



## A REVIEW ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE IN KODAIKANAL

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### **Abstract**

*Kodaikanal is the just Hill Station in Asia developed by the people in the United States. Kodaikanal features a monsoon-influenced subtropical highland weather. The temperature is cool over summer and winter as a result of the height of the town. There is archaeological evidence of people's habitation in this region ahead of the present era. Megalithic dolmens dating from early Chera Dynasty times, earthen containers along with other artifacts that have been found here prove that the initial residents of Kodaikanal were the Palaiyar individuals who are tribal. At present, this acknowledged spot is one of famous tourist area within the Southern region of Tamil Nadu. The economic condition of the people living in Kodaikanal has been improved due to the traveler from a different region around the globe. The aim this paper is to analyze and learn the economic, religious and environmental condition of those living in Kodaikanal.*

**Keywords:** *Kodaikanal, Economic, Religious, Environmental condition, Tourist place.*

### **Introduction**

The initial residents of Kodaikanal were the Paliyan people who are tribal. The precise sources that are earliest to Kodaikanal and also the Palani Hills are observed in Tamil Sangam literary works of the early Christian era. During 1821, Lieutenant B. S. Ward, a British surveyor was, the first European to visit Kodaikanal, who was on the lookout for a healthy place to live, for the foreign missionaries working in Madurai and the surrounding areas to escape the summer heat and epidemics. The site visitors which are early Kodaikanal had traveled by horse, bullock cart or palanquin.

The forest ended up being infested by robbers and wildlife, and yet it became popular using the elite families, because of the wonderful climate and clean air. In 1834, the Collector of Madurai climbed up from Devadanapatti and built a small bungalow in Kodaikanal. By the second half of 19th century, churches along with other colonial structures started showing up in and around Kodaikanal. Contemporary Kodaikanal had been established as a hill station by United States missionaries in 1845, as a refuge from the large conditions and exotic diseases regarding the flatlands.

### **Economic Condition**

Kodaikanal is a city in the hills of the Taluk division of the Dindigul district in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. Its name in the Tamil language means "The Gift of the Forest". Kodaikanal is referred as the "Princess of Hill stations" and has a long history as a retreat and popular tourist destination. Much of the local economy is based on the hospitality industry serving tourism. The economy of Kodaikanal is predominantly run by tourism. The number of tourists increased from two million in 1999 to 3.2 million in 2009.

The town's infrastructure changes frequently in preparation for the peak tourist season. Significant roadways are changed into one-way lanes to modify the constant inflow of traffic and special police forces are introduced for the safety of the tourists and security of local organizations. Resorts tend to be fully booked throughout the season and empty over the off-season. Due to the rapid development of nearby areas such as Madurai and Coimbatore, the town is just starting to enjoy tourism throughout the year.

### **Health Condition**

The major medical facilities provided by are Van Allen Hospital in addition to Government Hospital. These hospitals address clients with common afflictions, injuries and delivery and small surgery, but they are not equipped with modern medical equipment for complicated diagnoses and surgeries. In April 1915, Dr. Van Allen lifted funds to make the built a hospital at the entrance of Coaker's walk. It was named after him. Services got updated from time to time, now this hospital has the X-ray machine and well-equipped laboratory for pathological and operation theater with blood transfusion services. Government Hospital is situated on the hillside near Rock cottage on reduced shola road. It was a small hospital in municipal established in the year 1927. At present, it has X-ray, Dental, Maternity ward and other facilities.

### **Religious Condition**

Since Kodaikanal was founded by the American and European Missionaries, Christian churches are abundant in Kodaikanal. They include Church of South India -opposite to Bryant Park, St. Peters Church near Coakers Walk, Gorapur, Lake End, La Salette, Lutheran Mission, Sacred Heart - Munjikal, Saint Antony's - Antonyar Kovil Street, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint



Joseph's, Saint Mary's and Saint Peter's – Cockers Walk road. Amongst the most popular are Union Church with a large Tamil congregation and Margaret Eddy Memorial Chapel at Kodai International School with lively services in a typically American style and distinctive stone architecture. There are many Hindu Temples in Kodaikanal including the Durgai Amman Kovil, Kurinji Andavar Kovil, Mariamman Kovil, Observatory Murugan Kovil and Vinayagar Kovil. The Muslim mosques are Ellis Villa and Munjikal. There is an active community of Tibetan Buddhist refugees.

### **Educational Condition**

The following schools are located at Kodaikanal: Bhavan's Gandhi Vidyashram, Brindavan Public School, Kodaikanal International School, Kodaikanal Public School, St. John's Girls Higher Secondary School, St. Joseph's Public School, St. Peter's Matriculation Higher Secondary School, St. Xavier's High School, Zion Matriculation High School. The main colleges here are (American University of India (AUI) / Kodai International Business School (KIBS) [www.aui.edu.com](http://www.aui.edu.com)) which is an elite Business school offering MBA & BBA programs in USA & India located in Ugarthenager, Kodaikanal Christian College, and Sacred Heart College. Mother Theresa University is distinctive as India's only university devoted to exclusively women's issues. In 2005, a new engineering college specializing in Information Technology, Kodaikanal Institute of Technology under Anna University, has been established 22 kilometers (14 mi) below Kodaikanal town

### **Ecological Condition**

Air and water-borne mercury emissions have contaminated large areas of Kodaikanal and surrounding forests. A study conducted by the Department of Atomic Energy confirmed that Kodaikanal Lake has been contaminated by mercury emissions. Mercury pollution was reported in Kodaikanal which affected lakes in the area. The causes, originating from a Hindustan Lever thermometer factory nearby, were reported to be dispersal of elemental mercury to the atmosphere from improper storage and dispersal to water from surface effluents from the factory. Apart from tests conducted on Kodaikanal Lake, moss samples collected from trees surrounding the Berijam Lake, located 20 km from the factory were also tested. This showed mercury level in the range of 0.2 µg/kg, while in Kodaikanal Lake the lichen and moss levels were 7.9 µg/kg and 8.3 µg/kg, respectively. Fish samples tested from the Kodaikanal Lake also showed the High level in the range of 120 to 290 mg/kg confirming that pollution of the lake had taken place due to mercury emissions from the factory.

The Hindustan Unilever thermometer factory caused widespread mercury pollution through improper disposal of broken thermometer waste containing large quantities of mercury. The factory sold much of this waste to a junkyard in Kodaikanal and also dumped large quantities in the forest behind the factory. The factory was eventually closed in 2001 after 18 years of operation. Hindustan Lever has used considerable legal maneuvering to avoid paying compensation the ex-workers and their families many of whom died or became physically handicapped as a result of mercury poisoning.

### **Conclusion**

The detailed analysis of the present condition of environmental, economic and religious Condition of Kodaikanal is explained in this paper. From the ancient period, this place was attracted by all the peoples living in India and other foreign countries. Due to the increase in population and the tourist, this place is crowded by vehicles. So, the entire city has been polluted and many natural resources are affected. Many non-profitable organizations (NGO) and social service peoples from various places are taking many initiatives to restore the environmental condition of the Kodaikanal.

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