INTRODUCTION

Social structure and social organisation are two interrelated concepts and are integral part of any social system. The changes happened to these may alter the system itself. Social change is a very slow process, requires many years or decades to get modified or altered. The structural transformations in the society basically shape the social institutions. For an accurate perception of the society, the study of social institutions is essential. As far as traditional India is concerned, the three basic pillars of Indian society are the Caste system, joint family system and the village life. Even though, the stringency of the Caste system has reduced, its internal dimensions are still functional. In Kerala at village level, changes happened mainly in economic, political and interaction patterns. However, one of the major areas in which changes occurred greatly, is in the family, especially the joint family system. The village life reflects the life and culture of the people of an area, and comprises hierarchically arranged Castes and communities. The Caste groups vary from each other in many dimensions, such as, family, inheritance pattern, descent, marriage system and kinship behaviours. For these reasons, anthropologists and sociologists have been attracted to study the Indian village life in several angles. Village studies had become frequent in anthropological studies since 1950’s.
Social stratification and occurrence of change at village level were the main areas studied by anthropologists during 1960's. Intensive studies on ‘change’ resulted in the formulation of concepts and theories. The changes in village life have been occurring due to external and internal forces. The change would not get completed, until the internal operations become static. The matrilineal system of inheritance, followed by different communities, underwent change due to social, cultural, political, economic and legal factors. Thus, the study of social change at village level, paved the way for critical analysis of society and cross cultural comparisons of social phenomena.

The present study is an attempt to analyze the major changes happened in the society of north Malabar\(^1\) due to the emergence of patrilineal system. It is presented as a regional study, which is part of a wider social space and time. The dimensions of the study, thus, fall diachronically to form the background and centered on the period of transition and social change. Social change is not a sudden process and is need of the time. It takes time and various factors like social, cultural, political, and legal-contributing for the change. But the change would be comprehensive, if the urge for it is internal.

Kerala is a land with rich socio-cultural and historical importance and many anthropologists have conducted studies on Kerala society and culture. The formation of Kerala, as a separate State of India, occurred in 1956. Before that period, there were three distinctive zones or districts in this region, i.e., Malabar, Cochin and

\(^1\)The north Malabar region mainly includes Kannur and Kasaragod districts of Kerala.
Travancore. Cochin and Travancore were referred to as princely States and up to 1947, the district of Malabar remained under the British administration.

During the Britisher’s administration in Malabar, both patrilineal and matrilineal system of inheritance had existed but matrilineal system was the predominant form of inheritance. The Malabar region includes the present districts of Kerala, namely parts of Kasaragod, Kozhikkode, Malappuram, Palakkad and some areas of Thrissur district. In 1800, these territories formed into an administrative area called Malabar district. It was a district in Madras Presidency, and till 1947, Malabar remained under the British administration. One of the important peculiarities, connected with each of these administrative areas concerned was, regarding the descent and kinship system. Generally two main types of descent systems namely, patriline and matriline prevailed in Kerala till the early phase of the 20th Century. The matrilineal (marumakkathayam) system existed in Kerala have been mainly studied by Gough, Schneider and Fuller.

Kerala is a Caste ridden society and each Caste group has its own characteristic features. Traditionally, the Caste groups were arranged hierarchically in the social order. Before the formation of Kerala in 1956, Janmi (landlord) system had existed and the Janmis and Naduvazhis (local rulers) occupied most of the lands. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people of Kerala till the early phase of the 20th Century. Associated with this practice, the main land tenures prevailed in Malabar area were Janmam, Kanam and Verumpattom. Thus, according to Radhakrishnan (1989: 26-29), the people were also categorized as Janmis, Kanakkar and Verumpattakkar. This shaped the agrarian system of north Malabar.
later on, different Acts were passed to abolish the Janmi system existed in Malabar.

Territory, power, village dominance etc., result from the possession of land. “In Malabar, Miller found a small territorial unit, the nad comprising a number of villages (desam) and stated ‘For all the lower Castes, the chiefdom (nad) was the limit of social relations within the Caste, while their relations with other Castes were largely confined to the village. Only the superior Castes had an internal organisation, which extended through out the nad and beyond, though not beyond the frontiers of the kingdoms, i.e., the uniformity of culture was closely related to the lines of territorial segmentation” (in Dumont, 1998).

Territorial segmentation of culture embraced and differentiated the people of Kerala to a great extent. Matriliny (marumakkathayam) was one of such cultural markers. This was the system of inheritance prevailed among a considerable section of the people inhabiting the western coast of South India, viz., Indian States of Travancore and Cochin and the districts of Malabar and South Kanara. Gough (1961) and Fuller (1976: 54-55) mentions that, the literal meaning of the word, marumakkathayam is inheritance through nephews and nieces or sister’s children. Marumakkathayam was followed by Nayars and several other Non-Brahmin Hindu Castes in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The Thiyyas and other cognate Castes of north Malabar and South Kanara were also governed by the system. The system has changed due to various reasons, and patriliny has emerged as a new system of inheritance, which has made great impact on the communities of Kerala, especially in north Malabar.

Patrilineal system of inheritance has now become the very base of the family system in Kerala. This stage has reached through a
transformation from matrilineal pattern. The transformation has affected positively and negatively, the socio-economic and cultural spheres of various societies and resulted in the decline of certain cultural traits with the emergence of new ones.

The shift from matriliny to patriliny has resulted in changes, mainly in the household pattern, status of women, role of kin members, household composition etc. But these changes are not uniform to all the communities as they are from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The kinship system and the related inheritance pattern could be analyzed by studying the socio-cultural background of the communities.

F.J. Richards says that there is abundant evidence that inheritance through females was at one time general in south India over which the Brahminic superstructure was built. While disruptive factors have not affected directly the matrilineal peoples in the north, much disintegration has taken place in the south both before and after the enactment of the Nayar Regulations and the Hindu Succession Act which came into force in 1956 (in Iyer, 1968).

In addition to the changes in kinship system, agrarian system was another important area, where much of the changes have occurred. The introduction of agrarian rules affected the ownership of property held by the land owning dominant Castes and resulted in the decline of power and agrarian relationships.

In this context, it would be significant from an anthropological perspective to study the social and structural changes taken place in societies with the emergence of a new system of inheritance.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The traditional Kerala society can be divided into two extensive categories based on the descent: those who trace their descent through the male line and those who trace it through the female line. In the Malabar region, majority of the Caste groups followed matrilineal system. In north Malabar, this system existed among majority of the Castes, especially among the Nayar, Maniyani, Vaniya, Marar, Thiyya, and the Nambuthiri of Payyanur Gramam.

The social system of Kerala has undergone marked structural changes due to various socio-economic, legal and political factors. One of the main changes in Kerala society, especially in north Malabar, is the change in inheritance pattern, i.e., from matriline to patriline. The communities bearing matrilineal elements are of rare occurrence and in Kerala among the Nayars and others where full-fledged matriline is found to be prevalent (Iyer, 1909, Gough 1961). The Muduvans and Thanta Pulayans make the sister’s sons heirs of all the property while the Kadar, Paliyans, Mala Pulayas, and Hill Pantarams are patrilineal. Thus, in certain tribes a compromise between the patrilineal and the matrilineal systems was reached (Fuchs, 1982:124). The co-existence of the two diverse cultural patterns in the cultural tradition of these communities of India has been possible because of the contact of the indigenous matrilineal civilization of India and the later immigrant patrilineal cultural complexes (Ehrenfels, 1941).

In the past, the social system was primarily based on feudal relationship and was regulated by economic, social, political and cultural life of the society. The matrilineal law of inheritance helped those who followed it, to accumulate more land or to protect the land held by them from partition. It means that a particular system of descent and succession
(matriliny) was favoured by the society, for its own socio-political and economic benefit. The introduction of patrilineal system / bilineal law of inheritance have adversely affected many of them who had followed matriliny. However, variations within the system due to local or regional differences also flourished to a certain extent. That was the basis that some of the castes, who had adopted new system with respect to succession and descent lost their socio-political and economic dominance.

It is clear that the social organisation of the Kerala society, especially, north Malabar shows some peculiarities in terms of the changes from matriliny to patriliny, landlordism to individual ownership etc. A social system survives only when it has common acceptance.

There are many reasons for the decline of matriliny and the emergence of patriliny. For this, actually, one cannot resolute on any particular factor like the introduction of laws of inheritance, but there are social, political and economic factors responsible for the same.

Emergence of patrilineal (makkathayam) system of inheritance and the decline of matriliny has brought out noticeable changes in Kerala society, which has not been studied earlier by the anthropologists. In this context, the study has significance.

The present study focused on closely related institutions like, family, kinship, religion and stratifications of the society. Here, main emphasis is given to the existing models in anthropology and the approach is in par with the concept of Dominant Caste (Srinivas, 1987), theory of Dysfunction (Merton, 1968) and the theories and concepts of change and transformation.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Only few anthropological literatures are available on the present problem highlighting the various aspects of change in the society with the introduction of a new system of inheritance.

Malabar Manual is one of the fundamental works that throw light on the social structure and history of Malabar. In this book, William Logan (1951) tries to map out the matrilineal system, agrarian relations, the invasion and interventions of foreign powers.

In Kerala, the Nayars observed cultural features of unusual anthropological interest; their kinship institutions have provided an absorbing theme for descriptive accounts, endless controversies and comparative and analytical studies. The earlier descriptions and discussions of Nayar customs included those by lyer (1909). But, studies focused on Nayar kinship in the modern phrase started with Gough (1961).

Ehrenfels (in Appadorai, 1954) study on Anthropological background of matrilineal societies gives an idea about the status of women. It highlights that matrilineal civilizations provide for certain preferential rights for women, which though, substantially reinforcing their economic, social, educational, professional, yet do not result in a reversal of the position of the sexes. Ehrenfels tries to map out the elements of matriarchy in different Castes and Tribal groups, and to establish the role played by matriarchal cultures in India (1941).

The most significant village study dealing with kinship extensively and intensively in its various aspects is Mayer’s (1960 rpt.1986) Caste and Kinship in Central India.
In part two of the book, Matrilineal Kinship (Schneider and Gough (Ed.), 1961) Gough concerns herself with the problems of variation in the structure and functions of descent groups, residence, patterns of interpersonal relationships, and marriage preferences in matrilineal system.

In Matrilineal Kinship, Gough (1961) has dealt with the Kinship systems of the Nayar of Central Kerala and of the Nayar of north Kerala. Gough has also described the Thiyyas of north Kerala who were traditionally the share cropping tenants of the Nayar and the Brahmin and have also been matrilineal.

Madan (1965) in Family and Kinship presents an analytical description of the family system of the Pandits of rural Kashmir in the wider context of their kinship organization. The author analyses economic aspect of the household partition and the structural implications of marriage.

Irawati Karve’s (1968) Kinship Organization in India, imparts a comparative picture of kinship organization in different parts of India. The kinship organization has been presented as the Northern cultural zone, the Central, the Southern, and the Eastern.

Dube (1969) presents an analytical study of the impact of matriliny and Islam on each other in the Island of Kalpeni.

Changing residence patterns of the Central Kerala Nayar have been studied by Unni (in Dube, 1974). Mencher and Goldbery (in Dube 1974) in their studies argue that the Nambuthiri system appears to be complimentary to that of the Nayar, the underlying structure shows that
they are two of a kind. Gough (in Dube, 1974) describes and analyses the Kinship system of the Brahmin of Kumbapettai

2 The region to the north of Calicut and the Kora river, forms north Kerala, See Gough, 1961 p 305.

village in Tanjore, compares it with the Kinship system of the lower Castes of the region, and attempts to relate the basic features of the Brahmin kinship terminology with other institutions.

The Nayars Today by Fuller (1976) is based on his empirical research carried out in the southern part of Kerala, discusses the disintegration of matrilineal joint family system and the changes it had brought about in the twentieth Century. Though the study is predominantly centered on the Nayars of southern Kerala, it gives a picture about the customs and practices prevalent among the Nayars of southern Kerala.

Balakrishnan (1980), in Matrilineal system in Malabar, explains the matrilineal system existed in Malabar during the 18th and 19th Centuries. The study has been presented with special reference to the legal and judicial aspects. The study presents the origin, development, taravadi system and its break up, marriage pattern and different features of matriliny in Malabar. It also includes the Mappila Marumakkathayam Act of 1939 and the Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1933.

Unni (1980) in ‘A History of Mushika Vamsa’ throws clear light on the history of South India, especially Malabar region. The book gives a picture about different periods more particularly the Kolathiri Period.
In 'Mappilas of Malabar' (Koya, 1983), a description is made on the matrilineal system existed among the Mappilas of north Malabar. According to the author, matriliney in Islamic setting is not natural and it is something of a cultural assimilation that took place between the two communities of Hindus and Muslims. It also deals with the system existed in the Arakkal Royal house, in the Laccadive Islands, and the Mappilas of the coastal towns of South Malabar. The study explains the disintegration of Hindu Joint families, and Muslim society of Malabar. It is opined that the Mappila Succession Act was the first legislative measure that was initiated in the direction of bringing about social change in the matter of customary law. He concludes that the change from matriliny to patriliny is really a social change of paramount importance and one of great consequence as it would imply far reaching structural changes in the Mappila society of Malabar.

Mann (1987) in, Is Matriliny a Symbol of Higher Status – A Case of Garo woman, examines the question of matriliny and status of women under changing social economy. It also shows that despite growing preference for new techniques of cultivation and culture contact with the patriarchal world, the Garo women continue to enjoy a high status in her matriliny based social structure.

E.M.S Nambuthiripad’s (1987) Keralam malayalikalute mathruboomi gives an account on social reforms and the institutions functioned for community renovation among the Nayars and Nambuthiris. In Keralam: samoohayavum rashtreyayavum (1988) describes the political situation in Kerala and the society during the feudal period and the invasions of various foreign powers. The study highlights the traditional Janmi system and the agrarian relations existed in Kerala. The book points
out that during the British period, the status of the Janmis declined from that of a ruling class to mere owners of land.

Kolenda, the American social-cultural anthropologist, in, Regional differences in Family structure in India (1987), depicted a picture on the Indian family structure and analysed the regional differences in family structure in India.

Murray Milner (1988) has pointed out a set of interrelated explanations of status relations in Hindu marriage alliances derived from a general theory of status relationships. The theory propounds to explain the strong tendencies toward status homogeneity, and hence isogamy and endogamy, and the counter pressures towards heterogeneity, and hence hypergamy and hypogamy. It claims that a general theory of status relations, supplemented by particular cultural and historical facts, can help us to systematically organize the data concerning status relations in marriage alliances. Milner’s paper discusses that the legitimate and institutionalized definitions of appropriate status relations in marriage alliances vary over different regions and castes. One of the aims of this paper is to suggest that social science analysis requires both general theories and their careful contextualization and specification in particular cultural and historical settings.

Singh (1988) explains in Land, Power and people- Rural elite in Transition, 1801-1970, that the land control, power and people together form a nexus in rural society, and that the dynamics of the agrarian power structure cannot be fully understood without first comprehending how this matrix works. Singh also examined the substantive nature of the problem, namely, the relationship between the rural elite and the agrarian power structure in a historico- evolutionary setting and this was pursued through
an analysis of the link between institutional and social structural factors-the link between land, power and people. Thus, by linking the rural elites with the agrarian power structure, the study attempted to trace the structure of the former by examining the nature of the latter as it empirically existed and underwent change through various historical phases.

Donnan (1988) presents a picture about the Dhund marriages of northern Pakistan in Marriage among Muslims. This book imparts a new approach to the study of Muslim marriage and the author presents the study by blending kin phrased preferences and non-kin considerations.

Xaxa’s (1988), Studies in Indian Agrarian Social Structure: A survey of Trends and Perspectives, is based on agrarian social structure. In this paper the author has highlighted the major works of Anthropologists and Sociologists related to agrarian social structure.

Modern Kerala- Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations is a remarkable contribution of Kurup (1988) to the historical writings on Kerala. The book touches different aspects which led to the birth of modern Kerala. The book explores the structural changes happened to the Caste oriented and feudalistic society of Kerala. The author points out that in the long run of historical processes, the Janmi system has been replaced by peasant agriculture.

Gray and David Mearns (1989) in ‘Society from the Inside Out- Anthropological Perspectives on the South Asian Household’, provides a decisive appraisal of the particular way in which the household is set in society. The contributors of this book make obvious that the view from the ‘inside out’ - that is, the understanding of big scale encircling social forms from the ‘inside’ or from small-scale institutions - is integral to a
more adequate theory of society. This study attempts to compare the nature and operation of domestic groups in a provincial context. The study concludes that the household in South Asian society consists of a variety of forms associated with particular social, economic and geographic conditions.

Raha (1989) made a study of the Rabha society touching matriline and patriline in the book, Matriliny to Patriliny- A study of the Rabha society. This study compares the changes happened to forest dwelling Rabhas, who have preserved their traditional matriline to a great extent, and village dwelling Rabhas, who have discarded many of their traditional matrilineal elements to give place to the patrilineal Hindu cultural traits. Through this study, the author has confirmed his hypothesis that the matrilineal Rabhas of West Bengal, due to different external and internal factors, have kept their journey on to form a new patrilineal society.

Jha (1991) made a comparative study of villages using survey data along with historical records, particularly the village notes. For the study, he classified the villages of rural Bihar into eleven categories on a simple-complex continuum by analyzing the records of more than five thousand villages. This work out paved the way for a systematic sampling of the villages studied and provided empirical grounds for the concept of a rural-urban continuum. The author concentrates on the modal styles of relationships constituting the ‘primary level structures’ of villages and these structures are constituted by such institutions as family, upper class and lower class relationships, money lending, sharecropping and jajmani relationships. The expectations typifying the roles of each of these groups have been explored and analyzed. It is attempted to concentrate on regional variations as well as variations in the nature of villages which are noticeably reflected in the styles of relationships studied. The author
shows how new forces are disrupting the existing pattern and producing economic and political systems that no longer depend entirely on Caste.

Leela Dube (in Muslim Women in India (ed.) Anjum 1992) in the article, Women in a Matrilineal Muslim community, explained the situation of women in a matrilineal system in the 1960’s. The article was based on empirical fieldwork conducted in Kalpeni Island.

Two careers/ One family, by Lucia Albino Gilbert (1993), describes the current world of women and men trying to negotiate new realities at home and at work, with each other and with the larger social structures. The study is significant for being one of the rare studies in offering a glimpse of the future and the potential that exists for creative restructuring of our concepts of gender. This book again, takes up to the frontier of close relationships, where gender roles are being reevaluated in the light of what is both functional and optional for persons in dual- career partnerships.

The prime concern in the book Understanding Indian Society, edited by Yogesh Atal (1993) is marriage, family and gender. In the eleventh chapter of the book, Gough, based on her fieldwork among the Nayars, has tried to give a satisfactory definition of marriage. But she argues that it is not necessary that all societies must have marriage by her definition. The twelfth Chapter deals with the Nayar family in a disintegrating matrilineal system. This is followed by Shah’s paper on changes in the Indian family. Another Chapter by Suma Chitnis titled Feminism: Indian Ethos and Indian Convictions points out the perceptions and sentiments of a noticeably large number of Indian women which seem to diverge from those of the western-influenced feminists. Another is their somewhat mixed and confused reaction to the feminist emphasis on
patriarchy, and particularly on men as the principal oppressors. The third is their relative inability to tune in to the demands for equality and personal freedom. She opines that understanding the roots of these three reactions is important from the point of view of gearing active feminism and women’s studies in India to the Indian ethos and Indian convictions. Nakane’s paper on Marriage, Family and Gender, concludes by presenting the matrilineal elements still existing in the present Nayar family.

Jeffrey (rpt 1994) has made a study on the Decline of Nair dominance in Travancore and the book traces the social changes, especially changes in matrilineal system, that have occurred in Kerala during nineteenth Century. Though the study centered mostly on the Nayar communities, it also provides a general account on the social and political history of the area during the period of change.

Part II of Unni’s (1994) book, Kinship systems in South and South East Asia, is mainly based on matrilineal system in Kerala. This study attempts to explain the kinship system and marriage patterns of Traditional Nayar and Nambuthiri communities. The author has discussed some of the factors which have contributed for the collapse of matriliny. However, this work gives some basic idea about the traditional kinship system prevalent in Kerala.

_Keralatthinte samskarika Charithram_ (Cultural history of Kerala) written by Gopalakrishnan (1994) in Malayalam torches to the cultural and feudal history of Kerala. The study analysed the development of feudalism and discussed about Kolathiri’s of Malabar and the interventions of foreign powers over the kingdom. The study has presented in a sequential order and gives picture about the social changes happened in the Kerala society.
Khan’s (1994) Marriage and Kinship among Muslims in South India, primarily focuses on the social institutions such as, marriage and kinship among the Muslims of a village in South India. The work is empirical, and the study shows how the Muslim social life is related to local cultures. In this study, the author has analyzed the institutions- marriage and kinship in the milieu of the two main theories, namely, descent theory and alliance theory.

Malabar and its Folk by Gopala Panikkar (1900 rpt. 1995) attempts to explain the traditional features of Malabar, such as the taravad system, marumakkathayam, Feudalism and different festivals in Malabar. It also gives a brief account on the Nambuthiris of Malabar.

Cultural heritage of Kerala by Sreedhara Menon (1996) imparts an account on marumakkathayam system of inheritance, its antiquity, theories of origin and related social customs. It also explains the Janmi system, evolution of feudal polity, the Caste system etc.

Caste, Class and Power by Beteille (1996) is based on an intensive study of the changing patterns of social stratification in a multi-caste village in South India, Tanjore. The study examines the village social life which was shaped by the prevalence of three caste groups and the caste of a villager determines his position in the class system and power hierarchy.

Renjini (1996) in an article titled Matrilineal system of Nayars of Kerala, briefly mentioned about Nayar matrilineal system.

Malabar Gazetteer edited by Innes (1908 rpt. 1997), gives a brief account on Chirakkal, and Kolathiri vamsam which was once under British rule.

Local Agrarian Societies in Colonial India- Japanese Perspectives, an edited book by Peter Robb, Kaoru Sugihara and Haruka Yanagisawa (1997) present a collection of essays on the agrarian history of British India. The Chapter on Malabar Tenancy Act, 1930 gives a description on the relationship between the janmis and kudiyans, categories of the janmis and the kudiyans, landed property management etc. In addition, it imparts an account on agrarian problem, marumakkathayam system and marumakkathayam reform movements.

Kerala Gazetteers Department has edited and published a book, Perspectives on Kerala History (1999), which deals with the history of Kerala. In the Introduction Chapter of the book, K.N.Ganesh has attempted to analyse the writings related to Kerala history starting from Atula’s Mushaka Vamsa of 11th Century. In order to analyse the historiographical trends, he divided the period of such works into different phases such as, early phase, British-colonial phase, Post-independence period and modern trends. This book also covers the political forms during 12th Century and the expansion of agrarian society and agrarian relations.

K. Saradamoni’s (1999) book, ‘Matriliny Transformed’ is mainly based on legal interventions regarding matriliny. Her study deals with matriliny in Travancore, and shows that matriliny was not restricted to Nayars, but practiced by a large number of Castes and communities and there was no standard form of matriliny which was followed by everyone. She is of the opinion that changes in matriliny were taking place over time and the major factors that affected women were the changes that had
come in landownership and land relations since the formation of Travancore and the legislative enactments or regulations, which brought about radical changes in marriage, inheritance and property relations. She argues that, the individual partition of property allowed by the matrilineal legislation reduced the property base of the 
taravads, where women had certain rights and access to education or employment was not uniformly available to all women, who became a ‘dependent’ category.

The edited volumes of Oommen (1999), Kerala’s Development Experience seeks to appraise the issues relating to the sustainability of the model from specific sectoral perspectives and incorporated various Development reports, Census data and examined it critiquely. However, the study gives an account on the current features of Kerala and the reality behind ‘Kerala model’.

Census of India-Special Studies-Kerala- Temples of Kannoor district (1999) gives a general background and history especially political history of the district. Accordingly the voyage of Vasco da Gama, during the close of the fifteenth Century was an important landmark in the history of Kerala and followed by Dutch. The study reveals that the Mysorean invasions had resulted in political, social and economic changes and later on the Britishers ceded the land of Malabar. The book concludes that the Caste structure, once the basis of traditional order, does not afford adequate framework for the analysis of Indian village society today, and also examines the role of temples in social organization. Thus, a more differentiated analytical scheme for the study of social change in India was covered.

Renjini (2000) analysed the status of present day women (Nayar) in Kerala by comparing it with status of Nayar women in the matrilineal
system. In this book, the author has examined the changing position and the status differences of Nayar women due to westernization and modern education. The author stresses that several institutional and structural practices have contributed to progressive changes in the socio-economic position of women.

Social Mobility in Kerala is a renowned work of Osella and Osella (2000), based on their fieldwork in a rural Panchayat in Southern Kerala. They have touched different spheres of social life and the mobility happening in all these spheres. For instance, regarding Marriage and mobility, they pointed out that marriage reforms, unification of the caste and the abolition of matriliny have encouraged expansion of affinal ties and formation of a wide-ranging marriage market.

Bhaskaranunni’s (rpt 2000) book on Kerala society titled *Pathompatham Noottantile Keralam* describes the castes, customs, education system, coins, agriculture, trade and industry, land system, temples, punishment, inheritance system etc., prevalent in Kerala during the nineteenth Century. The inheritance pattern and the marriage system existed among the Nayars and Nambuthiris formed one of the main concerns of the book. Another work by the same author (2005) titled *Keralam Irupatham Noottantinde Arambhathil* also gives information about different communities of Kerala and their customs and practices.

Leela Dube (2001) has written a book, ‘Anthropological explorations in gender-Intersecting fields’ and in the second essay of the book, titled ‘On the construction of gender: Socialization of Hindu girls in Patrilineal India’ is a dynamic enquiry into the process of absorbing and growing up female in the patrilineal, patri-virilocal milieu of Indian society. The author has highlighted the importance of family structure and the wider context
of kinship in understanding gender roles. The third essay, titled Seed and Earth: the symbolism of biological reproduction and sexual relations of production highlights that the metaphor of the seed and earth is used to symbolize the different roles of men and women in procreation. The metaphor seed and earth denotes the logic of dichotomization of roles and thereby reinforcing of culturally established norms. The fourth essay, Caste and Women focuses on interrelated themes such as occupational continuity in the caste system and its extensive connection with food and rituals, and its effect on marriage and sexual relations. The author points out that occupational continuity depends in large scale on women.

In the fifth essay, the author has analyzed the distinctive space of women and the freedom and security they enjoyed in the matrilineal milieu of Lakshadweep. Dube has also highlighted the changes that have occurred in the matrilineal system of Kalpeni after 1956. However, the most interesting point that the author noted was that even the youngsters of this Island show their eagerness to retain the matrilineal system from its dissolution.

The last essay deals with patterns and contrasts, in kinship and gender that existed in South and South-East Asia. In this essay the author has highlighted the differences in kinship systems and family structures and the critical differences that exerts on gender relations. She has applied a comparative perspective to analyze the kinship systems of south-east Asia.

Desai and Thakkar (2001) in Women in Indian Society opines that a woman’s status in the family is much influenced by the family structure, and argues that there is not one pattern of family, that in changing circumstances its form has also been transforming. It has been pointed out
that family life in poor households, in business communities, among migrants and among those members who are living abroad, have been substantially altered and more and more adjustments to the new demands are being made. The contemporary families are facing range of challenges for survival especially because of the socio-economic changes, market forces, consumerism and environmental degradation.

The study explains that a woman’s work is absolutely essential for family survival and though women in the pre-Independence period worked in some professions such as teaching and medicine, a more marked entry came with the Second World War, when many of the white-collar jobs were done by women.

The study remarks that women’s subordination is not only due to male domination but also due to the basic economic and political structures of society, which are again reinforced by the same male domination.

Indian Development- Selected Regional Perspectives is a famous book edited by Jean Dre’ze and Sen (2001). The fourth Chapter of this book mainly concentrated on Kerala’s Development Achievements written by V.K.Ramachandran. Different spheres of development prospects and constraints, such as caste and gender relations in Kerala, agrarian change and agrarian relations in Malabar, Travancore and Cochin, Land Reforms, Caste based reform movements, the role of the left etc., have been discussed in this Chapter. The author attempts to highlight that the achievements of the people of Kerala are the result of major social, economic, and political transformations especially, as a result of public action in post-1957 Kerala. Another important factor contributed for the
change is, transformations in agrarian relations and changes in the conditions of unfreedom of the people of oppressed Castes.

It also points out that the pervasive influence of the matrilineal system was important in determining social attitudes towards women’s survival, women’s education, and women’s health. The study concludes that, Kerala’s achievements were possible because of mass literacy and transformation of traditional patterns of gender, caste, and class dominance.

Srinivas’s (2001) essays in Social Anthropology on village, caste, gender and method is of great importance as it highlights the major changes happening in the society and most of them are relevant in the contemporary period. The essay on the changing position of Indian women gives a detailed picture on their status.

Family and household is central to anthropological studies. Srivastava (2001) made a study on household changes based on a field study carried out among the Korwa of southern belt of Bihar. The study points out that the categorizations of family (household) are culture-specific and the critical factor that determines this is land. The study concludes that the household is not static; it follows a series of stages, such as expansion and replacement.

Framing Custom, Directing Practices: Authority, Property and Matriliny under Colonial Law in Nineteenth Century Malabar is a CDS Working Paper by Praveena Kodoth (2002). The study is important in the sense that it critically examines legal discourse on matriliny.

Koshy (2002) has edited a book entitled Cannanore in the Maritime History of India. The fourth Chapter of this book deals with the kingdom of
Kolathunadu and the relationship with Dutch East India Company. Another essay of this book highlights the Portuguese-Cannanore relationships which was marked by a period of friendship firstly which was followed by two other phases, fraternity and conflict. Kannur in History by Kunhikrishnan is another essay related to the study, and according to him, an important landmark in the history of Kannur began with the advent of the Portuguese. It also deals with the relationship between the Arakkal and Chirakkal families.

Kishwar (2002) in her study, off the beaten track, examines the issues related to women. The third Chapter of the book deals with daughter’s rights in her parental family and the dowry calculations. It examines that, in India, tussles over dowry payments have become a major source of conflict between families. She notices that the modern inheritance laws have increasingly moved in favour of men and against the interests of women. The study points out that, the communities which practiced matrilineal inheritance, such as the Nayars and Moplahs of Kerala, have been steadily moving towards patrilineal inheritance. Thus, the systems which provided reasonable or adequate protection of women’s economic rights have all been rail-roaded out of existence and the property is today much more heavily concentrated in the hands of men.

The Publication Division of University of Calicut has published a book entitled, The Ali Rajas of Cannanore, written by Kurup (2002). The study is relevant due to the role it had played in the political and socio-economic history of Malabar region. The study mainly concentrates to explain the relationships established between the Ali Rajas and foreign powers. However, the study gives a picture about the situation in Malabar in the past Centuries.
Nongbri (2003) has made a study on Khasi women and Matriliny. The study shows a solid connection between gender, patriarchy and the state. The study shows that while kinship provides an important context within which gender ideology is shaped and practiced, it cannot be divorced from wider social structures and processes. It also looks at the constitution of gender within the Khasi matrilineal structure and the implication of the Khasi custom lineage Bill.

Arunima’s (2003) book attempts to understand the system of matrilineal kinship and tries to answer the question of why matrilineal kinship was abolished in Kerala. The book provides an account on the changing history of colonial Malabar and the change in matrilineal taravada as a result of the transitions in family law initiated under Company rule. The study analyses that the crisis within matrilineal families in the late nineteenth Century was not merely a set of changes in customs and laws in Malabar, but the search for a wider identity, among the Nayars spelt their desire to move out of the narrow confines of the family. The book covers a good account on the legal abolition of matrilineal household.

Sumi Krishna (2004) has edited a book, Livelihood and Gender-Equity in community Resource Management. In this book an article titled Gender Aspects of Family Property and Land Rights: Regulation and Reform in Kerala by Praveena Kodoth deals with the structures and practices of families in determining gender differentiated patterns of access to land and other forms of property / productive resources. It seeks to address the conceptual issue of women’s and men’s claims to land/property in terms of viable notions of interests and identities. By taking the example of Kerala’s Land Reforms, it discusses the importance to property reform of a gendered understanding of the family. It collates findings on
changing property related practices, such as inheritance, dowry, and residence in contemporary Kerala to understand the implications for women’s property rights today.

Ravi Varma’s (2004) work (Vol. I & II) on Marumakkathayam (matriliney) is an elaborated and well noted one in Malayalam. The first Volume of the book mainly dealt with tribal matriliney and northern systems. The study gives a picture about different inheritance patterns and briefly mentions about the history of development of matriliney. In addition to this, the author has presented the matrilineal system existed among the tribes and communities residing in the northern part of Kerala. The study describes the Aliya Santana systems existed in Tulunadu, its origin, history of development, salient features etc. Marumakkathayam system among the Muslims is of a rare one. The study gives a picture about Mappila marumakkathayam system. In short, the study gives a whole picture about the marumakkathayam system which existed in northern Kerala. Varma has tried to identify the differences existing between different marumakkathayam groups.

The second volume of the above book mainly dealt with Matriliney in Lakshadweep and southern systems. The study has analysed the significance of the system in Lakshadweep, the matrilineal systems of different communities in the southern region, Matriliney followed by the ruling families etc. The study also observes the minute level changes in communities observing matrilineal system. Cross-cultural analysis of the system gives more opportunities to think and identify the similarities and differences.

Parkin and Stone (2004) have edited a book entitled Kinship and Family- An Anthropological Reader, and Section first of this book focus on
the question of Descent, descent groups and marriage. It examines the chronology of matriliny and patriliny and treated it as distinct realities and the evolutionary views of various anthropologists regarding the origin and development of this. This section also covers a Chapter by Adam Kuper on lineage theory and its development. For convenience, it is divided into two, the classical and modern, each marked by three phases. The classical period was started by the publication of Maine and Morgan and these models were modified by contemporaries, mostly by McLennan. During the third phase, hypotheses drawn from these models were subjected to empirical testing on the basis of new ethnographic reports. Accordingly, this then initiated a new cycle of elaboration and ethnographical application and criticism.

According to Kuper, throughout these two periods the central issues remained remarkably constant. First there was the question of the relationship between blood and soil, kinship and territory. Second there was the relationship between the family on the one hand and the clan or gens or sib on the other. However, the functionalists were not concerned with sequences of institutional change but rather with the relationship between contemporary institutions.

Ajithkumar’s (2004) book, Kerala Samskaram includes the customs and practices existed in Kerala. It describes the history of different place names, ancient cultivation practices, the traditional food of Keralites, inheritance patterns, festivals, art forms, education system etc.

Negotiating disciplinary boundaries or debilitating method? Learning what to avoid from research on matriliny in Kerala by Praveena Kodoth (2005) is an analytical paper on Saradamoni’s (1999) and Arunima’s (2003) work. In the first part of the paper, the author attempted to locate
Saradamoni’s and Arunima’s work within the larger corpus of mostly anthropological research on matriliny in Kerala. In the latter part, it examines the concern with region and history respectively as reflected in the previous work.

Mahendrakumar (2006) analysed the contemporary Socio-Economic structure of a Kerala village. The main emphasis in this study is traditional caste based occupations and change and also analysed the degree and factors involved in the diversification process of traditional occupations.

*Kovilakangalum Kottarangalum*, a book in Malayalam by Murali (2007) is actually a memoir, which mentions a brief account on Chirakkal, Arakkal Royal families and different *manas* or *illams* of Kerala and their present condition. Though the study is not aimed to give a deep understanding, it gives a shadow picture about the past and present conditions of these royal houses.

Since few anthropological literatures are available on patrilineal emergence and its impact on north Malabar, the present study would be significant from conceptual and theoretical point of view.

**OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To analyze the definitions on the two concepts- matriliny and patriliny,

- To analyze the emergence of patrilineal system and its impact on agrarian relations of north Malabar,
To study the impact of patrilineal system on Chirakkal village with Socio-Political and legal significance, and

-To study the factors that led to the decline of Chirakkal dynasty.

**AREA OF STUDY**

The village selected for the present study is relevant for several reasons. This village had a complex system of social organization, landlordism, dynastic power system and related social structure. This is a micro-level study proposed to analyze the changes happened due to shift from one particular social framework to another in a village social system. Since the shift happened cannot be easily comprehended at the wider level with the limitation of time, the study is confined to village level and the analysis is deliberate to impart a general picture of the village life with the swing in inheritance pattern.

The area of study is Chirakkal village, in Kannur taluk of Kannur district, Kerala State. The physiography of the district shows that it lies between the latitudes 11° 40' to 12° 48' north and longitudes 74° 52' to 76° 07' east. The eastern part of the district is bounded by the Western Ghats, Kozhikode and Wayanad districts in the south; the Arabian Sea demarcates the western part and Kasaragod district in the northern region. Chirakkal is located approximately 3-4 Kms north of the district headquarters, Kannur. The district has been divided into three revenue taluks, with nine Development Blocks, eighty three Grama Panchayats, and six Municipalities.
Chirakkal is bounded by the Valapattanam and Puzhathi Panchayats in the north and east respectively, and Pallikunnu Panchayat in the south and Azhikode Panchayat in the west. Chirakkal is a developing village. The Panchayat is divided into 22 Wards.

The Chirakkal kovilakam family, one of the major land owning families of north Malabar situated in Chirakkal Panchayat, had been the followers of matrilineal system. They belong to Varma community and enjoyed high socio-political and economic status when compared to other castes and communities of the area. They were the rulers of the Chirakkal Kingdom. In addition to the Varma, the Nayar, Thiyya, Vaniya, Muslim, Chaliya, Marar, Maniyani, Pulaya, and Valluva of the area also embraced matriliny.

**METHODOLOGY**

Both Primary and Secondary data have been used in the study.

Kovilakam denotes the palace of members of the ruling family.

The main methods used to collect the primary data were the anthropological techniques such as Interview, Non-participant Observation, Case study, Genealogy, and also Household Survey. A sample survey of 1000 households was conducted in the Chirakkal Panchayat comprising of thirteen communities. This forms the representative of the group. The household survey was conducted to get general information
on the village caste structure, the concentration of the caste groups, family types, educational status, occupations of the people of different castes, nature of household, inheritance patterns etc. In addition to this, primary data were also collected from agriculturalists, social workers, and religious specialists of different villages and cross checked with the information collected from the key informants.

For the collection of data on kinship structure, approaches, such as the residential, the biographical, were employed in different degrees. This is to understand family composition, kinship roles, kinship behaviour etc. Inter-generational study was helpful to assess the changes which happened due to the changes in kinship structure. Thus, by using certain variables such as, right to have membership in taravadi or family, right to inherit property, right to establish kin relationships, right to have power and succession, right to perform religious and ceremonial duties and post-marital residence etc., kinship structure has been analysed in the study. The analysis of kinship structure was complemented by qualitative interviews of fifty two respondents from matrilineal and patrilineal Caste groups.

The Secondary sources include Census reports, Government records, and Archival materials. These sources provided valuable information on traditional Kerala society. The study, however, primarily relies on data gathered through a field level investigation. A detailed Interview Schedule was used for collecting socio-cultural information from key informants of all the caste / religious groups. By using the Genealogical method, the family types, descent inheritance pattern, marriage pattern etc., have been obtained.
In addition to the above approaches, gender perspectives in the kinship system analysis, agrarian relations and structural differences in family and kinship among castes of north Malabar were also used for analysis.

For cross-cultural analysis and interpretation, the data collected from the village have been cross-checked with neighbouring villages, which were under Chirakkal dynasty.

Inter-generational approach was also employed to understand the changing mentality of the people, especially matters related to household formation, household head and selection of marital bonds. The head of the family is identified on the basis of Government supplied ration cards and on mutual accord of the family members. Collection of oral narratives are also utilised to elicit data from the memories of the people. This had been followed also in tracing out the agrarian relations and change, variables working along matrilineal and patrilineal systems. In addition, the oral narratives had supplemented the secondary sources and archival materials. The data have been explored within the framework of structural transformation.

In Chirakkal village, a random sample survey was conducted in households spread over in 20 Wards. According to the 2001 Panchayat Census, Chirakkal has a population of 43287 members.

The samples of 1000 houses out of a total of 7612 houses spread over in 20 Wards were surveyed for the study. The Wards surveyed are as follows:

Railway cutting, Manna, Kadalayi, Puzhathi, Keeriyad, Balan kinar, Kattampally, Kottakunj, Kollarathikkal, Onaparambu,

The principal caste groups in the village today are Chaliyas, Thiyyas and the Muslims. The samples of households selected are representatives of the whole village, but the selection was made on random basis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The proposed study is confined to Chirakkal village. The study will not be complete without the understanding of legal and social reforms which have been passed by changing governments of Kerala. The study attempts to analyse the problem diachronically for a holistic understanding and has not been feasible to confine to a particular period.

It was difficult to confine and converse all the agrarian relations in village level, and one cannot study all the spheres of society at the same time. Here the intension was to examine only those institutional systems which are relevant to the study. Until the early part of the 20th Century, the agrarian relationship and agrarian social structure was a prime issue in the ongoing social life of the area. The agrarian social structure can be studied from a variety of perspectives, such as production relations, social inequality, social stratification and so on. However, inadequate availability of documents not enabled to reconstruct the socio-economic profile of the agrarian life in detail.

One of the prime constraints of the study was related to time. Since the research was conducted on part-time basis, the researcher faced the problem of continuity in the various phases of the research work.
ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The whole of the village social structure and organisation, its history and social changes have been spread over in four Chapters of this thesis. The Introduction, though it deals with methodology, review of literature, objectives and area of study, it also gives a brief idea about the content of the study.

The first Chapter delineates the factors which led to the decline of Chirakkal dynasty. This Chapter is predominantly based on secondary sources. Various factors have accelerated the decline starting from the invasion of foreign powers.

The second Chapter deals with the existence of matriliney and patriliney among different castes and religious groups in a village. The groups are the Nayar, Thiyya, Vaniya, Maniyani, Harijan, Marar, Kshatriya, Valluva, Nambuthiri, Viswakarma, Chaliya, Malayan and the Muslim. This Chapter also gives a brief description of the features of matriliney and patriliney. A comparative approach has been employed in this Chapter to analyse the extent or degree of matriliney and patriliney. For the study, the kinship features have been classified into different categories on a matri-patri continuum by analyzing the features that each caste groups exhibit. This work paved the way for a systematic categorization of the Castes studied and provided empirical grounds for the concept of a matri-patri continuum. This again concentrates on the primary level membership rites of various relatives coming at various degrees and these are constituted by such institutions as family, taravadu and residence. The typical features of each of these groups have been explored and analyzed. In this chapter attempts were also made to concentrate on the changes
which have occurred as well as the structures which are not undergone any change.

Chapter third highlights the impact of patrilineal system on the village life. The emergence of a new system would result in structural changes especially at institutional level though it has affected various castes differently.

In the fourth Chapter, the shift from matriliny to patriliny has been explored with reference to various factors such as changes in law, social framework, reform movements etc. It also deals with the agrarian relations that existed in villages as part of the socio-economic framework of the village and changes happened to it.

Summary and Conclusions of the major findings are given followed by the fourth Chapter.