CHAPTER III
SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPLICATION
ON NAYAR'S MILITARY SYSTEM

The traditional, social setup such as Nayars as militia to Brahmin priests and the ruling families paved the way for upholding their military position in Travancore. Their better position in society and administration as Dewans, Chieftains, Naduvazhis and Desavazhis enabled them to have better footing in the royal house, and also in sharing the administration of the state. In addition to that the Rajahs and the members of the ruling families made sambandham with the Nayar girls which highlighted the status of the Nayars in social, political and economic matters.

The general feature of inheritance throughout India was that of Makkathayam. But in Kerala, there were two types of inheritance i.e. Makkathayam and Marumakkathayam. Malayala Brahmins commonly known as the Nambudiris, and other Brahmins followed the Makkathayam. Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis and Nayars followed Marumakkathayam, Travas also followed Marumakkathayam inheritance among backward communities. Christians strictly followed Makkathayam, but Muslims of Malabar took to Marumakkathayam.¹

According to Marumakkathayam system of inheritance, the descent was traced in the female line. The term Marumakkathayam is a fusion of two words i.e. Marumakkan and tayam. In a Nayar Taravad which included all the members of a Marumakkathayam family, the property was held in common. For example in a family having a daughter and son the daughter, her children and grand children were eligible to inheritance from the mothers Taravad. The son's children could not claim the property of their father but were liable to claim property only from their mothers Taravad.\(^2\) Nayar women usually married from their own caste, sometimes from men of high caste like Nambudiris and Kshatriyas, but Nayar women should not have sambandham with a man from a low caste. This was said to bring pollution and disgrace for all the members constituting Taravad. Moreover the law of the land was also made very strict and violation of such Nayar women were disbanded from the Taravad or even killed by her family members.

Among the Kshatriyas of Kerala too the law of succession through the female line was followed. The Rajah's son was discarded and deprived of his father's throne, but Rajah's Nephew became the legal heir to the throne. Any one who went

against the law of the land was very seriously dealt with. For instance in the case of Raman Thamby and Pappu Thamby, sons of the deceased, Rajah Ramavarma who tried to usurp the throne with the help of the refractory Nayar chieftains namely Ettuvittal Pillamars were suppressed.¹

The matrilineal system of inheritance was of much benefit to the Nambudiri Sambandham Partner, who had a life of ease and pleasure without having to mind about the maintenance of his Nayar wife and children. Even in the case of a Nayar partner he did not have to provide for his wife's subsistence, but on important festive occasions, his mother visited the daughter in law and gave a few gifts and clothes. There existed a cordial relationship between the Nayar's military organisation and their matrilineal kinship and marriage system.⁴

The lives of soldiers away from their homes, have always been a part of military history of the world. Nayar soldiers spent most of their life from youth to manhood in the battlefield. Their marriage system was made up in such a

way that it indeed helped to solve the fundamental problems concerned with human relations. The Nayars of olden days, did not care much about their marital relationship. Hence sambandham was not looked upon as a real marriage. So it did not go along with any sort of affinity that was to be seen between a husband and wife or father and son.⁵

Nayar's system of marriage was not a real one, but a Nayar woman could have sambandham only with high caste men or with Nayars. In order to prevent the attention of the Nayar soldiers from taking up the family responsibility or having any sort of affinity with his wife and children, such type of system was made essential to divert the attention of these soldiers towards military warfare.⁶ The matrilineal system remained unchecked for centuries on account of various reasons. The political and religious heads were the Kshatriyas and Brahmins. The matrilineal system of succession and inheritance favoured them and they exploited the service of the Nayars. The Nayars in turn, showed their superiority of caste rules and regulation towards the low


caste and untouchables. In the social system of Kerala the various institutions like marriage, matrilineal succession and inheritance, kinship, Taravadi and Kavnavanship were interconnected and fused with one another. One institution found its linkage with another, until these institutions met with its decline and met with its extinction by the passing of several legislations followed by various Acts in the 19th and 20th centuries.  

The two important features of the traditional Nayar marriage were the Tali-Kettukalyanam and Sambandham union. This was common to all matrilineal families. As per the caste rule the partners should belong to different matrilineal ancestors, and that male was to be elder than the female. Other than caste status, ancestry descent was a deciding factor before giving the final approval for the marriage.  

Every Nayar girl before attaining puberty had to undergo a ritual ceremonial. There was a slight difference with respect to the person who had to tie the Tali in North and South Travancore. In South Travancore, boys and girls who took in the Tali-Kettu Kalyanam was of the same sub-caste. In North

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Travancore Tirumulpad or Aryapattar were employed for this purpose.\(^9\) The auspicious number chosen for the performance of the Tali-rite was seven, nine and eleven. Infact girls below the age of seven were also enlisted in the Tali-rite marriage for consideration of economy. The bondage of a real marriage was not to be seen in the Tali-rite and hence either party could dissolve this, at their mutual consent. There was no taking seven steps, going round the sacred fire or Homan. In place of vedic hymns, vernacular hymns of Ambalavasis were sung. Marriages were conducted in the girls Taravad.\(^10\) In many of North Travancore taluks, the girl removed her Tali as soon as she heard of the Tali-tier's death. In central kerala, women did not observe death pollution for her Tali-tier marriages.\(^11\)

Unlike the Tali-rite the word Sambandham constituted the real marriage. Sambandham was the principal word which denoted marriage among the followers of Matrilineal system. It was used differently in different parts of kerala as different local names which meant marriage. It was known as Gunadosham

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\(^9\) Travancore, Census of India (Trivandrum, 1932), vol.XXVIII, Report, 1931, p.163.


\(^11\) C.J. Fuller, op.cit., p.112.
which was a union of good and evil and putavakota, which meant giving of cloth. The commonly used terms in south Travancore were putavakota while in the North it was called Sambandham. After attaining puberty, the Nayar girl chose her own Sambandham partner, but he was either from her own caste or superior caste. "It may be performed without any formal ceremony, and in several ancient families, including the most aristocratic as a private transaction confidentially gone through. In some cases the bride-groom presents into her hands a few unbleached cloths. Presents are made to vaidikas and to the relations and servants of the bride. After supper and Pansupari the party disperses. Just before the acceptance of the cloth, the girl makes due obeisance to uncles, mother aunts and other elders, as if by way of seeking and obtaining their formal assent for the transaction she is going to enter into. Another day is generally fixed for the actual consummation ceremony. On that day too the bride-groom goes with betel and nuts to the bride's house accompanied by a few friends who are entertained at supper". Perpetual widowhood is not an institution among Nayars. Divorce is theoretically unrestricted but practically not very frequent.  

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12 Travancore, Census of India, 1901, op.cit., p.330.
The same ceremony was followed, whether the bridegroom was a Nambudiri or a Nayar, but a Nambudiri did not look up this sambandham as a real marriage. Among the male members of the Nambudiri families the first son inherited the whole property. He was permitted to marry a Nambudiri woman, the second, third etc. entered into Sambandham with marumakkathayam woman. As a result of which many Nambudiri woman had to remain unmarried. These women of the highest landed aristocracy did not have a life of pleasure or freedom. Moreover there was no matching of horoscope. Nambudiri partner resided in his illam and Nayar women and her children were provided for their subsistence by their Taravad. Nambudiri father did not take meals with them. His children were also not to use Nambudiri's name along with their names. Even if the sambandham partner happened to be a Nayar, he did not give money for the maintenance of his wife and children. Every Nayar boy or girl prior to the passing of the Marumakkathayam Acts in the early part of the 20th century belonged to their mother's Taravad. A male Nayar had four names. First was his clan name to which he belonged, inherited name, a given personal name and caste title. After few years, his clan name was followed by the caste name. A nayar girl in those days took only three names, that of her clan, name followed by her

mothers' name and her given name. After passing the Nayar Acts 1912 and 1925 karnavan's name was no more prominent, it was replaced by the boys fathers name, and his given name followed by his caste name. Thus in those days every boy and girl gained their ascendancy in the society only through their mothers Taravad which was a segment of the Matrilineal family.\(^{14}\)

Travancore Kshatriya women took only kshatriya as sambandham partners and Talis of girls in the Travancore royal family were tied by Nambudiris or Aryapattars. In central kerala Kshatriya families, Tali-tier was a Aryapattar and Sambandham partners either a Brahmin or Kshatriya. In the Zamorin of calicut family, Tali-tier was a Kshatriya from Cranganore family and Sambandham partners were Nambudiris. The common features between the sambandham for common Nayars and aristocratic families was that the sambandham relation could not normally become the basis of a continuing affinity between the two families.\(^{15}\)

The military life of Nayars had a great impact on polygamy. Like polygamy, the institution of polyandry was widely practiced among Nayar men and women, Nambudiri men, Kshatriya men and women. In this way the life


\(^{15}\) C.J. Fuller, *op.cit.*, pp. 115-119.
of Brahmin girls were affected. Some of them even died as a virgin and hence they were forced to lead a life of seclusion. Nayar, kshatriyas and Iravas practiced polyandry. Polyandry was strictly prohibited among Nambudiri women.\textsuperscript{16} Polygamy one of the primitive institutions of the world was commonly practiced by majority of the upper caste Hindus. In any other part of South India or North India, the practice of polygamy might have been a successful institution if the economic wealth of a person was sound, but in Travancore economic status did not matter to the followers of this system. Hence this system remained unchecked until it was prohibited by a law. Even before passing of the Acts, this system was gradually dying out due to the initiative taken by the English educated Nayar youths.\textsuperscript{17}

Nambudiris considered it their birth right to have sambandham with Nayar women. In the name of custom, manners and religion they did not take up any responsibility to provide for the maintenance of their Nayar spouse and children. Even if a Nayar spouse and her children made a visit to his illam they were not allowed to enter through the common entrance, but they had to go through the back door. They were

\textsuperscript{16} Samuel Mateer, op.cit., pp. 179-180.

\textsuperscript{17} Travancore, Census of India (Trivandrum, 1922), Vol. XXV, Part I, Report, 1921, p.105.
not even allowed to enter the kitchen or touch any of the family members. By all means the children born to a Nambudiri father and a Nayar mother were made to believe that they had no connection whatsoever with their father. It was because Nambudiris do not look to this sort of sambandham as a real marriage.  

Taravad of a Nayar included all the matrilineal system of family organization, whose ancestry was traced from a female ancestors. The family consisted of mother, her daughter her grand children, her sister's children and her brother. The Senior male member was the karnavan of the Taravad. He married from other Taravad because among Nayars endogamy relation was strictly prohibited among men and women of the same matrilineal ancestors. And hence he could not marry a girl of his Thavazhi.  

Sambandham could be terminated at the mutual consent of husband and wife, but it should be brought to the notice of the Karnavan. There was no place for any panchayat to settle issues, as karnavan was the representative of the Taravad at the Tara Assembly. In Travancore divorce and remarriage was

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strictly prohibited among Nambudiri Brahmins and other Brahmins, but under the Marumakkathayam system, right to divorce and remarriage of widows was permitted. It was only after the passing of Nayar Act in the first half of the 20th century, the Nayar marriages were legalized. The Travancore Nayar Regulation I of 1912 declared sambandham valid. Ever since then, it became the responsibility of every husband to provide for the maintenance of his wife and children. The old customary practice of inheritance underwent changes and both the self-acquired property and the personal property of the husband was conferred on his wife and children.

Father and son concept did not form the nucleus of matrilineal system. Mother and child was the accepted theme. Karnavan looked to the management of the Taravad property and general affairs of every member. In the absence of such male issue, the senior female member took his place. In the matrilineal family, birth of a female child was not considered to be a liability when compared to their counterparts in North India and other parts of South India. Mother occupied a honourable position. In the family consisting of many members, she catered to the needs of each.

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one of them. Mother had to perform the duties of a father also, as he did not reside with them. Thus a woman before and after her marriage resided in her Taravad. Her rights over the Taravad property was kept intact even after she became great grand mother. In a Nayar Taravad, the property was kept in common, undivided under the management of a Karnaavan. Thus in Travancore, this system supported the cause of female supremacy.  

Nayar and Nambudiri had martial, and material relations from the ancient days. The Nambudiris utilized the physical strength and military activities of the Nayars for safeguarding their lives and property. According to Nambudiri ideology, Nayars were their adiyam. In the past, it became the customary duty of all common Nayars to become the adiyam of a Nambudiri family followed by a ceremony. Nayar men and women rendered service to Nambudiris inside and outside their illam. Nayars rendered their service as guards during religious functions like sacrifice or yogas and other family functions. Nambudiri was always accompanied by his Nayar adiyam, who gave instructions to all the untouchables to move out of their way. If the latter refused to do so, the Nayar could even kill him. However, he was not punished because by doing this, the

Nambudiri was saved from the pollution by touch. Nayars looked to the Nambudiri landlord as a benefactor and paid customary dues from generation to generation. Nayar women were engaged in the Nambudiri marriages in such a way that at the gate of the bride's illam the procession was met by some Nayar women. These women took Ashtamangalam a plate with coconut, plantain, Betal leaves and other articles. This was offered to the bridegroom.\(^{21}\)

Even when a Nambudiri woman visited another illam, a Nayar maid accompanied her and commanded the retirement of all males on the road. During ritual celebration the stained clothes were taken for washing by the Veluthedattu Nayars. Nambudiri girls were not married before puberty, unlike kshatriya or Nayar girls, but puberty ceremony was important to them also. Pregnant women of the Nambudiri caste were confined in the Temples attached to their homes, unlike Nayar women confined in the Local Temple. The marriage of a daughter or a younger sister was one of the most important responsibility of a Nambudiri. Lot of money was spent on wedding, sometimes on account of financial crisis Nambudiri.

\(^{21}\) Edgar Thurston, *Castes And Tribes of Southern India (Madras, 1909)*, Vol.V. pp. 198-199.
often married several wives in exchange for his daughters or sisters.\footnote{Travancore, Census of India, 1901, op. cit., p.665.}

The kinship system among Nambudiris and Nayars proved to be very effective in the land ownership and tenure system. This system was held in common to keep the ancestral property undivided among the brothers. Even though Nambudiri Brahmins possessed acres of land, they were exempted from all taxes. In Malabar the position of a Jenmi was that of a landlord. The whole land in Malabar came to be considered as the private property of the Jenmies. The malabar jenmi was referred as a ryot, and his tenants were not considered as the actual cultivators. The tenants were therefore not protected by tenancy legislation. Their possession of land and the land revenue policy in Travancore and other parts of Kerala made them lords and masters. They utilised this opportunity to exploit the women of kshatriya and Nayar community. The Nayars who served the Nambudiris as tenants were not in a position to oppose or strike the Nambudiri. Instances were available to show how a Nambudiri landlord of a Nayar family, insisted upon being admitted as a co-husband of the girl. When the husband objected to it, the Nambudiri sent his men to subdue him. Finally, the Nayar was forced to accept the Nambudiri as a co-husband to his wife. Thus the Nambudiri of those days were so powerful that they used Nayars as their protectors of property.
and persons and used their women as sexual object in the name of sanbandham.²⁴

The Nambudiri not only made sanbandham with the Nayars, but also with the kshatriyas and the ruling family in the name of religion. Koil Thamburan, a sub-division class of the Malayala Kshatriya married their women only to the Nambudiri Brahmins and they had sanbandham with women of Travancore royal family. Among Nayar caste also there were a few residing in Northern Travancore gave their women in marriage only to Brahmins as a token of superior status.²⁵ K.R. Krishna Menon, retired sub-judge, Waluwanad Taluk, Malabar District objected the sanbandham of Nambudiri with Nayars, stated that the system was originated by the Nambudiri for their selfish desire. Thus the Nambudiri's required Nayars for soldier and their women for the consorts of the younger sons. The British Government had no desire to interfere into this matter.²⁶

From the emergence of sanbandham until its abolition by Government Act in 1896, there was an unchecked continuity for this system in Malabar, Travancore and Cochin among the

²⁵. Travancore, Census of India 1931, op.cit., p.165.
followers of the matrilineal succession and inheritance. In the first place Nayars who formed the hereditary warriors and militia of the State wanted to have high class breed by consorting their women with Brahmin and Kshatriyas, avoid any confusion in the purity. Secondly, they wanted to keep the Taravad property undivided so that all its members got their subsistence. Thirdly the Nayars wanted their share in the family property and the management of Taravad. Above all the rigidity of the caste system was so severe that women who had relation with men inferior than her was either killed or banished from the community. The child born to a low caste father and high caste Nayar women would be polluted and hence the child could not be a member of his father's or mother's Taravad. Hence they made sambandham with high caste men or men of equal status. Thus the military, social, political and religious oriented caste system favoured for its progress, and also to increase the population of the Malayala Sudras who were the service men of Brahmins and Kshatriyas.  

Kshatriyas were superior to the Nayars in social status. Social customs and habits of these Malayala Kshatriyas were similar to the Nayars. Most of the Nayar chieftains of the earlier period were transformed into Kshatriyas caste by

Brahmin rituals. Kshatriya, Ambalavasis, Nayars were the followers of the Marumakkathayam system of succession and inheritance. Kshatriyas of Travancore were of seven subdivision and were based upon the geographical position.\textsuperscript{28} These Kshatriyas were broadly divided into two types Malayala Kshatriyas and other Kshatriyas. Most of the kshatriya families had migrated from North Malabar and settled in Travancore. The koil Thamburans and Rajas were superior in status to Tirumulpad who were allowed to perform religious ceremonies for other kshatriyas. Like Nayars these kshatriyas could not read vedas or conduct vedic lessons. They had many rituals to undergo by the influence of Nambudiris over them.\textsuperscript{29} Eventhough the rulers of Kerala were broadly known as the Kshatriyas, there was difference in status among the rulers of Travancore, Cochin and Calicut. The rulers of Travancore and Cochin state were superior to the Zamorin of calicut. The Zamorin was not a pure kshatriya but a Samanta. Hence he could not wear a sacred thread.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} K.N. Gopala Pillai, \textit{Kerala Mahacharitram} (Malayalam) (Trivandrum, 1948), p.22.

\textsuperscript{29} Travancore, \textit{Census of India}, 1931, op.cit., p.374.

\textsuperscript{30} K.V. Krishna Ayyar, \textit{History of Zomorins of Calicut From the Earliest Times to 1498} (Calicut, 1929), Part I, p.65.
The relationship between kshatriya men and Nayar women were more or less similar to that of a Nambudiri man and a Nayar woman. Kshatriya men entered into sambandham with the Nayar families of royal descent and not the commoners. The Kshatriya women entered into sambandham with Nambudiri men or the Koil Thamburans.\textsuperscript{31} Kshatriya Nayar marriage was held in the same way as the case of an ordinary nayar sambandham ceremony. After the cloth giving ceremony was over, kuruppu a sub-division of the Nayar caste had to call out the full name of the consort, which constituted the wedding rite was over.\textsuperscript{32}

The offspring of the kshatriya women and Nambudiri men were known as Malayala kshatriya nobility. The offspring of koil Thamburans by kshatriya women were the Rajas.\textsuperscript{33} The kshatriya women of royal descent had sambandham with either Nambudiri or the koil Thamburans. The Tampi was the name of the Nayar sons of Travancore sovereigns even though this title was also conferred upon others as a merit. The female children were known as Ammochi. The house of the royal consort

\textsuperscript{31} A. Ayyappan, \textit{The Personality of Kerala} (Trivandrum, 1982), p.153.

\textsuperscript{32} Travancore, \textit{Census of India}, 1901, op.cit., p.319.

\textsuperscript{33} Rammath Iyer, \textit{Travancore Today} (Madras, 1920), pp. 35-36.
was known as the Ammavedu. In Travancore there were several such Ammavedus. The family members of the consort also received royal status and they were provided with estates or houses. Since the kshatriya rulers of Travancore followed the Matrilineal System of Succession, only Rajah's sister's son took the throne. While the Tambi enjoyed territorial possession, there were few sons born to other kshatriyas who had no territorial possessions. Such male issue were known as Unnithan and Valiyathan.

Some of the privileges enjoyed by the sons of Travancore Rajah were that they could use a Palanquin and appear before the Rajahs without a head dress. The two Tampis namely Raman Tampi and Pappu Tampi of the late Rajah Ramavarma tried to usurp the throne, which was against the existing laws of the land. They met with failure, and this was one of the common factors which paved the way for the final downfall of the Ettuvittil pillamars who posed a constant threat to the very existence of the monarchy.

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35 Travancore, Census of India, 1901. op.cit., p.320.
History of Land tenure system in Kerala had its religious backing. The system had a great impact on the military service of Nayars. The Land tenure tradition says that Parasarurama, incarnation of Lord Vishnu after defeating kshatriyas 21 times, threw his victory axe into the sea, and reclaimed a narrow strip of land from the sea and this formed the present kerala. Though Parasarurama had brought few Brahmins, but very soon fresh inflow of immigrants started to occupy the land.37 Prior to the ascendancy of the Nambudiris as the landlords, the land was owned by the Non-Brahmin natives. The casteless society, which existed till then disappeared with the advent of the Nambudiris. Two types of lands emerged and were called the Brahmaswam and the Devaswam lands.38 As per the Brahmanical laws which started to govern the laws of land, Brahmins and their property were to be kept aloof from invading forces. Hence, the innocent land owners began to transfer their lands to Brahmins and Temples. Unlike Northern India, in Kerala, Private ownership of land was recognized much earlier to Sangam age.39


38 Imperial census of India, Report on the census of Travancore, 1891, op.cit., p.653.

39 P.N. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, op.cit, p.343.
Travancore rulers were powerful and aimed at safeguarding the interest of the actual cultivators of the soil. In the process of subjugation of feudal chieftains and extending the territorial boundaries, about one half of the cultivable land came under the ownership of the state. From the second half of the 18th Century Travancore Government began to assume the post of Jenni landlord in Travancore. This was because the whole of the waste lands and 80 per cent of the cultivated land had come under the possession of the sircar. The remaining 20 per cent was with the Jennies, these Jennies were Brahmins, Brahmin temples and Madampis. On account of this state owned lands, it became possible for the later Rajahs to initiate a policy for the general well being of the tenants. As a result of the dedicated work of Colonel Munro the Resident Cum Dewan of Travancore, Government as the Jenni of the Travancore lands increased. Many of the Devaswam institution with its wealthy land revenue were surrendered to the Government in 1812. The expenditure for daily offerings and other rules for Temple management were fixed by them. The system of land tenures was based on the Principle of direct settlement with the individual ryots in the whole of the sircar lands.


The treatment meted out to the tenants of the Sircar land was comparatively better to the tenants of the Private jennies. The state demand from their tenants was only land revenue and the rent was also less when compared to tenants holding jenmon lands. Before the Proclamation of 1865 came into force the tenants of the Brahmin jennies and the Sircar lands were tenants-at-will. They had no ownership rights but held only occupancy rights. By the new measures, the tenant cultivators of the sircar lands were given full ownership and rights to transfer properties. These lands were released from State-land-lordism, and distributed to the cultivators.\textsuperscript{42} The Proclamation of 1867 ensured protection to the tenants from arbitrary eviction. Before the passing of the 1932 Act, the condition of the tenants of the jenmon lands were worst. They were subjected to the threat of eviction. The Act restored Proprietorship on the Kanom Tenants of the jenmom lands and these tenants came to be known as the Kudiyan. The Kudiyan had to pay a fee viz. Jenmikaram due to the jemmi. The amount was remitted to the state, and the state would remit the same to the jemmi. In this way, the State acted as a mediator to safeguard the interest of the tenants of the jenmon lands.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{42} T.C. Varghese, Op.Cit., P.64.

\textsuperscript{43} A Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteer Trivandrum (Trivandrum, 1962) p.567.
The Land Tenures in Travancore came under two broad divisions, viz., Jenmon Tenure and Sircar Tenure. The Jenmon tenure were of three sub-divisions viz., The first group of jenmon lands included territory owned by certain chief and temple lands. They were exempted from the payment of tax to the Government. The Second type included Brahmins lands and the Private property of the Hindu temples. These lands were also free from taxation, but if they passed into other hands than those of the original owners for money consideration they were subjected to a tax known as Rajabhogam tax. The third group included all properties owned by the non-Brahmin and Non-Devaswam jennies. They were subjected to the payment of Rajabhogams ranging from 1'/8 to 2/5 of the full assessment. The land could also be transferred to another class on alienation by sale."

In the Sircar Tenure, the Sircar acted as the land-lord and confined the Property rights to the ryots. The Sircar lands came under two heads viz., those lands over which the ryots had no property rights, and those which they possessed rights, of ownership. The lands in which the tenants held ownership rights were of three tenures viz. Kandukrishi, Kuttakapattom and Nair Viruthi. The Kandukrishi lands were the crown lands, granted on lease at pleasure. The ryots and no proprietary rights, transferable rights were also denied to them. The rent was fixed and payable all in grain. The Sircar, did not interfere with their occupancy so long as the rent was regularly paid. The Kuttakapattom lands were Government

"S. Padmanabha Aiyar, op.cit. p.18."
Property. The lands were leased for a short periods at a public auction. The gardens were assessed with very high rates. The Nair or Oozhia viruthi had no transferable rights of occupancy. They continued to enjoy Permanency as long as they rendered services regularly. Unlike other tenures, the holders had to render certain services to the states, such as supplying provisions for Pagodas, and Charitable homes, render service on occasion of Royal tours in the country and assisting in the Collection of revenue. The Viruthikars were paid for from Public funds in the form of advances at fixed rates which were below the market value. When the holder died, he was succeeded by his legal heirs subject to the payment of certain fees: If the holder failed to render the required service on any occasion, he had to pay a penalty called "Pattakottu" equal to a year’s full rental on the holding.  

The second type of the Sircar lands fell under three main tenures, viz., Pandaravaka or Sircar Pattom, Pandaravaka Otti and Inam. The Sircar Pattom are liable to full assessment. The tenants enjoy absolute rights over their holdings such rights are heritable. The land remained in the possession of the holders as long as the Government demand was paid. In the Pandaravakai Otti tenure, the relation between the State and the ryot was that between a mortgagor and mortgage. In this systems, the Sircar acts as the mortgager and the tenants as

mortgage. The loan was money, actually borrowed as due to improvements. The tax paid to the Government formed the remaining amount of the full assessment after deduction of interest, and a rajabhogam. The mortgage amount was reduced by 25 per cent and the interest on this percentage was added to the tax. This process was repeated at each alienation until the capital debt was over and the Property was converted into the Pattom tenure subject to the payment of the full assessment.\(^{47}\)

The next class of tenure was the Inam. They formed the grants of lands made by the rulers or the petty chieftains from time to time for some service rendered. They were of two kinds, viz., Personal Inams and Service Inams. The Service grants formed an inalienable and remained untouched as long as the stipulated services were rendered. If the holder dies heirless the Inam was conferred on somebody else on condition of proper service. The Personal grants were given as a reward for service or as a token of favour. This grant constituted of two types, viz., those which by customs the holders could not alienate and those which could be transferred at will. Some of the Personal grants were of rent-free nature while the others were subject to a quit-rent and Rajabhogam or Rajabogam only.\(^{48}\)


All Taxes were to be made in kind and hence the Nayar Taravad were less acquainted with cash economy. The yield from these lands included pepper and other articles. Government held the monopoly in pepper contracts and these Nayar families had to sell the pepper only to the Government and no others. In return, they received oil, cloth, tobacco as basic necessities for their family. By the end of the 19th century, nearly half of the cultivated wet lands came under Government pattam tenure.\textsuperscript{45}

In Malabar things were different, Eversince the British annexation of Malabar in 1792, the land Revenue Policy of the British administrators centered around two important objectives. Firstly, to get maximum share of agricultural Products as land Revenue and secondly to create a class of superior right - holders on the land and get their service in the event of crisis.\textsuperscript{46} In Malabar, ryotwari settlement was made with the jenmies. The jenmies constituted of the former Rajahs, Nambudiri Brahmins and Nayar chiefs. These intermediary group of people were considered as the actual ryot and were entitled for a share in the revenue. The land revenue was collected from the holders of the plots and not from the jenmies. Apart from the jenmi landlord, all the other groups associated with land and agricultural activities were

\textsuperscript{45} T.C. Varghese, op.cit., p.30 and p.45.

reduced to the rank of tenants. The tenants were subjected to the threat of eviction and they were burdened by the levy of high rents. This very often strained the relations between the landlord and tenant. The need for Tenancy reforms was strongly felt by the supporters in Malabar. As a result of which the British administration in Madras Passed various Acts. The Malabar Compensation for Tenants improvement Act of 1887 and the Malabar Tenancy Act 1930. These Acts tried to solve some of the major problem associated with the Malabar Tenancy System.

The 1887 Act was amended in 1900 to rectify certain defects but eviction and rack-renting continued to be in force. The provisions of the Act put a check on the absolute powers enjoyed by the jennies which benefitted the actual cultivators. The Act conferred fixity of tenure and fair-rent on all cultivating Verumpattam dars. However, it failed to confer security of tenure to non-cultivating Verumpattam dars. The Act also benefitted the landlords. They could demand one years rent in advance. The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 had many provisions to restore security of tenure on several categories of tenants. The Act also tried to help the concerned party to have a fair rent fixed by the civil courts.

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11 Ibid. P.25.
17 Ibid. P.137.
19 Ibid. P.137.
Many of the tenants were not able to make use of the provisions in the Act. The reason was that the disputes were to be settled through civil courts. The financial problem of the tenants debarred them from taking the case to the court for a favourable decision. Secondly, the court favoured the landlords in their judgement. The Act took to the interest of the upper sections of the tenancy. The Act was later amended in 1951 and 1954 to protect the interests of the tenants more effectively.

Different types of land tenure in Malabar were as follows viz. The highest land system was known as jenmom. The right meant not a free-hold but a post with a fixed share of the produce of the soil. The Nambutri Brahmins entered Malabar in large numbers and by 8th century they had organised themselves into well knit class. The disturbed state of affairs on account of the chera-chola war favoured the Nambudiri to get vast areas of land from the other social groups. By 11th century they developed the Brahmin centered land system; and became wealthy and powerful jemmies. The actual cultivators started to transfer their lands to Brahmin temples and through temples to the Nambudiris. The power of the chieftains started to weaken after the advent of the portuguese and this favoured the rise of several faked jemmons. This further helped the Nambudiris to emerge as the most powerful and undisputed landlord of Malabar. The jenmi received a fixed share of the total produce of the agricultural produce.
Next important tenure was known as the kanon tenure. The holder of the land as a duty had to supervise all the inhabitants of the area under his jurisdiction. The Kanakaran received a fixed share of the produce of the soil. He could even transfer his holding to any one he liked. He was also paid for relinquishing his holding. Kuzhikanam tenure was on a newly reclaimed lands. The holder was called the Kuzhikanakkaran, who enjoyed the entire produce of that land for a period of twelve years. At the end of the period the holder was paid at the customary rates for improvements made, in terms of the share due as Pattam. The Verumpattam, was the holding of the actual cultivator subjected to the Kanakkaran. The holder was entitled for 1/3 of the Produce. In Travancore, ever since, sircar became the land lord of the major Portion of the lands in the state, the condition of the tenants improved. In British Malabar the British administrators looked to the interest of jemmies and the harsh treatment meted out to the tenants failed to emancipate the tenants completely.

56 Ibid. P.28.
55 Ibid P.28-29
56 Ibid. P.29.
The 150 years of British rule made the peasants, feudallords, landlords and even the middle class lose their proprietary rights over their lands. Hence, these men had to leave their villages and seek employment in towns. They also had to move out to foreign countries like Ceylon, Burma and Malaya. Added to this, the outbreak of I World War in 1914 rendered the life of wealthy feudallords miserable. The worldwide financial depression of 1929 brought about deflation. The British refused to devalue the overvalued Rupee. This increased debts and the indebted landlords were left with no money to clear their debts. The rate of interest was very high. Many of them had to sell their lands and move out to the cities in search of industrial jobs.57

The social, political and economic condition of Travancore from ancient time onwards paved the way for the entry of Nayars into military service. The Nayars considered military life as a pride because they had high status in the society and better position among the royal family. The kings and their family members had sambandham with the Nayar women. This further strengthened their relation and cordiality with the ruling families. The military service enable the Nayars to

57. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, op.cit. p.104.
have better economic position by means of royal grants for their military services. They also got better position in the administration of Travancore as Dewans and other high officials. The Nayar's military and political position in the Travancore administration began to decline since the beginning of the 19th century. This was due to the British involvement in the affairs of Travancore administration by means of commercial and political Treaties.