

Belief systems



Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Kerala has a reputation of being, communally, one of the most religiously diverse states in India.

According to 2011 Census of India figures, **54.73% of Kerala's population are Hindus, 26.56% are Muslims, 18.38% are Christians, and the remaining 0.33% follow other religions or have no religion.**

Various tribal people in Kerala have retained the religious beliefs of their ancestors. In comparison with the rest of India, Kerala experiences relatively little sectarianism.

Hindus represent the biggest religious group in all districts except Malappuram, where they are outnumbered by Muslims. In 2018, 43.80% of the total reported births in the state were to Muslims, 41.61% to Hindus, 14.31% to Christians and 0.25% to others, according to the vital statistics published by the Government of Kerala

Buddhism



- **Buddhism** also held sway in Kerala in the ancient period. Some Buddhist missionaries are also said to have come to South India and propagated Buddhist teachings.
- Many prominent Hindu temples of the present day like the Kurumba Bhagavathi temple, Cranganore, are believed to have been at one time Buddhist Shrines.
- **In the Durga temple at Paruvasseri**, 21 miles from Trichur, has been discovered an image of the Buddha sitting in meditation. The central theme of Buddha's religion is the eight- step path (ashtanga marga).
- The first step is the proper vision leading to the realization that the world is full of sorrows caused by desire, greed etc.
- The second is the right aim which seeks to avoid the engagement of the senses and luxury. It aims to love humanity and increase happiness in others.
- Right speech is the third step, it implies the practice of truthfulness promoting mutual friendship. Right action includes abstention from killing, stealing and unselfish deeds. Right livelihood instructs man to live by pure and honest means.

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- Right effort means proper way of controlling senses so as to prevent bad thoughts.
- The seventh step is **correct awareness or right mindfulness** which means understanding the idea that the body is impermanent and meditation is the means for the removal of worldly evils.
- The last step is right concentration which will lead to removal of evils generated by attachment to the body and the mind.
- Buddhism laid emphasis on the law of 'Karma' by which the present is determined by the past actions.
- Buddha preached that the ultimate goal of one's life is to attain Nirvana.
- The Hindu rulers of ancient Kerala followed a policy of enlightened religious toleration and they patronized Buddhist temples without reservation. The Buddhist religion began to decline from the 8th century AD.

Jainism



The Jain religion might have come to Kerala in the 3rd century B.C. It is believed that Chandragupta Maurya (321-297 B.C.) the great Mauryan Emperor, abdicated his throne in the 25th year of his reign and came down to Shravanabelagola in Mysore accompanied by the Digambara Jain Saint Bhadrabahu. The Jains believe that it was Chandragupta Maurya and Bhadrabahu who introduced the Jain religion in South India during their sojourn there. Though Chandragupta Maurya came only up to

Shravanabelagola, his followers visited different parts of South India. Their main object was not to obtain converts but to find a haven of peace where they could meditate in tranquility and quiet. Jainism must have got itself introduced also in Kerala under these circumstances.

It had considerable hold on the people in the early centuries of the Christian era and had its own royal patrons as well. Ilango Adikal, the author of the Tamil Epic, Silappadikaram, was a Jain prince who lived at Trikana Mathilakam (the Kunavayikottam of Tamil literature) and in those days Matilakam was a famous center of Jain religion and learning.

There were several Jain shrines and temples in ancient Kerala and a few of them continue to exist even today as Hindu shrines after undergoing a process of transformation.

In Mathilakam was a famous Jain temple to which several other temples in the vicinity were subordinate but it later became a Hindu shrine.

According to the Malayalam work Kokasandesam Brahmins never used to enter the temple of Matilakam even as late as 1400 AD., the reason for which was perhaps that it was once a Jain temple. According to some scholars the Koodalmanikyam temple at Irinjalakuda, dedicated to Bharata, the brother of Sri Rama, was once a Jain shrine and it was converted into a Hindu temple, during the period of the decline of Jainism.

It is argued that the deity originally installed in the **Koodalmanikyam temple is a Jain Digambara**, in all probability Bharateswari, the same Saint whose statue exists at Shravanabelagola in Mysore.

In the days of the decline of Jainism the genius of the people of Kerala for synthesis might have made them convert the Jain shrine dedicated to Bharateswari into a Hindu shrine and dedicate it to Bharata, the brother of Sri Rama, so as not to offend the sentiments of the orthodox Jains and at the same time please the Hindus

Jain and Buddhist Texts



- The sixth century B C marked an important stage in Indian history as far as the development of new religions is concerned.
- Numerous religious sects arose in the mid- Gangetic plains as a result of an upheaval of new ideas and the resulting rise of new philosophical tenets. These ideas were so diversified that the philosophical speculations based on them varied from religious speculations based on them varied from religious speculations to the search for the truth which the Upanishads had emphasized.
- The efforts in this direction brought about the result in this Brahmanas. In other words, the old Vedic religion had ceased to be a living force. The spiritual unrest and the intellectual stimulation led to the rise of various heterodox religious movements.
- The religious sects were based on regional customs and rituals practiced by different people living north – east India. Jainism and Buddhism were the most important and they developed into the most potent well organized popular religious reform movements.
- The Jain religion might have come to Kerala in the 3 rd century B. C. It is believed that **Chandragupta Maurya** the great Mauryan Emperor, abdicated his throne in the 25 th year of his reign and came down to Sarvanbeloga in Mysore accompanied by the Digambara Jain Saint Bhadrabahu.

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- The Jains believe that it was **Chandragupta Maurya and Bhadrabahu** who introduced the School of Distance Education Kerala History – I 30 Jain religion in South India during their Sojourn there.
- There were several Jain shrines and temples in ancient Kerala and a few of them continue to exist even today as Hindu Shrine. Shrines after undergoing a process of transformation. In Mathilakam was a famous Jain temple to which several other temples in the vicinity were subordinate but it later became a Hindu shrine.
- The existence of these Jain relics in Kerala furnishes convincing proof of the hold that Jainism had on the people in the ancient past.
- The decline of Jainism in Kerala started in the 8th century A D. There are some old Jain families in the Wayanad and Kasargod areas of north Kerala even today and a few families of Gujarathi businessman professing the Jain faith live in such commercial centers as Alleppey and Mattancherry.

Christianity



- ❖ Christianity was introduced in Kerala in the first century A.D., i.e., three centuries before it gained official recognition in Europe or became the established religion in Rome. Legend has it that Apostle St. Thomas landed at Maliankara, a place adjoining Muziris, in 52 A.D., converted

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several Brahmins and others and founded seven churches on the Malabar coast, i.e., at **Maliankara itself, Palayur, Kottakkavu, Kokkamangalam, Quilon, Niranam and Nilakkal.**

- ❖ The belief in the St.Thomas tradition is firm and widespread among the Christians of Kerala, though many modern historians have rejected the evidence on which it rests. In the background of the extensive trade relations that existed between Kerala and the Mediterranean countries before the Christian era, it must be stated that there is nothing intrinsically improbable in the St.Thomas tradition.
- ❖ The traditional accounts preserved by the Jews who came to Cranganore in 68 A.D. contain a reference to the existence of a Christian community at the place. The statement of Pantaenus, the head of the Alexandrian school who visited Kerala in the 2nd century A.D., that he found a flourishing Christian community here is also cited as evidence in favor of the Apostolic origin of the Kerala Church
- ❖ In Kerala the Church Mission Society of London began work in the Syrian Church. For some time there was close co-operation between the Syrian priests and the C.M.S. Missionaries. But in later years the Missionaries broke off their connection with Syrian Bishops and Church and began to work on their own.
- ❖ It was on their initiative that the Anglican Church came into existence. Some of the priests of the Syrian Church who had come under the influence of the C.M.S. Missionaries advocated reforms which included the replacement of Syriac by Malayalam as the language of worship in the Syrian Church.
- ❖ The proposals were looked upon with disfavor by the Bishops and Clergy of the Syrian Church. The reformers thereupon formed a new Church known as the Marthoma Syrian Church as distinct from the Jacobite Syrian Church, the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Malabar. Thus in the course of 19 centuries following the arrival of St. Thomas the Kerala Church came under the influence of

foreign churches and eventually it split itself mainly into five branches, viz.,

(1) the Nestorian Church confined mainly to Trichur .and Ernakulam, but with a congregation in Trivandrum also

(2) the Roman Catholic Church embracing the whole of Kerala and following three different languages for their rites, viz., Syriac, Latin and 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.

Jews



Apart from the Christians, the Jews also have formed part of the community in Kerala from very early days.

According to tradition they came to the Kerala coast in 68 A.D. in order to escape from religious persecution at home. Some 10,000 Jews and Jewesses are said to have come to Kerala and settled at Cranganore, Palayur, Mala and Pullut.

However, there is no direct evidence in support of this tradition and hence its authenticity is denied by some writers, but in the light of the fact that the fleet of Solomon used to visit Kerala for purposes of trade, it is clear that this country was known to the ancient Jews even as early as 1000 B.C.

Hence it is not improbable that the Jews must have come to Kerala in search of an asylum when they had to face religious persecution in their homeland. They might have come and established their first settlement at Muziris or Cranganore in the first century of the Christian era itself.

New batches of immigrants might have come in subsequent centuries when, with the spread of Christianity, the Jews had to face severe persecution at home. Apart from the Jewish centers mentioned earlier, such places as Quilon, Madayi, Panthalayani Kollam and Chowghat are also referred to in foreign accounts or local traditions as some of the other places where the Jews settled down after their migration into Kerala.

There are no traces of Jewish colonies in these places today except that there is a **'Jew's Hill' at Chowghat and a 'Jew's Tank' at Madayi**. The Jewish settlers, like the Christians who preceded them, achieved a large measure of economic prosperity and secured several valuable privileges from the native rulers. The famous Jewish Copper Plate Grant of Emperor Bhaskara Ravi Varman dated 1000 A.D. records the royal gift to the Jewish Chief, Joseph Rabban, of several rights and privileges in perpetuity. The Jews continued to enjoy 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 White Jews Synagogue, Mattancherry, was built in or about 1567 in the wake of this migration. For centuries thereafter the Jews formed an important commercial community in Central Kerala.

Under the Dutch and the British they enjoyed full freedom to carry on their commercial and religious activities. The birth of the Jewish State of Israel in May 1948 thrilled the Jews of Kerala and the bulk of them have since migrated to Israel.

According to the Census of 1991 there are only about a hundred and twenty Jews in Kerala and they form a picturesque community confined to the towns of Mattancherry, Parur and Emakulam

Islam



- ❖ **Islam** also found its way into Kerala at an early period of its history. As noted earlier, there had been considerable trade between Arabia and Kerala even before the time of Mohammed the Prophet.
- ❖ Like the Christians and the Jews, the Arabs also settled down in Cranganore and established a separate colony of their own in a part of the town. The religion of the Prophet might have been introduced here by these Arab traders in the 7th or 8th century AD. itself. But the progress of this religion, unlike that of Christianity, was relatively slow.
- ❖ At the time of Sulaiman's visit (851 A.D.) there were not many Muslims on the Kerala coast, for the Arab traveler says, "I know not that there is anyone of either nation (Chinese or Indian) that has embraced Muhammadanism or speaks Arabic".
- ❖ Mention may be made in this connection of a doubtful tradition prevalent in Kerala that the last of the Chera Emperors (Cheraman Perumal) became a convert to Islam and went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and that it was in the wake of this conversion and pilgrimage that Islam as a religion made headway in Kerala.
- ❖ The story is also told of the mission to the Kerala coast of Malik Ibn Dinar and family with the object of spreading the religion of the Prophet. They are said to have landed first at Cranganore where they were hospitably received by the local ruler.

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- ❖ The first mosque in Kerala, like the first church, was established at Cranganore itself. In the wake of their success at Cranganore Malik Ibn Dinar and family are said to have visited other parts of Kerala and established more mosques. Among the mosques which figure in this connection are those of **Quilon, Madayi or Pazhayangadi, Kasaragod, Srikantapuram, Dharma Pattanam, Pantalayani and Chaliyam**. In the course of centuries Islam made progress as a religion and today the Muslims are, next to the Hindus, numerically the most important community in the State.
- ❖ The progress of the faith was, in many respects, due to the tolerant policy pursued by the rulers of Kerala and this was particularly so in North Kerala where the Zamorins of Calicut patronised Islam in all ways.
- ❖ The Muslims were a major power to be reckoned with in Calicut in the days when the Zamorins were in power. They commanded the confidence of the rulers and had great influence in their court.
- ❖ The Muslims were given special and favored treatment by the Zamorins for reasons of enlightened self-interest. The Zamorin's navy was manned by Muslims. The heroic exploits of the Kunjali Marakkars, the Admirals of the Zamorins, in their fight against Portuguese expansionism form an important chapter in the history of Kerala.
- ❖ The Muslims of Malabar, otherwise called the Mappilas, were so intensely pro-Zamorin that the Zamorins had even issued an order that in order to get sufficient number of Mappilas to man their navy one or more male members of the families of Hindu fishermen should be brought up as Muslims.
- ❖ This, perhaps accounts for the relatively high proportion of Muslims in the population of the Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala.

HINDUISM

Several saints and movements existed. Adi Shankara was a Hindu philosopher who contributed to Hinduism and propagated the philosophy of Advaita. He was instrumental in establishing four mathas at Sringeri, Dwarka, Puri and Jyotirmath. Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri was another religious figure who composed Narayaniyam, a collection of verses in praise of Krishna.

Some of the most notable temples are:



Ananthapura Lake Temple, Angadipuram Thirumandhamkundu Temple, Alathiyoor Hanuman Temple, Bhayankavu Bhagavathi Temple, Kadampuzha Devi Temple, Kerala Deshpuram Temple, Panniyur Sri Varahamurthy Temple, Sukapuram Dakshinamoorthy Temple, Thirunavaya Navamukunda Temple, Triprangode Siva Temple, Tali Shiva Temple, Trikkandiyoor Shiva Temple, Thrissur Vadakkumnathan Temple, Guruvayur Temple, Thriprayar Temple, Lokanarkavu Temple, Thirunelli Temple, Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple, Thiruvananthapuram Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, Chottanikkara Temple, Chengannur Mahadeva Temple, Parassinikadavu Muthappan Temple, Chettikulangara Devi Temple, Mannarasala Temple, Chakkulathukavu Temple, Thiruvalla Sreevallabha Temple, Kaviyoor Mahadevar Temple, Parumala Panayannarkavu Temple, Sree Poornathrayeesa Temple, Kodungallur Bhagavathy Temple, Trikkur Mahadeva Temple, Manalarkavu Devi Temple and Rajarajeshwara Temple.

Temples in Kerala follow elaborate rituals and traditionally only priests from the Nambudiri caste could be appointed as priests in major temples. But in 2017 as per the state government's decision, the priests from the historically backward caste communities are now being appointed as priests.

Malayali Hindus practice ceremonies such as Chorunu (first feeding of rice to a child) and Vidyāraṁbham

Aryanisation

- The Aryanisation of Kerala was a slow but steady process which was effected in a subtle manner "not by the force of arms, but by the arts of peace." It ended in the final submission of the local Dravidian races to "the superior intelligence and administrative skill of the Brahmins from the North".
- The question of the date of the Aryan immigration into Kerala and its impact on social life is a much discussed one.
- Logan has expressed the view that the Vedic Brahmins proper must have come to Malabar only in the early years of the 8th century A.D. and that they must have come by way of the coast from the Tulu country. According to him they had not migrated to the south in 605 A.D.
- Though during the period suggested by Logan there was a large influx of Brahmin immigrants into Kerala through the South Canara region, it is not correct to say that Brahmins had not migrated into Kerala during the period prior to the 8th century A.D.
- The consensus of opinion among scholars is that the process of the Aryanisation of the Deccan and South India began about 1000 B.C. and

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it reached a decisive stage by the time of Katyayana (4th century B.C.), the grammarian, who mentions the kingdoms of the south.

- We have the evidence of the Sangam works that Aryan influences were at work in Kerala society even in the early centuries of the Christian era. Some of the celebrated Sangam poets were local Brahmins and they were generously patronized by Chera kings.
- The Patittupattu speaks of the Brahmins as well versed in the four Vedas. Vedic sacrifices were conducted by Brahmin priests under the patronage of the Chera rulers.
- The Chera ruler, Perumcheral Irumporai, took keen interest in listening to the exposition of the Vedas by learned Brahmins and in acting according to the injunctions contained in Vedic texts.
- Thus the Sangam works testify to the intrusion of Aryan ideas and practices into Kerala in the early centuries of the Christian era. It seems that the first batch of Brahmin immigrants came to Kerala in the 3rd century B.C.
- itself immediately following the advent of the Jains and the Buddhists. It may be recalled that the period coincided with the Mauryan age in the history of North India when a conscious policy of acculturation or dissemination of “the superior material culture of the Gangetic basin” was pursued by the Mauryan State—a policy which had the fullest backing of Kautilya, the author of the Arthashastra who had spelt out its details.
- According to K.M. Panikkar “the geographical distribution, the organization of the community and their special customs show clear-sighted planning which could not have been the result of unregulated migration”.
- During the Sangam age which partially synchronized with the Gupta age of North Indian history immigration of the Brahmins into Kerala continued uninterruptedly on a small scale.

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- Mayura Sarman, the Kadamba king (345–379 A.D.) and his son named Chandrangathan are said to have invited large colonies of Brahmins and settled them in the Kerala and Tuluva countries.
- Many more such batches of Brahmin immigrants might have come to Kerala in the post-Sangam age. The domination of Kerala by other South Indian powers like the Chalukyas, the Pallavas and the Rashtrakutas in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries must have given an impetus to the process of Aryanisation.
- The Western Chalukyas who were Vaishnavites seem to have dispatched several Brahmin colonists and encouraged them to settle in Kerala. Vedic Brahmins came in batches during the period of ascendancy of the Rashtrakutas who were chiefly Saivites.
- According to one view the Panniyur and Chovaram factions among the Namboothiris derived their inspiration from the Vaishnavite Chalukyas and the Saivite Rashtrakutas respectively.
- There is also evidence of close cultural contact between Kerala and the Pallava kingdom. The Mathavilasaprahasana of Mahendra Varma I (580–630) was one of the favorite themes of the Chakiars of Kerala.
- The Avantisundari Kathasara of Dandin of Kanchi shows intimate knowledge of Kerala and mentions two learned Brahmins from the coast. In the 8th century A.D.
- The Aryanisation of Kerala reached its climax with a major batch of Brahmin immigrants coming here and strengthening the already existing forces of Brahmanism. According to tradition six eminent Brahmins scholars also came along with the immigrants, and met the Buddhists
- in argument, completely defeated them and established the supremacy of the Vedic faith. They founded a school for the propagation of Vedic studies in the land and enlisted a number of disciples of whom the most illustrious was Prabhakara, the great Mimamsaka.

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- Prabhakara is said to have eventually become the head of the school founded by the Bhattas. He came to be called Guru and his system of philosophy Gurumata.
- The Aryan influence increased considerably in the 9th century as is evidenced by the work of Sankaracharya (788–820 A.D.) and other Hindu reformers. During the age of the Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram (800–1102 A.D.) Hinduism registered spectacular progress.
- The Bhakti cult which found its great exponents in Kulasekhara Alwar, Cheraman Perumal Nayanar and Viralminda Nayanar in the 9th century ensured the further consolidation of the gains already made by Hinduism during the earlier period.
- A more detailed account of the Bhakti movement will be given elsewhere. It would be relevant in this context to study the impact of Aryanisation on early Kerala society and culture. With the predominance of the Brahmin, elements in public life, far-reaching changes took place in all spheres of human activity even from the later Sangam age.
- Bishop Caldwell has made the following comment on the tactics employed by the Aryan immigrants in spreading their ideas among the people.
- “The Aryan immigrants to the south appear to have been generally Brahminical priests and instructors, rather than Kshatriya soldiers, and the kings of the Pandyas, Cholas, Kalingas and other Dravidians appear to have been simply Dravidian chieftains, whom their Brahmanical preceptors and spiritual directors dignified with Aryan titles, and taught to imitate and emulate the grandeur and the cultivated tastes of the Solar, Lunar and Agni-kula races of kings.”
- The caste system was foisted on a casteless society by the Aryan immigrants who worked with extraordinary missionary zeal in spreading the Aryan ideology based on the primacy of Chaturvarnya.

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- The scholars and men of letters among the immigrant Brahmins who could impress the local rulers by their superior intelligence and scholarship succeeded in persuading the latter to conduct Yagas or sacrifices after the Vedic fashion for the sake of their own long life and prosperity. Having thus got the moral support and allegiance of the rulers, they won over the rich merchants to their side by throwing open to them the trade routes and commercial centers of North India.
- The princely and merchant classes who were thus brought within the sphere of Aryan influence were made to believe that they constituted two superior castes, the former the ruling caste (Kshatriyas) and the latter the trading caste (Vaisyas).
- Eventually these castes began to look upon their kinsmen who followed other occupations as inferior to them in the social scale. The Brahmins also succeeded in creating in the minds of these two castes a feeling that the former were superior to the latter and as such deserved the allegiance of all classes of people. Even in the later
- Sangam age the protection of the Brahmins is seen to have been held up as a great virtue of the rulers. At the same time the toiling classes like the Panas, the Vedas, the Kuravas, etc., who had occupied a high status in society in the early Sangam age came to be looked upon as low castes. This was particularly so in the case of the Panas who had once enjoyed the special esteem of kings and chieftains.
- Nevertheless, those among the Panas who distinguished themselves by their intellectual abilities were absorbed within the Brahmin fold, but the bulk of the Pana community came to be regarded as constituting the lowest caste called the Kizhor (the Harijans of later days).
- The advent of the Aryan immigrants brought about other significant social changes as well. There was a change in the dietary habits of the people. The use of beef and liquor which was common even among the Brahmins in the early Sangam age now came to be looked upon as

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taboo. Those who used beef now had some social stigma attached to their class.

- The continued use of beef by the Panas was perhaps one of the factors which brought about the decline in their social status. The introduction of the caste system also brought about a decline in the level of general literacy. The members of the fourth caste, viz The Sudras were denied the right to education and subjected to other social disabilities as well.
- The social status of a person came to be determined on the basis of the occupation which he followed.
- Dignity of labor no longer commanded recognition. Those who were engaged in occupations involving physical exertion were relegated to the lowest strata of society and came to be looked upon as low castes.
- Side by side with the social degradation of the Panas, the Parayas and other respectable classes of earlier days, the status of women also underwent a change for the worse. Female education was neglected.
- Child marriage took the place of adult marriage and women were compelled to take to family life and neglect intellectual and artistic pursuits at a very early age. Women no longer enjoyed the social freedom and equality of earlier days. The life of the widows was a hard one.
- Thus the immediate impact of the Aryan immigration was a decline in the status of the toiling classes and women, both of whom had enjoyed a superior social status in the early Sangam age. The increased influx of the Aryans in the 8th century A.D. had its impact in the religious and cultural fields as well.
- The new Aryan missionaries devoted all their attention to propaganda against Buddhism and Jainism whose hold on the people was the main stumbling block to the success of their ideology and before long these religions lost their following among the people. It is also possible that the Aryan missionaries resorted to a deliberate policy of destroying Buddhist Viharas and images.

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- The broken and damaged Buddhist images obtained from such places as Karumadi and Pallikkal, perhaps, bear testimony to this. It may be noted that the Buddha images from the Alleppey and Quilon districts have been assigned to the period from the 7th to the 9th century A.D. Simultaneously, the Brahmin immigrants also established Hindu temples on a large scale with a view to popularizing the Hindu religion. Several temple arts and festivals were also instituted with the same motive.
- The worship of Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Vishnu, Siva, etc., was made popular by the savants of the Bhakti cult. Non-Aryan deities and practices were also accommodated within the Hindu fold.
- The Dravidian Goddess Kotravai was accepted in the form of Durga, Kali and Bhagavathi and absorbed into the Hindu pantheon.
- The popular non-Aryan deity Sastha came to be looked upon as Hari Hara Putra, -i.e., the son of Vishnu (Hari) and Siva (Hara) in order to make him acceptable not only to the Shaivite and Vaishnavite sections of the Hindu population but also to the converts to Hinduism from within the Buddhist fold.
- The Hindu religion in Kerala was before long molded by a synthesis of Aryan ideas from the north and Dravidian ideas from the south.
- Thus the absorption of the Dravidians within the fold of Hinduism was affected by the incoming Aryans by a gradual process of social assimilation and cultural synthesis rather than by military conquest. This victory of the Aryans was in the ultimate analysis an ideological one.
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Proliferation of Brahmin settlements and temples

The temple is a unique institution in Kerala. They began to emerge in Kerala around 8 th century AD. Medieval Kerala temple has an important role as the biggest land owner. The temple has vast property. The ownership of vast cultivable land is vested in temples such lands known as Devaswom lands. Brahmin settlements Kerala Brahmins were called as Namputhiris who were one of the predominant elite communities of Kerala. Though few in number, the Namputhiris have wielded great power and influence throughout our history.

Spread of Brahmin settlements

Advent of Namboothiris

The advent of the Namputhiris was a slow and steady process spreading over several centuries from 3 rd c B C to 12th c A D. It finally ended in the final submission of the local population to the superior intelligence and administrative skill of the Namputhiri Brahmins. It was carried out in a subtle manner not by the force of arms, but by the arts of peace. An advanced alien culture finally swept away the old tribal society.

Emergence of land ownership rights

Contemporary and recent studies of Kerala history give glimpses of how agrarian structure and relations evolved on the south west coast of India.

Kunjan Pillai was the pioneer who traced the origin of land ownership and Brahminical landlordism. There were three broad types of land based on the ownership right during the medieval period in Kerala. They were Cherikkal, Brahmaswam and Devaswam. The land under the control of the Naduvazhis was called Cherikkal.

Cherikkal

Cherikkal under the Kulasekhara dynasty ownership of land was vested in Chera Kings whose chieftains enjoyed land rights. Under this, the lands which

were acquired by Kings or the feudatories were cultivated by the native population and these were known as Cherikkal lands.

Cherikkal land was under the control of Brahmins.

Devaswam, the land under the control of temples. Owners of Devaswom land were called Ooralalar. During the 17 th -18th centuries remarkable variations developed in the lease holdings involving cultivating rights for an extended period, called Alavattam, or Marayapattam. Apart from pattam, there were semi- permanent lease tenures like Adimai Anubhogam in Central Kerala. Adimai Anubhogam could even be held as Janmam. Mortgage tenures, called Kanam or Otti, existed even in early medieval times.

This involved obtaining lands or any service for a stipulated period of time after paying a certain amount of money as security. Lands could be rendered Kuttikkanam on payment of a certain amount, called Kuttikkanam, indicating that new trees and new gardens were coming to be established all over Kerala.

Particularly, **Kuttikkanam lands** were used for cultivating Coconut, arecanut etc. Chanthas and Angadies were the major regional trade centers of Kerala during the medieval period. Commodities used daily such as paddy, rice, vegetables, nuts, salt, fish etc were the major items exchanged in these centers.

Nadus and Naduvazhis

The term nadu is found to denote the various divisions of the kingdom, as in other contemporary Tamil kingdoms of South India. The chief of nadu was nadu udayavar or naduvazhikal.

Kolathunadu

This was the northernmost among the nadus in the Kingdom. It was an independent territory for a long period since the Sangam age.

The Mushakavamsa Kavya of Atula, composed in the court of Srikanta in the beginning of the 11th century, which is incidentally the earliest known work of regional history in Sanskrit, narrates the history of the Mushaka dynasty.

Kurumporainadu

This is to the south and south east of Puraikilanadu, known by the same name till modern times.

Kuncikutta Varma alias Virakkurumporaiyar, who was mutukuru or Senior prince, made a gift.

Ramavalanadu

This is mentioned in a record of about the 11th century from Tirumannur temple near Kozhikode. Kanaiyapalli Yakkam Cellan and Paliyattu Kannan Kantan are mentioned as the rulers there. The territory lay to the south of Kurumporainadu and if the name could be taken as a clue to the origin of the nadu, it must have been established in the period of Rama Varma as a territory directly under the rule of governors nominated by the Perumal since it is stated that the two governors mentioned by name belonged to different houses.

Eral Nadu

This lay to the south of Ramavalanadu, and figured prominently in the records of the age. The rulers of Eralnadu, and figured prominently in the records of the age.

The Devaswom system notably exists in the state of Kerala, where most temples are either managed by the government of Kerala. Brahmadeya was a tax free land gift either in the form of a single plot or whole villages donated to Brahmins in the early medieval India.

Formation of Jati

The caste system in Kerala differed from that found in the rest of India. While the Indian caste system generally modeled the four division of society into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras in Kerala, the Namputhiri Brahmins formed the priestly class and only rarely recognized any one else as

being other than Shudra or untouchables, the latter being outside the caste system.

Formation of swaroopam

The age of swarupams and Naduvazhis and comprising the middle ages in Kerala began with the disintegration of the second Chera Kingdom. The age witnessed the emergence of localized rulers of different Nadus and their original families known as Swaroopams. They were ruling houses that controlled the Nadus. They were ruling houses that controlled the Nadus. They were large unit families. Their political authority originated on the basis of Kuru (sincerity. The Chera inscription alludes to the existence of Kuruvazhcha. As big landlords.

The swaroopams ruled the Nadus. In course of time new swaroopams In course of time new swarupams developed and they brought in to being new Nadus. The important Swarupams however are **Thrippalur (Venad).Perumpadappu (Kochi), Nediyruppu (Kozhikode), Kollam (Kolathunadu) and Arangoth (Valluvanad).**

The rule of the Naduvazhikal marked the end of Kerala as a politically unified School of Distance Education Kerala History – I 41 state.

Perumpadappu (Kochi), Nediyruppu (Kozhikode), Kollam (Kolathunadu) and Arangoth (Valluvanad).

The rule of the Naduvazhis and Swarupams exerted a powerful influence in the newly emerged polity. The age also witnessed the emergence of the Janmi the ascendancy of the priestly class. Politically sterile and culturally unfruitful, the Naduvazhi era witnessed the Swansong of the old order, pushing Kerala to the limelight of modern history.

Structure of political authority in medieval Kerala

Political authority in Medieval Kerala was based on the organization of a large number of small territorial units, over which a powerful matrilineal joint family exercised their hereditary political and judicial authority.

Each territorial unit was known by the name of the place where the authoritarian joint family was originally located, like that of the Samurai, called Nediyruppu swarupam, and Kochi Perumpadappu swarupam. The term Swarupam indicated the autonomous region controlled by the secular authority of the ruling joint family. Some of the features visible in the medieval Swarupams were Present in the Nadus under the later Cheras. All Swarupams were matrilineal, and conclusive evidence is lacking as to when the matrilineal system arose. Among the gradations within the swarupam seniority was the major criterion for becoming the ruler. This practice was called assuming **Muppu** (Eldership).

The order of seniority was complicated by the emergence of Tayvalis or mother's lineage. Tayvalis arose as segments within the Swarupam where the children of sisters or cousins developed into separate lineages.

The earlier practice, seen in the Kurumbahad division of the family into Kovilakom also continued. Samutiri's family was divided into two Kovilakom. Kizhakke Kovilakam and Patinjare Kovilakam. Kovilakam were also used to indicate the residences of different princes are mentioned as located at Pakode, Tikkurissi, Manalikkara, Kalkulam and so on.

Each of these Koyikkals enjoyed rights and privileges. However, the order of seniority in Venad was not based on such Koyikkal. Creation of new Swarupams was another major feature. The new swarupams could develop into swarupam, as in the case of **Chempakassery (Ampalapuzha), Palakkad (Trauswarupam), Vettathu Swarupam, Kadathanad etc.** Migrations resulted in the establishment of Swarupams at Punjar at Pandalam.

The conversion of the control of a family in a certain area into territorial authority was a process that revealed the structure of political power. The assumption of family seniority itself was not a sufficient condition for royal

authority was a process that revealed the structure of political power. The assumption of family seniority itself was not a sufficient condition for royal authority and hence it was supplemented by anointment rituals and ceremonies.

Perumpadappu Swarupam

The Perumpadappu swarupam or Cochin royal house entered political prominence only in the beginning of the 16th century after the arrival of the Portuguese, but it had its origin as an independent principality immediately after the fall of the Kulasekhara Empire. The origin of the Perumpadappu family is shrouded in mystery. The traditional view is that the Perumpadappu chief or Cochin ruler was the descendant of the Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram in the maternal line. The history of the Perumpadappu Swarupam during the pre-Portuguese period is lost in obscurity. Literary works such as Sukasandesam, Unniati Charitam, Sivavilasam. The Sivavilasam describes the story of the Swayamvara of Yuvaraja Rama Varma of Perumpadappu by Unniati, the daughter of Kerala Varma of Odanad.

Medieval Trade – Arab and Chinese

The Arabs and the Chinese were important

The Arabs and the Chinese were important trade partners of medieval Kerala. Arab trade and navigation attained a new enthusiasm since the birth and spread of Islam. Four gold coins of Umayyad Caliphs found in Kothamangalam testify to the visit of Arab traders to Kerala in that period.

Medieval Trade groups

The foreign travelers like Sulaiman and Masudi who visited Kerala in the 11th century have testified to the economic activities and the consequent financial soundness of the Kingdom. The economic prosperity was mainly achieved from the extensive foreign trade with west Asia and China. Kerala had a flourishing overseas trade with China during the period. China purchased articles like pepper, ivory, Cinnamon, teakwood and pearls from this part of the country. A remarkable feature of the age was the pivotal position occupied by the mercantile corporations and merchant guilds in the socio-economic life of the country. The most important of such merchant guilds were Manigramam, Anchuvannam and Valanchiyar. Manigramam was an association of merchants who transacted in Diamonds. Anchuvannam was a body of merchants who traded in five different commodities. Valanchiyar was an organization, which carried on overseas trade. The trade corporations functioned actively and contributed to the economic prosperity of the land.

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 under the patronage of the Dutch governor Van Rheeede.

Kerala Pazhama

Kerala Pazhama is a history book of historical importance. Dr Hermann Gundert features the history of Malabar from A D 1498 to 1531 in this small book, which was first published in 1868 . In this book Dr Herman Gundert denotes the history of Malabar from A D 1498 to 1531. It describes the books of Herman Gundert named Kerala Pazhama and was published in Paschimodayam.

Tuhfatul Mujahideen

Tuhafatful al Mujahideen fi bad Akhbar al- Burtu ghaliyin's is a historical work by Zianuddin Makhdoom II on the struggle between the Mappilla Muslims of

Malabar and south Canara and Portuguese colonial forces in the 16th century.

It marks a new stage in the tradition of historical writing in Kerala. The book was completed in 1583. Shaik Zainuddin was a native of Ponnani and he belonged to a family of religious scholars.

Tuhafat – Ul- Mujahideen has an introduction and 4 separate parts. In the introduction the author calls the Muslims to fight against the Portuguese. It is the first historical work of Kerala to be authored by a Keralite. Zianuddin who wrote his gratuitous gift to the Muslim Shahids who had laid down their lives fighting the Portuguese (The Tuhfat-al- Mujahidin) dedicated the work to Ali Adil shah, the Sultan of Bijapur, as he found none in Kerala worthy of the dedication.

The Portuguese Period

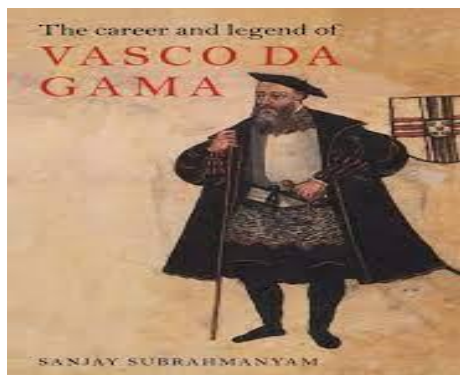
Portugal, though a small and insignificant country in the middle ages, played a significant role in the medieval history of Kerala.

Their 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.

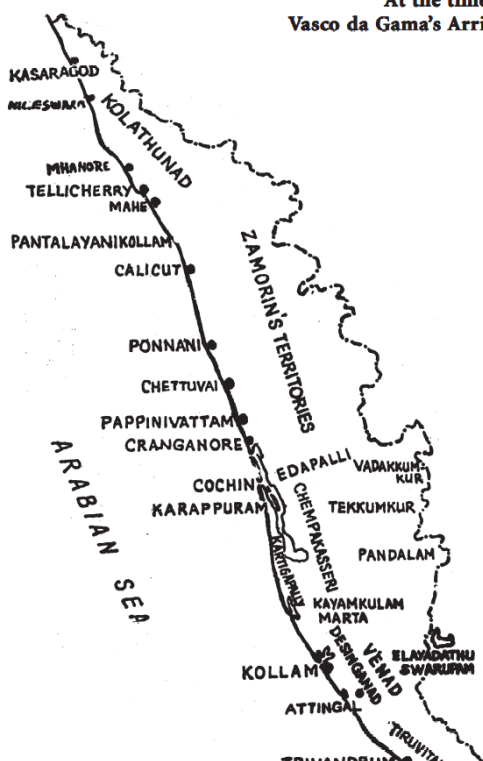
The landing of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in May 1498 marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Kerala. On his arrival at Calicut in May 1498 Vasco da Gama was received by the Zamorin and his subjects with traditional hospitality. Vasco da Gama came for a second, this time to avenge the Zamorin.

The Zamorin, although they agreed to pay compensation for the Portuguese loss, refused to expel the Arabs from Calicut. In the meanwhile the Portuguese headquarters in India was shifted from Kochi to Goa.

Vasco da Gama's Expedition (1498)



At the time of
Vasco da Gama's Arrival



On his arrival at Calicut in May 1498 Vasco da Gama was received by the Zamorin and his subjects with traditional hospitality. The Portuguese navigator met the Raja at his residence situated a few miles outside Calicut city.

The interview between the two leaders failed to produce any concrete results. The request of Vasco da Gama for permission to leave a factor behind him in charge of the merchandise which he could not sell was turned down by the

Zamorin. The ruler of Calicut insisted on payment of customs duty by the Portuguese in accordance with the law of the land.

Vasco da Gama left Calicut in August and broke the journey at Cannanore at the invitation of the 177 KERALA 1498 A.D.

At the time of Vasco da Gama's Arrival 178 A Survey of Kerala History Kolathiri Raja offered to the Portuguese facilities for trade at Cannanore. The Kolathiri entered into an informal agreement with Vasco da Gama in regard to the loading of Portuguese vessels. The Portuguese Captain set sail from Cannanore in November 1498 and reached Lisbon in 1499. Vasco da Gama was given a hero's welcome on return to his country, for his mission to the East was an unqualified success, the cargo he took with him alone being worth 60 times the cost of the expedition.

Decline of Portuguese Power in Kerala

The Portuguese lost their commercial and political supremacy in Kerala by the end of the 16th century. The Dutch conquered their strongholds such as Kollam, Kodungallur, Purakkad, Kochi, and Kannur and the Portuguese flag ceased to fly over Kerala by 1658. The Portuguese lost their commercial and political Supremacy in Kerala by the end of the 16th century. The Dutch conquered their strong holds such as Kollam, Kodungallur, Purakkad.

Impact of Portuguese Contact

- The hundred and fifty years of Portuguese contact were fruitful from the political, economic and social points of view.
- Politically, the contact confirmed the political disunity of Kerala. The attempt of the Zamorin to unify Kerala was foiled by Gama's arrival. In the educational and cultural field, the Portuguese established Seminaries and Colleges. The study of Latin Portuguese was popularized.
- Indological studies were undertaken.

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- Garcia de Ortha had written one of the earliest works on medicinal plants.
- The Portuguese contact led to some results in the political, economic and social fields. The most important political result was that the political disunity of Kerala was confirmed by the century and a half of Portuguese contact. On the eve of Portuguese arrival the Zamorin of Calicut was making a bold bid for the political unification of Kerala under his hegemony.
- The arrival of the Portuguese reversed this process and accelerated the pace of the 'Balkanisation' of the country.
- While checking the expanding power of the Zamorin and reducing the Cochin ruler to the position of a helpless vassal of the Portuguese king, the Portuguese Governors followed a deliberate policy of placating the minor princes and chiefs by money gifts with a view to safeguarding their own- commercial interests. It was the basic aim of Portuguese policy in Kerala to bolster up the power and prestige of the minor chiefs at the expense 189 of the major Rajas.
- Among the minor powers which became powerful under Portuguese patronage were Purakkad, Parur and Vettat. The political disunion of Kerala thus sedulously fostered by the Portuguese helped to sustain the political vacuum in the country and paved the way for its conquest by the Mysore rulers and the English in the later period. The Portuguese contact led to some changes in the economic field.
- The Portuguese put an end to the age long trade connection between Kerala on the one hand and Arabia and Egypt on the other.
- At the same time, the trade with Europe grew in dimensions and led to the flow of wealth into the country from new sources. Increasing trade contacts with Europe also led to the introduction of European fashions and luxuries. The ornamental architecture and the buildings of the bungalow type were introduced by the Portuguese on the Malabar coast.

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- The ecclesiastical architecture of Kerala also came to be influenced by Portuguese ideas and styles. The local powers copied from the Portuguese the European technique and weapons of warfare. The artillery assumed special importance in the wars of the period. Several new towns came into existence and old towns decayed during the period of Portuguese trade contact.
- Thus Calicut, Cochin and Chaliyam grew in importance while Quilon and Cranganore languished for want of patronage. It is said of Portuguese Cochin that it "might well compare with some of the best cities in Europe".
- The Portuguese introduced into India a number of new agricultural products such as the cashewnut, tobacco, the custard apple, guava, the pineapple and papaya. **They popularized the Kerala spices like pepper, cardamom, cinnamon and ginger in European markets** by arranging their direct transportation. The Portuguese promoted the scientific cultivation of pepper and ginger on an extensive scale and even the masses of people took to the cultivation of these spices.
- The credit for having introduced salutary changes in coconut cultivation also goes to the Portuguese. Under their patronage, coconut came to be cultivated for commercial purposes rather than for mere household use. An improved variety of coconut seed was popularized by them.
- Coir became a chief item of export since the days of the Portuguese. The effects of Portuguese impact on traditional Kerala society were indeed far-reaching, especially since it had to face a social and religious system which was radically different.
- Every section of Kerala society was affected in some way or other. The introduction of gunpowder by the Portuguese revolutionized the technique of warfare by making the artillery the most important wing of the army. The Nairs, the traditional fighting class, who had been trained

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to fight with sword and shield found themselves facing an entirely hopeless situation.

- Unable to cope with it, they had to face the threat of unemployment on a large scale. At the same time, the Christians and the Muslims found new avenues of employment in the artillery and also in the cavalry which had come into increasing prominence by this time as a wing of the army. The traditional caste structure was also subjected to heavy strains. The Portuguese impact. The untouchables among the Hindus were attracted towards Christianity and the Portuguese authorities who were interested in conversions gave them all encouragement. Those who thus changed their religion naturally got some economic advantages and extra privileges which they did not enjoy as Hindus.
- The Muslims who had been reaping enormous profit from trade, both external and internal, were prevented by the Portuguese from trading in those items in which the latter had a vital interest.
- Their Volume of foreign trade was curtailed as a result of some of the steps deliberately taken by the Portuguese authorities.
- The result of all this was that the Muslims were ousted from their old position of preeminence in the field of trade and commerce and reduced to the position of petty retail traders dealing with some relatively minor items only.
- The Portuguese contact led to some results in the educational and cultural fields as well.
- The Portuguese founded theological seminaries and colleges at Cochin, Cranganore, Ankamali and Vaipicotta for the purpose of training Christian priests. These institutions helped to spread the knowledge of Latin and Portuguese among the local people. Even some of the native rulers like the Cochin Raja are said to have mastered the Portuguese language.

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- The Portuguese period also marks the beginning of Indological studies and research by European scholars. Garcia da Orta's work on the medicinal plants of India is one of the earliest studies on the subject. St. Francis Xavier translated the Catechism into Malayalam.
- The accounts of the Kerala coast left by such shrewd observers as Duarte Barbosa, Gaspar Correa and others also deserve mention among the beneficial results of Portuguese contact with Kerala. Joannese Gonsalvez, a Spanish Jesuit, cut out types in the local language for printed books. The Portuguese set up printing presses at Cochin and Vaipicotta.
- **The Chavittunatakam**, the Christian counterpart of the **Hindu Kathakali**, originated and grew into a popular form of entertainment under the patronage of the Portuguese missionaries. Apart from some of these influences, "the relations between Portugal and India were barren of cultural and political results and there is in that history nothing which any civilized nation can be proud of'.

Kunjali Marakkars



- The **Kunjali Marakkars** were the admirals of the Zamorins fleet.
- They dominated the waves for almost the century and helped the Zamorin in his epic fight against the Portuguese
- The Marakkar family had some of the most remarkable naval captains whose powers makes the name of Malabar pirates resound still in history.
- The origin of the Kunjali Marakkars is not clear.
- According to tradition they were originally marine merchants of Cochin who left for Ponnani in the Zamorin's dominion when the Portuguese came to Cochin and got favors from the Raja, The Zamorin took them into his service and eventually they became the Admirals of the Calicut fleet.
- The Kunjalis chose the very best men to man the navy. Kutti Ali was the bravest of the persons so chosen. In 1524 the Calicut fleet under his command inflicted heavy damage on Portuguese vessels. Kutti Ali used light and fast moving armed boats to attack the heavy Portuguese vessels and developed his own technique of guerilla warfare on the sea.
- His 'hit and run' tactics caused considerable havoc to Portuguese shipping and trade. Henrique de Menezes organized a powerful expedition against Kutti Ali and destroyed several of his ships in the port of Ponnani.
- In 1525 he attacked Panthalayani Kollam which was a stronghold of the Kunjalis.
- The Arayan of Purakkad who was present at this attack as an ally of the Portuguese was shot at and wounded by the Portuguese Governor who suspected him of disloyalty.
- The chief of Purakkad, thereafter, turned against the Portuguese and helped their enemies in several ways in the future wars Kunjali I was the admiral of the Calicut fleet from 1507.He organized naval defenses against the Portuguese on a sound basis.

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→ A brilliant strategist, he avoided pitched battles and inflicted heavy casualties

Dutch in Malabar



- The Dutch were the second colonial power to establish a ruling system in Kerala.
- It was the Portuguese from the trade with Kerala. It was the colonial power to establish a ruling system in Kerala. It was the profit of Portuguese from the trade with Kerala that attracted the Dutch to here. The Dutch East India company was established in 1602.
- Admiral Stephen Vander Hagen reached Calicut as the representative of the company and formed an alliance with the Zamorin, laying the foundation of the Dutch era in Kerala history. The Dutch formed many

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treaties with local kings in central Kerala. They also went to capture many Portuguese centers in 7 Ceylon.

- In 1658, the Dutch captured Kollam and in 1663, Kochi from the Portuguese.
- In the 18 th century Travancore became powerful under the rule of Marthanda Varma It annoyed the Dutch in 1741,a large group of soldiers reached Colachel and moved to Marthanda Varma's capital Kalkulam In 1795, the British also defeated the Dutch in a battle of Kochi, ending the Dutch influence absolutely.

Troubles of the Dutch

- The Zamorin, in spite of his discomfiture at Chettuva, took active steps to form an all-Kerala confederacy against the Dutch and their ally, the Cochin Raja.
- In 1728 he proposed the adoption of a princess from the Tekkumkur family into Calicut in order to wean away the rulers of Tekkumkur and Vadakkumkur from within the orbit of Dutch influence.
- The Zamorin also sent emissaries to Kayamkulam and other principalities suggesting the early formation of the projected all-Kerala alliance against the Dutch. The defiant attitude of the Zamorin posed a serious threat to the Dutch position in Kerala. At this time the Dutch had also to face other troubles in North Kerala.
- The Bednore Nayaks had attacked the northern territories and advanced as far as Baliapatam in the Kolathiri Raja's kingdom.
- The English who were on the side of the Kolathiri persuaded the Dutch to join their campaign against the Nayaks, but before long the Dutch, fell out with the Kolathiri prince on the issue of the price of pepper to be sold to the Dutch at Cannanore.

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- The dispute 211 was amicably settled in 1737 with the Kolathiri agreeing to sell 1,000 candies of pepper at Rs. 56 per candy. In spite of their alliance with the English the Dutch had realized that the English Company was a serious rival to them in the political and commercial fields.
- Van Imhoff who was now guiding the affairs of the Dutch in Kerala formulated plans for annexing the various States and bringing them under Dutch rule in a move to counteract the growth of the British power. But before he could carry out his policy, the Dutch plans were upset by the rise and expansion of Travancore under Marthanda Varma (1729-1758).

Rise of Travancore



- Marthanda Varma inflicted a severe defeat on the Dutch in 1741 in the famous battle of Colachel (Kanyakumari district) and he annexed to Travancore one after the other all the States in the neighborhood with whom the Dutch had been carrying on intrigues.

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- Thus, to the dismay of the Dutch, the Elayadathu Swarupam, Attingal estate, Kayamkulam, Purakkad, Tekkumkur and Vadakkumkur came under the sway of the Travancore ruler during the period 1746–1750.
- The action of Marthanda Varma shattered the Dutch dream of the conquest of Kerala. It may be noted that the important Dutch establishments at Quilon, Marta, Kayamkulam and Purakkad were absorbed in the kingdom of Travancore as a result of Marthanda Varma's conquests and the Dutch position was considerably weakened.
- In 1748, the Dutch entered into an agreement with Travancore under which they undertook not to disturb the English factories of Anjengo, Vizhinjam and Edava in Travancore and also promised to help the Raja in the event of his being attacked by any European power.
- The most far-reaching clause of the treaty was the one which provided for Dutch neutrality in the wars which Travancore might choose to wage war against native powers. The provisions of this agreement were formally embodied in the Treaty of Mavelikara (1753).
- The treaty marked the complete humiliation of the Dutch and their eclipse as a political power in Kerala

Effects of Dutch Contact

The Dutch made some significant contributions to the economy of Kerala. They created conditions favorable for the revival of Kerala trade. New products and scientific techniques of cultivation were introduced with a view to improving the agricultural economy.

Coconut was extensively cultivated on the Kerala coast under Dutch auspices. In order to give a fillip to coconut cultivation improved seeds and scientific methods of cultivation were popularized. Vypin island and Venduruthi were specially chosen by the Dutch to carry out their experiments in coconut cultivation and their success in these places inspired the people to copy the Dutch example and take to large scale coconut cultivation. Trade in

coir and coconut oil received an impetus following the increase in the area and outturn under coconut.

The Dutch also gave encouragement to the cultivation of rice and indigo. Good quality seedlings were brought from Surat and sown in Ernakulam, Alangad, Venduruthy, Verapoly, etc., and local fishermen were trained in indigo cultivation. New industries like salt farming and dyeing were also introduced by the Dutch.

The local rulers took to salt manufacture on an extensive scale and won enormous profits following the example of the Dutch.

The Dutch imported into Kerala several expert dyers from Tuticorin and gave them all conveniences and facilities to settle down in Kerala and teach their craft to the native people.

The ports of Kerala such as **Cochin, Quilon, Anjengo, Colachel and Tengapattanam** hummed with brisk activity consequent upon the revival of Kerala economy under the Dutch. In the educational and cultural fields, the Dutch contact has left very little of an impact. They built no seminaries or educational institutions.

But the memoirs, letters and accounts left by the Dutchmen like **Visscher, Linschoten, Nieuhoff and Baldaeus** have been of inestimable value to scholars of the later period to reconstruct the history of Kerala.

The greatest achievement of the Dutch in the cultural field was, perhaps, the compilation of the monumental botanical work, Hortus Malabaricus, which deals in detail with the medicinal properties of Indian plants.

The work was compiled under the patronage of Admiral Van Rhee and among those who were associated with the great project were the Carmelite monk Mamaeus, three Gowda Saraswath Brahmins, viz.,

Ranga Bhat, Appu Bhat and Vinayaka Bhat and an Ezhava physician by name Itti Achuthan.

The work was completed after several years of dedicated labor and it was finally published from Amsterdam between 1678 and 1703 in twelve volumes with 794 neatly executed copper plate engravings.

“A book of its size”, says Whitehouse, “on which such care was expended must have consumed a fortune before its publication and confers honor both on those who compiled it and the place where it was compiled”

Mysorean Invasion

The Mysorean invasion of Kerala by Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan represents a brief interlude, a watershed in our long history. It put an end to the middle ages in Kerala and inaugurated in Modern period of our history.



Haider Ali's Conquest

Haider Ali intervened in Malabar affairs thrice, first as Faujdar of Mysore, then as ruler of Mysore twice. His intervention took place in the Palakkad region. By this time, Haider's policy in Malabar underwent a profound change instead of sending military governors from Mysore to rule over the conquered territories.

Mysorean invasion and land revenue system

William Logan also came out with his findings on Malabar land tenures prior to the Mysorean Invasion. Cutting land deeds executed as early as 1000 A D. Logan found the original system as one of sharing of produce, each sharer being permitted the free transfer of his interest in land. The Janmi had no absolute ownership with Mysorean invasion, there occurred a disturbance of customary sharing of produce which had prevailed at that time.

British East India Company foundation of Colonial state

East India company also called English East India company, formally governor and company of merchants of London trading into East Indies united company of merchants of England trading to the East Indies, English company formed for the exploration of trade with East and South east Asia and India, incorporated by royal charter on December 31,1600.

Starting as a monopolistic trading body, the company became involved in politics and acted as an agent of British imperialism in India from the early in the 18 th century to the mid 19 th century. In addition the activities of the company in China in the 19 th century served as a catalyst for the expansion of British influence there.



The company was formed to share in the East Indian spice trade. The company met with opposition from the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies and the Portuguese. The East India company act, 1813, also known as the charter act of 1813 was an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdoms which renewed the charter issued to the British East India company and continued the company's rule in India. However, the company's monopoly was ended, except for the tea trade and the trade with China. Reflecting the growth of British power in India.