to enter in Temples by backward classes, Mobilisation of workers and peasants by the Communist party etc. To make the portrait of Alleppey more clear, the final sections of this chapter explain the geographical and demographic features of today's Alleppey. The purpose of this chapter is not only to emphasise the historical importance of the colonial era in understanding the urban processes of a Third World country but also to contextualise the ecological and epidemiological processes in Alleppey which will be discussed in Chapters III and IV respectively.

II. THE LAND AND PEOPLE BEFORE THE CREATION OF ALLEPPEY

II.1 Chieftains under Perumals - Early Years of Travancore

Narratives on the history of South India in the modern period start with a study of three kingdoms, namely, Chera, Chola and Pandya. Travancore was ruled by Chera kings, popularly known as Perumals. The Chera empire did not have a politically integrated structure as it had been constituted by numerous chieftaincies who paid allegiance to the central power. This was true in the case of both the first Chera empire which lasted till A.D. 600 and the second Chera empire which rose into prominence in A.D. 800.

The socio-political realities of Travancore during this period is mainly determined by its geography. The prevalence of numerous independent principalities and the absence of forces of centralisation during the Chera period (and also during the subsequent Brahmanical rule) have been
explained on the basis of topography, even by Marxist analysts.\textsuperscript{2} Emergence of large empires and centralisation tendencies in Asia were attributed to the need for canal irrigation based on large scale public works. Liberal monsoons and numerous rivers criss-crossing the state undervalued the need for centralised irrigation in Travancore. Moreover, the terrain did not make it easy the construction of wide roads which might have facilitated large scale force movements. The impossibility of external aggression, as this vertical strip of land is protected by hills and sea from both sides further excluded Travancore to be part of any centralised power.

Agriculture and animal husbandry were the chief occupations during this period. Accordingly, the society was divided into cultivator communities (which included Vellala, Kuravan, Pulayan, Kanikkar etc.) and cowherds (namely Mannadi, Eradi, Ayan, Yadavan etc.). The chieftains were able to maintain themselves through farming in their own large agricultural tracts. There was no land taxes levied by the chieftains. Dispersed settlement patterns were the rule rather than compact settlements.\textsuperscript{3} In a situation in which each family lived on its own estate or that of a landlord, there was "little opportunity for individuals to have the experience of Nonfamilial primary group life which characterises the nucleated village."\textsuperscript{4} Perhaps the development of feudal relationships in Kerala was also greatly facilitated by the settlement pattern,\textsuperscript{5} as argued by ethnog-
raphers like Mencher.

As the people of that time lived in harmony with the environment and exploited minimum resources for subsistence, the 'Public Health' scenario was less problematic compared to the later period in which man tried to 'conquer and tame nature' to enjoy its fruits maximum. Though there are idealised and romanticised descriptions on the superior quality of life and health of people of that period (in tune with the speculative narrations of Locke and Rousseau regarding life in 'State of Nature') we are unable to reach any convincing inferences based on them.

The second Chera empire ruled by Perumals ended by the earlier half of the 11th century primarily due to their indulgence in a century long war with Cholas, secondly due to the rise of several chieftaincies within the empire and finally due to the Brahmin Immigration.

II.2 Brahmanical Domination and Structural Changes in Travancore Society

From 11th century onwards Brahmin immigrants succeeded in propagating the myth that Kerala is a gift given to Brahmins by Parasurama - an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The occupation of Kerala by Brahmins was through bloodless means and it was made easy by the then existing socio-political conditions. Firstly, the Brahmins associated with the dominant chieftains and then exploited the religious sentiments of the masses, using their mastery over Sanskrit.
language and rituals. They made the temples constructed by
them as the nerve centres of social and political life of
the region. Sanskrit education was imparted to Brahmin
children through temples. Knowledge of religious literature
and mastery of rituals were looked up and they were the
privilege of Brahmins only. 9

Introduction of 'chaturvarna' followed and local chief-
tains were given the 'Kshatriya' status and encouraged women
of these families to opt Brahmins as their husbands. They
appointed 'Thalyarthirees' as supervisors of political and
economic affairs of the chiefdoms. The chief occupation of
this period was agriculture and allied activities.

The consolidation of Brahmin hold and the carving out
of a new class of warriors known as Nairs did not result in
a centralised rule, though it helped in the emergence of a
new feudal relationship in Kerala, centred around
agriculture. The Nairs, who helped in the implementation of
transfer of lands from cultivators to Brahmin temples and to
Brahmins themselves also acquired land of their own in this
process. But Nairs of Travancore considered direct cultiva-
tion as polluting and affecting their superior status.
Consequently they leased out their land on 'Pattom' basis to
Eazhavas and Christians. Many of the lower caste groups, by
that time were pushed down to the status of agricultural
labourers and agrestic slaves (Pulayas and Cherumas).

49
As in the case of the Chera period, during this period also there was no burdensome land taxes.\textsuperscript{10} The status based non-contractual agrarian relationships existed during this period (though feudal and inegalitarian in essence) did not affect the health resources of the masses considerably as the 'Kanomdars' were required to pay only nominal dues in the form of agricultural products or nominal services as a token of loyalty and allegiance to the higher castes. Agriculture was mainly for household consumption and for feasts organised around temples and thus commercialisation was not the rule. Existence of slavery during this time with all its usual characteristics including Thampra's (masters) right to sell and kill adiyars (slaves) at their will had been studied by many social scientists in detail.\textsuperscript{11} Extremely restricted interaction between pure and polluting castes limited physical and social mobility of the masses. Venturing overseas and working in sea-going ships were looked with awe and fear by the people.\textsuperscript{12}

The Brahmin law makers did not assign trade and commerce to any particular community and hence the absence of Vaishyas is a notable factor in Kerala's social system. Trade and commerce did not enjoy a high status in society and entrepreneurship was not encouraged by the social system. Though Kerala had trade relations with many foreign countries such as Arab and Greek, from very ancient times and products of Kerala enjoyed high value all over the world, the Brahmanical system of that time looked down upon
trade and trade related activities. The minimal activities of trade existed at that time was mainly run by Muslims, Ezhavas and Christians. The vestiges of Arab influence could be seen prominently in Alleppey. A few families in the town still claim that they are the descendants of Arab merchants who came here for trade.

III. CREATION OF ALLEPPEY AMIDST TRADE WARS AMONG EUROPEAN POWERS

The Brahmanical domination in Travancore continued unchallenged till Travancore also became the focal point of trade war between European powers. Before the arrival of Portuguese the Arab Moors, Syrian Christians and Jews were enjoying a privileged position in trade. The trade monopoly of the Arabs was effectively challenged and checked by Portuguese who established their presence by early 16th century. The challenging of Arabs marked the beginning of "spite, intolerance and enmity in the socio-religious life of the state". The Portuguese aggressively involved in proselitization and even plundered local temples and offended many local chieftains. Battle for trade monopoly between Arabs and Portuguese became the order of the day.

Muziris in North Kerala acted as the foremost trading town and port of Kerala till the middle of 14th century. Muziris was a sea outlet on the same backwater system as Cochin and Alleppey. The major items of trade of that time were pepper, ginger and other spices, timber, salt, tobacco
and opium. However, "pepper more than any article attracted European merchants to the Malabar coast." Muziris outlet got silted increasingly over time. The flood of 1341 finally sealed its fate and practically blocked any traffic from the sea into the backwater. The Jewish and Syrian Christian merchants migrated to Cochin, followed by Portuguese. Now Cochin and adjacent areas became the arena for the trade battles.

The erstwhile Purakadu and Ambalapuzha chieftaincies included most of the present day Alleppey and its suburbs. The Raja of Purakadu had to engage in several military battles with Portuguese. In 16th century, Purakad Raja had to sign a treaty with Portuguese to escape from their repeated attacks. The local people hated Portuguese due to their harsh political dealings and sectarian religious designs. According to Louis Roche "when the Dutch Protestants appeared on the Kerala coast with tolerance in religious matters and superiority in the military front, the local Rajas and the people gave them support." Portuguese domination in the Kerala coast was sealed forever in 1663. Purakadu Raja signed another treaty with Dutch and allowed them to build a factory at Purakadu for trading pepper and ginger. This resulted in Dutch domination in trade of Travancore.

European colonial powers were able to establish their hegemony in Kerala, primarily due to their superior naval warfare and due to their ability to effectively exploit the
local political situation in which the local rulers (who were either independent or loosely organised under the suzerainty of a powerful king) were indulged in heavy in-fighting. The foreigners supported one king against another and through careful manipulation they protected their trade interests and expanded their political power. However, in the early years of 18th century Travancore emerged as a major single native power,\(^1\) which also challenged the Dutch.

Martanda Varma (1729-58) and Rama Varma (1758-1798) assisted by Keshava Das brought the petty chieftains of Travancore under control and state territories expanded from Cape Comorin to Cranganore. The properties of conquered Rajas (chieftains) were annexed by the state though properties belonging to Brahmins and their temples (and those of friendly Rajas) were left untouched. Nevertheless, the state of Cochin and trading posts such as Kayamkulam and Purakadu (adjacent points of present day Alleppey) were controlled by the Dutch. By this time the British had also arrived in Travancore.

After the political consolidation of Travancore, the state (taking clues from Dutch East-Indies Company and British East India Company) decided to involve in the lucrative foreign trade. This did not please the Dutch and several battles followed between the company and Travancore. Finally, Travancore could break Dutch power through the
creation of a port town called ALLEPPEY. To quote Dasgupta: "Finally Travancore challenged and broke the Dutch blockade of the coast at sea. This was done not by another naval battle but by the establishment of a new port at Alleppey a little to the south of Cochin, which the Dutch were forced to leave alone." 19

The creation of Alleppey town in 1762, by clearing the jungle and constructing a port was an attempt to challenge the trade and political supremacy of European colonisers by an indigenous power which was also interested in making profit through trade. This was also an attempt by Travancore to assert itself after consolidating its base. 20 The state also needed money to expand and maintain itself. The builders of the town expected that it would act as a trade centre where the commercial activities could be supervised and controlled by the state itself. As the state was deficient of an entrepreneurial class, Raja Keshava Das invited merchants from Bombay and Sindh to settle down in the town. The invitees were given all facilities including free land along the banks of Commercial canal which is digged as part of infrastructural development of the newly created town.

IV. ALLEPPEY IN THE HANDS OF BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

After the creation of Alleppey, Travancore enjoyed trade monopoly for a short period (roughly 35 years). The British East India Company persuaded Travancore to sign two treaties (one in 1795 and another in 1805) and through these
treaties the Company ensured their political domination in Travancore. The final treaty (1805) through an arrangement called 'subsidiary alliance system' reduced the state to a dependent one.\textsuperscript{21} Unlike in Malabar, the Company preferred to have an indirect control through the employment of the office of the British Resident.\textsuperscript{22} The British Resident appointed a Commercial Agent\textsuperscript{23} in charge of the commercial department of Travancore. All Commercial Agents were required to stay at Alleppey and they were also required to act in the capacity of Superintendent of the Local Police in charge of the law and order situation.

The British Resident enjoyed a very dominant position in the political and economic affairs of the state as evident from the following words of the Rani of Travancore in an address to Resident Munro: "I cannot do better than to place myself under the guidance and support of the honourable East India Company whose bosom had been an asylum for the protection of an infant like Travancore since the time Sree Padmanabha Swamy had effected an alliance with a respectable company of the European Nation. To you, colonel I entrust everything connected with my country...."\textsuperscript{24} After gaining a commanding position over Travancore's affairs, the company started designs to obtain absolute control of trade through Alleppey.

The Britons were not in favour of 'state monopolies' as they knew that only arrangements such as 'free trade' and 'private enterprise' would bring more profits to them. In
1855 the British Governor of Madras Presidency condemned the state monopoly system on the ground that it would give rise to "breach of public peace" and "increased smuggling activities". A letter issued to Travancore Raja of that time threatened annexation, if no economic reforms are introduced on the basis of liberal trade. Consequently state monopolies of pepper (1860) and tobacco (1863) were abolished. Finally, in 1865 Travancore joined the 'British India Free Trade Zone'. Within a year British Crown honoured the Travancore Raja by giving the title 'Maharaja'.

Establishment of British India Free Trade Zone witnessed unprecedented expansion of trade and commercial activities in Alleppey, triggered by the growing demand for pepper and other spices and substitution of coir yarns in place of jute as a packaging aid. By that time, there were many coir factories in Alleppey, the first of them being founded by Mr. James Darrah in 1859. Other foreign companies manufactured coir yarns in Alleppey were Goodekar William, Pears and Lesley and Aspinwall, all started through foreign investment. (Indigenous investment in large amounts started coming in only after 1920s. The first such factory was founded by K.C. Karunakaran, an Eazhava entrepreneur.) Thus from the earlier position of exporting timber, spices and other natural products, Alleppey entered into a new position in which it became a manufacturing town which exported processed and semi-processed goods.
V. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ALLEPPEY UNDER BRITISH RULE

The economic situation of Alleppey and its hinterlands were similar to the situation envisaged by Anthony King\(^2\) wherein the new towns of Third World acted as "vital links that hold together empires in the age of formal imperialism" by extracting and exporting the resources of the hinterlands. The ruling elites of a Third World town, according to King, acted as agents to organise resources not only from its immediate hinterland but also from other towns that lie in interior districts. In the case of Alleppey Boats and bullock carts were used to transport resources from various parts of Travancore. (As Bombay had its cotton hinterland in Gujarat, Calcutta had its jute hinterland in Bengal, Alleppey had its coir hinterland along the coastal tracts of Travancore and spice and timber hinterland in Western Ghats.)

Hans Schenk, while observing the economic scenario of Alleppey goes further to argue that Alleppey was more like an industrial outpost of Britain. To quote Schenk, "coir manufacturing sprang up and expanded in and around Alleppey in order to satisfy consumption abroad. The finished coir products were used mainly in Europe, the United States and a few other countries. While part of the coir produce was shipped in a semi finished state (yarn) for manufacturing abroad, a very sizeable share was finalised in Alleppey itself.... Alleppey was more an industrial outpost of
V.1 Financial Bankruptcy of Travancore State

A massive drain of wealth from state treasury of Travancore was an immediate impact of British supremacy. After Veluthempi's revolt of 1809, Britons imposed a war indemnity of 189,877 pagodas on Travancore state which was already got pauperised due to its large arrears in subsidy to the company. The sad state of finances of Travancore could further be evident by the decision of the Maharaja to cancel the prestigious 'Murajapam festival' in 1810 which used to be held in every 12 years. Payment of various taxes as per the financial clauses of the 1805 treaty followed by the introduction of 'free trade', encouragement of the production of cash crops etc. resulted in the ultimate collapse of the government treasury. Unrestricted marketing of British made goods broke the backbone of traditional and cottage industries. Small and marginal farmers joined the ranks of agricultural labourers and 'coolies'.

V.2 Famines and Epidemics

By 1855, European Agro-entrepreneurs established plantations which was facilitated by the Travancore King's enactment of several rules allotting wasteland for plantation crops. During the same period, Commercialisation of farming and government's policy of non-interference in private grain trade, increased the food prices. Food scar-
city and increase of food prices led to famines in 1860, 1870 and in 1876-77. Though Nampoothiripad argues that it was food scarcity which led to these famines, recent researches argue that it was not always the scarcity of food but the food grain prices which triggered famine mortality all over India in various famines.

The impact of famine in Travancore and in Madras Province, occurred during 1876-77, was extremely terrible that people went for roots and leaves of plants and even for animal caracases. The severity of the famine is evident in the report of the Madras Sanitary Commissioner which describes the events in the following words: "The people of South India... will not only eat a fat bullock, but manage to pick up nutriment from the caracase of a beast that has died of their own complaint-chronic starvation. It may truly be said that the labouring poor made a great effort to live. When their ordinary food failed them, they used roots, leaves and fruits from the jungles and picked the bones of every animal that died, or had to be killed on account of want of forage." The occurrence of famines always followed by outbreak of epidemics in Alleppey and adjacent villages.

V.3 Creation of Income Inequalities

In the years which preceded the great South Indian Famine of 1876-77, which had major impacts in Alleppey, the wage structure in Alleppey was marked by far ranging in-
equalities of income and wealth. In 1875, the Commercial Agent of Alleppey drew a salary of Rs.1000/- month while the lowest grade employees like sweepers received a salary of Rs.2/- month. The Indian head clerks received Rs.12/- while coolies earned daily wages ranging from 25 paise to 5 chakrams (28½ chakram = Re.1). Considering the facts that there was no full employment for daily-wage earners throughout the month and there was a consistent increase in food grains prices one can rightly conclude that during the time of colonial capitalism in Alleppey people lacked adequate income which had damaged their survival strategies, health and well being.

The inference that Alleppeyites were having only a hand to mouth existence during the colonial capitalism is further underlined not only by interviews with elders of Alleppey who were former workers of coir factories, ports and oil mills but also estimates made by Jeffrey and Schenk. The reports of a survey held in 1891, quoted by Jeffrey emphasises the need of at least Rs.42/year to cover the minimum necessities of a 'man'. (The survey gives a lower figure of only Rs.29.5 for 'women' and 'children'!) Thus an average family needed at least Rs.15/- for a modest living in 1891. Assessing the situation of 1930s in Alleppey, Schenk remarks as follows: "Junior Clerks and skilled artisans earned Rs.10/- to Rs.15/- and labourers upto Rs.10/- under conditions of full employment.... It was estimated that an average sized household required Rs.20/- to Rs.25/-
a month to live modestly."

After 1920, there was continuous wage cuts not only in coir industry but also in other sectors. Attempts to provide subsidised food were not effective in the face of reduction in real wages. These developments resulted in massive labour strikes. The nature of the constant clashes between the state of Travancore which always tried to protect imperial economic interests and the masses who always tried to get compensation for the depletion in their health assuring resources could be understood from the following observation made by Schenk: "The commitment by the state of Travancore to the business interests of the foreign entrepreneurs was firm enough to guarantee that no challenges to those interests were allowed beyond a certain a limit. That limit was the social order of capitalism itself. When trade unions rallied around more radical demands, such as the call to destroy capitalism, the state power and the economic elites... did not hesitate... to employ its armed forces against a leftist uprising in and around Alleppey, at the cost of many hundreds of lives." 40

VI. THE INDUSTRIAL DECLINE IN POST COLONIAL ALLEPPEY

By 1920s Alleppey reached the zenith of its growth in terms of investment, export trade, number of workers in industry and the quantum of industrial activities in and around the town. But 1930s witnessed a decline in the pace of industrialisation and the years which followed independ-
ence showed a trend of deindustrialisation. (Details in Appendix-2) By 1980s, the number of ships visited Alleppey port in a year became less than a dozen. (Between 1981-1990 only 5 ships have come to the port. One in 1982-83, three in 1988-89 and one in 1989. During this period only 414 tonne coir products were exported while 51,808 tonne rice and 24,517 tonne wheat were imported.41) The last ship left Alleppey, in 1989, to Thailand after delivering 'rice', imported by Food Corporation of India to supply to Keralites who now have to import almost all food items of daily consumption.

Alleppey is no more known as a 'port town' and the former port employees live in dire poverty due to lack of alternate employment opportunities (and of old age). The two important canals criss-crossing the town, once used to be busy with cargo boats, now ensure uninterrupted supply of mosquitoes from their stagnant, filthy water. The monuments of Alleppey - a light house that never glows, "a superfluous pier, empty godowns, weeded canals" and "blistered company names on the walls of factory sheds" reminds one of a ghost town recollecting its glorious days. The causes of this decline of Alleppey are examined in the following paragraphs.

There is a theory42 which states that capital would migrate to places where exist certain facilities such as banking and insurance, availability of cheap skilled labour, abundance of raw material and hence there is a sure possi-
bility of production ensuring sustainable profit. Generally speaking, this theorisation could be true in case of Alleppey also as capital might have migrated to areas where the above mentioned factors are present. But behind this economic generalisation one could locate certain specificities which are crucial in sorting out the debates on the extent of social factors within the context of profit oriented production - the factors due to which labour became costly in Alleppey and probably "cheaper" in other areas.

After 1920, workers of Alleppey started organising themselves in the context of wage cuts and exploitation by middle men. Starting with the formation of Travancore Labour Association (in 1922), workers asked for more wages bonus and other benefits to ensure their existence (not to mention well being and health) and these activities resulted in the 1938 inter factory strike and thereafter they acted as role models to other type of workers in the state. Communist party and its various organs educated them on their rights (though not duties) and the laws which ensure their rights. Denial of any of their natural, political or legal rights was challenged by strikes and demonstrations. Many industry owners who were reluctant in implementing laws regarding wages, working hours and various welfare measures were scared to invest in Alleppey. Instead of investing in Alleppey, where labour is "militant", investors looked for regions where they could easily violate laws in collaboration with authorities and to take advantage of the illitera-
cy and poverty of masses by availing even child labour and gender discriminated wage rates. Thus one of the major reasons for the deindustrialisation of Alleppey is its advancement in social sectors (as explained in the next section of this chapter) - an advancement which made the masses aware of the rights and dignity of all humans and the need for an egalitarian social existence.

There were, of course, certain technological, environmental and international factors also which were beyond the control of local Alleppeyites that decided the course of deindustrialisation of Alleppey. However, in the final analysis they appear only secondary compared to the above-mentioned aspects. It is not the technological lag as such, but the inability of a town to update itself in the context of technological advancement and changes in economic activities around the world that makes a town senile. This ability to 'update itself' stems from the overall development and growth, precipitated by the past economic and social history.

Inventions such as refrigerators discouraged the use of spices in European cuisines. There was an increased preference towards synthetic fibres instead of natural fibre in the years which followed the discovery of plastics and ethylene based polymers and this resulted replacement of jute and coir in global packaging scene. Along with these developments factors such as the global recession of 1930s
and the resultant economic depression reduced the demand for Alleppey's products in the international market. The Second World War period was noted for decline in export trade not only in Alleppey but also in all the major markets of the world. Within a few years after Second World War, India became politically independent and this followed the exit of almost all foreign entrepreneurs from Alleppey.

Alleppeyites constantly complain about the discrimination and negligence they faced in independent India at the hand of Central Government which was mostly run by the Congress party. They had to wait till 1989 to see a train passing through their town. The exclusion of Alleppey from the railway expansion processes kept the town isolated from the other industrial towns of the country. The dependence on the slow moving water transport system towards and from Alleppey played its part in retarding its growth. While the 'discriminatory aspect' of their argument needs further verification, the 'lag in transportation' aspect carries weight. It is true that there was no substantial investment in Alleppey either by the central government or by the state government after 1947.

Another major reason for decline of Alleppey suggested by all those who interviewed was the coming of Cochin port in 1935. During 1920s the provincial government at Madras decided to build a modern deep water harbour at Cochin, which is only 60 kms away from Alleppey. This was mainly due to the military and strategic reasons perceived by the
Better infrastructural facilities offered by Cochin lured many business men to Cochin. The changes in shipping style occurred in recent years did not favour Alleppey. The 'Chilanka' operations employed in Alleppey port became obsolete in the face of modern technologies offered by Cochin. Thus in the shadow of sophisticated Cochin port Alleppey declined into oblivion.

Finally, Alleppey had a comparatively smaller hinterland compared to that of colonial towns developed during the same period like Karachi. The survival of a colonial port town requires an extensive basis of exploitation. Economic historians argue that "apart from Karachi in a very late stage of British Indian colonial history - no second ranking colonial port towns actually evolved." As mentioned before, the development of Cochin was mainly based on strategic military reasons. Though Cochin developed faster in the initial years its growth today is not as fast as Bombay or Visakhapatnam. Calicut could never survive as a major port, as it did not have an extensive base of exploitation. Visakhapatnam grew as a major port mainly due to the presence of an extensive iron ore basin in interior Andhra Pradesh and it still exports iron ore to East Asia. Therefore the ultimate drain of Western Ghats of its resources was a major factor which reduced the economic activities through Alleppey port.
VII. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

VII.1 Educational Development among Backward Classes

The year 1805 in which the Maharaja of Travancore accepted British suzerainty was also coincided with another important incident - the starting of activities of London Missionary Society under the leadership of Rev. Meed, who is known for spreading modern education in Travancore.\(^{47}\) Another pioneer in the field of educational activities in Travancore viz. Church Missionary Society (CMS) established its first headquarters in Alleppey. (Later CMS shifted its headquarters to the adjacent Kottayam town.) In 1812 Salvation Army started its activities among depressed sections of Society such as Pulayas. In 1825, CMS started a girls school at Alleppey to provide education to girls. This was followed by establishment of several English schools in Travancore by Ringle Taub, a Spanish Missionary who commenced his work in 1806.

Though missionaries were motivated by the zeal of "spreading the good news to one and all", as Gopala Krishnan puts it "their service in the field of education can never be underestimated. With the spread of education, a sense of human dignity and human rights dawned on the population. They began to question oppressive customs."\(^{48}\) The major beneficiary of these factors was Ezhava community who constituted a majority in the hinterland of Alleppey and later provided more than 65% of the workforce in the coir manufac-
turing sector of Alleppey. Not only Eazhavas and Channars but also slave castes like Pulayas became aware of their rights and dignity. Kushala Kumari argues: "it was the Christian Missionaries who first opened the eyes of the Pulayas and other low castes about the need and importance of education. Before the arrival of the missionaries in Travancore, the government did not take any interest in the field of education for the Pulayas." 49

VII.2 Development of Urban Values

The establishment of Alleppey town from the very beginning resulted a change in the nature and composition of the population. As noted in an earlier section Kerala lacked a "Vaishya group' who could offer competition to the enterprising foreigners. Therefore Dewan Keshavadas had to invite North Indian entrepreneurs to come and settle down at Alleppey. The immigrants included Parsis, Gujratis, Kutchis and Sindhis. They added up the earlier traders of Kerala namely Chettiyars of Tamilnadu, Jews from Cochin, Kongani Brahmins from Goa along with local Syrian Christians and Muslims. With the establishment of Alleppey, trade occupied a prominent position in social hierarchy and locals entered in trade related activities.

The change in the demographic profile 50 of the region and the installation of a cosmopolitan and capitalist spirit catalysed a change in the outlook of the people from a traditional, ascriptive one to a modern achievement oriented
one. Alleppey spread urban values into the interior parts of the state. These changes finally culminated in developing "class consciousness" even among the peasantry of Alleppey. In the context of agrarian movements, Oommen argues: "it was through caste reform and uplift movements that class consciousness emerged and crystallised in Travancore. There was another important factor which facilitated the emergence of agrarian movement in Travancore, the development of an industrial town, Alleppey, referred to as the Venice of India."51

The values, attitudes and ideas unleashed due to the establishment of the town were not only potent enough to create class consciousness and worker-peasant movements but also resulted in structural changes which in turn considerably influenced the public health scenario of the population in and around Alleppey.

VII.3 Movement against Discriminatory Dress Code (1820s)

By the then prevailed caste laws Eazhava and Channar women were not allowed to cover their bosoms in public. Those lower caste women who got converted into Christianity started wearing upper clothes. While the upper caste Hindus objected this practice, the Missionaries and Christian institutions supported the lower caste women. The year 1829 is marked for clashes between Channar and Eazhava Christians and Upper caste Hindus on the above issue. These clashes were contained using military and in 1829 Col. Munro, in the
capacity of Resident cum Dewan of Travancore issued a Royal Proclamation allowing lower caste women (converted to Christianity) to wear upper garments that could cover their bosoms. Thus the first ever agitation against caste restrictions were organised by Eazhavas and Channars and influenced by Christianity and above all followed by the establishment of CMS girls school at Alleppey in 1825.

The 'Eazhava non-converted women', seeing the privilege enjoyed by their converted counterparts initiated the second phase of this agitation and the second phase coincides with the year in which the first fullfledged coir factory was established in Alleppey in 1859 and the establishment of this factory and the growth of coir manufacturing sector necessitated women in large numbers to go out of their house for wage labour. Upper caste Hindus physically removed the bras (jackets) worn by Eazhava women in public and this led to another round of clashes. Later through the intervention of Lord Harris, governor of Madras, the Maharaja issued a proclamation allowing Eazhava women not only to wear a bra, but also to wear a coarse upper cloth, though exactly not like that of upper caste women. The years that followed witnessed swelling of Eazhava workers in factories and Eazhava children in Missionary schools.
VII.4 Movement to get Right to Education

Narayana Guru, an Eazhava reformer advocated the importance of education and organisation by coining the slogan - "learn and be free; unite and be strong." He went on asking Eazhavas to take part in the industrialisation process of the country by contributing not only capital and labour but also through upgrading technology and enhancing skills. Another reformer from Eazhavas, Dr. Palpu led another movement popularly known as 'Malayalee Memorial' in 1891, through which Eazhavas demanded entry into government schools and civil services. Finally, in 1903 Eazhavas made their powerful and mass based organisation, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP). The Travancore Maharaja had no other way except throwing open government schools to Eazhavas also.

Opening of Government schools to Eazhavas led to yet another round of clashes between Eazhavas and Upper caste Hindus. At Maryamkulam, Nairs destroyed a school on the ground that it was polluted by Eazhava boys. However, caste Hindus were forced to retreat in the face of organised agitation by Eazhavas. Apart from the support from Missionaries who aimed at conversions and colonial government which aimed at free wage labour in factories and plantations, the factors that facilitated the fight against oppressive customs and practices were the economic independence and mobility attained by Eazhavas by being workers in the manufacturing sector and in the commercialised agricultural
sector. Even capital and entrepreneurship started coming into the industry from the ranks of Eazhavas. As noted before, the first indigenous investment in coir manufacturing sector in 1920 was by an Eazhava (though he was assisted by his German wife in this endeavour).

VII.5 Temple Entry Movement

In 1924, Eazhavas led yet another struggle viz. Vaikom Satyagraha in which they demanded entry into roads which were exclusively reserved for upper castes. Workers from Alleppey went on a 'Padayatra' (March Past), to Vaikom to support the agitation in which they demanded the right to tread on roads which were hitherto kept as the privilege of Caste Hindus. This culminated in the 'Temple entry declaration' of 1936. Today, Eazhavas are one of the most powerful communities of Kerala who influence government policies from within.

VII.6 Formation of Caste-based Organisations for Political Action

The upward mobility and emancipation achieved by Eazhavas inspired other communities as well and it triggered the birth of several organisations in the early half of the 20th century. In 1907 Pulayas, under the leadership of Ayankali organised Sadhujana Paripalana Yogam (SPY). SPY aimed at promoting education, propagating hygienic life styles etc. among Pulayas. The fishermen community of Alleppey, under the leadership of K.p. Karupan, in 1927,
formed 'Araya Vamsodharani Sabha' and decided to shed the sub-divisions among them (such as Arayan, Mukuvan, Valan etc.) and to merge as a single group). The ideal of organised communitarian action did not limit within lower castes, rather it spread into the upper castes also. In 1909 Namboothiris formed Yogakshema Sabha. A town near Alleppey (Changanachery) witnessed the emergence of Nair Service Society in 1914.

VII.7 Growth of Mass-based Movements

A pro-Maharaja, Anti-British revolt by Veluthampi took place in 1809. However, it was not a mass-based movement, though a few historians58 treat it as an indigenous attempt to uproot colonialism. After containing 'hostile' elements like Veluthampi and by successfully manipulating the succession issue of Travancore (which arose after the death of Balarama Varma in 1810) the British raised Gauri Laxmi Bai to the Maharani's position as it suited their imperial interests.

The genesis of political movements in the modern sense can be traced only with the 1891 Malayalee Memorial in which Travancoreans59 demanded a due share in the bureaucracy. Education of masses and growth of middle classes in various communities enabled them to accept the political ideas of democracy and self-government. Consequently a political party viz. the State Congress came into being in 1938 and demanded self rule from the Dewan and Maharaja.60 In Allep-
vey and adjacent areas these overall developments took a
distinct path in which the industrial workers and poor
peasants made their own contributions.

VII.8 Formation of Trade Unions

Between 1859 and 1922 many factories were established
in Alleppey and adjoining Ambalapuzha-Cherthala areas. SNDP
took keen interest in the welfare of coir-workers as majority
of coir-workers constituted Eazhavas. When in 1922,
Travancore Labour Association (TLA) was established, SNDP
served in the Board of Directors of TLA. In the earlier
years, the primary objective of TLA was not economic.
Oommen argues: "the social organisation and production
relations existed in Alleppey factories was such that the
immediate objective of TLA was not economic betterment of
workers as much as it was their emancipation from social
degradation." Cherian also underlines the above aspect
and argues that the forging of new identity and solidarity
of workers were not entirely due to trade union concerns
alone. To quote Cherian, "they found themselves pre-occu-
pied with certain fellowship and humanitarian concerns which
did not fall within their purview of the old order." Consequentially they involved in activities such as creation of
a Death Benefit Fund, establishing Alleppey Workers Parasp-
ra Sahakarana Sangham, the formation of health care system,
the establishment of reading rooms and night schools adja-
cent to union offices etc.
The establishment of workers' unions in Alleppey enabled the workers to be sensitive towards various social and political issues that may affect their life. Awareness of their political power by 1934 enabled them to engage in the first inter-factory strike in Alleppey. The gradual emergence of class consciousness enabled the workers to delink themselves from SNDP during 1937-38. When the class based mobilisation is completed, in 1938, the largest ever strike of factory workers took place. In this strike 2 lakh workers had participated, 200 workers were wounded, 266 arrested and one died. It is to be remembered that the year 1938 is also marked for the establishment of the State Congress, the first political party of Travancore.

VII.9 Organisation of Peasants

The organisational works started among the coir workers of Alleppey spread into the agrarian sector also as by the end of 1920s the commercialisation of agriculture was also completed. In 1934, the 'Kuttanadu Karshaka Sangham' was formed. This was followed by formation of other peasant organisations like Kuttanadu Karshaka Mahasabha. However, the first full-fledged agricultural labour union was inaugurated only in 1940, with the formation of Travancore Karshaka Thozhilali Union. This union supported by communist publications such as Deshabhimani newspaper, effectively, made use of Drama and Folk songs to educate and mobilise the agricultural workers. These efforts educated the workers
as well as peasantry the value of organised action and incited them to indulge in political activity and culminated in a popular revolt in two villages (Punnapra and Vayalar) near Alleppey.

**VII.10 The Grand Finale at Punnapra Vayalar**

As a part of the National Movement for independence, the peasants, workers and fishermen organised a revolt against Dewan C.P. Ramaswami Iyer. By 1940, almost all categories of workers were organised themselves, but were looking forward to 'Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union' in Alleppey for leadership and inspiration. They had come to know the various types of exploitation they suffer by the hands of middlemen, Moopens, feudal landlords and even by the hand of the Church.65

The exploitation by landlords and sea lords in the coastal areas of Alleppey along with extremes of inequality66 and poverty provided a fertile soil for the growth of communist ideas among the masses. In this regard Daniel writes: "The outbreak of the Second World War had severe impacts upon the economy of Travancore especially on the food front. Coir factories in the industrial belt of Alleppey were hard hit by the disruption of exports during the war. The workers were amenable to any revolutionary idea which could ameliorate them from their distresses. The absence of any political agitation due to the war was utilised by the communists for effective revolutionary propa-
ganda among the factory workers. As a result, a significant proportion of factory labour population in Travancore gravitated to the communist fold by 1943."67

The food situation got worsened by 1946 and the agitation for responsible government turned into an agitation against the government's food and industrial policy. Workers raised the demand for bonus with a perspective that 'bonus is nothing but deferred payment'. In July 1946, 2.5 lakh factory workers from Alleppey to Paravur struck work and lead hunger strikes and demonstrations. Consequently, demand for bonus was accepted first time in India. Another strike, which included a large number of peasants also broke out in September. Landlords and industry owners, with the help of state police attempted terror tactics to subjugate the strikes. But the agitation spread into more and more parts of Travancore. In October a charter of political and economic rights was submitted to the government which demanded replacement of King and Dewan, adult franchise and economic and social betterment of workers and peasants. In the confrontation which followed between the police and workers at Punnapra and Vayalar villages which lie a few kilometers away from Alleppey town resulted in the death of 400 (-700)68 people and arrest of 300 people. The trials followed sentenced 3 to death and 27 for life term imprisonment.
VII.11 Assessment

The creation of Alleppey town not only changed the demographic composition of the town but also changed the value systems and outlook of the population. The earliest influence in Alleppey was that of the educational activities of Christian Missionaries. The hitherto backward classes, especially the Eazhavas who form a majority among various communities in Alleppey became educated and came to know the dignity and equality of all human beings irrespective of caste or creed. They were able to fight caste repression and to get rights to wear clothes and worship in temples like upper castes.

However, it is the Marxists who mobilised the peasants and workers on class-basis by forming trade unions among factory and farm workers. Gradually, the workers were able to delink themselves from caste based organisations and fight against exploitation by asking more rights and wages to ensure well-being. The early mobilisation of both general public and working classes resulted in the growth of a mature political culture in the town and ensured comparatively effective functioning of programmes and agencies such as Public Distribution Systems and healthcare systems, as we will see in Chapter V.

As mentioned in Section VI of the present chapter, the confrontational stand taken by the Alleppey workers in 1930s and 1940s caused the flight of investors from Alleppey as
they found Alleppey is "too communist" to invest. The entrepreneurs found it easy to migrate to other places as their investment in plant and machinery were meagre and the economy was surviving entirely on a manufacturing base operated through cheap labour and extremely low level of capital investment. The labour of that time were swapping their potentials to subsistence wages only to enable them to have a hand-to-mouth existence. The demand for more wages and better working conditions resulted in only deprivation of their jobs and hence their existence.

VIII. THE SPATIAL SETTING - INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON HEALTH

The geography of the town is largely defined by its proximity to sea and the presence of numerous rivers and small canals both within the town as well as in adjacent Kuttanadu which forms part of Alleppey's hinterland. (Refer Map.3) On the western part of the town there is Arabian Sea with a coastal line of 82 km. and on the eastern side there is Vembanadu Lake which has a length of 84 km. and breadth of 3.1 km. Apart from Pampa (which is the third largest river of the state), Manimala, Achenkovil, Meenachil and Muvattupuzha rivers discharge into Vembanadu lake. To ensure smooth passage of forest products and for public transport several canals were digged in and around Alleppey. These canals had flowing water in earlier days. Of late the water system got stagnated due to reasons which are discussed in Chapter III.
Map-3. Alleppey and Hinterland
Many European authors compared the geography of Alleppey with that of the province of Holland in Netherlands. The prominent among them is the Dutch Captain Nieuhoff (1664). He "proceeded to Kudamalloor by boat along the lakes of Kuttanadu which evoked in his mind nostalgic memories of his own native land."\(^{69}\) The British engineer Bristowe who sailed in these backwaters during 1920s and 1930s noted the usefulness of backwaters as a cheap mode of transportation.\(^{70}\) The area where today's Alleppey is located was believed to be risky and uninhabitable as monkeys, jackals and crocodiles were inhabited there.

The temperature throughout the year ranges between 20°C-34°C. The climate of the town could be better described as 'Tropical Monsoon' type with extreme humidity in the air due to presence of numerous water bodies. Writing in 1773, John Clark, the East India Company Surgeon found the coast of Malabar "temperate and healthy'... 'with the air, even in the warmest months causing no great inconvenience to health".\(^{71}\) The summer monsoon from sea to land arrives in Alleppey coast, first time in India, every year in the first week of June, with almost mathematical precision. It was by following the path of monsoon winds, tradesmen and travellers from Europe and Arabia arrived in Malabar coast. The South West monsoon continues till August. The return of Southwest monsoon during October-November brings further rains in the town.
The sandy, peaty or kari, alluvial and laterite soil of Alleppey is highly porous, slightly acidic and has very little water retentive capacity. Vast tracts of alluvial deposits and small sand dunes decide the soil character and permits the growth of paddy, coconut, beetlenut, pepper and cashew cultivation. Several animals like cows, sheep, pig, buffalo and elephants and birds like duck and chicken are domesticated.

The characteristics of climate, land and water mentioned above have many implications on the public health situation of the town, as listed below:

1. The distribution of land and water resources promotes a decentralised pattern in the socio-economic arrangements including the settlement pattern.

2. The dispersion of settlements not only enables the residents to enjoy all the advantages of a non-congested countryside but also retards the speed with which an epidemic may spread out.

3. Frequent monsoons help the people in maintaining environmental and personal hygiene.

4. The alluvial and sandy soil in the town is capable of absorbing human waste to a considerable extent. Nearness to the sea and the abundancy of water in the backwater basin could wash away dirt and waste generated by households.

5. The landscape provides different set of opportunities for resources and allows co-existence of primary and
non-primary sectors\textsuperscript{72} even in the heart of the town.

These natural advantages of the town should have made Alleppeyites free from diseases and illnesses. But thanks to the contamination of water bodies, loss of flow in the canals and waterlogging due to various developments of later years, Alleppey has a heavy burden of diseases as we will see in Chapter IV.

IX. CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ALLEPPEY

As per the 1991 census, the town accommodates 174,666 persons in 46.77 square kilometers. The town has a population density of 3,735 persons sq. km. as against 749 persons/sq. km. for the state and 1,415 persons/sq. km. for the district. Alleppey district is the most densely populated district in the state. Table II.1 gives the population figures of Alleppey town and Table II.2 give the proportion of age-wise and sex-wise groups in the total population.

Table II.1: Population of Alleppey Municipality compared to the District and State Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kerala State</th>
<th>Alleppey District</th>
<th>Alleppey Municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>29098518</td>
<td>2001217</td>
<td>174666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>14288995</td>
<td>975885</td>
<td>85699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>14809523</td>
<td>1025332</td>
<td>88967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census.)
Table II.2: Proportion of Age Groups and Sex Groups in the Total Population of Alleppey Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Males (over 6 years)</td>
<td>75275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Females (over 6 years)</td>
<td>79002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Adults</td>
<td>154277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Children (0-6 age group)</td>
<td>10424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Children (0-6 age group)</td>
<td>9965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Children</td>
<td>20389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Adults to the Total Population</td>
<td>88.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Children to the Total Population</td>
<td>11.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census Report.)

The growth rate of population of Alleppey district is steadily declining since 1961. (The growth rate of population was 20, 19, 11 and 7 for the years 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991 respectively.) The present growth rate is 7.28% which is almost half of the state's growth rate and is 14.32%. From 1941 onwards, there was a steady increase in the population ratio (except a small drop for 1971). However, as we see from Table II.2, the latest census shows the proportion of male children to the total population is much higher than that of the female children. One has to doubt whether Alleppeyites, of late, are preferring to have a male child to a female child.
Table II.3: Literacy Levels in Alleppey Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Kerala State</th>
<th>Alleppey District</th>
<th>Alleppey Municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>93.81</td>
<td>93.79</td>
<td>82.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>86.17</td>
<td>91.12</td>
<td>81.57*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census Report)

(*For Alleppey Municipality, literacy percentage to the whole population is given, whereas for Kerala state and Alleppey district 'effective literacy rate' is given. The effective literacy rate of Alleppey town excluding 0-6 age group is 93.28%.)

Table II.3 gives the comparative figures of literacy levels in the Municipality, which is higher than that of Kerala State and almost equal to that of the district.

Table II.4: Data on Percentage of SC/ST Population to the Total Population of respective State, District and Municipality Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCs/STs</th>
<th>Kerala State</th>
<th>Alleppey District</th>
<th>Alleppey Municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Castes (SCs):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Tribes (STs):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census Report)

Table II.4 shows the percentage of SCs and STs in Alleppey municipality. Though the figures for SC appear to be very low, a large number of SCs are converted into Christianity and Alleppey district has a considerable number of
'Latin Christian' population among the fishermen community and hence the number of depressed classes are not very less than the state average.

The demographic profile of the five wards chosen for data collection through field survey, is given in Table II.5 and Table II.6.

Table II.5: Data on the Number of Females and Children in Selected Wards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Ward</th>
<th>No. of Houses</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Children (0-6 yr)</th>
<th>No. of People in chosen Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>1993 2073 4066</td>
<td>269 276 545</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chungom</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>2303 2463 4766</td>
<td>251 258 509</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullackal</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>2131 2163 4294</td>
<td>217 227 444</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehru Trophy</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>2585 2587 5172</td>
<td>306 295 601</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumboly</td>
<td>1309</td>
<td>1312</td>
<td>3186 3300 6486</td>
<td>404 390 794</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4804</td>
<td>4907</td>
<td>12198 12586 24784</td>
<td>1447 1446 2893</td>
<td>1272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census Report and Survey data)

Table II.6: Data on SC Population in the Selected Wards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wards</th>
<th>SC Population</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chungom</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullakal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehru Trophy</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumboly</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census Report)
In the selected wards there is no ST population. The number of SCs ranges from 11 to 711 in various wards. The two wards chosen are sparsely populated by SCs and two are thickly populated by SCs. A comparison of literacy levels between the sexes in the general population is given in Table II.7.

**Table II.7: Literacy Levels in Chosen Wards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wards</th>
<th>Beach</th>
<th>Chumkom</th>
<th>Mullakal Nehru</th>
<th>Thumboly Trophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2303</td>
<td>2131</td>
<td>2585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literate Males</td>
<td>1609</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>2228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Male Literacy</td>
<td>80.73</td>
<td>87.97</td>
<td>86.81</td>
<td>86.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>2463</td>
<td>2163</td>
<td>2587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literate Females</td>
<td>1486</td>
<td>2124</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>2105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Female Literacy</td>
<td>71.68</td>
<td>86.24</td>
<td>85.53</td>
<td>81.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 1991 Census Report)

The percentage of literacy levels Table II.7 are worked out, treating children of 0-6 age group as illiterates. Males are more literate than females and the discrepancy is high in Beach ward where the poor fishermen are concentrated.
Table II.8: Profile of Sample Households in Alleppey town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beach</th>
<th>Chum-</th>
<th>Mulla-</th>
<th>Nehru</th>
<th>Thum-</th>
<th>boly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses</td>
<td>No. of Houses</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Households</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (0-6 yr)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCs and STs</td>
<td>SC Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST Population</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Levels</td>
<td>Literate Male</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Lit. %</td>
<td>79.85</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lit. Female</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female Lit. %</td>
<td>75.74</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Levels</td>
<td>0-1500</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1501-3000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3001-5000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5001+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table II.8 depicts a profile of sample households chosen for data collection for the survey. Incomewise, there is not only a pyramidal gradation of the sample households but also the bottom of the pyramid is very flat indicating the presence of a large number of poor households in the sample, which is indicative of the poor income levels of the town itself.
X. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The predominantly agrarian population of the ancient Travancore lived in harmony with the nature by exploiting it in the optimum, sustainable levels. The rulers of the time did not extract huge taxes also. Hence, the public health scenario of this time was less problematic compared to the later years. The arrival of Brahmins into the scene resulted in stratified social relationships and marked the outset of drain of 'health resources' of the masses, though this drain was not as much damaging as in the colonial period.

The geographical consolidation and political centralisation of Travancore tempted the local king to enter in the flourishing international trade. However, in the face of ever expanding European mercantile capitalism, Travancore and thus Alleppey had fallen into British domination. The events which led to this political catastrophe was much on the line of 'Free trade' and 'Liberalisation' presently pursued by the developed countries. The foreign entrepreneurs flourished in Alleppey, mostly due to the abundance of cheap labour. Today also, MNCs shift their production base to countries, where cheap labour and poor administration are present. The continuous extraction of resources from Alleppey's hinterlands drained the health resources of the masses precipitating famines and epidemics.

The educational activities of the missionaries and organisational activities of the Marxists enabled Alleppey-
ites to be aware of their worth, dignity and rights. The workers of Alleppey, who were swapping their potentials to subsistence wages in later years asked for more rights and wages to survive in a situation where food prices went up. The state replied them with the 'gun', but the workers persisted in the face of repression. The investors shied away from Alleppey in later years fearing the 'militant labourers' of Alleppey. Currently Alleppey is facing a trend of 'de-industrialisation' at least in the 'coir' and 'coconut oil' sectors for which Alleppey was known worldwide.

The chapter also briefly examined the spatial and demographic features of today's Alleppey. The presence of numerous water bodies in and around Alleppey can have some influence on the public health situation of Alleppey. All demographic features of Alleppey are favourable except, the low levels of income of households which limit their 'purchasing power' of goods and services.
Notes and References


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Mencher argues: "The caste group tending to dispersed settlement also tend either to be landlords or else to have Superior tenancy rights.... Authority relations between higher and lower castes were always directed from a given unpartitioned upper caste landlord family toward the families who either worked for them as tenant farmers, coolies or agrestic slaves or with whom they maintained one or another category of service relationship.... Co-operation between the workers never extended beyond those working for one landlord and even among these was uncommon."


8. "The main work of Brahmins has been to gather the myths together, to display them as unified cycle of stories and to set them in a better developed social framework". (Kosambi, 1965).


11. K. Saradomoni, Emergence of a Slave Caste: The Pulayyas of Kerala (New Delhi, 1980).

12. "...at that time people were afraid of to board sea-going ships and that workers were taken by force; they were probably slaves."


14. Ibid.

15. "A temple at Thevalakara in the erstwhile Travancore region was plundered with the intention of taking possession of temple treasures." Roche (1994).


20. "Travancore sought to become a major regional state from about 1730 onwards. It consolidated its internal power and extended its financial base. Moreover, the state took advantage of internal power struggles between the foreign trading companies.... In this combination of internal strength of Travancoreans and a wider regional political un-balance Alleppey could be created in 1762 as an outlet for the foreign trade of the state...." Schenk (1986), p.33.

21. "The revision of the treaty with Travancore in 1805 not only reduced the state from a friendly ally to a dependent state, but also burdened it with a heavy subsidy that soon fell into arrears." B. Sangeetha, 'Succession Problem of Balarama Varma, King of Travancore'. Paper presented in ICKS, 27-29 August 1994, Trivandrum.

22. Col. Macaulay was the first Resident. Later in 1810, Col. Munro took charge as the resident.

23. Capt. Robert Gordon was the first commercial agent in Alleppey.


25. Ibid.


32. Refer Section II.1, Chapter III of this thesis for details.
    Also see Paul E. Back, 'Planters lobby in late 19th Century - Implications for Travancore', EPW, Vol.27, No.33, August 1992, pp.1747-1753.


36. RAT (1874/75, 1876), (Trivandrum, 1876).


40. Ibid., p.71.


42. The theory of 'Internationalisation of Capital' focuses on capitalism as the dominant mode of production in the world economy and argues that there is a tendency for capital to flow between economies in response to differential profit opportunities. As a result, there was
occurred a worldwide reorganisation of industrial production sites and the establishment and extension of the capitalist labour process on a globally organised and co-ordinated basis.


43. T.M. Thomas Isaak, 'From Caste Consciousness to Class Consciousness, Alleppey Coir Workers during Interwar Period', EPW, XX No.4, 1985.

44. Robert Bristow, Cochin Saga. A history of Foreign Government and Business Adventures in Kerala, South India, by Arabs, Venetians, Dutch and British together with the Personal Narrative of the last Adventure and an Epilogue (Ernakulam, 1959).


46. B.P. Rao, Visakapatnam, a Study in Geography of Port Town (Varanasi, 1971).

47. M.A. Sherring, The History of Protestant Missions in India, from their Commencement in 1706 to 1881 (London, 1884).


50. "When the census was taken in May 1875 the total population of the Kingdom (Travancore) was 2,311,379 of whom 1,702,805 were Hindus, 139,905 Muhammadans, 261 Europeans, 1,383 Eurasians, 151 Jews and 466,874 native Christians." Sherring (1884), p.298.


53. Directorate of State Archives, Proclamations from 1858-1874.

55. "Today the government has not shown any encouragement worth the name to any educated Tiya, whatever his qualifications may be. Even low places such as office peons... are denied to them on the score of their caste even though they possess more than the necessary qualifications." (excerpt from Malayalee Memorial).


57. Saradamony (1980).


59. Though it was Eazhavas who led 'Malayalee Memorial' other community members also signed in the Memorandum. The memorial can also be treated as an upsurge of 'Malayalees' against 'foreigners' (Tamil Brahmins).

60. Suresh Kumar (1994).

61. Puthupally Raghavan, Stories of Tears and Blood (Malayalam) (Kottayam, 1979).


64. Thomas Isaak (1985).

65. "The biggest 'janmie' was the church itself. The main income of Punnapra church was through exploitation of workers.... For generations brutal exploitation was going on with the sanction of the church." Oommen (1985), p.75.

66. "Punnapra is a small coastal village, four miles north of Alleppey town.... In the sandy place filled with coconut trees one could notice only a very few large houses, among hundreds of thatched huts. In the former lived the landlords who owned all the lands of Punnapra and in the latter, their tenants and workers." Oommen (1985), p.75.


68. Different authors give different figures. For example, Oommen (200), K.C. Goerge (345), Poduval (700) and so on.


71. John Clark, 'Observations of Diseases which prevail in long voyages to Hot countries, particularly those in East India; and on the same diseases as they appear in Britain' (London, 1809). Quoted in Mark Harrison, *Public Health in British India, Anglo Indian Preventive Medicine 1859-1914* (Cambridge, 1994), p.38.