INTRODUCTION

As it is often described, 18\textsuperscript{th} century is a period of transition. Though there started some significant changes in economy and society by 16\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, all of which were found aggravated in the second half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Geographical discoveries, formation of merchant capital, scientific revolution were significant factors which caused unprecedented impact on the whole society. In India, politically, it was a period of decline of empires, which caused to originate regional powers. In the economy, there were some major shifts with regard to trading centres and commodities. And agriculture also was subjected to change due to the fluctuations in the world markets. Reclamation of more (waste) lands, hill tracts, forests etc. were to generate more products to satisfy the new demands. Malabar was a region, which was very sensitive to all these changes and was subjected to radical changes in society, in forces and relations of production.

The present study titled "Formation of society and Economy in Malabar, 1750-1810" is an enquiry into various aspects of the transition of economy and society of the period. The objective of this study is to locate the process of change, especially in the ownership right in land in the backdrop of colonial reforms in Malabar. The term Malabar is understood in three
different ways. The ancient and medieval chroniclers and foreign travellers mention Malabar as the whole land which we call now as Kerala. But a few writings represent the whole western coast ranging from Gujarat to Cape Camorin as Malabar coast. Here we take the third, that is the geographical area created by the British as Malabar district, lying in between South Canara and Kochi.

A word about the time span of the study may be worthwhile. The study attempts to cover transition in three different phases. The first phase, period between 1750 and 1766, represents the traditional or pre-Mysorean social order in Malabar. In the second phase, that is from 1766, there heralded a new state and socio-economic fabric under the Mysorean rulers Haidar and Tipu Sultan up to 1792, when the British defeated Tipu in third Mysore war. The third phase covers a period from 1792 to 1810, which marks the foundation of the colonial supremacy in Malabar. It was during this time that the British introduced certain colonial policies in order to collect revenue and sustain their rule over the province. And more importantly, it was a period when the anti-British struggles were undertaken by the indigenous people which recurred for many years. Though the challenges from Pazhassi Raja was over by his death in 1805, the Company had to wait a little more (at least up to 1810) to normalise and stabilise its administration. The present study is intended to offer an interpretive and analytical thesis on
the basis existing source materials and reconsideration of the existing theories and arguments.

**Review of Literature**

A number of studies have attempted to examine the transitional phase of the society in various parts of India. Such serious attempts are comparatively less with regard to the history of 18th century Kerala. And those limited works can be categorised in to three: one which covers the history of trade, the second focuses on the political aspect and the third which survey both trade and politics during the period. Ashin Das Gupta's *Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800* (1967) is a pioneering work of national and international repute. It covers the history of 18th century trade in Kerala, as he uses the term Malabar for the whole Kerala. He has reconstructed the nuances of the 18th century trade like trading communities, trading centres, (which were an untapped area till that time) with the support of the Dutch and the British sources. But as a general study covering Kerala as a whole, the work couldn't pay much attention to the province of Malabar. And interestingly, influenced by the colonial writers he came to conclusion that the basic reason for the decline of trade in 18th century Malabar was the invasion of Tipu Sultan.

T.K. Ravindran's monograph, *Malabar under Bombay Presidency* (1969), is one of the earlier works related to the British occupation of
Malabar. The work focuses on the historical enquiry of initial judicial reforms of the British in Malabar, when it was under the control of Bombay presidency. Later on, Malabar was transferred to Madras presidency in 1800. He takes ten years (from 1792-1802) as period of study which unravels the important changes that occurred due to the introduction of colonial legality in this land. This small work consisting of a single chapter (with introduction and conclusion) doesn't pay attention to social or economic impact of British administration.

As a general survey of the trade in the western coast, Pamela Nightingale's *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784 -1806* (1970) is a treasure of information on the spice trade/pepper politics during the early phase of colonial administration throughout the coast. Out of the whole contents merely two chapters are dedicated to Malabar, in which the author has highlighted the varied problems. Struggles between the French and the British for pepper, political structure of the coast, activities and the private business of Company's own people like Murdoch Brown etc. are extensively discussed. However, the highly researched two chapters are very informative as far as the students of this field are concerned.

*Kerala under Haidarali and Tipu Sultan* (1973) by C.K. Kareem can be considered to be the first research work on the history of Mysorean presence in Malabar. It is a vast work organized into twenty one chapters. He
provides at most every aspect of the history of Mysorean period in a simple and lucid language. However the author's enthusiasm to eulogize the Mysorean rulers deviates from the scientific methodology of history. Though the work covers a wider area, the author has not touched many crucial problems. For example, to a student who tries to understand the nature of revenue settlement introduced by Tipu Sultan in Malabar, the book offers nothing.

Prof. N. Rajendran's *Establishment of British Power in Malabar 1664 to 1799* (1979), is a general description of the initial phase of establishment of British power in the coast of Malabar. The book is based upon a strong archival support, which is highly helpful for researchers.

*History of Tellicherry Factory* (1985), authored by K.K.N. Kurup is an exclusive study of the British power in Malabar. This study highlights the activities of the factory from its establishment to the year 1794. Prof. Kurup has done a commendable job by reconstructing the first phase of colonial enterprises in Malabar. But as the study is concluded by an earlier date, it couldn't present a detailed survey of the after effects of the British imperialism in Malabar. However, as a continuation of his research, he has published two Malayalam works titled *Pazhassi Samarangal* (1980) and *Pazhassi Samara Rekhakal* (2004), which analyse the British administration and the indigenous resistance paused against the British. The present study
has greatly benefited by the details of the works, though there are some problems.

A recent work on this area is of a young German scholar Margaret Frenz, titled *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar 1790-1805* (2003). The work is organized into six sections which covers an extensive area from pre colonial social order to the transformation to colonial administration in Malabar. Though the book covers the history of a short period between 1790 and 1805, the author has brilliantly portrayed the issues like the conflicts between the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British and the invasion of Mysore rulers on Malabar. The author is enthusiastic to introduce the "little Kingdom" model of Nicholas B. Dirks to understand the history of Malabar. While Dirks applied this mode of "little Kingdom" and "great Kingdom" to analyse the pyramidal nature of the pre-colonial South Indian State, the same model is taken by Frenz but proves to be not applicable in the case of Malabar. Another model she discusses is 'contact zone', which again fails to get currency in the discourse on 18th century Malabar.

One of the significant works concentrating on society and economy of 18th century Malabar is the doctoral thesis of Bonaventure Swai, titled "Trade and Politics in 18th century Malabar", submitted to the University of Tanzania, Dare-es-Salam (mimeo,1979). The work attempts to unravel the intricacies of
the 18th century political structure as well as the colonial intervention in spices trade. In one chapter, Swai examines the roots of British merchant capital in the hinterland of Malabar which may be the first attempt of its kind. But like many other foreign authors, Swai fails to analyse the intricacies deeper socio-economic factors in the region. Still the present study has been greatly benefited by sources of information in many stages of this research. His papers titled, "Notes on Colonial state with special reference to Malabar in 18th and 19th Centuries", (Social Scientist, Vol. 6, July 1978), “From Kolathunad to Chirakkal: British Merchant Capital and the Hinterland of Tellicherry, 1694-1766", (Studies in History, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan-Jun 1985) also have equal importance.

Sources and Methodology

The major share of the source materials of this work constitute the colonial records collected from various archives in India. Secret and Political Department Diaries (from 1767 to 1810), Revenue Department Diaries (from 1779 to 1801), A collection of Treaties Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring countries etc. are collected from Maharastra State Archives and are of highly historical value. Secret correspondence of Tipu Sultan and secret Letters of Tipu Sultan collected from Bombay University Library have highly helped this study. Tellicherry consultations (from 1725 to 1750), Letters from Tellicherry (from 1721 to 1751), Letters to Tellicherry
(from 1726 to 1750) etc. collected from Kerala Studies Centre Kerala University Library Trivandrum are of great significance. Report of a Joint Commission (1792-93), Jonathan Duncan's Report (1794), Minutes of the Board of Revenue (1818), John Shore's Minutes on the Joint Commissioners Report (all from Regional Archives, Kozhikode) etc have supported this study. Apart from these studies, some of published Manuals, Treaties and gazetteers also are made use of.

Apart from this, the work is also depended upon a few indigenous sources like grandhavaris namely, Vanjeri Grandhavari, Kutali Grandhavari and Kavalappara Papers. Besides, two other valuable sources of the period, but tapped rarely, Thalasseri Rekhakal and Vellayude Charithram, a contemporary chronicle by a brahmin named Vella have also been depended upon. A large corpus of secondary sources like books, articles and journals are also used by the present work. The present work follows an accepted historical research methodology such as perusal of archival sources and textual criticism on secondary works and dissemination of the thesis.

Organization

The dissertation is organized into five chapters except an introductory and conclusion. The first chapter titled, 'Society and Economy of Pre-Modern Kerala: Historical Background’ is a survey of pre-colonial society, economy and political structure of Kerala in general. The chapter begins with
the pre-colonial social structure which is known as *janmam-kanam-maryadai* or feudalism. It discusses the various forms of rights over land such as *janmam* and *kanam*. There is description of development of forms of holdings called *kuzhikkanam* and *kuttikkanam*. Appropriation of surplus produce by the elite class, its forms etc. are thoroughly discussed. Pattern of settlement, redistribution and consumption, trade, power structure and relations are other areas of discussion.

The second chapter, 'Mysorean Invasions and Transformation of Society,' offers a reconsideration of the Mysorean era of Malabar, a period from 1766 to 1792. It begins with a discussion on historiography on the same period. It examines the way in which the imperialist and nationalist historians depicted the Mysorean rulers, Haidarali and Tipu Sultan. The most important area of this chapter is pepper politics of the 18th century Malabar and how the Mysoreans tried to get a monopoly over the spice trade. There are also references about the response of the Mappila merchants and the Company officials to the Mysore policy of monopoly and establishment of Tipu's capital city of Malabar.

The third chapter, "The Establishment of British Power in Malabar," begins with raising a question that whether the company had really conquered Malabar by the year 1792. It is a fact that the company officials at Tellicherry and authorities in Bombay were not confident enough to pursue their
colonialist ambitions. However, the company could advance a lot by concluding treaties with the local rulers of Malabar. The chapter gives a description of the Company's motives to attain pepper monopoly and its initial reforms in judiciary. There is also reference about relinquishment of the trade monopoly and the private interests of the Company's servants like Murdock Brown in Malabar. This chapter also highlights the issues within the company like dismissal of the second Malabar Commission, appointment and dismissal of collectors and early resistance against the British revenue reforms.

The fourth chapter, 'Land Relations in Malabar and British Perceptions,' the core of this dissertation, analyses the British projects of introducing new land ownership right and land tenure reforms in Malabar. In the first part it seeks to understand the theoretical moorings of the British to think about the introduction of private ownership in land. The philosophical base of the Physiocrats and the ideas of John Locke, Mill, and Riccardo etc. had very much influenced the British. An enquiry about the process of introduction of various settlements like zamindari, mahalwari, and ryotwari in various parts of India and logic for selecting each in particular areas is also included. The colonialist perception of land ownership in Malabar has gained a space in the chapter. To get an idea of the traditional land ownership right in Kerala, two typical attipettola karanams also been included.
The last chapter, 'Indigenous Revolts and Consolidation of British Power,' examines the nature and character of the resistance raised by the indigenous people, especially the local chiefs and Mappilas of Malabar. It aims at reconsideration of the existing theories on the nature and character of those insurrections and tries to find out a different argument on the same.