Chapter - 4

Inventing new identity- Debate on Educationing Namboodiris

This chapter proceeds with a discussion on Namboodiri attitude towards accepting colonial education. Transformation of Namboodiris into human beings envisages erasure of their pre-colonial educational practices and acceptance of the values of modern educational system. Internalising the colonial modernity disseminated ideas was fundamental in transforming Namboodiris as colonial subject. Educational institutions are one of the sites through which such notions are internalized. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how Namboodiris viewed colonial education and how they appropriated its value. This chapter will be an attempt to understand this process.

The feature of Namboodiri reform movement was that they had their own movement for better education. The reformers and Yogakshema Sabha have continuously discussed the issue of acceptance of western ideas including English education as a way for reforming the community. One of the thrust of Namboodiri reform movement was to modernise their system of education. Unlike other communities of Kerala like the Nairs, the Ezhavas and Syrian Christians, the Namboodiris resisted English education for a long time and were most reluctant to respond to the reform movement that swept through Kerala in the early 20th century. Their disapproval of accepting English education was characterised as uncivilized and foolish act in the writings of 19th and early 20th century. Emile Durkheim has remarked that education was not the force to transform society and resolve social ills and pointed out that education could be reformed only if society itself is reformed. He further added that education “is

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only the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces the latter, it does not create it” 379 To the Namboodiris, English education was an effective tool to change them into a human being 380.

Towards the second half of 19th century, English education was introduced in different parts of Kerala, Namboodiris also began to think in terms of receiving English education and changing themselves according to time. It is interesting to note that English education became a major theme of debate in the deliberations and discussions of Yogakshema Sabha from the beginning to the end of its first phase. English education was viewed as a model for inventing new identity in the changing world. The reformers and Sabha continuously reminded the urgency of accepting English education for getting employment as well as for the socio-cultural ‘progress’.

During the first two decades of 20th century Namboodiris tried to make a balance between the traditional education system and modern education. But by the emergence of radical reformers like VT.Bhattathirippad, Mullamangalathu Raman Bhattathirippad, and M.P.Bhattathirippad (Premji) the Namboodiri attitude towards western education had totally changed. They conceived education as a tool for social reforms. 381 A new identity was envisaged through English education. Subsequently, they acknowledged western education as indispensable factor in the changing modern world and Namboodiris were

379 Durkheim, 1897/1951, pp.372-373
380 M.Ramavarma Thampan, ‘Namboodiri Yuvakkale’(Namboodiri youths), Unninamboodiri, 1927-28 (ME.1103 Dhanu), Vol.9(4),p.245, Unninamboodiri in its editorial, ‘Vidyalaya Varshika Yogam’ (Anniversary meeting of school), also opined education as the only way for reforming Namboodiri social life. (Unninamboodiri, 1925(ME.1100 Meenam, Vol.6(10),pp.547-549)
optimistic that English education would help them to abandon their primitive way of life and superstitious beliefs.\textsuperscript{382}

**Traditional education**

The education system of Kerala up to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was dominated by the upper castes especially the Namboodiris. Pre-colonial domain of Namboodiri education was the study of Vedas, Puranas and religious scriptures. Sanskrit was the medium of instruction. Since they were well versed in Sanskrit, and education remained largely with the hands of the Namboodiris, they enjoyed great power and prestige in the society. They were more focused with intellectual activities connected with Brahmanical religion and kept away from agriculture, industry and commercial activities.

Gurukula system\textsuperscript{383} of education had been followed by the Namboodiris over the years.\textsuperscript{384} Boy’s and girl’s by the age of four started their primary education under the guidance of instructors or ‘othikkons’, or ‘Ezhuthachan’.\textsuperscript{385} Girl’s education was confined to cooking, house administration, and basic medical treatment.\textsuperscript{386} Attention was given to the education of boys. ‘Upanayana’ (investiture ceremony) signifies the beginning of Vedic education which generally performed at the age of 7 or 8. They set up institutions were instructions are given to the memebers of the community.\textsuperscript{387}

\textsuperscript{382} Edappally Narayana Raja, “Samayathinte Vila” (the Value of Time), in V.S.Narayanan Namboodiri (ed) \textit{Samudhayabhodhanam} (Instructing the Community), Thrissur, Yogakshema Upasbha, 1916,p.66
\textsuperscript{383} Gurukula system education was common during the pre-colonial period
\textsuperscript{384} K.V.M. ‘Sanskrita Vidyabhyasathinte Paramodesam’ (the ultimate aim of Sanskrit education), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1924(ME.1100 Kanni),vol.6(1),p.68
\textsuperscript{385} othikkan, Brahmin teacher and priest who conducted Brahmin rituals from birth to death
\textsuperscript{387} Two Vedic centres, one at Trichur and another at Tirunavay worked as the centers of Vedic education
The Namboodiris who are economically backward were able to acquire only basic education in Sanskrit and Malayalam and higher education was denied to them. Sanskrit was identified as symbol of social status and generally the study of Malayalam was not encouraged by the orthodox group. By the spread of English education primacy of Sanskrit was questioned by the new English educated youths and they started to shatter fallacy of giving too much importance to Sanskrit. This was well reflected in the report of the Malabar Marriage Commission. The report critically pointed out that only few of the Namboodiris have mastered grammar and syntax of Sanskrit which is the chief vehicle of the sacred texts. Namboodiri education did not go beyond memorizing of ‘slokas’ (verses).388

This factor was further outlined in the Census Report of Travancore, which stated that Namboodiris stood at the top in literacy among South Indian Hindus. Their literacy rate in British Malabar was 44.7%, in Cochin it was 70%, and in Travancore it was 66%. It was claimed that the high female literacy rate of Namboodiri women was the direct result of their distinguished ancient tradition of female education. The Report pointed out that the existence of priesthood among Brahmans still denying educational opportunities to their females. Namboodiris considered education as a part of ‘Dharmaadharmam’. This consideration was a blessing to their females since their education was not branded as ‘Adharmam’ by their male counterparts. Namboodiri females got the opportunity to enjoy reading epics like ‘Mahabhaarahatham’ and ‘Ramaayanam’ and thereby attained some level of spirituality, identity and eliteness. Recitation of ‘Krishnagattha’ and ‘Ramayanam Kilippaattu’ was part of their daily life. The education of a large number of Namboodiri females was limited to reading and, to some extent, writing skills. Their

388 Report of Malabar Special Commission-1881-1882.p.23
recitation of epics was mostly peripheral without perceiving the real meaning of the content.\textsuperscript{389}

However, when compared to other communities the percentage of Namboodiris who got training in modern education was very low. In Cochin State, it is revealed that, only 1\% of Namboodiri males knew English while 16\% of other Brahmanas in the State, knew English.\textsuperscript{390} Towards the end of 19\textsuperscript{th} century the trend was better in British Malabar where 3\% of Namboodiri males and 1\% of the females had some control over English language.\textsuperscript{391} Possibly it was because of the direct political control of the British over Malabar.

The community produced distinguished Sanskrit scholars and thinkers in the pre-modern period. But in the modern period, over emphasis on tradition and study of Sanskrit resulted stagnation in educational matters. Thus they were not conscious of the newly emerged public space which produced opportunities in different fields. They remained in their traditional space and traditional form of education. Because of the oppression from the Namboodiris their tenants had left their traditional moorings and moved towards modern fashions and tendencies. Reliance on attenders on everything, absence of challenges, and exclusiveness from other groups, made them apathetic, lazy and un-enterprising. The scientific approach towards education was on decline among the Namboodiris with the beginning of 19\textsuperscript{th} century. They shut their eyes to the progress of education of other communities. The life concept of the Namboodiri was reduced.

\textsuperscript{389} Nagam Aiya, \textit{V. Report on the Census of Travancore}, Vol-1, Thiruvananthapuram: Govt. of Travancore, 1891.p14
\textsuperscript{390} Census Report of Native Sate of Cochin, 1875-76.p.34
Their reluctance to imbibe modern education by the end of 19th century resulted in the decline of their presence in public service. This could be interpreted in terms of the negative attitude of the Karanavers towards English education and Government employment. Since English considered as the language of the ‘Mlechchas’ (out castes), they kept away from it and it resulted in their failure in the race of progress. But later the progressive elements in the community, neglect oppositions and congratulated and encouraged those who came forward to accept modern education. Most of the Namboodiris neglected the new education in the name of Varna dharma since it would violate their pollution practices and hence remained unqualified to get an entry into government service which was rewarding monetarily and socially in the new social atmosphere. Namboodiri mind was closed to the intellectual and material world outside.

It is interesting to note that they had supported the Malayali Memorial of 1891 against the foreign domination in the Travancore administrative service. While Brahmins in other parts of India moved to urban centres for accepting avenues created by the western Government, Namboodiris in Kerala remained stuck on their rural outposts following their traditional system of education and way of life. When English language which was the base of western culture began to strengthen in India the higher caste of India showed reluctance to it and this attitude resulted in the decline of the prestige and welfare of these communities. Namboodiris also surprisingly remained aloof from all these new trends. When criticisms were raised against their isolation from modern trends

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393 Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiri, ‘Dambathya Bandham’ (Marriage Relations), *Unninamboodiri*, 1926 (ME.1101 Karkidakam), Vol.7(11), pp.636-640
394 AR Rajarajavarma, “Namboodiris and literature”, in *Namboothiris* (Ed) by Parayil Raman Namboodiri, Trissur, Yogakshernam Vayanasala, 1917, p.47
from different corners of the society, they remained unaware of these criticisms because of their ignorance and illiteracy. In the reformist discourses the reformers urged the community members to discover the causes for educational decline and find out a solution to it.\textsuperscript{395} This self-consciousness resulted in the change of attitude of Namboodiris towards English education.\textsuperscript{396}

**Namboodiri and Western Education**

There are various interpretations on the aversion of Namboodiris towards western ideas and English education. It can be argued that a false consciousness existed among the Namboodiris towards modern ideas and employments since they were not traditionally been employed in Government or other professions. Namboodiris and other powerful upper castes of Kerala like Nayars were initially slow in adopting modern education, wage employment as well as opportunities in trade and commerce.\textsuperscript{397} Though well versed in Sanskrit and traditional knowledge, they suffered from the effect of false belief in caste superiority which forbid them from taking English education. They strictly believed in caste hierarchy and feared that joining in the public school with others for English education would destroy their caste purity.\textsuperscript{398} This fear of pollution from other castes compelled them to keep away from western education.

During the early period of reform activities a strong group of traditionalists stood against the acceptance of English education. They formed organisation’s and groups for opposing the spread of English education among the Namboodiris. It was well attested in

\textsuperscript{395}In the reformist discourses it is found that reformers were continuously urging the community to discover the reasons for their decline in educational and social matters and to find out a solution to it
\textsuperscript{396}Ibid, p.48
\textsuperscript{397}KPKannan, *Of Rural Prolitarain Struggles-Mobilisation and Organisations of Rural workers in South-West India*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi,1988,p.128
\textsuperscript{398}Mahopadhyayan Ravivarma Thampan, ‘Asudham adhava ayitham’ (pollution or untouchability), \textit{Unninamboodiri} special edition, 1927 (ME.1102 Kumbham), Vol.8(6),pp.97-100
the formation of “Nottipanthrandukar” at Sukapuram temple against the decisions of Vellinezhi session of Yogakshema Sabha which passed resolution in favour of spreading English education among the Namboodiris.399

The hatred and opposition of the Namboodiri elders (Karanavers) on educating the juniors members (anathiravans) could be seen as the major reasons for the slow pace of the progress of English education among the Namboodiris. When there was the lack of support from the elders, the enthusiasm of the youths had also diminished.400 The elders insisted that only eldest son had the need of education and younger sons could study themselves. In giving education Karanavers did not followed equal considerations towards all.401

The coming of colonial ideas and institutions were perceived by the Namboodiris as a threat to their secure positions as the established elite. Perhaps this was a partial explanation to their early reluctance in imbibing ideas, institutions and practices that accompanied colonial dominance, this is well reflected in popular stories and accounts by colonial administrators and other contemporary observers.402 The colonial takeover relegated the Namboodiris to the background in terms of political power and their activities were reduced to the religious field. They took time to understand the changing situations.403

400 Vidwan C.S.Nair, ‘Yadasthithikathwavum Samudaya Parishkaravum’ (Conservatism and community reforms) *Unninamboodiri*, 1928(ME.1103 Midhunam), Vol.9(10),pp.579, see also Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiri, Namnude Puthiya Varnasramam, in Unni Namboodiri,ME1096 karkkidakam,p
401 Athippara Krishnan Namboodiri, ‘Namboodiri samudaya Sthapanangalude Talkala Stithi’ (Condition of Namboodiri community Institutions), *Unninamboodiri*, 1924(ME.1099 Karkkidakam), vol.5(11),p.549
Namboodiri indifference towards western education was also due to landlordism.\footnote{Mozhikkunnam Brahmaduttan Namboodiri, \textit{Khilafat Smaranakal}, Mathrubhumi Books, 2010 pp.234-235} This was well attested by the articles appeared in \textit{Unninamboodiri} and \textit{Yogakshemam}, the two magazines run by Yogakshema Sabha, which commented that the Namboodiris of Kerala are the community who are least influenced by western ideals.\footnote{Muuthirangodu Bhavathrathan Namboodiri, \textit{Vaidikara Niyanthranam} (restricting the power of Vedic Priests), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1926(ME.1102 Kanni), vol.8(1),p.67} Approach of the Namboodiris to English education was that, \textit{‘Nicha Bhasham Nacha bhyaseth’} (Language of the Aliens).\footnote{PK Aryan Namboodiri, \textit{Nalukettil Ninnu Nattilekku}, Mangalodayam Ltd., Trissur, 1969, p.82}

Namboodiri reformist leaders expressed that they could not survive in the fast changing world without accepting English education. Reformers asserted that new Government was not ready to accept Namboodiri spiritual superiority and they had to work hard to earn their livelihood. The need of English education was recognized for discovering new economic pursuits. Reformers stressed the need of English education for the progress of the community.\footnote{An article of \textit{Unninamboodiri} written by Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiri shows this shift in the Namboodiri attitude. “Namboodiris now entered in to modern ways like English education. A modern leader makes arrangement for this. But orthodox who were feared of these changes opposing it. Namboodiris cannot live without this change. The duty of the Namboodiris according to the Smrithis to observe ashrams of life. During the past Namboodiris have nothing to do except observance of these four ashrams of life. But now the situation changed. Government is not interested in spiritual affairs and in religion. The Government is not ready to protect the Brahmin way of life and their policy is that of each should keep their property. That means Brahmins lost their support from the rulers. Today only those who works will sustain. So getting in to the field of work schools were to be set up. The attitudes of the ‘karanavers’ were the cause for the lack of education. Education is the only way for progress, Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiri, Nammude Puthiya Varnasramam, in \textit{Unni Namboodiri}, ME1096 karkkidakam,p.415} Subsequently Namboodiri community realized themselves the need for the re-reading of their religious scriptures (Sastras) in such a way as to break the barriers of caste sectarianism and to come out of the self-imposed exclusiveness.\footnote{Editorial, ‘Cochin Namboodiri Regulation’, \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1927 (ME.1102Meenam), Vol.8(7),p.379} The fallacy of the glorification of the past as the period of
Sankaracharya, Melpathur, Poonthanam etc. also contributed to their reluctance in acceptance of English education.\(^{409}\)

The weakness of Vedic education in imparting worldly knowledge was duly noticed by the early reformers. To aspire worldly knowledge they demanded the need of studying the administrative language English.\(^{410}\) Reformers worked for correcting the false belief among the Namboodiris that English was the language of other religionists.\(^{411}\)

In the first two decades of 20\(^{th}\) century progress in the field of education was viewed as progress in ‘\textit{dharmacharam}’, means progress in matters related to royal justice and renaissance. Modern education was viewed as a way to employment which would in turn influence administration. The Nayar’s advancement in getting English education and Government employment was considered as a challenge to the Namboodiris because Nayar’s began to think about reviewing the social relations with the Namboodiris.\(^{412}\) During the reformist discourses some of the leaders were aware of the nature of Vedic education which was featured by chanting of slokas without understanding the meaning of the words.\(^{413}\) They argued that the main reason for the gradual disappearance of Namboodiris from all the public places was due to the adherence to their traditional educational practices. These leaders even feared that if this system of education continued Namboodiris would become a part of history. The leaders tried to remind

\(^{409}\) Editorial, ‘Declaration’, \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1923(ME.1099 Kanni), Vol.5(1) ,p3
\(^{410}\) Ibid,p,10
\(^{411}\) Ibid,p,11
\(^{412}\) PK Aryan Namboodiri,op.cit,p.42
\(^{413}\) Kodanath Narayanan Namboodiri, ‘Presidential address to the 7\(^{th}\) anniversary of Namboodiri Youth wing’, \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1925-26(ME.1101 Dhanu), Vol.7(4), p 287
Namboodiris that if they wanted to live as human beings they had to join in public schools and accept the modern ideas.414

The reformers identified two type of education- Vedic and worldly, in their discourses on the mode of education. Worldly education helps to lead an independent life by earning for livelihood. There was also demand that agricultural education should be given to Namboodiris who live with farming.415 Reformers further added that this type of education would enable them to start scientific steps in the field of agriculture. Acquiring modern education was viewed by the reformers as a way to obtain necessary skill for modern life and as a means to resist old order.416

Yogakshema Sabha, though in its first phase was reactionary in many matters related to social life, it could not be denied that they were aware and acknowledged the fast spreading significance of the English education. They recognized the necessity of English education for interaction with polity and judiciary. Gradually English education was also viewed as an effective measure for sophistication of social life and helped to reduce superstitious beliefs. The inability to read and write English was identified as a real handicap, but the early leaders of Sabha were not ready to give up tradition. But later they realized that rejection of English education would adversely affect the progress of community as a whole.417 They understood that to get pace with others, Namboodiris had to accept English education.

Discussion on English education for Namboodiris was initiated by Kudallur Kunjunni Namboodiri back in 1872. An invitation letter was sent by him to important

414 Ibid.,p.287
415 Ibid.,p.285
personalities of the community for forming a council. This letter also pointed out the difficulty of Namboodiris in joining in public school since it admitted students from all castes. The traditionalism existed among the Namboodiris could be seen in this argument. But at the same time the call for English education was more or less agreed upon. But, it was four decades later in early 1910, that the idea took a concrete shape.\textsuperscript{418} The Divan of Kochi expressed the view that he was not sure whether the Namboodiris actually needed special schools. He doubted on the Namboodiris willingness to join in the special schools as well as its funding. Divan entrusted C Mathai, Chief Inspector in the Education Department, to get report on the condition of Namboodiri education.\textsuperscript{419}

The Chief Inspector conducted a detailed study and submitted a report to the Divan. The crux of the report was to promote modern education without adversely affecting their age-old traditions and beliefs. Based on this report and some independent enquiries, the Divan issued orders stating the necessity for establishing special school with funds to be raised by the charitable institutions (\textit{Dharma sthapanams}) of the Namboodiris.\textsuperscript{420} The order of Divan also pointed out that necessary legislation in favour of special schools would be taken within a year and hence the community should deposit an amount of Rs.8, 500 towards the estimated expenses for the first year.\textsuperscript{421}

Yogakshema Sabha from its beginning showed keen interest in spreading English education among Namboodiris.\textsuperscript{422} Early leaders of Sabha tried to adjust with old and new. There were discussions in the community and Sabha for English education during

\textsuperscript{418} Editorial, ‘Vidhyabhysa Anukulyam’(Educational Concession), \textit{Unnimamboodiri}, 1924(ME.1100 Thulam),vol.6(2),p.95
\textsuperscript{419} Ibid,p.97
\textsuperscript{420} charitable institutions (\textit{Dharma sthapanams}) such as Chovvannuur Sabha Madhom and Vadakke Madhom Brahmaswam
\textsuperscript{421} Ibid ,p.98
\textsuperscript{422} The very foundation of Yogakshema sabha itself is the product of the realization of the significance of education. See \textit{Jenni}.Karkkidakam,1908(ME 1083),Vol.5(4),p.49
The main theme of discussion within Sabha in the first few sessions was on commencement of the programme of education. As per the scriptures, after Upanayana till Samavarthana Namboodiris was not allowed to attend schools since it would defile their purity. Another section within the Sabha expressed the opinion of reducing the period of Brahmacharya and early performance of Samavarthana. This different arguments indicatethepresence of progressive and conservative elements within Sabha on the question of English education. Kurur Unni Namboodiri in the second session of Sabha held at Trissur pointed the inadequacy of Sanskrit education in modernizing the community. Yogakshema Sabha continuously discussed the possibility of starting special schools for imparting English education exclusively for Namboodiris. Special schools were envisaged as the centre where Namboodiris could study English without disturbing their caste purity. Thus Kulakkada special school was started in 1912.

The annual session held at Thiruvananthapuram, Sabha expressed the urgency of accepting English education. Subrahmanyan Potti demanded women education. But Yogakshema Sabha took two decades for taking the issue of women education. These interactions on the need of English education reflected in the hike in participation of Namboodiri students in the public schools. According to the Travancore Census Report,

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425 President of the session, Edappally Sankara Raja and Subrahmanian Potti, the first degree holder among the Namboodiris, argued that modern education was essential for the Namboodiris. Subrahmanyan Potti was the first to demand women education in a public meeting.(Editorial, ‘Women Education Commission’, Unninamboodiri, 1927(ME.1102 Karkkidakam), Vol.8(11),p.607)
986 children of the community joined public school in 1910.\textsuperscript{427} Kurumathur Sankaran Namboodirippad was the first to sent his daughter to an Elementary School in 1911 in North Malabar.\textsuperscript{428} Desamangalathu Sankaran Namboodiri sent his fourth son Guptan Namboodiri to Madras for the study of English and he completed DE in trade and later became the manager of a rice godown.

Sabha submitted memorandums and requests to the respective Governments of Travancore, Cochin and Madras for promotion of English education. P.Kunhiraman Nair, Member of Madras Legislature submitted a memorandum for Namboodiri education in the legislatureas requested by Yogakshema Sabha. Sabha directly submitted another memorandum to Madras Governor in 1915. Secretary of Yogakshema Sabha, Kirangottu Vasudevan Namboodiri studied English for submitting the memorandums in English languagewhich indicates Sabha’s enthusiasm towards modern education.\textsuperscript{429} Sabha even sent a deputation under Pumulli Tuppan Namboodiri, Olappamanna Narayanan Namboodiri, Cherumukku Vaidikan, Kurur Unni Namboodiri and Chittur Narayanan Namboodiri to meet the Madras Governor while he was residing at the palace of Kollangottu Vasudeva Raja in 1915.

The changed concept of English education was exhibited in the 8\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Sabha at Vellinezhi in 1915. Acceptance of English Education was the major issue of discussion at Vellinezhi. The meeting warned that neglect of English education would adversely affect the progress of the community. Different ways and means for the popularization of English was discussed. When Kurur Unni Namboodiri in his speech

\textsuperscript{427} Travancore Administrative Report, 1910
\textsuperscript{428} Interview with K.V.Harijayanthan Namboodiri on 11-02-2012
\textsuperscript{429} Editorial, ‘Vidhyabhyasa Anukulyam’(Educational Concession), Unninamboodiri, 1924(ME.1100 Thulam),vol.6(2),p.96, this incident was characterized as ‘Vellinezhiyile Velli Mazha’ (silver rains of Vellinezhi)
sought financial aid for Namboodiri education many came forward with financial assistance for promoting English education among the community.\textsuperscript{430}

A special session on English education was organized as a part of Vellinezhi conference. The resolution of ‘Education for Namboodiris’ presented by Kurur Unni Namboodiri suggested the possibility of starting special schools for modern education. Kurur Unninamboodiri suggested the idea of forming a Kerala University by incorporating Trissur Brahmaswam Madom. Thus the first step towards social mobility and progress in terms of modernity was emphasized on education. The readiness to accept western knowledge and steps for its promotion marked the growing awareness of the community on the changing needs.\textsuperscript{431} Special schools were started at Peramangalam, Taliparamba, Karikkad, Panjal, Kulakkada, Tekkan Tottara, Killimangalam, Killikurussimangalam and Venmeni. Schools thus established were ready to accept peoples from different walks and corners. The 8th anniversary of Namboodiri School celebrated at Trissur reflected this wider attitude. The presence of W.E.Kottan, representative of Imperial Governor, Sarvothama Rao, Member of Imperial Legislature and T.P.Varghese, Training School Head Master indicates this changed attitude.

The Edakunni Namboodiri special school tried to balance between traditional and modern system of education. This was evident from the strict instructions given to the students of the school to observe all daily routine like bath, prayer, Vedic chanting and the conventional dress. Most of the Namboodiri traditions like Ekaadasi fasting, Vaavu half-fast (orikal), holidays on Ashtami, Vaavu and Prathipadam were observed. They had to go and pray in a nearby temple at least once a day. All students ate together in

\textsuperscript{431} Quoted from interview of ICP Namboodiri, \textit{Desabhimani},12-11-1995,p.12
large dining hall constructed by the Committee. The teachers also ate with them and mostly stayed with them too. The principles of purity and pollution (‘Suddham’, ‘Asuddham’) were meticulously followed. The curriculum of this school always reminded their social status and duties. Thus Yogakshema Sabha in its early days was hardly “reformist” but chiefly “defensive”. But Edakkunni School played a great role in the Namboodiri reform movement and became the basis for the Namboodiri educational progress.

Sabha continuously tried for getting financial assistance from Government to spread English education. When Chief Minister of Madras presidency visited Malabar in 1916, a deputation committee under AKTM Guptan Namboodiri met the Chief Minister at Vellinezhi\(^\text{432}\) and requested grant of concessions to Namboodiris in education and employment. But the response of Chief Minister’s was disappointing when he replied that the Government was not ready to grant any special concessions to Namboodiris. Moreover he urged them to solve problems by themselves.\(^\text{433}\) Government was giving concessions to other communities whereas its attitude towards the Namboodiri was

\(^{432}\) Editorial, ‘Yuvajana sangham vaka deputation’ (deputation by Youth wing), *Unninamboodiri*, 1928(ME.1104 Vrichikam), Vol.10(3), p.171. Edakuni Namboodiri Vidyalaya played a significant role in the spread of education among the Namboodiris and there by constructing a new image to the Namboodiris. As per the decisions of the 8\(^{\text{th}}\) anniversary of Yogakshema Sabha Namboodiri special school at Edakkunni was started in the *Padippura* (Out house) of Vadakkinedathu Kirangottu Illam in June 1919. English and Sanskrit were taught as two divisions. After three years the school was shifted to ‘Bhaktipriyam’ temple ‘oottupura’ with the permission of Cochin Raja. School faced financial problems from the beginning and high school division and Sanskrit division were stopped on account of this. The financial difficulties of the school aggravated when Namboodiri ‘Dharma Stapana Bill’\(^*\) was passed by Cochin Government. The Bill insisted that school could not accept money from charitable institutions like Vadakke Madam and Brahmaswam Madam. Some wealthy Namboodiris like Desamangalam Cheriya Narayanan Namboodiri and Chittor Kunjan Namboodiri supported school during the period of financial crisis.

The school was upgraded as high school in 1922. School became a mixed school in 1931 and it was opened to all castes in 1949. Later when many Namboodiri schools were sold like Peramangalam Sreedurga Vilasam High School and CNN High School Cherp in the open market and only Trissur Namboodiri Vidyalaya survived.

\(^{433}\) Ibid, p.172
negative in employment and education.\textsuperscript{434} The attitude of the Madras Government towards Namboodiri education was further attested by the deliberations in the legislature.\textsuperscript{435} These kinds of efforts were followed in the princely state of Cochin also. Sabha was succeeded in getting an order from the Cochin government that Namboodiris could start later on an school by depositing 8000 rupees in government. The institutions functioned under the directive of Sabha like Desamangalam press, Mangalodayam magazine and Mangalodayam Company, played crucial role in the spread of English language among Namboodiris.

Namboodiri attitude towards English education is well reflected in the shift in the policies of Sabha. The Kulakkada session of Yogakshema Sabha in 1921 passed resolution for women education. Sabha discussed the condition of Namboodiri schools and cane forward to conduct special meetings. A special meeting of Sabha was held at Panjal in 1926 to discuss the pathetic condition of Namboodiri special school.\textsuperscript{436} Similar types of resolutions were passed in the 19\textsuperscript{th} session of Yogakshema Sabha at Kumaranellur in 1927. But traditionalist’s opposition to special school continued during this period. When the special meeting at Panjal decided to collect money for special school, traditionalists under Paschima Raman Namboodiri opposed it. But 1000 rupees were collected from the meeting to run the special schools. The Namboodiri special

\textsuperscript{434} Ibid, p.172
\textsuperscript{435} In a question to Namboodiri education in the Madras legislature, the response was that Namboodiris have enough money and education would be done by themselves. A. Ramavarma Thampan, ‘Namboodirimarum Parishkaravum’ (Namboodiris and Reforms), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1924(ME.1099 Midhunam), vol.5(10), p.456
schools in 1920’s faced acute economic problems and many schools faced the problem of lack of students except the school at Trissur. The appointment of Namboodiri Female Education Committee and the movement for Namboodiri Family Regulation Bills should be viewed as the example of changed attitude of Yogakshema Sabha towards Namboodiri education and especially of women education. The commissions asserted that English education was the need of the time. The passing of Bills and Regulations resulted in a rise in number of Namboodiri students in schools and colleges.

Changes in education reflected in their attitude towards social life. Questioning of practices like polygamy, old marriage and restriction imposed on women were the result of the spread of education. Muthirangodu Bhavathrathan Namboodiri, in his presidential address to the 6th anniversary of Namboodiri youth wing asked Namboodiris to receive English education and enter in to government employment. He argued that Brahmanism would not be ruined by joining in public schools with others or studying English. He also emphasized that their higher education in the foreign countries would be a big boom to the community.

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437 Ibid., p.102
439 Editorial, ‘Maharajavu Tirumanassile Sannidhanathil’ (in front of the Highness Maharaja), Unninamboodiri, 1928(ME.1103 Karkkidakam), Vol.9(10), p.6125
440 M.Ramavarma Thampuran, ‘Samudaya parishkaram’(community Reforms), Unninamboodiri, 1928(ME.1103 Karkkidakam), Vol.9(11), p.637
441 Muthirangodu Bhavathrathan Namboodirippad, ‘Presidential address to the 6th anniversary of Namboodiri youth wing’, Unninamboodiri, 1925(ME.1100 Edavam), Vol.6(9), p.447
442 Ibid., p.451
Changes in the system of Education were one among four revolutionary changes envisaged by the Namboodiri Youths in the 1930’s.\textsuperscript{443} By the spread of western education, strong opposition to the outmoded customs started among the common people.\textsuperscript{444} ‘\textit{Yachana Yatra}’ (Hunger March) of 1931 from Trissur to Kasaragod was for helping the poor Namboodiri students. It became a strong publicity programme for the spread of English education.\textsuperscript{445} With inspiration from the hunger march, marches were conducted in different parts of Kerala which outlaid the importance of spreading English education.

Active involvement of Yogakshema Sabha in crucial social issues in 1930’s, had not affected its involvement in the issues related with modern education. A lottery draw was introduced for raising permanent fund for the smooth functioning of the special schools.\textsuperscript{446} An amount of Rs.25000 rupees was collected and was utilized for the spread of education. An Educational Committee was formed with AKTM Guptan Namboodiri, Chittur Kunjan Namboodiri and Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiri as members for the management of the fund. Major portion of the profit from the lotteries was spent for women education. But later by the Ongallur session of Sabha in 1945, a rift occurred within the Sabha on the utilization of this educational fund. EMS and others demanded the use of the permanent fund for the working of the labour centre at Lakkidi.\textsuperscript{447}

Attempts for starting public schools were also made by the Namboodiri community. Sabha gradually demanded public schools in the place of special schools. C.N.N High School at Cherp, near Peruvanam Trissur, was an example for this

\textsuperscript{444} A Ramavarma Thampan, ‘Namboodirimarum Sambandhavum’ (Namboodiris and Hypergamous marriage), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1926 (ME.1101 Midhunam), Vol.7(10),p.564
\textsuperscript{445} PK Aryan Namboodiri, op.cit,p.117, It was conducted between ME.1107-1110
\textsuperscript{446} Ibid,p.122
\textsuperscript{447} Olapamanna, ‘Pazhuril’ (At Pazhur), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1947 (ME.1122 Edavam), Vol.1(2),p.113
initiative. The establishment of schools exclusively meant for girls like ‘Vidyarthini Sadanam’ and ‘Balika Vidyalaya’, did not check their admission to public schools.

Namboodiri community made wide propaganda for accepting English education in 1920's and 1930’s. Discussions in Unninamboodiri and Yogakshemam urged for the acceptance of English education. The journals convinced their fellowmen that the lack of education would lead to the stagnation of the community and projected successfully that even the lowest castes were exploiting the situation favourably. Reformers contented that ignorance, superstitions and reluctance to accept modern reforms would lead to the decline of the Namboodiri community like the Muslims. They asked their fellow men to appoint teachers irrespective of their caste.

‘Swadharmanushatnum’ (performance of once on dharma), memorandum prepared by the Kottakkal Upasabha of Yogakshema Sabha, urged the need of reforming some traditional institutions according to the needs of the modern society. The pamphlet was the best example for the continuance of tradition and modernism in the demands for English education. Memorandum stood for restructuring traditional Sanskrit education on the modern ways. It recommended the conversion of ‘Brahmacharyasrama’ (celibacy life prescribed for the young Namboodiri men) into a full-fledged period of training true humility, self-control, Vedic knowledge and knowledge in practical life. The memorandum accepted acquiring new skills like English education as a way for reforms.

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448 C.N.N. School was started in the memory of Chittur Narayanan Namboodiri, popularly known as ‘Aram Thampuran’, in 16th June 1916. It was started as a mixed school. Started as a primary school in 1920 it became a high school
449 Balika Vidyalaya was started at Panjal, Panjal is in Trissur district, Village known for Athirathram Yagam which was held in 1975 and 1990.
450 Yogakshemam,21-01-1921, Yogakshemam,27-05-1921, Yogakshemam,09-09-1921
451 Editorial, ‘Muslim Aikya Sangham’, Unninamboodiri, 1926 (ME.1101 Midhunam), Vol.7(9),p,501
452 Ibid,p,502
453 Swadharmanushatnam, Memorandum prepared by Kottakkal Upasabha of Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha,1917(ME.1092)LS.Press,Kottakkal, p.27
At the same time it remained silent on female education. The memorandum considered equipping with English education was a touch stone in comparing and contrasting western culture and eastern culture. It blamed that craze towards western ideologies had reduced Namboodiri interest in dharma and simultaneously aspiration towards Sanskrit was decreasing.  

The reformers lamented that the traditional form of education resulted in elimination of Namboodiris from public places and they has become a rejected community. They even feared Namboodiris would become a part of history. English education was perceived as an effective method for ending isolated life. Reformers conducted heated discussions on the need of public school. It was judged as a way for interacting with members of other communities and changing them into a social being. They hoped that English would play a major role in the spread of nationalism and the activities of Indian National Congress. Reformers admitted the fact that Namboodiris were far behind of other communities in the acceptance of western education. They also reviewed the role of English in abandoning Namboodiri false belief in social evils like untouchability.

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454 Ibid, p.13
456 Editorial, ‘Namboodirimarude Parishkaram’, (Reforms of Namboodiris), Yogakshemam, March 1985, Vol.6(3,4,5), p.9 reformers contended that Namboodiri role in public life was limited to the management of their special schools, Editorial, ‘Lala Lajpat Rai’ Unninamboodiri, 1928(ME.1103 Medam), Vol.9(8), p.458
457 Muthirangodu Bhavathrathan Namboodiri, ‘Presidential address to the 9th anniversary of Kavalappara Namboodiri Yogakshema Upasabha’, Unninamboodiri, 1925(ME.1101 Thulam), Vol.7(2), p.183
458 Mozhikkunnam Brahmadattan Namboodirippad, ‘Nammude Innathe Athyavasyam’ (Our essentialities of Today), Unninamboodiri, 1925(ME.1101 Kanni), p.12
459 Vidwan C.S. Nair, ‘Yadasthithikathwavum Samudaya parishkaravum’ (Conservatism and community reforms) Unninamboodiri, 1928(ME.1103 Midhunam), Vol.9(10), pp.579-582
460 Ibid, p.582
Reformers went to the extent of demanding to stop ‘Oootupra’ and advocated the diversion of money to education. Reformers realized that social situation was going beyond their control. It was evident from the articles of Unninamboodiri and Yogakshemam. Yogakshemam reported that the number of the Namboodiri Brahmins studying in the professional college very limited.

Yogakshema Sabha and allied organisations like Namboodiri Yuvajana Sangham (Namboodiri Youth Wing) conducted crucial discussions on English education for Namboodiri women. Various interpretations were given to the merit of women education. Women education was considered vital for keeping the virtues, removing all particularities, and for bringing Antharjanam to modern domestic life. Namboodiri Female Education Commission supported these arguments. But there were also strong opposition to these demands.

Reformers and educated youths went to the extent of confessing that by sticking on purity and pollution they were wasting eight or ten years for Vedic education. They urged the Namboodiris to give away all the rituals that makes obstruction in getting modern education. Reformers tried to convince their followers that school was sacred and added that the multi caste class rooms formed a miniature form of

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461 Yogakshemam, 01-10-1920
462 Yogakshemam, 23-05-1923 Yogakshemam reported that in 1923 that the number of the Namboodiri Brahmins studying in the professional college was only 438
463 See ‘Stree Vidhyabhysam’ (women education), Unninamboodiri, 1928(ME.1103 Chingam), Vol.9(12), pp.724-25, Lakshmikutti Amma, M, ‘Namboodiri Balikamarude Vidyabhysam’ (Education of Namboodiri girls), Unninamboodiri special edition, 1927 (ME.1102 Kumbham), Vol.8(6), pp.76-78
464 Kurur narayanan Bhattathirippad, ‘Samudayika Swatantram’ (Community freedom), Unninamboodiri special edition, 1927 (ME.1102 Kumbham), Vol.8(6).p.88
465 M Ramavarma Thamparan, ‘Namboodiri Balika Vidyabhysam’ (Education of the Namboodiri girls), Unninamboodiri, 1927 (ME.1102 Makaram), Vol.8(2).pp.816-16
466 Namboodiri Female Education Committee Report, Trissur, Mangalodayam, 1927.p.3
467 Editorial, Unninamboodiri, 19297(5), pp.406-407
468 M Ramavarma Thamparan, ‘Unninamboodirimarodu Orulbodhanam’ (Call to the Unninamboodiris), Unninamboodiri, 1926(ME.1102 Kanni), vol.8 (1).p.34
469 Ibid,p.35
community.\textsuperscript{470} One would get much world knowledge from the school. Any language might be accepted for teaching and learning in the school, but preference should be given to modern ideas scientific principles. They pointed out that for mingling with boys of other communities Namboodiri boys had to study in public schools.\textsuperscript{471} They criticized traditionalist’s concept on English and argued that fault not lied in English education but with the way it was being taught. Education was given either partially or over imitation of western knowledge and lack of ability to distinguish between good and bad.\textsuperscript{472} Reformers urged for education of boys and girls and thereby other drawbacks could be gradually solved. According to reformist perception there was no question of purity and pollutionin education and Government employment.\textsuperscript{473} Emphasis was given to good food in their discourses since good health needed for good education. They opined that Namboodiri students in public schools were not eating enough for fear of purity and pollution.\textsuperscript{474} Reformers doubted on the efficacy of special schools in acquiring worldly knowledge. Western education in gurukula system was not practical. The reformer’s argument was that in the place of running special schools, community should extend financial support to the deserving students.\textsuperscript{475}

The important issues taken up initially in the discussions on education were the merits of modern education over traditional education and on the need of public schools in the place of special schools. Reformers questioned the need of special schools and

\textsuperscript{470} R Eswarapillai, Namboodirimarum Samudaya Parishkaravum; (Namboodiris and Community Reforms), Unninamboodiri, 1925-26(ME.1101 Dhanu), Vol.7(4),p.224
\textsuperscript{471} Ibid,p.225
\textsuperscript{472} Ibid,p.226
\textsuperscript{473} Ibid,p.226
\textsuperscript{474} M Ramavarma Thampan,op.cit,n.86,p.35
\textsuperscript{475} Ibid,p.357
held the view that children should study in public schools along with other students.476 Namboodiri reformers demanded ritual reforms for the promotion of education among the Namboodiris. The rituals like ‘Upanayana’ and ‘Samavarthana’ forbade them from studying in the public schools. Hence they demanded the reforming of rituals according to the need of the time. They were conscious that for the educational progress there was the need of allowing them to study in the public schools.477

In some reformist discussions there was also attempt to combine traditionalism with modern. They were ready to accept the virtues of both educational systems. They understood that mere Sanskrit education would limit their participation in world affairs and their success in life competitions. At the same time rejection of modern English education by pointing on Brahmanism was considered as foolish.478 They supported education that enables them to lead a happy life. They considered acceptance of English education was not against scriptures. But at the same time these arguments favoured special schools which were considered not for preserving traditionalism but for reducing the duration of the study.479 A comparison between the traditional education and modern education was made in the reformist discourses. They held the view that Vedic education gave only inner knowledge and they argued that in the modern competitive world, knowledge in worldly affairs and practical skills were essential.480

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476 PM Manazhi, ‘Antherjanagalum Avarude Vesha Bhushanangalum’ (Antherjanams and their dress and ornaments), Unninamboodiri, 1926 (ME.1102 Chingam), Vol.7(12),p.716
477 Kumaramangalass Kesavan Namboodirippad, ‘Presidenti al address to the 5th anniversary of Namboodiri youth wing’ Unninamboodiri, 1924(1099 Medam), Vol.5(8),p348
478 Cherumukku Vaidiakan Cheriya Vallabhan Namboodiri, ‘Presidential address to the 8th anniversary of Namboodiri youth wing’, Unninamboodiri, 1926-1927(ME.1102 Dhanu), vol.8(4),p.231
479 Ibid,p.231
480 Kumaramangalass Kesavan Namboodirippad, ‘President address to the 5th anniversary of Namboodiri youth wing’ Unninamboodiri, 1924(1099 Medam), Vol.5(8).p348
The management of Namboodiri special school was a crucial issue of discussion within the community. To decide the future of these schools meeting was conducted at Panjal under the presidentship of Muthamala Purushothaman Namboodiri. The meeting expressed the view that it was time for serious thinking on the future of special schools.\textsuperscript{481} Sabha and reformist leaders requested the help of wealthy members of the community to contribute money for it.\textsuperscript{482} The orthodox people like Paschiman Raman Namboodiri and six others argued that there was no need of special school and they would not contribute any money to the management of the school.\textsuperscript{483} But other members of the meeting strongly supported the cause and were able to collect more than 1000 rupees from the participants.

Another thrust of discussion was on the nature of women education. Discussions infavour of women education not confined in Yogakshema Sabha alone but it was publically debated. Wealthy families appointed tutors for their girls but the middle and poor families remained hopeless and helpless.\textsuperscript{484} In the discourses on women education it was argued that Women like men had the right to education. The traditionalists argued that Namboodiri women education should be confined to the ability to read ‘\textit{Ramayana}’, ‘\textit{Mahabharatha}’, and ‘\textit{Puranas}’. Women were not allowed to know about the changing world. So attempt of the reform movement was to bring up women from the kitchen, allow them to get modern education and travel freely. In the case of social life English education was viewed as a tool for transforming the condition of Namboodiri women.\textsuperscript{485}

While majority demanded transformation of Namboodiri women through modern

\textsuperscript{481} Editorial, ‘Special Meetings’, \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1928(ME.1103 Meenam), Vol.9(7),p.465
\textsuperscript{482} Edittorial, ‘Namboodiri Vidyalayathinte Bhavi’ (The future of Namboodiri Vidyalaya), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1926 (ME.1101 Medam), Vol.7(8),p.444
\textsuperscript{483} Ibid,p.507
\textsuperscript{484} Interview of ICP Namboodiri, \textit{Desabhimani},12-11-1995
\textsuperscript{485} Cherumukku Vaidiakan Cheriya Vallabhan Namboodiri, ‘Presidential address to the 8\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Namboodiri youth wing’, \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1926-1927(ME.1102 Dhanu), vol.8(4),p.233
education there was also argument for restricting women education in mother tongue. This group argued that there was no need of teaching English and Sanskrit to Namboodiri girls. Primary education of Namboodiri girls according to this view should include reading, writing, basic Maths, house administration, and child care.\textsuperscript{486}

Traditionalists rejected any literary activities by women. But youths supported English education and literary activities for the emancipation of women.\textsuperscript{487}

Women Education Commission discussed the issues including the nature of the present form of education imparted to Namboodiri girls, and further steps required for improving of the existing system.\textsuperscript{488}

Reformers viewed English education as a tool for improving economic status of the Namboodiris. They argued that Namboodiris were leading a life of poverty though they had agrarian lands. People had stopped the practice of paying money (\textit{dana} \textit{dakshina}) to Namboodiris for getting salvation.\textsuperscript{489}

English changed the concept of manual labour. For improving the economic status, the reformers urged them to accept English education and start scientific agriculture.\textsuperscript{490} In this interpretation the concept was ‘live with work’ and it attained strength. Reformers were of the impression that English education was a must for success in the life competition of the modern world.\textsuperscript{491}

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\item \textsuperscript{486} Kurur Narayanan Bhattathirippad, ‘Samudayika Swatantram’ (community freedom), \textit{Unninamboodiri} special edition, 1927 (ME.1102 Kumbham)pp,88-89
\item \textsuperscript{487} Ibid,p.93
\item \textsuperscript{488} Women Education Commission* was formed in ME.1102 as per the decision of 19\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Yogakshema Sabha with AKTKM Guptan Namboodirippad as the President and Muthiringodu Bhavathrathan Namboodirippadu as the secretary, \textit{Namboodiri Female Education Committee Report}, Trissur, Mangalodayam, 1927, p.2
\item \textsuperscript{489} Mozhikkunnam Brahmadattan ‘Nammude Innathe Athyavasyam’ (Our essentialities of Today), \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1925(ME.11101 Kanni),p.8
\item \textsuperscript{490} Ibid,p.9
\item \textsuperscript{491} Muthirangodu Bhavathrathan Namboodiri, ‘Presidential address to the 9\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Kavalappara Namboodiri Yogakshema Upasabha’, \textit{Unninamboodiri}, 1925(ME.11101 Thulam), Vol.7(2),..184
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English education was also viewed as a method for realizing the rights and needs of the community. Reformers argued knowledge in administrative language was essential to bring the grievances to the attention of the authorities. At the same time traditionalists contended that English education was not a must and it was not suitable for the life style of Indians. But reformers rejected orthodox by convincing their fellow men that study English was necessary as it was the language of the ruling class and for getting their rights. According to reformist perception English education helps for reviewing their own failures and drawbacks and reminded to be cautious on the physical luxury of western culture.

The Namboodiri Family Regulation Committee Report and the Namboodiri Female Education Commission Report stressed the need of English education. Namboodiri Family Regulation Bill demanded changes in the Namboodiri education and analysed that the main reason for stagnation in Namboodiri affairs was the lack of modern education. The Regulation proposed changes in the educational system of girls. It also proposed changes in the existing style of Vedic education.

Attempt for modernizing Namboodiris through modern education faced opposition from a group within the community. In the beginning of 20th century traditionalists and landlords stood against all types of social changes. When Kurur

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492 Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiri, ‘Stree samajam’ (women organization), Unninamboodiri, 1926 (ME.1101 Kumbham), Vol.7(6), p.352
493 Ibid, p.353
494 P. Ananthan Pilla, ‘Unninamboodirimare Unaruvin’ (Awake Unninamboodiris), Unninamboodiri, 1924 (ME.1100 Kanni), vol.6(1), p.60 For reformers knowledge in English helps for acquiring knowledge in worldly affairs
495 Published in the Gazette by Cochin Government on 1926
Unni Namboodiri introduced resolution for English education at Vellinezhi session of Yogakshema Sabha in 1915, the orthodox vehemently protested against it and formed a collective known as ‘Noottipanthrandukar’ to oppose the movements in favour of English education.\(^{499}\) A newspaper from Thiruvananthapuram namely ‘Indian Twinker’ criticized the modern practices of Namboodiris like modern education, Namboodiri regulations, and self-caste marriage. This newspaper argued that these changes would destroy Namboodiritham\(^{500}\) and they would become equal to non-Brahmins. For the orthodox varna system should be continued for the welfare of the Hindu community.\(^{501}\)

‘Dharmodharaka Samithi’ (protection of Dharmam) criticized the decisions of Yogakshema Sabha to start special schools. This organisation declared that special schools of Mannadi, Kumaranellur and Edakkunni were evil centres.\(^{502}\)

In the traditional conception Vedas and Dharmasastras were the two eyes of Namboodiris. They attributed the decline of Namboodiris to the craze for western culture.\(^{503}\) Indian respect towards western advises, religion, rituals and communities resulted in their decline. Namboodiris were asked to withdraw from the modernization movements like modern samajams (associations) and educational institutions. It was argued that their ancestors had laid down laws for the progress of Namboodiri community.\(^{504}\) It was also argued the lack of Vedic education were the cause of many weakness of the community. They demanded continuation of Vedic education without

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\(^{499}\) Editorial, ‘Sudarsanakkar Tekkottu’ (Sudarsanakkar Towards South), *Unninamboodiri*, 1927 (ME.1102Meenam), Vol.8(7), pp.491-493

\(^{500}\) Namboodiritham, Brahminhood


\(^{503}\) Ibid,p.81
much change. Orthodox judged that it was because of the toughness of Vedas that many were reluctant to study it. They viewed Vedic education as penance. According to them real Brahminhood lied in Vedic education. Traditionalists even argued that English education changed them into a type of ‘Whiteman’. 505

To conclude, the demand for accommodating modern English education was in the limelight within the Namboodiri community during the first half of the 20th century. This demand was the result of the new consciousness on their degenerated condition in matters related with modern education. The attempts to change the condition of education should be viewed as Namboodiri eagerness to change the constructed image on the community. English education was accepted as a mark of identity. But, we should remember that, all these processes were emerged within the colonial discursive realm.

Serious discussions on education like the need of special schools, public schools, nature of women education and education as a tool for economic advancement indicates the urge of the community to restructure themselves according to time. The call for western education was led by Yogakshema Sabha, though there were variations in intensity of their demands. Sabha was successful in mobilizing the community towards English education. Though traditional in approach, early Sabha had taken the initiative to form special schools. During this period Sabha discussed possibilities of accepting modern education without affecting their traditional space. Support to special schools and appointment of special teachers were to be viewed in this context. But gradually crucial discussions within Sabha started on issues related with special or public schools, nature of women education and education for social change. Within a short span of time

505 Kavil  Avinijikkattu Bhavadasan Bhatathirippad, ‘Namboodiri Yuvajanangalude Sradhakku; Attention to Namboodiri Youths), Unninamboodiri, 1921-22 (ME.1097 Dhanu), Vol.3(4),p.336
Sabha questioned the usefulness of special schools and demanded education of girls in public schools. Modern education was perceived as a mean for ending Namboodiri isolation and getting into the colonial modernity. It was also used as a weapon for fighting against traditionalism and accepting modern ways of life. Namboodiris showed the willingness to abandon traditional customs and practices for modern education. Namboodiris went on to the extent of demanding transferring of the money spent on unnecessary rituals and sacrifices to progress of education.

All the above deliberations, related on modern education express the attempt of Namboodiri community to invent a new identity within the new space created by colonial modernity. Reformers were aware that community should not survive without accepting different forms of colonial modernity, including English education.