CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

TRAVANCORE – AN OVERVIEW

Travancore which was a place of hills and dales had been the first and foremost among the Indian States.¹ There are States with larger area, larger revenue and larger military force. But no political unit in India presents a picture of such continuous history, cultural tradition and substantial welfare of the people as this ancient state.² It is perhaps the only kingdom in India which preserves its original caste, religion, customs, manners and institutions.³ There is scarcely a kingdom like this on the face of earth, where dynasty continued to exist in an unbroken line of succession, from the time of its inception to the present day.⁴


¹ V.B. Singh, Nehru on Socialism, New Delhi, 1977, p. 91.
‘Malanad’, ‘Malavaram’, ‘Malabar’, and ‘Thiru Adi Desam.’ \(^5\) In Malayalam the name of Travancore was interpreted as ‘Tiruvithamkur’ and in Sanskrit as ‘Srivardhanapuri’ or ‘Srivazhumkode’ meaning the seat of prosperity. \(^6\) But the name ‘Travancore’ is an anglicized form of ‘Sri-Vazhum – Kodu, which later became ‘Thiruvithankodu’ and finally it developed into Travancore. \(^7\)

The ancient kingdom of Travancore formed the southernmost part of the West Coast of India, the country extending from Gokarnam in the North and Cape Comorin in the South. \(^8\) It was bounded on the North by Coimbatore and on the East by the Western Ghats and the district of Madurai, Ramnad and Tinnevelly. The Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea formed the southern and western boundaries respectively. \(^9\)

Travancore had an area of 7625 square miles, \(^10\) situated between the \(^8\) and \(^10\) of North-latitude and between \(^7\) and \(^7\) East-longitude. It was more strongly protected by its natural boundaries; the South and west being bounded by the sea; the East by the range of high ghats; and the northern parts being mostly covered with

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\(^7\) Emily Gilchriest Hatch, *Op.cit*, Madras, 1933, p.2
\(^8\) *Dinamalar*, (Tamil daily) dated 20.3.1978, p.8.
backwaters, rivers and lakes. Thus, the terrain of Travancore was unfavorable for the march of horses and elephants that formed the best portion of the army in those days.\textsuperscript{11}

Travancore can be broadly divided into three natural regions, namely the Highland, the Midland and the Lowland. This physical configuration is responsible for the varieties in climate and vegetation. The Lowland area is immensely fertile. The sandy coast in the Lowland region is wonderfully suited for coconuts. The breeze from the sea is very helpful to the growth of the coconut palms and the periodic monsoon feeds them with water. The fisher-folks live along this narrow belt. The annual yield of more than 90,000 tons of fish is equal to the catch in Sweden and Denmark put together with all their improved facilities for deep-sea fishing. Here is a source of wealth and possibilities for immense development.

The Midland region occupies more than one third of the State with an area of 2722 square miles.\textsuperscript{12} A mild temperature and good climate with plentiful rainfall make the Midland so densely populated. The Highland region is mostly covered with forests. Out of an area of 3,566 square miles, only 496 square miles are actually under

\textsuperscript{11} Cover File No.68, (Political) A Short Sketch on Travancore, March 24, 1923, p.1.
cultivation. The ever green forests present an exuberant variety of tropical vegetation.\textsuperscript{13} In the North, the mountains rise to a height of over 8000 feet. Anaimudi is the highest peak about 8,841 feet above sea level.\textsuperscript{14} The cool climate of the hills has attracted the Europeans. The major portion in this area is taken by tea, coffee and cardamom plantations, mostly under European management.

With three small isolated exceptions viz., the Anchanad Valley, the Shenkottai Taluk, and the eastern slope of the Mahendragiri Hills, covering an aggregate area of 200 square miles, which project eastward into the adjoining British districts, the range of the Western Ghats runs along the entire eastern extremity of Travancore and is the determining factor in its climate and irrigation. The range reaches its summit level of 8,837 feet at Anaimudi in the extreme north-east, the highest peak in south India around which are grouped several other peaks of fairly equal elevation.\textsuperscript{15} These hills, together with the base connecting them, from the elevated plateau are commonly known as the High range. To the South of the high ranges the extensive table-land known as the Cardamom Hills, with an elevation of about 3,000 to

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3,500 feet and with peaks ranging between 4,000 and 5,000 feet.\textsuperscript{16} To the South of the Cardamom Hills, the Ghats do not form a broad or elevated chain, but run in a series of ridges slopping on either side, with isolated peaks rising to a height of 5,000 to 6,000 feet.\textsuperscript{17} The range abruptly ends at the Aramboly Pass in South Travancore, though the hills further South such as Marutuvamalai, may also be scientifically regarded as an integral portion of the same system. From the main stem are thrown out several irregular rocky spurs on the western side which stretch into the interior, extending in some cases even to the sea-shore, and relieve the evenness of the plains below. The extensive hilly region of Travancore is one of her proudest and most invaluable possessions.

Owing to the undulating nature of the land and its graduated altitude, Travancore has a well ordered system of natural drainage. As many as 14 principal rivers emerge from the hills and flow over an aggregate length of 700 miles, carrying fertility to the plains below.\textsuperscript{18} With the solitary exception of the Pazhayar in South Travancore, which takes a shortly southward course, all these streams with their numerous effluents and branches run in a westerly direction,

\textsuperscript{17} I.H. Hacker, \textit{A Hundred years in Travancore, 1800-1906}, London, 1908, p.12.
interspersed with occasional windings towards the North and the South. A copious rainfall on an abundance of forest ensures a perennial flow and most of the large rivers carry down a considerable volume of water all the year round. During the wet weather, many of the streams overflow their banks and inundate the adjoining lands, particularly in North and Central Travancore, where the rainfall is heavy. The most important river is the Periyar, with a length of 142 miles.\(^\text{19}\)

A distinctive feature of Travancore is its extensive system of inland water - communication near the sea-coast. There are about a dozen lakes along the coast separated from the sea by a narrow strip of land, and connected together by means of artificial canals constructed from time to time. Most of the lakes, locally known as backwaters or *Kayals* are really the mouths of the rivers that enter into the sea.

A number of lakes or backwaters lie along the coast. The backwaters have all been connected by canals. This extensive backwater and canal system affording great facilities for inland navigation stretches along the coast of Kerala from Trivandrum in the South to Trichur in Malabar, a distance of about 228 miles. The chief backwaters in the district from South to North are the Veli, the

\[\text{\(^{19}\) Travancore Administration Report 1104 M.E. (1928 -29) Trivandrum, 1931, p.1.}\]
Kadinamkulam, the Anjengo and the Edava Nadayara Kayals. All these back-waters are comparatively small and shallow. At Varkala where there is a cliff formation, two tunnels with 924 feet. and 2364 feet. were constructed in 1877 and 1880 respectively. They enable uninterrupted water communication along the coast. Besides these systems of backwaters and canals, there is a fresh water lake at Vellayani in Neyyattinkara Taluk.\(^{20}\) The superficial extent of the lakes is 157 square miles, the largest of them being the Vembanad Kayal which gradually increases, covers an area of 79 square miles.\(^{21}\)

Travancore is blessed with abundant rainfall from South to North and from West to East. The South-West monsoon winds begin to blow in May and take a north-westerly bend before they come in contact with the coast of Travancore. These winds bring in the largest quantity of rain. The north-east monsoon, which is no more than the retiring and deflected current of the south-west begins towards the end of October.\(^{22}\) The rain it gives is lighter on the low country than on the hills, where it descends in sudden and heavy showers accompanied by thunder-storms. The mornings during this monsoon are generally fine and the rain falls only in the evenings. The highest rainfall is in

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Peermade (251.9 inches) and the lowest in Ayikudi (18.3 inches) in the Shenkottai Taluk beyond the Ghats.\textsuperscript{23} The average rainfall in 1915 - 1916 was 88.9 inches. The year may roughly be divided into four seasons, viz., the dewy season from December to February, the hot season from March to May, the and the North-East monsoon season from October to November. The temperature generally rises from the middle of December to the middle of April and then falls up to the middle of July, remaining more or less stationary thereafter for the rest of the year. Owing to the effect of the sea breeze, the temperature along the coast is generally equable, seldom rising above $90^0$ or falling below $70^0$.

At the foot of the hills, the variations range to a few degrees on either side of these hills, while marked diversities accentuating with the altitude are noticeable on the hills.\textsuperscript{24} On the High Range, the climate is that of the temperature zone, the thermometer falling to $50^0$ or $50^0$ or $60^0$ in the day, and frosts at nights being experienced in wet weather.\textsuperscript{25}

The distinguishing features of the plants of Travancore are their variety and beauty. As many as 700 trees indigenous to the State have

\textsuperscript{24} Ward and Conner, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.30
been recorded, a phenomenon unparalleled in the flora of any other country.\textsuperscript{26} Teak is the most valuable of the timber trees in the forests, closely followed by rose-wood and ebony. The plains are deservedly famous for their coconut and arecanut plantations, while the palmyrah grows luxuriantly in the low lands of South Travancore. The jack fruit the mango, the laurel and the tamarind are also grown in profusion. Bamboos cover the slopes of hills and the banks of rivers.\textsuperscript{27}

The animal kingdom of Travancore is no less diversified and wealthy. The carnivorous species are well represented in the forests, the tiger, and the leopard, both of the black and spotted varieties, being common. The elephants are among the most cherished possessions of these forests, while several other interesting species such as the bison, the sambur and the ibex, not to speak of a variety of small game, are also found in abundance. As many as 330 species of birds and 67 species of snakes have been recorded.\textsuperscript{28}

Travancore is not rich in mineral deposits. Though gold is admittedly one of the most universal of metals, it does not exist here in quantities to be extracted with with profit. All the paying gold reefs of

\textsuperscript{28} Ulloor S. Parameswara Aiyer, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.11.
South India occur in the system of geological formation known as the Dharwar system, which is not believed to extend to the South of Kolar in Mysore territory. The only mineral products worthy of notice in the State are monazite, plumbago and mica. Monazite is a phosphate of the rare elements, cerium, lanthanum and didymium, and is after associated with thorium silicate which gives its economic value. Thorium, however, is not an essential constituent of monazite and occurs in it only as an impurity. The value of the material may be much enhanced by eliminating the useless constituents by electro-magnetic separation. The mineral is yellowish to reddish brown in colour its luster being resinous. It occurs scattered in fine grains in gneiss and schists, the deposits that may be worked on a commercial scale being found in the sands derived from these rocks.

Monazite is believed to exist in large quantities near the mouths of the rivers between Quilon and Cape Comorin.\textsuperscript{29} Being a heavy mineral with a specific gravity of about 5.2, it cannot be carried far by the current from the mouths of these rivers. Monazite is chiefly used in the manufacture of gas mantles to which the rare earth-oxides, give an incandescent glow.\textsuperscript{30} The oxide of didymium, which is of a

\textsuperscript{29} Census of India 1981, Kanyakumari District, Part XIII and A&B, p.15.
dark brown colour, is employed in marking the mantles, while the limonite sand is used in the manufacture of magnetic electrodes. Plumbago, also known as graphite, is the next important mineral. This is found scattered in various parts of the country in and around the zone of latertic gneisses. Mica is practically confined to Eraniel in South Travancore. Three varieties of this mineral have been discovered. Viz, muscovite which is white, philosophize which is both white and amber, and biotitic, which is dark. All the varieties are found only in pockets. Mention may also be made of pyrrhotine, occurring in the Tovalai Taluk, from which the manufacture of sulphur and nickel is possible, and of the phosphate of aluminia, locally known as ‘Kanmadam’, found in Idiara in North Travancore. The deposits, however, are little more than nominal, and are therefore not of much commercial importance.

The total population of the State as enumerated in the Census of 1911 was 34,975.\textsuperscript{31} Though covering only about one per cent of the entire area of the indigenous states of the Indian Empire, Travancore contains about five per cent of their aggregate population. Kashmir, with nearly eleven times the area of Travancore, has a population less

than 3 lakhs. Regarding population and revenue Travancore was next to Hyderabad and Mysore among the Indian States. Mysore, Gwalior and the neighbouring Ceylon were nearly four times as extensive, but their population was much less than that of Travancore. Baroda, though nearly of the same area had only less than half of the population of Travancore.\(^\text{32}\) The climatic condition, capacity of soil, steadiness of water-supply and facility of communication and the littoral belt account for the congestion of population in the Travancore area. There is a gradual flow of population from the congested seacoast to the interior areas of the State.

Malayalam is the language of the State and 83 per cent of the total population speaks Malayalam.\(^\text{33}\) The percentage of the Malayalam speaking people is the largest in the Kottayam Division, where it is nearly 97 per cent it diminishes to 93 per cent in Quilon, 88 per cent in Trivandrum and 13 per cent in the Padmanabhapuram Division. Next to Malayalam, but at a considerable distance from it, comes Tamil, which is spoken by 5, 54,618 persons or 16 per cent of the population.\(^\text{34}\) Tamil is the predominant language in the


\(^{33}\) Cover File No.68, (political) A Short Sketch on Travancore, March 24, 1923, p. 3.

\(^{34}\) Ibid.
Padmanabhapuram Division, where 86 per cent of the people speak it, the percentage gradually declining towards the North till it falls to 2 per cent in the Kottayam Division and in Shenkottai in the Quilon Division, Tamil is the recognized as a vernacular. The other languages worthy of mention are Konkani, Marathi, Telugu and Hindustani, spoken by 11,052, 6,740, 6,452 and 4,647 persons respectively.\textsuperscript{35}

The entire population of the State falls under seven religions. The three predominant religions are Hinduism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Nearly 22,82,617 persons or 66.6 per cent of the total population are Hindus,\textsuperscript{36} 9,03,868 persons or 26.4 per cent are Christians and 2,26,617 persons or 6.6 per cent are Mohammedans, besides these, there are 73 Jews, 16 Buddhists and 11 Jains.\textsuperscript{37} Out of the total density of 452 per square mile 300 are Hindus, 120 Christians and 30 Mohammedans, the other religions make up the small balance of only two.\textsuperscript{38}

The Hindus are divided into innumerable castes and sub-castes. Thirty four of them, however, are numerically important. The Nayars numbering 5, 92,489 stand foremost, followed by the Ezhavas whose

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
number is 5, 46,265. These are followed a long way off by the Pulayas with a strength of 1,85,314 and the Channans with a strength of 1,66,195. The remaining castes number less than a hundred thousand. The Nambutiris whose strength is only 5,105 are from the spiritual aristocracy of Malabar. Among them marriage is generally restricted to the eldest son. Women are strictly gosha and as a rule married after puberty. The Nambutiris still retain many of their primitive customs unaltered. The Koiltampurans and the Rajas form two small indigenous Kshatriya castes. The male members of the former marry the female members of the latter, but not vice versa, the latter taking wives from the Nayar caste. The Nayars are the most prominent and progressive of the non-Brahmin communities. Among these and other indigenous Malabar castes, marriage after puberty is the rule, divorce is sanctioned by usage though the privilege, but rarely exercised, and the remarriage of widows are common. In the matter of inheritance, the Kshatriyas and the Nayars are governed by what is known as the Marumakkattayam law, under which descent is traced not in the male, but in the female line. A woman’s relatives on the female side, however remote in kinship, live together in one family, popularly

known as the *Tarwad* and enjoy the Tarwad property in common.\textsuperscript{42} If a common ancestors has two issues, one a male and the other a female, both are the members of her *Tarwad*, but not the children of the son, who belong to the *Tarwad* of his wife. In other words, the kinship in all cases ends with a male and does not descend further down.\textsuperscript{43}

The Ezhavas form another pushful and industrious community. They belong to the depressed class of Hindu society, but their social disabilities are gradually disappearing. The Channans are analogous to the Ezhavas. The Pulayas and the Parayas are agricultural labourers and hold the lowest rank in the social scale. The Ezhavas and Channans constitute 21 per cent and the remaining depressed classes about 17 per cent of the total Hindu population.\textsuperscript{44} There is no keen sectarian difference among the Hindus of Travancore. Absolute toleration has been the dominating feature of the religious life of Travancore from the earliest times. Kashmir at one end has only 3 Christians per 10,000 of the population, while this State at the other end has nearly 3,000.\textsuperscript{45} The Christians believe that the seeds of their faith were originally sown in the State by St. Thomas himself, one of

\textsuperscript{45} *Ibid.*
the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ in 52 A.D.\textsuperscript{46} Whatever may be the nature of the authenticity of this tradition, there needs to be no hesitation in concluding that Christianity has been prevalent here from very early times, as Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Nestorian monk of Alexandria who lived in the sixth century A.D. makes unmistakable reference to the Christians of Malabar. 63.4 per cent of the Christian population has been returned as Syrian Christians.\textsuperscript{47} These Syrian Christians are the representatives of the oriental church which flourished on the Malabar Coast in the early centuries of the Christian era, and though Christians by faith, are Hindus by race. The epithet Syrian is applied to them because of the Syrian or chaldaic liturgy they use in their churches. They were Nestorians in the Middle Ages, but became Roman Catholics after the arrival of the Portuguese at the end of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{48} The bulk of them, numbering 2,93,407 souls, still remain Roman Catholic. In addition to these Syro-Romans, there is a large body of Roman Catholics numbering 1,73,724, who follow the usual Latin rites. Some of these may be the descendants of Syrian Christians who adopted Latin rites; but the great majority are the descendants of converts from the Hindu fold during the last four

\begin{thebibliography}{48}
\bibitem{46} K.E. Job, \textit{The Syrian Church of Malabar; Its Cultural Contributions}, Trivandrum, 1952, p.82.
\bibitem{47} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{48} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{thebibliography}
centuries of the Christian era. This development is called the latinization of Kerala church particularly after the Synod of Diampur in 1599. Diampur is Udayamperoor in between Vaikam and Trippunithurai. When the Dutch subplanted the Portuguese on this coast, about one-third of the Syrian Christians broke from the fold of Catholicism and passed under the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch after the Dutch power gave place to the British. A portion of these Jacobite Syrians, who came under the influence of the teachings of the Church Missionary Society, formed themselves into an independent denomination known as Reformed Syrians, while some thousands went still further and formally embraced the Church of England giving up their Syriac Liturgy.

The Church Missionary Society was established in 1816 during Major Colonel Munro’s Residency, with the object of assisting and supplementing the old Syrian church, but from 1814 the society has been working independently. The number of Jacobite Syrians returned at the last Census is 2,02,059 of the Reformed Syrians 74,866 and of the Anglican Communion 56,251. Besides, the Church Missionary Society, two other Protestant Missions, viz, the London

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50 P.J. Thomas, Syrian Christian Art and Culture, Trivandrum, 1957, p. 120.
51 Ibid.
Missionary Society and the Salvation Army have done some appreciable propagandist work in Travancore. The former, whose operations began in 1806, confines its activity to the places South of Quilon, the places to the North of that line being within the area of influence of the Church Missionary Society. The number of Christians attached to this Mission, as per the last Census, was 81,573. The Salvation Army entered Travancore during this time and their Salvationists number was 16,794. The number of Europeans in the State is 399 of whom 183 are of the Anglican communion, the Anglo-Indians number 1,750 of whom 1,555 are of the Roman Catholic persuasion, being mainly the descendants of the Portuguese settlers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Islam is also an ancient religion in the country. The first batch of Mohammedans are believed to have come from Arabia to Malabar in 710. The commercial relations between Arabia and Malabar were so close and constant during the intervening years that before the fourteenth century the Mussalman merchants had, according to Ib-in-Batuta, the well-known traveller been able to pervade every coast town

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53 P.J. Thomas, _Op.cit._, p.120.
55 A. Sreedhara Menon, _Social and Cultural History of Kerala_, Delhi, 1979, p. 270
of Malabar. Even to this day, the Mohammedans live more largely in the littoral than in the mountainous region. Before the advent of the Portuguese; the Mohammedans had monopolized the trade of the country. In the eighteenth century, Tippu Sultan of Mysore effected some conversions in a few of the northernmost taluks during his final and ineffectual invasion of Travancore, while, with the opening of the seaport of Alleppey, Mussalman merchants from Sind, Cutch and Gujarat began to settle in the State.

The bulk of the Mohammedans are Sunnis by sect. From the racial standpoint, the Mohammedans may be roughly divided into three classes viz., the descendants of the early Arabian and Egyptian settlers together with the descendants of Mohammedan converts, east coast Mohammedans who have migrated and settled down for the purpose of trade, and recent settlers from Upper India also for the same purpose. The first of these classes generally speak Malayalam, the second Tamil and the third Hindustani.  

By appearance, dress and habits, the people of Travancore could be divided into two classes, the descendants of Aryan immigrants and others. The distinctiveness of features, clean habits and simple life

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could be attributed to the social rank which they enjoyed irrespective of their religious pursuance. The indigenous population, wherein there had been an admixture of foreign blood was characterised by dark complexion and features, which were not so well defined. Even among the apparently homogeneous group, certain distinguishing features existed to identify the particular sect or class which each belonged to. Thus the tuft of hair on the head with its varying modes of tying differ from sub-sect to subject and identifying caste marks on the forehead associated with Hindus, and close shave of the Christians. The skull cap or the turban of Muslims had been in vogue for a long time. The Malayalee women were noted for their preference of simple white dress though the manner of dressing varied with the women of various communities. The Nayar ladies had their *pudava, rouka* and upper cloth all white in colour and the Christian ladies wore their cloth in a distinctive style with a fan-like portion on the back side and long sleeved blouse. The Muslim women also had their distinctive dress. The women of this part used to wear heavy ornaments. A typical woman decorated her head, ears, nose, neck and arms, waist and ankles with heavy jewellery. The outlook of the people changed considerably.

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Among the Nayar ladies the *pudava* and *rouka* had mostly given place to sari and blouse, Christians took to sari and blouse.\(^{58}\)

The *Marumakkathayam* system and the joint family system were peculiar in Travancore. The *Marumakkathayam* determined the inheritance through the female line. Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis, Samanthars, Nayars, Ezhavas, Vellalas and some Muslims followed this system. In joint family system the members lived under the same roof without partition and the eldest male member of the family who was called ‘*Karanavar*’ exercised full powers over the affairs of the family was also peculiar to this land.\(^{59}\) Among the *Marumakkathayees* it was the custom that the wife and children of a male member of the joint family used to reside in the joint family of which his wife was a member.\(^{60}\) During the last three decades, there was intense legislative activity against both systems. As a result various communities had been given legislative sanction to claim partition from the joint families and adopt Makkathayam. Caste system had considerable effect in Travancore. Child marriage which was in vogue among several communities was prohibited. Inter marriage between sub-castes have become more common even among orthodox circles. Marriage

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ceremony which usually lasted for several days has been reduced to one day function.\textsuperscript{61}

The Nairs, Christians, Eazhavas and Muslims form the four important communities in Travancore. Traditionally, the Nairs occupied a prominent position after the eclipse of Brahmins. The Nairs owned most of the landed properties and held high position in the administration of the State. The Nair Service Society established in 1914 under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan flew from strength to strength and began to occupy a predominant position in all walks of life, especially in the affairs of the State. The Christians who were first under the patronage of the British Mathomites, Church of South India and Syrian rulers then by their hard work came to be recognized as an influential community.\textsuperscript{62}

The important sects in Christian religion are Anglican, Jacobite, Latin, Catholic, Christians. Though they did not form a homogenous community, the Christians of different denominations were pioneers of modern education in Travancore and in the economic development of the country and have developed considerable vested interests.\textsuperscript{63} While

\textsuperscript{61} Edgar Thurston, \textit{Castes and Tribes of South India}, Vol.IV, Madras, 1909, p.120-121.
\textsuperscript{63} Foreign Political Proceedings, Fort William, July 17, 1818, No. 20.P.69.
the Nairs and Christians were socially and educationally advanced communities, the Ezhavas were backward and did not get their due share in education and administration. Sri Narayana Dharma Paripallana Yogam was founded for encouraging and promoting religious and secular education and industrious habits of the people of Ezhava community. Muslims also raised their position by their hardwork.\textsuperscript{64} The Nadar community, one of the important castes in South Travancore, was socially and educationally backward and their exclusion from Government services and various representative bodies made them work together for amelioration of their grievances. The Nadars slowly began to play a vital role in Travancore.\textsuperscript{65}

**ADMINISTRATION**

For general administrative purpose, the State was divided into 33 taluks grouped under five Districts, known as Divisions, viz., Padmanabhapuram composed of five taluks, Trivandrum of four, Quilon and Kottayam of eleven each, and Devikulam of two. The taluks varied widely in extent from 53.9 square miles (Parur) to 926

\textsuperscript{64} *A Hand Book on Kerala*, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1988, p.29.

\textsuperscript{65} *Census of India*, Part I, Vol.XXIV, Travancore, 1941, p.129.
square miles (Chengannur) Padmanabhapuram was the smallest Division with 2,564.3 square miles. Padmanabhapuram was the southernmost of all the Divisions. It was the fountain head of its Administration for the Administrative convenience. Later on in 1729 it was shifted to Trivandram. The two taluks of Tovalai and Agastiswaram, comprising Nanchinad, long known as the granary of Travancore from the fertility and abundance of its wet-lands, were portions of this Division. Padmanabhapuram and Travancore, were two of the ancient capitals of the State. Kottar, is a well-known centre of weaving and other industries, and Colachel, the seaport of Travancore, were also in this Division. To the North of this lies Trivandrum, with an area of 842.9 square miles, the headquarter Division of the State, partaking to some extent of the physical and ethnic characteristics of South and North Travancore.

This Division contains Trivandrum, the capital of the State and the residence of His Highness the Maharaja, celebrated for its ancient temple dedicated to Sri Padmanabha, the family deity of the rulers of Travancore, Varkalai, a health resort and place of pilgrimage, and

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67 Cover File No. 15184, Boundary Disputes.
Ponmudi, a sanatorium on the hills.\textsuperscript{68} To the north of this is situated the Quilon Division of the mountainous taluk of Shenkottai which partakes wholly of the adjoining District of Tinnevelly, is left out of account. The Quilon Division contains Alleppey, the most important sea-port of the State, and Quilon which was the chief emporium of Southern India until Cochin took its place in the fourteenth century of the Christian era. During the wet weather, the floods carried by river Pampa, together with its numerous tributaries and branches, submerge the major portion of the Ambalapuzha Taluk, known as Kuttanand, where, however, owing to the peculiar process of paddy cultivation adopted by means of dredging and draining, the extent of fertility varies with the inundation to which the land becomes subject to. Kottayam, covering an area of 2,318 square miles, is the northernmost division of the State.\textsuperscript{69} The Vembanad Lake extends South to North from one end of the Division to the other, cutting off a whole taluk, Shertallai, from the main land. Karur, the ancient capital of the early Chera kings known as Perumals, Kaladi, the birthplace of Adi Sankaracharya, the distinguished Indian philosopher, Alwaye, a fine health resort, and Vaikom, celebrated for its Saivite shrine, are within the limits of this division. Besides coconut and paddy, ginger,

pepper and molasses are some of the valuable products of this division as also of Quilon. Devikulam lies to the east of the Kottayam Division and parallel to it. This division, measuring 1,253.2 square miles, is made up of the cardamom hills and the High range, and is the chief centre of the European plantation industry in Travancore. Peermade, one of the sanatoria of the State, is in this Division. From the point of view of progressive administration and of literacy, Travancore was second to no other State of India.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

My thesis entitled “Judicial Administration in Travancore Under Col. Munro (1811-1814)” highlights the part played by colonel Munro in the Judicial development of the State. He was also a social reformer. His reformative measures and administration earned him the people’s gratitude. He had the distinction of being the most important and venerated of the British Residents in Travancore. His period witnessed many changes in the State. He rendered yeoman services for the all round development of Travancore State.

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SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is not restricted to one or few aspects of the Judicial Administration in Travancore under Colonel Munro. It is an elaborate study which covers all the aspects such as origin, significance and the impact of the system on the life and culture of the people of Travancore. Its importance would be realised only when Munro becomes the Resident of Travancore in the year 1811. He introduced several reforms on the system of Judiciary in Travancore. They all form the scope of the study.

HYPOTHESIS

The abolition of the legal system of the Sarvadhikaryakkar and Karyakkar and establishment of Zilla, Appeal and Huzur Courts introduced in Travancore by Colonel Munro made him very popular. The study on the Judicial administration reflects Munro’s deep commitment to the introduction of Judiciary on the basis of British model in Travancore. The introduction of organisation of Police force in Travancore related to Judiciary by Munro established a good government in Travancore from 1810 onwards. The abolition of
different kinds of ordeals like ghee -ordeal, water ordeal by Colonel Munro gave much relief to the people as a whole in Travancore.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has certain minor limitations from the view point of the sources. One limitation is the lack of literature on the different reforms introduced in the year between 1811 - 1814. Yet an attempt has been made to set right the limitation by collecting data through archival materials. Despite the lack of certain details, it is possible to prepare a comprehensive account of the Judicial administration in Travancore.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary as well as secondary sources shed light on the early history of Travancore during the period 1811 to 1814. The primary sources of information about this period are the Official Records, Private Papers, Letters, Proceedings of the Government such as Orders, Press Notes, Press Communiqués, Reports of the Government appointed Committees and Commissions, Assembly Proceedings, Census Reports, State Manuals, Administrative Reports of the Government, Gazettes, Acts and Proclamations of the Travancore
Government and the correspondence between different authorities of Government found in thousands of files preserved in the English Records Section of the Kerala Government Secretariat at Trivandrum.

The publications prepared by the public and private agencies and Journals and souvenirs largely form the secondary source. The government records and published works relating to Travancore are kept preserved in the Kerala State Legislative Assembly Library, Trivandrum and Kerala University Library, Trivandrum furnish a lot of information about the popular movements and people’s uprisings. Old books, published works and records on this particular topic are the treasure house of information which deals with the hard ships endured by the people of Travancore.

The published works of different authors also furnish much information. But many of them are not free from bias as they are not based on historical objectivity and were written to advocate one claim or the other or to serve the purpose of propaganda. Caution has been applied for an assessment of distorted statements, interested accusations, false charges and exaggerated accounts. However, through the application of criticism the evidences and corroboration of facts, it has been found possible to reconstruct the history of the Judicial
Administration in Travancore under Colonel Munro between 1811 to 1814.

CHAPTERISATION

The proposed thesis is arranged in seven chapters including introduction and conclusion.

In the introductory chapter, the researcher traces out the geographical features of Travancore. The chapter gives an account of the natural divisions, geographical position, mountains and hills, passes, sea, rivers, back water, climate etc., along with various sections of the people with special reference to their occupation.

The second chapter explains the historical background of Travancore. The chapter describes in detail about the history of the ancient kings such as the Ays, the Pandiyas, the Cheras, the Cholas, the rulers of Vijayanagar, the Nayaks, the Nawabs and the kings of Travancore till 1811, the year in which Colonel Munro became the Resident of Travancore.

The third chapter is about the abolition of the Legal system of the Sarvadhikaryakkar and Karyakkar by Colonel Munro.
The fourth chapter explains the establishment of Zilla, Appeal and Huzur courts.

The fifth chapter deals with the Organization of Police Force in Travancore.

The sixth chapter describes in detail about the Abolition of Trial by Ordeal. It is followed by the conclusion.