CHAPTER – III

SAHODHARAN AYYAPPAN AND SREE NARAYANA DHARMA PARIPALANA YOGAM

Sahodharan Ayyappan was very much associated with the social rejuvenation of modern Kerala. The entire structure of Kerala society and economy during his period was determined by the caste system. Even though some members of his community enjoyed privileges based on their money status and titular status, the community as a whole remained underprivileged. The economic wealth acquired by some of the Ezhavas through their occupations such as toddy business, coconut cultivation, coir and copra business, etc., created in them an urge for get privileged and become elevated in the social hierarchy. Even these privileged class within the community lacked social privileges and civic rights like walking through public roads or approach roads of temples, entry in to the temples wearing upper cloth and even to build a good home.

Internal factors and national changes led to the elevation of many business and agricultural families among the Ezhavas to prominence. Land ownership, agriculture and trade were the main factors contributed the Ezhavas towards their elevation. Though Ezhavas had no right to own landed property, the corporate ownership of land under the joint family or other corporations – illom or taravad existed. A class of tenants existed among them, but probably they were the sub-tenants under the Nairs. But the individual or private ownership of land was denied to the Ezhavas. They remained as poor landless agricultural labourers. Sahodharan Ayyappan realized that education and wealth did not directly help his fellow men to enhance their socio-political status.

Implementation of land reform measures by the rulers was the only reason why the Ezhava tenants became owners of land. The most revolutionary land reform measure in
Travancore was the proclamation of 1818, which marked a turning point in the history of elevation of the Ezhavas. It gave right to the people to take up waste land and new land formed from rivers and backwaters for cultivation. Though the Regulation was meant for all castes, Ezhavas being agricultural labourers were able to utilise the opportunity in favour of them. As a result some of the Ezhavas secured a considerable share in the *sircar* tenancy rights and using their labour power and their capital earned from non-agricultural pursuits. It marked a change in the condition of Ezhavas from agricultural labourers to tenants. The notification of 1865, otherwise known as the famous *Pattom Proclamation* by the Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal, made another tremendous change in the condition of Ezhavas. It declared the *Verumpattakkara* holding the *sircar* lands as the owners of the land. Thus the Ezhavas who had a share in the sircar tenancy by the Regulation of 1818 became land owners by the Regulation of 1865. Sahodharan Ayyappan mustered courage and inspiration from the above measures.

The Ezhavas were not only agriculturists, but also the main participants in non-agricultural occupation such as coir making, coconut trade, toddy and arrack trade, artisanal occupations, handicrafts etc. The beginning of the interportal convention in 1865 between Travancore and the British India Government was an important Landmark in the development of trade, especially in the export of coconut products. The liquor trade and the increased demand for the coconut products in the world market added perspective to the schemes. When the demand for coconut products in Europe and America increased towards the end of the 19th century, Ezhavas were able to take the advantage of cash economy. Through all these ways the most of the Ezhavas become economically independent and began to elevate themselves.

Another factor which contributed much to the elevation and transformation of the community was the establishment of Public Works Department (PWD). As a result the
Ezhavas were able to emerge as wage labourers in rural and agro-processing industries. Several Ezhava women were employed as coolies in the Public Works Department. The Ezhavas thus emerged as an enterprising community. They even ventured into new economic arenas as contractors, commission agents, cash crop farmers, traders and entrepreneurs. What was most striking is that with the income earned by them from trade and other activities the Ezhavas were able to purchase more lands in a large scale.

The processes of education that the British initiated have brought new and entirely revolutionary elements into the life of Kerala. The spread of Western education and the work of Christian missionaries brought about a radical social change. The reforms, social as well as political, introduced by the British in Kerala also report the way for the growth of social consciousness among the people against the evil practices in the society. Most of all the low caste people got certain social as well as civic rights as a result of these social movements. In the processes of social change Sree Narayana Guru played the most decisive role.

He became the architect of a bloodless revolution for the creation of an egalitarian society in Kerala. When the newly emerged middle class in the Ezhava community was thinking of social transformation and social elevation, Sree Narayana Guru emerged as a saviour of the community. He was one of the epoch making seers of the present century, who has dynamically effected a radical change in the social, moral and spiritual value, vision and behavioural pattern of his contemporaries in India. Among the socio-religious reformers of Modern India who clamoured for social justice, the name Sree Narayana Guru occupies a prominent place. His life and mission brought far reaching changes in the social transformation of modern Kerala. He was born in the year 1854 A.D. at Chempazanthi, in the suburb of the city of Trivandrum. His father Madan Asan and his mother was Kutty Amma.
He attempted to dispel age-old doubts and darkness by his deeds and words. During the period of extreme social ostracism and religious authority he made a revolution against then existed socio-religious practices and impressed himself fully in liberating the people from their manifold grievances and sufferings. He consecrated temples in different parts of Kerala for the worship of Ezhavas and other castes that had been denied the right of worship in Hindu temples. The installation of a Siva idol at Aruvippuram was a revolutionary event not only in the history of Kerala but also in India. It was a bombshell thrown against the citadel of Brahmin monopoly. He was an educational thinker and believed that Knowledge is the only panacea to right path. His message “get enlightened through education” had an all pervading impact on the socio-cultural life of Kerala. As the right to seek education was denied to the people who hailed from the lower strata of society he started schools to empower the poor children. In the place where he consecrated temples, he established Sanskrit padasalas as a challenge against the Brahmical monopoly on Sanskrit education.

Sree Naryana Guru vehemently attacked the very concept of caste system. He argued that mankind should not be divided into caste groups, religious groups or economic classes. He advocated the oneness of humanity. In his “a critic of caste” in verses he preached that “one of kind, one of faith, and one of God is to man; of one of womb; of one of form; difference here in none. Similarly he was rather determined about the eradication of the evils that were eating the very vitals of the individuals in particular as well on the society in general. He was totally against the manufacture, sale and use of the intoxicating drinks especially the practice of toddy tapping and advocated the Ezhavas to abandon that profession. He pleaded his followers “Liquor is poison, make it not, sell it not drink it not”.

Further he severely condemned the expensive and superstitious customs like talikettu kalyanam, tirandukuli and pulikudi. Out of sheer ignorance the common people spent a lot of their time, energy and money for the systematic observation of such obsolete customs and
worn out practices. He waged a crusade against these superstitions and unwanted customs which weakened the Ezhava community. His teaching and activities stamped out all such evil practices from the Ezhava society.16

Getting inspired by the Sree Narayana movement the newly emerged middle class of Ezhavas like Sahodharan Ayyappan began to think for more social reforms to get rid of all these disabilities and got practical results. For that venture they even joined hands with the Nairs, who treated the Ezhavas mercilessly even in the past years. For getting civic rights, to get chance in government employment, the Ezhavas signed the Malayali memorial along with Nairs, Christians and Muslims. The memorial made a joint venture to cast off the influence of Tamil–Telugu Brahmins in civil service of the state, by touching the feelings of recognition of these communities.17

It constituted the first spark of political consciousness among the people of the state and a bold attempt by the educated middle class at exposing public policies prejudicial to its interest. This memorial was signed by 10038 people belonging to Nair, Ezhava, Christian and Muslim communities and the petition was submitted to the then Maharaja Sree Mulam Thirunal on 11 January 1891.18

The Nairs were the only group, among the memorialists of 1891, who were capable of getting any favour from the government. Since then the Nairs have had practically a monopoly of government service.19 Professor T.K. Ravindran unmistakably analyses the reason for the denial of political rights to the Ezhavas and other depressed classes in spite of the positive response created by the memorial on the government. It dissolved and failed to reach the Ezhavas and other depressed classes due to the fact that they did not, as a precondition for enjoyment of political rights, possess civic rights, right to work, right to religious freedom, right to education and what is worst, not even the right to access in public
places or walk on public roads. An individual without the basic civic right is unfit to receive the political rights.\textsuperscript{20}

The failure of the Malayali Memorial from the point of view of the Ezhavas forced the educated middle class of the community to raise their voice against the government and society.\textsuperscript{21} Dr. Palpu, who was neglected a job in the Travancore medical service only because of his low caste birth, entered into the mainstream and acted as the champion for the agitations against the deprival of political as well as civic rights of Ezhavas, when they failed to get any desired result from the Malayali Memorial, the Ezhavas made the leadership of Dr. Palpu for the removal of their social disabilities by submitting a petition of rights in October 1896. This is popularly known as the Ezhava Memorial.\textsuperscript{22} It was signed by 13176 Ezhavas and half of them land tax payers.\textsuperscript{23}

Claiming that Ezhavas paid more tax than any other community, the petition stressed that the government schools were virtually close to them and they were denied the incentive to education which was a stepping stone to \textit{sircar} service. The memorial concluded by demanding entry to government schools and employment under \textit{sircar}.\textsuperscript{24} The Dewan in his reply pointed out the difficulties in admitting Ezhavas to schools and appointing them in the government service, as it was contrary to tradition. But he assured granting of special schools to Ezhavas. In actual sense it also failed to get the desired result.\textsuperscript{25} But the Ezhavas got certain educational rights as a result of the memorial.

The Ezhava Memorial was significant in many respects. For the first time, a section of the people and that too belonging to an untouchable and discriminate caste dared to point out to the government their importance in number, economic strength and contribution to the exchequer. Even though the Ezhavas did not assert themselves or questions the prevailing customs, the Ezhava memorial could be considered the first charter of demands of the Ezhavas. This memorial certainly marked the beginning of an organized agitation of the
Ezhavas for their rights. The Ezhava leaders like Sahodharan Ayyappan began to think to form an Ezhava organization with branches all over the state with a view to transform the Ezhava Community and to agitate till their grievances are redressed.

**S.N.D.P. Yogam**

With a view to promote the material and spiritual education, economic progress, and social reform of the community, the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) was formed on 15th May 1903 with Sree Narayana Guru as President and Kumaran Asan as Secretary. Dr. Palpu played a significant role in the formation of SNDP Yogam. The Yogam, under the guidance of Sree Narayana Guru, focused its attention first on having temples thrown open for Ezhavas all over Kerala, as Hindu temples were unapproachable to the Ezhavas and other backward classes. Flouting all the traditions and practices, Guru went ahead installing idols in temples by challenging the monopoly of the Brahmins.

Almost simultaneously, the Yogam started a crusade against superstitions, irrational traditions and customs, which were eating in to the vitals of the Ezhava community. Religious practices and observances were to be rationalized and outdated and humiliating practices connected with puberty, marriage, pregnancy, death, etc., were to be abolished.

Sree Narayana Guru in his birth day message in Chingam M.E. 1096 declared that liquor is poison and hence the people should not produce, sell or drink it. The S.N.D.P. Yogam held its 18th annual meeting at Karunagappalli on 26-28 Edavam M.E.1096 and decided that the Ezhavas should stop the practice of producing (toddy tapping), selling and drinking liquor forthwith for the all round progress of the community. The annual meeting also resolved to appoint Sahodharan Ayyappan and T.K.Madhavan as Assistant Secretaries to help the General Secretary in the campaign. The effect of the campaign was
spectacular and the government adopted repressive measures to weaken the movement. The success of the campaign resulted in a heavy loss of excise income of the government.\textsuperscript{31}

The Yogam, with the constant inspiration from Sree Narayana Guru and Dr. Palpu, made indefatigable efforts to uplift the Ezhava community educationally. The first attempt of the Yogam in this field was to remove the obstacle for admitting the Ezhavas to Government and government aided schools. Later it concentrated its attention on establishing its own educational institutions. A number of primary as well as secondary schools were started under its management. Later it started several colleges for giving higher education to the community.\textsuperscript{32}

Another field to which it directed its attention was the public services. Jobs in Government Services were not available to Ezhavas. Against this injustice, the Yogam not only turned the attention of the community but also gave a lead to the fight for securing their rights. The fight succeeded by 1935, when the Government of Travancore appointed a Public Service Commission and framed rules reserving nearly forty percent of jobs for the backward communities.\textsuperscript{33} SNDP Yogam also made valuable contribution to the community by securing communal representation in the State Legislature. All these activities of SNDP Yogam transformed the Ezhava Community as a whole. But till then they were denied social and political privileges, temple entry and representation in the legislature respectively and it then again led to other movements such as abstention movement and temple entry movements.

**The Abstention Movement**

The middle class of the Ezhava Community now turned towards the political rights of the Ezhavas. They questioned the Nair monopoly in the administrative sphere even in the Ezhava Memorials. Another significant movement of the Ezhavas to get more privileges was the abstention movement. A Legislative Council was formed in Travancore in 1888. But, for
It was only after 1919 that an Ezhava was nominated. Between 1921 and 1932 though property owned Ezhavas had voting rights, no Ezhava candidate could win in the elections. The Ezhavas had the largest population but had no representation in the council. The Ezhavas under SNDP Yogam urged the government several times for reservation of seats in Legislature. They, in 1928, submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission requesting for adult franchise and communal representation. The Muslims and Latin Catholics also stood for adult franchise or a reduction in property qualification for voters. The government continued to be adamant and remained un-affected by the memorandums and consequent boycotts. Dissatisfied with the unhelpful attitude of the government, the representatives of Ezhava – Christian – Muslim organization met together and gave shape to the all Travancore Joint Political Congress in December 1932. This Joint Political Congress led the abstention movement. Ayyappan even wanted it to be called as non-cooperation movement. Sahodharan showed particular interest in the movement and Sahodharan Ayyappan described the Travancore government as an oppressive government and its legislature as good for nothing. His attack turned against Hindu religion as it perpetrated the disabilities of the Ezhava community. Encouraged by this, the Ezhava youths began to demand the conversion of the Ezhavas. Meanwhile, the Hindu Mission and Mannath Padmanabha Pillai was trying to wean away the Ezhavas from the movement. Ayyappan described the attempt as one “to retain their (caste Hindus) political monopoly and fight the Christians politically for which Pulayas and Ezhavas could be used as counterweights. When C.Kesavan, the prominent leader of the movement and of the Yogam was arrested on the charge of treason for his Kozhencherry speech in 1935 and imprisoned, Ayyappan described it as a challenge to the Ezhava community and called the Ezhavas to fight for the Movement led by Kesavan and others for the community. Through struggles and sufferings the memorialists became victorious. At the end of a show down, the government of Travancore on 17 August 1936 issued a press communiqué conceding the
demand of the memorialists and they got the franchise and communal representations. Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims got their share in the legislative council as well as representation in various government departments. Their complaint over political injustice and inequality was to certain extent satisfactorily remedied. Ezhavas got a reservation of eight seats in the lower house and two seats in the upper house. Thus the Ezhavas won in their attempt and long struggle for securing political rights.

K. Ayyappan became an activist of the S.N.D.P. Yogam with the earnest desire to spread and implement the teachings of Sree Narayana Guru. During his stay at Trivandrum, Ayyappan moved closer to S.N.D.P. Yogam and its General Secretary, Kumaran Asan. The first meeting of the Ezhavas of Cochin was held on 9 May, 1916 at the Government High School, Trichur with C.Krishnan as President and founded the Cochin Ezhava Samajam. This organization later came to be known as the Cochin Thiyya Maha Sabha. In M.E. 1113 the Sabha adopted the name S.N.D.P. Yogam. At its annual conference at Trichur Ayyappan presented a resolution recommending the constitution of a committee to activate the work of the Yogam. Accordingly, a committee known as Sree Narayana Seva Sangham was registered. Sahodharan Ayyappan was the first President of the Sangham. The Sangham started to work with some comprehensive programmes like establishing educational institutions, students’ hostels, libraries, orphanages, clinics, child care homes, research institutes, starting publications and agricultural, industrial, banking and business ventures. The project was very grand but the Sangham could not take a step forward.

The Yogam held a great convention at Ernakulam on 23 December 1945 and made a Declaration of Rights. The chief architect of the Declaration was Sahodharan Ayyappan. The convention was attended by more than 50,000 participants from the distant villages of the Cochin State. The main points of the Declaration were complete responsible government, communal representation in popular bodies in proportion to population, to make the
observance of untouchability a criminal offence and temple entry for all by a Royal Proclamation, educational facilities for all, elimination of jenmi system, permanent occupancy right for tenants, remission of tax and financial assistance to farmers, minimum wages for labourers, equal wages for equal jobs for men and women, unemployment pension, maternity leave with salary, universal adult franchise, education up to the age of 16, equal civic liberties and rights for women along with men etc.  

Along with the activities in the Cochin Ezhava organization, Ayyappan was also very active as one of the leaders of the S.N.D.P. Yogam in Travancore. As a mark of recognition of his services to that association Ayyappan had been elevated to its presidency continuously for several terms (1936-1940). He saw the Yogam as a strong organization that fought against the monopolistic interests of the privileged few with an end to enable the unprivileged also to get a share in the fortunes of the society and the state. 

Even though Sahodharan Ayyappan retired from the position of president of the Yogam in 1940 he continued to be a member of both the state council and the Board of Directors till his death.

Through all their efforts, the Ezhavas gained most of their privileges and social, economic and political rights in the first half of the 19th century. The main contributing factor which enabled the downtrodden Ezhava caste to fight for equality and civic rights was the emergence of a healthy economic middle class within the community. Along with that saint turned social reformer, Sree Narayana Guru and SNDP Yogam contributed a lot and led the social transformation and socio-economic elevation of the community. Educated Ezhavas, like Dr. Palpu, C. Krishnan, C.V. Kunjuraman, Sahodharan Ayyappan etc., were the leaders who guided the Ezhavas towards their political rights and social equality. In the long run the Ezhavas, through different ways acquired social, economic, political as well as religious rights and privileges and became developed in to a greatest determining factor in the socio-economic and political spheres of Kerala.
For Reservation

Sahodharan Ayyappan firmly believed that for the uplift of the backward communities, reservation in government jobs was essential. He said, “Those who argue for communal representation in government service stand for the attainment of equality of all people in the country. As far as I am concerned, not only the demand for communal representation but also the differences in the name of caste and religion will be stopped. I desire that the people of Cochin should become a nation comprising of only one caste – Cochinites – instead of Ezhavas, Nairs, Brahmins, Muslims, Christians etc. For this, all people of the state should get a chance to grow and strengthen. Then, the hidden powers in them will be brought out by giving them representation in government services. The community which had a lot of government employees seemed to be more powerful. For the attainment of communal justice, government jobs will be shared between different communities. In sharing, I never argue for the neglect of efficiency. If persons from the lesser represented backward communities possess the prescribed qualifications for the post, then only they may be given preference in appointment. If we examine the Civil List, there is no person from the Ezhava community drawing more than Rs.100 even though there was some highly educated, able and efficient persons. So, when vacancies arise for top posts, Ezhavas may be given preference over Nairs, Christians and Brahmins. However, if certain communities even backward and less represented than the Ezhavas had the qualified persons, then they may be given preference. For instance, if a Pulaya possess the qualifications necessary for top posts, he may be given preference over an Ezhava”. Due to the scarcity of educated men among the Depressed Classes, he suggested the Government for their upliftment, to appoint them as peons in Government Services.

C.A Kunjunni Raja, Member from Landholders constituency, introduced a resolution in the Council on 2nd December, 1930, demanding that a Staff Selection Board be appointed with powers akin to those of the Public Service Commission in British India. K. Ayyappan
took the lead to oppose this resolution. He argued that the appointment of C.G. Herbert as Diwan of Cochin ushered a new era of hope to the backward communities and if this resolution was passed by the Council, the Head of the Administration would be handicapped in doing justice to them. Messrs. C. J. Mathew and M.K. Raman opposed this resolution. T.M. Krishna Menon, Diwan Peishkar, replied that the Government did not think it necessary to appoint a Staff Selection Board and it might be difficult to constitute a committee satisfactory to all. Thereupon C.A. Kunjunni Raja withdrew the resolution which was found objectionable.

Sahodharan Ayyappan was very particular that the backward communities should get the share in government appointments due to them. For this, he introduced a resolution in the Council on 15th December, 1931, urging the Government to publish in the Gazette quarterly wise statements of new appointments in each department of the Government Service. Members from less represented communities like Muslim, Ezhuthassan, Christian etc., supported this resolution. But the privileged castes who had enjoyed the major share opposed this. When the resolution was put to vote, 13 voted for, 5 against and 15 remained neutrals. On behalf of the Government, T.V. Kasthuri Ranga Ayyar, Diwan Peishkar, announced that they accept it.

Sahodharan Ayyappan also introduced cut motions during the voting of Demands for Grants for drawing the attention of the Government towards the cause of the less represented communities in public services. He even went to the extent of introducing a resolution demanding the Council to recommend the Government to make it a rule not to recruit for five years any more Nairs and Christians to the police force. The immediate provocation was that in the year 1106 M.E., Neelakanta Menon, the Commissioner of Police, made 53 appointments in which Nairs got 31. Likewise, when the former Commissioner Chacko made appointments, he preferred to appoint from among his community, Christians. This type of
favouritism led to the over representation of Nairs and Christians in police service. He blamed the appointing authorities of having followed the policy of favouritism towards their own communities which resulted in the growth of communalism. K.P. Vallon, representative of the Depressed Classes, and K.M. Ibrahim strongly supported this resolution which was opposed from the Government side. Finally, the resolution was, with leave, withdrawn.

The opinion of Sahodharan Ayyappan that a Public Service Commission was not necessary underwent change. T.K. Nair introduced a resolution in the Council on 15 February 1933 urging the Government to drop the idea of having a P.S.C. in the State. On behalf of the Government, Rama Varmha Tampuran, Secretary to the Diwan, replied that a P.S.C. was necessary. Sahodharan Ayyappan argued that such a commission would obstruct the unjustifiable actions of the Heads of Departments and vice versa towards backward communities. These backward communities were not getting justice at the hands of the Heads of Departments. So, the P.S.C would act as a filtering system which would reduce discriminations considerably. Even though Sahodharan Ayyappan expected justice from the Diwan, by experience he came to the conclusion that the Head of Administration had his own limitations in appointments. As earlier, the Heads of Departments continued to appoint their own men, especially from their own community. So, Sahodharan Ayyappan opposed the resolution of T.K. Nair which was, with leave, withdrawn.

V.K. Krishnankutty introduced a resolution in the Council on 11 February 1936, demanding that a P.S.C be constituted in the State for the recruitment of officers for the public services in order to give adequate representation to all the communities in the State. Sahodharan Ayyappan suggested two amendments to make the resolution more explanatory and meaningful which were accepted by the mover. He argued that the existing system of recruitment to public services was defective and cause great concern among the backward communities. This resulted in creating communal conflicts. So, he urged the Government to
take initiative to make rules for ensuring the share of unrepresented communities in Government service. For that he suggested, Government should establish a Staff Selection Board with powers to prepare lists from which future vacancies could be filled up. On behalf of the Government, T.S. Narayana Ayyar, Secretary to Government, replied that the Government was entirely with the principle embodied in that resolution, of giving legitimate representation to all classes of His Highness’ subjects. That policy had been clearly laid down and adhered to. But the disagreement was as to the procedure by which this principle should be given effect to. The simple position of Government was that the procedure then followed was working fairly satisfactorily and they felt no need for any immediate change. Then the resolution as amended by Sahodharan Ayyappan was put to votes and carried.

These efforts of Sahodharan Ayyappan and others in and outside the Council persuaded the Government to make an announcement to protect the interests of the backward communities in the public services. In the opening speech of the President Shanmukhan Chetty, Diwan of Cochin, in the second budget session of the Fourth Legislative Council, announced the policy of the Government to resume in their own hands the recruitment for public services except the appointment of peons, masapadies, and other menial servants. In the discharge of that function, Government was advised by a Staff Selection Board consisting of three officers of government nominated from time to time. The scheme was proposed to be worked tentatively for a period of three years at the end of which the position would be reviewed in the light of the then existing conditions.

The mode of recruitment to public services under the new scheme was classified into two divisions – Higher and Lower. The Higher Division comprised of all appointments, the initial salary of which was Rs. 100 or above per mensem, exclusive of allowance and the Lower Division consisted of all appointments, the initial salary of which was below Rs. 100. The power to make all appointments in the Higher as well as the Lower division was vested exclusively in Government as the final appointing authority, except in regard to the inferior
service generally. In the Higher division, efficiency was the sole criterion for appointment, recruitments to this division was made by Government as before either directly or by promotion from the Lower division by selection based on exceptional efficiency. Recruitment to the Lower division was made on the basis of selection by the Staff Selection Board from among qualified candidates belonging to various communities. Appointment to this division was made with a view to secure their allotted share to the different communities in accordance with the rotation laid down. However, certain departments and classes of appointments were excluded from the operation of the rules as to communal representation. They were (a) the Palace (including the office of the Sarvadhi Kariakar, the special palace office and establishments paid out of palace funds and the Cranganur Palace); (b) the Nair Brigade and His Highness, Body Guard; (c) the Devaswam and Archaeological Department; (d) Any hereditary office and the office of Parvatham for which special rules had been laid down by Government; (e) Estates under the management of Government (f) Cook in the Education or any other Department; (g) Task workers in the Government Press; (h) Any person who was paid out of funds charged to ‘Works’ in the Public Works or other Department, (i) Any person who was paid out of any departmental, office or other fund for contingencies.

Under the new scheme, the following classification and percentage were adopted for the purposes of rotation of the different communities.

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<th>Major Community – Sub Community – percentage</th>
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<td>I Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nair</td>
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<td>2. Tamil Brahmin</td>
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<td>3. Ezhava</td>
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<td>4. Pulaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Other Hindu</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Other Hindu Backward</td>
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or Depressed classes
This announcement regarding the constitution of a Staff Selection Board in the State was received with joy from different sections. Sahodhan Ayyappan commented that Government deserves appreciation for finding out a solution to the problem of representation of different communities in Public Services. Even though there were differences in details, the rule which embodies in the constitution of the Staff Selection Board gives a new hope to all. The Staff Selection Board which was tentatively constituted for a period of three years brought into force from 1st Kanni, 1112 M.E. The members of the first Staff Selection Board were T.S.Narayana Ayyar, K.Achyuta Menon and Thomas Manjuran. They were very particular to see that the backward communities got their share in public services and strictly adhered to the rules of the Board.

V.K.Krishnankutty, member from Anthikkad constituency introduced a resolution in the Council on 25 November 1936, for recommending the Government that in the matter of appointments to Public Services beyond the purview of the Staff Selection Board, the same principles of communal representation should, wherever possible, be followed. Dr.A.R.Menon, Member from Pallippuram constituency, opposed it on the ground that it was beyond the purview of the Council to discuss a matter of this nature. He even went to the extent of saying that it was to vitiate the atmosphere of the legislature. Sahodharon Ayyappan retorted that efficiency in services was not the monopoly of certain castes. So, he urged the Government to respect the sentiments of the backward communities in connection with the appointments beyond the purview of the Staff Selection Board. T.S.Narayana
Ayyar, Secretary to Government, replied that the principles of communal representation could not be strictly applied in respect of appointments above Rs.100. Recruitment to the higher grade was made solely on the principle of efficiency, irrespective of communal considerations. However, the Government subject to the test of efficiency, tried to redress grave inequalities in communal representation in the higher ranks of the service. Thereafter, the resolution was, by leave, withdrawn. When the original period of three years was about to expire, the Government decided to examine the working of the Staff Selection Board with a view to find out if any changes had to be made in the rules. For this, a committee was constituted consisting of four non official members of the Legislative Council, with the Diwan Peishkar as Chairman.

The recommendations of the Committee were accepted by the Government in to, and certain changes were accordingly introduced in the working rules of the Board. The total number of appointments made by the Government on the recommendation of the Board were 762 in 1115 M.E., of these, 151 were secured by Ezhavas, 90 by Romo – Syrians, 125 by Nairs, 44 by Muslims, 76 by other Hindus, 32 by Tamil – Brahmans, 106 by other Hindus (Backward or Depressed), 46 by Latin Christians, 47 by other Christians, 30 by Pulayas and 15 by Jews and Anglo – Indians. This clearly shows that backward communities received more representation in the Public Services, thanks to the services rendered by the Staff Selection Board. Hence, certain vested interests, particularly those who had enjoyed a monopoly in Public Services, began a systematic propaganda against the Staff Selection Board. With a view to get mass support, they suggested that the establishment of a Service Commission in the place of the Board would increase the efficiency of Public Services. It resulted in the introduction of a resolution in the Council by M. Krishna Menon, Member from Trichur North Constituency, for recommending the Government that with a view to ensure efficiency of Services, the Staff Selection Board be replaced by a Public Service
Commission on the lines existing in British India and other sister states, not infringing the communal ratio of recruitment.  

According to Sahodharan Ayyappan, as far as the backward communities were concerned, the Service Commission was a trap, intended to limit their appointments to public services. Even though he was the Deputy President of the Council during this period, he decided to fight against this resolution with tooth and nail and wanted to reveal the inherent danger in it. He said that the move for the so called efficiency was only for the continuation and also for the revival of the over representation of certain communities. He added that with the institution of the Staff Selection Board, the minimum qualification had been raised and other safeguards for efficiency were made. Sahodharan Ayyappan also remarked that the institution of the Staff Selection Board had created communal harmony in the State.

In the event of a neutral position of official members, Sahodharan Ayyappan was sure that this resolution might be carried by the Council. So, he requested the Government that they should not be guided by the number of votes alone. He said, “They should analyse and see proportion of votes from particular sections and understand their implications. All these things will have to be weighed very carefully before the Government comes to a conclusion.” B.V.K. Menon, Secretary to Government announced that the official members would remain neutral in voting. However, the resolution was carried by 18 votes to 15. But, the opinion of Sahodharan Ayyappan-Deputy President had a high influence on the decision of Maharaja and hence dissented.

The forum of Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly also witnessed the strenuous efforts of Ayyappan for the cause of Harijans. T.T. Kesavan Sashtri introduced a resolution in the Assembly regarding representation of Harijans in Public Services. He demanded that immediate steps might be taken for giving reasonable share of representation to Harijans by reservation Sahodharan Ayyappan supported it and demanded that the Harijans might be
given special training and appoint them in top posts. He suggested that, for this purpose, the Government should adopt a new scheme. These ideas, after some years, led to the policy of special recruitment of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates to government service by Government of Kerala.

**Against Untouchability**

Ayyappan also used the forum of Legislature in his fight against Untouchability, unapproachability, and such other social evils. C.J. Mathew introduced a cut motion in the Council to ascertain from the Government how far they were bound to open out the roads maintained by public money to all castes and creeds. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan argued that in respect of public opinion the Government should permit all people to walk freely in roads. He recalled the slogan of the Cochin Maharaja “Honour is our family treasure”. He interpreted that it not only means the honour of the Maharaja but also the honour of His Subjects, is the family treasure. So, in order to protect the honour of His Subjects, the Maharaja should issue an order prohibiting the practice of untouchability in public roads. He argued that without this, it would be meaningless to say that Cochin had educational progress, Legislative Council and reform. He even went to the extent of saying that if any science permitted the practice of untouchability, he would not regard it as science. So also, if any religion approved of the practice of untouchability, nobody would consider it as religion. Moreover, if any God sanctioned the practice of untouchability, nobody would care about that God.

On 18th February 1929, A.B.Salem introduced a cut motion in the Council for urging the Government to throw open all hostels in Ernakulam as cosmopolitan hostels, and to allow everybody to have access everywhere. Sahodharan Ayyappan strongly supported it. From the Government side Rao Sahib C.Mathai, Director of Public Instruction, replied: “to show
the principle of cosmopolitanism has been accepted by the Government, we are going to call the next new hostel as cosmopolitan hostel”.  

C.J.Mathew introduced another resolution in the Council for recommending to the Government that all hostels and roads maintained by public money be thrown open to all classes of His Highness’ subjects without difference of caste or creed. Sahodharan Ayyappan vehemently criticized the policy of the Government and said that the hesitation of the Government to execute this recommendation was either due to jealousy or blindness.

K.T.Mathew introduced a motion during the voting of Demands for Grants to draw the attention of the Government of their failure to take action on the recommendation of the Council for throwing open all the roads maintained by public money to all classes without difference of caste or creed. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan said that he was arguing for the Brahmins because those who did injustice had also the same harm ness like the sufferer from injustice. Hence, this was not only the issue of Ezhavas and other backward communities but also the general issue of the country. On behalf of the Government V.K. Aravindaksha Menon, Chief Engineer, replied that they should not keep any portion of the road from the public. The policy of the Government was to introduce reforms calculated to take away all restrictions from any community in the state.

On 14th August 1930, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a motion in the Council urging the Government to recommend the Maharaja for a Royal proclamation that the question of unapproachability and untouchability was to be done away with. He remarked that these practices were a heavy burden resting upon the shoulders of depressed classes and only by its removal, the personality of backward class people would be blossomed. M.K.Raman, E.Ikkanda Warrier, P.C. Chanchan etc. supported the motion whereas A.S.Harihara Ayyar opposed. Rao Bahadur T.S. Narayana Ayyar, Diwan of Cochin, replied that the Government was not going to oppose the cut motion. He continued that whatever had been expressed
with regard to the issue of a proclamation would be conveyed to the Maharaja. Thereafter, the motion was, with leave, withdrawn.

Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a resolution in the council on 3rd December, 1930, for recommending the Government to start a cosmopolitan hostel attached to the Maharajas College, Ernakulam, in the building used for the caste Hindu hostel. He blamed the educational authorities that even though the students were for that reform, they without any sense of responsibility were trying to thwart all those reforms. From the Government side S.K.Subrahmanya Ayyar, Director of Public Instruction, replied that they accept it in principle. In the voting ensued, only one member, A.S.Harihara Ayyar voted against, whereas 28 voted for and 12 remained neutral and the resolution was carried.

M.K.Raman, member from Ezhavas North constituency, introduced a resolution in the council for recommending to the Government that a Gazette notification be immediately issued to the effect that there should be no prohibition for any class or caste among the people of Cochin to the use of any road, tank or well or other public place, maintained out of public funds. Sahodharan Ayyappan argued that if this resolution was passed then the Government could examine whether they could implement it. For this purpose, in the interest of the majority of people, Government could use the police force. He added that this issue was not communal, but general. It intended to place all the subjects of His Highness in a position of equality. He was painful to see that instead of these continuous efforts, the Government and caste Hindus failed to permit all people to walk freely through all the roads and thoroughfares. He said; “With your monopolized powers, you have trampled down us. But we will not consider any more trample as blessing. We have education and hence the practice of believing whatever you said is gone. Now, we understand that your Sanskrit verses and English words were mere tricks and traps. We are arguing for a reasonable cause without disturbing others. If a Brahmin or Nair can walk through a public road, why you prohibit me?
It is very painful. I am, in all respects, not below to them. Hence, it was an insult to me. This conscience of insult was wide spread among backward communities”.

Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a resolution in the Council for recommending to the Government to open all Government and aided schools to all the subjects of the State irrespective of caste or creed. He pointed out that in the Cochin State, 10 schools were not opened to all. He urged the Government to insist that without the consideration of caste or creed, all students were allowed to study there. He suggested that if any school failed to do so, the grant might be stopped and the Government should take steps to start another government school there.

Again, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced another resolution by which he urged the Council to recommend to the Government to throw open all the Sirkar water pandals in the state to all classes of His Highness the Maharaja, irrespective of caste or creed. Ayyappan explained that certain castes were not allowed to come close to the water pandals and they had to stand in the particular places meant for them. Then, there was also differentiation in giving water, through the palm of their hand, in a lotta and for the backward people in the bamboo. He said that behind this resolution there was no intention of insulting anybody else. On the other hand, from school days onwards Ayyappan was pained on the reluctance of Brahmans in charge of water supply to give water through the palm of his hand. These bitter memories and pain of his heart erupted in the shape of this resolution. From the Government side it was replied that this being the result of a long standing custom and hence difficult to do away with all on a sudden. Finally, the resolution was put to vote of the House and carried.

Even though in the Budget session of 1105 M.E a cut motion of Sahodharan Ayyappan, regarding the issue of a proclamation abolishing untouchability and unapproachability in the state was passed by the Council and the Government accepted, no action was taken on it. Hence, he introduced another resolution in the Council for the same
He said that the inspiring advises tendered by Sree Narayana Guru persuaded him to bring this resolution again and again until the practice of untouchability came to an end. He categorically remarked that the essence of an Ezhava, Pulaya, Brahmin, Nair and the King was the same. This essence would automatically develop according to environment and opportunity. Hence it was of utmost importance to provide congenial environment and opportunity for blossoming of this essence. Sahodharan Ayyappan warned the Government that if they were going to respect the sentiments of the orthodox group, they could not implement any reform. He said that the Government can examine the practical side of the issue whether they can implement it, any difficulty to Government arising from this and public opinion matured etc. He declared that Ezhavas, Arayas, Christians, Jews, Muslims and other backward communities would welcome this measure. Even among the high caste Hindus who had received education supported this. For instance, P.S. Kesavan Nambudiri, a high caste Hindu, happily seconded this resolution and said: “To a certain extent the community to which I belong, might also be responsible for the existence of this pernicious evil. But the moment we are convinced of its baneful effect on society, we have no hesitation in discarding the same. It is for the Government to find out adequate measures to root out this age long stigma from society. Sahodharan Ayyappan opined that by passing this resolution, the Council was only conveying public opinion to the Maharaja. He continued that the common people did not know that this custom was very bad. Some Government servants and people thought that the Maharaja would be pleased to see the assaults on Pulas. So, in order to root out such feelings from the heart of common man it was an urgent necessity to issue a proclamation for the abolition of untouchability. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and carried.

On 18 December 1931, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a motion in the Council for recommending to the Government to introduce anti-untouchability lessons in the text books of primary schools. He hoped, by this the new generation would condemn the practice of
untouchability.\textsuperscript{115} Joseph Pettah opined that if a direction was given to the writers by the Government, they would include it. From the Government side I.N. Menon, Director of Public Instruction, replied that it was a question of issuing instructions by Government and hence he would consult the Government in this matter.\textsuperscript{116} Thereafter, the resolution was withdrawn, with leave of the House.

On 30 November, 1932, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a resolution in the Council for recommending to the Government to make it a rule for the Municipal Councils of the State not to issue licenses to any hotels and restaurants which were not opened equally to all classes of the people irrespective of caste or creed. From the Government side U. Kandar Menon replied that the Government was not in a position to accept this resolution.\textsuperscript{117} He continued that it was not in the power of Government to direct hotel keepers as to whom they should cater and whom not. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and negatived.\textsuperscript{118}

Sahodharan Ayyappan tabled a cut motion in the council for drawing the attention of the Government to the practice of removing non-caste Hindus from the roads by the police and certain people when there was a religious procession going through the roads, on the ground that their presence pollutes the image and high caste Hindus.\textsuperscript{119} He opined that, this practice was an attack on the rights of the backward communities. So, the Government should use police and military force against these attacks. He remarked that if the police or Judges were going to place obstacles on the march of time by allowing this practice of pollution, it would be removed by the strong flow for reform.\textsuperscript{120} After discussion, the resolution was put to votes and carried. Later in the Press Communique regarding para processions, Government had made it perfectly clear that so far as the use of public roads were concerned Government recognized the right of every community to make legitimate use of public roads.\textsuperscript{121}
K.T. Mathew introduced a motion in the Council for urging the Government to throw open all roads and thoroughfares maintained by the P.W.D to all without the distinction of caste or class. Sahodharan Ayyappan seconded it and opined that there was no reason for Government to reject this reform. He boldly declared that if any move against this reform came from any quarters, even from the Palace, it would be looked with contempt. Again in the next day, K.T. Mathew moved another cut motion in which he demanded the opening of a road near Kadavallur temple. In this connection also Ayyappan criticized the Government. He said that if the subjects of the Maharaja had no self respect or honour, then the Maharaja had also the same and there was no meaning in the watch words-Honour is our family treasure. He continued that a section of His subjects did not have the right to walk freely in the roads and it was not only an insult to the people but also to the Maharaja and the country in general. However, on this cut motion, from the Government side V.K. Aravindaksha Menon, Chief Engineer, replied that the Government had no objection to open this road. Thereupon the motion was, with leave, withdrawn.

On 20 March 1934, Sahodharan Ayyappan moved a resolution in the council for recommending to the Government to remove all unapproachability notice boards and not to allow any such notice boards being newly put up any where in the state. The immediate provocation for this resolution was the move to put unapproachability notice boards at Tiruvanchikulam Poramboke lands where all people were permitted to walk freely. During the discussion, George Chakyamuri opined that the backward people should throw away those notice boards. Ayyappan reacted to it that he was not for riots. He warned that if Hindu religion retains untouchability and such other social evils, its future was in danger. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and carried. During the general discussion on the budget (1935) also Ayyappan requested the Government for the abolition of untouchability. He declared; “I believe that even in palace there is nobody superior to me in purity by birth”.
On 11 February 1936, E.Ikkanda Warrier introduced a resolution in the Council for recommending the Government to issue a Royal Proclamation abolishing unapproachability and untouchability in the state. Sahodharan Ayyappan seconded this resolution and opined that even though caste Hindus demanded for this social reform, the attitude of the Government in this matter was not up to the expectation. He said that the demand for the abolition of untouchability and unapproachability was only moderate and reasonable and if Government did not accept and implement it, people would turn against those religions and smash it, which permitted these insulting practices. From the Government side R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, Diwan of Cochin, announced that they accepted the principle underlying this resolution and would examine its applicability. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and carried. Again on 1 April 1938, Ikkanda Warrier introduced a resolution in the Council for recommending to the Government to abolish unapproachability by a Royal Proclamation. Ayyappan amended it by adding the word untouchability and strongly supported it. From the Government side K.P. Kannan Nair, Secretary to Government, replied that the Government had absolute sympathy with the motive underlying this resolution. He continued that it was more for the people to reform themselves in this matter than to introduce a piece of legislation, so that the people might be compulsorily reformed. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and carried.

On 1 August 1941, K.S. Panicker introduced a cut motion in the Council to impress upon the Government the necessity of abolishing unapproachability in the state by a Proclamation. Sahodharan Ayyappan supported it and opined that, this law was intended to reform all. P.V. Raphael, Joint Secretary to Government replied that unapproachability was a deep rooted custom among a section of the people. He continued that the Maharaja being the Protector, patron and the father of all, it was not advisable to request him for issuing a Proclamation for the abolition of unapproachability.
On 11 August 1945, K.K. Kannan introduced a resolution in the Council for urging the Government to remove untouchability by a Royal Proclamation. The mover of this resolution had an experience of the practice of untouchability, on his way to Anandapuram. When Kannan with his friends entered a coffee house, the Nair owner told them that he would serve coffee to them on condition that they consented to wash the glass after taking coffee. This demand was turned down by Kannan and his friends and quit the shop. Later, Kannan lodged a complaint against that shop owner to the Public Health Director which was forwarded to the sanitary inspector for enquiry. The Sanitary Inspector, in his report, opined that it was customary in all villages that backward class people were required to wash their glasses, if tea was served to them at any “Nair Tea shop”. Kannan suggested that if Government found it difficult to eradicate these social evils, they should make fresh laws for the same. K. Ayyappan happily supported this resolution and opined that, in his belief, there was no human being above him. However, he recalled the bitter experiences and insulting letters which he had received from orthodox group. This was mainly due to the fact that he belonged to the community of Ezhavas. Ayyappan continued that even the work of high caste Hindu Organizations like Nair Samajam, Nambudiri Yogakshema Sabha etc. against untouchability had not succeeded. So, in order to sweep out this evil practice, the abolition of untouchability by a Royal Proclamation was essential. B.V.K. Menon, Secretary to Government, replied that these social reforms should not be initiated by Government by compulsion but those should be evolved by the society itself. He continued that Government did not encourage this evil practice and proper solution was the education of public opinion. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and carried.

During his ministership also Sahodharan Ayyappan tried to eradicate social evils like untouchability and unapproachability. For instance, on the resolution of K.K. Kannan in the Council for cancellation of licenses issued to coffee clubs, hotels, barber shops etc which were not opened to all classes, Sahodharan Ayyappan, Minister for Public Works, replied that
the Government accepted the principle of the resolution. Again, on 9 August 1947, Kannan introduced a cut motion in the Council for urging upon the Government the necessity of adopting more effective measures to prevent and deal with the increasing assault cases of Depressed Classes. Sahodharan Ayyappan replied that the Government saw such assaults with all its seriousness and would take proper measures against it. This reply satisfied the mover and he withdrew the motion.

The contributions of Sahodharan Ayyappan, K.P.Vallon, K.T.Mathew, E.Ikkanda Warrier, K.S. Panicker, M.K.Raman, K.K.Kannan, etc. in and outside the Legislative Council for the eradication of untouchability, unapproachability and such other social evils were phenomenal. Due to their strenuous efforts, the Cochin Government ultimately announced that every roads, every tank, every well, every school, every public office, the expenses of which were met from Public funds were thrown open to all communities. Cochin Government also declared that they would not encourage the practice of untouchability. Moreover, Ayyappan made systematic campaign against untouchability which mitigated the rigours of Hindu orthodoxy towards this evil practice. The practice of untouchability became a punishable crime under the Indian Constitution which came into force on 26 January 1950.

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