

Kerala Society



The culture of Kerala has developed over the past millennia, influences from other parts of India and abroad. It is defined by its antiquity and the organic continuity sustained by the Malayali people.[3] Modern Kerala society took shape owing to migrations from different parts of India and abroad throughout Classical Antiquity.

Kerala traces its non-prehistoric cultural genesis to its membership (around the 3rd century AD) in a vaguely defined historical region known as Thamizhagam – a land defined by a common Tamil culture and encompassing the Chera, Chola, and Pandya kingdoms. At that time, the music, dance, language (first Dravida Bhasha – "**Dravidian language**" –

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then Tamil), and Sangam (a vast corpus of Tamil literature composed between 1,500–2,000 years ago) found in Kerala were all similar to that found in the rest of Thamizhagam (today's Tamil Nadu). The culture of Kerala evolved through **the Sanskritization of Dravidian ethos, revivalism of religious movements and reform movements against caste discrimination.** Kerala showcases a culture unique to itself developed through accommodation, acculturation and assimilation of various faculties of civilized lifestyle.



Historiographical Trends

The growth of colonialism and the introduction of modern education helped for the emergence of modern historical writing in Kerala. Most of the works written during the early phase were more describing and the authors did not delve into the causes of the events.

While they wrote factual history of In the modern period, they relied more upon the traditional sources and legends for reconstructing the history of earlier periods.

However certain works of historiographical importance had been produced in Kerala in the earlier period also. The two significant works of the earlier period were :**MooshakavamsaKavya and Tuhfat-ul-Mujahideen.**

Mooshakavamsa Kavya belongs to the 'Kavya' tradition of the Indian historical writing; it was prepared by Atula in the 11th century and is generally considered as the first historical chronicle of Kerala. Atula was the court poet of Srikanta, the king of the Mushaka or Ezhimala kingdom of North Malabar.

The work is a blend of legends and facts. The author relies upon legends and traditions for recording the early history of the kingdom, but when it comes to more recent and contemporary periods, the description becomes more factual and historical. The author relates the origin of the Mushaka dynasty to a traditional myth.

According to this, the pregnant queen of Mahishmati escaped to Ezhimala to save herself from the massacre of the legendary hero, **Parasurama**. She then gave birth to the son Ramaghata who eventually became the founder of the Mushaka kingdom. As he was said to be born in a mouse burrow, his dynasty got the name, Mushaka.

Ramaghata is said to have built the capital city, Kolapattanam.

According to the description of Atula, Srikanta is the 118th ruler of the dynasty, and some other important rulers mentioned are Nandan, Vikramaraman, Ugran etc. The name of the king Nandan of Ezhimala is mentioned in the sangam work also. Nandan is characterized as the one who is involved in worldly pleasures both in **Mushika Vamsa and in Akananuru**.

The most important king of the dynasty was Vallabhan II, who founded the ports of **Marathi (madayi) and Valapattanam (valapattanam)**. He is also said to have helped the Cheras in their fight against Cholas. The Mushakavamsa Kavya has more than one thousand songs divided into fifteen cantos. The work provides information about the penetration of the Cheras into the Ezhimala kingdom.

Atula had given the chronology of the Mushaka rulers from Ranaghata to Srikanta. As he was the court poet, he naturally relates the genealogy of his mentor king with the Yadukula, in order to legitimize the authority of the King. The traditional historical writing initiated by Atula is not seen continued by the succeeding generation for reasons not clear.

Tuhfat-ul-Mujahiddin, written by **Sheik Zainuddin** in the 16th century marks a new stage in the tradition of historical writing in Kerala. The book, in general, depicts the Portuguese atrocities on the natives of Malabar, especially on the Muslims. Following the Arab tradition of historical writing, Zainuddin gives importance to the detailed chronology of the Portuguese domination in Malabar during the 16th century.

The book was first written in Arabi and then translated into several foreign and Indian languages.

For a very long period, This work was considered as an honest guide to know about the history of Malabar by many.

Sheik Zainuddin was a native of Ponnani and belonged to a family of religious scholars. He dedicated the book to the then Bijapur Sultan Adil Shah I. The book, Tuhfat-ul- Mujahideen has an introduction and four parts. In the

The author calls the Muslims of Malabar to fight against the Portuguese. The first part also reminds the Muslims that it is their duty to fight against Portuguese domination. The second part deals with the growth of Islam in Kerala and has a detailed description about the ports in the western coast.

The **third part** of the book is about the tolerant attitude of the Hindu rulers in Malabar towards the Muslim and other religious communities. It then discusses the prevailing custom, caste system, marriage system,

pollution, order of succession, practice of polyandry, dress, warfare etc. of the

people of Malabar. In fact, this part provides a vivid picture of the socio-cultural condition of Malabar in the 16th century.

The **fourth and final part** of the book discusses the growth of Portuguese domination in Malabar from 1498 to 1583, the year in which the work was completed.

According to Zainuddin, the position of the Muslims in Malabar was far better prior to the advent of the Portuguese.

He states that the Muslims were well treated by the Hindu rulers. He is very much concerned about the loss of the Muslim dominance in the foreign trade between the Middle East and India.

Till recently, history of ancient Kerala was written on the basis of traditional sources made up of legends and fables, with occasional peeks into its early history.

These traditional sources constructed by the blending of oral tradition were put to writing only during the 17th and 18th centuries. In fact, all these sources were conveniently prepared by upper sections of the society to legitimate their ideological hegemony in the society.

The most popular traditional sources of Kerala history is the **'Keralolpathi'** the oral tradition of the Namboothiri Brahmins of Kerala, compiled in different versions, in the later times. The general assumption among the historians is that the Keralolpathi was put in the written form not earlier than the 17th century.

Thereafter several scholars like **Herman Gundert, Chelanat Achutha Menon, Manavikrania Raja etc.** have prepared separate versions of the book, but the basic theme remains the same. The various versions of the Keralolpathi are known in different titles like **KolathunaduVazhakkam, Kozhikode Vazhakkom, Venad Vazhakkometc.**

Keralolpathi states that the land of Kerala was created by the legendary hero Parasurama, stretching from Gokarna in the north and Kanyakumari in the south. Parasurama is said to have raised this land from the Arabian sea with a fling of his legendary ax, as a part of his repentance for killing all the Kshatriya kings. He then brought sixty four Brahmin families from north India and gave the newly created land to them. Thirty two Brahmin families then settled in Tulu nadu and the remaining thirty two in the present day Kerala.

Afterwards, the Brahmins are said to have brought a Perumal from outside to rule the land and the people of Kerala, for a period of twelve years.

Thirty six such perumaal converted to Islam, abducted his throne and went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. On the eve of his pilgrimage he is said to have

divided his country among his various chieftains.

The work, Keralolpathi is divided into three parts, the first part is called the '**Parasurama period**' stretching a period from time immemorial to 216 CE. The second part is called **the 'Perumal period'** covering the

period between 216 and 428 CE. The third and the last part is the

'Thampuran period'

from 428 to the modern times. The different versions of Keralolpathi try to legitimize the dominance of Brahmins over the land of Kerala, their creation of the rulers and the 'give and take policy' between the rulers and the Brahmins.

The 'Janmam' right of the Namboodiri Brahmins over the entire land of Kerala during the medieval period was thus justified by a popular tradition created by the Brahmins themselves and the other sections of the society, were made to accept it.

'Ballads' are narrative poems, commonly known as the **'Pattu literature'** which manifests the historical consciousness of the different sections of the society of a period which had not produced any historical literature as
Such.

They often depict the ideological hegemony of the elite classes as well. It is not possible to consider the Pattu literature as the product of a particular period as they are interpolated.

Still inferences could be drawn about family relations, interclass relations, the status of gender and social and economic conditions of the society in general.

The Ballads of Kerala are broadly divided into **'Northern Ballads' or 'Vadakkan Pattukal'** and the **'Southern Ballads Or the 'Thekkan Pattukal'**. **The 'Payyannur Pattukal'** provides information about the

trading activities and the social conditions of North Malabar in the medieval period.

The **'puthuram pattukal'** and the 'Thacholi pattukal' comprise the main corpse of the **'Vadakkan pattu'** literature.

Though they deal with the heroic deeds of two important families of the Kadathanad region, they throw ample light upon the rule of the then Naduvazhis or the local chieftains and the social and cultural conditions of the society during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The **'iravi kutty Pillai Pattu'** and the 'Valiya thampi Kunju thampi katha' belong to the Thekkan pattukal. The former one is prepared in the background of the **'kaniyamkulamwar'** between the Venad ruler and Tirumalai Naik of 1634.

The story of the latter one is woven around the conflict between Marthanda Varma and the Thampis for capturing the rule of Venad.

Apart from these we have several other works of this genre like the **'patapattu'** or the war songs of

the Mappilas, the 'Rabban Pattu' of the jews and the 'Margam Kali Pattu' of the Syrian Christians, which provide useful historical insights into the condition of the respective communities during the medieval period.

Origin OF KERALA



Long long ago, Parasurama, a turbulent god like Thor of Norse myth, flung his battle-ax far out into the heaving sea, the waters receded and the land of Kerala emerged into the sun and air. This is the age-old tradition about the origin of the land.

There is very good evidence that the land of Keralam has been shaped by a geological upheaval. Queer things are even now happening along the sea coast. Mud banks occur along the sea-board from the Kotta river to Kanyakumari, the most remarkable being those of Pantalayini Kollam, Kozhikode and Alappuzha. These banks have been known to mariners from ancient times as smooth and safe anchorages even when the sea is rough. When the sea is calm, the banks cannot be discovered except by surroundings of mud. But , during the monsoons, the bed of the mud at the bottom of the sea is stirred up, and the anchorage calms down as if oil has been poured on the waters. The mud is peculiar, dark green in color, fine in texture and oily to the touch. The mud banks are mobile and are carried along the littoral currents. But

at times their smooth surface is disturbed by '**mud volcanoes**' or huge cones of mud and water which come bubbling up from below often bringing with them dead fish, roots and trunks of trees. The Western Ghats which form the eastern border of the state, show definite evidence of such a cataclysm, in the gaping discontinuity of the Palakkad gap which is about 30 kilometers broad.

The coastal belt of the Alappuzha district is like a sandy seashore which has been extended inland.

Marine fossils including coral reefs have been unearthed near Changanacherry. Geologists therefore feel that the Arabian Sea must have once extended right up to the foot of the Western Ghats. Many explanations have been offered for the name of the land, but the most plausible is probably the one which refers to this origin. The interpretation that Kerala means the land of Kera (coconut palm) is not tenable. Plausible but not wholly convincing is the reading that Keralam was originally

Cheralam means the land of the Cheras. But Cher can also mean 'added' and would give the meaning, 'the land which was added by the recession of the sea.

Kerala has a continuous chain of lagoons and backwaters. They are never far from the sea, and at several places they have established a permanent connection with it.



The backwaters, rivers and the canal system form a navigable inland waterway of about 1,920 kilometers which is more than one-fifth of the total length of India's inland waterways.

The biggest of the backwaters is the **Vembanad Lake** which stretches from Alappuzha to Kochi and covers an area of 79 square miles.

The **Sasthamkotta Lake** in the Kollam district is the only major freshwater lake in Kerala. It is rather small, about 1.5 square miles, but is situated in a picturesque setting with high hills on three sides. Along the coast, the climate is equable, but slightly damp.

The mean temperature in the midland and lowland is about 90 degree F.

The high ranges have a cool and bracing climate throughout the year.

The state gets rainfall both from the south-west and the north-east monsoons. The former, between May and August is very heavy and in the highlands

as well as along the coast, it can alter the mood of the landscape in a most dramatic way.

People

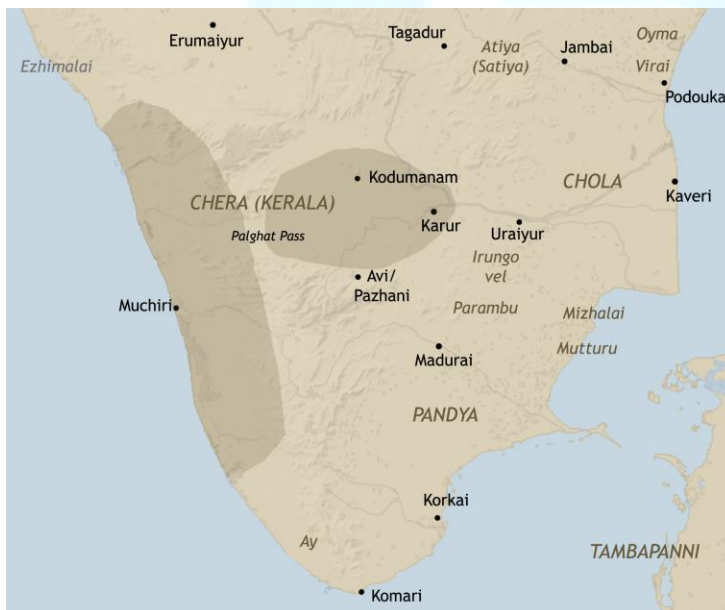


- The Negrito element seems to be the earliest racial strain in the population of Kerala as of South India in general. The physical characteristics are curly hair, black skin, round head and broad nose.
- The Uralis are the primitive artisan tribe of Wayanad, being blacksmith's, carpenters, potters and basket makers.
- Their pot making technique is very primitive since the potter's wheel is not used. The pot is made by scooping up the inside of a properly shaped lump of clay.
- They cultivate ragi and rice to a small extent. The Proto Australoids who came long after the Negritos, are distinguished by their long head and flat nose. They are represented today by the Kurichiyas of Wayanad. Their chief occupation is agriculture, both shifting and permanent
- cultivation of rice being practiced. The Dravidians who came still later are represented by such communities as Nairs, Vellalas, Ezhavas etc. It is quite possible that the last group represents a staggered and later migration, possibly from Srilanka.

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- The word Ezhava has been derived from Sinhala
- and the other name of the community, Thiyya is derived by some authorities from Dwipa which means an Island (Sri Lanka).
- Namputhiris represent the Aryan penetration to the deep south.
- There has been considerable mingling of Aryan and Dravidian strains in the case of the Nair community because of the socially sanctioned practice of Namputhiri males marrying Nair women.
- Though there has been an infusion of Syrian and Arabic blood in the case of the Christian and Muslim communities, the basic stock is indigeneous.

Cheras



- The proto history of Kerala is part of the history of trade and trade routes in the ancient world.

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- Spices, in the cultivation of which Kerala had a monopoly for centuries were lifted first by the Phoenicians, the most enterprising traders known to antiquity.
- But the monopoly in trade with Kerala changed hands successively during the centuries.
- The earliest seat of the Cheras seems to have been Kuttanad, the flat, low lying country of backwaters around present Alappuzha.
- This is why the Chera king always had the title of Kuttuvan. From here, they extended their sway and shifted their capital ultimately to Vanchi near Muziris in the north.

The period 825–1019 is the **golden age of old Kerala**.

The founder of the dynasty was and subsequent rulers used the title Kulasekhara Perumal along with their names, the word Perumal meaning Emperor.

The state language of the Chera domains continued to be Tamil for a long while, even after the spoken language had undergone considerable differential evolution.

The Tamil classic, Pathittipathu is a cycle of about a hundred poems written by poets who were patronized by the Chera rulers.

The variety of grains, pulses and other food crops mentioned in this work, as also of domestic utensils, agricultural implements and jewelry, suggests an advanced and prosperous culture.

The degree to which arts and crafts and refined ways of living had evolved is revealed by the 17thc Tamil classic Chilappatikaram, which

was written by Ilango Atikal, a Chera prince who was the younger brother of the ruler, **Cheran Chenguttuvan**.

The second Chera Empire went down in the conflict with the Cholas which began about 985 when Raja Raja ascended the Chola throne.

Both Raja Raja and his son Rajendra who came to the throne in 1012 launched massive attacks on the Chera realm, first overrunning its southern region and then threatening the capital itself.

Mahodayapuram fell in the attack of 1019. This struggle, which lasted over three decades brought about far reaching social transformations in the land of the Cheras.

Matriarchy



Matriarchy seems to have emerged in Kerala during this historical crisis. The word Nair seems originally to have meant captaincy in the army. But

the protracted war led to the differentiation of the Nair community on the basis of military service.

Since it was very close to the ruling houses, the community steadily gained in social status.

Brahmin (Namboothiri) youths who could marry Kshatriya women could now marry Nair girls also.

The growth of this tradition was helped by the fact that, as is natural in immigrant groups there were far more men than women in the Brahmin groups that entered Kerala. This led to the practice of only the eldest Nampoothiri male of the younger generation in the family marrying within the community.

The younger brothers married Kshatriya or Nair girls. But they had no property which their progeny could inherit, since inheritance in the Namboothiri community was confined to the eldest sons through the Namboothiri wives. As the holocaust of the war With the Cholas consuming Kshatriya and Nair males in increasing numbers, the high ratio of females in these groups worked identically like the low ratio of males in Namboothiri groups to make the system of hypergamy' more pervasive.

The younger generations in such alliances could inherit property only through their mother's side. The depletion of the males also prompted women to take over the administration of family properties with increasing confidence and ability.

Anthropologists, especially from foreign lands, even today cherish a great nostalgia for the matriarchy of old Kerala. But the institution was clearly related to the feudal economy of the past, the big joint families depending on their viability on extensive possessions of land. When the winds of change

began to blow over the region and to change the pattern of economy at a steadily accelerating tempo, the joint family became too unwieldy for the times.

The Travancore Nair Regulation of 1912 established the patriarchal pattern of the nuclear family. The very fact that about thirty four thousand joint families in Travancore partitioned their properties within two years of the passing of

The regulation shows that the changed social and economic conditions had built up an imperative for the transformation.

The Nair Service Society actively and uncompromisingly campaigned for this change.

The Cochin Nair Regulation Act of 1920 and the Madras act of 1993 extended the reform to Kochi and Malabar respectively. These legislations also

severely discouraged '**hypergamy**' by making it obligatory on the part of the husband to maintain his wife and children.

As a basic economic pattern, the patriarchal system is a thing of the past in Kerala. But from old traditions, the communities which once had this system have inherited strong kinship bonds. Even today people of

these communities feel a sense of responsibility towards their nephews and nieces in addition to their sons and daughters.

Kerala under Perumaal – Socio Political Structure

Once a king – a **Cheraman Perumal** – was walking on the balcony of his palace when he spotted the moon splitting into two and joining back again. Bewildered, he consulted a few astrologers, who confirmed that such an event had indeed occurred and was not a mystical experience.

Few months

later, he got a few Arabic visitors on their way to Ceylon and from them, the king learned that Prophet Muhammad was behind this miracle and he was the founder of a new religion.

The king did something drastic. He abdicated the throne, divided up the kingdom and set sail to Mecca to meet this man. He met the Prophet and converted to Islam and lived in Arabia for a while. Then to spread the religion in his homeland, the converted Perumal returned to Kerala, but he

died somewhere along the way.

Later, few of his followers reach Cranganore and it is they who set up the first mosques, including the one at Kodungallur. According to the legend, Saraf Ibn Malik, Malik Ibn Dinar, Malik Ibn Habib, Ibn Malik and their wives and friends were responsible for establishing the first mosques at

Kodungallur, Kollam (in north, not Quilon), Maravi (matayi), Fakanur, Manjarur (Mangalore), Kanjirakkattu (Kasargod), Jarfattan

(Karippatt), Dahfattan (Dharmatam), Fandarina (panthalayani Kollam) and Caliyath(Chaliyan near Beypore).

Cheraman was the name of the dynasty of Chera rulers and Perumal meant, 'the great one'. According to Keralolpathi, written in the 17th or 18th c, following various conflicts in the, the representativeness of 64 settlements in Kerala

brought the Perumals from outside Kerala and each one was to rule for 12 years. This story is found in a Muslim account recorded by Sheikh Zeinuddin as well as in the Brahmanical narrative, Keralolpathi. The fascinating tale of a Kerala king meeting the Prophet was first recorded in 1510 CE by the Portuguese writer Duarte Barbosa.

Barbosa who would later become Ferdinand Magellan's brother in law and would join him on his trip around the world, reached Kerala in 1500 with his uncle and stayed there for five decades. Quite conversant in the local language and based on his familiarity with the traditions and customs , he wrote the story of this **Cheraman Perumal** based on what he heard. His version was that, around 600 years before Barbosa's time, there was a mighty lord named Chirimay Perumal, whose capital was a popular port for pepper trade. The Moors who came for trade had numerous discussions with the King and they converted him to Islam. He went to Mecca in their company and died either there on the way back; the Malabar people never saw their king again. Barbosa also wrote that the single kingdom which Cheraman Perumal

ruled was partitioned into three – Cannanore, Calicut and Quilon- with Calicut having the right of coinage.

Feudal Agrarian Structure, Nadu and Naduvazhi, Temple centered administration

The Sangam works allude to the existence of private property but not to anything like the complex **Janmi system or landlordism** that evolved itself in later years. The traditional view that the Janmi system was created by Parasurama who bestowed all the land on the Namboothiri Brahmins is no longer accepted. It was during the Chola- Chera war of the 11th century A.D that the system had its origin. The war led to the total mobilization of the resources of the state.

A new situation arose in which the Namboothiri came to acquire a dominant position in economic and social life. In view of the preoccupation of large sections of society with the conduct of the war and the consequent decline in their interest in the administration of the temples, those Namboothiris who were the trustees (Uralar) of the temples mismanaged the temple properties and endowments and misappropriated for themselves all the revenues there from. In the meantime, it also happened that several ordinary tenants who owned lands and properties transferred them into the Namboothiri Brahmins and the temples. They did so because the lands and properties so transferred came to be regarded as Devaswoms and Brahmaswoms and enjoyed freedom from devastation by the enemy forces in times of

war as well as exemption for the payment of tax to the state. In the above circumstances,

The Namboothiri Brahmins came to acquire the status of wealthy and powerful landlords or Janmis.

The origin of the Janmi system is attributed to the above development and it bears a resemblance to the circumstances that gave birth to European feudalism in the 13th and 14th centuries. It should be noted that continental feudalism was the product of the dual process of some people surrendering their landed estates to more powerful men in return for the guarantee of immunity from the dangers of the times and of some others placing themselves and their properties under similar protection as vassals liable to be called out for active service in times of war or internal commotion.

Evolution of feudal polity



- While the Janmi system was thus evolving itself in the 11th century A.D. The political unity of Kerala was also breaking up. In the 19th century A.D the political unity of Kerala was also breaking up. In the

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9th and 10th centuries, Kerala was a homogeneous political unit with a centralized administration

- under the Kulasekharas and the Naduvazhis or Viceroyalty exercised their powers under the effective control of the central government. During the later period of the Chera Chola war (11th century AD) and after the central
- The government became weak and the Naduvazhis asserted their independence. A number of small principalities arose on the ruins of the Kulasekhara Empire.
- This situation persisted for several centuries.
- At the time of the arrival of the Portuguese Kerala presented the picture of a feudal polity with its characteristic weaknesses. The major political powers were Calicut and Venad and their ruler's possessed sovereign political rights.
- Most of the other chieftains or Naduvazhis had come within the sphere of influence of the major powers. In addition to these Naduvazhikal, there were a number of Desavazhis or local nair chieftains (Madampis) and a few Namboothiri chieftains who exercised effective authority in their domains.
- Like the feudal barons of medieval Europe
- , they provided the Naduvazhis with fighting forces in times of need. Moreover, each of the principalities had also its suicide squads (Chavers) comprised primarily of mercenaries. The

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activities of these elements created conditions of near anarchy in the

- Land. Kerala's feudal polity also had a religious character. As the Devaswoms or temples served the purpose of sanctuaries or Sanketams which enjoyed protection from the attacks of the enemy in times of war, there was a regular scramble among the rulers for the acquisition of the right of over-lordship
- (Melkoya) over temples, irrespective of the consideration whether they were situated within their own domains or not.
- The Sanketam functioned almost 'as a state within the state' with the ruling sovereign having no effective political control over it. The Sanketams were also centers of political intrigues. The extra territorial loyalty of the Namboothiris as a class was also a factor which made the religious polity a reality.
- They owed allegiance not so much to any ruler as to their caste chief, the Azhvanchery Thamprakkal, who alone had the authority to punish them. The Namboothiri Janmis also enjoyed the extraordinary power of inflicting death penalty on their tenants. Thus on the threshold of the 16th century Kerala was in a distracted political condition, with a number of petty chieftains engaged in interminable quarrels and its religious polity provides yet another cause for potential discord.

Feudal levies and Privileges

The accounts of the Portuguese and Dutch writers of the 16th and 17th centuries throw further light on the state of feudal polity in Kerala.

Though the Naduvazhis had vast powers they were checked by Kuttams or local assemblies.

The Naduvazhi was thus head of a feudal aristocracy with limited authority. All the chieftains from the ruler to the Desavazhi possessed their own landed properties which were either cultivated by them through their slaves or leased to Kudiyans or tenants.

No regular taxes were levied in those days but the Naduvazhis had several sources of revenue. Logan in his Malabar Manual gives a catalog of such items or revenue and they may be reproduced here in order to emphasize the ultra-feudal character of Kerala polity. Customs duties on imports, exports and transports were levied by the chieftain. He could usurp the estates of his decaying neighboring chiefs. He had the right to force them to contribute supplies in emergencies by having resources to violence, if need be.

Fines of various kinds were very common. A succession duty called **Purushantaram** was levied from every person who assumed charge of family property on the death of the owner.

When a person died without heirs, his property lapsed to the chieftain (Attaladakkam). No one had the right of adoption without the prior consent of the chief, which could be obtained on payment of a fee (Dattukazhcha). The

Naduvazhi received presents from his subjects on such occasions as weddings, births, funerals, opening of new palaces etc.

Women convicted of adultery were made over to the Naduvazhi and the latter sold them to foreign merchants and made profit out of the transaction. None could seek gold without paying a royalty to the chief. Fees for protection were levied from all strangers and dependents e.g. Changatam, Rakshabhogam etc. ships which came ashore could be seized along with the cargo in order to enrich the coffers of the chieftain. The Naduvazhi had also the monopoly of certain animals captured in his territory under certain special circumstances.

A typical institution which enabled the chieftain to augment his revenue was the ankam, a dual fight arranged between two parties, to settle an unresolved dispute. A sum of 1000 panama had to be paid for getting permission to conduct the ankam, with the chieftain himself acting as umpire.

The chieftain had the power to settle marriage within his domain and before the marriage was conducted the parties had to pay respects to the chieftain with presents of money and other things. The construction of two storeyed buildings or tiled could not be undertaken without obtaining prior permission which was granted only in rare cases. The use of palanquins and dholies was allowed only for carrying feudal heads or chieftains. Yet another feudal custom was to take the girl to the chieftains household with the

prescribed fee and other presents before the tali tying ceremony. The chieftain also

conferred titles like 'Menon' on the members of the Nair community after receiving presents of money and other articles. The chieftain could dictate to his subjects in many matters of detail concerning their daily routine or mode of living. Bracelets could be worn on both arms only by those who were permitted to enjoy this privilege. The same applied in regard to using the umbrellas with handles. Those who did not have permission in this matter could only wear umbrellas without handles on their heads. The wearing of certain ornaments like Mukkuthiby women required permission. It was the sole privilege of the chieftain to cut in a slanting manner plantains used for preparation of curries on festive occasions. The chieftains enjoyed the power of life and death in some places; this was delegated to select persons for a fixed period, usually five years.

This institution was known as Talavettiparvathyamor authority obtained by decapitation.

During the five year period the person concerned could exercise almost despotic powers within his jurisdiction. In short, feudalism was its worst in Kerala in the 17th and 18th centuries. A large number of slaves were condemned to agrestic slavery with the result that they could be brought and

sold like chattels by the landowning classes. They were not treated as human beings entitled to rights and privileges. The janmi had the power

to put them to death without being called to account. This state of affairs prevailed in Kerala even in the beginning of the 19th century when the British had begun to establish their political authority over the land.

Medieval Society: Christian, Jewish and Islamic

Presence, Colonial expansion

Christianity



- The story of the rise and spread of Christianity in Kerala is part of the story of the blending of diverse cultural influences and ways of life.
- Christianity is believed to have been introduced in Kerala in the first century AD, ie, three centuries before it gained official recognition in Rome.
- Local tradition ascribes its origin in Kerala to St Thomas, the apostle, who is said to have landed at Maliankara, a place

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adjoining Muziris in 52 A.D., converted certain Brahmin families and founded seven churches on the Malabar Coast.

- The belief in the St Thomas tradition is universal among the Christians of Kerala, though many modern historians are inclined to regard as unreliable the evidence on which the tradition rests.
- In view of the extensive trade relations that existed between Kerala and the Mediterranean countries there seems to be nothing improbable in the St Thomas tradition.
- Since its introduction, the Christian faith, though alien in its origin, came to be accepted as an indigenous faith and it made steady progress. The number of Christians seems to have been reinforced in 345 A.D. by an influx of Syrian immigrants of 400 Christians from 72 families belonging to seven tribes from Baghdad, Nineveh and Jerusalem.
- Cosmas Indicopleustes the Byzantine monk (6th century A.D.) testifies to the existence of a Christian church in Quilon. The Christians of the age were prominent in trade and commerce and they received several privileges and favors from the native rulers.
- During the age of the Second Chera Empire (800-1102 A.D.) the Christians were a highly favored business community in the land. The Teresappalli copper plate executed in 849 A.D. by Ayyan Adikal Thiruvadikal, the Governor of Venad, during the reign of Emperor Sthanu Ravi (844-855 A.D) is a

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- historic document granting several rights and privileges to the Christians of Quilon.
- It proclaims the spirit of religious toleration and catholicity of outlook which characterized the contemporary rulers of Kerala. The Christians were treated on a footing of equality with the Hindus and assigned a place
- of honor in the economic and social life of Quilon.
- Another document of historical importance which bears similar testimony to the tolerant outlook of the rulers is the Copper Plate Grant (1225 A.D.) issued by Veera Raghava Chakravarthi, the ruler of Mahodayapuram, to the Christian merchant, Iraivi Korthanan, granting to the latter the office of
- Manigramam i.e., the headship of the merchants of the place in addition to several other privileges and rights.
- Christianity made steady progress in Kerala and the church became one of the well-established institutions in the course of centuries. The liturgy and organizations of the church were also subjected to diverse cultural influences during different stages of its history. The early Christians were, in fact, called **Syrian Christians** because they followed the Syriac liturgy.
- It may be mentioned that Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ and it became the language of the Mother Church of Persia with which the Kerala church had ecclesiastical communion from the 6th to 16th centuries.

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- Consequently, Syriac became the sacred language of the Kerala church as well. In course of time, Latin liturgy was also introduced side by side with Syriac liturgy among the Christians.
- It was the Christian missionaries who visited Quilon in the medieval period who introduced the Latin rite for the first time in Kerala. When the Portuguese established their political influence in Kerala after 1498 AD. Latin rite emerged as a more important and permanent factor. A large community of Latin Christians sprang up in Kerala particularly in the coastal areas. A section of the Christians thus came under the jurisdiction of the Papacy.
- Towards the middle of the 17th century the power of the Portuguese declined in Kerala and was replaced by the Dutch power. A section of the Christian church owing allegiance to the Pope freed itself from Roman influence and became independent under local Bishops.
- **Episcopal succession** was secured through the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and thus began the Antiochian connection of the Kerala church.
- With the establishment of the British power the church mission society of London began work in the Syrian church. In the initial stages there was a high degree of cooperation between the Syrian priests and the CMS missionaries but eventually there was friction between the two.

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- The CMS missionaries started working independently and on their initiative the Anglican Church came into existence. They concentrated
- their work among non-Christians, particularly among the lower castes in the Hindu community.
- Meanwhile, some of the Syrian priests who had come under the influence of the CMS advocated reform in the church. They pleaded especially for the replacement of Syriac by Malayalam as the language of worship in the church.
- This provoked opposition from the Bishops and clergy of the Syrian church. The reformers who were led by Abraham Malpan of Maramon
- formed a new church known as the Marthoma Syrian church as distinct from the Jacobite Syrian Church and the Roman Catholic church of Malabar.
- Thus in the course of the 19th centuries after the introduction of Christianity in Kerala the one church founded by St Thomas branched off into different streams as the result of the domination of foreign churches. Eventually there came into existence five distinct branches, viz,
- **1) the Nestorian church confined to Trichur and Ernakulam with a**
- **congregation in Trivandrum.**

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- **2) The Roman Catholic church spread out all over Kerala and followed three different languages for their ceremonies. Viz., Syriac, Latin, Malayalam.**
- **3) the Jacobite Syrian church also known as the orthodox Syrian church.**
- **4) The Anglican church which is now part of the church of South India and**
- **5) the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.**
- There has recently been a schism in the Jacobite Syrian Church, one section owing intelligence to the Catholics of the East and another to the Patriarch of Antioch.

As a result of another split, the Mar Thoma Church recently gave birth to a new denomination viz, the St Thomas Evangelical church. There are, in addition, a number of minor missions and churches like the Salvation Army,

Lutheran mission, brother mission, bible faith mission etc. each of which seeks ideological inspirations from some foreign church. It may thus be seen from the rise and growth of Christianity in Kerala that diverse cultural influences have been at work in molding the organizations and liturgy of the various denominations of the church.

The Catholic Church has been in recent years in the forefront of a movement for Indianization of the church and this is having its impact.

The Christians have identified themselves with the community in which they lived by adopting the language, customs and dress of their Hindu brethren. In fact, their social assimilation has become a fait accompli.

Jews



The Jews living in the Kerala coast from the 1st century A.D. Onwards have also written another glorious chapter in the history of cultural confluence in Kerala. The Jewish immigration to Kerala was the direct effect of the early commercial contacts with Israel.

According to tradition some 10,000 Jews and Jewesses came to Kerala coast in 68 A.D. in order to escape from religious persecution at home. They landed first at **Muziris** and founded a settlement. Later they moved to such places as Parus, Mala and Pullut.

The Jewish

The population of Kerala was reinforced in course of time by fresh arrivals of immigrants when, with the spread of Christianity, the Jews had to face severe persecution at home.

The Jews, like the Christians, developed into a prosperous business community with the generous patronage of the native rulers. The famous Jewish Copper Plate Grant of Bhaskara Ravi Varman dated 1000 A.D. records the royal gift to Joseph Rabban, the Jewish chief, of certain permanent rights and privileges.

This document is yet another eloquent testimony to the policy of religious toleration followed by the rulers of ancient Kerala. The Jews enjoyed a high standing in society till the arrival of the Portuguese who persecuted them and compelled them to leave Cranganore for Cochin in 1565. The famous White Jew's Synagogue was built in 1567.

For centuries thereafter the Jews formed an interesting and colorful community in Central Kerala. But the birth of the Jewish State of Israel in May 1948 stirred the imagination of the Kerala Jews too and the vast majority of them migrated from the State. According to the census of 1991 there were only more than a hundred Jews in Kerala.

Islam



Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam also found a home in Kerala during the period immediately following the birth of the faith. The early commercial relations between Kerala and the Arabs must have paved the way for the foundation for the spread of Islam too.

The Arab traders seem to have introduced the Islamic faith at Muziris in the 8th century itself.

The first mosque in Kerala, like the first church, was established at **Cranganore (Muziris)**.

The religion of the prophet made gradual progress, thanks to the patronage of local rulers. According to a tradition current in Kerala, the last of the

Chera employers, (Cheramam Perumal) became a convert to Islam and left for Mecca and this event helped the spread of Islam in Kerala. It may, however, be noted that there is no historical evidence in support of this tradition.

In the course of centuries, Islam spread to other parts of Kerala, and Muslims are today, next to the Hindus the most influential community in the State. The patronage of the Zamorins (Rajas of Calicut) particularly helped the Muslims to become a major force in the public life of North Kerala.

A stone inscription in the Munchunti Mosque at Kuttichira in Kozhikode records a permanent grant of property by a Zamorin to the mosque in the 13th century and bears evidence of the Zamorin Raja's patronage of Islam. The Zamorin's navy was manned by Muslims.

The **Kunjali Marakkar**, the admirals of the Zamorin's fleet, have immortalized themselves in Kerala history by their heroic fight against Portuguese colonialism. The services of the Muslim community were so indispensable to the Zamorins that they even issued an edict that, in order to get sufficient number of Muslims to man their navy, one or more male members of

The families of the Hindu fisherman should be brought up as Muslims.

Apart from providing proof of the tolerant policy pursued by the Zamorins, this also accounts for the relatively high proportion of Muslims in the population of the Kozhikode and Malappuram Districts.

Colonial Expansions



The advent of the Europeans marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Kerala. It put Kerala firmly on the political map of India. The arrival of Vasco-da Gama at Kappad near Calicut in May 1498 inaugurated the Da Gama Epoch in the history of Asia.

It was an epoch of European domination over Asiatic countries. It lasted for more than five centuries (1498–1947). No event during the Middle Ages had such a far-reaching repercussions on the civilized world as the opening of a sea route of India, says the Cambridge History.

Portuguese



Portugal, though a small and insignificant country in the middle ages, played a significant role in the medieval history of Kerala. Their landing/anchoring at Kozhikode symbolized the beginning of a new dawn in the commercial history of the land. The Portuguese advent to Kerala was motivated by several factors.

Their main aim was to find a new route to India. The desire for Malabar spices in general and Pepper in particular attracted the Portuguese to Kerala. Pepper, the black gold was the cheapest and most useful of spices and

Malabar as the land of pepper brought them to the Malabar Coast.

With this was added the desire of maritime exploration. However their immediate objective was the extension of trade. Later they had the imperialistic aim of building a Portuguese empire in India.

The political condition of Kerala suited their desire. There was bi central authority in the land. Kerala was fragmented by a number of chieftains who were fighting with one another for supremacy.



Vasco-da Gama was sent by Dom Manual the Portuguese king on July 8, 1496 at the head of an expedition. He reached Calicut on May 20, 1498

and was well received by the Zamorin and his subjects with traditional hospitality. Gama met the Zamorin as the representative of the king of Portugal, 'the most powerful of the Christian sovereigns in the West'. He expressed the king's desire to enter into a commercial treaty with the Zamorin to procure spices. However the Zamorin turned down the request as he insisted on payment of customs duty.

Thereupon Gama left Calicut and reaching Kannur entered into a commercial treaty with the Kolathiri. He returned to Lisbon in 1499 where He was given a hero's welcome.

Vasco-da Gama came for a second time to Kerala, this time to avenge the Zamorin. The Zamorin although agreed to pay compensation for the Portuguese loss, refused to expel the Arabs from Calicut. Thereupon Gama bombarded Calicut port and destroyed the Arab merchant fleet. Returning to Kochi where his demands were met.

Gama sailed back to Portugal in 1502. Da Gama's departure was followed by a bitter conflict between Kochi and Calicut.

The Zamorin emerged as the leader of the resistance to Portuguese. In this struggle, the Portuguese sided with the Cochin Raja and the Zamorin was forced to withdraw. When Albuquerque came, he patched up the differences with the Zamorin by the treaty of 1513.

The Portuguese were granted permission to erect a fort at Calicut. In the meanwhile, the Portuguese headquarters in India was shifted from Kochi to Goa. This was the beginning of the end of Portuguese imperialism in Kerala.

Albuquerque's successors were weak and corrupt. Although Vasco da Gama came for a third time as Portuguese viceroy, and scored a victory over Kolathiri and the Zamorin, he passed away at Kochi.

His successor Manazes and Sampaygo were not able to make any mark, paving the way for Portuguese enterprise to decline.

Dutch



The Dutch were the first Protestant nation of Europe to establish trade contacts with Kerala. Established in 1592, the Dutch E.I. Company dispatched missions to the local rulers to secure trade privileges.

Van Hagen the Dutch Admiral had concluded a treaty with the Zamorin (November, 1604) to expel the Portuguese from India.

It also secured trade facilities at Calicut.

The treaty is important as the first political agreement entered into between the Dutch and an Indian power. The treaty was renewed in 1608 and the Dutch

were given freedom of trade in the Zamorin's domain.

The treaty of 1610 stipulated to pay customs duty to the Zamorin. The 1625 agreement gave the Dutch permission to build a factory in the Zamorin's domain.

Similar treaties were signed with **Purakkad (1642)**, **Kayamkulam and Venad (1662)** to have warehouses in the respective domains and monopoly of pepper trade.

Thus by the early decades of the 17th Century the Dutch had emerged as a serious rival to the Portuguese.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch contact produced results beneficial to Kerala. They revived Kerala trade. New products and scientific techniques of cultivation were introduced. They gave encouragement to coconut cultivation on commercial basis.

They promoted indigo and paddy cultivation. New industries like salt farming and dyeing were introduced. Although they never built seminaries or colleges, the memoirs, letters and accounts left by the Dutch men like Visschier, Nieuhoff and Van Rheedee are of inestimable value for the reconstruction of Kerala history.

The greatest achievement of the Dutch in the cultural field was the compilation of **HORTUS MALABARICUS**, a monumental botanical work on the medicinal plants of Kerala.

It was compiled under the patronage of the Dutch governor Van Rheede. With this project were associated such stalwarts like Mathaeus the Carmelite monk;

Appu Bhat, Ranga Bhat and Vinayak Bhatt, the three G.S. Brahmins and Ithi Achan (Itti Achutan), an Ezhava physician. It took many years to complete the work and it was finally published from Amsterdam between 1678 and 1703 in 12 volumes.

The English and The French

Following the footsteps of the Portuguese and the Dutch, the English and the French came to Kerala mainly for commercial purposes, but later had political ambitions. They built up and consolidated their rule in the land and began to rule over an empire vaster than the American colonies.

Ralph Fetch was the first Englishman to reach the shores of Kerala (1583). Capt. Keeling who followed him concluded a treaty with the Zamorin in 1615 in order to expel the Portuguese from Malabar. During the last days of Portuguese rule (1635-35), the English secured access to all Portuguese

Ports in Kerala and they began to export pepper to England from 1636. In 1644, the English obtained permission from the king of Venad to build a factory at Vizhinjam.

In 1664, the Zamorin granted them permission to erect a factory at Calicut. In 1684 the Rani of Attingal gave them permission to build a factory at Anjengo substantially increased English influence. Fort Anjengo soon became the most important English possessions on the West Coast, next only to Mumbai.

Along with building their influence in South Kerala, the English took steps to safeguard their interests in North Kerala. With the permission of the Kolathiri, they set up a factory at Thalassery (1694). When the English companies were united in 1702, Thalassery along with Karwar, Calicut and Anjengo became the affiliated factories of Bombay.

When English had to face opposition from the natives who raided the company's warehouses and inflicted heavy damages (1704-05), the English built a fort at Thalassery in 1708 and secured monopoly of trade in pepper from Kolathiri.

The French too entered Kerala with the purpose of trade. They arrived near Thalassery in 1725 and occupied Mahe. They had already established their superiority over Pondicherry, and Mahe was captured as per the directions of Pandy Governor. With this a new European power also came to the Kerala Coast to take part in the struggle for power –

The French East India Company

Caste and social reform movements



Caste and British Interventions

Prior to the coming of the British, caste had grown into a powerful social institution, with the dominance of Brahmins at the top of its hierarchy.

The Hindu kings also upheld this institution with the help of their civil

power. With the advent of the British as the political head of the society,

the traditional form of the caste started taking a different shape. The

British brought with them their own traditional form of government which

was quite different from that of the Indian monarchical system. As

prudent foreigners, the British were

more interested in consolidating their power over a strange land and

people rather than initiating reformative changes in its peculiar

institutions such as '**Caste**'.

They introduced a system of education which did not demand of the

learners

any change of caste or religion. The policy of comparative non - interference followed by the British made the lower castes revolt against the Brahmin supremacy.

Growth of modern industrial organization and the rapid spread of urbanization further altered the social situation. This situation made it inevitable for people of different castes, classes and religions to live in close congregations in cities.

The East India Company of the British obtained from the Mughal rulers some commercial privileges in the beginning of the 17th century. It tightened its political hold over the whole of India within 7 to 8 decades.

After

consolidating their power the British introduced throughout India uniform legal, legislative and judicial systems. The British transferred the judicial powers of the caste councils to the civil and criminal courts which affected the authority which the Panchayats had held over the members.

Questions of assault, adultery, rape and the like were taken before the British courts for decision. In civil matters such as marriage, divorce, caste based occupational disputes, disputes between husband and wife, parents and children etc, the intention of the British was to be guided by the caste customs.

But in actual practice various decisions of the High court's virtually set aside the authority of the caste.

Some of the legislations which the British introduced shook the integrity

of the caste system are **The Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850, The Special marriage Act of 1872, and the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act of 1856.**

The spread of English education also exposed Indians for the first time to the Western world.

The popular western ideas and values such as **“liberty, equality and fraternity”**,

democracy, rationalism, individualism, women’s liberation, secularism, humanitarianism etc made their inroads into India. These ideas had deeply influenced the western educated Indians. The people who had hitherto been the targets of atrocities, deprivation, exploitation and humiliation could now voice their protest by asserting their rights.

Increasing influence of science and technology added greater strength to the growing awareness of the masses.

Major Social Reform Movements in Kerala – SNDP and Backward Class Movements



From 1812 until almost the close of the century, though political life was characterized by inactivity and society presented an outward calmness, subversive forces were forming and developing.

This current of social transformation gradually led Kerala into the mainstream of political struggle for freedom and responsible government in the 20th century. The important outcome of this ferment was the awakening of the masses, especially the lower orders in the Hindu society, against social injustice and evils.

This awakening found articulation in Kerala towards the last quarter of the 19th century. A number of socio-religious reform movements, which were also the earliest democratic mass movements in Kerala, took shape.

On the whole, these movements were peaceful and non-violent, though there was an undercurrent of militancy in them. These movements were of the utmost significance, because Kerala had, for centuries, tolerated the caste system in its most oppressive form.

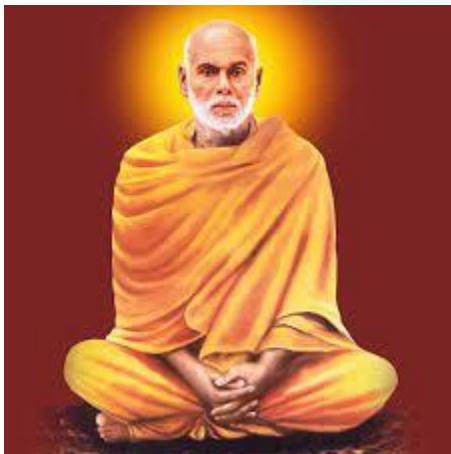
The rigid caste system and irrational caste taboos existed in such a heinous way that the lower orders were not only '**untouchable**' but '**unapproachable**' as well.



In Malabar, despite the advent of direct British rule and the resultant separation of the caste system from the administrative machinery, social status and economic competence of the individual was still determined by his position in the caste hierarchy.

In the princely states of Kochi and Travancore, the hold of the caste system was even more suffocating. Until the

In the 20th century, governmental positions were denied to lower castes and non-Hindus.



One of the most important social reform movements was spearheaded by **Shri Narayana Guru**, the great Hindu saint and social reformer.

The Guru was born in 1856 in the Ezhava Community which had a status far below that of the Namboodiris.

He fearlessly criticized and campaigned against the rigors of the caste system, the Brahmin hegemony and the numerous social disabilities of the

Ezhavas and other lower castes. Soon Shri Narayana Guru became the rallying point for the Ezhavas and Thiyyas to unite and organize.

The Shri Narayana Dharma ParipalanaYogam (SNDP), literally the society for the propagation of moral teaching of Shri Narayana came into being on 15th May 1903.

Within a short period, the Guru and Yogam drew towards them a brilliant band of dedicated workers, including the poet Kumaran Asan, whose efforts constitute an eloquent testament to what a community, submitted to centuries of tyranny, can do and achieve through unity, realism and organism.

Shri Narayana was, however, no sectarian philosopher and leader. A programme of action founded upon such sublime humanism and social purpose was not destined to remain confined to one caste only; it soon became the philosophy of Hindu reformation, encompassing all castes, including the Brahmin.

The Nair's also felt the need for reform.

Throughout the medieval period and until well into the 19th century, the Nairs had a pre-eminent role in Kerala. By the middle of the 19th century,

however, this dominance started waning. Institutions like the Sambandam (non-legal marriage) and the matrilineal joint family system, which had ensured the strength of the Nair community earlier, now became productive of many evils. The impact of the market economy, the disappearance of traditional military training, the absorption of new values through the new system of education, the self-consciousness being generated among the lower castes and their cry for equality and privileges - all these factors brought about a decline of **Nair dominance**.

The sense of decline gave an impetus to the spirit of reform that expressed itself in the work of religious men like Chattampi Swamikal, in literature, in the press and later in legislative enactments in respect of marriage, inheritance, property rights etc. Ultimately, the movements crystallized in the foundation of the Nair Service Society in 1914.

The impulse to change was not confined to the Ezhavas and other untouchables and the Nairs only. As a matter of fact in varying degrees, it affected every caste in Hindu society as well as the Christians and the Muslims.

Vaikom Satyagraha



A movement had set on foot to demand admission of certain sections of the people, the so-called **“unapproachable”** banned from appearing in public roads adjacent to the famous temple at Vaikom. Conservative opposition was trotted out with obstinate determination.

The feeding of Brahmins inside the temple was regarded as an important offering to the deity, and uninterrupted custom was pleaded by those who opposed the movement. It was contended that if the **'Avarnas'** were allowed to come into the approach roads the temple priests would be polluted and the temple consequently defiled. The forward section resolved to

try the methods of **'Satyagraha'** and several individuals, a large number of whom being Nayers and other caste Hindus, organized a **"Jatha"** to lay their grievance before Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai, the Regent of Travancore. A resolution was moved in the Legislative Council demanding the opening of the temple roads to the 'Avarna' Hindus.

But it was thrown out by a majority of twenty-two against twenty-one votes. A little after this Mahatma Gandhi visited Vaikom in Meenam 1100 (Ch. era-1924), interviewed several orthodox Brahmins and others,

and explained the movement as one which was calculated to remove social injustice and

to advance the cause of humanity.

Public opinion in the state was so favorable that the government threw open the approach roads to the 'Avarnas'. "**I call it a bed-rock of**

freedom", said Mahatma Gandhi, "because the settlement is a document between the people and the state constituting a big step in the direction of liberty in one respect at least".

The course of events in Vaikom led to similar attempts in Suchindram and Thiruvārppu.

Guruvayur Satyagraha



The famous **Guruvayur Satyagraha** is a memorable episode in the history of the national movement. With the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee decided to begin Satyagraha before the famous temple at Guruvayur with effect from 1st November, 1931. It was a movement for temple entry and abolition of untouchability. The Satyagraha began accordingly under the leadership of **Sri. K. Kelappan**.

Among the Kerala leaders other than **Kelappan** were **Mannath Padmanabhan, A.K. Gopalan and N.P. Damodaran.**

Guruvayur began to attract the attention of all India. There were certain untoward incidents during the early period of the Satyagraha. They served to heighten the tension in the minds of the people who were in sympathy with the movement. After the movement had run its course for about ten months, Kelappan entered on a fast before the temple on September, 21, 1932.

The fast electrified the atmosphere. On October 2, 1932 Kelappan broke his fast in response to Gandhi's wishes. There after a referendum was held among the Hindus to find out their views on the question of temple entry. More than 77 percent of the Hindus expressed themselves in favor of temple entry. The Guruvayur temple was thrown open to Harijans only in 1946. Though the Satyagraha did not immediately

As a result of the opening of the Guruvayur temple to all Hindus, the movement helped to create a strong public opinion in the country in favor of temple entry and abolition of untouchability.

Temple Entry Proclamation



- In Travancore the movements for the mitigation of the severities of caste, if not its total abolition, have been popular. The teachings of Sree Narayana Guru gave a momentum to the forces which were generated by the extension of western education among the masses and the tolerant policy pursued by the State in recognising the legitimate claims of the backward communities.
- The promulgation of the Temple Entry Proclamation was a
- reform of far-reaching importance, not only to the teeming millions of Travancore but a momentous act of emancipation and hope to the whole of India. The Proclamation runs as follows:
"Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on divine guidance and
- **on all-comprehending toleration, knowing that in its practice it has throughout the centuries, adapted itself to the needs of changing times, solicit that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth or caste of community, be denied the consolations and the solace of the Hindu faith.**" His Highness the Maharaja had earlier in his reign commanded

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- the appointment of a committee to examine the question of Temple Entry for the 'Avarnas' to find out the extent of the demand for reforms, to ascertain the attitude of the Savarna castes, to examine the question in the light of the Hindu scriptures and formulate proposals as to the lines on which
- the reform might be affected. The committee expressed their considered opinion that a Parishad of learned persons, well versed in the theory and practice of Hinduism, should be summoned, and that the reform might be affected by the ruler with their approval.
- They also suggested certain methods by which the rigor of the custom excluding the Avarnas from the temple might be softened.
- But the Maharaja did not believe in half measures. With an outlook which no Indian monarch had been able to entertain for a couple of thousands of conservative years,
- His Highness the Maharaja Sree Chitra Thirunal affixed the Sign Manual to the momentous Proclamation. It was on the eve of the Maharaja's birth day in 1112(1936 A.D.) that the edict was promulgated. The
- Proclamation was received throughout India with delight and admiration. It was welcomed by the whole civilized world. To the Hindus it was a matter of pride and fresh hope.
- The Repercussions of the Proclamation were so great that the Christians and Muslims were so great that the Christians and Muslims were equally warm in giving it a hearty reception.

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- **Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer** referred to the day of the Proclamation as a unique occasion in the history of India and specially of Hinduism. Gandhiji expressed the hope that "all other Hindu Princes will follow the noble example set by this far-off ancient Hindu State." The Prime Minister of Madras described the Proclamation as the "**greatest religious reforms in India after the time of Asoka**".
- The Maharaja gave the biggest charity that any ruler could give to his subjects in opening the doors to every class and creed.

Channar Revolt (1813–1859)

Figure 2: Subaltern Women Engaged in the Making of Coir



- Channar revolt is also known as Channar lahala or Maaru marakkal Samaram, by Nadar women in Travancore Kingdom for the right to wear upper body to clothes and cover their breasts.
- During that time, the lower caste women were not allowed to wear clothes that covered their breasts and this uneasiness made a large number of Nadar embraced Christianity and started to wear 'long clothes'.

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- In the year 1813 colonel John Munro issued an order granting permission to women converted to Christianity to wear upper cloth, yet they still denied.
- And in 1859, under pressure from Madras governor Charles Trevelyan, King of Travancore issued a proclamation the right for all Nadar women to cover their breast, but they were not allowed to cover in the style of higher class women. Later the challenge was supported by Ayyankali during 1915 – 1916, and attained the permission.

Aruvippuram Consecration by Sree Narayana Guru

[1888]



Aruvippuram is a village in the southern district of Thiruvannathapuram in Kerala.

The lower caste people do not have the permission to worship gods, as the idols were considered as the gods of upper caste people.

Sree Narayana Guru defied Brahmanical tradition of installation of deity as it was the right of Brahmins, where he established a Shiva temple at Aruvippuram by installing a rock from the Neyyar River. This represented

the self determination of the lower caste people to fight against caste rigidity and upper caste domination, which also paved the way for uprooting centuries old system of Kerala.

In continuation of the Aruvippuram, Guru established several temples in various parts of Kerala, where lower people were permitted. The incident also inspired the Guruvayur and Vaikomssatyagraha of the 20th century.

Villuvandi agitation by Ayyankali

- In 1865, Travancore saw a new order from the British government which gave the right for all sections of society to ride in wheeled vehicles. But avarnas/low castes were denied from traveling in roads meant for kings and higher castes
- (rajaveethi).
- Ayyankali acted against this discrimination by purchasing Bullock cart and he rode the bullock cart from Venganoor. He chose the road as a medium for his agitation as it represented the idea to use public space.
- He emphasized the right to travel, right to trade and self-respect which will eventually promote economic development and social benefits.
- The Aruvippuram incident inspired Ayyankali to act against the social evil, which discriminated against upper and lower castes.

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The idea of Villuvandi, as it was generally used by king and rich people marked the protest of Ayyankali

- against the discrimination, and it represented the idea of freedom.
- **Malayali Memorial (1891) – G.P Pillai & SankaraMenon)**
- It was a petition submitted to the Maharaja of Travancore (Sree Moolam Thirunal) which was signed by 10028 persons belonging to all castes and creed (Hindu, Christian and Muslim) to draw the attention to the exclusion of educated natives from the higher grades of public services.
- The petition pleaded for a fair quota for the natives for government appointments. But the government attitude was unhelpful and outsiders continued to be appointed. Nevertheless the agitation served its purpose namely to arouse political
- consciousness of the people. It also symbolized the emergence of the new educated middle class as a force to be reckoned with.

Ezhava Memorial (1896)

Malayali memorial was mainly a high caste sponsored (especially nairs) petition, which mainly focussed the plight of the educated upper class people. This made the Ezhavas to take their own action to gain their rights. Dr Palpu, who denied Medical services in Travancore undertook mass petition strategy and it was signed by 13,176 members of Ezhava community. This document was known as Ezhava memorial.

Kallumala Samaram/Perinad Lahala

It is an agitation that took place at Perinad and nearby villages by the Pulayar community. The agitation was a sudden uprising against the upper classes dictum to the minority castes to not use the public roads, denying the right to education, prohibiting centuries of temples and denying women to wear gold or metal ornaments.

Ayyankali persuaded Pulaya women in south Travancore to wear undergarments and throw away the bead necklaces which they used for covering the breasts from time immemorial which was considered as a symbol of slavery.

A public meeting was convened by Ayyankali in 1915 at Perinad, to throw away their traditional ornaments and the meeting was attacked by caste elites. This was a turning point in the history of Kerala reformation, as the agitation marked the ability of downtrodden sections to act against caste barriers.

Education and Social Transformation – Role of Christian Missionaries



The beginning of western education in Kerala may be associated with the work of Christian missionaries. It was the protestant missionaries who took the initiative in this regard.

A Prussian missionary by name Ringletaube was active in Trivandrum-Nagercoil area during the period 1806-16. He set up schools where free instructions were given in reading, writing and arithmetic to all poor children, irrespective of caste or creed. But the most illustrious name connected with

educational work in this area was that of Dr. Mead of the London Mission Society. From the time of his arrival in 1817 till his death in 1873 he devoted his whole time to educational work. He established several schools including

industrial schools and also encouraged female education. The Christian missionaries were active in other parts of the state also. As early as 1813 the Syrian priests had set up a college or seminary in Kottayam for training priests. The CMS missionaries who worked among the Syrians introduced here several branches of secular instruction. They also set up in Kottayam a Grammar School in 1821 and their wives set up a few Girls school in Kottayam and adjoining areas to promote female education.

Among the early CMS

missionaries of Kottayam the names of Bailey, Baker and Fenn deserves special mention.

In the Cochin area the first school was started at Mattancherry by the English missionary Rev.J.Dawson in 1818 with the aid of a grant received from the Government.

English education began in the Malabar area with the establishment of a school each at Kallayi in Calicut in 1848 and at Tellicherry in 1856 by the Basel Evangelical Mission.

The fine example set by the Christian missionaries in different parts of the state gave the necessary incentive to the government to enter the field of education.

In 1817, Rani Gouri Parvati Bai, with the assistance of her Diwan Col. Munro introduced a system of free and compulsory education under state control.

Malayalam primary schools were set up in all parts of the state and guardians of children between the ages of 5 and 10 were enjoined under law to send their children to school. Men with suitable qualifications were appointed as teachers and paid salaries from the state treasury.

This was a clear recognition of the principle that the cost of education was charged on state funds. In 1834 during the reign of Swati Tirunal the first English school was started at Trivandrum with Mr.J.Roberts of the CMS mission, Nagercoil as Headmaster. This was done at the invitation of the Maharaja. In less than a year Robert's School was taken over by the Government and became "His **Higness the Maharaja' Free School**".

In 1866 it was raised to the status of a college. In the Cochin and Malabar areas also we find progress on similar lines. In 1845 was opened the English

High school at Ernakulam, the nucleus of the Maharajas College of later days. Dr. Gundert, the founder of the Basel Mission in Malabar, was also the Government Inspector of Schools for Malabar and South Canara. The Brennen School at Tellicherry started in 1862 under the auspices of the Basel

mission with an endowment of Rs.12000 by Mr.Brennen, the master Attendant at Tellicherry, was later taken over by the Government and run as the Government Brennen College.

The foundations of English education in Kerala were thus firmly laid. A chain of colleges and schools came to be set up, in due course. Whereas these institutions served the cause of general education, the need for starting institutions offering courses of studies in specialized branches of knowledge was also left. This led to the establishment of institutions offering professional and technical courses as well as those devoted to the promotion of oriental studies and fine arts. Among the earliest of such institutions to be started in the respective fields mention may be made of the Law college, **Trivandrum(1874), the Ayurveda college, Trivandrum (1889), the Sanskrit college, Trivandrum (1889), the Engineering college Trivandrum (1939), the Swati Tirunal Academy (now college of Music-1939), the medieval college**

Trivandrum (1951), the Agricultural college, Trivandrum(1955) and the Veterinary college , Trichur (1955).

In later years more institutions came to be started in the above fields in order to cater to the increasing demand for professionals and specialists.

Caste and class transformation

The social composition of Kerala is significant since it has determined the sociological foundation of Kerala politics. The traditional four-fold division of society (Chaturvarnya) is not applicable to Kerala.

Numerous sub castes have grown around the major castes. Prominent castes like the Nayers and Ezhavas do not fit into the traditional caste division. Although the Scheduled Castes and tribes may have certain common characteristics and on this basis can be demarcated from other groups they lack the cultural homogeneity to be considered a social unit. Inter-caste hostility is often greater among them since some of them receive better opportunities of modernisation and earn greater social mobility.

The members of the lower castes, unwilling to leave their caste, however low it may be, tried to improve their status by adopting the cultural patterns of the higher castes. In social change the caste association has greater significance than the caste itself.

Castes and sub-Castes remain even now the basis of social and political action. Kerala may be described as a communal museum.

Communities, advanced and backward as well as large and small have made up the Kerala society.

Many factors such as religious revival and rivalry, economic compulsion, spirit of modernisation, etc. contributed to mental turmoil which took the form of social reform movements. The religion and society of Kerala has also changed

greatly over the centuries. Here, over two thousand years ago, the Tamil speaking people developed a fairly advanced civilization independently of the Aryan north.

During this period, Kerala remained a part of an area sharing the same language and cultural activities. The entire South India was referred to as '**Tamilakam**' by the Sangham works as well as contemporary foreign accounts.

Gradually Keralites broke away from the Tamilians, a process undoubtedly encouraged by their geographical situation. In the course of centuries we developed our own culture, in the process extensively absorbing Aryan elements from the north, as well as Arab and European elements from the west.

These influences affected the language and religion of the Keralites.

A silent revolution was taking place in the socio religious system of Kerala during the last phase of the Sangam Age.

It was a landmark in the formation of the agrarian society of Kerala. The simple tradition of the tribes became extremely complex as the people migrated to the other parts and turned into settled agriculturalists.

The rapid increase of the new ideologies with the emergence of **Buddhism, Jainism, Brahmanism, Christianity and Islam** shook their **tradition and became extremely complex.**

In the wake of socio-economic transformation, the heterodox religious ideologies themselves underwent major changes and got reconstructed more or less in idioms of pre-existing tradition.

The formation of organized Brahmin settlements in Kerala in the ninth century must have been the result of a slow process of migration from time to time. Usually the whole of Kerala was covered by a network of temple centered Brahmin settlements.

A combined administration of knowledge, institutional support, division of labor and ideology was essential for the formation of such settlements.

The Brahmins had great knowledge and this enabled them to be a dominant community in Kerala.

People govern themselves and others through the production of knowledge.

The Namboothiris (Kerala Brahmins) gradually gained dominance as the advisory committees of the Kings.

The final stage of Brahmin domination coincides with the rise of Kulasekharam. They were the patrons of Brahmanism in Kerala. Large numbers of temples were constructed and Namboodiris became powerful and influential. The

Brahmins attained a position of primacy in social and religious matters.

Manipravalam works testify to the dominant position of the Brahmins in contemporary Kerala society.

The final stage in the development of society is marked by the emergence of class and state. Initially, the state emerged from gross inequality in the distribution of produce. Later it was dominated by those who managed to obtain a greater portion of land, labor and other basic sources of subsistence.

Unequal distribution culminated in unequal access to the sources of livelihood.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, the land of Kerala was governed by dozens of Naduvazhies under a feudal system which went by Brahmanical codes of morality.

A self-regulating social system organized in terms of communities prevailed and managed the affairs. The higher-ups in the hierarchy monopolized the juridical-political matters by tradition. The juridical conventions and the

Administration of justice was primarily based on Sastric jurisprudence institutionalized as **'Desamaryada' or local conventions**.

Since the Brahmins were the hegemonic group with enormous economic and cultural control, their Vedic Sastric-Puranic adaptation constituted the chief tradition of wisdom for representing the socio-political processes. The

technologies that are derived from knowledge are used by various institutions to exert power over people.

There is a link between knowledge and power.

An important characteristic of the Hindu society of Kerala was the observance of the caste system which made the social life of the vast majority of the people miserable. This social stratification is a particular form of social inequality.

The caste system that had stratified communities on the basis of inequality was part and parcel of the economic pattern of Hindu society in the pre-colonial period.

The Primitive communist society of Kerala was replaced by a system which divided the society into castes. First into three or four then it became dozens and scores.

Religion had been a central factor in the culture of Kerala since the beginning

of its formation. As an ideology, religion played an important part where the caste system progressively established here.

Caste based social order was the creation of the age-old Hindu religion.

Caste is not the growth of a single age or even a few centuries. It assumes different characteristics at different times.

Caste structure goes out of inter-relationships between groups. The institution of caste based social stratification was a major effect of the

sastric-puranic mode of representation of the hereditary social division of labor.

In the division of labor, superior castes were specializing in honorable, lucrative jobs and inferior castes in humble, menial jobs. Division of means was done according to the status and need of each caste. In this dispensation all caste groups received their portion of the material benefits. Thus carpenters, smiths, barbers, washer men, plowmen all got their share of the produce to help them stay alive, at a reduced rate. Inter dependence was the essence of separateness in the caste system. Here caste and occupation went together and a man was born not only into his caste based profession but also into his employer's hands as well.

The institution of caste evolved gradually during the **post-Sangam period**. Though the caste system in Kerala had some peculiarities of its own it was the version of Brahmin- centered Varna- caste system that prevailed elsewhere in India. Kerala has its own peculiarities in the evolution of class-caste society.

Only one of the four Varna - the Brahmins-had become part of Kerala Hindu society. Many of the ruling families belong to the next one, the Kshatriya caste.

But the bulk of the people who carried on the warfare, the professions of Kshatriya were drawn from outside this caste. The traditional warriors of Kerala, in historical times, are non-Kshatriyas.

The third caste Vaisya is totally absent from the caste

hierarchy of Kerala. The nonexistence of any caste whose traditional occupation is trade in the Hindu society of Kerala is significant. The people who perform the function of Vaisya caste—the Jews, the Muslims and the Christians—were outside the Kerala Hindu society even in historical times. At the same time there were minute divisions of caste and sub-caste for each minor occupation.

The caste rules operated in the most irrational manner. The triple defilement practices of untouchability, unapproachability, unseeability were observed by people at all levels of Hindu society. Though the Savarnas did not permit the low caste Hindus to approach them without feeling themselves polluted, no such distance pollution was associated with the Christians and Muslims; but their touch was considered polluting.

There were externally identifiable castes significant too. The style (mode) of clothing, the shape and position of the tuft of hair and the differing style and material of the ornaments functioned as the caste marks of the bodies. The

clothing of Keralites even in the beginning of the twentieth century was prescribed by customs with striking differences based on caste and sub-caste identity.

Clothing functioned as a sign-system to signify the caste of the individual. One would wear a cloth to one's waist strictly limiting the

lower end above the knee-joint or up to the knee-joint or above the ankle or stretching down the ankle.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century was a great turning period which changed the face of Kerala far more than did the preceding thousand years. A new era set in Kerala which witnessed the emergence of the society quite

Different.

Kerala experienced an intellectual revolution or renaissance during this period which totally changed the outlook of the people. Religious, cultural and ideological as well as economic issues lead to important dimensions and

conflict in the social order. This period witnessed the formation of a consciousness about the identity of Kerala in all areas of social endeavor. The nature, direction and momentum of these changes constitute the basis for the introduction of an alternative system of beliefs and re- structure of social institutions.

Rise of the New Professional Classes

It would be interesting to assess the changes that have taken place in the personal life of the Keralites in recent years. The disruption of old social institutions like the joint family , the matrilineal system, the Janmi system etc has helped the average Keralite to acquire a new dignity of his own and develop a fresh outlook.

He is no longer enamored of landed property or the unwieldy mansion known as **Nalukettu**. He has come to have faith in the benefits of higher education which opens up new avenues of employment. Even the young men and women of the socially backward sections in

The community has taken to higher education and this has enabled them to secure jobs in government service and public undertakings. The learned professions have also attracted the new generation of educated young men and women in large numbers.

This has led to the emergence of new professional classes who wield considerable influence in public life. Their interests cut across the conventional barriers based on caste and religion. They constitute the new elite in Kerala society.

Caste in Contemporary Kerala



The Hindu society in Kerala is today organized on the basis of the caste system. The caste system had its origin in Kerala by about the 8th century A.D. when the influx of the Aryan immigrants reached its peak.

The social and economic changes brought about by the Chola-cheram war of the 11th century A.D. strengthened the basis of the caste system. The Namboothiri Brahmins who were at the apex of the caste hierarchy attained a position of primacy in social and religious matters.

Jainism and Buddhism had practically disappeared and Hindu society came to be organized on the basis of castes and sub-castes.

The most striking feature of the society that emerged before long was the predominance of the upper castes and the relatively subordinate position occupied by the lower castes.

The works of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British writers throw light on the social organization of Kerala during the period from the 16th to the 19th century. It may be seen that the Brahmins stood at the top of the social hierarchy and among them the Namboothiris occupied the highest rank.

There were also other Brahmin castes like the Tulu Brahmins and the Goud Saraswath Brahmins who came from outside.

The Kshatriyas who constituted the ruling class were kept by the Namboothiris under their effective control.

The Nairs and Tiyyas (Ezhavas) constituted powerful sections of the Hindu

community. The Nairs being the martial class were the more influential of the two. They moved about the land with sword in hand. Being famous for their fidelity, they were employed by the Portuguese as Changatam

(suicide squads) for protecting their lives and properties. In the Portuguese period

they were not addicted to drink but by the time of Buchanan's visit in 1800-1801, the position had changed.

Kunjan Nambiar who composed his Thullal works in the preceding century makes specific references to the drinking habit of the Nairs. The Tiyyas had toddy tapping as their main occupation, but like the Nairs, they too received military training.

The Kammalas (artisans), the Mukkuvas (fisher folk) and several other castes like the Pulayas, the Parayas and the Kuravas occupied a low position in society and were subjected to all kinds of social disabilities.

The caste rules operated with the utmost rigor. The upper castes like the Brahmins, the Kshtariyas and the Nairs observed them strictly as otherwise they would have been treated as outcasts and sold to Christians or Muslims under royal orders.

The evils of untouchability, unapproachability and instability were observed in the most irrational manner. The members of the lower castes had to keep a distance from the higher castes according to a prescribed schedule. Thus the Pulaya had to keep a distance of 60 ft. from the Nair while the Namboothiri would consider himself polluted even if he is seen by a pulaya or Nayadi. The failure on the part of the members of the lower castes to make way for those of the higher would have invited even the death penalty.

The upper castes (savarnas) like the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the nairs etc. enjoyed several immunities and privileges which were denied to the lower castes.

Political power and authority in the land lay concentrated in the hands of the former. The existence of royal families who had matrimonial connections with Kshatriyas, Nairs etc. and who eventually leaned heavily on the Brahmin officers who were imported from outside for assistance in the discharge of their duties, helped the upper castes to get themselves entrenched in positions of authority.

It was the special privilege of the Brahmin judges, Vaidikar, as they were called, to give judgements in all important cases.

The law administered by them was not equalitarian in any sense. While the Brahmins enjoyed freedom from death penalty, the members of the backward castes were given this punishment even for such ordinary offences as theft, killing of cows etc.

The lower a person's rank in the social scale, the more severe the punishment meted out to him.

Trampling to death under an elephant, blowing from the mouth of a cannon

and hanging (chithravatham) spread over three days were the common punishments imposed on the members of the lower castes even for ordinary offenses.

An Ezhava or Pulaya

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- condemned to death for any crime was hanged while a Nair placed in similar circumstances was beheaded. Trial by ordeal (Satya Pariksha) was common in both criminal and civil cases. The type of ordeal to which a person was
- The subject depended on his caste status. Ordeal by balance (Tukku) was reserved for the Brahmins, fire for Kshatriyas and poison for Sudras. A famous instance of trial by ordeal is the Kaimukku or ordeal of boiling ghee in the Suchindram temple intended for Namboothiri women found guilty for sexual offences.
- This was the position in regard to administration of law at the time of the British conquest of Kerala. Though British rule tended to liberalize the penal
- Code to a certain extent, the Naduvazhis and the upper castes continued to enjoy their position of predominance as the policy of the British government was to sustain them as the props of their power. The members of the lower castes (Avarnas) or backward communities, as they came to be called, had no place in the councils of the state. They could hold no office under the Government either in Travancore or Cochin.
- There were also manifold restrictions in regard to their dress, ornaments, mode of conveyance, use of domestic vessels, manner of construction of houses etc. Individuals among

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- Those who wanted to enjoy privileges in these matters had to make payments to the Sarkar or to the Naduvazhi and obtain a license.
- This arrangement led to a series of inequitable imposts which imposed an intolerable burden on the members of the backward communities. In fact, the dichotomy between the Savarnas and the Avarnas continued to be the bane of Hindu society and stood in the way of the advancement of the backward classes.
- Hindus of one caste lived in complete segregation from their brethren belonging to other castes. The Varnas were denied access to temples, schools and places of public resort and there were even restrictions on their freedom to walk along the public roads without fear.
- The practice of pollution was widely observed. Inter dining was held in terror. It is also worth mentioning that much more than the barriers of caste
- which stood in the way of social mobility, there were inter- sub-caste barriers among the Nairs and also among each of the backward communities like the Ezhavas which too prevented the members of the various castes from acting in unison and harmony as homogeneous communities. There was neither inter-dining nor inter-marriage between the various sub-castes. Moreover, some of the avarnas who were high in the social scale practiced untouchability in relation to the Pulayas and other

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scheduled castes. Thus paradoxical as it may seem, the Harijans were being denied entry into the

- temples owned by the Ezhavas who themselves had the grievance that they were being denied entry into temples by the upper caste Hindus.
- The social science in Kerala, in fact, presented many more such paradoxes. One such glaring paradox was that while a non Hindu like a Christian or Muslim was not barred entering into approach roads to temples or admission to schools, those Hindus who by accident of birth happened to be born in the low castes, were kept out of these places and subjected to social humiliation.
- To make the irony complete, those Hindus who converted themselves to Christianity or Islam immediately got these privileges conferred on them without demur or protest from among the upper caste Hindus.
- It is not surprising that under such circumstances a large number of conversions took place in Kerala from among the backward castes in the Hindu society to Christianity and Islam and the prestige of Hinduism suffered heavily even among these who were born within its fold. Swami
- **Vivekananda** who visited Kerala in 1892 observes as follows about this phenomenon in a letter to one of his friends, "**if a bhangi comes on as a bhangi he would be shunned as the plague**, but no sooner he gets a cupful of water poured upon his head with some

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mutterings of mantras and gets on his back a coat, no matter how threadbare he comes into the room of the most Orthodox Hindu – I do not see tile man who then dares refuse him a chair and a hearty shake of hands. Irony can go no further'. It is significant to note that Swami

- **Vivekananda** felt so disgusted with the caste taboos of the Hindus that he called Kerala the '**mad house of India**

Matriliny in Kerala and its changes, Transformations in family, Marriage, Taravadu, Inheritance, Succession and descent. A distinctive feature of the social organization of Kerala till recent times was the prevalence of **Marumakkathayam or the Matrilineal system** among certain castes and communities. It involved inheritance and succession through the sister's children in the female line. The antiquity of the system has been a theme of controversy among scholars. The traditional view propagated by the Brahmin aristocracy and expounded by the authors of the Keralolpathiis that **Marumakkathayamis** of hoary antiquity and Makkathayam or the patrilineal system of inheritance was unknown to ancient Kerala. As opposed to this is the view that Makkathayam was the system of inheritance prevalent in ancient Kerala and that Marumakkathayam

came into vogue at a later period of Kerala history under the impact of some compelling forces.

The fact that succession to the throne among the early Cheras and the Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram was from father to son is cited as evidence in support of this view.

P.T.Sreenivasa Iyengar, author of the History of the Tamils, is categorical that Marumakkathayam was unknown in Kerala till the tenth century AD.

K P Padmanabha Menon has expressed the view that the Marumakkathayam system was nonexistent in Kerala till the thirteenth century and that it came into vogue in the fourteenth century in response to the challenge of certain compelling circumstances.

The fact that Friar Jordanus of Service (early fourteenth century) is the first foreign traveler to mention the existence of the system and no other foreign observer before him has alluded to it is adduced as evidence in support of this contention. The observations of Friar Jordanus are as follows.

“In this India, never do even the legitimate sons of great kings or princes or barons inherit the goods of their parents but only the sons of their sisters for they say that they have no surety that those are their sons; but it is not so with the sister, for whatever man may be the father, they are certain that the offspring is of their sister and is consequently truly of their blood”.

Prof. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai who too believes in the later origin of Marumakkathayam accepted the view of P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar that the

system was unknown in Kerala till the tenth century, but he agreed with the substance of Padmanabha Menon's view that it was the product of certain compelling circumstances.

As distinct from the two extreme views given above, there is also a compromise view which suggests that Marumakkathayam must have been the system of inheritance and succession prevailing in ancient Kerala and that it must have been in a state of suspended animation during the period of the ascendancy of the patrilineal Brahmin caste till it staged a revival at a later period.

A.L.Bashim has given expression to a similar view. He says, **"In the early days of the Chera Kingdom of Kerala inheritance was through the male line but about the twelfth century a matrilineal system became regular , according to which the heir to the throne was the son not of the king, but of his eldest sister. This system called Marumakkathayam,**

continued in Cochin and Travancore until very recent times, both for royal succession and the inheritance of estates. Perhaps it existed in Kerala at an early period, but was dropped by the upper classes for a while under Brahmanical influence, to be reviewed in the course of the centuries. Family/Tarawad The family or tarawad in the matriarchal society was a joint family consisting of all the descendants of a common ancestress in the female line.

The mother and all her children, all grandchildren by the daughters, all her brothers and sisters and the descendants on the sister's side lived

together in the same home sharing a common kitchen and enjoying all the property and after her death, they shared her property in common with one another. Though every one of the members of the matriarchal family had the right to maintenance from its property, none was entitled to partition.

The consent of all the members of the tarawad is essential for effecting partition.

Though the joint property belonged in law to the females, they were considered as incapable of family management and hence the eldest male member of the family called **karanavan** was vested with the right of managing the family property.

The Karanavan could not, however, alienate the family property except with the unanimous consent of the junior members or the Anantaravans. The junior members had no property of their own and they succeeded to the karavasthanam or managership of the family by seniority.

In case the Karanavan mismanaged the tarawad property, the junior members could initiate legal proceedings and have him removed from the management.

A disquieting aspect of the joint family under Marumakkathayam was the undue influence exercised by the Ammayi, that is, the Karanavan's wife, in the affairs of the Tarawad. It should be noted that her children, through her husband, namely, the Karanavan, had no legal

claim to his family property and still her will prevailed with the latter in family matters.

This led to a lot of dissatisfaction among the junior members and the Ammayi Came to be viewed with suspicion as the cause of all tensions in the Tarawad.

Very often she appropriated for herself and her children whatever little gain the Karanavar Gained from the management of the Tarawad Property and the Anantaravans naturally presented this.

In addition, there was also the complaint that the Karanavar Incurred the displeasure of several junior members of the family also because he was partial to the members of his own Tavazhi(branch) , that is, the children of his direct sisters. As a result of these factors the joint family became a hotbed of troubles and intrigues.

In view of the internal tensions, the joint family system failed to work harmoniously and there began the clamor for the reform of the

Marumakkathayam Law of inheritance.

Plural Traditions of Family in Kerala Regional variations of mutual power rankings, Namboothiri and Nayar communities enjoyed dominance in the Kerala School of Distance Education Kerala Society: Structure and Change 64 social structure. Besides these two dominant communities, Kerala had many Christian and Muslim communities and several intermediate and lower ranking caste, as well as tribal communities which were outside the caste system.

It was the concentration on the dominant Nayar caste and their matriliney that contributed to the perception of Kerala society being predominantly matrilineal was not restricted to Nayars;

It was practiced by a large number of castes and communities covering more than half of the population .

While matriliney existed in many Hindu caste groups, several tribal groups and some Christian and Muslim groups, the patrilineal family was the norm among large Christian religious groups, while among Muslims both patrilineal and matrilineal family norms existed.

Kurichiyans, traditionally a matrilineal hunter gatherer group, were agriculturists scattered over the Kannur, Wayanad and Kozhikode districts of the state.

The traditional Kurichiyans joint family is referred to as 'mittom' with reference to the large courtyard in front of a complex of buildings for dwellings and other purposes, where all family ceremonies take place. Each '**mittom**' has its own Kulam, a grouping of people descended from a common ancestress.

A Kulam is further divided into two segments known as bandhu and panthi and kulams coming within the same segment being sister kulams and forbidden to marry amongst themselves.

Thus **moiety, exogamy** and prescriptive marriage between panthi and bandhu are crucial in the social organization of Kerala Society: Structure and Change 65 the Kurichiyans and the shaping of its family norms.

When a family grows too large for joint living, or new property is acquired new households came up but they were still attached to the 'bottom for all ritual and ceremonial purposes until these new dwellings installed all deities and enshrined them.

Those dwellings that thus acquired independence became erupuras or attara of the original '**mittom**', although they may also be referred as 'mittom'. Once a child reaches the age of five, she/he can be sent by the Karanavar to live in any of the erupuras and the adults too may be circulated between erupuras to meet labor requirements.

A common pool of property for the members was maintained by 'mittom'. The lands were held jointly by the members of the mittom, but the legal rights were vested in the Karanavar.

The women's role was mostly in the private domain, but their role in production and men's dependence on them to maintain the social organization and conventions of their society was undeniable and unchallenged.

Christianity and Muslim Family Traditions The modern beginnings of most of the families are associated with a legendary patriarch, a sort of founder of the family. It is noticed that most of the families in this phase got associated with the Dutch or British in a peculiar way while being under the suzerainty of the local king.

The Syrian Christians readily imbibed western traits more expeditiously than the local Hindus. In North Malabar and in coastal towns of Malabar generally, the Mappilas followed the Marumakkathayam system of

inheritance, though it was opposed to the precepts of Quran, but a man's self - acquisitions usually descended to his wife and family in accordance with the **Mohammedan Law of property.**

This combination of two systems often led to much confusion and troubles in Muslim Joint families. This practice of matriliney was ascribed to the orders of Raja of Chirakkal and seemed to have been further encouraged by the example of the Bibi of Arakkal, the only Muslim royal family and head of North Malabar Mappilas.

Reforms of the Laws of Inheritance and Marriage It has already been mentioned that a movement for the reform of the law of inheritance had been started by the junior members of the Marumakkathayam families who revolted against the autocratic powers exercised by the Karanavan in the tarawad. In the Travancore area of the state the movement received the staunch support of the Nair service society.

In 1083 Kollam era (1907-08) in response to the growing public opinion the Government of Travancore appointed a committee of officials and non-officials to go into the whole question. A bill was introduced in the legislature by the government and passed into law as Act of 1912. This measure is known as the first Nair Act.

It did not provide for partition of Nair Tarawads, the shares being calculated per capita. On the other hand, it granted half of the self-acquired property of a male to his sons and the other half to his nephews.

The first Nair Act only embodied a compromise between two conflicting views instead of meeting the demands of the agitationists in full. Hence the agitation for the reform of the **Marumakkathayam Law** continued unabated. A non-official motion introduced in the Travancore Legislature in 1916 in order to amend the Nair Act (1912) by providing for Tavazhi partition was lost owing to the opposition of the Government. However, the second Nair Act passed in 1925 provided for the partition of Nair tarawads, the share being calculated per capita and deprived the nephews of all claims to the properties of their uncles. The Nair Act was followed by the Ezhava Act and the Nanjanad Vellala Act providing for similar changes in the law of inheritance in respect of the two communities.

The Nair Act of 1925 and the other measures that followed prohibited the practice of polygamy. Thus as a result of progressive legislation vast sections of the Hindu community in Travancore became Makkathayis and the old Hindu joint family system broke up.

Cochin was also powerfully influenced by this wind of change and several pieces of legislation were passed with a view to amending the laws of inheritance and marriage.

The Cochin Nair Regulation of 1095 Kollam Era (1919–20) imposed restrictions on the powers of the **Karanavar And** facilitated partition of joint families. It legalized customary marriage and declared the wife and children as being entitled to maintenance by the husband or the father. The provisions of the regulation applied to non – Nair husbands also.

The result was that all husbands including Namboothiri were now legally bound to maintain their wives and children, if any. The Regulation also prohibited polygamy and anticipated central legislation by several decades. The measure has been hailed as a milestone in the annals of Marumakkathayam as it fulfilled all the legitimate aspirations of the progressive sections of the Nair community.

The Cochin Nair Act of Kollam Era 1113 (1937–38) which superseded the Regulation of 1920 retained the main provisions of the latter and introduced more progressive changes with a view to doing away with the evils of the joint family system. The Act brought about the complete disruption of Marumakkathayam as an institution and freed the members of the joint family from the shackles of the autocratic Karavan. The wife and children of a husband or father became the legal heirs of his property.

Every member of a Nair family (tarawad) could now claim his share of the properties by demanding individual partition.

The Act of 1113 repeated the earlier prohibition on polygamy and also prohibited the marriage of a female less than 16 years of age and of a male less than 21 years of age.

The Government of Madras also enacted legislative measures with a view to changing the laws of inheritance and succession in Malabar in response to public opinion.

The Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1993 allowed partition of **tarawa property** and legalized inheritance from father to son. The partition

could also be affected without the consent of the Karanavan, if the majority of the members wanted partition.

The Act applied to all the Hindus of Malabar including the Namboothiri of Payyannur Gramam who followed the Marumakkathayam system. An amendment to the Act of 1933 which was passed in 1958 conferred the right of individual partition on the members of the Marumakkathayam families. Legislative measures were passed simultaneously to bring about the change from **Marumakkathayam to Makkathayam** in the case of the Mappilas of North Kerala.

The Mappila Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 conferred on the members of the Mappila Marumakkathayam families the right to claim the partition of their tarawads. The property which they acquired as a result of the partition was thereafter to be governed by the Sharia law. It may also be mentioned that the **Sharia law** passed by the Central legislature in 1937 was made applicable in 1949 and with this the Muslims in Malabar area who had followed Marumakkathayam also came to be governed by the patrilineal law of inheritance which the Muslims followed all over the world. An important piece of legislation which affected the life of the Namboothiris also deserves mention.

The Madras Namboothiri Act of 1933 changed the law of inheritance governing the Namboothiris of Malabar. Every member of a Namboothiri Illam, whether male or female, could get an equal share in the family property under its provisions.

The junior members of the Namboothiri families also got the right to marry within the caste and thus the children of all junior members of an illam became the legal heirs to the property.

Legislative measures passed by the Indian parliament after independence have included those affecting the law of inheritance among all classes of Hindus.

The Hindu Succession Act which came into force in 1956 provides for a uniform system of succession for all Hindus with respect to intestate succession (i.e., inheritance of property of persons who die without having made a will).

The Act gives equal rights to man and woman in regard to inheritance of property and it applies to all persons governed by the

Marumakkathayam law as well. It may also be mentioned that under the same Act the law relating to Hindu marriage has also been modified so as to make monogamy compulsory for all classes of Hindus. Mention may also be made in this connection of the **Kerala Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition), Act 1975** passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly.



legislative measures of its kind, it has ensured the disintegration of the **traditional matrilineal system of inheritance and ushered in the patrilineal (Makkathayam)** system which is in vogue among progressive societies all over the world.

Demographic trends in Kerala-

Migration, Ageing and trends of Birth and death rates; Health care in Kerala; Consumerism and new lifestyle.

Migration from Kerala to the other states in India and countries outside has now become so rampant that its impact is felt in every aspect of life in the state (Zachariah et al., 2001)

- **Migration** has brought in profound impact on the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of the state in the past 40 years. Though the state enjoyed a tradition of having trade relations with the West and Arab world, dating back to periods even before the birth of Christ, the population of the state had a non-migrating nature.
- **Literature** indicates that the people of the state lead a contented and peaceful life under the patronage of local rulers and this factor discouraged them from venturing out of their state boundaries.
- However, under the reign of Britishers, the situation began to change and they permitted the emigration of Indian labor to countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Fiji, Malaya, Singapore etc. to work in their plantations and factories. Until the beginning of World War II, Kerala was a net-in-migration state, as it attracted labor force and traders in large numbers from the neighboring area, mainly the Madras Presidency. In earlier periods, migration of Keralites.
- to other parts of India were mostly confined to people from Malabar area, which was the part of Madras presidency and where living conditions were less favorable than in the princely

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states of Travancore and Cochin (Joseph, 2001) After World War II, followed by Indian independence in 1947, the educated natives (Keralites) started to venture out to other parts of the country especially to the cities like Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta etc. in search of new avenues. The lack of employment opportunities and

- **expansion of education** in the state compelled the educated to move out in search of new horizons. So one can say that since 1947 the state became a major source of net out- migration. Based on the analysis of census reports, Joseph (2001) points out that till the end of nineteenth century
- Keralites were basically home-bound people, following a simple mode of life and following the social constraints imposed by the society.
- But with the passage of time, the forces of constraints weakened and the economy of the state entered into a new trajectory of development and **“migration also ensued as a concomitant to the process of development”** (ibid). Though the number was not by and large high at the beginning, the upward social mobility and the economic stability of these families became an element of inspiration for others in molding their lives.
- As mentioned earlier, prior to independence, emigration from Kerala was confined to countries like Malaya, Burma, Singapore etc. But the oil boom that started in the Arab countries during the early 1970s ended up in large-scale

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- emigration of Keralites to these countries, which can be counted as the beginning of a new saga in the history of the state. Kerala entered into an age of extensive emigration during the 1970s and “most sections and communities in Kerala, except the poorest, the most educated, and yes, the most affluent, have participated in the migration process” (Nair, 1986).
- **The decline in growth** rate during the 1970s was contributed to partly by decline in fertility and partly by net out-migration. Kerala has been a net out-migration State from the 1930s, and the rate of net out-migration reached its peak during 1981-91 (Kerala Development Report, 2005).
- At present, **“Kerala is becoming too much dependent on migration for employment, sustenance, housing, household amenities, institution building and many other development activities”**

Growth in the number of Emigrants from Kerala, 1998-2011

Year of Survey	No of Emigrants (in million)	Percentage increase
1998	1.36	
2003	1.84	35.29
2008	2.19	19.02
2011	2.28	4.11

Source: Compiled from various Kerala Migration Survey Reports 1998, 2008 & 2011, CDS

Demographic profile of Kerala

The state of Kerala, located in the south-west part of India in its present form, was formed in 1956 as part of the linguistic reorganization of the Indian States by merging the three Malayalam Speaking regions. It has a land area of 38,863 sq. km, stretching 580 km in length and 30-130 km in breadth.

While in terms of area, Kerala forms only 1.1 per cent of India, its population (as of Census 2011) of 33.4 million accounts for 2.76 per cent of India's population. According to the recent census reports the state ranks ninth position in terms of population in the country. When it comes to population composition, about 52 per cent of the state's population is constituted by females and the remaining 48 per cent by males. Population density in Kerala is 840 persons per sq. km, one of the highest in the country.

One of the characteristic features of Kerala's demographic structure is the total fertility rate (1.8 per woman) which is below the replacement level (2.1 per woman). State's demography is also skewed in favor of women, which according to the latest census was measured as 1084 females per 1000 males. It can be observed that throughout the census period, the proportion of the population was always in favor of females rather than to males.

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Kerala's unique settlement pattern and wider infrastructure development makes it difficult to see the differences between urban and rural areas and there is a strong rural-urban continuum in all along the state. Of the total population, urban dwellers figures to 15.9 million which is about 48 per cent of the whole population

and rural populace constitute 17.5 million

Population size and decadal growth rate

Census Year	Population in Million		Decadal growth Rate	
	Kerala	India	Kerala	India
1901	6.36	238.9		
1911	7.15	252.09	11.75	5.75
1921	7.80	251.32	9.16	-0.31
1931	9.51	272.92	21.85	11.00
1941	11.03	318.66	16.04	14.22
1951	13.55	361.09	22.82	13.31
1961	16.90	439.23	24.76	21.64
1971	21.35	548.16	26.69	24.80
1981	25.45	683.33	19.24	24.66
1991	29.09	843.39	14.32	23.86
2001	31.84	1027.02	9.42	21.54
2011	33.39	1210.19	4.91	17.64

Source : Census reports

Age wise distribution of Population in Kerala

The notable strides achieved by the state in demographic

parameters has brought in a number of concerns and challenges along with it.

The changes in the fertility and mortality rate over the time has significantly affected the age structure of the state

Age composition of Population in Kerala 1951-2011

Census Year	Age group 1-14	Age group 15-59	Age group 60+	Total Population
1951	52.15 (38.48)	79.08 (58.35)	4.29 (3.17)	135.52
1961	72.05 (42.60)	87.12 (51.54)	9.86 (5.8)	169.03
1971	85.95 (40.26)	114.25 (53.52)	13.28 (6.2)	213.48
1981	89.01 (34.97)	146.43 (57.53)	19.1 (7.5)	254.54
1991	86.74 (29.78)	178.74 (61.42)	25.61 (8.8)	290.99
2001	82.96 (26.10)	201.82 (63.38)	33.35 (10.5)	318.41
2011	78.31 (23.47)	213.47 (63.97)	41.93 (12.57)	333.72
2026	69.88 (18.76)	69.88 (18.76)	68.04 (18.26)	372.54

Table gives us a picture of the transitions across different age groups over the last six decades. From the table, it is evident that the decline in the birth rate has significantly reduced the proportion of children to the total population. The proportion of the children in the total population has reduced from 42.6 per cent in 1961 to 23.47 per cent in 2011.

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Higher concentration of population in the working age group is considered to be a stimulus for the economic growth and financial gains and this scenario as termed as 'windows of opportunities', which finally results in the demographic dividend. Currently, the state holds a favorable situation with a high proportion of working age population, but it is evident that with decreasing fertility and increasing life expectancy, the population is undergoing aging and its repercussions are being experienced in the state. The share of the 60+ population has also increased four times and the projections show that in near future state is going to witness similar demographic situations that of developed countries like Japan, Germany etc.

Demographic Transition in Kerala

- It can be observed from the above graph (Figure 5) that all
- The three vital demographic parameters (i.e.CBR, CDR and IMR) show a declining trend from 1951 to 2011, with IMR experiencing a significant decrease.
- Infant mortality rates show a rapid decline from 120 deaths in 1951 to 12 deaths as per the recent SRS reports (2015). This can be attributed to
- improved health services, increase in institutional deliveries, higher immunization coverage, greater awareness and

technological advances. During the same period the death rate decreased by 18 points from 25.1 in 1951 to 7 in 2011.

- The immediate or the proximate causes for the decline in fertility
- were the increase in the age at marriage and the increased adoption of family planning measures especially sterilization . Various studies conducted indicate that female literacy, socio-economic changes, increased preference and performance of family planning programme
- etc. as the factors contributing to this decline (Pillai, 1983 & Zachariah and Kurup, 1984).
- With respect to Kerala, one of the striking features of the state's demographic transition is its achievement without adequate economic backing (State Human Development Report, 2005). It is interesting to note that most of the European and other developed countries had achieved maximum economic growth and development at the time of their transition.
- The first glimpses into the demographic transition were brought out by the study done by the Centre for Development Studies, in 1975 for the U.N Department of Economic & Social Affairs.
- The study revealed that in Kerala the high levels of literacy and educational attainments along with the spread of

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health facilities in rural areas had resulted in a sharper decline in the rates of infant mortality and mortality in general.

The State Human Development Report (2005) remarked that the State attained these remarkable achievements in demographic transition within a short period.

The fact that in Kerala, social development had preceded economic development drew the praise and attention of researchers across the world and this pattern of development, later on, came to be known as **'Kerala Model' of Development.**

Health Care in Kerala



- Kerala, the southernmost state of India, has attracted international attention for its outstanding achievements in population health despite its economic backwardness.

- This paradox, often referred to as the '**Kerala Model of Development**', has been studied since the 1970s, and has become an ideal model of development for many poor income countries in the world. Yet, since the 1990s, the stagnant economy and a wave of globalization has affected this once-praised state, and have forced Kerala to confront new challenges.
- The health care system is considered to be the principal factor for attaining the high level of health status in Kerala.
From The formation of the state, health care provision was one of the governments' top priorities, and the system was developed in a way that incorporated both western and traditional medicine that was accessible to the people In addition to the facilities run by the public sector, the private sector plays a major role in health care provision in
- Kerala, providing the majority of allopathic facilities and beds. Although the number of allopathic facilities run by the private sector was 704 in 1978, it increased to 4,288 in 1995, accounting for 75.8% of the allopathic facilities in the state.
- Between 1986 and 1996, the number of beds in the public sector grew from 36,000 to 38,000, a 5.6% increase, while
- beds in the private sector grew from 49,000 to 67,500, a 37.8% increase. As for human resources, although Kerala has

a relatively high number of allopathic doctors (30,318 in 2000, or approximately one doctor per 1,000 population), 86.4% of them work in the private sector.

- Historically, services were provided privately even before the foundation of the state, in institutions such as mission hospitals. However, the recent trend of the burgeoning private sector is predominantly driven by for-profit enterprises.
- Major factors for this trend may be described as the gap between the needs of the people and the quality of service the public sector can provide. Technology development and the aging society have raised the cost for health care, whereas the economic growth in Kerala has lagged behind other states in India, causing a fiscal deficit in the state budget.
- Until the late 1970s, the share of health expenditure in the total state budget had been consistently higher than those in
- the rest of India. For example, yearly average health expenditure accounted for 10.45% of total revenue in Kerala and 8.3% in all India in 1960–65. However, it became 9.07% and 9.54% respectively in 1985–90.

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- Furthermore, although health expenditure on salaries for health personnel increased in the 1990s, capital spending for infrastructure of facilities decreased.
- An initial meeting on public and private cooperation in health was held in January 2003 with the aim of creating a better health care system in a reciprocally beneficial manner.
- Until then, the private sector was very reluctant in negotiating with the public sector because they were afraid of being unfairly regulated.
- Under these circumstances, the government must carefully craft a system with minimal, but necessary,
- regulations over the private sector. Such acceptable regulations would include registrations of health care facilities and the number of health personnel, and accreditation of hospitals with a certain level of standard. In addition, the government of Kerala has formed a task group to create radical health policy changes and the result
- The Health Vision Kerala 2025, will be published in 2004. By creating a new health care system incorporating the private sector, the government may be able to choose an option to gradually reduce its role as a health care provider, and concentrate on providing preventive care and being financially responsible for those in need.

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- Kerala is one of the smallest states in the Indian union. Its area 38,863 square kilometers is just 1 percent of the total area of India. Kerala as a unique model of development because it has been able to achieve exceptional social development in such areas as health, education, and even the demographic transition, despite low economic development
- and low per capita income. The population distribution of Kerala according to **religion is about 56.20 per cent Hindu, 24.7 % Muslim and 19 % Christian.**
- At present the state is administratively divided into 14 districts, which in turn are divided into 63 Taluks, 152 Blocks, 1532 Villages, 978 Grama(Village) Panchayats, 53 Municipalities and 5 Corporations.
- The preference of Kerala is changing. Changes in the pattern and trends are striking and obvious and become so prominent in the last two decades.
- Kerala's high consumption and low economic growth relative to the rest of India raises interesting questions about the reasons behind increasing consumption in Kerala.
- The process of urbanization in Kerala has placed the state among the most urbanized places in India. As markets concentrate in and around urban centers, things are more accessible to the urbanites.

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- This in turn exercised its impact on the consumption habits of the people.
- Kerala society received some unforeseen changes in its socio-economic environment due to large scale migration of gulf countries.
- The oil boom in the West Asian countries from the seventies led to a massive boom in migration.

The economic consequences of migration and migrant remittances have found an increase in the household income of Keralites and changes in income distribution.

- Conspicuous consumption has become the hallmark of an emigrant, especially a Kerala emigrant.
- The present Kerala economy is often described as a money order economy. The total remittance in Kerala in 2011 was estimated to be approximately 55,000 crore compared with 43,228 crore in 2008.
- The economy was unable to take full advantage of the growth in consumption expenditures despite a potential increase in productive
- capacity by way of savings generated from the remittance Inflows.

Market led globalization indicates the emergence of the free market . This produces consumers all over the world with an

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extensive range of products and services that were not easily available before .

Another reason for the growth of consumerism is government policies. In the then socialist countries, for instance production of consumer goods was restricted by the state.

In order to encourage industry the government of India initiated liberalization policies. These policy measures had a bearing on the advancement of consumer durable goods.

(social media and internet) and the transport facilities cause the development of the society to a consumerist culture.

Apart from government policies, the role of advertisement and the media is very important.

Consumerism is heavily dependent on advertising and advertising is booming.

Media is not only the mirror of society but also an instrument of social change.

The KSSP study reveals that the influence of TeleVision, Radio, Newspapers and Journals on Kerala society is very high.

The unyielding use of advertisement of products compels the consumers to buy them without paying much attention to the absolute utilitarian aspects of the Product.

Television advertisements target women, youth and children, for they are the prime decision makers when it comes to the purchase of household items.

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Aging population and frequent divorce have led to segmentation of households into smaller units which lead to further structural increase in

consumption. Exposure to the outer world, pressure from neighbors and friends, credit card, social prestige, mad craze for new products, growing middle class, influence of western culture and style of living etc are other factors.

Kerala has been undergoing an unprecedented consumption boom and increasing standard of living. The state ranks at the top among Indian states in per capita

consumption expenditure though its rank in terms of per capita Net **State Domestic Product (NSDP)** is relatively lower. With only 3.4% of the country's population, it accounts for 10% of the total consumption. The value of consumer articles flowing into the state is estimated to be in

the range of 50–60 billion Indian rupees.

For the past two decades, Kerala's market has been witnessing the domination of **Multinational Corporations** with their branded products and services compared to other states in the rural sector.

There is a significant increase in the level of consumption of both food and non-food commodities. During the last few increasing use of packaged foods are seen in 2011. No wide rural urban disparity in the consumption of food items.

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Majority of the households in Kerala shifted their purchase from the local market to super and Multinationals. Eating habits of the people have also changed substantially.

The proportion of food expenditure was 21% in 2001 which increased to 26% in 2010. The consumption of beef, mutton, chicken and fish has increased during the last three decades.

The consumption of household goods and commodities are growing and changing rapidly in India.

According to NSSO survey (2008-09), consumption of household durable goods

In Kerala it is four times the national average. Changing lifestyle, income, social prestige, better health and standard of living led to the changing consumption pattern of non-food items.

The proportion of non-food expenditure was 39.8% in 2000 which increased to 44.3% in 2010. The percentage increase in food and non-food expenditure in rural area

remains more or less the same in both periods, but in urban areas the increase is more in favor of non-food items.

Now Kerala is regarded as the hottest market for consumer goods. Nearly two thirds of homes have Mixer and gas connection and nearly one third have a refrigerator.

But the effects of consumerism would be seen essentially in the social and economic spheres of life. Demonstrative and luxurious

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consumption has resulted in heavy financial commitment for the people.

Unable to pay back the loan taken from individuals and financial institutions, many are driven to suicide. Unlimited consumption causes exploitation of natural resources and environmental problems in the form of limited resources and in the form of pollution.

THE CAUSES OF MARGINALIZATION

Frank Herbert remarked "**All men are not created equal, and that is the root of social evil**". In this section we will discuss the causes of marginalization.

Through marginalization, a majority of people are deprived across the globe. It is a complex problem, and there are many factors that cause marginalization. Some of the important factors that are responsible for marginalization discussed below are: exclusion, globalization, displacement, disaster - natural, and unnatural.

i) Exclusion



Marginalization is a process that denies opportunities and outcomes to 'those living on the margins', while enhancing the opportunities and outcomes for those who are 'at the center'. Marginalization combines discrimination and social exclusion. It offends human dignity, and it denies human rights, especially, the right to live effectively, as equal citizens. Caste and class prejudice, in many societies across the globe, exclude many groups and communities, and hinder their participation in economic and social development. For further discussion on exclusion please refer to the unit titled, Inclusive Development.

ii) Globalization



Globalization is a controversial and much debated topic, and the responses are Marginalization both positive and negative, in the context of development. As far as organization is concerned, globalization played a certain role. Increased openness has promoted development at the cost of equity. It is viewed that it has enhanced the gap between haves and have-nots and thus boosted marginalization. Globalization in the post-1980 period has marginalized much of the third world and low income, developing countries.

Apart from East and South Asia, all the world's less developed regions grew faster during the relatively less globalized era of the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, all regions have expanded their exposure to international trade. While it is true that some middle income

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developing countries, as well as the most populous countries, India and China, are gaining out of globalization, yet the impact is not equally universal for all nations of South Asia

The era of globalization is a cause of concern for many underdeveloped countries. In the case of Africa, Latin America, and some parts of Asia, the human development indicators have been declining. Simultaneously, the gaps between the rich and poorer nations have been also increasing

iii) Displacement



The forced population displacement is caused by development programmes implemented by the governments of various nation states. The government of India admits that there are 15.5 million displaced persons when it drafted the National Rehabilitation Policy in 1994. The increasing construction of development projects

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consistently displaced a massive number of tribal, poor, and weaker sections.

This resulted in the marginalization of already marginalized people. The ultimate gainer are the contractors, businessmen, industrialists, politically and economically well off and the real poor are the underdog. As a consequence, we find social unrest, resistance, and disharmony in many parts of the globe.

More details about displacement and its impact are discussed in the unit titled, "**Inclusive Development**".

iv) Disaster- Natural and Unnatural



Disasters are global phenomena and a serious challenge to development (Table 2). Vulnerability is linked to broader social issues: such as poverty, and to social exclusion, conflict, and marginalization. There are three broad classification of disaster and their combined impact on development is staggering

Categories

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Natural: earthquake, volcanic eruption, hurricane, tornado, ice storm, flood, flash flood, landslide, wildfire, insect infestation, and disease outbreaks. These disasters may be further sub classified as meteorological, oceanographic (tsunami or sea storm), hydrological, or biological events,

Development Imperatives Technological: Associated with technological advances, i.e., explosives, unexploded ordnance, toxic spills, emissions of radio-isotopes, and transportation accidents. It also includes hazmat (hazardous materials) incidents involving carcinogens, mutagens, or heavy metals; dangers such as structural failure of devices and machines or installations, and plants, such as bridges, dams, mines, power plants, pipelines, high rise buildings, vehicles, and trains.

Social: These include incidents primarily involving social unrest, such as hijacking, riots, demonstrations, crowd rushes, and stampedes, terrorist incidents, as well as bombings, shootings, and hostage taking.

Problems of SC & ST in Kerala



Highest concentration of Scheduled Tribes in Kerala is seen in Wayanad district **(37.36 %)** followed by Idukki **(14 %)** and Palakkad **(10.8 %)**. In Kerala, tribals constitute **1.1 percent of the total population.**

The tribals in Kerala are not only geographically concentrated, but are overwhelmingly rural. The celebrated Kerala model of development has not made much change for the socio-economic life of the marginalized sections of Kerala.

Extreme levels of poverty, deprivation and vulnerability, High levels of exclusion, both developmental and social, extremely low levels of empowerment (political, social and economic), rapid marginalization due to unfair, unequal and exploitative relations of production, and exchange between tribal communities and others, Low level of access to entitlements, Practically zero

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participation in development matters with no autonomy in any form of decision making, abnormally huge siphoning of developmental resources and benefits meant for tribal people by middlemen, Poor human development with low levels of literacy and access to health care, rapid alienation of assets like land, alarming depletion of social capital, especially traditional forms of organization and leadership, quick deterioration of traditional knowledge systems and cultural attainments, fast-increasing tendency to use tribal people as cats-paws in criminal activities like illicit distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, stealing of forest wealth, etc., High levels of exploitation of women by outsiders, weak delivery system of public services, dependency-inducing developmental programmes relying on distribution of benefits, rather than building up of capabilities, implementation of ad hoc and stereotyped developmental programmes in the absence of proper planning, very weak monitoring systems etc are the problems faced by the tribal community.

Unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and water scarcity continue to plague the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations of the district, despite efforts undertaken as part of decentralized planning, according to a report by the Thiruvananthapuram district panchayat.



Job security is the biggest concern for the Scheduled Castes, with **83,479 skilled workers, comprising 22.45% of the total SC population, being unemployed. The district has over 3.27 lakh SC** residents, according to the 2011 Census.

Lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities has also made it difficult for them to maintain personal assets acquired through government financial aid and otherwise. For example, 11,143 homes were found to be in deplorable conditions.

Almost half of the 2,978 settlements that house a majority of the SC population were found to lack in basic infrastructure, with 992 settlements vulnerable to scarcity of potable water.

Homeless, landless

- A total of 8,605 SC persons are homeless, while 5,120 do not possess any land. The picture is not rosy for those who have homes, with 998

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persons living in single-room houses. As many as 685 settlements were found to be in need of soil conservation.

- The unavailability of public crematoriums was also mentioned as a concern in the report, which outlines the challenges faced by the civic body and their possible solutions, as part of the district panchayat's draft Annual Plan 2017-18.
- An evaluation of the civic body's 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-17) shows that a majority of the projects undertaken as part of the Special Component Plan (SCP) for SCs were unsuccessful. For instance, a project to provide auto rickshaws as well as training in driving them to SC women failed to take off, says the report.

Tribal development

- The ST population, comprising 21,020 people, fares much worse, with a majority below the poverty line. All 240 ST settlements face the issue of potable water scarcity.
- Although all of them have access to electricity, some homes are yet to be electrified.
- The report also points out the need for better infrastructure at the pre-primary school level, the construction of tarred roads to replace the existing mud paths in most settlements, and the construction of more toilets and bathrooms.

The inability to utilize government benefits effectively, and exploitation by intermediaries are factors that hamper their development, according to the report.

PROBLEMS OF FISHERMAN

According to Thomas Kocherry in the paper “suggestion for improvement of socio- economic status of traditional fisher folk”, the traditional fisher folk are all those men, women and children who earn a livelihood by involving in harvesting, handling, processing and marketing of fish and fish products. Therefore traditional fishermen folk include 1

- 1) Artisan fishermen, working on non mechanized and motorized crafts in coastal waters**
- 2) Fishermen working on mechanized boats in coastal waters**
- 3) Workers at fish landing centers involved in unloading, sorting and icing.**
- 4) Workers involved in traditional methods of fish curing and drying.**
- 5) Workers involved in prawn peeling sheds.**
- 6) Workers in fish processing firms.**
- 7) Workers involved in marketing of fish inside the state.**

They include men, women and children. They need not belong to the fishing castes as well.

Even in the above stated definition, one could see anomalies if it is analyzed in the context

what the present situation is offering. There are middlemen proactive at the landing centers and markets and trade union -

E ▶ ENTRI

again both at landing centers, harbors and markets and soon – eating away the pie meant for traditional fishermen.

“ Traditional fish workers in Kerala are socially marginalized and geographically isolated. They do not have any share in the economic and political life of the state. In this sense they are truly **“subaltern” class in Kerala”**

WHAT IS PRESENT?



The introduction of mechanized boats and advanced nets changed the fishery sector altogether. The recent introduction of inboard engines in addition to outboard engines changed the situation into a more complex one.

The cost of operation for traditional, outboard and inboard are varying. The market demands the frequency of fishing operation using the mechanized vessels. The outboard engine consumes 45 liters of Kerosene per hour while the inboard consumes only 15 liters of diesel per hour during voyage.

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The maintenance cost is also less for the inboard sector.

It is very difficult to separate the non-mechanised from mechanized sectors.

At least most of the traditional fishermen have stepped into the threshold of mechanization by and large.

This has been necessitated by various reasons.

1) The lack of fishing activities along the coastal line since the fish wealth there is being over exploited. This compels the fishermen to go deep-sea fishing.

2) Unparallel or mismatch among the fishermen with respect to the mechanization.

Trawlers and large fishing vessels go for deep-sea fishing which compels the ordinary fisherman also to strive for the same.

3) Fluctuating "price" mechanism prevailing everywhere. The middlemen decide the price of the fish once the fishermen land up after a heavy toll in the sea.

4) Mismatch in the market price of fish in relation to the increase of fuel price.

But it does not permit the traditional fishermen to revert back to the old style of fishing as it might only lead to poverty.

5) Increased activity of trade unions at the harbors and markets. Earlier, if all the workers related with fisheries were done by the community people, today the trade union has a claim under the labor regulations

. Eventually the money has been taken out of the poor fisherman's pocket.

The increased trade union activities in Kerala have attracted the people from outside the fishermen community to embrace this job at large. Though the fishermen are also a part of the trade unions, there is a growing trend of outsiders to dominate this segment in recent times.

The government gave emphasis to the foreign exchange earnings through increase in production. Since then, the might of the larger groups decided the course of action. In the increased competitive environment, traditional fishermen also went after mechanization at large. But this has been developed into new dimensions.

The conflicts between the trawler crews and the kattumaram fishermen grew in intensity over the time.

Many incidents are reported on the fighting between traditional fishermen vs boat crew away in the sea.

If trawling is carried out in the same area as kattumaram fishing there is great risk of damage to the latter fishermen's gear as well as to their lives.

Moreover, since the catching capacity of the trawlers is very high, it affects the catch of traditional fishermen.

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Even though there is a law stipulating twenty-two kilometers depth of sea only for traditional fishermen, the trawlers never kept the rule.

Problems of old age



On record, the state has 620 registered old age homes--the highest in the country--and these have more than 30,000 inmates. But sources confirm that there would be at least another 1,000 homes which come under non-registered and paid categories.

"There is no data or any protocol in running these unregistered old age homes. There are unpaid homes being run by charity groups/NGOs and paid ones. We receive serious complaints of cheating and financial misappropriation against paid homes.

Many senior citizens give their entire savings or write the will in the names of the homes only to get cheated. There is zero government intervention in this sector," a social justice (SJ) department official said on condition of anonymity.

ENTRI

Nineteen per cent of the state's current total population are above 60 years and the number is projected to reach 23 per cent in 2025, close to the present rate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

Even registered homes are in poor condition

The Kerala Development Report, published by the state planning board in February this year says the standards of even registered old age homes in Kerala are highly uneven.

"Most of them are managed on custodial lines and take care of only the food and lodging of residents. It is important that such homes are modernized and made resident friendly," it says.

"We know nothing about unregistered homes. The process of admission, leaving, facilities, medical attention for the senior people, staff who attend to them etc are not known.

There will be no surprise if any **human trafficking or illegal kidney sale** takes place in any home," said a department district officer in North Kerala.

Reacting to this, Jalaja K S, Joint Director of the department, said guidelines were issued in 2016 to include paid old age homes also under the supervision of the government. However, the process has not been completed.

"Normally, we used to get information about the old age homes in the annual survey conducted by Anganwadi staff. But after the bifurcation of the department, the local bodies have the responsibility to do the same," she added.

Sources say after the bifurcation of the social justice department in 2019 into Women and Child Development (WCD) and Social Justice Departments, the latter has no working apparatus at the ground level which has affected its functioning badly.

Residents in registered old age homes

2015-16---17,499

2016-17---19,149

2017-18---27,272

2018-19---28,029