CHAPTER III
THE PERVADING INFLUENCE OF PRESS

The most powerful force in the world is thought. The more forms of expression it finds, the more that force can manifest itself. The invention of printing was a milestone in human history.\(^1\) While we will be looking at the debates around print and education, they both undoubtedly possessed unquestionable significance.\(^2\)

The colonial domination and the spread of education by the missionaries brought about drastic changes in Malabar in the 19\(^{th}\) century. The colonial rule introduced entirely a new system of public administration, a new economic order which was characterized by British bureaucracy, commercialization of agrarian economy, development of transport and communication and western concept of private property in land. Such transformations were attempted to ensure the consent of the colonized, as distinct from physical control exercised through military success and territorial conquest.\(^3\)

The activities of the missionaries resulted in the emergence of an intermediary middle class in Malabar society during the second half of the 19\(^{th}\) century. Education was an important factor in the process of this

\(^{1}\) Leo Tolstoy, quoted in the article “A Century-old Riddle Eludes an Answer,” in The Hindu, 1\(^{st}\) March 2008, p.11.

\(^{2}\) Tithi Bhattacharya, The Sentinels of Culture, Class, Education and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848-85), New Delhi, 2005, p.34.

social change. Culture and politics, integrated in the process of domination was not perceived or realized by the colonized.\textsuperscript{4} It is interesting to see that the printing as well as reading culture developed as a site of colonial discourse amongst the Malayalees of Kerala.\textsuperscript{5} Print, education and salaried job were the three main areas of ‘primitive accumulation’ of class awareness.\textsuperscript{6}

The fundamental technological change of modern times connected with literacy was, of course, the development of bulk printing. Its significance became felt in the 1880’s with the popularization of daily newspapers and weekly journals.\textsuperscript{7} English education remained the catalyst for the success of the modern education system, even after the spread of Malayalam schools. This was apparent in the tendency among children going to ezhuthupallis and kutipallikootams (traditional schools) to take admission in English schools after elementary stage. Some people resigned their jobs to enter English schools.\textsuperscript{8}

Though the first school in Malabar was established at Tellicherry in May 1839\textsuperscript{9} the pace of growth of literacy and education was not fast

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Tithi Bhattacharya, \textit{op.cit.}, p.30.
\end{itemize}
until 1860’s. During the 1850’s there was none in Malabar who could read and write English as there were no English schools during those days. The Basel Mission Society had then only just started English elementary schools at Calicut, Tellicherry and Cannanore.\textsuperscript{10}

**An exploration in search of English and modernity**

Due to the educational activities in Malabar for the 25 years starting from the academic year 1857-58 a flow of scholars from high schools and university took place. The progress obtained is evident from the following table\textsuperscript{11}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Uty. Pupils</th>
<th>H.S Pupils</th>
<th>Middle School Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857-58</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>580</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862-63</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867-68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>1872-73</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>3698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

William Logan adds: “Of the pupils in 1882-83, 5270 were girls. Many Malayali youths proceed to Madras and elsewhere to complete their education and if the number of these were added, there would be a considerable increase in the number shown in the column headed

\textsuperscript{10} Article by C.Krishnan in *Mithavadi* Special Supplement, 1925, p.47.

university pupils”. In such a situation one proposal of Tellicherry municipality was to raise the standard of local municipal school to F.A class. It was said that the proposal seemed to have emanated from some of the councillors who had sent up their sons or nephews to the late entrance examination and wanted to get higher education at a cheap rate.

This exodus of youths to Madras and other places is widely discussed in the contemporaneous literature also. Since it is the mirror that reflects the eventful life of those periods they are to be seriously considered and studied. In Indulekha the hero Madhavan and the heroine Indulekha, in Lakshmikesavam both the hero Kesavanunni Nair and the heroine Lakshmi, in Saraswathivijayam the character Marathan who later becomes the sessions judge, in Parangodiparinayam the main character Parangodan vakkeel are examples of those who studied outside Malabar. The characters Krishnan, Kandankudungi, Puthiyedathu Kochukrishna Menon, P.V

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12 Ibid., p.107.
13 Kerala Sanchari, 2nd January 1887, MNNPR, TNA.
14 The first novel in Malayalam written by O.Chandu Menon in 1889.
15 The novel in Malayalam written by Padu Menon published in 1892.
16 The novel in Malayalam written by Potheri Kunhampoo published in 1892.
17 The novel in Malayalam written by Kizhakkeppatt Ramankutty Menon, published in 1892.
Kuttikrishna panikkar and so on of early Malayalam short stories also come in this list.

The craze for education and the study of English is also a thread of discussion in the first Malayalam novel *Indulekha* and many of the novels and short stories that immediately followed it. Indulekha, the heroine of this novel studied English, read piano and even smiled in English. Madhavan, the hero felt it is the best to get into government service after acquiring a degree in law.

Indulekha could drum out her suitor, the 45 year-old Suri Namboothiripad because of her prudence obtained by English education. The other character Kalyanikutty became his victim because she lacked the same. Thus Indulekha espouses the cause of independence in sexual life by rejecting Suri Namboothiripad. And that echoes the emergence of independent family system by liberating the individual from the grip of joint family system. When Indulekha uses the first-person singular as she rejects the advances of Suri Namboothiri, the attitude reverberates across Nair society, much as the door Nora would slam a few years later when she leaves her ‘doll’s house’ echoes through Europe.

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24 *Doll’s House*, a drama by Henri Ibsen.
In the novel *Lakshmikesavam*, the heroine Lakshmi mercilessly rejects the unilateral proposal from the fifty one-year old Nair landlord Akkarappatt Kelunni Nambiar.\(^{26}\) She ensures the independence in marriage by accepting the man of her choice Kesavanunni Nair, after absconding from home and living in exile for one year. Soon after the incident, the landlord’s friend ‘Itti Vasu Namboothiripad made a comment that, had she not been taught English, she would not have defied the words of her uncle ‘Chathara Menon’ and absconded. It means that it was her English education that enabled her to revolt against the existing social order.

In *Sukumari* (1897) written by Joseph Mooliyil there is a dialogue between Sathyapalan (the hero) and Sukumari (the heroine). The story is that of the 1860’s. Sathyapalan says, “The government had decided to propagate here English education. English education is good. But it is bad that our people abusing the mother tongue and mimicking English because many of the locals believe that English culture means that it is wearing their costumes and following their food habits. To speak in English, to smile in English, to dress in English and to walk in English is a new style becoming prevalent now.”\(^{27}\)

Thus one undisputed and significant development of the late 19\(^{th}\) century Kerala was the emergence of an English educated class which began to review the existent social order, ideas and institutions in sharply critical terms.\(^{28}\) It was a process of culture shift in which the

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\(^{28}\) J.Devika, “*Imagining Women’s Social Space in Early Modern Keralam*”, in Working paper series-329, CDS, Thiruvananthapuram.
English educated minority transferred the merits and advantages they already attained to their subordinates in the society.²⁹

The print house of Kerala popularised western values, notions, clothing, behaviour and ways of life as superior features of modern life by facilitating the circulation of literary creations embodying practices of modernity. The western values were soon internalized by native writers who began to reproduce them. Apart from representing social reality, novels or fictional narratives in general, also exercise social control by projecting symbols and modes of life into the life of the community, particularly in those less easily defined but basic areas such as norms, values, and personal and interpersonal behaviour.³⁰ O.Chandu Menon’s novel Indulekha is a good example for this. It created an impression in the native minds that English education is essential for good living. This novel reproduced western values as superior leading to social progress.³¹

In fact Indulekha is a work that evinces the influence which English language and western thought has made in the land of Kerala. “The book begins with a dispute over education. The elderly manager (Panchu Menon) of the matrilineal joint family refuses to waste money on sending a distantly related boy (Shinnan) to school. Madhavan (hero) protests that his uncle has ‘no idea about this small boy……….except to bring him up like a bull calf…….I will take him

²⁹ C.I Issac, op.cit., P.40.
away myself and have him educated.’ Madhavan’s claim is that since the taravad property is earned by the ancestors, the children of Shinu Pattar also is entitled for its share. So Madhavan vehemently says that Panchu Menon is obliged to send Shinnan (son of Shinu Pattar) for studying English. Madhavan here challenges not only the orders of the karanavar (head of the Nair joint family) but also his financial monopolistic authority. The culture of Madhavan acquired by English education shines here when he makes such denials. Here the dispute symbolizes a struggle between the status quo and change. This is the curtain raiser to the central concern of the novel: an exploration of the different ways in which Malabar society was trying to grapple with the cultural situation in the 19th century.

Indulekha ends with Indulekha’s (heroine) marriage with Madhavan and after a month of honey moon, they get settled in Madras. This is an indication of the beginning of the ruin of taravads and joint family system, which was preserved intact as an institution by the feudal society. The result is the acquisition of private wealth for wife and children and subsequent birth of nuclear families. This is again substantiated by William Logan, “And the fashion is daily becoming more and more prevalent for the woman to leave her ancestral home for that of the husband of her choice although as matter of law the husband occupies no recognized legal relation involving rights and responsibilities in regard either to his wife or his children”.

The cultural impact of the new literacy was not confined to English literates. There was a spill over effect on vernacular readers. The new cultural essence invariably found its way into the Indian languages and through them to a larger audience. The growth of printing facilities in these languages during the course of the 19th century furthered this process, for the new cultural taste could thus enter the arena of ‘popular reading’.35

It was this awareness in Western literature that inspired the early novelists of Kerala to write books like *Indulekha*. Within three months of its publication the first edition of *Indulekha* was wholly sold out.36 Between 1889 and 1892 nine novels are written in Malayalam out of which the six are from Malabar. Among this the first edition of the parody novel *Parangodiparinayam* was sold out within months as in the case of *Indulekha*. The above sequence of events in the publishing field vivifies the fact that the Malayalam readership in Malabar was considerably increased by the 1890’s consequent to the increase in the literacy rate.

Apart from above reasons the eminent English teachers of Malabar made the dissemination of English more quick during the fag end of the 19th century. Thatha Kanaran who belonged to Thiyya community is a better example for this. Thatha Kanaran who was the headmaster of the Tellicherry Basel Mission High School from 1887 onwards had written an authoritative work entitled *Comparative study of English and Malayalam as a guide to Reciprocal Translation*. “Since

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36 O.Chandu Menon, *op.cit.*, pp. 241-44.
he became the headmaster of the school his popularity as a unique scholar in English attracted so many students to this school”.37

The impact of the colonial rule and English education was tremendous upon the realm of social life in Malabar during the second half of the 19th century. The establishment of courts influenced not only the economic and social structure but also the mindset of the society. Even in small towns there appeared lawyers’ groups wearing black gowns. From nephews and sambandhakkars (the Brahmin boys involved in the contract marriage with Nair women) threats for partition of taravad echoed. Janmis employed the assistance of courts for evicting the tenants. Everywhere there arose a new class of middlemen connected with courts. Many of the first novels and dramas of Malayalam were either written by lawyers or depicted the lawyers in main roles. And those who acquired some legal knowledge later, either engaged in the preparation of memoranda or in the issue of press statements and thereby they became either public servants or leaders.38 During those days (1870’s) Thiyyas practised polygamy. It was the spread of English education that put an end to that abominable custom.”39

The speedy introduction of modern English schools accelerated the process of the fast vanishing of indigenous schools in the last decades of the 19th century. Considering this topical interest Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar wrote the short story Nattezhuthassanmar

37 Murkoth Kunhappa, Murkoth Kumaran, (Mal), Kottayam, 1975, p.39.
39 Murkoth Kunhappa, op.cit., p.3.
(teachers in indigenous schools)\textsuperscript{40} and Murkoth Kumaran wrote another short story entitled \textit{Malayalam Munshimar} (Malayalam teachers).\textsuperscript{41} K.V.M (K.Vasudevan Moosad) recalls this situation in his autobiography. “By 1900 new types of schools were only in the towns. If one wanted to study Sanskrit or any other in the traditional mode, teachers were a few and the natives had little wished to send their children”.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{In style English, the rest local}

The acquaintance of the educated class with English style and habits enabled them to speak and write English. They were more accustomed to English dress code. An excellent example of this category is Adv. Poovadan Raman who founded two newspapers in Malabar, the first English newspaper the \textit{Malabar Spectator} (later \textit{West Coast Spectator}) and the second Malayalam newspaper \textit{Kerala Sanchari}.\textsuperscript{43}

Murkoth Kunhappa gives a vivid explanation of this charismatic personality. “During that time (last quarter of 19\textsuperscript{th} century) there was a daring and cultured lawyer in Malabar named Poovadan Raman. He was the first in Malabar to cut the hair and grow the moustache in European style and to follow the western dress code”.\textsuperscript{44} (His son Govindan was the first Malayali to go to England for higher education).

\textsuperscript{40} Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar, \textit{Kesari}, (Mal), Trichur, 1945, pp.23-32.
\textsuperscript{41} Murkoth Kunhappa, \textit{op.cit.}, p.148.
\textsuperscript{43} A newspaper published from Calicut from 1886.
\textsuperscript{44} Murkoth Kunhappa, \textit{Malayala Manorama Samskara Tharangini}, (Mal), Kottayam, 1982, p.141.
Among these educated people many of them were genuine in thinking and behaviour. But there was a few who were blindly imitating the western habits. For them it was a matter of status to speak English and read English newspapers. Many of the literary works of that period mock such habits. There is one such depiction in a scene in *Parangodiparinayam*⁴⁵. “That time Parnagodikutty (heroine) was reading with much interest the *London Times* paper, reclined on a couch. It was about Gladstone’s speech about Home rule movement”.⁴⁶ Parangodikutty is a true representative of the imitating class.

K.C Narayanan Nambiar satirized this blind imitation of western style in his poem *puthiya parishkaara chihnangalathre*⁴⁷ (new cultural signs) published in an early issue of *Kerala Sanchari*. In the poem *ardhakshauram* (half shave), *melmeesha* (upper moustache), krop, shirt (crop and shirt) etc. were mockingly denoted as symbols of modern culture.

There are several dialogues in the novel *Sukumari* about the fondness of educated and literate people here, to imitate the English systems. In this novel  Sukumari, the heroine comments about the craze for English dress, “I have no objection in locals switching over to a different dress. Yet it is too much that the locals wearing the chest open dress, tie and cap as the English people wear. There is no doubt that the pants is better than the local *dhothi* and wearing shoes is a protection for

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the feet. But an ordinary shirt and turban will better suit our people”.48

In this novel there is another youngman in European dress, speaking to Sathyapalan (the hero) a conglomeration of English and Malayalam. Later Sathyapalan discloses to Sukumari that this youngman absconded some time back from Tellicherry committing some crime. Later he studied some English from somewhere else and now he is working as a writer in one coffee estate in Wayanad. Sathyapalan mockingly calls that youngman’s language as his *manipravalam* (mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit), a language of those who studied Malayalam and a bit of English.49 In the dialogue between the character Karuna and Sukumari there is a mention of people going to Belgaum, changing their local names by English names. Then the names like Vasu becomes D’vaz, Raman becomes Raimond, Achuthan becomes Atchison and Perayan becomes Pereira.50

In the novel *Parangodiparinayam* the author makes fun of the young people blindly imitating the English style. The character Pangassa Menon says, “If one is intelligent, without much hard-work he can study the lessons and get a promotion. After passing one or two examination he boards a train to Madras. There his endeavour is to become one like European. Subsequently he forgets Malayalam. Even when he speaks to the servant he deliberately uses a few English words. Thus he develops an English-Malayalam mixed style which neither English people nor Malayalis can understand. Thus by the time he

50 *Ibid.*., p.103.
finishes B.A, B.L and comes out, the *taravad* will be in ruins*.\textsuperscript{51} The novelist sarcastically calls this class *koothankeeri jaathi* (a class of persons Indians in blood and colour but English in taste and opinions).\textsuperscript{52} “Lord Mecaulay in the education minutes of 1837 has recorded that the creation of such a community is the aim of English education in India.\textsuperscript{53}

The novelist makes fun of both Parangodan and Parangodikutty for their blind craze for English habits. He says that the impression of Parangodikutty is that since her being an English lady all the young men in the country are always tarrying to be her servants.\textsuperscript{54} The novelist also makes fun of Parangodan who is not ready to marry his lady love Parangodikutty without following the English custom of ‘courting before marriage’. Parangodikutty reluctantly agrees with that since she is forced to pretend that she too knows that foreign custom.\textsuperscript{55}

**Tide of English Newspapers sweeps Malabar**

The above examples convince the overwhelming influence of the English education in Malabar and the craze of the locals to imitate the English habits. It may be that genuine or artificial enthusiasm that coerced the so-called elite class of Malabar to subscribe and read English newspapers. The newspapers tuned by the colonial masters were appealing to the emerging section of new readers. The practice of communication through English has been fashionable since then. Leading newspapers of Common Wealth Countries of Asia and Africa

\textsuperscript{51} Kizhakkepatt Ramankutty Menon, *op.cit.*, p.62.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p.61.

\textsuperscript{53} V.C Haris, “Preface” in Kizhakkepatt Ramankutty Menon, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p.71.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p.83.
are still published in English language. In India even the vernacular newspapers changed into English as they grew up. Our present day largely circulated leading national dailies like \textit{The Hindu}, \textit{Amrithabazar Pathrika} etc. which had been originally vernacular shifted to English later.\(^\text{56}\)

Even in Calicut there were three English newspapers. The veteran journalist Theruvath Raman says, “During the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century three English newspapers \textit{Malabar Spectator}, \textit{West Coast Reformer}, and \textit{Champion} were circulated in Calicut. The launching of an English weekly \textit{Malabar Spectator} almost six years prior to the starting of \textit{Kerala Pathrika} indeed upholds and corroborates the craze for English in Malabar. It was the English newspapers that nurtured reading habit among the people of Malabar”.\(^\text{58}\) When Adv.C.Krishnan converted the \textit{Mithavadi} magazine into a weekly newspaper in 1921 one page was dedicated for English news alone.

During the 1880’s apart from \textit{Malabar Spectator} there was many an English newspaper read by the educated class in Malabar. In the reminiscences of the famous writer M.R Nair who used to write under the pseudonym ‘Sanjayan’ there is the portrait of his father reading the English newspaper \textit{Amrithabazaar Pathrika}\(^\text{60}\) when Sanjayan was a child. M.R Nair in his article \textit{njanagalude aashan} (our teacher) writes,

\begin{itemize}
\item \(^{56}\) C.I Issac, “The Press as a Site of Colonial Discourse-A Case Study on the Experience of Keralam”, \textit{op.cit.,} p.43.
\item \(^{57}\) An English newspaper started from Calicut.
\item \(^{58}\) Interview with Theruvath Raman on 9\textsuperscript{th} March 2004.
\item \(^{59}\) A vernacular newspaper started first from Tellicherry in 1908 and later shifted to Calicut.
\item \(^{60}\) An English newspaper published from Calcutta started in 1768.
\end{itemize}
“Sanjayan (M.R Nair) reminds one of the nights when he was a child. He is lying on the bed resting his head on the pillow. In the corner of the room near a table Sanjayan sees his father behind an unfolded newspaper. That newspaper was *Amrithabazaar Pathrika*. It was the first English newspaper that Sanjayan ever heard of”.

G.Priyadarshanan, a scholar in Malayalam journalism writes that *Amrithabazar Pathrika* was a largely circulated daily in Calcutta. It was widely circulated among the English educated people in Malabar too. Madras Mail which sharply criticized the Congress and its publications was the newspaper which Chenkalath Valiya Kunhirama Menon, the founder of *Kerala Pathrika* everyday read. Theruvath Raman reminisces that K.P Krishnan who was the assistant editor of *West Coast Reformer* and *Harbinger* later became the Calicut reporter of Madras Mail. He continued in that post until the publication of the Madras Mail was ceased. Raman added that in those days Madras Mail had very good circulation in Malabar. Government officers used to subscribe this newspaper. When circulation increased more Malabar news started to appear.

In the novels that were published in the last decade of the 19th century the newspaper reading habit of various characters has been

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63 An English newspaper started from Madras in the late 19th century.
64 V.T Bhattathirippad, *V.Tyude Jeevitha Smaranakal*, (Mal), Kottayam, p.95.
65 An English newspaper started from Calicut.
66 Interview with Theruvath Raman on 9th March 2004.
displayed. In *Lakshmikesavam* there is a scene where the heroine Lakshmikutty reads the newspapers sitting on a chair in her room.\(^{68}\) Since Lakshmikutty is a character, proficient in English language, and as it is said in the story that more than one newspaper exist, probably there might have been at least one English newspaper among them. In the story of Ambadi Narayana Poduval\(^{69}\) entitled “Ente Aadyathe Lekhanam” (My first article) also there is the portrayal of a context in which an English educated youngman Krishnan who unreasonably mocks the vernacular books and newspapers. “Anchalkkaran (postman) brought a few books and papers and placed them before Krishnan. He selected only those in English among them and pushed to a corner the books and papers in Malayalam even without removing the wrapper. There were many old papers of that kind lying already there. Then I asked whether he does not want those in Malayalam. Then Krishnan said, “Those are non-sense rubbish. It is because of my dignity that I have not sent them back. If you like you can take”.\(^{70}\) In the story of C.S Gopala Panikkar, “Melvilasam Maari” (address changed), the central character mentioned as ‘I’ is reading an English magazine reclined on a chair. The other character Lakshmikutty reads *Vidyavinodini* sitting on another chair lying near.\(^{71}\)

It was a practice in those days also, to send copies of newspapers to men of eminence in different parts of the country. Thus Dr.Hermann

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69 One of the first short story writers in Malayalam.
Gundert used to get by post every week, newspapers printed in almost 18 languages. Gundert read these regularly and used its crux in his articles.\(^72\) It is almost certain that they might include English newspapers one or more.

Along with the increasing literacy, employment opportunities and return from land and other investments, the purchasing capacity of the people had also increased. This is evident from the considerable number of professionals and other people engaged in various income generating activities, at that time. In the census returns of 1881, the population has been classed according to actual occupations.(Appendix-1).\(^73\) Among the professionals, 7206 were employed in Government and 2274 in the Defence Department. Both of these groups collectively came to 9480. Many of these groups had the financial affluence to subscribe newspapers.

The facts furnished in the *Statistical Atlas* of Malabar (based on the 1881 census) also corroborate that there were many who had sufficient income to subscribe newspapers either English or Malayalam. It states that among the population 31.9% are land holders and 16.75 are traders. In the industrial class the number of persons who live by the supply of food and drink, fuel and forage is very large. They account for 12.4% of the people. So also are the workers in wood and the like who number 4.0% of the people. Workers in leather and cotton fabrics are


\(^73\) William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.117.
few, but there are large numbers engaged in the manufacture of coir, as well as numerous tailors and umbrella-makers.”  

Towards the end of the 19th century, the number of officials drawing a salary of more than 10, 20 and 50 rupees a month were 1063, 245 and 90 respectively. Some of the people in the above categories had the capacity to subscribe a newspaper. Also they being affluent and literate it was also a prestige for many of them to have a paper in their houses. In the beginning it was the English newspapers that had fair circulation in Malabar. In those days most of the Government employees used to purchase *The Madras Mail* which mostly favoured the Government. The fact that even Chenkalath Kunhirama Menon, the man behind the Congress Movement in Malabar during the 1880’s subscribed *Madras Mail*, which criticized the Congress the most, is an indication of its influence in Malabar.

When the circulation of various English newspapers showed signs of increase some of them appointed their own staff correspondents in Malabar during the 1890’s. This fact is corroborated by many of the reports published in those days by *The Madras Mail* with the credit-line, ‘From Our Correspondent’. It is not sure whether they were full time correspondents stationed at Calicut or if they were roaming reporters. G.Priyadarshanan, writes that the eminent journalist Murkoth Kumaran had been the reporter of *Madras Mail* for three decades. This is again

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76 V.T Bhattathirippad, *op.cit.*, p.95.
corroborated by the noted journalist K.P Kunhimoosa that the function held in connection with the inauguration of the Tellicherry Mubarak High School by Maulana Shaukath Ali was reported in the Madras Mail by its reporter Murkoth Kumaran.\textsuperscript{78} However it be, Madras Mail published various kinds of news items from Malabar, some with maximum haste and some with reasonable speed, considering the gravity and seriousness of the news item.

The arrival of the economic reporter to the Government of India, at Calicut is a news item in Madras Mail under the heading, ‘The Economic Reporter in Calicut’.\textsuperscript{79} Since the news is a little serious it appeared in the paper without delay. The report is seen sent from Calicut on 9\textsuperscript{th} December 1889 which is published on 11\textsuperscript{th}. It means that it took only a single day to have it published in the paper. During the 1890’s there were no telegraph facilities from Calicut to Madras. Train was the only means to send the reports to Madras from where that paper was printed and published. So the speed is of-course wonderful.

The F.O.C (From Our Correspondent) report entitled ‘Wayanad Planting Notes’ published on 27\textsuperscript{th} December 1899, endeavours to depict the deficiency of rainfall in Waynad.\textsuperscript{80} On the same day among the

\textsuperscript{78} Interview with K.P Kunhimoosa on 8\textsuperscript{th} July 2005.

\textsuperscript{79} Madras Mail, 11\textsuperscript{th} December 1889-Micro-film, NMML, New Delhi. The text of the item is as follows. “Calicut, 9\textsuperscript{th} December:- Dr.George Watt, Economic Reporter to the Government of India, arrived here on 5\textsuperscript{th} and left yesterday after gathering a deal of valuable local information on economic and industrial subjects and collecting several specimens for the commercial museum at Calcutta….He carried away from here fried bananas, wooden sandals, coconut and palmyra jaggery, pappadams, native under-linen etc.”

\textsuperscript{80} Madras Mail, December 27, 1899, “ Malabar-Wayanad 23\textsuperscript{rd} December:- Though the rainfall in the district for the entire year is only about 10\%, below the average of the past ten years, this shortfall represents a very serious deficiency in the quantity which usually obtains during the North-East monsoon.......The
general news items there is another report about the decision to introduce a special syllabus of studies in all fisheries schools of Malabar coast. The above news items although seen as sent from Malabar on December 23rd appeared only four days after. From this it can be deduced and deciphered that it took four days for the news dispatch from Malabar sent by the correspondent, to appear in the paper.

The Madras Mail was able to carry the news item regarding the publication of the first Malayalam novel though a bit late. The historic publication of Indulekha was on 9th December 1889 at Calicut. The news item appeared on 4th February 1890 under the title ‘A Malayalam Novel’. It is very pertinent to note that an English paper published from Madras carried the report of the publication of a Malayalam novel from Calicut with due importance. This has happened only because it had a wide audience in and around Calicut.

The Madras Mail even during the 1890’s carried the doubts of the readers of Malabar regarding the scholarships to which they are entitled. Example is the letters in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ column. One such letter entitled ‘Christian College Scholarship’ is seen published in the issue of February 1st, 1890. It is very conspicuous that the letter was

Collector of Malabar shown his sympathy with the difficulties of landholders all over the country, addressed to the Board of Revenue advocating considerable remissions of taxation should be sanctioned”.

Ibid.

Madras Mail, 4th February, 1890. News item says, “Mr.O.Chandu Menon, the District Munsiff of Parappanangady, in Malabar has published a novel in Malayalam entitled Indulekha, printed at Spectator Press”.

Madras Mail, 1st February 1890. The letter says, “Sir, It is well known that the Madras Christian College holds out an annual scholarship, for the ‘benefits of students from Malabar’ as set forth in the extra collegiate scholarship scheme of the college, of-course by a competitive examination. Can a non-British born
written from Calicut only on 29th January. It means that the letter took only three days to reach Madras and for being published in the paper. The importance attached to such silly letters from Malabar during those times is quite amazing. All the more amazing is that the letter was followed by the reply also.\footnote{Madras Mail, 1st February 1890. The reply was this: “We have made enquiries and ascertained that the scholarship rules are not absolutely clear on this point. In the only case of the point being raised, it was provisionally ruled that if the student had studied for the length of time prescribed in a college of the district to which the scholarship is assigned, he was eligible even if born elsewhere. If such cases should occur often, perhaps the question may have to be definitely settled by the council of the college--Editor”.
} In the news item on January 30th, 1890 the staff reporter makes an elaboration of his ‘on the spot’ study of the sanitation problems in Minicoy and Malabar especially among the towns of Calicut, Ponnani, Guruvayur and Cochin.\footnote{Madras Mail, January 30, 1890, The report says, “…..In regards to sanitation the condition of things which the Surgeon-General deprecates as ‘too horrible to contemplate’ reigns, the Collector says. In all the large towns in Malabar, even in Calicut itself the Mappilas attached a sort of sanctity towards the wells in their sacred graveyards and habitually uses the water for drinking in preference to any other. In Calicut, Ponnani and many other places, the graveyard wells are in sandy soil, and graves new and old thickly surround them on every side. Drinking water is drawn from these wells by the Mappillas, not only without repugnance, but as a matter of choice. At Angadipuram I saw lately a grave, in which the feet of the corpse (newly buried) actually rested against the wall of the well, from which all the neighbouring houses draw their drinking water. The case of such water for drinking is a horrible practice; but it would require special legislation to stop it. Perhaps there is not a filthier tank in the country than the peculiarly sacred one attached to the famous Hindu temple of Guruvayur. I make bold to state that the general sanitation of Minicoy is superior to that of Calvetti in the heart of Cochin Municipality and is exactly similar to that of the fisherman’s quarter in the town of Calicut and most of the towns along the coast”.
} The advertisement published by Calicut Basel Mission Manufacturers on 27th January 1890 convincingly and conclusively establishes the fact that there was

(Cochin born) subject who passes his F.A from an institution of Malabar, compete for the same. - A Candidate, Calicut, 29th January”.

\footnote{Madras Mail, 1st February 1890. The reply was this: “We have made enquiries and ascertained that the scholarship rules are not absolutely clear on this point. In the only case of the point being raised, it was provisionally ruled that if the student had studied for the length of time prescribed in a college of the district to which the scholarship is assigned, he was eligible even if born elsewhere. If such cases should occur often, perhaps the question may have to be definitely settled by the council of the college--Editor”.}
circulation for the *Madras Mail* especially in and around Calicut and generally in Malabar.  

Stalwarts like Adv.C Krishnan used to write articles in *Madras Mail*. K.R Achuthan, biographer of C.Krishnan, has noted that *Madras Mail* was the favourite newspaper of Krishnan. Occasionally he wrote articles in that paper. This fact is established by N.K Damodaran in an article on C.Krishnan. He brings to notice the article Krishnan wrote in *Madras Mail* on 22nd July, 1900 under the heading ‘Malabar Janmi’ (Malabar landlord) while he was a student.

All the above references undoubtedly establish that the journalistic scenario of Malabar was under the sway of English newspapers published either from Malabar or outside, even much before the vernacular papers could make performance and grip in its own heartland. The main reasons for this contradictory phenomenon were that elementary and primary schools were fewer in number then. Malayalam vernacular schools in structure and content were carbon copies of the English schools. Malayalam was not encouraged much in those days in the English schools and as a consequence vernacular literates were also comparatively fewer in number. English education remained the catalyst

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86 *Madras Mail*, January 27, 1890. The body of the advertisement was this: “CALICUT BASEL MISSION MANUFACTURERS, Trouserings, Table Napkins, Face and Bath Towels”.


of the success of the modern education system even after the spread of Malayalam schools.\footnote{Ibid., p.179.}

**Tiny trots of vernacular**

But the efforts of the missionaries to the introduction of wide-scale school network during the latter half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century resulted in the spread of literacy in Malayalam. In their schools students were admitted irrespective of caste, creed and sex. They made the people conscious of their deplorable condition and the necessity to better themselves through education.\footnote{R.N Yesudas, “Christian Missionaries and Social Awakening in Kerala”, in *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Part I-IV, pp.195-201.} In Malabar the growth of education, although slow, during the early years of the British rule, gradually picked up by the last decades of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{Report on Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency for 1872-73, No. XXXVIII, p.63, TNA.}

![Table 2](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Middle School Pupils</th>
<th>Elementary Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857-58</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862-63</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867-68</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-73</td>
<td>3698</td>
<td>11671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>27527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>1431</td>
<td>37136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that during the academic year 1882-83 there was a steep increase in the percentage of those ‘under instruction’ when compared to the corresponding figures that of five years back, i.e., 1877-78. The same pattern of increase is noted during the five years prior to the academic year 1877-78 also. These facts

\footnote{William Logan, *op.cit.*, p.106.}
vindicate indirectly that the number of the Malayalam literates increased considerably during the above stipulated periods and in a way that led to considerable increase of Malayalam readers.

The following table shows the state of education in Malabar as per the census of 1881.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taluks</th>
<th>Under Instruction</th>
<th>Instructed</th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chirakkal</td>
<td>9486</td>
<td>17772</td>
<td>245411</td>
<td>272669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>5567</td>
<td>12764</td>
<td>147444</td>
<td>165775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurmbranad</td>
<td>7944</td>
<td>20206</td>
<td>232874</td>
<td>261024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynad</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>3853</td>
<td>82868</td>
<td>88091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calicut</td>
<td>6384</td>
<td>18721</td>
<td>180857</td>
<td>205962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eranad</td>
<td>5114</td>
<td>14823</td>
<td>276206</td>
<td>296143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walluvanad</td>
<td>7117</td>
<td>19149</td>
<td>281836</td>
<td>308102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palghat</td>
<td>11018</td>
<td>25703</td>
<td>305733</td>
<td>342454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponnani</td>
<td>12769</td>
<td>27762</td>
<td>352123</td>
<td>392654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66769</td>
<td>160753</td>
<td>1447496</td>
<td>2332874</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instructed</th>
<th>Under instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.89%</td>
<td>2.862%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Literacy in Malabar from 1891 to 1931.

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94 Ibid.
95 Census Reports of relevant years. Statistics for Planning, Kerala.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>22.08%</td>
<td>3.92%</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
<td>10.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>22.57%</td>
<td>3.46%</td>
<td>13.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>22.92%</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
<td>14.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the third and fourth table it is clear that during the years between 1881 and 1891 the literacy rate increased to 13% from 6.89%. Also high appreciation is given for education in the *Statistical Atlas of Malabar*. “As to education the people of Malabar are much ahead of the Presidency generally; only 77.9% of male and 96% of the female population being illiterate”.\(^{96}\) The Malabar area could boast of its education status compared to other districts. Of all the districts of Madras, Malabar had 20% and more of pupils of school-going age attending educational institutions. In majority of the districts in the state the percentage was less than 12. \(^{97}\)

In such a social and educational situation that existed during the late 19\(^{th}\) century it was difficult for any Malayalam journal to make a debut. Murkoth Kunhappa comments, “Then there was only a few who spoke Malayalam language. Among them the rich and those who had interest in reading newspaper used to read only English newspapers. And the landlords who were devoid of English education had no fair opinion about newspaper reading. In the lower strata there were only illiterates and a few literates who had no financial capacity to subscribe a newspaper. It was from a section of people between the above two


\(^{97}\) File No.A806, Chart I, RAC.
extremes that the subscribers for Malayalam newspapers were to come. Among them the ladies had not used to read papers at all. When Malayala Manorama was started in 1890 newspaper reading was not at all a habit among Malayalis. Only a few were interested even in reading prose texts. Majority of the people were fond of poetry.” In such a situation, it was interesting to look at the condition of Kerala Pathrika started six years back. Even after two years since its inception Kerala Pathrika could get a circulation of only 904 copies.

Mannalath Sreedharan, a veteran journalist also ascertains the above fact. “In the period when Kerala Pathrika was launched many of those who could read Malayalam newspapers were not able to write the language. In those days Malayalam newspapers were regarded as a comic effort of the Sanskrit scholars. Then many of the scholars did not know how to write prose. Even the letters were written in poetry. Therefore the duty to create genuine interest in Malayalam reading was also undertaken by this paper. Since the prose was rarely used, the readers were few in the beginning”.

**Bilateral growth of press and prose**

Along with the growth of vernacular newspapers the prose style in language also grew. Infact the growth of the both is intertwined and complimentary. The prose style created drastic changes in Malayalam

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101 *Correspondence* 639 dated 18th June 1886, RAC.

102 Interview with Mannalath Sreedharan on 20th May 2005.
literary sphere. Only in a language very much penetrated among the people, can a literary language originate. The public sphere emerged as a result of the propagation of newspapers and journals are indeed a creation of this prose style.\footnote{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, pp.484-485.}

The decline of indigenous education as a cultural construct and the ascendancy of modern Malayalam education, are signified by the transformation of Malayalam language, particularly prose. Scholars have pointed to Kerala Varma as the initiator of simple Malayalam prose. An equally strong case has been made for the missionaries as the initiators of Malayalam prose.\footnote{K.N Ganesh, “Cultural Encounters Under Colonialism: The Case of Education in Keralam”, op.cit., pp178-179.}

It was the missionary activities that contributed much to the development of modern Malayalam prose and to the increased readership in Malayalam. For the propagation of Christianity they made contacts with the common man. Thus they had evolved a new prose style out of the speech of the vulgar populace and fashioned it as a medium for descriptive, narrative and discursive writing.\footnote{V.Aravindakshan, “The Literary Tradition of Kerala”, in P.J Cherian, (ed.), Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p.82.} The most developed form of missionary Malayalam prose style is to be seen in the missionary newspapers”.\footnote{Shibu Muhammed, “A Criticl Enquiry into Popular Journalism in Kerala with reference to Malayalam Newspapers and its History”, in P.K Pokker, (ed.), Calicut University Research journal, Vol. III, Issue 1, University of Calicut, July 2002, p.107.}
This new lucid style was easily understood by the common people. The new missionary prose style was popularized through the schools and newspapers and was backed by the use of print. “It was from this ‘missionary prose’ and Sanskrit language that the present day literary language evolved. The grammar, style, diction etc. required for a language were developed in the early 20th century and were disseminated through the medium of print. The ‘middle class’ that developed during this time made transactions in the new language”.  

Prof. V. Aravindakshan says, “Prose, a popular medium for the manifestation of ideas is a creation of this age. The contribution of the prose, born and incubated in the pages of newspapers and journals, in conveying to the ordinary public thoughtful articles and imaginative works is invaluable. It represents the liberty of the language from the framework of customs. The most solemn representative of that liberty is the novel, narrated in prose. It is the modern criticism that creates a public sphere among the ordinary reader, by transmitting the crux of literary works and thereby imbuing in him, thoughts about good and evil”.  

The contribution of newspapers in the creation of modern literature and its dissemination is indescribable. Prof. N. Krishna Pillai says that the development of journalism was one of the main reasons for the renaissance of Malayalam literature during the time of Kerala Varma. The close nexus of Malayalis with the western culture nourished the growth of newspapers and journals in Malayalam. Due to the above

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access an environment congenial and convenient for the multi-faceted growth of literature was created. Indeed, journalism was very much useful and fruitful for the fast propagation of literary works among the public, for the engendure of a prose style which is able to discuss political, social and cultural tastes, and for the enrichment of other literary areas like articles, biographies and stories”.¹⁰⁹ As in the case of novel, literary criticism of the modern type also, was born and brought up in the pages of periodicals. It is only in a society that contains democratic characters and that has bid farewell to feudal culture, literary criticism can grow. Due to modern education and journalism a favourable atmosphere for criticism was getting evolved in that period.¹¹⁰

Along with the educational institutions the missionaries gave a fillip to printing and journalistic activities. L.M.S Missionaries established a press at Nagercoil in 1820.¹¹¹ Benjamin Bailey installed the C.M.S press at Kottayam in 1821 and started printing subsequently.¹¹² In Malabar Dr.Hermann Gundert made pioneering efforts in the field of printing and started a litho press at Tellichery in 1845.¹¹³ These missionary presses printed hundreds of religious publications to propagate Christianity. Journalism was also introduced by these missionaries for the benefit of their followers and to convince them of

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¹¹⁰ V.Aravindakshan, “Malayala Sahithyathinte Adhunikeekaranam: Chila Prarambha Prachodanangal”, *op.cit.*, p.34.
the glory of Christian religion. The first Malayalam periodical
Rajyasamacharam was published from June 1847 to December 1850. It
was printed from Basel Mission Press Nettur, Tellichery. The next
journal Paschimodayam was also brought out by Basel Mission from
Tellichery from October 1847 to August 1851. Gundert was closely
involved in the publication of these two journals.

It was during the 19th century, the colonialist administrators
introduced with a new found vigour, enterprises like factories and
plantations, transporting systems like roads and railways,
communication systems like telegraphs and anchal (post). Construction
of railways and roads took a tremendous pace under the British than
under the Rajas of Kerala. Therefore to cope up with this great leap, the
spread of information with a maximum speed was necessary and the
colonial rulers utilized print for this end. In-fact, print and print media
were after all the resultant product of colonialism. C.A Bayly comments,
“print itself did not create an information revolution. Rather it speeded
up the velocity and range of communication among existing
communities of knowledge”. In fact the advent of mechanical
duplication of knowledge did encourage the spread of literacy and it
caused the growth of a reading subject in the state.

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114 Murkoth Kunhappa, Malayala Manorama Samskara Tharangini, op.cit., p.95.
115 Puthuppalli Raghavan, Kerala Pathrapravarthana Charithram, (Mal), Thrissur,
1985, p.31.
116 Ibid., p.41.
118 C.A Bayly, Empire and Information 1780-1870, Delhi, 1999, p.243.
119 C.I Issac, “The Press as a Site of Colonial Discourse-A Case Study on the
Experience of Keralam”, op.cit., p.33.
Thus the components of ‘colonial modernity’ were related to each other and therefore each one was inseparable. For gathering and disseminating information the government began to publish its Acts, munsiff records, manuals, gazetteers, regulations and so on. The introduction of print under colonial rule produced wide effect. The simultaneous introduction of public instruction, the printing press, public debate in newspapers, the English language, libraries and dense archives transformed Indian society in the 19th century more thoroughly than colonial capitalism transformed its economy”.\textsuperscript{120} The overall output of all these factors combined was the formation of public sphere.

Before the arrival of the missionaries Malayalam was not developed as a standard language. It was the colonial government that had taken the initial steps to standardize the Malayalam language. By the end of the 18th century, as a result of the Treaty of Seringapatana in 1792, the whole of Malabar came under the hands of Bombay Presidency. During that period since the Company Government lacked a press of its own the printing works were done for the company by the Courier press at Bombay. When Malabar came under the British, the Courier press owners expressed their wish to have printing facilities in the language of the newly annexed area also. They said to the Government in March 1798 that inorder to print the government notices and regulations they will require Malayalam types. Immediately the Governor Jonathan Duncan sanctioned 5000 rupees. He was seeking the convenience of printing in order to propagate the new regulations and rules among the locals.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{120} C.A Bayly, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.8-9.
\textsuperscript{121}
It was in 1857 that the Madras government appointed Dr. Hermann Gundert as the first Inspector of Schools in Malayalam-Karnataka districts. He continued in that post until 11th April 1859. In Travancore a text book committee was constituted in 1867. In 1868 Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuran became the chairman of this committee. Under his leadership the committee printed stories, essays, poems and even novels which were translations or adaptations of English books. Kerala Varma’s text books not only gave thrust to prose form but also exempted religious and mythological contents. The work of Keralavarma Valia Koyi Thampuran, who was the chairman of this committee, has to be reviewed from the perspective of effectively popularizing the missionary educational methods through his twenty odd text books.

The printing presses which were actively involved in the publication of books meant for proselytization by the end of the 19th century started publishing books with a secular perspective like travelogues, biographies, autobiographies and those connected with the extension of knowledge. It was during the 1860’s that Kerala Varma started giving importance for prose in curriculum. Through the above text books, a literary culture mainly prose centred, became more

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122 C.K Moosad, \textit{op.cit.}, p.428.
prominent. The buyers of these books were not the rich and the newly elevated middle class groups alone.\textsuperscript{126}

Yet it took some more time for the ripening of a ‘print culture’. During the fag end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century the locals dared to start presses like Keralavilasam, Keralakalpadrumam, Vidhyavilasam, Vidhyabhivardhini etc. Several books came out of these presses. Though in a limited extent, it heralded the rise of ‘print capitalism’ here. Even then, the presence of a vernacular reading public was not felt. Ananda E.Wood says, “It is doubtful whether there was a good bookshop even at the larger towns like Trichur. Books were generally available through salesmen who walked from house to house selling the books that were carried in bundles on their back and heads”.\textsuperscript{127}

K.V.M provides a description about how his education was lagged by six months due to non-availability of the copy of a text book. “In those days (around 1903) to purchase a book one should go for Guruvayur Ekaadhashi (a Hindu religious observation). One day ezhuthassan (teacher) told my father that it was time for me to initiate the magham study (a stage in the study of Brahmin students). But the ezhuthassan had not with him a text book. Thus the studies were lagged by six months as the book was not available”.\textsuperscript{128}

Gradually the situation changed in favour of Malayalam language and literature. The print capitalists printed many orally transmitted texts and manuscripts and sold them among the people. S.T Reddiar printed

\textsuperscript{126} E.V Ramakrishnan, “Varthamaana Pathrangaludeyum ….”, \textit{op.cit.}, p.485.
\textsuperscript{128} K.V.M, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.15-16.
the works of Kunchan Nambiar and Ezhuthachan and sold them at festival places, *angaadis* (markets) and seasonal fares. Vidyabhivardhini published not only classics but also popular works like *vanchippatt* and *thiruvathirappatt* (folk songs) and also translations of prose writings from other languages. The book *Nerampokku vishayamaaya criminalcase pusthakangal* (Interesting Criminal Case Books) brought out by S.T Reddiar is the forerunner of detective stories in Malayalam.\(^{129}\)

In Malabar hitherto there was not any vernacular newspaper to satiate the tastes of Malayalam readers. The missionary journals had no other objective other than religious propagation. It was at this time Chenkalath Valiya Kunhirama Menon made a bold step to start a Malayalam newspaper from Calicut which became a giant-leap in the history of Malayalam press and journalism. He found that, for newspapers Malabar is a virgin soil not yet upturned.

**Kerala Pathrika-Harbinger of a New Era**

The vibrant and dynamic period of social transformation starts with the beginning of national movement. It can be said that the powers of social transformation got more vigour and vitality with the national consciousness getting an organized structure in 1885. The *Kerala Pathrika* of Chenkalath Valiya Kunhirama Menon started from Calicut in 1884 heralded the advent of this new era of transformation.\(^{130}\)

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It was from nothingness Menon built a mighty journalistic edifice the Kerala Pathrika. He had constraints many and so he had to strive much. His work was a sacrifice in the altar of public cause and human love. P.V Krishna Warier says, “When Kerala Pathrika was started there wasn’t a facile style in Malayalam. It was Kerala Pathrika that cleared and created a new avenue”.\(^{131}\)

About his Herculean task Kunhirama Menon himself commemorates in the preface of the famous book Vrithandapathra Pravarthanam. He writes about the constraints he had faced when he started the paper. “The difficulties that I and my assistants had to face in the beginning were not at all little. It was a truth that because of the efforts of my friends we had a considerable circulation in the beginning itself. But difficulties were much due to the scarcity of reporters who were able enough to write reports and articles from the villages. Those who were proficient in English did not use to read vernacular newspapers nor contribute to them under the impression that it was something below their status. Even if a few were ready they were not trained at all in the vernacular style. The poets knew Malayalam but they had little knowledge in the art of prose writing. And the ‘advocate clerks’ style was not at all befitting to the media. Because of these reasons I was put into much trouble in the early period. We were coerced to rewrite wholly the articles and news reports that were sent from country sides. Sometimes we had to publish news items in poetic stanzas…….”\(^{132}\)


\(^{132}\) K.Ramakrishna Pillai, Vrithandapathra Pravarthanam, (Mal), Kochi, 1984, pp.xxxv-xxxvi.
It was not Kunhirama Menon alone who had to undergo these kinds of trials and tribulations. His contemporary K.V. Moosad portrays a similar situation in his autobiography. He writes, “In those days vernacular journals were seemed to be making a death at its infancy itself. Scarcity of printing press and lack of assistance from the part of writers were the main reasons. In order go get rid of the first, Mangalodayam installed a press of its own at Trichur. To overcome the second it was necessary to make an approach based upon the time, region etc. In those days Sanskrit scholars were many. But among them those who were able to utilize their scholarship in the laymen’s language were few. There were a few who had won spectacular success in important examinations through English education but they felt contempt for Malayalam. Those who seemed to be civilized were even reluctant to write letters in Malayalam; then how can we think of them writing articles for newspapers? Those who were able to write were not ready to write; those who were ready to write were in-fact incompetent to write; this was the situation. Yet the eminent hands behind the journals like Vidhyavinodini, Rasikaranjini, Bhashaposhini etc. made relentless efforts to transform those English pundits into lovers of vernacular language. Thus a countable number of adepts who could write about modern subjects were groomed”.

The pathetic situation of the vernacular journalism even at the fag end of the 19th century is depicted by a reader, in an early issue of Kerala Sanchari. He writes in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ column extending best wishes to Kerala Sanchari: “Although newspapers have been published in Malayalam long since, it is a pity that they could not

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instill much inspiration or patience in the readers”.

“Due to the continuous efforts of *Kerala Pathrika*, *Kerala Sanchari* and *West Coast Spectator* there occurred a revolutionary change in the mind set of the people. To realize this achievement plentiful assistance was extended by writers like Appu Nedungadi, Oyyarath Chandu Menon, Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar, Kannambra Kunjunni Nair, Mooliyil Raman, Potheri Kunhamboo and so on”.

Thus when the people came to enjoy the fruits of journalism a situation engendered in such a way that they were tempted to subscribe them and to wait anxiously for their arrival. Such a situation is narrated by a reader in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ column of *Kerala Sanchari*. “Best wishes for you (Editor) and your journal. Since the advent of *Kerala Sanchari* many are very eager to know the everyday news. In the day break of Thursday people are thronging in the post offices and in the houses of subscribers. ‘Didn’t Sanchari come? Is there anything about officers? What is the local news? etc. were the types of comments they make while waiting for the paper”.

Observing the explosion in the journalistic scenario during 1890’s, Kandathil Varghese Mappila comments: “The fact that at present we have 17 papers is something amazing when compared to the size of this region and population. Among the 17 papers six are weeklies. Except *Malayala Manorama* all the five are published from

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134 *Kerala Sanchari*, 7th November 1888.

135 Puthupalli Raghavan, *op.cit.*, p.89.

Calicut. Therefore it is very clear that there is no other land other than Calicut so fertile for the birth and growth of newspapers”.  

Thus during the latter half of the 19th century newspapers were the vehicle to represent the intensity and the extensiveness of social relations. Various social groups though hitherto separated far and wide, by virtue of reading news came to know and understand each other which helped them to come closer. People belonging to various castes and religions before dining from one table could appear in the columns of one paper and thereby started to build strong friendship and solidarity by acquainting each other, exchanging opinions, engaging in arguments and sometimes making discords.

It was at that juncture, instead of the old social segmentations like caste, religion and village, there evolved alternative social relations. When people who lived in the villages as separate castes shifted to urban areas, their thread of discussion became the news of the city. When people who belong to various castes and religions started to work together in the factories, their success and failure became the general news. The virtues and vices of the British rule affected all communities alike. Thus administrative matters became local news. The means of information and communication has the power to mould the human beings into a single family. In fact the very nature of the press is to make the people united and enable them understand the meaning of life.

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137 Malayala Manorama, 11th February 1893.
139 Ibid., pp. 3-5.
This period also witnessed the appearance of several literary periodicals like Rasikaranjini, Sujananandini, Mangalodayam, Vidyavinodini, Bhashaposhini, Vidyavilasini and so on. “The first literary magazine of the kind we see today was the Vidyavilasini launched in 1881...But the two excellent journals that nourished the modern literature were Vidyavinodini of C.P Achutha Menon started in 1890 and Bhashaposhini of Kandathil Varghese Mappila started in 1893. It was Achutha Menon who initiated a separate regular column for book criticism”.\(^{140}\)

The beginning of newspapers and magazines not only could explore new possibilities for knowledge information but also could shift the literary manifestations from kovilakams (the abode of Kshathriyas) to ordinary men”.\(^{141}\)

The Muslims of Kerala who were witnessing the multifarious developments in the field of printing could not keep aloof from the mainstream. The first Muslim press was established at Tellicherry by one Kunhammed. He learned the art of printing from the Basel Mission press.\(^{142}\) Soon after this, the printing activities spread across the Muslim strongholds like Calicut, Kondotty, Malappuram, Thirurangadi, Tirur, Ponnani etc. Before 1900 there were 15 Muslim presses in Malabar.\(^{143}\)

**Print Capitalism Blooms**

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\(^{140}\) V.Aravindakshan, “Malayala Sahityathinte Adhunikeekaranam…”, *op.cit.*, p.32.


By 1890’s the literacy rate of Kerala ascended new heights. The development of printing played a central role in spreading the cultural content of the new literacy. Its cultural possibilities were realized by the printed word, by setting up new networks of communication, facilitating new options for the people and a new means of controlling the people. By facilitating easier access to literary products, print contributed to the making of a new cultural taste and sensibility and thus a new cultural personality. The print capitalists published novels, short stories, travelogues, biographies, dramas and so on. Half a dozen novels were written between 1887 and 1892.

Like the missionaries the new publishers had no permanent readers or money. For them publication was a new kind of risky business. Therefore for getting popularity and wider audience the ‘print capitalists’ conducted dialogues between the leading literary figures of the time and those were published in their periodicals. Kerala Varma, A.R Rajaraja Varma, Muloor Padmanabha Panicker, Subrahmanyam Potti and so on were involved in these dialogues. Dialogue thus become the artifact of the ‘printer-editor’. Although he takes no part in it he encourages the same as it promotes the publication itself. The development of ‘print culture’ during the last decades of 19th century created a group of writers like Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar, Murkoth

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147 Ibid.
Kumaran, Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna pillai, Appan Thampuran and so on.

The newspapers and magazines not only reinstalled the literature to new secular heights but also made possible the standardization of the types and style of Malayalam.\textsuperscript{148} The evolution of a prose style which even the laymen could understand was accelerated by those prose writers who deliberately worked for it.\textsuperscript{149} This situation encouraged even the Namboothiris for the promotion of ‘print capitalism’. K.V.M explains how the Mangalodayam publishing house was formed. “The people of Deshamangalam Mana were very eager to acquire more knowledge about the world by reading books and newspapers. It was a period when Cheriya Narayanan Namboothirippad of Deshamangalam was very enthusiastic in erecting a press and starting a Malayalam magazine. Without much delay, in the eastern pathaayappura (granary) of Deshamangalam Mana a press was installed and started the Mangalodayam magazine in that Thulam of Malayalam era. At that time a community congregation named Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha had already been started due to the encouragement extended by Kuroor Unni Namboothirippad, Mathur Vasudevan Namboothirippad and Deshamangalathu Namboothirippad. Mangalodayam magazine was intended as an official organ of that sabha. But in the magazine literature, science, history, poetry, short story, literary criticism etc. were treated as main items”.\textsuperscript{150} Under the initiative of Appan Thampuran, Kuroor Damodaran Namboothirippad and a few others Mangalodayam

\textsuperscript{148} E.V Ramakrishnan, “Varthamanpathrangaludeyum…….”, \textit{op.cit.}, p.486.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{150} K.V.M, \textit{op.cit.}, p.55.
Company was started and Kerala Kalpadrumam press was merged into it. After 22 months, Desamangalam press and *Mangalodayam* magazine were also transferred to the company.\(^{151}\)

It is a pity that to a greater extent this ‘print capitalism’ made its successful march at the expense of poor writers. K.V.M gives an elaboration of how print capitalists exploited the writers then. “Frequent editions published for the stories I wrote based on epics is a proof that they were warmly welcomed in the world of literature. In that context my well wishers even made comments that my writing efforts meant only to inflate the pockets of book-publishers”.\(^{152}\)

Murkoth Kumaran darted sharp attacks against the publishers who exploit the gifts and talents of poor writers. He called such publishers ‘blood-suckers’.\(^{153}\) The article of Murkoth Kumaran entitled *Kunchan Nambiarude Vikruthi* satirically attacked the print capitalists. In it he said that there are a few who hold the version that Kunjan Nambiar deviated because his only aim was to entertain the readers. Now Murkoth Kumaran flings a question who the readers are. Also he asks, was Kunjan Nambiar made his *thullal* stories with the intention that the readers should read and enjoy his poems in the books to be published and circulated by Reddiar and Mangalodayam companies.\(^{154}\)

**Two forms of Communication channels**


As the print capitalism got new dimensions newspapers and journals sprouted on a larger scale during this period. They could manifest an ‘authority’ which permeates in all spheres of culture. Apart from newspapers and journals, literary forms like novels and short stories also exhibit this aspect. This authority is two-dimensional. One of ‘private’ and the other that of ‘public’ or ‘outward’. It is through the prose forms like novels, short stories and articles that the internal-entity gets exposed, which was so far hidden in the communicative language alone. The words used in many of the short stories resembled very much those of the colloquial language. It required a new communicative language to find out the ‘individuality’ in the life of Malayalis. This internal-entity existed earlier. It gets a form and existence when it is represented by means of a literary transaction.155

Parallel to this private world there arises an external sphere of public life. It is this world which newspapers defines and detects. When we say that the private and outward worlds are the two sides of the same authority it implicates a world of contradiction which one definition can contain. This becomes explicit when we remember the connection of the 18th chapter of Indulekha with other chapters. The comprehensiveness of the novel is possible because of the perspective that it is within the public spheres of nationality and connected events that the private worlds of romance and discord exist.156 In fact the 18th chapter of the novel carries a debate on several issues such as atheism, English education, and the Indian National Congress. The relevance of this digressive discussion lies in the fact that it integrates into the plot ‘the

156 Ibid., p.486.
vital issues Indian society faced at that time. It is not accidental that the language of this chapter follows the analyzing style employed by newspapers and magazines in respect of various contemporary political and social topics. It is because of the fact that the cultural life of Malayali in the 20th century is a history of evolution of that public sphere and its politics which gradually evolved through journalism.

New cultural Taste and Sensibility

Print enabled to expand the new cultural tastes created by colonial literacy. K.N Panikkar says, “The influence of English on early novels in India is unmistakable, but this literary form was not generated exclusively here by external stimulus; it was rooted in the intellectual needs and aesthetic sensibility of the burgeoning middle class. Naturally the contradictions, ambiguities and uncertainties of the middle class in their social and cultural life, which arose out of the mix of a hegemonizing colonial culture and contending traditional cultures, formed the context in which a literary sensibility found expression in the nineteenth century”. Chandu Menon’s account in Indulekha is self explanatory as to how he could sow the seeds of a new literary taste and through that a new cultural taste was developing among the vernacular intelligentsia. Around the end of 1886, after Chandu Menon left Kozhikode to Parappanagadi, he began reading a large number of English novels while not engaged in work related to his government job. This new-found love of literature in him supplanted the normal leisure

157 E.V Ramakrishnan, “From Region to Nation and Beyond, Allegories of power in Malayalam Fiction”, op.cit., p.37
time activity of vedi parayal (gossip) among friends and members of the family. Consequently Menon’s circle of intimates felt somewhat neglected. To offset this he says that he ‘attempted to convey to them in Malayalam the gist of the stories of novels’ he had been reading. Initially they were not particularly interested in these stories of English romantic encounters, but they soon developed a taste for them. One of them, was greatly taken with Lord Beaconfield’s ‘Henrietta Temple’ and the taste then acquired for listening to novels translated orally, gradually developed into a passion. Inspired by this interest in Beaconsfield’s novel, Menon decided to translate it, but he soon gave it up as an impossible task. Instead, he undertook to write a new novel after the English fashion.\textsuperscript{160}

Even Chandu Menon was amazed by the speed with which the first edition was sold out. He says, “When I finished writing the preface to the first edition of this book on 9\textsuperscript{th} December 1889, I did not expect to write a second preface to this same book. Even if I had to write one, I did not have even in my wildest dreams thought that I would have to write one so soon. The first edition of this book which was put on sale in the beginning of January 1890 was sold out before 30\textsuperscript{th} March. There was still a great demand for this book and this led to a second edition and therefore also to the writing of this preface. Malayalis who had not read in Malayalam any book in the manner of English novels earlier, immediately read and enjoyed this book and praised it”.\textsuperscript{161}

\textit{Indulekha} of Chandu Menon imported a new movement to Kerala which the Malayalis hitherto had not seen or experienced. The character

\textsuperscript{160} O.Chandu Menon, \textit{Indulekha}, pp.237-238 .
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p.241.
sketch in *Indulekha* and *Sharada* by Chandu Menon (the sketches of Surya Namboothiri, Panchu Menon, Shinu Pattar, Kandan Menon) was like a bomb flung against the landlord system and other social evils which reeled round it. After *Indulekha* there occurred a spate of novels in Malayalam. Indeed the wide spread literacy and the availability of printed literature contributed to a change in attitude towards leisure itself. Leisure in the past had been defined mainly in terms of participation in group activities, be it gossip within the family or with friends or sports and games in the locality. Murkoth Kunhappa depicts such a scene in the biography of his father Murkoth Kumaran. “At night the house of Adv.Kunhappa (father-in-law of Murkoth Kumaran) becomes a venue for the get together of scholars. Officials, lawyers and scholars used to engage in arguments, criticisms and reciting stanzas. It is very reminiscent that Nairs and Nambiars adorned the venue in the above such get together held between 1870’s and 1900’s at this Ezhava abode. His (Adv.Kunhappa’s) son-in-law Murkoth Kumaran also participated in those get-togethers.”

But the increasing number of printed literature in different forms enabled the literate middle class to make reading as a form of spending the leisure time. In the novel *Sharada* there is a vivid description of learned people reading in a library even in the last decades of the 19th century. “When Thassen Menon looked into the room lifting the mat, he

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165 A novel written in Malayalam by O.Chandu Menon and published in 1892.
saw eight to ten learned gentlemen seriously reading newspapers and books. Among them one or two persons sitting on the edge of a table lying in the middle of the room. And one person sitting on a three-legged chair reads a newspaper holding it with his left hand. His other hand clutches a wooden plank so as to enable him to sit balanced. Another youngman Harihara Pattar reads sitting on a paddy box. Another one reads sitting on folded towel since he did not get anything to sit”.\textsuperscript{166} These reading rooms functioned as a popular mode of diffusion of knowledge at the grass root level.\textsuperscript{167}

Thus it can be deciphered that during the period between 1884 and 1889 a drastic change took place in the reading habit and sensibility of Malayalees, from the cold reception received by the newspaper Kerala Pathrika in 1884 and in contrast to that the warm welcome accorded to the first Malayalam novel Indulekha in 1889. It may be factors like the growing literacy, the availability of copies due to duplication facility by print, the new cultural taste developed among the people and the proximity of reading rooms, materialized during the five years from 1884 that paved the way for the triumphant march of Indulekha through the minds of Malayalees. It is true that by the time Indulekha was published, print technology was well entrenched in literary production.\textsuperscript{168}

The development of ‘print culture’ created a wide impact on existing society. The expansion of ‘print culture’ undermined the

\textsuperscript{166} O.Chandu Menon, Sharada, (Mal), Kottayam, 1892, pp.103-104.
\textsuperscript{168} K.N Panikkar, “Creating a New Cultural Taste: Reading a Nineteenth Century Malayalam Novel”, op.cit., p.96.
existing court culture and the monopoly of elites over the written tradition. The court culture was confined to a few but the ‘print culture’ had a wide audience. The widespread literacy facilitated the shift of writers and other cultural artists from the court of princes to the fora created by the print capitalists.\(^{169}\) Also there has been an intimate transaction between periodical journalism and the novel. In the late 19\(^{th}\) century the appearance of several journals in Malayalam points to the emergence of a new type of subjectivity in the society. Journals like *Kerala Pathrika, Malayali, and Malayala Manorama* contributed towards the deepening self-awareness of the literate middle class which came to be increasingly mobilized both politically and socially. These periodicals call the attention to the regional identity of Kerala and to the linguistic homogeneity of Malayalam which are recognized as an important factor contributing towards political destiny.\(^{170}\)

Indeed the evolution of press in Malabar as a communication medium was in several phases. It was started off as a mechanism in litho-press to duplicate the Bible and scriptures. Gradually it turned into a communication medium, the history of which from *Rajyasamacharm* to modern Malayalam journalism has a story of several ups and downs. *Rajyasamacharam* and *Paschimodayam* of the Basel Missionaries of Tellichery were magazines, the first a religious journal and the second a secular periodical. In course of time multifarious changes occurred. The 19\(^{th}\) century missionary discourse of progress, reform and new religious sensibility together with the spread of literacy helped the growth of


\(^{170}\) E.V Ramakrishnan, “From Region to Nation and Beyond, Allegories of Power in Malayalam Fiction”, *op.cit.*, p.37.
newspaper industry in Kerala. The result was the English newspaper *Malabar Spectator* that started in 1879. But it was only on 19th October 1884, Malabar could witness the birth of a Malayalam newspaper in its true sense, *Kerala Pathrika*. This paper was a guide and guardian to the subsequent newspapers. Press and literacy in the context were mutually complementing factors. The orthographic and typographic modifications leading to the standardization and the spread of popular education paved the way for the wide acceptance of newspaper culture here. The result was that *Kerala Pathrika* was followed by *Kerala Sanchari* in 1888 and *Manorama* (both published from Calicut) in 1892. Although Kerala can claim a prolonged history of writing and reading it is in the 20th century that they get universalized here. As a result it is in the mid-half of the 20th century that the new book-centred culture evolves. Consequent to the invention of print, what happened in the west during five centuries was happened in India in one century and in Kerala within a period less than that.

Thus due to education, literacy and print the number of readers and subsequently the circulation of newspapers increased. As a result new newspapers like *Mithavadi* and *Gajakesari* from Tellicherry, *Yogakshemam* and *Unni Namboothiri* from Trichur, *Mathrubhoomi* and *Al-Ameen* from Calicut, *Kerala Kesari* from Vadakara etc. were

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launched. Also numerous books were published from different parts of Malabar.

The educational standard of Malabar was scaling new heights in the beginning of the 20th century. Indigenous system of education was almost extinct. Almost all the ezhuthupallis were converted into primary schools by this time.\textsuperscript{175} By the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century numerous changes had occurred in the society. Literacy increased. Literary sphere dilated. Cultural life got a new vigour.\textsuperscript{176}

An article in the \textit{Janmi} news magazine also gives a nutshell of the state of education in Malabar in that period. During the last 20 years literacy has increased considerably. Earlier the literates were 7\% but now it is 10\%. If the literate women were eight per thousand now it is increased to 30 per thousand. In the case of women’s education Malabar tops all other districts in the Presidency. It is also mentioned in the report that many of the schools out of the present 13 High Schools and 46 Lower Secondary Schools were started during the last twenty years.\textsuperscript{177}

To accelerate and strengthen the process of modern education in Malabar, various steps were taken by the Government. Aid was extended to private managements. Such schools were named Grant-in-Aid schools. Thus the missionaries established 150 schools for the backward classes by the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{178} \textit{Kerala Pathrika} was always vigilant in pointing out the lapses in the implementation, to make

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[175] \textit{Janmi}, May 1912, (M.E 1087 Edavam).
\item[177] \textit{Janmi}, May 1912, (M.E 1087 Edavam).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the process more effective and efficient. In the report it said that the primary education in Malabar is in a retrograde condition…the grants have been reduced, teachers get low remuneration and the number of schools is gradually decreasing. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the educational authorities should increase the salaries of village school masters and also endeavour in all other ways to spread primary education throughout the District.¹⁷⁹

As a result more initiative was taken by the Government in raising the educational standard of the schools. The Director of Public Instruction in Madras wrote in his annual report that there was satisfactory progress in the number of educational institutions in Malabar but a slight decline in the collegiate education due to the large failure in the 1903 matriculation examination.¹⁸⁰ During this period the representations of various sections of people in the schools were like this: The landlords constituted the largest number of scholars 41.3%, Coolies 23.9%, traders 12.9%, officials 11.8% and the artisans 7.7%. Over the 83.6% of the male population in the collegiate and the upper secondary stages belonged to the landlords, trading and official classes.¹⁸¹

At this period the condition of the schools managed by the Local Board deteriorated much. Then Kerala Pathrika warned the Government with an editorial about the pathetic condition of schools

¹⁷⁹ Kerala Pathrika, 11th August 1894, MNNPR, TNA.
¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.5.
managed by Local Boards. It said that unless the Government increases the grants for these schools and takes upon itself the management, any innovation introduced by Government in the matter of improving and spreading primary education in the country would be quite futile. It also highlighted the need to improve the present staff of supervisors appointed to inspect such schools and to give proper instructions to the teachers.\textsuperscript{182}

The genesis and spread of newspapers sowed the seeds of modern ideology among the people. Consequently very novel literary tastes sprouted, which paved the way for new movements. Due to the acquaintance with the English books awareness about freedom, equality and fraternity engendered in the minds of our people also. Thereafter each one started to say proudly, ‘our land, our language and our culture’. After the Russo-Japanese war the general awareness had germinated generally in the Orient which indirectly influenced our land also. Thus instead of the old culture of caste and \textit{janmi} a new popular culture started arising. The movements like \textit{khandakavyam} (poem of medium length), novel and journalism are its excellent examples.\textsuperscript{183}

From 1906 onwards the national leaders showed great interest in the education of the people. They formed National Education Commission and began agitation for the introduction of compulsory education. In 1910 Gopal Krishna Gokhale introduced, in the imperial council, a scheme for compulsory education.\textsuperscript{184} Even though schools were in plenty the members of the lower castes could not attend. In

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[182] \textit{Kerala Pathrika}, 30\textsuperscript{th} July 1904, MNNPR, TNA.
\item[183] E.MS, \textit{Sampoorna Kruthikal}, (Mal), Sanchika 9, Trivandrum, pp.264-65.
\item[184] \textit{Kerala State Gazetteer}, Malappuram, pp-34-35.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
1911-12 the Government removed restriction in admitting the pupils in schools on the basis of caste.\textsuperscript{185} Even at that time Kumaran Asan and the S.N.D.P were fighting in Travancore and Cochin for the entry of Ezhava children in Government schools.\textsuperscript{186}

In the first quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Malabar witnessed great progress in the elementary education and secondary education owing to the encouragement given by the Madras Government.\textsuperscript{187} The Government’s attention to promote Malayalam education began only after 1920’s. The Government of India Act of 1919 popularly known as Monford Reforms of 1919, transferred education portfolio to the Indians.\textsuperscript{188} With the passing of Madras Village Panchayath Act of 1920 Panchayath Boards and District Boards were set up in almost all parts of Malabar.\textsuperscript{189} Primary education was given greater care. The District Board maintained elementary and secondary schools. Consequent to that the elementary education had marked progress as is evident from the following table.\textsuperscript{190}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percentage of Increase</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>455</td>
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\textsuperscript{187} Kerala State Gazetteers, Malappuram, p.712.
\textsuperscript{188} J.Allen, The Cambridge Shorter History of India, New Delhi, 1964, p.683.
\textsuperscript{189} C.A Innes, Madras District Gazetters: Malabar District, Vol. II, Madras, 1933, p.ix.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
The above table shows an increase of 88.72% from 1923 to 1931. Although general education showed spectacular hike, the Muslims and the depressed communities did not take to education early, owing to serious economic and social hindrances.\(^{191}\) According to the report of the Mappila Education Committee compulsory education was introduced among them. Thus the number of public elementary schools for the Mappilas rose from 1239 to 1365 and their strength went up from 86315 to 96794.\(^ {192}\)

Due to the increased activities of many agencies mass education rapidly increased during the period from 1921 to 1939.\(^ {193}\) All municipal schools were made accessible to all classes of children irrespective of caste or creed.\(^ {194}\) At this time the Chirakkal Taluk Board School faced a problem of caste and religious discrimination. When one Pulaya student was admitted to the school, parents of Mohamedan and Thiyya communities immediately withdrew their children from the school. When the authorities happened to hear about it, they allowed admission to more Pulaya students.\(^ {195}\)

\(^{191}\) P.R Gopinathan Nair, “Universalisation of Primary Education in Kerala”, \textit{op.cit.}, p.75.

\(^{192}\) File No. A 825, pp.5-6, RAC.


\(^{194}\) \textit{Malabar Gazette}, 1923, p.7.

\(^{195}\) \textit{Mathrubhoomi}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 1925.
At this juncture the growth of higher education is also to be considered, though their number was less. By the year of 1931 there were four colleges and 62 secondary schools including 34 aided, in the whole of Malabar. Also there were 4134 elementary schools and 11 training schools.\textsuperscript{196} As a result, Malabar had a high percentage of general literacy. In 1931, there were 5,09,051(14.45\%) literate persons out of which 51,821 were literate in English.\textsuperscript{197}

For all these decades Malabar was only a district under Madras Presidency. In the process of the fast growth of Tamil nationality Malabar was neglected and dishonoured. At the same time through literature and journalism people of Malabar got an access and solidarity with Travancore and Cochin, both culturally and linguistically.\textsuperscript{198}

This, in turn, assisted the propagation of newspapers of Malabar in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore and vice versa. Infact it was through print that awareness about the entity of the Malayalam speaking people was felt.\textsuperscript{199} The print-language laid the bases for national consciousness.\textsuperscript{200} The convergence of capitalism and print technology created the possibility of a new form of imagined

\textsuperscript{196} Kerala State Gazetteer, Malappuram, p.750.

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., p.276. The number of literate persons among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christian were as follows: Hindus 3,94,297 out of 23,03,754 or 17.11\%, Muslims 87,694 out of 11,63,453 or 7.53\%, and Christians 26,720 out of 65,895 or 40.545\%. Among the Hindus the Nairs were the most literate. Out of 44,27,969 (over seven years old) 1,65,743 or 37.43\% were literate. Of this 20,68,694 or 67\% were literate in English.


\textsuperscript{199} E.V Ramakrishnan, “Varthamaana Pathrangaludeyum…..”, op.cit., p.497.

community, which is the basic morphology, set the stage for the modern nation.\textsuperscript{201}

In Malayalam at various periods several publications came out which helped the social transformation and the eradication of evils in various communities.\textsuperscript{202} By and large, the fast growth of literacy and education and subsequent inflaming of nationalism inspired the patriots to start the next generation of newspapers like \textit{Mathrubhoomi, Al-Ameen} etc. Within one decade \textit{Mathrubhoomi} got wide acceptance and fairly good circulation. The District Magistrate of Malabar in his letter agrees that \textit{Mathrubhoomi} has a considerable local circulation and is more widely read in the district than any other vernacular paper.\textsuperscript{203}

It was a time when many political and social events that affect the public life continuously broke out in Kerala. In such a situation there is no wonder that newspaper carrying news items and criticisms pertaining to those events would fetch wide circulation very quickly. Newspapers were very vigilant in informing the public about the day to day news breaks and also in enlightening them with the practical knowledge about various things that they are supposed to know.\textsuperscript{204} As a result the growth of some of the papers was much more fast.

Newspapers like \textit{Yogakshemam, Unni Namboothiri} etc. were the sharp swords used for the social transformation in the Namboothiri community. When papers like \textit{Service} and \textit{Swabhimani} concentrated in

\textsuperscript{201} I\textit{bid.}, p.46.

\textsuperscript{202} Chummar Choondal and Sukumaran Pottekkatt, \textit{op.cit.}, p..269.

\textsuperscript{203} Letter from Russell, Dt. Magistrate of Malabar to the Chief Secretary to Government, Public Relations Dept. Madras, 17\textsuperscript{th} October 1932, TNA.

\textsuperscript{204} N.Krishna Pillai, \textit{op.cit.}, p.314.
the Nair community, *Mithavadi, Gajakesari* etc. laid their thrust on the community that was regarded as backward. The *Prabham* weekly of E.M.S Namboothripad gave invaluable contribution in propagating socialist ideology. The *Atnmavidyakahalam* of Vagbhadanandan also fought against blind beliefs and evil practices.\(^{205}\) Many of these newspapers and journals that started during the decades of renaissance are no more now. But what have been done by them is inherent in our cultural life and remain as their legacy.

\(^{205}\) Chummar Choondal and Sukumaran Pottekkatt, op.cit., p.272.