CONCLUSION

The economy and society of Malabar was in the course of transition during the latter half of 18th century. The political structure also was in transformation as the Mysorean rulers and the British made intervention in that sphere. This study has attempted to address the existing theories and arguments and to find a logical explanation to various issues regarding society and economy in Malabar in the 18th century. The most important of which indeed, is the British reforms in the land ownership and related issues.

In the very first phase, the British introduced a revenue policy in order to satisfy the project of colonialism. Permanent settlement was aimed at the creation of zamindars or landed aristocracy in order to get a permanent source of revenue. In Malabar, a section of people, particularly the elite class of janmis were transformed to the owners of land. This transformation was based mainly on the colonialist perception of property right. According to the European perception, right to property was a natural right. The British administrators who introduced reforms in property right were influenced by the thoughts of John Locke. For him, private ownership was a law of nature. He firmly believed that one’s human rights included, along with liberty, that of owning and disposing of the property that one had gained by mixing one’s
labour with the land. Each and every individual has a right to property and which was alienable as well. But the right of property that existed in pre-British Kerala was quite different from that of the British. The people of Malabar had right to hold the land on the basis of a written deed (*karanam*) and such a right was to be acquired by the individual by his own effort. It was actually not the property right in western terms, but a sort of right of control. The land under one's control was not saleable or transferable. But all these traditional concepts and practices related to wealth/property were subjected to drastic change under colonial legal prescriptions.

The transactions in land, thereafter was put under strict scrutiny of the state, for the purpose, permanent registration of land was introduced in Malabar in the year 1794. Occupation of waste land was another step from the part of the Company towards introduction of private property in land. Those waste lands were assigned to somebody and revenue was imposed upon. All those reforms led to the introduction of a revenue regime in Malabar.

The ideas of utilitarianism, liberalism and the doctrine of rent developed by Malthus, James Mill and Ricardo had influenced the British in their revenue legislation. According to Ricardo, rent was the surplus produced on fertile soils. Since the rent was appropriated by the landlords it does not help the process of productive accumulation and since the landlords were the
unproductive class, it was necessary for the state to appropriate this rent by abolishing intermediaries. For Mill, the rent belonged to the state and it was the actual owner of all land. This doctrine of rent provided the rationale for a high revenue demand by the British.

All major discussions and debates predominant in Europe were found reflected in formulating a revenue policy in British Malabar. As a preliminary step, the British conducted an extensive survey of land attempted to understand the nature of ownership in land. Colonial reports from W.G. Farmer onwards, the Brahmins or *jenm-kars* were identified as owners of land, or those having absolute property in land. With the report of Warden, the British accepted that the *janmis* were the sole owners of land.

The protests of the local lords and other influential chiefs of Malabar were result of the new reforms by the British. The loss of influence in the existing power structure was the reason for local chiefs’ resistance. The characterisation of Pazhassi revolts as "restorative revolts" by Kathleen Gough is to be examined. Because, the revolts led by Pazhassi and others were not aimed at restoring the previous system as such, instead, he was fighting for a sphere of his own influence within the British revenue regime.

Those who have attempted to study the history of 18th century Malabar have focussed mainly on the establishment of British power over the territory and subsequent results. Most of those studies share the idea that by the year
1792 a colonial state was established in Malabar. But the British records itself stand against this general perception and there are contradictory evidences to offer a different argument. To say, though the British had conquered the land of Malabar by 1792, it took at least 13 years to exercise power in the real sense. In comparison to other places of India, the case of Malabar is not exceptional. For example, the settlement of 1765 had been established a British Bengal; but Orissa remained unconquered until 1803. And in the case of Benares, though the British had obtained administrative powers in the year 1775 in Benares, they couldn't exercise any direct political authority for quite some time. From 1788 to 1795, the British in Benares had no advancement. In the case of Madras also, the British could make a break through only by 1821 with the introduction of the ryotwari settlement, although it had established a direct administration in 1782. Likewise, in a period between 1792 and 1805, there existed no state in Malabar. If anything was possible, it was only a revenue regime.

Before entering into the revenue settlement, the British had started to survey and map the whole territory which they conquered. Initially, the information was gathered by the army and naval forces, which later on was undertaken by the officials accompanying the Residents. James Rennel was the first cartographer of India who surveyed Bengal and neighbouring regions. His surveys were largely benefited by later revenue assessors. Likewise, in Malabar, the Vettattunad escheats were surveyed by Capt. Moncrief.
and Col. Sartorious surveyed the rivers of the country and Lt. Monier Williams prepared the first map of Malabar under Moncrief's supervision. These surveys on the west coast were mainly intended to identify the resources such as timber, spices and forest resources.

Several reports, right from the Joint Commissioners' to Buchanan's *Journey* are obvious documents of colonial 'gaze' on the people and its resources in Malabar. 'Keen observations' of Buchanan is the typical example of that genre of writing. His writings highlight the British intentions of transformation of the existing landscape. William Thackeray, another author of a report, speaks of natural resources especially of rivers and possibility of widening and connecting them. The establishment of plantations in cinnamon, coffee, pepper, nutmeg, spices, etc. can be seen as result of these surveys and travels. Those works were, of course, the intellectual base for the establishment of colonial state in Malabar.

The ecological imbalances that occurred due to the colonial intervention in Malabar is an area least explored. Protracted warfare and introduction of plantation had started to affect nature badly. The teak plantations of Eranad and Valluvanad *taluks* were subjected to indiscriminate felling of teak, which according to C.A. Bayly, had resulted in depletion of the water level in the area. It is a fact that the army of Arthur Wellesley had caused to destroy the trees in the hill tracts of Waynad, when they waged a
prolonged war with Pazhassi Raja. However, this period was only the starting point of such destructive activities.

The policies and administrative strategies formulated by the British in India were not the result of a slow and steady process, but with a very clear plan. To a section of historians, this project of colonialism was more a trial and error method than a pre-planned agenda of administration. But this argument cannot be accepted as shown by Dirks and others. Of course, colonial powers had the object of conquest at the very beginning itself. Though there was confusion about the method and modus operandi, the colonial ambition of conquering a vast land was not at all set aside. There was no thought of giving up the project of Indian conquest at any point of time.

It is a fact that theoretical and philosophical questions predominant in Europe had a considerable say in the British policies promulgated in India. In many occasions the attitudes and mentalities of the British public and the intelligentsia had influenced those debates. For instance, until 1790's the Home administration of the Company and the British public at large remained opposed to expansionist wars and further annexations of territories in India. Many a time impediments from within or outside had hampered the advancement of the company's rule in India. As a result, in the initial phase,
the Company's policies were not so clear and the lack of clarity led the British to resort to variety of policies.

As mentioned, the early experimentation of the British state in Malabar, of course, was leading to the establishment of a revenue regime. For the "effective" administration, the British had to learn more and more about the people of the land and they used all state modalities to transform knowledge into power. In order to introduce a revenue system, the British had to create knowledge about India. But the arguments of scholars like B.S. Cohn- that for the Company, to create Orientalist knowledge about India was more important than collection of revenue - is actually against the reality. It is a fact that there is no knowledge without a purpose. In the case of the British, knowledge was often used as a means of governing the people. It was the Orientalist epistemology that became the steering force of the Company in the whole course of its rule. As William Jones had rightly observed, "all Orientalist studies in the 18th century had a political slant". In the case of the British, knowledge was often used as a means of governing the people.

What the British introduced in Malabar was a variant of Madras ryotwari system. According to Madras ryotwari, the state's share was fixed as the half of the next produce of the land after deducting the expenditure of cultivation. The actual cultivator in turn, was to be assured of the other half of the net produce. But the Malabar ryotwari was a different one. According to
which, the *janmi* was considered as the sole legal proprietors of the whole land.

The question regarding the existence of land revenue in pre-Mysore Kerala has been addressed by the present study. According to some contemporary chroniclers and modern historians there was no organised and systematic revenue system in the period. Actually, there were two or more than two types of dues which had to be paid to the landholders namely, *pattam* and *varum*, a share to the overlord or local chief. The terms like *melvarum*, *melpathi*, *melodi*, etc. indicate the collection of a fraction of land usually by the rulers, the temples or chieftains. As these dues showed the features of both tax and rent, as some scholars pointed out, it may be better termed as 'rent-tax'.

However, the first systematic land survey and settlement in Malabar was conducted by Tipu Sultan, known as *jamabandy* settlement. The Mysoreans made settlements with the nairs and other intermediary classes, because the Mysoreans understood them as actual owners of land. They had converted state grain share into money at certain rates. The Mysorean administrators surveyed the land and fixed the land tax on the basis of the produce, where such a practice was unfamiliar to the rulers and people of Malabar. Survey of the land appears to have entrusted *kandeluthu*, *Melkangana kanakku* (Menon, Menokki etc.) but the point is that there was
no centralised and uniform collection but only localised collection. The new system of tax, huzur niguti, was collected on the janmi's share of rent. And the government made direct relations with the tenants. This was the period from which direct interventions of the state into production and its assessment was begun. And more importantly, since Haidar Ali's times itself, the right of janmis had been taken or absorbed by the government and the Mappila kanakkars started to disregard the dominance of the janmis.

The British Joint Commissioners, after an extensive collection of information by the Sheristadars, made a proclamation that janmis were the sole owners of land and kanakkars as the owners' lessees, but which invited a series of landed disputes and difficulties. The British, by fixing ownership, was transforming land to a commodity and they were seeking a class of supporters of administration. The newly introduced reforms were found difficult for smooth functioning so that implementation of which made with the support of the newly established judiciary.

Apart from the changes in the ownership, there were also some new changes in measurement and classification of land. In pre-colonial times, the procedure of measurement of land was depended on the type of land, which means the paddy fields were measured, based on their sowing capacity, parambas and purayidams on the areas of tree planted or kuli and the areas of forest trees or kutti. This classification was replaced by feet, square feet,
acres and hectares which made the measurement procedures uniform. If the
earlier classification was based upon land use, the British classification was
only on the basis of physical extent of land alone.

The British plan of establishing a monocultural plantation was evident
as early as Buchanan's journey. In Buchanan's enquiry, non remunerative
trees were to be felled down and forest's value had to be calculated in terms of
saleability. In the coming years the British took his observations as a
guideline for their extension of plantation, especially the teak plantation.

The British policies, particularly the revenue policy invited a series of
protest from the part of rulers and local chiefs of Malabar. The government
had to overcome resistance from various corners. The fierce and prolonged
revolts waged by the ruler of Kottayam, Pazhassi Kerala Varma Raja in the
north and the Mappila chiefs in the south were historic. It is a fact that even
though Malabar was taken over by the British in the year 1792, until 1805,
(when Pazhassi Raja died) they couldn't make any considerable advance in
the region due to strong resistance.

Historiographically, the British writings always followed a way of
under estimating and denigrating the resistance movements by the indigenous
people. The Report of Joint Commissioners depicted Pazhassi Raja as 'the
most intractable and unreasonable of the Rajas'. The British also speak of the
Mappila rebels as 'bandits' and 'robbers'. The same report considered
Mappilas of south Malabar as "jungle Mappilas" and "robbing Mappilas", "who never would voluntarily or quietly submit to pay the revenue". But at the same time the early nationalist historians were enthusiastic to characterise Pazhassi Raja as the "Lion of Kerala" and his rebellion as the first war of independence in Kerala.

Similarly, attempts made by the later historians like K.K.K. Kurup culminated in characterising Pazhassi as a 'Hindu-Peasant-Nationalist'. Most of his works in this direction is a part of a general perception that Pazhassi Raja's struggles were part of a growing nationalist consciousness. But actually, attributing nationalism in Pazhassi Raja is meaningless. Because, prior to the Mysorean occupation, the Raja, in alliance with the British, was fighting against Tipu Sultan. Contrary to his calculations, the British neglected him after their victory over Tipu and only from then itself, he was moving against the British. Besides, even in the course of hostility, Tipu had signed a settlement with British. In another occasion, as they offered some privileges or rights, Pazhassi was very close to the British during that phase.

Likewise, the issue of peasants' participation of the revolt, and 'popular support' as formulated by scholars must be put under serious scrutiny. It is a fact that most of the leaders of the revolt were those who lost their powers and privileges under British. The resistance was both against the British and the British policies. What actually existed was an insurgency situation. Serious
enquiries must be done to gather evidence to verify whether Pazhassi resistance movement can be termed as 'popular revolt' or 'peasant revolt'.

Another stream of historical writing is aimed at appropriation of history and career of Pazhassi Raja. Most of the things they present in the guise of facts lack corroborative source materials. It follows a methodology of presenting legends as history. If the religious idioms like 'temple', 'deity', or 'oracles' were made use of by a ruler like Pazhassi Raja, it can not be minimised into religious or communal terms. Rather, it must be seen as a political act.

This group of writers also present a confusing discourse over the support base of the rebels with regard to their religious identity. This argument in nutshell is that the support base of the Pazhassi Revolts was only the Hindus and the Mappilas during period were against the Raja and his revolts. The available evidence stands antithetical to such an argument. The fact is that in many occasions the Mappila chiefs had extended their support to the Raja's army. The British records speak extensively of Pazhassi Raja and his men were assisted by Unni Mootha Muppan at Kuttiyadi. There are also references about Athan Gurukkal and Chemben Pokker who had fought against British in coordination with the Pazhassi rebels. Until the fall of Pazhassi Raja, Mappila rebels of South had associated directly or indirectly in his major operations. The Mappila leaders of the north like Chaladi Thangal,
Haidar Kunhikkutty, Elampulam Kunhan, Vavantullan Kunhi (sic), Kunhi Moideen Muppan of Elathur, etc. were very close associates of the Raja in his resistance against the British. Chovvakkaran Moosa and Mucky, the principal Mappila traders of the British in Malabar had supplied rice, gunpowder and other essentials to the rebels. These are sufficient and solid evidence to state that religion was not an obstacle for aligning with the rebellion which was against the British. The intervention of Mysore state in Malabar was a crucial factor which caused some changes in the existing society, economy and polity as well. But, that short period of Mysoreans has been often discussed with religious overtones. From the colonial administrative historians to the nationalist writers, the cause of Mysorean invasion of Malabar was one and the same, the religious factor. The economic and strategic factors had not been taken into account. What is actually left in those writings is the motivation of the rulers who invaded an alien land. For Mysore, Malabar was a foreign land with rich resources such as spices, timber, forest resources etc. and land with extensive coastal area, which could be utilised for extension of their power to the south.

Tipu's attempt to extract spices by trade monopoly and to intimidate Mappila merchants can be seen as part of such a wider objective. The religion for those rulers was secondary to political factors. If they were conscious of religion they would not have been hostile to the Mappila merchants. The Mysorean rulers were ambitious and fought wars with many
rulers of South India. And they were not reluctant to adopt any extreme measures against those who challenged their power. For instance, Haidar set fire to an extensive village in Jagir (area including Chingalpet and Madras). Jagir was under the control of Muslim rulers. Haider set fire to the extensive farmland and houses in order to intimidate the ruler and people of that area, by which the Mysorean army could establish their supremacy. The same method was followed in Malabar too, which shows that religion played little role in political conquests.

The Mysore rulers fought with the Malabar Rajas as their enemies, who were followers of a different belief system and cultural pattern. It is quite natural to feel that the religion and cultural differences of indigenous people and rulers of Malabar were obsolete and so that they were tempted to introduce certain reforms especially in connection with caste system, customs dress code, etc. But we do not have ample evidence to believe that all those reforms were introduced in religious terms. If we formulate a logical explanation, the revenue reforms of the Mysoreans would be a focal point. Because of those reforms, a large number of people lost their privileges. The privileged class, fearful of losing their position and power, raised fierce resistance against the Mysore rulers. The best example was the case of Mappila chiefs called Muppans of Malabar. The Muppans and Gurukkals had raised strong protests without any consideration in terms of religion. If religion was a deciding factor, this kind of protest couldn't have been taken
place. And more importantly, when an alliance was formed by the British and Marathas against Tipu Sultan, Hyderabad Nizam was the prominent figure, where the religion was a non-issue. And the attitude of Mysore rulers was same towards the Nawab of Jagir and Mappila merchants of Malabar. So it can be argued that the religion in pre-modern time cannot be seen as a factor of polarisation as of later period. To be precise, contrary to colonialist and some indigenous/nationalist writers' perception, the Mysore's invasion of Malabar was purely out of economic and political factors, never religious. They had attempted to conduct experiments in revenue system, trade and state craft including conduct of first survey, introduction of huzur niguti, direct payment etc. which had far reaching effect.

To be precise, during the early phase of its rule in Malabar, the East India Company had to go through a tortuous path. Apart from the differences of opinion in Britain, the Company had to face a series of resistance from the indigenous rulers and chiefs. Though Pazhassi revolts and Mappila resistance came to an end by 1805, new flames of powerful and protracted voices of dissent were challenges, to be faced by the British in the near future. Of course, colonialism had made a rupture in the political economy of Malabar. But it was founded upon unrelenting voices of dissent.