

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Old Indian society was founded upon hereditary relationships which were regulated according to a hierarchy. The social structure, based on castes and communities, was not congenial for the growth of the civil society.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the emergence of the Indian middle class fostered the bonds of voluntary association in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

Induced modernization-bourgeois property, capital accumulation, trade and industry, urban life, modern education and so on, together with the dislocation of peasantry led to the loosening of earlier social

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<sup>1</sup> Neera Chandoke, "The Assertion of Civil Society" in Manoranjan Mohanty, et.al., *People's Rights: Social Movements and the State in the Third World*, New Delhi, 1998, p.30. Neera Chandoke says, "In liberal theory civil society came to embody a whole range of emancipatory aspirations which focused on the defence of human liberties against state oppression and which marked out an autonomous sphere of social practices, rights and dignity for the individual".

Rajeev Bhargava, "Introduction", in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *Civil Society, Public Sphere and Citizenship: Dialogues and Perceptions*, New Delhi, 2005, p.14. Rajeev Bhargava says that civil society is an arena of society constituted outside the public power, a region of society where people have come together and formed associations outside the purview of the state. To be sure, civil society and state do not exhaust all institutions in a society. For example, people are born into family or may involuntarily find themselves in institutions such as castes, or traditional guilds. These social institutions are outside the state but do not form part of civil society. So civil society consists of more or less voluntary associations outside the state. It is a feature of such associations that individuals can join or leave them at will. Since the continued existence of such associations entirely dependent on the choice of individuals civil society is an arena of self regulating voluntary associations.

<sup>2</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, "Nationalism, Modernity and Civil Society: The Subalternist Critique and After", *Indian History Congress, Presidential Address*, Calicut, March 2007, P.7.

bonds. There was no such exodus as in Europe, but people were let loose at varying speeds, from their earlier bonds, from different communities and regions, but everywhere more pronouncedly from the upper castes. This loosening of bonds took various structural shapes, like the formation of new classes, professional groups etc. and was the beginning of the process of individuation in India.<sup>3</sup> It is in this escape that we see the emergence of individuated persons with the accompanying changes in their sense of being a person. Such an emerging sense of person also gave rise to new imaginings about life and society.<sup>4</sup>

Jordons observes that it was among the English educated intelligentsia that several ideas of reform first arose. They were primarily trying to deal with a personal problem that affected their own lives very deeply: constant contact with Britishers and European ideas made them look upon some social and religious characteristics of their own society with horror and disgust. Social reform in this first stage was mostly prompted by the desire of these people to cope with the difficulties which they experienced themselves. There was not as yet any concern for the mass of the people, or any desire to transform the structure of society at large. What they wanted was to reshape their lives according to the new standards and values they were discovering. They sought to clarify their own ideas, and propagate them among their kindred intelligentsia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Javeed Alam, "A Look at Theory: Civil Society, Democracy and Public Sphere in India", in Rajeev Bhargava, and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.351.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.350.

<sup>5</sup> J.T.F. Jordens, "Hindu Religious and Social Reform in British India", in A.L. Basham (ed.), *A.Cultural History of India*, Delhi, 1975, p.366.

A society of self regulating individuals whose relations are contractual and not based on hereditary communal ties implies a new intellectual outlook. The outlook of the emerging civil society was rational, scientific, secular, libertarian and humanistic. These were the values, which inspired the freedom struggle led by the Congress. The leaders of the struggle were uneasily aware that the reformed attitudes were confined among the middle class.<sup>6</sup> Thus although there was some escape from the yoke of the subservience of feudalism the fact of subjection under the British yoke continued. Indians were not still citizens.

As for citizenship, the term the English educated Indians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century commonly used, was 'subjects' in common with Her Majesty's British born subjects. However the notion of citizenship being crucial to the emerging 'public'<sup>7</sup> spirit' the term citizen was to appear in the lexicon of the politically aware Indians.<sup>8</sup> Anyhow with the awareness of subjection came the sense of one's rights and respect for one's independence. For Indians however, the process was in a sense

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<sup>6</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, "Nationalism, Modernity and Civil Society", *op.cit.*, p.7.

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere", in Carolyn M.Elliott, (ed.), *Civil Society and Democracy*, New Delhi, 2003, p.53. Nancy Fraser says that the term public designates what is of common concern, and not just objectively or from an outsider's perspective. So public is what matters to the whole society, or belongs to this whole society.

B. Kuppaswamy, *Communication and Social Development*, New Delhi, 1976, p.73. Kuppaswamy says: The term public refers to a spontaneous collection of people in response to a certain kind of situation. The public is not a group with any kind of membership, rules etc. The public is a collection of individuals without any prescribed tradition or cultural pattern. It arises only when there is some issue confronting the people. As a result public vary depending on the issue or the problem on hand.

<sup>8</sup> Sudhir Chandra, "Subjects' Citizenship Dream", in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.107.

facilitated by the nature of British rule. Pragmatic and therefore liberal in its overall stance it granted equality and freedom of thought, speech and association. Pragmatism however made sure that what was conceded in principle was held back or diluted in a variety of legal or extra-legal way. Even when it appeared unsafe to ignore Indian exertions to claim their entitlement, the authorities tended to devise stratagems that made a show of concession and conceded just that little bit of substance. Indeed the better organized became the exertions, the more the British fear of concessions came to the surface. In any case, there would always be the compulsion to extend certain special privileges to Europeans behind the façade of equality. Indians began to learn this lesson quite early, and they could learn the growing contrast between the principles and the practice of British rule. This in turn led to the realization of the more critical dichotomy between what came to be viewed as national and imperial interests. This realization rendered necessary an expanding and exclusively Indian ‘public space’.<sup>9</sup>

### **Emergence of Nationalism and Public Space**

It was sometime in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that this cultural consciousness began to acquire political trappings, leading eventually among other things to the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885.<sup>10</sup> Congress was the mirror of the emerging civil society. The rule of the law, the emergence of the press, the growth of the voluntary associations and the demand for civil and political rights through the medium of English established the social space in which Congress was

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pp.109-110.

<sup>10</sup> D.I Sheth, “Nation Building and Making of Civil Society” in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.389.

formed. This social space was narrow, hemmed in as it was by the persistence of the older social loyalties of caste, community and locality. But however imperfect, the emergence of civil society was a critical development. It was a transition from the closed community to the open society, with all that it implied: a transition even if very partial indeed, from custom to law, from status to contract, from birth to merit, from privilege to justice, from hierarchy to equality, from communalism to individualism, from heredity to association; in short, from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*.<sup>11</sup>

The new social relationships did not of-course extend to the whole surface of Indian society. The lower orders of the population were still compartmentalized in localities, communities and castes. It was the group which called itself the educated middle class (the English-educated middle class) that claimed to represent ‘public opinion’.<sup>12</sup> The private, individualistic relationships among their society were complemented by public ties. There was now an Indian Public that did

<sup>11</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, “Nationalism, Modernity and Civil Society”, *op.cit.*, P.8. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century German Sociologist Ferdinand Toennies coined two contrasting terms, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, meaning thereby the friendly community and the anonymous community (or association) respectively. Civil Society is distinct from communal existence because it is based not on birth or status, but on voluntary associations and contractual relations between individuals. It is this which the Indian National Congress embodied in its constitution and ideology and which M.K Gandhi rejected in his manifesto of 1909.

<sup>12</sup> Jurgen Habermas , “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article”, in Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas Mackay Kellner, (ed.), *Critical Theory and Society*, p.137. The expression public opinion refers to the tasks of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally (and, in periodic elections formally as well) practises vis-à-vis the ruling structure organized in the form of a state.

Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere”, in Carolyn M.Elliott, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.53. Nancy Fraser says that through the circulation of newspapers, reviews and books among the educated classes, and scattered, small scale face-to-face exchanges in saloons, coffee houses and political assemblies there emerges a sense of the nation, or its literate segment, an opinion which deserves to be called ‘public’.

not exist earlier. The class which represented the public (the new class of English educated Indians in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other towns) shared despite all their regional differences certain common characteristics. The factors that contributed to this commonalty were, first of all, the English educational system of schools and colleges through which they passed. Second, they subsisted materially on the means of livelihood available in the service of the colonial government and in the new professions of law, western medicine, journalism and education to which their degrees were the passport. Third, they had a common lifestyle, which was dictated by the type of education and the type of occupation which sustained them.<sup>13</sup>

For the first time since the passing away of the old Mughal nobility a class emerged which could speak in the same language and across the country: not, however, a ruling class, but a subordinate class, and one which spoke the language of rights instead of privileges. The language in which they demanded their rights was the English language. Those who spoke this language were also capable of forming public associations and of maintaining their proceedings in English. They were capable of negotiating politics and of providing leaders (both new-fangled things). They created various political associations especially in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Poona.<sup>14</sup>

Among this the Indian Association of Calcutta assumed some importance. However despite representation from different parts of the country it turned out to be a largely Bengali gathering which failed to attract the foremost public men of the country. But it discussed

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<sup>13</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, "Nationalism, Modernity and Civil Society", *op.cit.*, P.8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

questions agitating the 'national mind'. This 'beginning of a great experiment' was further hoped would become an annual event. But that did not happen. The Indian Association could only organize its second national conference two years later, just when the Congress held its maiden session. That the two national conventions discussed the same issues reflected the unity of concerns among educated Indians. But their meeting separately showed want of concerted action among them.<sup>15</sup>

Exposing the diversity of interests between the rulers and the ruled these middle class fostered 'citizen like conduct' and created an ever widening public sphere.<sup>16</sup> These issues related to the employment

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<sup>15</sup> Sudhir Chandra, "Subjects' Citizenship Dream", in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>16</sup> Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article", in Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas Mackay Kellner, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.137. Habermas says, "By the public sphere we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion (that is with the guarantee of assembly and association and the freedom to express their opinions) about matters of general interest. In a large public body, this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere. We speak of the political public sphere in contrast, for instance to the literary one, when public discussion deals with objects connected to the activity of the state".

Rajeev Bhargava, "Introduction", in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp.14-16.. "By public sphere I mean a common space in principle accessible to all, which anyone may enter with views on the common good realized wholly or partially...Persons may bring into the public domain only those issues which potentially concern everybody. There is all the difference in the world between articulation a wrong done to me and a wrong that affects all of us. The public sphere is depersonalized and has a strong dimension of impartiality to it. A public sphere consist of inter communicating spaces available in principle to everybody and into which people may bring issues that concern everyone. They do not command the official apparatus of the state. However because they seek to influence decision making processes of the state they maintain a permanent relation with it. For voluntary association in civil

of Indians in the higher branches of the administration and freedom of thought and speech-especially freedom of Press; and Indian representation in legislative and executive decision making. The necessity of efforts to acquire a voice in the country's administration and governance was also stressed as Indians were obliged to bear witness the economic exploitation of their country. About the Parliamentary Government and India *The Hindu* wrote in 1881, "India is a football between the two political factions of England; without enjoying any of the advantages of party government, she is subject to all its disadvantages. She has no voice in the election of the members of parliament, and the motives, therefore of English statesmen in administering the affairs of India are simply those of justice and humanity. England is not bound to us by the ties of a common nationality or a common religion; on the other hand too many of those whom she deposes to exercise her immediate power over us are actuated by the strong impulses of an assumed superiority in civilization and morals.....To us a more independence in the matter of Government seems to be the only remedy".<sup>17</sup>

So well was the lesson learnt that the 'first reform' that the Indian National Congress demanded in the year of its birth was 'to have the power to tax ourselves'. The reform, the Congress explicated, meant that Indians wished 'to have the actual government of India transferred from

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society an engagement with state is only a last resort. The public sphere is outside the institutions of the state but directly concerned with what occurs there".

<sup>17</sup> G.Kasturi, (ed.), *The Hindu Speaks*, Bombay, 1978, p.15.

England to India under the simple controlling power of the Secretary of State and of Parliament'.<sup>18</sup>

Initially, the pattern of Indians to air grievances was through the Press and to petition the authorities. Though European newspapers were exclusive and often uninterested in native society, a number of Indians subscribed to journals such as *The Englishman*, *The Banaras Recorder*, or *The Delhi Gazette*, and the information they purveyed was quickly diffused among the Indian literates. Letters from Indians indirectly critical of the company rule, expatriate attitudes and the princely states were quite often printed in their pages.<sup>19</sup> After years of spasmodic activities organized around specific grievances, there was realization of the need for a permanent agency and this led to the formation of political association, initially in the presidency towns, that were expected to act as regular watchdogs. The presence of non-official Britons, their somewhat antagonistic relationship with the ruling East India Company and their insistence on having the same freedom of the Press that they were used to back 'home' acted as a fillip to Indians incipient public activities.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress* (Bombay, 1886), NMML, New Delhi, pp.33-37.

<sup>19</sup> C.A Bayly, "Colonial Rule and the Informational Order in South Asia", in Nigel Crook (ed.), *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*, New Delhi, 2001, p.303.

<sup>20</sup> Sudhir Chandra, "Subjects' Citizenship Dream", in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 114-115.

## To Curtail Public Opinion

At the same time the public sphere remained important to the politics of colonial rule too. The colonial state sought to legitimate authority through theatrical public rituals and performance, through durbars and public appearances; it sought to incorporate the public in the practices of domination, responding to public debates on legislation and issues of public concern; it sought to know public opinion, feel the pulse of the people, by finding in the countryside, monitoring publications and keeping a watch on public spaces; and finally it struggled to shape public opinion through propaganda and education. But projects of knowledge were implicated in the practices of surveillance. By the mid-nineteenth century *The Reports of the Vernacular Press in India* had collated, translated and documented the ideas expressed every year in the vernacular press in the different provinces.<sup>21</sup>

In this regard special orders were issued in August 1886 to Chief Secretaries of all Presidencies from the office of the officiating Secretary to the Government of India at Simla. The order asked to submit a report giving a review of the most noteworthy discussions in all the vernacular newspapers published in the Presidency and containing any information and observations which Local Government may wish to lay before the Government of India as to the tone and character of the Vernacular Press. It also asked to add to this report, a statement giving the particulars regarding all the vernacular papers worthy of notice published in the Presidency.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Neeladri Bhattacharya “Notes Towards a Conception of the Colonial Public”, in Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp.155-156.

Through the evidence collected in these reports the states looked at themselves through the eyes of the public and thought of the ways in which to respond to public opinion and define the limits of public debate.<sup>23</sup> The state sought to censor and control that public opinion through Censorship Act, proscription of literature, arrests and threats. In the 1870's a number of Acts were passed for the control of public opinion, such as the Dramatic Performances Bill 1876 and the Act for the Better Control of Publications in Oriental Languages (1878), also known as the Vernacular Press Act.<sup>24</sup> It was at a time when the Government was viewing the vernacular newspapers elsewhere in India with doubt and suspect that Malabar witnessed the birth of its first vernacular newspaper *Kerala Pathrika* in 1884 and the next one *Kerala Sanchari* in 1888.

### **In Malabar too**

The progenitors of *Kerala Pathrika* and *Kerala Sanchari* were also the middle class leaders that emerged just like anywhere in India. They too had the realization of the expanding and exclusive Indian public space. Infact the ripples of the associations emerged in the metropolitan towns of India had their effect in Malabar too. Even the very inspiration behind the birth of *Kerala Pathrika* was by virtue of the participation of its editor Chenkalath Valiya Kunhirama Menon in the meeting of the Indian Association of Calcutta held there in 1884. Many

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<sup>22</sup> Letter from A.P MacDonnell, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Home Dept. (Public) to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1886, TNA.

<sup>23</sup> Neeladri Bhattacharya "Notes Towards a Conception of the Colonial Public", *op.cit.*, p. 155.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

of those who participated in that meeting were editors too. It included the main leaders of the early Congress like Dadabai Navaraji, Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Surendranath Sen, Surendranath Banerji, G.Subrahmanya Iyer and so on who were also editors.<sup>25</sup>

Thus it can be seen that when considering the relation of the birth of nationalities in India with the struggle against the colonial domination, the modern Kerala scene is a constituent to the broader Indian spectrum.<sup>26</sup> A public sphere emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Kerala, in which public interest became the key concern, and issues came to be debated in its terms. But this must not be taken to indicate the presence of a full fledged civil society of individuals. Rather it refers to the formation of many fora of discussion in which participants who had acquired certain skills attempted rational deliberation on issues and themes that were identified for limited reasons often as public.<sup>27</sup>

The propagation of the English education naturally facilitated the consolidation of national opinion and the free exchange of ideas. The great treasures of west were opened to the people of this country, which undoubtedly accelerated intellectual growth and cultural development.<sup>28</sup> English education and the principles of equality of men brought into the

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<sup>25</sup> V.M Korath, "Pathrangalum Desheeyaprasthanavum", (Mal), in *Kerala Press Academy Souvenir-1985*, Kochi.

<sup>26</sup> B.Rajeevan, "Cultural Formation of Kerala" in P.J Cherian (ed.), *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala*, Kerala State Gazetteer, Vol. iv, Part ii, Kerala State Gazetteers Department, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> J.Devika, *En-gendering Individuals: The Language of Re-forming Early Twentieth Century Keralam*, Hyderabad, 2007, p.6.

<sup>28</sup> Regional Record of Survey Committee, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. I, Trivandrum, 1970, p.75.

minds of lower castes a new sense of personality, importance and vitality. This kindled the fire of nationalism and inspired the quest for independence, which ultimately paved the way for self-government.<sup>29</sup> The three basic determinants of 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial middle-class life are education, salaried job and print culture.<sup>30</sup> In Malabar which was under direct British rule lower classes had the freedom to achieve progress by way of education and employment. But in the Princely state of Travancore when there wasn't any Ezhava officer getting a monthly salary of Rs.5 there were dozens of Thiyyas (Ezhavas) in Malabar holding major positions in the administration.<sup>31</sup>

Thus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the middleclass (intellectual class) was born, who re-manifested the tradition basing upon the colonial symbols like English education, religion, moral values, customs, tradition, individual characteristics, costume styles etc.<sup>32</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the public sphere had entirely emerged as the space in which new forces contended with established socio-cultural and political forces for hegemony. It was an arena of 'contested meanings' from the beginning; more importantly, it did not guarantee equal access to all and indeed excluded many groups. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> M.J Koshy, *The Genesis of Political Consciousness in Kerala*, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum 1972, p.19.

<sup>30</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, New Delhi, 1997, p.232, Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture, Class, Education and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848-85)*, New Delhi, 2005, p.34.

<sup>31</sup> G.Priyadarshanan, *Kerala Patrhrapravarthanam:Suvarnadhyanyangal*,(Mal), Kottayam, 1999, p.145 , Murkoth Kunhappa, "Kerala Samskarika Purogathiyil Achadiyude Panku", (Mal), *Sahithyalokam*, September, 1973.

<sup>32</sup> K.N Ganesh, "Malayala Saahithyathinte Samskaarika Bhoomishasthram" (Mal), in M.N Vijayan(ed), *Nammude Saahithyam, Nammude Samooham* (Mal), Vol. I, Thrissur, 2000, p.628.

century, the privileged groups which seemed able to harness public life to their ends were largely the modern educated or those who had gained early access to and familiarity with modern ideas and institutions.<sup>33</sup> The mainstream of social reformation movements were created by the ideals upheld by these people. The consecration of the temple in Aruvippuram by Sri Narayana Guru in 1888, the publication of the novel *Indulekha* written by O.Chandu Menon in 1889, the presentation of the *Marumakkathaya* Marriage Bill by Sir C.Sankaran Nair in 1890 and the Malayali Memorial in 1891 were the explosive events that transformed the state set out by the above group of people.<sup>34</sup>

The new regulations that those who are competent can study and get employment and thereby achieve progress in fact torn up the monopoly of caste into pieces. The origin of the printing presses created an impression that the treasure house of knowledge and scholarship is not a private property but in turn that of the public; when journalism and book publication became lucrative career, new institutions arose to encourage the writers instead of the old royal fora.<sup>35</sup>

Both the peasants and the middle class of that time became part of the national political agitation which got momentum in all India level. 'Home Rule Leagues' were organized all over Malabar. There a situation came into being in which Congress Committees and Tenancy Committees tried to work together.<sup>36</sup> Thus the entrance of the middle class into the political life of Malabar enabled the people who were

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<sup>33</sup> J.Devika, *op.cit.*, p.7.

<sup>34</sup> B.Rajeevan, "Cultural Formation of Kerala" in P.J Cherian (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.24.

<sup>35</sup> E.M.S., *Sampoorna Kruthikal*, Sanchika 9, Trivandrum, p.264.

<sup>36</sup> B.Rajeevan, "Cultural Formation of Kerala" in P.J Cherian (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.31.

leaderless after Pazhassi Raja to acquire political leadership through the national movement.

Along with the hike in literacy and print, reading habit also increased on a commensurate level. P.Narayanan Nair elucidates the organic growth of papers along with the creation of public opinion during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. “I was privileged to listen and understand about the First World War when I was a student in the High School. Our neighbour Kalathu Narayanan Nair was an employee of Kodungallur Taluk office. He came to Killimangalam every alternate week. Then he used to bring certain Malayalam newspapers too. One was the *Suprabhatham* newspaper edited by T.C Achutha Menon from Trichur. Sometimes he brought *Lokaprakasham* also. Although in them, there was such writing as bi-weekly and tri-weekly, for want of newsprint and other reasons in the war period, they were published only on and off. But Narayanan Nair had much interest in bringing all the issues of the papers available for him. In them, under the heading ‘War News’, the translations of the reports in English newspapers were carried. Majority of such reports were about the drowning of the ships, dropping of the bombs and firing of canons. On hearing about the arrival of Kalathu Narayanan Nair, the elders of the neighbourhoods would turn up in our porch. The aged people as well as the young were equally interested in listening to the war news. It was Sundarayyar master of third standard who gave vigour and vitality for reading and discussion. He had some knowledge about the nations of Europe. ...Even though the hearts of many of the Indians were brimmed with British hatred they did not dare to express them overtly as they thought that none could defeat the British Empire in which the sun never sets. These were the kind of

dialogues during the discussion. But many of them nursed a secret respect for Germany.

After the reading of the elders, the papers were left at home itself. I used to read them then. The ladies were also very much interested to know the war news. The literate ladies used to come to home and read by themselves. But I had to read out for the illiterate. When will this war stop, which has become a curse was the frequent doubt they raised. Consequent to the war since the shipping was paralyzed, the prices hiked for essential commodities. Rice did not come from Burma. The German submarine Emden which roamed in those days through the Indian Ocean was a nightmare for the Indians. Many ships were drowned. Madras was bombed. Canon was fired at Bombay. Planes flew near Cochin. Reports like these which disseminated then, became the cause for scare among the natives...Many inhuman incidents also occurred in North India during this time. After the Jalianwala massacre in Amritsar, the British soldiers forced the locals to crawl along the road on their belly. This kind of cruelty of the British was spread throughout the land through the newspapers".<sup>37</sup>

Robbin Jeffrey also notes the peculiar feature of reading habit of this period. "The demand for reading material had created its own solutions: A wide network of public libraries, reading rooms, schools etc. helps the spread of reading habits. Above all the new reading facilities proved the fact that wealth and urbanization are not a necessary condition for the development of reading culture".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> P.Narayanan Nair, *Aranoottandiloode*, (Mal), Kottayam, 1973, pp.41-52.

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It is the snowballing of the new spaces created due to the colonial modernity<sup>39</sup> that actuated the national-revolutionary movements which indeed started in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and got intensified from 1920's. The attitude represented by Madhavan in *Indulekha* is indeed a reflection of the middle class attitude of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here Madhavan when criticizing the colonial exploitation he absorbs and contains the cultural values nurtured by the colonialists. In the next stage the middle class group employed the colonial modernity as an instrument of resistance. The scientific awareness created as a result of colonial cultural sphere, rationalism, atheism etc. coerced a section to reject the Indian feudal traditions.<sup>40</sup>

During the last years of 1930's tremendous changes occurred both in the political and cultural spheres of Malabar. In that period anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, national and democratic movements strengthened in an unprecedented fashion all over Malabar. Modern value concepts which were confined to the upper strata of the society in the early phase now began to spread to the lower layers of society. In

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Robin Jeffrey, "Culture of Daily Newspapers in India", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 4h April 1987, P.608.

<sup>39</sup> Rajan Gurukkal, "Development Experience of Colonial Keralam", in M.A Oommen, (ed.), *Re-thinking Development: Kerala's Developmental Experience*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1999, p.96. Rajan Gurukkal says the term 'modernity' is used to refer to the profound process of cultural transformation which started with the introduction of printing and went on to develop the use of printing and subsequent communications media into a major way of organizing knowledge and culture". Dilip M.Menon, "A Place Elsewhere: Lower Class Malayalam Novels of the Nineteenth Century", in Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia, (eds.), *India's Literary History*, New Delhi, 2004, pp.485-86. Dillip M.Menon writes what characterizes colonial modernity in India is the specific contradiction between a rhetoric of universal modernity and a practice of accommodation with existing faultiness of power, tradition and custom.

<sup>40</sup> K.N Ganesh, "Malayaala Saahithyathinte Samskaarika Bhoomishasthram", *op.cit.*, p.629.

addition to the middle class, various other sections consciously entered into the mainstream of public life. Consequently political and cultural spheres became more popular based and it acquired democratic character.<sup>41</sup>

As a result “a public sphere was constituted in Kerala due to the collective and comprehensive changes that occurred in the various phases of the colonial period. It was constituted by the blending of various factors like political parties, public organizations, community organizations, clubs, councils, newspapers, periodicals, publications etc. The basis of these public spheres was the dissemination of the written word. The number of those reading and writing Malayalam also increased. Short stories, poems, novels etc. were written in plenty. Also came out so many translations and imitations. Science, Spirituality, Gandhism, Marxism etc. were written and read. An atmosphere was born which was reverberated by the debates, dialogues and criticisms that appeared in the periodicals”.<sup>42</sup>

### **In Print and Journalism**

The inventions and development of printing opened new horizons in education and in the communication of ideas.<sup>43</sup> The rise of the ‘print culture’ at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had considerably promoted the process of the development of community identities and a public sphere in Kerala.<sup>44</sup> The dissemination of printing led to the beginning of newspapers and magazines. The evolution of press in Malabar as a

<sup>41</sup> B.Rajeevan, “Cultural Formation of Kerala” in P.J Cheria (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.32.

<sup>42</sup> K.N Ganesh, ‘Malayala Saahithyathinte Samskaarika Bhoomishasthram’ *op.cit.*, pp.628-631.

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, Cambridge, 1980, p.28.

communication medium was similar to that of the developments in Europe, in phased growth. Elizabeth Eisenstein records that in Europe the monthly gazette was succeeded by the weekly and finally by the daily paper.<sup>45</sup> Just like that *Kerala Pathrika* (1884) was started as a fortnightly.<sup>46</sup> Then it became a weekly. *Kerala Sanchari* (1888) was started as a weekly right from the beginning.<sup>47</sup> *Manorama* (1891) was started as a fortnightly on the second and fourth Mondays of every month.<sup>48</sup>

Kunhirama Menon resisted through *Kerala Pathrika* boldly, the octopus of corruption rampant in the bureaucracy. He was successful in intertwining journalism and nationalism by his bi-forked approach of tethering together his paper *Kerala Pathrika* and Indian National Congress. *Kerala Pathrika* in which Kunhirama Menon expressed opinions freely regarding political and social events got wide acclaim and reception throughout Kerala.<sup>49</sup>

*Kerala Pathrika* was a role model in expressing public opinion without fear or fervour. It is a fact that the creation of public opinion naturally will control the limits and character of power politics. During

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<sup>44</sup> G.Arunima, “Imagining Communities-differently: Print, language and the ‘public sphere’ in Colonial Kerala”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 43:1, 2006, pp.63-75.

<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth.Eisenstein, *op.cit*, p.131

<sup>46</sup> *Correspondence* 639 dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 1886, RAC.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> Champadan Vijayan, “Pathrapravarthanavum Sahithyavum”, (Mal), in Chummar Choondal and S.K Pottekkatt, (eds.), *Malayala Pathracharithram*, Kochi, 1977.

<sup>49</sup> V.Aravindakshan, “Malayala Sahithyathinte Adhunikeekaranam: Chila Prarambha Prachodanangal”, (Mal), in M.N Vijayan, (ed.), *Nammude Sahityam Nammude Samooham-1901-2000*, Vol. II, Thrissur, 2000, p.29.

this period (late 19<sup>th</sup> century) itself there were efforts from the part of the government to control the papers. ..The press-book registration act had brought the printing presses in British India under the control of the Government. By this Act the Government was empowered to punish the editors and publishers and to confiscate the publications and the press where it was printed. The Vernacular Newspaper Act introduced by the Governor-General Lord Lytton had given powers to the Collector or Police Commissioner to enforce the withdrawal of news which they feel unfit. They had also powers to punish any such paper unwilling to do so.<sup>50</sup> Kunhirama Menon had to pay Rs.51 as fine for writing an article in *Kerala Pathrika*, criticizing the Government. It may be an incident first of its kind in which an editor in Malabar was penalized for the freedom of the press.<sup>51</sup>

*Kerala Pathrika* attacked the highhandedness of the District Police Superintendent Faucet, which was unimaginable for a newspaper in those days. It espoused the cause of tenancy movement and marriage reforms and criticized sectarian institutions. It resisted the double dealing of the British by criticizing the sentence in the Crawford case. To him the press remained an institution of the public itself, effective in the manner of a mediator and intensifier of public discussion, no longer mere organ for the spreading of news only.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> E.V Ramakrishnan, “Varthamaana Pathrangaludeyum Achadi Yanthrangaludeyum Vyaapanathode Malayaliyude Saahithya Sankalpangalilum Bhashavyavaharangalilum Sambhavicha Maattangal” (Mal), in M.N Vijayan(ed.), *Nammude Saahithyam Nammude Samooham*, Vol. I, Thrissur, 2000, p.483.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.482.

<sup>52</sup> Jurgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article”, *op.cit.*, p.140.

*Kerala Sanchari* had also more or less similar motives. Poovadan Raman, the owner of *Kerala Sanchari* wanted to make the people aware of the new constitutional innovations and the rights and duties of the public enshrined in them. Also he wanted the public to imbue with novel thoughts and thereby to lead them to modernity.<sup>53</sup> Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar and Murkoth Kumaran played significant roles in achieving the public commitment of the above papers. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century *Mithavadi* made a great stride in fighting for the dignity of all suppressed communities. As newspapers filled with ardent national fervour *Mathrubhoomi* and *Al-Ameen* also exercised their duty even at the expense of their existence.

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<sup>53</sup> Murkoth Kunhappa, *Malayala Manorama Samskara Tharangini*, (Mal), Kottayam, 1982, p.147.

## **Aims and Objectives**

1. To trace the connection between education and literacy and the emergence of reading public in Malabar. Founding of an English newspaper and the evolution of an English readership before vernacular dailies and vernacular readership is to be traced. Also emergence of early newspapers and their function in relation to their period is to be studied with the help of various archival sources, Government records and interviews.
2. To trace the part played by the early newspapers in manifesting a public sphere in Malabar. A comparative study of the various issues highlighted by the newspapers would serve this purpose. An in-depth study of this aspect will make it clear whether the early newspapers of Malabar offered a space for the different groups to express their views through debates and dialogues, setting the stage for the evolution of public opinion.
3. To trace the genealogy of print capitalism in Malabar. By analyzing this aspect the hardships faced by the early editors and their perseverance in achieving their various goals can be revealed.
4. To analyse the contrasting and contradictory perspectives and outlooks of various newspapers and editors on the same issue.
5. To analyse the subjective opinions and objective aims of various editors and newspapers.

6. To analyse the collective approach of early newspapers on common issues. An examination and evaluation of the treatment of Malabar Tenancy Bill of 1930 is made here a case study.

### **Study Region-Malabar**

Malabar was a separate area geographically and administratively from ancient times onwards. During the British period Malabar continued as a different District under Madras Presidency, separated from Travancore and Cochin in many aspects. It was here the missionaries started the first newspapers in the vernacular and created a paradigm for the successors. Calicut, the administrative headquarters of Malabar District was the birth place of the first English newspaper *Malabar Spectator* and the first modern vernacular newspaper *Kerala Pathrika*. It is here Chenkalath Kunhirama Menon who is aptly called the ‘father of modern Malayalam Journalism’, laid the foundation not only for *Kerala Pathrika* but also for Congress Movement and thereby to the creation of public opinion articulating journalism, politics and nationalism. During this period numerous newspapers and journals have budded but only a few of them could overcome the test of time. Therefore in this study only those newspapers that have played a major role are included.

The beginning of the missionary newspapers in 1847 is indeed historic. From then onwards the growth and evolution of the newspapers as a separate realm continued until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1930’s the nationalist sphere of Kerala took up a turning point with the Salt Satyagraha and the subsequent political ramifications of the

nationalist movement. Therefore the present study is confined to the period from 1847 to 1930.

### **The Scheme of Study**

The present study lays its thrust on the early newspapers and the part played by them in the formation of public sphere in Malabar. Since the area of print capitalism and the emergence of public sphere are very extensive, to make the study effective and focused, it is limited in seven chapters. The chapter-wise elucidation of the thesis is arranged in the following way.

**Chapter 1:** The introductory chapter deals with the evolution and general growth of civil society and public spaces which led to the nurture of public opinion and public sphere in India, Kerala and Malabar.

**Chapter 2:** It deals with the growth of education, literacy and the subsequent rise of various communities subverting the Brahminical hegemony. This enabled the lower castes to achieve new social status. In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century English literate was very vibrant in Malabar when compared to vernacular. The presence of the first newspaper of this time *Malabar Spectator* is indeed self explanatory of the above observation.

**Chapter 3:** In the first phase of literacy, the journalistic scenario of Malabar was under the sway of English newspapers even much before the vernacular newspapers could make grip. Then English educated people were the subscribers and readers of newspapers. The impact of new literacy had a spill over effect on Malayalam literates also. During

1893 there were five vernacular newspapers published from Calicut. Various social groups though separated hitherto, by virtue of reading news in the pages of papers, came to know and understand each other. Thus the newspapers were able to play a role in shaping the public sphere and set up a new network of communication. To get popularity and wide audience print capitalists conducted dialogues. Due to further education, literacy and print, the number of readers and the circulation of newspapers increased.

**Chapter 4:** The first two missionary journals *Rajyasamacharam* and *Paschimodayam* were aimed at proselytizing works and colonial subjectivity. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the feudal authority was replaced by wealthy class who came from various castes and they were financially strong enough to start industrial enterprises. Chenkalath Kunhirama Menon is the visionary who started the first newspaper *Kerala Pathrika* from Calicut. Due to the continuous work of *Kerala Pathrika* a style brimming with vigour and vitality was evolved in Malayalam. In all the endeavours of Kunhirama Menon, his right hand was Vengayil KunhIRaman Nayanar. Adv.Poovadan Raman wanted to have the people of Malabar knowledge in judicial procedures, to enable them to fight against corruption and injustice. For that he started *Kerala Sanchari* with Vengayil KunhIRaman Nayanar as the Editor. Adv.C.Krishnan and later Murkoth Kumaran succeeded him.

**Chapter 5:** The newspapers like *Kerala Pathrika*, *Kerala Sanchari* and *Manorama* that emerged in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century actively continued in the new century too. Among the new ventures in the new century the *Mithavadi* under Murkoth Kumaran was the first. It dealt

with every branch of the upcoming science and every device that made the life modern. It was ceased in 1908. Kumaran later edited almost a dozen newspapers including *Gajakesari*. After an interval of five years *Mithavadi* resurrected under Adv. C. Krishnan. He branded it as a magazine of the Thiyya community. Krishnan and *Mithavadi* raised the voice whenever injustice against Thiyyas was noticed. He believed that if India got independence the Congress would come to power. This will result in the slavery of the lower classes since Congress is led by upper classes. *Mithavadi* was followed by newspapers like *Mathrubhoomi*, *Al-Ameen*, *Kerala Kesari* etc. which propagated nationalism and fought for the eradication of caste discrimination as well as blind beliefs in the communities. In fact *Mathrubhoomi* and *Kerala Kesari* were started to give apt reply to the anti-nationalistic view of *Mithavadi* and *Gajakesari*. *Mathrubhoomi*, *Al-Ameen* and *Kerala Kesari* tried to identify themselves with the tenants and steered the tenancy movement. The newspapers like *Athmavidya Kahalam* of Vagbhadananda Gurudevan simultaneously supported national movement and tried for the reformation in Thiyya community. Though published from Trichur, which was a part of the princely state of Cochin, newspapers like *Mangalodayam*, *Yogakshemam* and *Unni Namboothiri* had considerable circulation and far reaching influence in Malabar. It was these journals that stood for the cause of the *janmis* during the agitations of tenants and enactment of Tenancy Act of Malabar.

**Chapter 6:** During the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century many issues of debating nature emerged. Tenancy, marriage reforms, prohibition, community school etc. were the subjects of heated debates and exchanges among the public. In all these issues the contemporary

newspapers played considerable role. But here as a case study the Tenancy problem alone is attempted. This chapter tries to vindicate the campaigns made by various newspapers standing on opposite sides during various stages of Malabar Tenancy Bill which was finally passed in 1930. To unearth the gravity and depth of the nature of those debates and dialogues which led to the emergence of public opinion, the reports in newspapers are carried in full length as far as possible.

**Chapter 7:** The concluding chapter attempts to lay a theoretical framework for the evolution of public opinion and public sphere within the ambit of the present study.

**Sources:** A study of the early newspapers of Malabar that helped to shape the public opinion and thereby to create a public sphere comes under the purview of this work. Therefore a lot of literary and archival sources, back volumes of various newspapers and periodicals, Government documents etc. have been used much to make the study effective. Most of the archival sources in and outside Kerala including Tamil Nadu Archives (hereafter TNA) at Chennai and Regional Archives Calicut (hereafter RAC) have been consulted and used in proper places to substantiate the observations. Many of the above records are kept in manuscript form. The proceedings of the Home-Judicial Departments, Revenue and Legislative Departments, the back volumes of some issues of relevant newspapers which are preserved in the form of micro-film in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (hereafter NMML) New Delhi, have been extensively used. Besides, the personal diaries of G.Sankaran Nair and A.C Kannan Nair preserved there, were also helpful for the present study. To make the study more authentic interviews with more than a dozen scholars have been made. Autobiography of K.V.M, Theruvath Raman, biographies of Murkoth

Kumaran, C.Krishnan, Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar, Chenkalath Kunhirama Menon etc. could shed much light on the present study. Also numerous articles in souvenirs, supplements and periodicals have also been used.

None of the original copies of *Kerala Pathrika* is found anywhere in Kerala or outside. The Madras Native Newspaper Reports (hereafter MNNPR) in TNA and the Native Newspaper Reports preserved in NMML, New Delhi are the only source. Therefore consultation of these reports and the cross checking of the same with the contemporary literature and documents is the system mainly adopted in this study.

Recent transfer of a large collection of documents related to British Malabar from TNA to RAC has made this study more meaningful. The files of the Revenue, Education, Public and Law Departments transferred in the above arrangement helped the study to be more effective. Also the back volumes of the newspapers like *Kerala Sanchari*, *Mithavadi*, *Al-Ameen*, *Yogakshemam*, *Janmi*, *Unni Namboothiri*, *Atmavidyakahalam* etc. kept in various personal libraries, institutions and public libraries have also been referred.

### **Pattern of Documentation**

The pattern of documentation followed in this thesis is mainly according the conventional method. The Latin abbreviation *Ibid* (abbreviation for Latin term *ibidem* meaning ‘in the same place’) is used to mention the book just referred to before. The Latin abbreviation *op.cit.* (abbreviation for Latin term *opera citato* meaning ‘the work cited’) is used to indicate the work which has already been cited in the same chapter. The non-English words used in the study are italicized and their corresponding meanings in English are given in the text/

glossary in the end. Some information though not inevitable but may illuminate the study is given as appendix in the end.

### **Review of Literature**

Print and public sphere have been the subjects of study, by many. But scholarly works regarding the evolution of print and journalism in Kerala are a few. Though these books are of-course profound and scholarly they lack historical cohesiveness. They are very similar in the style and presentation. Also they do not have much of a critical and analytical approach pertaining to the emergence of public opinion and the role played by the newspapers in manifesting the public sphere.

*Kerala Pathra Pravarthana Charithram* (Journalistic History of Kerala) by Puthuppalli Raghavan is more or less a chronological narration of the newspapers of Kerala. It provides a lot of information and insight. But it is more journalistic in approach.

*Kerala Pathra Pravarthanam: Suvarnadhyayangal* (The Golden Chapters of Kerala Journalism) by G.Priyadarshanan is of course a store-house of knowledge. He exposes so many new pieces of information by hard work and research but many are not substantiated by documental evidences.

*Malayala Pathrathinte Katha* (The Story of Malayalam Newspapers) by Perunna K.N Nair is brief when compared to the above works. Though it is an attempt to trace the development of journalism in Kerala, it does not describe as to how the interventions of newspapers resulted in the formation of public opinion.

*Samskara Tharangini* (Sea of Culture) and *Samskara Navoathanam* (Cultural Renaissance) by Murkoth Kunhappa are also

great works more or less tracing the growth of Malayalam journalism in a commendable manner. But the book is written in relation to the growth of the newspaper *Malayala Manorama*.

The evolution of print and its multifarious ramifications have been the thread of discussion and study of so many scholars outside Kerala. Because of its research relevance we witness new studies also coming up now.

*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* by the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* by Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* by Benedict Anderson, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India* by Stuart Blackburn, *Language, Politics, Elites and Public Sphere : Western India under Colonialism* by Veena Naregal, *Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, politics and the Indian Language Press* by Robin Jeffrey etc. are scholarly works that have been made mostly on the context of people other than Kerala and Malayalam. But the insights and inferences they provide are of much value and help in the present study about the manifestation of public opinion and evolution of public sphere in Malabar under the influence of early newspapers.