APPENDIX I

A concise history of formal education in Malayalam-speaking regions in the 18th and 19th centuries before the advent of the missionaries

When British rule was consolidated in India in the 19th century, social, political, and religious life in India was impacted by the spread of English language. Until 1829, Persian languages were used in the courts of law in Northern India. After 1813, when funds were set aside for public education, there were arguments as to how it should be expended: classical education in Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic, or modern Western education in English was the choices before the educationists. The prevailing opinion until 1830 was in favour of the old classical learning. However, there were some who argued that classical learning was outdated and unsuitable for the modern age. As a result, in 1817 in Calcutta, when some Indian and European Anglicists opened a school (which later came to be known as the Hindu College), the teachers were learned in the rationalist, atheistic philosophy of eighteenth century Europe. Down in the South, in Mylaudy, missionaries had started English schools for mass education by 1809.

The early system of education for Namboothiris, which existed before the advent of missionaries in Malayalam-speaking regions, was similar to that in Tamilnadu and Karnataka. This system was three fold: a) Vidyarambham (initiation into education), when boys and girls were given basic vernacular education; girls stopped their studies once they learned the basics of arithmetic and obtained satisfactory achievement in reading and writing; b) Upanayanam (leading to the master) at the age of eight, when a boy becomes dwija or twice born; and c) Samavartanam (termination of scholasticate) when the habits of a student get superseded and a person becomes ready for grihastashrama (position of householder). Brahmanic/Namboothiri agencies that imparted education were Salas, Mathoms, and
Ghatikas. In the medieval periods, Salas located in various places offered free lodging and boarding for Brahman students. The subjects taught included Vedas, Upanishadic philosophy, Sanskrit grammar, Hindu law, etc. Mathoms were the temple universities of Kerala, supported by the monarchs, which offered free education to Namboothiri youth in Vedas, philosophy, grammar, and so on. Ghatikas were temple centred institutions that provided Vedic and martial arts learning.

Non-brahmanic education was given in ezhuthupallis, pallikutams, or pyall schools, which were parallel to Brahmin schooling systems. The students were taught by an Asan (teacher)/ezhuthachan/vadhyar. He was either an Ambalavasi, or a Sudra, or even an Ezhava. The school was owned either by him or the kara (the local community). The ezhuthupallis were open only to caste Hindus and Christians. The subjects taught in these schools were arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), puranas, Ayurveda, Sanskrit (lexicography, grammar, and ethical principals), mathematics (astronomy), literature and music (especially for girls). Sanskrit and higher studies in puranas were generally forbidden to non-Brahmins unless they belonged to special communities or castes like the Ganikas, who needed some knowledge of Sanskrit to decipher the ancient texts related to their caste occupations. The options open to a student after the ezhuthupalli were to a) continue studentship, b) help his/her parents in business/agriculture, or 3) enrol in a Kalari (a martial arts training centre). Generally every kara or village had its Kalari attached to a temple. The instructors belonged to the Kurup, Panikar, or Kaniyan sub-castes. The Kalaris in the north were of a purely military nature, while those in the south had more of an athletic nature. Nairs, Tiyyas, Christians, and Muslims were trained in these institutions. The training given to boys was thorough and complete, while that given to girls was limited, and was often intended to build a healthy body. However, these Ezhuthupallis were not widespread, and more often than not, the students did not continue for long with the Asan. When the
government started to develop its own education system, the local teachers were coopted by appointing them to posts in government-approved schools and letting them teach subjects like astrology, vocal singing and poetry, didactic and religious subjects.

The Portuguese missionaries started a few seminaries and other educational institutions in Kollam (near Thiruvananthapuram), Vypeen (near Kochi), Varapuzha (near Kochi), and Angamaly (north of Kochi). The Dutch, who replaced the Portuguese, did not start any seminaries/colleges, but did make their contribution to Indological studies. They compiled the *Hortus Malabaricus*, a work on the medicinal properties of Indian plants.

The state did not aid or maintain any schools until the early 19th century. In spite of the educational efforts of the Portuguese, and the Dutch, together with the indigenous system, most of the people had not attended any formal educational institution and the women were mostly illiterate during the first half of the 19th century. (Aiya, 1906; George, 2009; Gurukal, 1999; Jeffrey, 1987; Tharakan, 1984b; Thomas, 1993; Thottupuram, 1981)