Chapter 1

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF CLASS IN THE EARLY UPRISINGS OF MALABAR

In order to understand the historical reasons and background of the class formation and class relations of late 20th century Malabar, awareness about the same of the earlier period is inevitable. Again the social stratification and dichotomy even though subjected to polarization and restructuring, had an evolutionary nature beginning from the late 18th century Malabar. It was during this period that the society was being formed antagonistically with comparative stress on the cardinal problem which led to the class and class relations of Malabar, i.e. the ownership of property and appropriation of agricultural products. The ownership and appropriation of wealth in Malabar was based upon caste oriented hierarchical social order which had a resemblance with the feudal system of medieval Europe. In short it was land ownership and property relations that became a deciding factor in determining the process of class formation and relations. The Keralolpathy itself mentioned the evolution of land tenures of Malabar and pointed out that the Brahmins were placed at the top of the property relations, while Pulayas or cherumars who were agricultural serfs in the bottom of it. Till recently, in Kerala the caste status and economic status ran parallel. But the social recognition of the lower class, even though they attained high status regarding wealth and education, was not accorded in

the pre modern Malabar. Needless to say therefore the caste status and economic status played a coherent role in the process of class formation of Malabar.

The Mysorean invasion of Malabar in the late 18th century as a political intervention greatly helped to change, ephemerally, the socioeconomic condition from which class and class relations emanated. Fearing persecution many Brahmin chieftans and Nair landlords fled from Malabar to Travancore after the coming of Hyderali and Tippu Sultan. In the absence of them tenants and cultivators who were mostly lower castes became free from oppression and exploitation of Brahmin Janmis and Nair Kanakkars. The land tax introduced by them was on the basis of elimination of intermediary, survey of land and fixing of government share on the basis of actual produce\textsuperscript{38}. So the Mysorean intervention undoubtedly effected the process of restructuring class domination at least for a short period. As a result of the flight of the landlords the cultivating lower class farmers became free and independent of the exploitation and oppression they suffered earlier. A salient noticeable characteristic in the attitude and response of the cultivating class who had no ownership right over their land was either their ignorance to establish their proprietary right over the land they cultivated during the absence of Brahmin Janmis and landlords or their lack of realization that Janmam was more legally powerful than Kanam. The class of actual cultivators were not guided and educated properly by any external agency and the absence of such force they retained to be a mere “class by

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. P-3.
itself”. But later this absence was filled by organic intellectuals who guided them properly and positively advised them to solve their backwardness regarding consciousness. Had the Kanakkars regarded the Janmam to be really important right in the soil, they would have definitely claimed this right39. But after the treaty of Srirangapatnam signed between Tippu Sultan and the British in 1792, Malabar was brought under the control of the British and as a result the Brahmin Janmis, and Nair Kanakkars returned to Malabar. In addition to this change they claimed their old proprietary right over land. But a few of the cultivating farmers expressed dissent and disagreement from which originated social tensions which grew gradually in Malabar.

When the British East India Company established their mastery in accordance with the treaty of Srirangapatinam in 1792 they resorted to restructure agrarian based Brahmin dominated socioeconomic system with a colonial bend of mind. They directly involved in the revenue system as a part of legitimizing their power and increasing income from revenue. One attractive contradiction that developed thereafter was the return of Brahmin Janmis and Nair Kanakkars who fled fearing Mysorean rulers from Malabar either to Cochin or Travancore. Naturally their return caused certain ownership contentions over Kanam land between tenant cultivators and Janmis and Nairs. The British did not hesitate to utilize those occasions to interfere in favour of Brahmin Janmis who resorted to regain their old ownership of land. The net result was that the peasants had to shoulder

39 Baden Powell, Land system of British India, New York, 1972, p-170.
another burden that is the British share of crops. The ‘Jamabandi’ which based on the share of the produce given by the tenant mainly Kanakkars, introduced by Mysorean rulers created a congenial political situation for some Mappila families to be rich by undertaking the duty of collecting ‘Jama’. The British reversed the system after 1792, and treated the birth right held by Janmi as the effective ownership and controlling right. But by bringing Janmi under taxation they denied him his customary authority, but transformed him into a controlling proprietor pushing the Kanakkars down the scale as a tenant farmer in the classical sense. Thus the medieval land relations were completely transformed under the British rule\textsuperscript{40}. As a consequence the material milieu that led to formation of peasant class and their opposite Brahmin Janmis and Nair Kanakkars became more vitiated and the peasants gradually became aware of the expropriation of the colonial masters. The British administrative system by a series of regulations had destroyed the political powers enjoyed by the feudal landlords. The administrative policies of the British had eliminated the main trends of feudalism in its social political economic and cultural aspects. However, it strengthened some of the economic relations by providing legal protection to the rights of land owning agencies. In another sense, the British articulated some of the feudal tendencies of the medieval agrarian

society to get the cooperation of the land owning class in a colonial system and left the peasantry and the cultivating class at their mercy\textsuperscript{41}.

The system of land tenures developed in Malabar was the product of its own history. Most of the Kanam tenants did not undertake direct cultivation. The lands they held from Janmis were leased to sub tenants and tenants at will, charging higher rents than the Janmis realized from them. Thus there were absentee land lords, absentee Kanakkars and rarely even absentee Verumpattakkars. It was the endeavour of this intermediary group to amass profits as much as they could by extracting the surplus from the cultivating tenants under British rule that served as the starting point of agrarian tensions in Malabar\textsuperscript{42}.

The important factors that played cardinal role in the formation of antagonistic classes were characteristics and changes in the agrarian society of the Pre-British and British Malabar. In agrarian societies land is the most important means of wealth and source of power and prestige, and rights in land are often hereditary with power and prestige tending to be ascriptive attitudes. Consequently, changes in the institutional frame work of agriculture, the pattern of ownership, control and use of land, or briefly the land system will have far reaching effects on the land based social order in such societies\textsuperscript{43}. Naturally the underlying classes’ in the social fabric of the

\textsuperscript{41} M.T. Narayanan, Agrarian relations in Late Medieval Malabar, Northern book centre, New Delhi, 2003, pp -194-195.

\textsuperscript{42} V.V. Kunhikrishnan, op.cit.n. 37, p-8.

agrarian society of the Pre-British and British Malabar had always grappled with the problems of land ownership and extraction of the surplus by the land lords and Janmis. Changes in the land system are occasioned by various factors such as territorial conquests, immigration and extension of the economic frontier. Therefore it was this concern of land and zeal to raise the standard of living that determined the dynamics of class formation and class relations of the pre-British and British Malabar. Further the caste system and caste based land system had many things to contribute to the same dynamics of class formation and relation. Like the prevailing mode and relations of production the dominant ideology had been playing a key role in dictating and determining the dynamics of class formation and relations. Of course ideology of a given social scenario is the product of modus operandi and modus vivandi of the dominant section of the same society. Therefore it was natural if a Caste based, Brahmin and Land lord dominated society developed and disseminated an ideology protecting their exploitative and repressive interests. And as a consequence the process of class formation and relation happened to be a process legitimizing the class interests of the upper class and the lower class degenerated to be a mere “class by itself” with no possibility of being changed to “class for itself”.

When the British established their suzerainty in Malabar the socio economic condition of Malabar was being subjected to changes favouring the colonial interests. The land revenue system and the agrarian relations were modified and restructured in order to buttress the colonial economy. It

\[44\] Ibid. P-14.
was with this colonial intervention that the traditional rural society of Malabar
was being linked to the colonial capitalist economy which gradually
penetrated to all walks of traditional rustic life of Malabar. They strategically
involved in the agrarian questions related with the land ownership between
Brahmin Janmis and the Nair Kanakkars on the one side and the lower class
cultivating peasants on the other. A nascent if not well developed class
consciousness can reasonably be marked on the attitude of the tenant class
of Malabar when they questioned and protested against the return of the
suppression and exploitation of the Brahmin Janmis under the auspices of
the colonial agency. Again when the British aligned with the Brahmin Janmis
and legitimized the eviction of and exaction from the tenants they not only
protested but even took up judicial steps against them. This spirit of protest
and fight must have emanated from their inchoate class consciousness
emerged out of their pathetic material condition. They also demanded
systematic receipt for the rent they remitted to the Janmis. It can reasonably
be read as premature consciousness about their rights. In another sense it
resembles Eric Strokes’ theory of primary resistance. But during the
beginning of colonial intervention a concrete socio economic change with the
opening of new industries and the consequent job opportunities did not
happen. Some isolated attempts were there to open new timber mills and
plantation agriculture in different parts of Malabar.

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The key to the changes in the tenurial structure on Malabar could be traced to the changes in the *Kanam* tenure under the British. The nature of *kanam* was a bone of contention not only between *Janmis* and tenants but even among the British. To some kanam was a mortgage while others regarded it as a lease. The Sadar court passed the ruling in 1856 in which the *Janmi* was regarded as a land lord of the European type with full rights of ownership, particularly with the right of ouster and *Kanakkar* as a mere terminable tenure holder without any permanent interest in land and subject to renewal at the end of 12 years. The process of consciencisation of tenant class of early 19th century Malabar was rather feeble. But the class of *Janmis* and *Kanakkars* was well equipped with traditional ideology for perpetuating their economic interest. Gradually a class of organic intellectuals emerged in Malabar to equip ideologically the tenant class. In addition some Mappila chiefs grew stronger in society as a result of their relationship with Mysorean rulers. As a cumulative effect the exploited tenant class began to be aware of the real oppression, suppression and exploitation they suffered from the *Janmis*. Solely because of the involvement of the organic intellectuals at least in preliminary stage a process of transformation from “class by itself” to “class for itself” started in Malabar.

The ideological world of the Mappila peasantry came to be circumscribed by the religious notions elaborated and projected by the

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46 V.V. Kunhikrishnan, op.cit.n. 37, p-13.
traditional intellectuals\textsuperscript{48}. The ideological justification offered by the traditional intellectuals worked as ample protection in the case of Mappila peasantry and therefore in the process of class formation and relations of Malabar the organic intellectuals became a great source of inspiration so far as the peasant class was considered. It is difficult to comprehend the collective life of peasantry and of the germs and ferments of development which exist within it without taking into account its linkages with movements among the traditional intellectuals\textsuperscript{49}. More enthusiastically to some extent violent expression of class spirit could be seen in a series of protests beginning as early as 1836 and lasting nearly a century in Malabar. Between 1836 and 1853 Malabar witnessed about twenty small and big uprisings of tenants against their land lords. Studying and understanding such series of struggles of tenants against Janmis, different from the perspective of class formation and relations is ahistorical. In all these uprisings the cardinal issue was the ownership of land and the share of wealth apart from material sufferings of tenants. The lion share of the cultivable land of Malabar was being owned by a minority of Brahmin Janmis while a big majority of tenant class or peasants did not get a single cent of land as their own. Hence the material factors determining the course of class formation and relation was nothing but land ownership, share of wealth and material sufferings.

A short survey about the details of the uprisings between 1836 and 1853 will help to understand the concrete picture of the class structure of

\textsuperscript{48} K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921, OUP, New Delhi,1989, p- 60.

\textsuperscript{49} Antonio Gramsci, op.cit.n.18, P-14.
Malabar. One noticeable peculiarity of those uprisings was the precise vertical dichotomy between Brahmin Janmis and Nair Kanakkars supported by the British on the one side and tenants and peasants mostly Muslims were on the other. The Pallippuram uprising\(^{50}\) of 1841 originated from the peasant-landlord contradiction. In this uprising Kunholan, who was deprived of his land even came to the extent of killing his landlord. In the Mannur uprising\(^{51}\) the possession of land, religious sentiment and the colonial favour worked as major issues determining the class affinity. In order to protect the tenants’ tenurial rights and pious religious sentiments the Muslim tenant rebels did not hesitate to murder a peon who was a colonial servant. In the Manjeri uprising\(^{52}\) of 1849 a group of petty tenants and labourers under Athan Moyen Gurukkal protested against a village accountant for accepting bribe and fought against the Rajah of Manjeri for his tendencies of oppression, repression and eviction. The incidents of the Manjeri uprising were indicative of the interplay of economic grievances and religious beliefs which generally characterized the uprisings in the nineteenth century\(^{53}\). The Kolathur uprising\(^{54}\) of 1851 rightly demonstrated the spirit of violent protest exhibited by Mappila tenants who even came to the extent of killing two landlords who were brothers namely, Komu Menon and Ittunni Rama

\(^{50}\) See Against Lord and State of K.N. Panikkar  
\(^{51}\) Ibid.  
\(^{52}\) Ibid.  
\(^{53}\) K.N. Panikkar, op.cit.n. 48, p-74.  
\(^{54}\) See K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State
Menon. The Mattannur uprising\textsuperscript{55} of 1852, the only one occurred in North Malabar was a graphic demonstration of the struggle for land ownership between Mappila peasants on the one side and the Brahmin Janmis and Nair Kanakkars on the other. An interesting factor evident in the series of those uprisings was the attitude of the British who favoured the propertied interest of the Janmis without reservation. Apart from the problems like ownership of land, eviction, high rent some other factors also worked behind the emergence of unique class structure of 19\textsuperscript{th} century Malabar. The contribution of folk songs and ballads was a very vital factor in the growth of a collective consciousness for this heroic tradition. After almost very uprising songs eulogizing the heroism of the participants and idealizing their sacrifice were composed and propagated by Mappila bands which went around the country side singing them\textsuperscript{56}. The Mappila peasants who took part in those uprisings and became martyrs did not take it as a privilege of becoming “Shahids” which was spiritual one, but in a sublime manner they took it up as a material spirit for liberation and in that sense a matter of religious belief worked as a social instinct for stratification. The collective consciousness of those Mappila peasants was also being propagated and transmitted through other factors. The weekly ‘chandha’ (market), the Friday congregation and pilgrimage to important ‘Jarams’ were occasions when information Jaram – Centre of Pilgrimage and congregation of Mopilas regarding revolts was orally transmitted\textsuperscript{57}. Therefore those material gatherings can reasonably be

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid
\textsuperscript{56} K.N. Panikkar, op.cit.n. 48, p-90.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. p-90.
realized as forces for developing conducive ground for class formation and consciousness.

An apparent striking contradiction that one can notice in the conduct of peasant uprisings of 19th century Malabar is unity and solidarity among Mappila tenants and few Mappila chiefs who enhanced their wealth through their association with Tippu Sultan and the tendency of Brahmin Janmis and Nair Kanakkars to extract the surplus produced by both Hindu and Mappila tenants. Unni Mutha Muppan, Chemban Pokker and Athan Gurukkal were the few Mappila chiefs who managed to enhance their wealth, power and influence because of their association with Tippu Sultan. Those newly emerged Mappila chiefs became the source of inspiration and leadership in all the Mappila tenants’ struggles against their Janmis. It shows a unique attitude in the history of class relations of Malabar, because they did not join with other land owners to enhance their wealth by exploiting tenants. The four popular intellectuals closer to the Muslim community of the period were, Ummer Quazi of Veliamkode, Sayyid Alavi Thangal and his son Sayyid Fazal Pookkoya Thangal of Mamburam and Sayyid Sana-Ullah-Makti Thangal. Studying the history of nineteenth century Malabar without the consciousness that these traditional intellectuals cultivated among the oppressed Mappila peasantry would be incomplete. The consciousness of the oppressed is usually a contradictory amalgam of values imbibed from their rulers and notions which spring more directly from their practical experience58. Therefore it was not unnatural that the suppressed and

exploited peasantry conceived and acted differently from their feudal and colonial masters. In these uprisings participation of Hindu peasants was totally absent while those of Mappilas who were mostly peasants, agricultural labourers, artisans and petty traders was extensive. It shows that compared to Hindu peasants and tenants their Muslim counterparts were able to popularize the messages of protest and to conduct organized action. It suggests a connection between religion and revolt realized through the ideological underpinning of religion: a source of eschatological dreams, juxtaposing eternal bliss against worldly sufferings. Unhesitatingly, religious ideology played a coherent role in the uprisings of nineteenth century Malabar. An unusual phenomenon of contradiction in the attitude and response of the class of peasants and tenants, belonged to different religions is a noticeable factor. The religious ideology popularised by so called traditional intellectuals became a nucleus of consciousness of a group of people suffering from their material life. The majority of Mappilas were tenants and landless labourers who led by the ideology of protest and uprising was a “question of lived relations” as Louis Althusser stated. Reducing or belittling the matter of discontent as if emotional, emerged out of religious ideology of Muslims of nineteenth century Malabar is rather resembled with the colonial agenda of characterizing those uprisings as fanaticism. It evolved from the real material life of the Muslim peasants who greatly suffered due to the oppression of Hindu lords and the colonial administrators. Knowingly or unknowingly the Muslim peasants and tenants

59 K.N. Panikkar, op.cit.n. 48, p-49.
of nineteenth century Malabar had been legitimizing their cause by universalising and eternalising itself. Study about the ideology in the minds of Muslim peasants of Malabar from a parochial perspective would be irrational and incomprehensive because the motive behind their struggle was broader and universal. On this view, ideologies are always driven by global ambitions, suppressing the historical relativity of their own doctrines. Louis Althusser himself stated that “ideology has no outside”. In spite of the organic or traditional background of the consciousness of the peasantry it was of course progressive and radical because their cherished desire was liberation from material sufferings of the society. An ‘organic’ ideology is not simply false consciousness to judge the whole of past philosophy as mere ‘delirium and folly’ is the manner of ‘vulgar’ Marxism. The role of dominant ideology and hegemonic class has been questioned by the scholars of Structuralist Marxist School. Nicos Poulantzas is of opinion that it is not the hegemonic class which binds society together; on the contrary, unity of a social formation is a structural affair, an effect of the interlocking of several ‘levels’ or ‘regions’ of social life under the finally determining constraints of a mode of production.

National movement of Malabar different from other parts of India is coincided with some unique movements addressing series of socio-economic issues like ownership of property, untouchability, inequality etc.

The early nationalist activities of Malabar under the leadership of Indian

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60 Terry Eagleton, op.cit.n. 58, p-58.
61 Ibid. p-117.
National Congress created a nascent feeling of nationalism in the minds of professional middle class which reflected in the literature of the period. The early efforts of public organization and agitation were through caste and class based bodies. The Malabar Marriage association founded in 1879 by English educated Nairs was the first expression of the caste based organization while Kerala Janmi Sabha, Dharmachara Sabha and Uthara Kerala Sabha became the class based organization. Both of these caste and class based organizations were identical in their demands and programmes which represented and highlighted the interest of Nairs and Janmis. It shows the unique nature of class formation and relations which was inextricably linked with caste hierarchy of Malabar. It may however be pointed out that the Mappila small peasants were located in South Malabar and the Nair middle peasants were located in North Malabar and that these two categories were not involved in the same struggle.

The 1921 Malabar rebellion which developed as a part of the Khilafat Non cooperation movement was a climax of the 19th century peasant uprisings of Malabar. Like earlier uprisings the Mappila tenants took enthusiastic participation in 1921 Malabar rebellion. The Mappila tenants as a peasant class became more conscious and united though with the advice and guidance of traditional intellectuals and middle class Muslims of Malabar. The difference in the attitude and reaction of Hindu peasants and

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62 For eg. ‘Indulekha’, Novel written by O.Chandu Menon conceives and narrates the changes happened after getting English education.

63 K.N. Panikkar, op.cit.n. 48, p-117.

Mappila peasants is a subject of study of many works. The ideological influence derived from the religious sanction conditioned Hindu peasants to submit the superior power of the upper caste Janmis and to accept the inviolability of their property rights. These were the norms of social behaviour that Hinduism believed to have prescribed for the low caste peasants. A departure from them was considered to be a sin. The ideological world of the Hindu peasantry thus strengthened their bonds of fealty and subjection to the land lords\textsuperscript{65}. Due to the enthusiastic participation of Mappila tenants and the absence of Hindu tenants there is a tendency among some scholars to tarnish it as a communal fight. But, for religious leaders the Khilafat movement was basically a religious question and its anti-imperialist character was only incidental\textsuperscript{66}. The Karshaga Sangha stated strongly that it was the British who figured the Mappila riots as communal riots and the real cause of it was the Janmi-tenant conflict and it was the revolt of tenants against Janmis oppression\textsuperscript{67}. The immediate provocation for starting the rebellion was the relentless attacks on the Mappilas to suppress the Khilafat campaign fearing that it might arise anti British and anti Janmi feeling\textsuperscript{68}. These agitations were parallel to one another and it is evident from the call of Ali Musaliar, one of the main leaders of the Khilafat agitations and the rebellion for Khilafat, tenancy and swaraj as

\textsuperscript{65} K .N. Panikkar, op.cit.n. 48, p-194.

\textsuperscript{66} Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, Khilafat Smaranakal(Mal), Calicut,1965,p-8.


the panacea for the material problems of the poor peasantry\textsuperscript{69}. Every speech by every Congress-cum-Khilafat leader was two-edged weapon aimed against both the British Government as well as \textit{Janmi}. It was this that gave a new hope and new slogan to the oppressed Moplahs who joined the movement in large numbers. It was a fine example of an agrarian political mass movement\textsuperscript{70}. The Khilafat and tenancy movements and congress support to them not only led to the alienation of the \textit{Janmis} from the congress but also contributed to the crystallization of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal consciousness among the Mappila peasantry\textsuperscript{71}. The class identity and conditions of class formation of the early twentieth century Malabar was greatly influenced and determined by the caste hierarchy and \textit{janmi} dominated social structure. Therefore the working class of the period failed to evolve from an egalitarian and independent socio-economic structure. Neither traditional intellectuals nor religious organizations helped the Hindu peasantry to overcome this religious inhibition and developed solidarity and evolve a rationale for action. The traditional intellectuals were closely linked with the land owning classes in a system of service and patronage and in many cases they themselves were land lords\textsuperscript{72}. Similarly in the working class history of Malabar this religious inhibition and consequent social taboos imposed undeterred restrictions. The form of worship in Hinduism did not create opportunities for common assembly particularly for the lower orders who had a very few public places of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{69} D.N. Dhanagare, Peasant Movements in India: 1920-1950, OUP, Delhi, 1983, p–78.
\item \textsuperscript{70} E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala, Bombay, 1943, p-9.
\item \textsuperscript{71} K.N. Panikkar op.cit.n. 48, p-138.
\item \textsuperscript{72} Ibid. p-194.
\end{itemize}
workship in Malabar. For the Hindu peasantry, therefore combination and organization were difficult to achieve\(^{73}\). At the same time the attitude and ideological awareness of the Mappila peasants were proved to be the work of the traditional intellectuals and few middle class Muslims. It was in the first Kerala State Political conference held at Ottapalam, demanded the harmonizing of *janmi-kudiyan* relations\(^ {74}\). As a result of these works the Malabar Kudiyan Sangam was formed at Pattambi in 1922 with T. Rama Kurup as President and M.M.Kunhirama Menon and P.A.Raman Menon as secretaries\(^ {75}\). The act of 1930 was a valuable piece of legislation which represented a turning point in the history of tenancy legislation in Malabar. This act marked the close of the second phase of the peasant struggle in Malabar\(^ {76}\). The passage of the Act clearly showed that only the upper middle class was benefited by the provisions. The *verumpattakar* in Malabar was not free from the grip of the *janmi* and the intermediary tenants\(^ {77}\). Another important finding that could be made of the tenancy movement was its linkage with Khilafat and Non Cooperation Movements. It served as the centre of agitation, both local and national\(^ {78}\). It was this agitation which gave the Malabar peasants the first elements of class consciousness – the

\(^{73}\) Ibid. P-195.


\(^{75}\) K.Madhavan Nair, op.cit.n. 68, p-91.


\(^{78}\) G.Sankaran Nair, *Dairy of September* 1923, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 1925, p-10.
consciousness that they should unite as a class and fight against their enemy, the *janmi*\(^79\).

Hence it can reasonably be concluded that the caste oriented, Brahmin and landlord dominated agrarian society of 19\(^{th}\) century Malabar was stagnant and unchanged. Even after the colonial intervention radical change did not happen as far as the socioeconomic and productive system was concerned. The Brahmin *Janmis*, Nair *Kanakkars*, lower caste Hindu tenants like Pulayas and Cherumars, Mappila tenants and some rich Mappila families and *thiyyas* who to be emerged from their backwardness due to English education collectively formed the social fabric from which the class relations developed. But it is also discerned that a new middle class, though emerged in Malabar with its colonial linkage, it was not socially and economically advanced similar to that of the middle class in Europe. The emergence of middle class was not an isolated one among the Muslims only, but a similar middle class among the *Nairs* and the *thiyyas* also emerged in Malabar by the late nineteenth century.

In the study of material conditions and relations of production from which inextricably developed class structure of Malabar it can rationally be found that the socio economic scenario was being controlled by the upper caste Brahmin *Janmis* and Nair *Kanakkars* who were confronted by the Mappila tenants and were led and guided by so called organic intellectuals. Again the agrarian society is found to have been divided into antagonistic classes such as *Janmis* and land lords on the one side and tenants and

\(^{79}\) D.N. Dhanagare, op.cit.n. 69, p-112.
peasants on the other. The ideology and consciousness mainly of Mappila peasants inspired them to question and protest against the material sufferings they had and evolved at least an inchoate class consciousness among them. If that consciousness which cultivated a nascent class feeling was religious and traditional it was never their fault. Understanding those ideologues as if ‘organic’ or traditional is not rational and historically relevant. Therefore the ideology of organic intellectuals and the class instinct that peasants drew from it were radical, progressive, universal and no doubt emanated from the material conditions of existence. To treat them as something inept and inferior would be a ‘vulgar’ Marxist way of understanding it.