CHAPTER IV
SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE DEPRESSED CLASS

The transformation of the Pulayas from Slaves to Casual labourers or Wage Earners, and to Government Employees and the Social, Economic and Political causes for the transformation are analysed in this chapter.

In Travancore, in 1847 A.D, Slaves carried out all the most arduous agricultural labour. The Sikar had owned about 15,000 slaves and leased to private land holders. Those private land holders had to pay the sirkar and feed the slaves. They had beaten and murdered the slaves with impunity and also sold the slaves. Henry Baker Junior wrote that almost every market day at Changanacherry children were brought by their parents or near relations for sale. The price was between six and eighteen rupees.\textsuperscript{142} In both the states- Travancore and Kochi, in the nineteenth century they were paid in grain - three measures of paddy to a man, two to a woman and one to a child. They lived in hovels situated on the

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banks of fields or nestle on the tree along their borders to watch the crop after the toils of the day \(^{143}\)

In the 1931, A.D in Cochin, the depressed classes were

**Table I DEPRESSED CLASSES AND THEIR NUMERICAL STRENGTH IN COCHIN IN 1931 A.D**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Numerical Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pulayar</td>
<td>82,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kanakkar</td>
<td>13,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sambavan (Parayar)</td>
<td>11,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vettuvar</td>
<td>11,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ullattar</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nayadi</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Malayar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kadar</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1923 A.D, in Travancore, for the purpose of fee concessions the following communities were treated as depressed

**DEPRESSED CLASSES IN TRAVANCORE IN 1923 A.D**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pulaya (Including Cheramar), Aiyanaivar of Vettovan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Paraya (Including Panchaman of Sambavar) of Valluvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kuravan and Kakkalan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pallan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hill Tribes/Animists (Including Ullatan and Vedars)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the *Census of Cochin 1901*, Pulayar (59,840), Parayar (8,841) Vettuvar (6,349) Kanakkar (5,917) and Koottar were Agrestic Serfs. They were considered as emancipated serfs. They formed nearly 15% of the Hindu population and 10% of the population of the state in 1901 A.D. Among them Pulayas or Cherumas were most important. About 75% of agrestic serfs and 11% of the Hindu population were *Pulayar*. In 1875 A.D., Parayas also formed a very considerable number of Slaves. The Malayar and Kadar, Hill Tribes, were nomadic in their habits in 1901 A.D. *Census of Cochin 1875* recorded that Vetans and Ullaters were the
least domesticated predial slaves. They were nomadic in their habits. The Naidees, the wandering tribe, were the lowest of the low castes. 

In Travancore, in 1911 A. D one half of the total hindu population were Nayars (5,92,489) and the Ezhavas (5,46,625). The numerical strength of pulayans (1,85,314) and Channars (1,66,195) were also high. Pulayar, Parayar and Kuravar were the important slave castes of Travancore and according to the 1854 Census, they were about 13% of the population of the state. Pulayar were the biggest untouchable caste in Travancore.

In India even in the beginning of the twentieth century over two-thirds of the population — landlords, tenants and labourers, lived upon the income derived from land. In Madras Presidency 69% and in Cochin State 51% of its inhabitants considered land as the means of their livelihood.

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The numerical strength of the depressed classes, in 1901, are given in brackets. The Agrestic Serfs were Adiyalar and Kudikidappukar. People who didn’t own land and lived in house sites owned by other were known as kudikidappukar. Their huts were situated in a corner of the landlords or masters property.

Also see K. Saradamani, Emergence of a Slave Caste... , Op. Cit., P.02.


Thus Agrestic Serfs had been an essential element in the whole country.\textsuperscript{147} 90.2\% of Pulayar in Cochin were engaged in agricultural operations, in 1901 A.D.\textsuperscript{148} 87.6\% of Pulayar were field labourers in 1931, A. D\textsuperscript{149}. They were ‘Adiyalars’ and ‘Kudikidappukar’ and not free from the control of masters. In 1941 A. D, only 33.84\% were field laborers and wood cutters, 1.03\% worked as Artisans and other workers, 0.03\% entered into Public Administration.\textsuperscript{150}

Slavery was an institution of ancient growth in India. In Travancore and Cochin, Agrestic Serfs used to be bought and sold like cattle and disposed of along with the land on which they worked. They were not allowed to use the highways, public conveyances, hospitals, common wells and denied permission to enter or even go near the temples. They had no access to bazaars and markets. They didn’t have the right to use upper garments to cover their breasts. They were not allowed to wear valuable ornaments. Education was also denied to them.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{147} Census of India, Cochin – 1901 Volume XX, Part I Report, Chapter VIII, OP. Cit., PP. 172-173.
\textsuperscript{149} Census of Cochin 1931, Volume XXI, Part I Report, Chapter VIII, OP. Cit. ,P.181 Chp VIII. Occupation
By the 1853 Proclamation of Travancore, *Sirkar* emancipated the children of *Sirkar* slaves, who were born after 15 - September – 1853 and in Cochin the proclamation was issued on 16 - February - 1854. The buying and selling slaves or mortgaging them as live chattels was made penal by the proclamation of Cochin State on March 1854 A. D. The Travancore *sirkar* proclamation of 24 – June - 1855 A. D emancipated all *sirkar* slaves as well as their future children. The tax levied from them was abolished. The proclamation also provided them the right to acquire and possess property like all other classes. The Maharaja of Cochin issued a second proclamation against slavery in march 1855 A.D to implement the provisions of the Government of India Act V of 1843 A.D. In Cochin slavery was altogether put to a stop by a reaffirmation of the proclamation on September 1872 A. D, which made it an offence punishable with imprisonment for a term of seven years. Although slaves were legally emancipated in Travancore, the social and economic condition of slave castes - pulayas and parayas continued to be very much same as before until the late 19 th century. In 1900 A.D, also slavery was practiced in rural parts of Cochin state 152.

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T.A. Paraman remembered that when he was young, pulayar were the ‘Adiyalar’ of the higher caste landlord and if a pulayar went to a distant land, he would introduce himself as the pulayar of his

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In March 1835, the CMS missionaries liberated the Manro Island Slaves. This was about twenty years before the Travancore Government freed its slaves. When the Kottayam Collage [the old Seminary] was built, the Travancore Government granted an endowment, a tract of land at Kallada near Quilon. It was known as Munro Island. A hundred Slaves had also been given with land. In 1835 A.D. Joseph Peet met the head of each slave family at Kallada and informed that they were free. Peet also gave them a copy of the following document.

We the undersigned, acting as trustees of Munro Island, do hereby declare that…. who has hitherto been a slave of the soil, is from this time liberated by us and made a free man, and that his wife and offspring are wholly and forever free and are regarded by us only as hired servants and that no one has any right to bring them into servitude again . At the same time we declare that we do not consider ourselves as released from any just claim which he or his wife or offspring many have upon us according to custom, privilege or law in consequence of their having been slaves

Benjenn Bailey
Joseph Peet

8th March 1935

In the biography of Metropolitan Kuriakoze Mar Gregiorious recorded that Rani Lakshmi Bais famous proclamation on 15-12-1812 abolished all forms of slavery in Travancore. See Philip Mathew, ed. The Saint of Pampady An Authoritative Biography of Metropolitan Kuriakoze Mar Gregorios , Mar Kuriakoze Dayara, Pampady, 2009, P.20. In Travancore, the 18 A.D Proclamation prohibited the sale or purchase of Kuravas, pulayas , Parayas and other low castes except in places where it was allowed by local customers for agricultural purposes. See Census of India - Travancore, 1931 ...., Op.cit., P.433.
‘Tamparan’ The pulayar resided outside the villages close to fields. They used ‘Olla’ and ‘Mulla’ to built their huts.\textsuperscript{153}

K.P Karuppan described that all the depressed classes lived in hutments except only or two families, who had brick houses in 1909. A.D, in Cochin.\textsuperscript{154} In 1932 he noted:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{153} T.A. Paraman “Atmakatha”, Unpublished. The author died before the completion of the work. T.A. Paraman, a pulaya, was born on 01- August-1924 in Edavanakad, one Thititayil family. He was the sixth child of Kunjan and Kali. He passed B.A and M.A from Maharajas Collage Ernakulam. He completed B.A in 1947 A.D and got appointment as a teacher in the Kodungallur Hindu University, in 1948 A.D When he had completed law, he was appointed as a teacher in the Njarakkal Government high School. He retired as a High Court Registrar. He was elected two times- from Kunnathunadu and Njarakkal, as ML A , in the Kerala State Legislative Assembly. Paraman died on 10-09-2000. See Charai Ramdas, Ayyankalikku Adarathodee, Upardom Books, Ernakulam, [First Published – 2006], Revised Edition - 2009, PP.96 – 103.

\textsuperscript{154} K.P Karuppan, “Athamkritha Samudayangal Thalamurakalkkappuram : Avarkkuvendy Avishkarikkapetta Padhathikalum Pravarthanamkalum”, Pandit Karuppante Samburum Kritikal- part two, Jnanodayam Sabha, Edakochi, 1992, P. 132. Here the expression “hbÂh¡pIfnse jngvamS§Ä’ is used by Karuppan. This is the Malayalam translation of an English report submitted by KP Karuppan to G.K Devadhari, President of Servants of India Society, in 1934, about the social and economic condition of the depressed classes and the ameliorative steps taken by the Government for improving their social and economic life.
Though these agrestic serfs were by law given full freedom, yet habits and environs had so charmed them to their traditional ways that it was well-nigh impossible for them to respond to the new call of liberty or at least to imagine a type of existence apart from that of serfdom, that intermediate status between slavery and the system of personal freedom, which alone seems to have been in vogue in the State. Strangers to modern notice of social life, and victims to superstitions notions, they disliked to be disturbed from their old moorings.155

Samuel Mateer noted that Pulayars were not allowed to use the public road when a Brahman or Sudra walked on it. They produced a warning sound and hastened off the roadway into the mud or brides. The Travancore *sirkar* circular on 21-July-1884 opened public courts, *cutherries*, public highways and markets to all classes of people. Travancore government notification dated 28-10-1040 ME [1864 A.D] granted the right to use wheeled carriages to all classes of people in all roads except palace roads. Even after these circulars Ayyankali had to fight for the right of Pulayas and other untouchable castes to walk along public roads. In 1893

Ayyankali bought a *Villuvandi*, a wheeled carriage and hung a bell, which would reverberate loudly on the run, which was only used by savarnas'. The ‘*Villuvandi*’ travelled along the public roads in Venganoor village. Ayyankali dressed like an elite savarna – wore a white half sleeve *Baniyan, Mundu, Melmundu* and headgear. The Savarnas tried to stop the vehicle, Ayyankali took weapons and continued the journey.

Access to markets and bazaars were also denied to them. In 1898 A. D, Ayyankali and his *pata* started from Venganoor and marched to Balaramapuram Aralamudu market. Savarnas and caste superior to pulayas attacked Ayyankali. Ayyankali pulled out his long knife and shouted. Though Ayyankali *pata* resisted the attacks with weapons, they failed to move forward. Clashes took place between Pulayar and upper castes. Many persons were injured. Thus Pulayas under the leadership of Ayyankali won the right to walk on public roads.156

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An organization called *Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham* was founded by Ayyankali, in 1907 A.D. The main objective of the organization was to create a unique platform for the oppressed. Pulayas, Parayas and Kuravas united together and fought for Dalit liberation. The programmes of the organization included social, economic and educational developments of Dalits. SJPS gave emphasis to discipline and cleanliness. Ayyankali started a Malayalam monthly called *Sadhu Jana Paripalini*, in 1916 A.D. The journal played an important role in the struggle of Pulayas and allied communities for social freedom.¹⁵⁷

P. K. Govinda Pillai, the Editor of *Subashini* News paper was nominated to the Sri Mulam Praja Sabha, in 1911, A.D, as the first representative of *Sadhujeana Paripalani Sangham*. Dewan accepted the

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Ayyankali a Pulayan, was born on 28- August -1863, in Venganoor, which was in Kottukal village of Neyyatinkara taluk. He was born in Peringattuvilla family as the son of Ayyan and Mala. Ayyan was the Adiyen of a famous and ancient Nayar tharavad ‘ Puthalathu’ Ayyan was pulayas Muppan. The Karnavar of the Putheralathu family granted him eight acres of land. So Ayyankali had better social capital than other pulayar.


demand of Govinda Pillai and Ayyankali was nominated to the Sri Mulam Praja Sabha, in 1911 A.D. 158

P.K Govinda Pillai in his speech in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly on 18 – February- 1911, said that in Mavelikara and Karthikapalli Pulayas were not allowed to walk along the roads freely and denied access to markets. The trouble was created not by Brahmans or Sudras but the castes immediately above them, who had 20 feet pollution distance. The police and the Excise subordinates also ill treated the community in some places offtenly, their huts in forests were set fire to. Pulayar were poor to register complaints. They faced considerable difficulty in Medical field. Only a few hospitals had Pulaya wards. In General Hospital, the Medical Officers didn’t treat them with any consideration. They had to wait till all the other outpatients had been served and some medicines were thrown to them from a distance one or two Pulaya lunatic patients were also denied admission into the Asylum. They failed to get proper justice from courts. Their complaints were not properly heard and disposed of. In some places

Legislative council / Sri Chitra State Council was started in the year 1888 A.D. Sri Mulam Popular Assembly/ Sri Mulam Praja Sabha was created in 1904 A.D. For more details see Pramod K.M. “ Spaces of Subordination...”, Op.Cit., PP 33-34.
Pulayas were denied admission to the courts. They had to stand out at a distance and their statements were taken through a third person and their complaints thrown out.\textsuperscript{159}

In Cochin, K.P Kuruppan wrote the poem \textit{Jathikummi}, in 1905 A.D, and published it in 1912 A.D, which was the first attempt for the upliftment of \textit{Avarnas}. It challenged the caste system, untouchability and in unapproachability. He mentioned that Valas, Parayas and Pulayas were ill treated because of their caste. In the beginning of the twentieth century, in the western coastal area of Ernakulam town, the construction of a lengthy, \textit{Kalchira} was started. Pulayar in Mulavukadu, who had work experience in muddy areas and \textit{Karimkulluvela} assisted Tamil workers as \textit{Kayyal}. Permission was denied to them to enter into Ernakulam town, Every day they came to Ernakulam, the state headquarters, in small boats by singing Karuppan's folk song \textit{Jathikummi}. They read \textit{Jathikummi} and realized that caste was one of the main causes of their suffering. They earned good wages and were liberated from the control of their \textit{jajmans}. In Mulavukadu, an Ezhava taught the Pulaya \textit{nilathezuthu}. When Karuppan was a teacher of Convent School Ernakulam, five young literate \textit{Karimkallu} workers with one elder one, Krishnati, met Karuppan to acquire

\textsuperscript{159} Specches of P.K Govinda Pillai, on 18 – February 1911, the sixth day, op-cit, PP-121-122.
knowledge. Karuppan accepted their request and taught them poems and slogans. Karuppan, a scholar and a teacher, also advised them the importance of an organization for the pulayar.

Pulayar from Mulavukadu, Panambukadu, Thevara, Karungotta, Kothad, Vaduthala and other nearest places met at Kochi Kayal and formed the Kochi Pulaya Maha Sabha with the efforts of Karuppan and Krishnathi Asan. T.K. Krishna Menon and Karuppan participated in the meeting. The first meeting of Pulaya Maha Sabha was held at St. Alberts High School Hall, in 1913 A. D. Pulayar from Mulavukadu, Panambukadu, Ochanthuruth, Narakkal, Vaduthala and Ernakulam attended the meeting. Krishnathi was selected as the President of Pulaya Maha Sabha.160 *Malabar Herald* on 07-06-1913 reported that Pulayar decided to

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K.P. Karuppan in his “Adankritha Samudayangal Thalamurakalkpappuran…”, wrote that the first meeting of pulayar, in Kochi, was conducted at st. Albert High School in 1909 A.D. T.K Krishna Menon in his “The Days That were” explained that pulayar met at St. Alberts High School on 25-05-1913 In *Kerala Charitram Volume I* noted that the first meeting of the Kochi. Pulaya Maha Sabha was held on May 1913 A.D. at St. Alberts High School.
submit a memorandum to Dewan Banerje and demanded free travel through public roads, access to educational institutions, Free primary education and the need to start primary school and technical schools for Pulayar.161 Krishna Menon answered to Maharaja that even though Pulayar got legal sanction, custom stood in their way for availing public roads and educational institutions.162 Government Order of 1913 A.D/ 1914 A.D permitted them to walk freely on public roads and in markets and also admission to school was granted163

An agricultural exhibition was organized by the sirkar in the ground opposite to Secretariat. In the last day of the exhibition a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Dewan. Karuppan, one of the speakers of the meeting, requested Dewan to grant permission to Pulayar to visit the exhibition- the producers of the things exhibited there. Dewan sanctioned and Pulayar visited the exhibition. They also travelled along the roads and

T.K.Krishna Menon was born in 1870 A.D. He belonged to the ancient, rich and respectable Thottakkat Nair family in Ernakulam. T. Shangoony was also from Thottakkat family. He was the editor of History of Kerala and Progress of Cochin. He supported the depressed and backward class struggles for their liberation. See Madras States Directory- 1935, The Pearl Press, Cochin, P. 547.


163 Ibid, PP-356-357
nearby places. By the entry of Pulayas into Ernakulam town the aim of Karuppan's drama *Balakalesham* was realized.\textsuperscript{164}

In 1920, in the third Annual General Meeting of Kochi Pulaya Maha Sabha, Narayana Chandra Varkar, who presided the meeting, said that pulayar needed stipends in secondary and higher level education\textsuperscript{165} M. P Pathrose in his inaugural speech mentioned that pulayar acquired the right to travel through roads and got admission in educational institutions. The meeting requested the Maharaja to issue a proclamation to put an end to untouchability and unapproachability. At the end of the meeting Pulayar and other participants walked along the roads, where permission was denied to them, with police escort. That Pulaya march was a remarkable incident in the history of Cochin.\textsuperscript{166} *Administrative Report of Cochin for the year 03 – March - 1919 to 13 – April – 1922* reported that most of the lower

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classes used highways but they were compelled to move off the road whenever they meet a higher caste person.\textsuperscript{167}

Cochin State Legislative Council was started in the year 1925 A.D. Karuppan was nominated to the legislative council, in 1925 and he got a floor to express the grievances of depressed and low caste people. Chanchan, a Pulaya, was nominated to the legislative council as the first representative of depressed classes in the year-1102 ME [ 1926-27 A.D. ]\textsuperscript{168}

K.P Vallon M.L.C [ 1929 A. D – 32 A. D ], met the Namboothiri in the Thalappilli Taluk, who had been disturbing depressed classes. When the Namboodiri asked Vallon to move off the road M.L.C shouted \textit{naye nee mari po}. By hearing that sound Namboodiri fell ill and died within two or three days.\textsuperscript{169}


P.C. Chanchan was born 1893 A.D in Mulavukad village of Kanayannur taluk. His parents were Perumpuly Chattan and Kali. He learned \textit{Nilathezhuttu} from an \textit{Asan} He read puranas like Ramayana, Songs of Karuppan and Kumaranasan, new papers etc. He maintained good relationship with Karuppan. When Krishnathi had converted into christianity, the leadership of Pulaya Maha Sabha came into the hands of Chanchan, a social reformer. He also acted as the General Secretary of Pulaya Maha Sabha . He acted as M.L.C from 1102 ME ( 1926-27 A.D ) to 1104 ME ( 1928 – 29 A.D ) He died on 11-12-1958 at the age of sixty four.

\textsuperscript{169} P.K Chattan Master, “ Anusmaranam” O.P.Cit , PP 107- 109
When K.K Kochukuttan was a student of Mulanthuruthy High School, he and his friend Chandran, who also belonged to depressed class, used to take tea from a Nayars hotel. There tea was served in the courtyard of the hotel for depressed classes and they had to clean their glasses.\(^\text{170}\)

Samuel Mateer narrated that degraded Pulayar wore only a piece tied around the head as head dress. Until 1865 A.D, men and women were forbidden to wear clothes above the waist. They used brass and bead

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Kochukuttan, a Kanakkani Paravan was born on Edavom 1086 ME [1910 – 11 A.D ] in Keecheri Village, the border of Thiruvithamkoor and Kochi. K.K Kochukuttan and K.K. Dakshayany passed the SSLC Examination in 1931 A.D as the first one from depressed class. Kochukuttan completed SSLC from Mulanthuruthy School . In 1931, A.D he joined the Intermediate class in Maharajas College Ernakulam. His father belonged to the Kochi State and his mother was from Vaikom , in Thiruvithamkur. He Studied in the B.A Classes in Maharajas College Ernakulam in the year 1942 -44 A.D. \textit{Sirkar} nominated him to the Legislative Council as a representative of the depressed in 1945 A.D He won the 1948 A.D election from Arnattukara \textit{Niyogakamandalam} as prajamandalam candidate. He was selected as Deputy Speaker in 1948 A.D. In 1949 A.D he become Deputy Speaker of Travancore Cochin. In 1952 A.D election he represented Amballur \textit{Niyogakamandalam} and selected as \textit{Thadesa Swayambharana Vakuppu Mantri}. He was the first minister from depressed class. In 1954 A.D , 1957 A.D. and 1960 A.D. He won the election from Kunmathunadu, Vadakkanchery and again from Vadakkanchery respectively. He retired from polities in 1965 A.D . He died on 22- February – 1987 . Formore details see \textit{K.K.Kochukuttan Smaranika, K.K. Kochukuttan Smaraka Samithi, Trissur, 1988, Passim.}
ornaments. They were not permitted to use milkcows and couldn’t use oil mills. By the Travancore government proclamation of 1040 ME [ 1865 A.D ] , women of all castes were allowed to wear garments to cover their upper part of the body- gave them the right to wear Kuppayam and Kattisheela 171. In 1901 A.D , in Kochi taluk Thanda Pulayans wore dress made of a species of grass called Thanda. Karuppan wrote that in 1909 A.D, Pulayars wore dark black colour Mundu. Almost all the depressed class women never covered their body properly or were naked. Even in 1919 A.D no one from depressed women dressed like a modern one.172

Ayyankali led the Kallumala agitation, which took place in Central Travancore around 1915 – 16 A.D. The stone necklaces and Pulunku Mala of Pulaya women were a sign of slavery and lay on the naked breasts of women like serpent. Iron piece called Kunuku were hanged in ears. Hands were filled with Iron bangles [Irumbu Valayangal]. Ayyankali persuaded and Pulaya women in Neyyattinkara and nearby places threw away the Kallu Mala, Pulunku Mala, Kunukku and Iron bangles. When the Pulaya women in Perinad, in Kollam, had discarded Kallumala the upper castes resented.

A public meeting of Pulayas was convened at Perinad in Kollam on 24.10.1915. About three thousand Pulayas attended the meeting. A Nayar attacked a Pulaya, Visakan Thevan, who later became a Niyama Sabha Samragikan. Confrontations took place between Nayars and Pulayas. Nayars destroyed the huts of Pulayas, molested Pulaya women and robbed their wealth. Pulayas also set fire to Nayars property. Perinad Lahala continued for one week. A friendly mass meeting of all castes was organised by Ayyankali at Quilon on 10-12-1915. The meeting was presided by Changanasseri Parameswara Pillai, a Nayar social reformer. Ayyankali ordered and with the support of Parameswara Pillai hundreds of women publicity threw away Kallumala in that meeting. It was a great victory for Pulayar.173 Kochi Pulaya Maha Sabha under the leadership of Chanchan and his companions distributed Rouka to fifty Pulaya women in Mulavukadu. The efforts of sabha succeeded and the Pulaya women in Mulavukad started wearing Rouka to cover their breasts.174

For the upliftment of the Depressed classes the chief measures adopted by Government was assignment of lands on concessional terms,

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establishment of colonies, construction of common buildings, provide wells and burial grounds, employment in public service, educational concessions, organization of co-operative societies and popularizations of industries etc. The Protector of the Depressed classes was appointed in Travancore and Cochin in 1924 A.D and 1927 A.D respectively.\textsuperscript{175}

In Travancore, on 20-01-1922, a total area of 15,280 acres of land was ear-marked for assignment to the depressed classes and 4,775 acres had been assigned to them in 1931 A.D. On 02-08-1924, the maximum limit of government land allowed, free of \textit{tharavila}, to each depressed class family was fixed as 03 acres and to each co-operative societies, which consisted exclusively of depressed class members was 30 acres. On 02-12-1926 depressed classes were exempted from the payment of court fees for the registry of government land.\textsuperscript{176}

V. John, in his speech, on 14-03-1930, said that rules regarding the assignment of lands on concessional terms to the depressed classes didn’t work properly. Only a small portion of the areas ear-marked for

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registry to depressed classes had been assigned to them. He requested the government to take steps to remove the grievances.\textsuperscript{177}

Kandan Kumaran, in his speech, on 14-03-1930, explained that the parayas had no lands of their own for habitation. Government ordered to issue three acres of waste land to Parayas. Though Parayas applied for land in every taluk, lands were not registered in the names of respective Paraya applicants.\textsuperscript{178}

4,254 acres of land from earmarked area and 4,851 acres from outside that area, were assigned to backward communication till the end of 1940-41 A.D\textsuperscript{179}

In Cochin, in the third decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Colonies were founded for Pulayas at Chalakudi, Narakkal, Cranganur, Azhikode Arnattukara and Malayattur, for Parayas at patiyaram, Elinjipara and Kodasseri, for Nayadies at Kunnamkulam and Pazhayannur and for Ulladas at Nettur. Instruction in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Mat making, Basket making etc were given to them. They collected the necessary raw


\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Administrative Report of Travancore for the year 1940-41 A.D}, Government Press, Trivandrum, 1942, P.133.
materials from the forests free of cost. For the Ulladas two work sheds, one for boat making and other for coir making were also opened. A poultry farm was introduced in the colonies at Chalakkudy and Kunnankulam. The Colonization increased their wages. In 1935 A.D, the state had 75 Colonies for the depressed classes.

In Travancore Backward communities had colonies in sachivottamapuram near Kottayam, Nani Kulam and Veliyalthnad. The Sachivottamapuram colony about 113 acres of land. A thrift Society was organized in the colony, which worked satisfactorily. A weaving factory was constructed in the colony 12 houses were constructed in the Anchamada Colony and the works in connection with the opening of the colony was progressed in 1118 ME [1942 – 43 A.D]

In 1116 M.E [1940 – 41 A.D] back communities had colonies in sachivottamapuram near Kottam, Narikulam and Veliyalthnad. The works in connection with opening of colonies at Anchamada and venganoor was progressed at the end of the year 1116 ME [1940 – 41 A.D]

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In Cochin to cultivate the habit of thrift among the depressed classes, home safe boxes were distributed at government cost and Co-Operative Societies were started for them.\textsuperscript{182} 43 depressed class Co-Operative Societies with a total membership of 1,725 existed in the state, in the year 1935 A.D.\textsuperscript{183} The Co-Operative movement was started in Travancore in 1916 A.D. The Table No. shows the progress of Co-Operative Societies. In 1920-21 A.D. there was 08 Co-Operative Societies among Pulayar, in 1929-30 A.D the number of Societies increased to 117.\textsuperscript{184}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[183] The Madras State Directory – 1935….., OP. Cit., P. 382 C.
\item[184] Census of Travancore 1931….., OP.Cit., P.434.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
PROGRESS IN CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AMONG DEPRESSED CLASSES IN TRAVANCORE FROM 1920 – 21 A.D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Community</th>
<th>Number of Co-operative Societies</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Working Capital</th>
<th>Share Capital</th>
<th>Reserve Fund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aryan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>10498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheramar (Pulayar)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>7994</td>
<td>1060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2798</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sambavar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast fishermen</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>2664</td>
<td>6172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>17026</td>
<td>18638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, Travancore 1931, Volume XXVIII, Part – I, Report, Appendix II – The Depressed And The Backward Classes P. 434
Census of Cochin 1901 A.D noted that conversion of the agrestic serfs to christianity gave them the right to access the field forbidden to them earlier and acquired equality with most others. The President of the Cochin Pulaya Maha Sabha, Krishnati, converted into christianity in 1917 A.D. The conversion clipped the activities of the Pulaya Maha Sabha. K.N Sukumaran wrote that converted pulayas got the right to walk through the roads freely. P.K Govinda Pillai in his speech in the Sree Mulam Popular Assembly on 24-02-1915 said that in Travancore many pulayar were converted into Christians by the influence of christian missionaries.

The Marthoma church, the Brethren Mission, and the Verpadu Sabha considered the dalits and dalits christians as inferior class. Poikayil Yohannan, a paraya convert, left christianity and started an organization named Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha [PRDS], in 1909 A.D. PRDS was founded for the liberation of the dalit community from the clutches of caste discrimination and untouchability. He sought to unite parayar, Pulayar [Cheramar] and Kuravar communities. Many

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185 Census of India, 1901, Volume XX, Cochin part I, Cochin Government Press 1903, P. 173.
188 Speeches of P.K Govinda Pillai in Sree Mulam Popular Assembly On 24-02-1915, Ninth day, PP. 116-118. Census of Travancore 1931 marked that converted christians were mostly drawn from Nadars, Pulayas, Parayan, Kuravan and other low- caste Hindu, who were untouchables. For more details see Census of India, 1931, Volume XXVII, Travancore, Part I Report, Government Press, Trivandrum, 1932, P.437.
abandoned christianity and embraced PRDS. The movement organized the Christian Dalit Communities. PRDS needed social equality and spiritual progress. He fought against superstitious beliefs, black magic and animal sacrifice. He taught the members of his faith to observe cleanliness and lead a life of high moral standard.¹⁸⁹ Pampady John Joseph, a pulaya convert, founded the Cheramar Mahajana Sangham, in 1921 A.D Many pulayas from Kottayam, Thiruvalla and Changanassery and pulaya members of Sadhujana Paripalan Sangham joined in Cheramar Mahajana


Poykayil Yohaman, an active christian preacher, is also known as Poykayil Kumara Guru Devan and Poykayil Appachan. He was born on 17-02-1879, as the son of Kandan and Lechi. He belonged to the Manikkal family in Eraviperoor, at Thiruvalla. They were the slaves of Sankaramangalam Marthoma Christian family. They had to follow their Jajmans caste. Thus Komaran was renamed as Yohannan. There was a school run by CMS Missionaries at Thevarkatt, in Eraviperoor. He joined the Thevarkatt school and Muthoot Kochukunjupadesi taught him to read and write Malayalam. He also learned bible. W.S Hunt, a Christian Missionary, wrote that

Poykayil Yohannan is a Pariah convert, who left the CMS to join the Mar Thoma Syrians, and left the church for the Brethren, from whom he seceded a year or two ago and became an independent preacher. He has attracted a number of followers.

In Pullad, the deadbody of a lower caste christian was buried in the burial ground of the Syrian Christians of the church. The Syrian Christians Insisted and deadbody was removed from the grave. Mariamma, a Syrian christian, who was a member of the Bretheen Mission, wanted to marry her lover Daniel, a paraya. The Syrian Christians opposed the marriage. These two instances realized him the caste based discriminations existed in Marthoma Church and Brethren Mission and he left that organization and joined in the Verpadu Sabha. Sanal Mohan in his P.H.D thesis is wrote that CMS had recorded that Yohanan was one of their member but biographers of him never mentioned any evidence for that. The headquarters of his new organization PRDS, was at Eraviperoor. Yohanan set up schools and industrial centres in different places. He bought land in different parts of Travancore for the use of PRDS- there were of seven acres of land at Eraviperoor, 5.5. acres at Changanacherry taluk, 13 acres at Neyyattinkara etc. He was nominated twice to the Sri Mulam Praja Sabha in 1921 A.D and 1931 A.D respectively. The plight of the depressed classes was presented in the Sree Mulam Praja Sabha. He spoke on the topics of education and employment of Christian Dalit youths and the disparity between Dalit Christians and Syrian Christians. He argued for job reservations, land allotment and fee concessions to uplift the Dalits.
Sabha Cherman Mahajana Sabha established churches of their own. John Joseph started a magazine *Sadhujana Doothan*, in 1919 A.D, which was later renamed as *Cherama Doothu* in 1923 A.D. The organization gave a new awakening to the Christian dalit communities. The formation of the Cheramar Mahajana Sangham weakened the activities of Sadhujana Paripalana Sangham.

Leaders from other castes also fought for the upliftment of Depressed Classes. The chief among them was Sree Narayana Guru. The Socio–Religious Reform Movement started by Sree Narayana Guru influenced the society immensely. The slogan of Sree Narayana Guru was “One Caste, One Religion and One God for Mankind.” His philosophy was freedom through education, strength through organization. Consecration of an idol was the exclusive prerogative and solemn right.

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Pampady John Joseph was born in a pulaya family, in 1887 A.D., at Pampady. He was baptized and joined in Brethren Mission. He passed the 7th standard and worked as a teacher in Pampady Mission School. He left the teaching profession and Brethren Mission. Pampady John Joseph was the Secretary and Paradi Abraham Issac was the President of the Cheramar Mahajana Sabha on 8 – June – 1931, he was nominated to the Sree Mulam Praja Sabha. He died on July 1940.
of the Brahmins. Sree Narayan Guru installed the sivlingam in 1888 A.D. An organization for Ezhavas, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogan [SNDP Yogam] was founded in 1903 A.D.

Avarnas were not allowed to worship Savarna Gods like Vishnu, Shiva, Devi etc. The untouchables and Avarnas worshipped only evil Gods like Gurikan, Kuttichathan, Chamundi etc. They offered birds and animal sacrifices, alcohol and other spurious drinks to please these Gods. Guru eradicated the evil custom of worshipping dark gods and made them worship gods whom the avarnas worshipped. He built 64 temples in different parts of the state. Sree Narayana Temples were opened to all classes of people, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Every Sree Narayana Temple had an educational institution attached to it. In 1912 A.D and in 1917 A.D, he discouraged the founding of temples and advised his people to establish schools and industries. Sree Narayana Guru urged the Ezhavas to eradicate the expensive social evils like Kettukalyanam, Thalikettukalyanam, Thirandu Kalyanam, Pulikudi Kalyanam etc. He also destroyed the system of Naga worship. By the influence of Sree Narayana Guru Ezhavas had abandoned these practices and they followed simple rituals and practices.\(^\text{191}\)

His movement also worked for the upliftment of backward and untouchable castes. He preached against caste discriminations and oppressions. When the Sree Narayana Guru visited the Ananthabhutezvaram temple in 1915 A.D, he met about 500 Pulayar and accepted Kanikka from them. Pulaya pupils stayed with Sree Narayana Guru in Alwaye Advaitha Ashram. They prepared and served food for the Anthevasis and guests in the Ashram 192.

One of the disciples of Sree Narayana Guru was Kumaran Assan, a great Malayalam poet. He was the first General Secretary of SNDP

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Sree Narayana Guru was born in an aristocratic Ezhava family, Vayalvaram house, in Chempazhanthi Village of Trivandrum District, n 14 th Chingom 1030 ME [1854 – 55 A.D], Kutty Amma was his mother. Her father was Kochanasan, a Brahmachari, a great scholar and a Sanskrit Pandit, Krishnavidyar, a great Vaidyan and a great Sanskrit Scholar was her brother. She was the niece of Kochanasan, the Scholar and Brahmachari, who was in charge of Manackal Bhagavathy temple. Sree Narayana Gurus father was Madan Asan, a teacher / Asan. He was also a scholar and a sathwika in nature. Madan Asan belonged to Nedumkanda a local suburb. He married Kuttiamma and they lived in the Kochuvila house which was on the western side of Manackal temple.

Nanu joined in a Kudipallikoodam. He studied Sanskrit from his own father and studied Ayurveda from Nanus uncle, Krishnavaidyan. He did his advanced studies in Sanskrit under Varanapalli Kummabballi Raman Pillai Assan. He obtained proficiency in Tamil language also. Though he married in 1882 A.D, he didn’t lead a family life. He conducted the All Religious Conference at Alwaye, in 1924 A.D. Guru died on 20 – September – 1920. He became a disciple of Thaikkad Ayyavu / Ayyaswamy, He performed penance in Maruthumala, which was only 08 kms away from Kanyakumari. He established the Adwaita Ashram at Alwaye in 1912 A.D. An eleven member committee, Vavootu Yogam [Aruvipuram temple protection Committee], of Ezhava community developed into an organization called SNDP Yogam, in 1903 A.D.

Yogam. A magazine named Vivekodayam was started by Ezhavas in 1904 A.D. Kumaran Asan was its Editor. T. K. Madhavan and Sahodaran Ayyappan were also the disciples of Sree Narayana Guru. Sahodaran Ayyappan fought for the eradication of caste system. Ayyappan conducted mistrabhojanam at Cheri in 1917 A.D. He along with a few Ezhava youths dined with the Pulaya children. Many people participated in the mistrabhojanam. All the participants in the revolutionary interdining were subjected to severe ostracism. Ayyappan established Sahodara Prasthanam, in 1917 A.D. He started a newspaper Sahodran which introduced his ideas among masses. Interdining was conducted in many other places and educated young men participated in it. He encouraged intercaste marriages. Ayyappan also spoke against caste system in public places. He wanted to stop the evil rituals practiced during the Bharani festival of Kodungalloor Bhagawati temple. The festival was famous for three things – the sacrifice of Cocks and shedding their blood to appease goddess Kali and her demons, the excessive consumption of alcohol, and singing of obscene songs. Ayyappan with Koruvaidyar and Masappadi Raman went to Kodungallur and exhorted the pilgrims not to go to Bharani by singing a song composed by Ayyappan. Kottai Kumaran also accompanied them.

Pilgrims threw cocks head and feather and Vazhakkula at them and attacked them. Police rescued them. Thus Ayyappan created a change in the society.

The two important fights against untouchability was Vaikom Sathyagraha [1924-1925 A.D], and Guruvayoor Sathyagraha [1931-32 A.D]. Avarnas were not allowed to enter the temples. They were not permitted to use the public roads around the famous Vaikom Mahadeva Temple in Central Travancore. Notice boards were put up at the entrance of the prohibited roads and noted that roads were closed to avarnas. The sathyagrahas decided to conduct a procession of Avarnas through the roads. Procession was started from Sathyagraha Ashram on 30.03.1924. On the first day selected sathyagraha volunteers Kunjappa a Pulaya, Bahuleyan, an Ezhava, and Govinda Panikkar, a Nair, had reached the notice boards, police stopped them and asked their caste. Permission was denied to Pulaya and Ezhava to walk through roads. Police arrested them. The Sathyagraha was temporarily stopped. When


K. Ayyappan was born on 22- August- 1889 as the youngest son of Kumbalathupa rambil Kochuavu Vaidyan and Unooly, in Vaipin, Cherai. He was also known as Pulayan Ayyappan. Sahodaran Ayyappan Passed B.A. Sanskrit from the Maha Rajas College, Thiruvananthapuram, in 1917 A.D. He served as a minister in Cochin Legislative Assembly and in Thriru-Kochi. He died on 06.03.1968.

The Misrabhojanam was conducted at the verandha of Raman Pillais house, who was the nephew of Ayyappan. Ezhavas Cherai Vijanavardhini Sabha enforced social boycott on the participants of misrabhojanam and debarred them from the sabhas activities. The social boycott was withdrawn only on 1927 A.D.
the Sathyagraha was resumed after six days on 07.04.1924. T. K. Madhavan and K.P. Kesava Menon were volunteered sathyagrahis and courted arrest. They didn’t pay bail money worth Rs.500 and were sentenced to six months imprisonment. K. Kelappan was arrested on 09 April - 1924 and Rama Swamy Naykar on 20 May -1924.

In September 1924 A. D, as per the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, a Savarna Jatha was started from Vaikom which proceeded to Thiruvananthapuram and a mass petition signed by 22,000 persons was submitted to the Maha Rani of Travancore. Petition demanded the freedom to all classes of people to walk through the roads around Vaikom temple and requested to put an end to the practice of untouchability. Mannathu Padmanabhan was the captain of the Savarna Jatha. T. K Madhavan, K. P. Kesava Menon and K. Kelappan were the commanders of the Jatha.

Vaikom Sathyagraha continued for twenty months. The roads near the Vaikom temple except the one on the eastern side, were opened to avarnas and the sathyagraha ended on 23-11-1925. In 1928 A.D, all temple roads in Travancore were declared open for all Hindus without caste discrimination. The Temple Entry Proclamation of 12 – 11 -1936 was the fruit of Vaikom Sathagraha and Savarna Jatha.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Hareendranatha Kuruppu, Mannathu Padmanabhan - Karmayogiyaya Kulapathi – Biography, Nair Service Society, Perunna, Changanacherry, 1977, PP. 112-128. C. K. Moosatt, Kelappan Enna Mahanaya Manushan - Biography, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-
Kelappan was born on 24.08.1889, in Muchukunnu Village of Kurumbanad Taluk of K. P. Kesava Menon, Department of Cultural Publications, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1988, PP. 156-167. of 201 – 206. Mannathu Padmanabhan was born on 02.01.1878 as the son of Iswaran Namboodiri of Neelimala Illam in Vakathanam and Lakshmikutty Amma of Chiramuttah Tharavad. Lakshmikutty Amma had Sambantham relationship with Iswaran Namboodiri, which gave birth to Padmanabhan. Padmanabhan was born in Chiramattah Tharavad in Changanassery village, in Trivancore. In 1893-94 A.D, at the age of sixteen, he got a job as an assistant teacher in Kanjirapilly Pravirithi Pallikoodam and continued that post till 1904-05 A.D. Mannam had passed the Magistrates examination and practiced as an advocate in Changanassery court. He bid farewell to his profession in 1915-16 AD. In 1914 AD Nair Samudaya Bruthya Jana Sangham (Society of the Servants of Nair Community) was formed. K. Kelappan was elected as president and Mannam as Treasurer. In 1915 AD the name of Nair Bruthya Jana Sangham was changed to Nair Service Society. Mannam was entrusted with the propaganda of Vaikom Sathyagraha. Meetings were organized to explain aims of satyagraha and to get public support. Mannam was a speaker - he asked his Savarna brothers to do justice to their Avarna brothers. He died on 25.02.1970. For more details see V. Balakrishnan & R. Leela Devi, Mannathu Padmanabhan And the Revival of Nairs in Kerlala, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982, passim. See Hareendranatha Kuruppu Mannathu Padmanabhan Op. Cit., Passim.

K. P . Kesava Menon was born on 01-09-1886. His father was Naduvillekam Beemachan, who belonged to the Palghat Rajavamsam Nedumpurayoor or Tharuvu Swaroopam. His mother was Kizhakkekottavettal Mennazhi Nethyaramma. Kizhakkekottavettal Menon family was related to Palghat Rajavamsam. He passed the B.A from the Madras Christian College, in 1912, A.D, and Law from England. He was the Managing Director of Mathrubhumi, News paper and published its first copy on 17.03.1923. In 1925, A.D, he resigned from the post of Secretary of Kerala State Congress Committee. In 19.08.1927, he set up practice in Malayam. He was the Editor of Mathrubhumi on 01-08-1948. On 07- Jun- 1951, he was appointed as the High Commissioner in Ceylon. He resigned that post in 1952-1952. Again in 1952, A.D, he joined Mathrubhumi and served as the Editor till his death on 09.11.1979. He was the President of the Ayka Kerala Committee. In 1956, AD, he become the working President of the Kerala Sahitya Academy. He has penned a number of books - his autobiography Kazhinjakaalam and Mahatma Gandhi's biography Rashtrapithavu are prominent among them. He was honoured by the President of India with the Padmavibhusan, in 1966, A.D. For more details see K. P. Kesava Menon, Kazhinjakaalam, Autobiography, Mathrubhumi Books, First Published – 1957, Eighth Edition 2012, Passim. V. Parukutt Amma, K. P. Kesava Menon, O.P. Cit, Passim. Hareendra Natha Kuruppu, Mannathu Padmanabhan..., Op. Cit., PP. 112-131. P. K. K. Menon, The History of Freedom Movement In Kerala Vol II [1885-1938], Department of Cultural Publication, Government of Kerala, 2001 [Re-Print], First published 1972.

Kelappan was born on 24.08.1889, in Muchukunnu Village of Kurumbanad taluk of erstwhile Malabar, as the son of Thenpoyil Kanaran Nayar and Kozhappalli Kunjamma. His father was a Vakkil Gomastan. In 1912, A.D, he passed B. A. from Madras Christian College. In the same year he joined in Changanassery St. Bermkas High School as Physics teacher. On 01-11-1914, Nair Brithya Jana Sangham was formed after some months it come to be known as Nair Service Society. Kelappan was selected as the President of Nair Brithya Jana Sangam. He resigned the Presidehip of N.S.S. and joined in Thiruvananthapuram Law College. He discontinued his studies, He worked as a Science teacher in A. V. High school Ponnani and Kozhikode. St. Jospeh European School. He went to Bombay to study Law. He did not continue his studies and joined in the congress. He participated in Non-Co-Operation Movement and he was jailed for ten months. Kelappan led the salt Sathyagraha in Kozhikode on 12.05.1930. He was elected as the President of Malabar District Board in 1937 A.D, and continued in that post till 01.02.1940. Congress announced Quit India Movement on 08.08.1942. Government arrested Gandhiji and congress leaders. Kelappan was also arrested in Malabar and realeased only on 25.06.1945. In 1947 A.D, all the important temples in Malabar were
Another important fight against untouchability was Guruvayoor Sathyagraha. Guruvayoor Sathyagraha was started under the leadership of K. Keleppan, a Gandhian and a Congress leader. Samuthiri, the trustee of famous Guruvyoor Sree Krishna temple didn’t allow temple entry to avarnas. K. Kelappan and Mannam organized meetings in the Villages in Malabar and throughout Kerala. In all his speeches Mannan stressed the importantace of removing untouchability. Sathyagraha started on 01.11.1931 and finally Kelappan began fast on 21.09.1932 to change the attitude of temple authorities. Mahatma Gandhi advised and Kelappan broke his fast on 02.10.1932. The Temple Entry Sathyagraha was also suspended. After that a referendum was held in Ponnani taluk and a great majority of higher caste hindhus or 77 % voted in favour of


temple entry. Then Samutiri declared that Guruvayoor temple would be opened to avarnas only when all other temples in Malabar were opened to them. Guruvayoor temple was opened to avarnas only after temple entry was granted in other temples in Malabar.\textsuperscript{196} The Madras Hindu Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Act was passed in 1938 AD. The Malabar Temple Entry Bill was passed on 08.12.1938\textsuperscript{197}. In 1947 AD all important temples in Malabar were opened to avarnas\textsuperscript{198}.

Slavery was abolished by the Travancore and Cochin government in the second half of the 19th century. Even after the abolition of slavery, the Pulayas were forbidden to use Public Roads, Markets and Bazars, Wheeled Carriage etc. In Travancore, Ayyankaly fought for the right to travel through roads and markets and he won the struggle and an organization was formed in 1907 A.D. P. K. Govinda Pillai was nominated to the Sree Mulam Popular Assembly as the representative of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham. He expressed the grievances of the Pulayas and was depressed in Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. In 1911 A.D. Ayyankaly was nominated to the Sri Mulam Praja Sabha.


In Cochin five young literate men, who were worked as Kayyal or wage earners met Karuppan. Pulayar met at Kochi Kayal and formed the Pulaya Maha Sabha. Pulaya Maha Sabha submitted memorandum to Maha Raja and government sanctioned their demand to travel through Public Road. On the exhibition day, with the permission of Maha Raja Pulayar entered the Ernakulam town. Cochin State Legislative Council was started in 1925 A.D and Karuppan was nominated as the first representative of the depressed class. Thus Pulayar got a chance to express their grievances. K.P. Vallon MLC also worked for the rights of Pulayas to travel through public roads freely. Even in the second decade of 20th century Pulaya women were not allowed to cover their upper part of the body. The Kochi Pulaya Maha Sabha distributed Rouka to Pulaya women. The Kallumala agitation led by Ayyankaly was a great success.

Sree Narayana Guru also fought for the upliftment of the depressed classes. His slogan was “One caste, One religion and One God for mankind” influenced the society immensely. He preached against caste discriminations and oppressions. Pulaya pupils stayed in the Alwaye Advaitha Ashram. One of the disciples of Sree Narayana Guru, Sahodaran Ayyappan, fought for the eradication of caste system. Ayyappan conducted misrabhojanam in 1917 A.D. and encouraged intercaste marriages. Upper caste leaders like K.P. Kesavan Menon, K. Kelappan, Mannathu Padmanabhan were the leaders of Vaikom
Sathyagraha and Guruvayoor Sathyagraha. T. K. Madhavan, one of disciples, of Sree Narayana Guru was also another important leader who fought for the eradication of untouchability. In Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation was issued in 1936 A.D. Thus depressed class got the right to enter the temples.

For the upliftment of the depressed classes lands were assigned to them, established Colonies, reservations were given to them in Public Service, started Co-operative societies and small scale industries were started in the colonies by which they earned wages. Thus the Pulayas transformed from the position of Slaves/or Bonded labourers to casual labourers or wage earners and they got appointments in government service.