CHAPTER - V

RELIGION AND FAITH

Religion is a perennial need of the human spirit. Religion is difficult to define. Still it may be described as “a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people grapple with the ultimate concerns of life”. Principles of moral conduct can be immediately derived from the scriptures of different religions. Religious beliefs and practices become relevant to daily life concerns. The population of the Travancore state was composed mainly of Hindus, Christians and Muhammadans and so was South Travancore. In 1931, the Hindus formed a predominant proportion making up total of 3,137,795 out of an aggregate of 5,095,973. The Christians and Muhammadans came next in the respective order. Out of 1000 persons in towns 648 were Hindus, 239 Christians and 112 Muslims, the proportion of Hindus being highest in the Northern division and Muslims in the Central Division.

HINDUISM

In Travancore Hinduism was the established religion.\(^1\) Hinduism, the religion of the ruling family was the predominant religion and its followers, divided into various caste groups, constituted nearly three fifths of the entire

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population of Travancore.² But the different communities lived side by side in amity and mutual confidence and developed into a body politic with common aims and aspirations.³ The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas were accepted as scriptures. Aryan heroes became popular with the masses and their idols were installed in the temples side by side with the deities of the Dravidians.⁴

Idol worship was the practice in Travancore from time immemorial and so also in South Travancore. Places traditionally considered holy and places made holy by priestly ritual, chanting and prayer came to be chosen as the abodes of idols and images. Places like this grew up into temples.⁵ The chief deities worshipped were Siva, Vishnu, Pillayar, Muruga, Ambigai (Bhagavathi) and Sastha. Muruga was very popular and the worship of Ambigai and Sastha was common in some places.⁶

Demon worship and worship of inferior deities also prevailed among the people of South Travancore. The devils were systematically worshipped especially by the ignorant classes. One of the devil temples situated at Agasthiswaram near Cape Comorin, the temple of Muttaramman which was said to have been built in ten days by the aid of demons.⁷ Some animals and

⁶ Gopalakrishnan, M., op.cit., p. 118.
plants were considered sacred and Ahimsah Paramo Dharma was their creed. Even plants were respected and some were regarded with special reverence as the abode of, or as being sacred to, particular deities.  

The animals that were regarded as objects of worship were the cow, the serpent, the bull and the garuda. The cow was Kamadhenu, the giver of all things. The serpent was worshipped as Adisesha who supports the earth and is the cot of Maha-Vishnu. The bull (Nandi) is Siva’s vehicle and is therefore sacred to Saivaites. Garuda (Brahmini kite) is the vahanam of Vishnu and is highly venerated by the Vaishnavites.

The Pulayas of South Travancore worshipped Mallan, Karinkali, Mantiramurthi, Bhadrakali and Anchu Thampuran. They did not have temples. They installed their deities in a shed called thekkathu. Each of them was represented by a stone. The priest was an elderly man called Pujari. The worship to these deities was given only on auspicious occasions like Sivaratri or Sankraman. The Pulayas worshipped demons and evil spirits of deceased ancestors. The spirits of persons who died before they were sixteen years of age and of virgins received special attention as they were believed to haunt the earth with unsatisfied cravings. Madan and

8 Ibid., p. 57.
9 Ibid.,
Panchavar were the most popular deities. Worship of Mariamma also prevailed among them.\textsuperscript{10}

**Principal Hindu Festivals**

Certain important festivals were celebrated by the Hindus. Deepavali, Thai Pongal, Mattu Pongal, Vavu Bali, Vinyaga Chathurthi, Pooja Vaippau, Mahanavami, Sivarathri, Avani Avittam and Onam were the important festivals celebrated by the Hindus in South Travancore besides the festivals at each temple.\textsuperscript{11}

Principal festivals in the important Hindu temples of South Travancore were Kodai festival at Mandakkad, Kalkulam car festival\textsuperscript{12}, Thiruvattar Meenam Utsavam and Thulam Utsavam, Suchindram Medam Utsavam, Margali Utsavam, Theppam Utsavam and Car festival and Kanyakumari Utsavam.\textsuperscript{13}

Maha Sivaratri was another festival celebrated by the people of South Travancore. This festival is celebrated to strengthen the Siva and Vaishnava unity. The twelve Siva temples situated in the various parts of Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks were selected and the devotees ran to all these twelve temples on the day of Navaratri which falls in the month of February.

\textsuperscript{12} Kalkulam temple is situated inside the fort of Padmanabhapuram. (*Dinamalar* dated 24 February, 2006, p.7.)
\textsuperscript{13} *Travancore Directory 1949*, Trivandrum, 1948, pp. 28-29.
reciting ‘Gopala, Govinda’. They started running from Munchirai temple of Vilavancode taluk and ended with Nattalam temple of Vilavancode taluk covering 100 kilometres. The whole day of Sivaratri was dedicated to the worship of Lord Siva. Special celebrations were held at the twelve shrines. After visiting these shrines the devotees finally went to Suchindrum to worship Sri.Sthanumalaya.

A large number of temples were constructed in South Travancore and even now they are attracting a lot of devotees. Saivite and Vaishnavite shrines may be seen in the same temples in many places. The Suchindram temple is dedicated to the Trinity and the Trinurts Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer are worshipped. In the Guhanathaswami temple at Cape Comorin both Siva and Ganesha are worshipped. In the Nagaraja Temple at Nagercoil both Siva and Vishnu are worshipped.

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14 *Dinamalar dated, 24 February 2006*, pp. 7-8.
17 There were 126 temples in Kanyakumari District as per 1961 Census.
Parvathisekharapuram temple at Munchira is the most important Siva temple of South Travancore. The temple at Thirupparappu and Kumaracoil are the important Muruga temples. Mandaikkad temple and the Bagavathy temple at Cape Comorin are the famous Amman temples in South Travancore. Adikesava Perumal temple at Thiruvattar is an important Perumal temple. The temple at Tirupatisaram is famous for the worship of Venkatasalapati. The temple at Vettumani in Vilavacode taluk is the most important Sasta temple.

Administration of temples

In Travancore, the temples were usually called Devaswoms. The term devaswom is literally attributed to deva or deity and is commonly used to denote temples. In Tamil devaswom is called as devasthanam (devar + thanam), ‘devar’ means heavenly immortal and ‘thanam’ means charity or donation. In Malayalam the word ‘devan’ denotes divine power and ‘swom’ which has been derived from Sanskrit means property. The Devaswom possessed extensive landed property which was called Pandaravaka.

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20 Travancore Information and Listener, April 1946, pp. 14.
22 Travancore Information and Listener, July 1948, p. 23.
27 Emily Gilchriest Hatch, op.cit., pp. 207-208.
29 Sreekanteswaram Padmanabha Pillai, Sabdatharavali (Malayalam Lexicon), 1989, p. 1749.
belonging to the royal treasury. Its sole managers were the Yogakhars, who
had all the powers over the Devaswom property and over everyone of the
tenants and holders of the Devaswom land.³⁰

The Hindu Religious Endowments Act, III of 1904 provided for the
better administration of Hindu religious endowments of the temples. Under
this Act it was made competent to the Government to intervene in the affairs
of such institutions and assume their management whenever necessary.³¹ In
pursuance of the Devaswom Proclamation dated the 12 April 1922, the
control of the Sirkar Devaswoms which vested for over a century in the
Land Revenue Department, was separated from that department and a
Devaswom Department was organized for their efficient management and
control with effect from August 1922.³²

With the formation of the Devaswom Department, the Devaswoms
were classified into major, minor and petty according to the scale of
expenditure incurred; major Devaswoms being those involving an
expenditure of Rs. 1000 or more, minor costing between Rs. 1000 and 100
and petty costing less than Rs. 100 annually.³³ Apart from the scheduled
Devaswoms there were the Personal Deposit Devaswoms which were
unincorporated religious institutions which came under the control and

³⁰ Shungoonny Menon, op.cit., pp. 79-80.
³¹ Travancore Administration Report 1941-1942, Trivandrum, 1943, p. 165.
³² Travancore Administration Report 1939-1940, Trivandrum, 1941, p. 150.
³³ Travancore Administration Report 1945-1946, p. 166 and Travancore Administration
management of Government at different times under varying circumstances. The accounts in respect of these were not merged with the general Devaswom accounts, but were maintained separately. These Devaswoms had personal deposit accounts with the Government treasuries.\textsuperscript{34}

At the apex of the administration stood the Devaswom Commissioner who served as a link between the government and the Devaswom. Generally members of the royal family were appointed as Devaswom Commissioners as evident from the appointment of Rajaraja Varma being the first Devaswom Commissioner. The Devaswom Commissioner acted as the adviser to the government in matters relating to Devaswom administration.\textsuperscript{35}

The Devaswom Commissioner was also directly responsible to the government for the proper management and control of Devaswoms and charitable institutions. Generally he would be consulted in all matters affecting Hindu temples and also for giving permission to open new temples at various places.\textsuperscript{36} The Devaswom Commissioner became the head of the department.\textsuperscript{37} He supervised and controlled the working of subordinate officers of Devaswom Department. Below him, the Devaswom Assistant

\textsuperscript{34} Travancore Administration Report 1945-1946, Trivandrum, 1947, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{35} Travancore Government Proceedings No. 4905, dated October 1922.
\textsuperscript{36} Government Order R.O.C. No. 206 of 21/G.B, dated 2 September 1922.
\textsuperscript{37} Proceedings of Sri Mulam Popular Assembly of Travancore, Trivandrum, 1923, p. 19.
Commissioners and Superintendents were appointed for the proper and effective administration of the temples.\textsuperscript{38}

In the major Devaswoms, several registers and accounts such as the day-book of receipts and disbursement of paddy, the cash-book of receipts and disbursements of paddy, the cashbook of receipts and disbursement of money, the daybook of miscellaneous receipts, the daily issue book of stores, the register of utensils, the register of silk and cloth pieces, the register of jewels and the register giving particulars of nadavaravu were maintained.\textsuperscript{39}

The formation of a separate Devaswom department did not in anyway affect the revenue administration of the Devaswom lands. The Proclamation of 1922 had made it clear that the Devaswom lands were treated as pantaravaka lands and the collection of revenue from them was made by the government from time to time. On 31 January 1923, the government permitted the Commissioner to lease out the lands belonging to unincorporated Devaswom on Kuttakappattam for an indefinite period. The Assistant Commissioners of Devaswom were also given power to do so, but only for a period not exceeding twelve years.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Government Order R.O.C. No. 206 of 21/G.B, dated 2 September 1922.


\textsuperscript{40} G.O.R. Dis. No. 52 of 23/G.B, dated 31 January 1923.
From 3 June 1923 all Devaswom Vaka service lands were made Pantaravaka property. The entire land was divided as pantaravaka, brahmaswom and devaswom lands. The devaswom lands were exempted from taxation and such lands were known as irayilli. The government was entitled to the extra assessment of vilayartham of such lands.\(^{41}\)

On 1 November 1924, the Superintendents of Devaswom were empowered to grant Kuttakapattam leases for a period not exceeding three years.\(^{42}\) According to the Devaswom (Amendment) Proclamation of 31 January 1947 a separate fund to be called “The Devaswoms surplus Fund” which consisted of the unspent balances out of the Devaswom Fund was formed. The Committee was set up for this consisting of the Devaswom Commissioner and two other officers appointed by the government. The Devaswom Commissioner was the convener of the Committee and it was named as Devaswom Surplus Fund Committee.\(^{43}\)

In course of time the government felt the need of bringing the temples under legislation and consequently Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act (Act XV of 1950) was enacted by the Travancore

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\(^{41}\) *G.O.R. Dis. No. 461/23, Devaswom.*

\(^{42}\) *G.O. No. 1691 of 26/Revenue, dated 13 November 1926.*

\(^{43}\) *Supplement to the Travancore Government Gazette No. 26, dated 11 February 1947/29\(^{\text{th}}\) Makaram 1122, p.1.*
Legislature. This Act provided for the establishment of Travancore Devaswom Board and the Board started functioning in an effective way.\textsuperscript{44}

The Travancore Devaswom Board not only gave a new impetus to the administration of temples but also brought about some social works such as establishment of schools, colleges, libraries for the upliftment of Hindu population in particular and the people of Travancore in general. The Travancore temples were bifurcated on 1 November 1956, the date of state reorganization when four Tamil speaking southern taluks of Travancore, Thovalai, Kalkulam, Agasthiswaram and Vilavancode joined with the Madras state forming Kanyakumari district.\textsuperscript{45}

\section*{CHRISTIANITY}

\textbf{Catholic Mission}

The advent of Christianity in South Travancore played a vital role in changing the life pattern, customs and conventions of the people. Christianity came to have a strong hold in South Travancore. Christianity spread among the socially, economically and religiously affected sections of the society. Christianity offered education which gave them their economic and social status. In 1542, the advent of Francis Xavier to South Travancore

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Travancore Gazette Extraordinary}, dated 16 April 1950.
\textsuperscript{45} From Travancore 490 temples were separated and entrusted to the newly formed Kanyakumari Devaswom Board constituted under Madras Government Act 30 of 1959 and it started function from 1 April 1960.
paved the way for the propagation of the Catholic faith.\textsuperscript{46} He established several churches, the chief of which at Kottar still bears his name.\textsuperscript{47} The increase of the Roman Catholics seems to be astounding. During the ten years preceding 1891, they showed an increase of 1,41,522 throughout Travancore. From thirty percent they had risen to be fifty six percent of the total Christian population and eleven percent of the general population.\textsuperscript{48}

The Roman Catholics of the Latin rite were found in all the taluks of South Travancore and in the largest numbers in Eraniel (22,170).\textsuperscript{49} According to Benziger in the year 1906 the total Catholic population of South Travancore was raised to 63,300 a phenomenal increase of 15,000 faithful within a period of four years. Most of the increase occurred in Vilavancode taluk where the number of Catholics in the district of Vengodu rose from 4,689 to 11,800 in four years.\textsuperscript{50}

The Catholic churches in South Travancore were formerly under the Quilon bishopric, but in 1930 a separate bishop was consecrated at Kottar. The chief centres of the activities of this mission at Agasthiswaram taluk were Cape Comorin and Manakudi. The Mulakumudu convent with the orphanage attached to it was the chief Catholic institution in Kalkulam

\textsuperscript{46} Francis Xavier had baptized about 10,000 people in one month. (Subramanya Aiyar, N., \textit{Census of India}, 1901, Vol. XXVI, Travancore Part-I, Report Trivandrum, 1903, p. 110.)
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Agur, C.M., \textit{Church History of Travancore}, New Delhi, Madras, 1903, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{49} Subramanya Aiyar, N., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{50} Narchison, J.R., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 39.
The churches of South Travancore were under the Diocese of Quilon and Bishop Benziger, a Carmelite Bishop of Quilon worked for the development of the Catholics.

He took pains to organise and strengthen the present church of Kottar. His period was called the golden age of the Kottar Church. Diocese of Quilon made rapid progress and steps were taken to separate this Tamil area to form a new Diocese. Rapid changes took place in the mission areas under him. Due to its vast growth he requested the apostolic see the part of his Diocese be separated and made into a new diocese.

The response from Rome was the Apostolic Letter ‘Adpastorale Ministerium dated 26 May, 1930 constituting the taluks of Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Thovalai and Agasthiswaram into the new Diocese of Kottar under the patronage of Saint Francis Xavier and entrusting it to the care of the native clergy. It is interesting to note that the jurisdiction of the Kottar Diocese founded in 1930 is co-terminus with that of the present day Kanyakumari District or the South Travancore.

A committee was set up at Kottar under the chairmanship of Fr. Paul OCD, parish priest of St. Xavier’s Church, Kottar which was raised to be the cathedral. There was whole hearted co-operation and all parishes

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contributed generously to the consecration fund.\textsuperscript{55} The letter of erection of the diocese was published in all the churches during holy mass on 28 September 1930, which is considered as the date of birth of the new diocese.\textsuperscript{56}

On 5 October 1930, in the clear and bright morning huge throngs of people gathered in the grounds and vicinity of St. Francis Xavier’s Church at Kottar. A procession of seminarians and clergy threaded its way through the crowd leading the first Bishop-Elect, Mgr. Lawrence Pereira, to the decorated high dais erected in the ground with the joyous pealing of the church bells and the jubilant strains of Perossis “Ecce Sacerdos Magnus” by the choir.\textsuperscript{57}

The unique feature of the new diocese was out of the thirty two priests working at the time of its execution, twenty eight were secular priests and all of them were native Indians and out of this twenty eight there were seven from within the territory of the new diocese itself.\textsuperscript{58} Bishop Benziger left the place on the very day of the consecration. He left as his legacy to the new Bishop about 95,000 Catholics, twenty five parishes, thirty two priests thirteen major and six minor seminarians.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{56} Marieli Benzigar, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 467-468.
\textsuperscript{57} The area of the diocese is 1665 Sq.Km. and the patron of the diocese is St. Francis Xavier. (Narchison, J.R., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 45.)
\textsuperscript{58} Lawrence, V., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 99.
The new Bishop faced many problems. He had no home except a suite of two rooms in the old parish house at Kottar, where he had made his home for over two years. The parish priest O.C.D. acted as the Vicar General. Secretarial work was looked after by Father Emmanuel Pereira and later by Father Mary Ephrem Gomez.\(^{59}\) In March 1953, the Bishop changed his residence from Kottar to Carmel High School. Meanwhile on the high grounds of Ramavarmapuram, Nagercoil a layout was prepared by the architect Robert Fernandez of, Trivandrum for the new Bishop’s House and the work was begun on 26 May 1936.\(^{60}\)

Bishop Lawrence had erected fourteen parishes.

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<tr>
<th>SI. No</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Taluk</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cheruvallor</td>
<td>Vilavancode</td>
<td>October 1930</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Kulasekharam</td>
<td>Vilavancode</td>
<td>May 1931</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Kallithattu</td>
<td>Vilavancode</td>
<td>June 1931</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Christ the King, Nagercoil</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
<td>October 1931</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Palliyady</td>
<td>Vilavancode</td>
<td>November 1931</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Midalam</td>
<td>Kalkulam</td>
<td>October 1932</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Puthur</td>
<td>Kalkulam</td>
<td>February 1933</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mathal</td>
<td>Thovalai</td>
<td>October 1934</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Kila Asaripalam</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
<td>May 1936</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Siluvaiapuram</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
<td>March 1936</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Packiapuram</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
<td>August 1936</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Kurusady</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
<td>December 1936</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>En-Puthenthurai</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Kovalam</td>
<td>Agasthiswaram</td>
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\(^{59}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{60}\) Francis, E., *op.cit.*, p. 51.  
The newly created parishes had been depending upon their mother churches and in course of time they gained a responsibility of their own. Bishop Lawrence passed away on 5 January, 1938 at the age of sixty two. The next day his burial took place in the Kottar Cathedral in front of the main altar. According to the Canon Law, the diocesan councilors met and elected Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandez, the Vicar General as the Vicar Capitular.

**Bishop T.R. Agnisamy**

On the first anniversary day of the demise of Bishop Lawrence, 5 January 1939 Pope Pius XI nominated Fr. T.R. Agnisamy S.J as the Bishop of Kottar. After holding various posts he was selected the Bishop of Kottar. After taking charge of the diocese he met all his priests in the hall at the parochial house at Kottar. Then he undertook visiting every parish to study for himself the people and places and the vast work that lay before him.

The preparations for the consecration to be held in Kottar came to an unexpected halt, when it was announced that the new Pontiff Pius XII had decided that he himself would consecrate the Bishop-Elect along with eleven other missionary Bishops. Thus the consecration took place in Rome on 29

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October 1939 at St. Peter’s Basilica, the day of the feast of Christ the king. On his return a great gathering of priests and people welcomed him. 

During the year 1939 in the diocese there were five divisions, thirty six districts, 133 parishes, 143 churches and chapels, fifty three priests, eighty nine sisters, twenty three brothers and 1,36,388 Catholic population.

In 1954, thirty seven new churches appeared with good functional buildings. Fourteen new convents and two houses of the Missionary Brothers of St. Francis were established at Pagode and Kolvel of Vilavancode taluk. The Carmalite Fathers of Manjummel were entrusted with the Manalikari Mission in 1950. Two members of Societies Auxiliatrix Missionum (S.A.M) with its headquarters at Belgium, Fr. T. J. James and Fr. V. Melard arrived in 1950, learnt Tamil and served the people of the Diocese of Kottar.

With the hard work and tireless missionary zeal of the parish priests and sisters of various convents various mission centres like Kulasekharam, Tiruthuapuram, Puthenkadai, Siluvaipuram, Vengode, Cheruvalloor, Mullanganavilai, Parakunnu, Puthukadai, Mangalakunnu, Karengal,

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66 Francis, E., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 63.
Manalikarai, Matravilai and other centres developed much and people showed much interest in the various church activities and social activities.\textsuperscript{67}

The following figure shows the development of Kottar Diocese under Bishop Agnisamy during 1939-1971.

![Graph showing development of Kottar Diocese](image)

The parishes increased from thirty nine to sixty eight, convents from ten to forty nine, priests from forty one to 117 and churches from 123 to 257.\textsuperscript{68}

Among Christians the Christmas season and the festival at St. Xavier’s Church in Kottar are opportunities for great gathering.\textsuperscript{69} Thus

\textsuperscript{67} Pastoral letter No. 20, 16 December 1954 and Kottar Diocese Golden Jubilee Sirappu Malar (Tamil), pp. 76-83.

\textsuperscript{68} Then Oli, June-July 1974, P.4. After his retirement in February 1971 Bishop Agnisamy lived in Beschi College, Dindigal and he passed away on 7 May 1974 at 5.20 a.m at the age of eighty three and was buried in St. Francis Xavier’s Chapel in the Cathedral, Kottar.

\textsuperscript{69} Nagamaiya, V., Report on the Census of Travancore, 17 February 1881 A.D. Mausy 1056 M.E., along with the Imperial Census of India, Trivandrum, 1884, p. 63.
the early Catholic missionaries have improved the religious life of the people and they have done a lot of educational and social services which led to the economic and cultural advancement of the society at large.

The Syro – Malankara Catholic Church

The Church in Kerala was founded by St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. Hence the Christians there are called “St. Thomas Christians”. Since its foundation in fifty two A.D. this Apostolic Church has been in communion with the Catholic Church. Till the middle of the 17 century, they were following the Syrian liturgy and so were called Syrian Christians.\textsuperscript{70}

In 1930 the Malankara Catholic Church was founded.\textsuperscript{71} On 20 September 1930 Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Bishop Mar Theophilos, Fr. John O.I.C, Bro. Alexander and Mr. Chacko Kilileth made their profession of faith and were duly received into the fold of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius XI.\textsuperscript{72}

Under the able guidance of Bishop Mar Ivanios the Malankara Catholic Church established so many churches, convents, educational institutions, small scale industries, health centres, orphanages and printing press. In Vilavancode taluk of South Travancore they started their

\textsuperscript{71} Philip Chemapakassery, Malankarai Vilakku (Tamil) August 1987, Marthandam, p. 10.
missionary work and established a lot of institutions which led to the growth of Malankara Church in this part of the country.

The Malankara Catholic Church produced fruits of holiness and love with the foresight and dedication of Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjali and Mother Mary.\textsuperscript{73} Rev Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjali came to Marthandam on 1934 and sacrificed his life for the welfare of the people\textsuperscript{74} He founded a Church named Christu Raja Church at Marthandam. Under Marthandam Church seventeen parishes were founded by him. He liberated the people from superstitious beliefs and preached the love of God. People who were affected by family problems, problems related to caste and religion were dealt with by him without any distinction.\textsuperscript{75}

When epidemics attacked Marthandam and Nattalam, the Malankara Syrian Christians under the leadership of Father Joseph Kuzhinjali risked their own lives and served the people.\textsuperscript{76} Thus the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church had done a lot for the social, economic and cultural development of the people of Vilavancode taluk through their various missionary centres.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Rev. Fr. Chempakassery, Malamkarai Vilakku}, August 1987, Marthandam, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{75} Malankarai Vilakku, Kathir-9, \textit{loc.cit.}, March 1983, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid.}
The Protestant Missions

The Protestant religion in South Travancore commenced after the arrival of Ringeltaube about 1806.\textsuperscript{77} The missionary movement in South Travancore in the middle of the 19 century represented, as far as the educated classes were concerned an intellectual, social and even political liberalism.\textsuperscript{78} With the active support of the British Residents Col. Macaulay, Col. Munrow and General Fraser in whose time the successive sovereigns made periodical gifts to the mission in the shape of donations and lands to build churches or to cultivate, besides revenue concessions and grant-in-aid to schools.\textsuperscript{79}

The Rajas of Travancore were ready to please the Resident and as a result on many occasions, the Christian missionaries received considerable help from them. Thus by the beginning of the 19 century the political situation became favourable for the work of the Protestant missionaries in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Census of India}, 1941, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{80} Gladstone, J.W., \textit{Protestant Christianity and Peoples Movements in Kerala}, Trivandrum, 1984, p. 56.
London Mission Society

Ringaltaube the first London Mission Missionary landed at Mylaudy on 25 April 1806 and he was welcomed and received by Vedamanickam.\textsuperscript{81} In six years he baptized about 700 persons. Nagercoil was the headquarters of the mission.\textsuperscript{82} Till 1816 he successfully spread the Gospel and continued his services. In 1818 Mead and in 1819 Mault came to Mylaudy mission and Vedamanickam continued his services till 1827. From 1816 to 1856 Mead and Mault served the mission.\textsuperscript{83}

In 1858 there were five mission districts and six European missionaries; 350 evengelists, catechists and school teachers; 864 communicants and 1871 baptised, the total of adherents being 15,178, the pupils 5,900 and contributions by native Christians Rs. 3,234.\textsuperscript{84} The extraordinary activities of the Christian missionaries in the field of education, medical field, small scale industries and social service led to the conversion of a large number of native populations which paved the way for the growth of Christianity in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{81} Hector, S.S., \textit{Thiruchabai Varalaru Mutharpakuthy (Tamil)}, Nagercoil, 1988, PP. 18-19.
\textsuperscript{82} Census of India, 1941, P. 139 and Velu Pillai, T.K., \textit{op.cit.}, Vol. IV, p. 603.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, pp. 24-25.
\textsuperscript{84} Nagamaiya, V., \textit{Report on the Census of Travancore 17 February 1881}, Trivandrum, 1884, p. 1115.
\textsuperscript{85} Agur, C.M., \textit{Church History of Travancore}, New Delhi, 1903, p. 15.
Parachalay Mission

The early missionary efforts were essentially confined to areas in and around Nagercoil, Neyyoor, Mylaudy and Thittuvilai. Besides Nagercoil and Neyyoor, towards the west of South Travancore, an important missionary field, Parachalay, established by Rev. Abbs (1838-1860), a co-worker of Rev. Charles Mead. He stayed at Parachalay from 1845 and upgraded it to a district. As many as fifty churches were erected by him in the Parachalay district and evangelical work registered phenomenal growth upto Neyyatinkarai. All the churches west of Neyyoor came under Parachalay district.86

In 1869 after Rev. Abbs, Rev. James Emlyn of England arrived to shoulder the responsibilities of Parachalay mission. At this period Marthandam had only a small thatched shed as a place for worship erected by Rev. Mead. To widen the missionary field at Marthandam availability of land was a primary requisite. By his untiring and ceaseless efforts Rev. Emlyn bought about 150 acres of land on either side of the high way.87

Up to the year 1905 the Marthandam Church built by Rev. Newport and associated establishments functioned under the supervision of European missionaries of Parachalay district. Rev. and Mrs. I.H. Hacker were the first

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87 At present this land is owned by C.S.I. Kanyakumari diocese. The Marthandam C.S.I. church campus, college campus, school premises and the mission hospital campus are situated in this land.
British missionaries who stayed at Marthandam and conducted ministry. The moments I.H. Hacker stayed at Marthandam it became part of Neyyoor district.\textsuperscript{88}

Rev. Sinclair continued the services of I.H. Hacker in Marthandam. It was the vision and labour of Rev. Emlyn that paved the way for Marthandam acquiring the distinction as the second largest Protestant Christian centre in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{89}

**Nagercoil Mission**

On 11 November 1859 with the retirement of Rev. Mead, Rev. James Duthie joined the Nagercoil Mission.\textsuperscript{90} After the arrival of Rev. Duthie within six months due to the failure of South West monsoon, famine and epidemic diseases people suffered a lot. Due to cholera hundreds of people passed away. Friends of the missionaries from England offered financial assistance and with the amount the missionaries constructed roads and pathways which offered employment opportunities to the affected people. Between February 1861 and August 1861 Rev. Dennis offered employment to 12,000 people in and around Nagercoil. Dewan Madava Rao appreciated the activities of the missionaries.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 20.  
\textsuperscript{89} Jai Singh, P., *op.cit.*, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{90} Report of the T.D.C. for 1908, Nagercoil.  
\textsuperscript{91} Hector, S.S., *op.cit.*, pp. 44-45.
Rev. Duthie took steps to undertake evangelistic work among the coolies employed in the coffee plantations on the hills near Nagercoil.\footnote{J. Duthie’s Letter to Barton, Nagercoil, dated 27 June 1874 (T.D.C. correspondence 1879-1889).} The native assistants made significant contributions to the success of the mission under Rev. Duthie. A notable man among them was Evangelist Devadasan who was the first native assistant to be ordained as pastor of the Home Church in 1866.\footnote{Report of the T.D.C. for 1908, Nagercoil, p. 10.}

Rev. George Parcker continued the services of Rev. Duthie. In 25 November 1908 Rev. Sydney Cave was put in charge of Nagercoil mission. During the period of Rev. Sydney Cave the salary of the pastors was increased.\footnote{Report of the T.D.C. for 1916, p. 5.} Rev. Sathyanathan and Rev. Samuel assisted him. In 1916 Cave retired from service and returned home.

Rev. Singlare who came to Nagercoil in 1909 succeeded Rev. Sydney Cave. On 16 August 1921 Rev. J.M. Kesari was appointed the pastor of Nagercoil Church. On 14 September 1930 Rev. J.M. Kesari passed away and Rev. J.A. Jacob was appointed in 2 January 1932. In 1939 the Neyyoor and Nagercoil districts were united and J.A. Jacob continued till 1944 as the pastor for the Southern region. After 1944 Paul Nesamony continued the services of Rev. Jacob.\footnote{Christu Dhas, G., op.cit., pp. 189-190.}
Under Nagercoil mission, Churches in Munkilvilai, Periyavilai, Therkukadu, Leepuram, Samathanapuram, Punnaiyady, Vedamanickapuram, Kottaivadi, Chidambarapuram, Eruappapuram, Chothavilai, Andarkulam, Philipspuram, Manavalapuram, Kadetty, Suvisheshapuram, Churankudy, Kadetty, Suvisheshapuram, Keezhaperuvilai, Alanvilai, Alankottai, Puthur, Villukuri, and Vilparayadi were the Churches which functioned very effectively.96

Neyyoor Mission

Rev. Leech and Rev. Baylis served in the Neyyoor district.97 On 17 May 1877 Rev. Baylis passed away, which was a rude shock to the people of the district but this loss was compensated by I.H. Hacker who took the leadership of the District in May 1878.98 During the period of I.H. Hacker the Neyyoor Mission district was divided into five regions namely Mathiyode, Kodiyoor, Kallankuzhi, Kuruvikadu and Kulasekaram. In 1899 a few weavers accepted Christianity. One person named Divakaran of Mathiode and his family got baptism and following them nearly 300 weavers were baptized in Kandanvilai. In course of time more than 2000 weavers from Pallam, Nattalam, Puttetti, Amsi, Melparai and Palliyadi became Christians and Churches were built for them.99

96 Ibid, p. 49.
97 Ibid.
99 Christu Dhas, G., op.cit., p. 150.
During the period of Hacker a new church was constructed in Neyyoor on 1 January and completed in 1906. Mission centres were started at Tharavilai, Manavalakurichi, Chemponvilai, Vannanvilai, Mankarai, Thuckalay, Nelliyyaraikonam, Muttaikadu, Kariavilai and Ponthal Pilavilai (Azhagiamandabam). In 1902 I. H. Hacker constructed the new Bungalow and he shifted his residence to Marthandam and as a result of that from 1905 the Neyyoor mission lost its headship and amalgamated with Marthandam.100

Thittuvilai Mission

J.J. Dennis was instrumental in extending mission work towards Thittuvilai. He began to build a small church at Ambellantiruthi, the first Christian village half way between Nagercoil and Thittuvilai.101 Due to his death in 1864 J.F. Vilkinson continued the completion of the chapel and named the place as Dennispuram in memory of J.J. Dennis.102

After the establishment of the Church at Dennispuram, Thittuvilai Mission District had eight congregations to the north of Nagercoil under the supervision of C.Yesudian.103 Rev. Duthie and his wife showed special attention to the work in the Thittuvilai Mission District. Rev. Duthie succeeded in securing funds for completing a new chapel at Thittuvilai. The

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100 Ibid, pp. 150-151.
102 Ibid.
Nagercoil Home Church also extended help to the Thittuvilai congregations.\textsuperscript{104}

**Other Missionary Activities**

During the year 1860, in the four mission districts of James Town, Nagercoil, Santhapuram and Neyyoor there were 230 native Evangelists, 106 Churches and 8566 Christians.\textsuperscript{105}

Rev. William Lee who came to James Town in 1865 spent sixteen years in the mission.\textsuperscript{106} The Zenana Mission work was carried on in the homes of caste Hindus. Very suitable Bible women were appointed for this work in Hindu homes and the Bible women regularly visited these homes when these ladies had leisure. Wherever they got admission, they worked in a very acceptable manner and they taught Christian lyrics and narrated Bible stories and the work was much appreciated.\textsuperscript{107}

In 1874 the South Travancore Church Council, consisting of all the ordained ministers together with selected representatives from the churches in the mission was established.\textsuperscript{108} This council met annually and discussed the life and discipline and maintained the welfare and prosperity of the

\textsuperscript{105} Hector, S.S., Thiruchabai Varalaru (1806-1907), (Tamil), Nagercoil, 1988, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{106} Hacker, I. H., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{107} Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, November 1967, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12
In 1904 to co-ordinate all the activities of the pastorates the South Travancore Pastorate Union was established.

**The South Travancore Diocese of the Church of South India**

In 1919 a movement for wider Church Union consisting of the South Indian United Church, Methodists Congregationalists, Anglicans with a section of Basel Mission and Wesleyans was started. A draft scheme of the union was drawn up in 1929 and after twenty five years of discussions and negotiations the Church of South India was formally inaugurated on 27 September 1947 in the St. George’s Cathedral, Madras. It was the first time that Episcopal and non-episcopal churches united to form one church and therefore it was an epoch making event in the history of the Church.

Thereafter the London Missionary Society which was under the Travancore Mission Council of the L.M.S. came under the Diocesan Council through its various Boards. The first officers of the Diocesan Council were Rev. A.H. Legg (President), Rev. J.E. Kesari (Vice President), Rev. R.H. Eastaff (Treasurer) and Rev. D.S. Sahayadhas (Secretary).

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109 Ibid, p. 56.
111 Ibid.
112 Sobhanan, B., *op.cit.*, p. 158
114 Ibid.
On 13 October 1947 Rev. A.H. Legg was appointed the Bishop of South Travancore Church. All the pastors accepted the union of the church of South India and on 15 January 1948 and the charter was accepted in the meeting. A.H. Legg continued his services from 1947 to 1959. For the first time the Protestant Churches of South Travancore came under a Bishop. The diocese of Kanyakumari of the Church of South India has its headquarters at Nagercoil.

The L.M.S missionaries had done a lot of social service activities. In the field of medicine, small scale industries like lace & embroidery, journalism, press and postal service, the missionaries have done marvellous work which in turn brought about tremendous changes in the socio-economic life of the people of South Travancore.

Besides the L.M.S, there are the Salvation Army, Lutheran Mission, the Brethren Mission, the Church of England, Zenana Mission and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission.

The Salvation Army

The formation of the Salvation Army by William Booth marked a unique event in the nineteenth century religious life of Great Britain.
From 1887 Nagercoil was only an occasional visiting station of itinerant Salvationists, notably that of Major Musa Bhai “Captions” Yesupatham the Divisional officer at Mavelikarai and Srinivasagam, another European officer.\textsuperscript{119} During their short stay at that place, they held meetings at the request of the local Christians in the streets, but they did nothing in the shape of securing converts or the like.\textsuperscript{120}

They started their work in 1889 in a village near Nagercoil. The sect owes its name to its emphasis on the doctrine of the salvation of the soul through Jesus Christ. The unique feature of this sect is the adoption by its members of red and yellow uniforms and well-graded military designations.\textsuperscript{121}

In the year 1890, some of the local Christians sent an earnest invitation to the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army at Madras requesting him to start evangelistic work in the Dalit villages around Nagercoil, if not in the town itself. Corps were opened at Kanakapuram, Paniyur, and Ezhudheshapattu.\textsuperscript{122}

Major William Johnston was the founder of Salvation Army in Travancore. His friend John Cox, a missionary, resigned from the L.M.S

\textsuperscript{119} Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1044.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{121} Narayanan Thambi, A., \textit{Census of India} 1941, Vol. XXV, Travancore, Trivandrum, 1942, p.139.
\textsuperscript{122} Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1044.
and became a coffee planter. His estate was known as Olivers Estate (Black Rock) located about fifteen kilometers away on the North West of Nagercoil with an elevation of three thousand feet above the sea level.\textsuperscript{123}

In 1892 Cox went to Madras on a business trip and noticed the Army’s activities in Madras, attended one of its meetings and had talk with Frederick Tucker about the condition of his mission. After his return to Nagercoil he wrote to Frederick Tucker, inviting his comrades in need of rest to come to his Black Rock Estate, free from the humid heat of the plains. Responding the invitation of Cox, Major Johnston who worked as Army officer due to deterioration in his health came to Black Rock Estate for rest.\textsuperscript{124}

During his stay in Black Rock Johnston’s work among them ended in the formation of the first Corps of Army on the estate in 1892 with Caption Keil as the first Corps Officer, who assumed the Indian name Yesupatham. On his recovery from illness, Major Johnston decided to conduct meetings amongst the labourers in the estate, which Mr. Cox encouraged. Some of the labourers professed conversion through the meetings conducted by Major Johnston.\textsuperscript{125} Johnston went to Madras entrusting the work in Black Rock Estate into the hands of Keil.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{123} Sobhanan, B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{126} Sobhanan, B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 175.
The Salvationists—there were two in each village—went about the village begging for alms and returned home almost empty handed. They went from house to house, rather hut to hut, and requested the people to attend the usual night meeting, but the people would not even condescend to listen to their entreaties.\textsuperscript{127} For a couple of years the Army leaders worked among the Nadar coolies in their villages near Cape Comorin. Their attempt to bring the Nadar coolies in the way of Salvation was not a great success.\textsuperscript{128}

After that the Salvation Army decided to abandon their barren field of labour and to go seeking for fresh fields and pastures new. Accordingly they withdrew to Nagercoil and made their headquarters on account of the postal and telegraphic facilities it afforded and to consider what was to be done next.\textsuperscript{129} Under Adjutant William Stevens the Salvation Army continued their service.\textsuperscript{130}

‘A Council of War’ was held consisting of the leading officers then present. In the council a decision was taken to work among the Dalits.\textsuperscript{131} Corps were opened in the villages that had embraced Christianity.\textsuperscript{132} Staff Captain Santosham with another European came down from Madras. Major

\textsuperscript{127} Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1045.
\textsuperscript{128} Sobhanan, B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{129} Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1045.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Scott Christian College, Nagercoil Platinum Jubilee Souvenir}, November 1967, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{131} Sobhanan, B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{132} Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1046.
Yesu Ratnam the Territorial commander of the Salvation Army in South India did a lot for the developments in South Travacore.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1895, when the Army General William Booth visited the Indian territory he was highly impressed with the Army's work in India as well as the various centres in Travancore. In a few months the army's work assumed large dimensions, and the converts numbered several hundreds. Drunkenness became a thing of the past, and this seriously affected the revenues of the village arrack vendors. Sunday labour was stopped and prayers were held in the villages instead. This provoked the wrath of the caste masters, who began to persecute the Salvationists.\textsuperscript{134}

At Kadaigramam, near Suchindram “Staff Caption” Santosham was severely handled by the enraged caste men of the village, while he was superintending the erection of the local barracks. Later on Major Yesu Ratnam was half murdered at this very place and that without any reason. However, conversion to Christianity continued.\textsuperscript{135} In a couple of years, the adherents of the Salvation Army numbered over 1,500. During the year 1903 the number increased to 4,000.\textsuperscript{136} It is recorded that within two weeks more than 2000 people were enrolled.\textsuperscript{137}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Ibid.
\item[134] Sobhanan, B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 176.
\item[135] Agur, C.M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1047.
\item[136] Ibid., p. 1048.
\end{footnotes}
Missouri Evangelical Lutheran Mission

The Evangelical Lutheran Mission had its headquarters at Nagercoil. The principal centres were at Nagercoil, Valliore and Vadakangulam in Tirunelveli District. They had forty one mission stations in the taluks of Thovalai, Agasthiswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode and Peermade. The Seventh Day Adventist Mission also had many churches in South Trivancore. This Mission had a church at Charodu near Padmanabhapuram in Kalkulam taluk.

ISLAM

Muslims followed Islam and they were fairly distributed in all the taluks of South Travancore. The Muslims who were the third major community in South Travancore formed about five percent of the population. From very early times, the ports on the West Coast attracted many sea-faring peoples of the world. It is believed that the first batch of Muslims reached Malabar by about 712 A.D. They came as traders in the coastal regions. They not only respected the customs and usages of the country but also maintained cordial relations with the native population.

139 Ramanatha Aiyer, S., Progressive Travancore, Trivandrum, 1923, p. 80.
They erected mosques in convenient places and slowly made many converts to Islam.\textsuperscript{142}

The most important Islamic centres in South Travancore were Thuckalay, Thiruvithancode, Colachel, Thengapatanam, Kottar, Manavala kurichi, Manalikarai, Thittuvilai, Aloor, Kadaiyalamude, Kulasekaram, Nambali, Marthandam, Kaliyakavilai, Enayam, Surankudy and Edalakudy.\textsuperscript{143} Muslims were mostly engaged in trading activities. The two major sections of the Muslims at these places were the Shiahs and the Sunnis.\textsuperscript{144}

The travel books of Ptolemy and Pliny states that in the First Century A.D. itself Kottar was a fertile business centre. The Arabian horses were sold in the Kottar market in the ancient period. They should have come to Kottar through the Colachel port.\textsuperscript{145} Thiruvithancode is an important Islamic centre situated in the south west of Padmanabhapuram where two mosques are found. The inhabitants of the village were mostly Mohammadans who were engaged in business with various important trading centres in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{146}

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\textsuperscript{142} Gopalakrishnan, M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{143} At present there are fifty six mosques existing in Kanyakuamri District.
\textsuperscript{144} Gopalakrishnan, M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Aivu Kalanchiyan} (Tamil) February 2004, pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Ibid}, p. 28. The Muslim Educational Society founded in 1981 has started a co-education college in Thiruvithancode in 1981 in the name of ‘Muslim Arts and Science College’.
\end{flushright}
Thuckalay is one of the places, sacred to Muslims. The Dharga named Peer Mohamed Oliyullah Durgha a fine mosque is dedicated to the Muslim Saint known as Peer Mohammed Sahib who was also a Tamil poet.\(^{147}\) He was born in Tenkasi of Tirunelveli district. After spending some time in spiritual pursuits in Peermedu of Kerala State he came and stayed at Thuckalay. Being a Tamil poet of great eminence, he wrote many books on philosophy. He had intimate relationship with the kings of Chera dynasty. It is said that he laid the foundation stone for the Padmanabhapuram granite fort. The anniversary of the great philosopher poet is celebrated every year on a grand scale on the full moon day in the month of Rajap. Both the people of Kerala and Tamil Nadu attend the celebrations in large numbers irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.\(^{148}\)

The vow of sleeping in the Dhargah premises was considered as very sacred and it was believed that this votary could drive away all ills especially the evil spirits. It is said that the saint appeared in their dream and granted their wishes. Arabs came to South India as traders and spread Islam. Cheraman Perumal was attracted by Islam in 789 A.D. and he went to Mecca and accepted Islam. He changed his name to Abdul Rahman. He went to many countries and sent some persons to South Travancore and they spread Islam here. At about 730 A.D. Hasrat Pavakasim who was born at

\(^{147}\) Scott Christian College, Nagercoil Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, November 1967, p. 29.  
\(^{148}\) Gopalakrishnan, M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 220. At present the anniversary day is declared as a local holiday for Kanyakumari District.
Tashkhand went to many countries and through sea came to Panakudi and settled at Elankadai at Kottar and a mosque was constructed here.\textsuperscript{149}

Thengapattanam had trade relations in ancient times with foreign countries like Arabia. Some Arab merchants who came here found it suitable for their trade. These Arab merchants, with the co-operation of the then ruler of Travancore built several mosques for the propagation of Islam. The mosque at Thengapattanam was built about 975 A.D. The site on which the mosque stands is known as “Sastham Parambu” and according to the information furnished by the local people, there was a Sastha temple on the same site before the mosque was built. Muslims here were engaged in trade of all kinds.\textsuperscript{150}

Muslims in India were always a minority and, since the Islamic religion defines itself in terms of a community of believers, Muslims in India were always acutely aware of, and anxious about their minority status. This fact is applicable to South Travancore too.\textsuperscript{151}

Some Islamic leaders toiled much for the growth of Islam in South Travancore. The most notable among them were Pakkir Pava of Thittuvilai, Sheiku Darvesh Miran of Churankudy, Thaika Sahibu of Kadaiyalumudu

\textsuperscript{149} Scott Christian College Nagercoil, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, November 1967, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{150} Gopalakrishnan, M., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 1215.
\textsuperscript{151} Lama Gangchen, T.Y.S., \textit{Major Religions in Contemporary World}, Delhi, 2001, p. 185.
and Bazil Shah of Elankadai.\textsuperscript{152} Sheikuthambi Pavalar was another important Islamic leader who was born in Nanchilnad. He was a great Islamic Tamil poet who contributed much for Tamil language. The two journals run by him were ‘Yatharthavathi’ and Islamiyamithran.\textsuperscript{153}

Hinduism, Christianity and Islam were the important religions of the people of South Travancore. Even though each religious group had its unique practices and rituals and followed different customs and manners, there existed appreciable unity among the people. People of different religions lived as brothers and sisters in South Travancore and they enjoyed peace as there was communal harmony. During the Kottar festival, along with the Catholics, people of all religions thronged the church premises. Likewise, for Mondaikad Kodai, people of all religions used to visit the shrine in Mandaikad. Without any distinction of caste or creed, people of all religions and communities used to visit the mosque at Thuckalay during festivals. This practice continues to some extent even today, and at present for all these festivals local holidays are given in order to facilitate participation in worship and celebrations.

\textsuperscript{152} Aivu Kalanchiyam, February 2004, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p. 11.