has started commercial production in 1984. This is a Kerala Government venture.

The Premier Spinning Mill which went into production in 1964 with a capacity of 12,096 spindles, now has 30,000 spindles and is being expanded to 50,000 spindles. It produces 60s and 80s yarn in hank and cone.

The Premier Brewery with a capacity of 1,50,000 hecto litres per annum went into production in 1973.

The British Physical Laboratory India Ltd., (B.P.L. India Ltd.) is the biggest manufacturer in the country of coronary care equipment. Its other products include precision industrial measuring instruments, electronic test gears, medical electronics, power line communication equipment, photo copying machines, relays etc.

The Palghat Malleables Ltd., making cast-iron sanitary cisterns and spiral castings to order, is a small scale factory organised by the unemployed with the help of the Kerala State Employment Promotion Corporation. The employees of the factory are the share holders. Its proposed capacity is 125 tonnes of gray iron castings and 25 tonnes of malleable castings a month. This company has another unit at Edathara 12 kms. west of Palghat town which does enamelling jobs on street light fittings. It is trying to bring enamelled tableware back into popularity.

The Palghat Tyres Ltd., is now making cycle tyres and tubes and moulded rubber goods.

Another significant industry located on the Coimbatore road is Electronic Devices Private Ltd., started in 1971. This purpose was to establish a plant to manufacture ceramic capacitors. Now this factory makes battery charges and solid state voltage stabilisers. Besides, electronic process control and alarm systems are made to order. Their major original project is now coming up in collaboration with the Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation (KELTRON).

The Madras Spinners is another spinning mill located on the Coimbatore road.

Olavakode area is an important industrial centre in Palghat district. The area has some saw mills and match, veneer and splinter units, a large and old tile factory belonging to Common Wealth Trust Ltd., and a small unit owned by an ex-servicemen co-operative society making wrought iron grills and sheet metal fabrication. The Olavakode industrial estate was established in 1957. It has 49 shares allotted to 18 industries of which 15 are functioning now. The products made there include engineering goods, rubber goods, wooden furniture, electronic equipment, aluminium alloy utensils, stainless steel tableware etc.

At Edathara there are some units manufacturing agricultural implements. The biggest among them makes about 2500 tonnes of implements a year which are marketed all over India. The Parli Tile Works Ltd., at Parli is a seventy-five year old concern specialised in the manufacture of thermal insulation materials and has renamed itself as Industrial Ceramic Products Ltd. Ottappalam in Palghat district is the centre of match and veneer industry.

Shornur, a town in the district is having a Government Press and an industrial estate established in 1966. This industrial estate with 23 shed having ten industrial units making agricultural implements, cast iron, household articles, pharmaceuticals, cutlery, cycle tyres and tubes, vacuum pumps etc. The biggest industry near Shornur is the Shornur Metal Industries

Limited. This company was started in private sector in 1928. The company has a foundry and forge to make agricultural and horticultural implements. It has a subsidiary cutlery manufacturing unit at Lakkidi. The Power Capacitors and Allied Products Industrial Co-operative Society with its Rs. 110 lakh project for making power capacitors in technical collaboration with Cromptons is coming up near Shornur Metal Industries.

Chittur is another industrial centre in the district. The Chittur Co-operative Sugar Mills, a cotton spinning mill with 15,000 spindles (Bhagavathy Textiles) and an industrial co-operative namely PENCOS Ltd., are the major industries located in Chittur area. The PENCOS is making ready made garments for export. A new Rs. one crore project of PENCOS envisages manufacture of sewing machines and its parts and buttonhole attachments etc.

Rice mill industry, handloom, country brick making and beedi making are some of the widely established industries in the district.

Power

There is no hydro-electric project in Palghat district, though blessed with a number of irrigation projects. The energy required for the district is transmitted from other power generating projects of Kerala. The Silent Valley Hydro-electric Project envisaged for construction across Kunthipuzha could not be materialised for ecological grounds. However, an alternative project to produce power utilising the Silent Valley waters at Kunthipuzha is under consideration.

Water Resources and Irrigation

Palghat district is blessed with irrigation facilities. Dams have been constructed across almost all the important tributaries of the Bharathapuzha to provide irrigation facilities to the district. Six out of the ten completed irrigation projects of Kerala are in Palghat district. They are Walayar, Malampuzha, Cheerakuzhi, Gayathri (Meenkara, Chulliar), Mangalam and Pothundy. The total ayacut of all these completed projects is 77,306 hectares. In addition to this, the construction of two major irrigation projects viz. Chitturpuzha and Kanhirapuzha is in progress. The total ayacut of these projects is 54,200 hectares.

Walayar Dam

The Walayar dam is constructed across the river Walayar, tributary of Bharathapuzha. The ayacut is 6476 hectares. The project provides a left bank canal with two minor distributories, a tail and major distributories. This project was started in 1953, partially commissioned in 1956 and completed in 1964.

Malampuzha Dam

The Malampuzha project consists of a 6,066 ft. masonry dam built across Malampuzha, a tributary of Bharathapuzha and a net-work of canal system with an ayacut of 42,090 hectares. The dam and reservoir are located about eight km. from Olavakode Railway Station and 13 km. from Palghat town. The project was started in 1949 and commissioned in 1955. Having a catchment area of 145 sq. kms., the reservoir has a capacity of 8000 m.e.ft. of water. There are two canal systems. The left bank canal traverses a distance of 32 kms. to command cultivable areas in the taluks of Palghat, Chittur and Alathur. The right bank canal with a length of 32 kms., irrigates areas in Palghat taluk. The reservoir also provides drinking water to Palghat town.

Gayathri Project (Meenkara-Chulliar Dams)

This project consists of two storage reservoirs; Meenkara dam across the Meenkara river and Chulliar dam across Chulliar river. Both these rivers are tributaries of the Bharathapuzha. There is a net-work of canal systems with a total ayacut of 10,930 hectares of land in Chittur taluk. The first stage of the project viz., dam across Meenkara river with canals was sanctioned in 1956 and opened for irrigation in 1960. The total cost of the project is Rs. 220 lakhs.

Mangalam Dam

The Mangalam Dam is constructed across the Cherukunnappuzha, a tributary of Mangalam river. There is a canal system with an ayacut of 6,880 hectares in Alathur taluk. The project and left bank canal were completed and opened in 1956. Further extension of right bank canal was continued and the project was completed in all respects in 1966.

Pothundy Dam

The Pothundy dam is constructed across the tributaries of the Ayalur river (sub-tributary of the Bharathapuzha) namely Meenchadypuzha and Padipuzha. It has an ayacut of 10,930 hectares in Chittur and Alathur taluks. The Project, started in 1958, has been completed and commissioned.

Chitturpuzha Project

The Chitturpuzha project envisages extension of irrigation facilities to an additional area of 9,200 hectares by remodelling with reconstruction wherever required, of the four anicuts in Chitturpuzha and the existing canal system. The ayacuts are at Moolathara, Thembara madakku, Kunnakattupathy and Narnee. The total ayacut will be 32,400 hectares.

Kanhirapuzha Project

The Kanhirapuzha project on completion will afford irrigation facilities to an area of 9,720 hectares. This is being constructed across the Kanhirapuzha, a sub-tributary of the Bharathapuzha. An expansion programme of the scheme by constructing a reservoir across the Thuppanadupuzha is also on the anvil. This will benefit an additional area of 4700 hectares in Ottappalam taluk. The total ayacut of the project will be 21,800 hectares.

The Attappady Valley Irrigation project to provide irrigation facilities to 12,140 hectares is under construction.

Communication

The most important mode of transport of goods and commuters within the district is roadways. The district is having a net-work of roads of 1247 kms. National Highway is of 67 kms. State Highways come to 143 kms, district roads 899 kms. and village roads 138 kms. The district also enjoys railway facilities. It has about 150 kms. of railway lines. The broad gauge rail lines measure to a length of 122 kms. and metre gauge rail lines 27 kms. Olavakode is the headquarters of a railway division.

Places of Tourist Importance

Malampuzha

Malampuzha is the largest tourist attraction in the district. It is 13 kms. away from Palghat town. Since the completion of Malampuzha dam in 1956 the place has been beautified into a tourist resort.

The dam is located in picturesque surroundings with a hilly background. There is a beautiful garden in the rear of the dam with green turf and multi-coloured flowerbeds. A children's park and a miniature zoo are located in the garden. A swimming pool with an attractive bath house is built nearby. The fish-shaped aquarium is an added attraction to Malampuzha. The vastness of the garden and the illumination of the fountains make it exceptionally attractive. A snake park has been started nearby the Malampuzha gardens.

Pothundy

Pothundy is 38 km. south of Palghat town. An irrigation project was started there in 1958 and commissioned in 1968. The estimated cost of this project was Rs. 234.25 lakhs. It consists of an earthen dam with a spillway section, across the tributaries of Ayalur river. Its 10 km. right bank canal and 8 km. left bank canal irrigate an area of 5,465 hectares of land in Chittur and Alathur taluk. The project also makes water supply to Nenmara and Ayalur villages.

Silent Valley

Silent Valley is about 46 km. north-east of Mannarghat. The extent of the reserve forest is about 9,000 hectares. There are many hills and valleys in this forest. Kunthipuzha, a tributary of the Bharathapuzha, takes its origin from the Silent Valley and runs southward. The Silent Valley contains India's last substantial stretch of tropical evergreen rain forests and it is perhaps the only vestige of a near virgin forest in the whole of the Western Ghats.

Meen kara

Meen kara is a fascinating spot by virtue of its dam, garden, fish ponds and its natural beauty. It is 32 km. south-east of Palghat town. Fish ponds are provided in the Meen kara reservoir site.

Mangalam

Mangalam is located 48 km. south of Palghat town. The place is mainly occupied by settlers from other parts of the state.

Mangalam dam is located near the national high-way No. 47 about 14 km. south of Wadakkancherry village. The dam is constructed across Cherukunnappuzha, a tributary of Mangalam river. The dam is located in picturesque surroundings. The reservoir fringes on the forest area where there are deer, wild elephants and a variety of birds. There are beautiful parks and lawns adorned with statues.

Attappady

Attappady is 38 km. off Mannarghat. This is a tribal abode. Irular, Mudugar and Kurumbar are the main tribal groups. They live in the forest in closely built huts called Ooru (hamlet). Attappady valley is a vast area with forests and hills.

Government have introduced a concerted programme to uplift the tribals of Attappady. This integrated tribal development scheme is implemented through the Tribal Development Block of Attappady.

Siruvani

Siruvani is about 80 km. away from Palghat town. A dam is constructed across the river Siruvani and the water stored is diverted for providing drinking water to Coimbatore city. Muthikulam where the dam is constructed is a place of natural beauty. Wild animals can be seen even in the daylight in the thick forests of these area.

Parambikulam

About 130 kms. away from Palghat, Parampikulam is famous for its Teak Plantations. The oldest Teak tree Kannimaram is situated here. Parambikulam wild life sanctuary is attractive.

Nelliampathy

The orange farm in 400 acres at Nelliampathy in Chittur taluk, under the Agriculture Department is the pride of Palghat district. The orange squash and lemon squash prepared here are widely known throughout south India for their quality. In addition to orange, pineapple and vegetables are also grown in the farm.

Ottappalam

Ottappalam was the centre of political as well as tenant movements in the south Malabar of the erstwhile Malabar province of Madras Presidency. The important Hindu festival of Ottappalam is at Chathan Kandar Kavu at Varode desam. The legend goes that the temple was built by the local Kanjoor Namboodiri family at a place where a Harijan called Chathan found a stone bleeding while he was sharpening his knife on it. The deity of this temple is Durga. The annual festival is Thalapoli which is celebrated on Avitam day in Meenam (March-April).

Nercha festival in the Ottappalam mosque attracts the local Muslims in large numbers. It is said that a saintly person by name Uthaman Auliya had lived and died at this place. An annual festival is held at this mosque to commemorate his death.

PART VII

PALGHAT DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

TALUKS

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Area Sq. km.</i>	<i>Population (1981 Census)</i>	<i>Density of Population (per sq.km)</i>
1.	Ottappalam	845.8	625,820	740
2.	Mannarghat	1185.6	250,949	212
3.	Palghat	720.3	447,958	622
4.	Chittur	1155.1	368,647	319
5.	Alathur	569.0	351,025	617

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

1. Palghat
2. Ottappalam

ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

1. Thrithala
2. Pattambi
3. Ottappalam
4. Sreekrishnapuram
5. Mannarghat
6. Malampuzha
7. Palghat
8. Chittur
9. Kollengode
10. Coyalmannam
11. Alathur

BLOCKS IN THE DISTRICT

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Taluk</i>	<i>Number of panchayats</i>
1.	Alathur	Alathur	10
2.	Coyalmanam	Alathur	8
3.	Chittur	Chittur	6
4.	Kollengode	Chittur	9
5.	Nenmara	Chittur	3
6.	Palghat	Palghat	12
7.	Mannarghat	Mannarghat	8
8.	Attappady	Mannarghat	3
9.	Sreekrishnapuram	Ottappalam	7
10.	Pattambi	Ottappalam	10
11.	Ottappalam	Ottappalam	6
12.	Thrithala	Ottappalam	7
			89

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Taluk</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Density of Population per sq. km.</i>	<i>Decadal Growth rate of population</i>
1.	Ottappalam	625820	297936	327884	740	19.88
2.	Mannarghat	250949	124641	126308	212	35.95
3.	Palghat	447958	220424	227534	622	21.40
4.	Chittur	368647	181042	187605	319	17.41
5.	Alathur	351025	170153	180872	617	18.68
Total		2044399	994196	1050203	456	21.30

PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY

<i>Year</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Kerala State</i>
1901	9.54	12.85
1911	12.03	15.45
1921	13.74	21.95
1931	15.19	25.58
1951	30.18	47.37
1961	39.89	55.08
1971	46.69	60.42
1981	51.55	70.42



° Silent Valley
Silent Valley—another view





Malampuzha Dam and Gardens





Malampuzha Aquarium



Malabar Cement Factory



Walayar Cement Factory



Kanniyar Kali



Hemambika Temple



Wild Life Sanctuary—Parambikulam



Tipu's Fort—Palghat



Civil Station—Palghat



*Thunchath Ezhuthachan, Father of Malayalam Literature—
He spent his last days in Chittur, Palghat Dt.*

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