CHAPTER - III

EMERGENCE OF A NEW ORDER

In Kalkulam taluk there are clear traces of the existence of local institutions from ancient period. These local institutions, besides relieving the pressure on the government, rendered certain useful services. They made spot enquiry and speedy solutions to the local problems. The emergence of a modern local administration in Kalkulam was the result of a single line of development from the past.

Local Administration in the Ancient Period

When Kalkulam was under the early Cheras, petty cases of the villages were heard in a common place. Generally this common place was under a tree in the centre of the village, called Podiyil or Manram. K.A.Nilakanta Sastri states that Podiyils or Manrams were the Assemblies existed then. These types of village sabhas existed during the time of the Ays, who were the chieftains of the Cheras. But the functions of the sabhas were mostly restricted to temple administration. This is confirmed from the Huzur office plates. It tells that the Ay King Karunandadakan purchased a piece of land from the Sabha of Munchirai, a neighbouring place of Kalkulam to build a

2. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Studies in Chola History and Administration, Madras, 1955, pp.74f.
temple for Lord Vishnu at Parthivapuram. K. K. Pillay, the author of the Sucindram Temple, also mentions about the existence of the Mahasabha which wielded enormous administrative powers.

For administrative convenience the Kulasekhara Cheras divided their kingdom into a number of nadus and nadus, into desams. They appointed royal vassals or naduvazhils to look after the nadus. A significant feature of polity during this period was the existence of local assemblies called nattukutangal. The inscriptions of that period refer to these assemblies as Munuttuvar, Arunuttuvvar etc., depending upon the number of members present in the assemblies. The Kannada inscriptions of the early 8th century A.D mention about the existence of Venad Munuttuvar. Since Kalkulam was a territory under Venad, such types of local assemblies administered this area also. These local assemblies exercised a check on the powers of the provincial governors and thereby effectively controlled provincial administration.

During the period of Kulasekara Cheras, Desams functioned under the control of Desavazhis. They were controlled by Desakottams. The lowest administrative unit was the Kara or Village. These Karas or villages were not territorial units but residing areas of people from the same caste or tribal

5. *Mahasabha* was the Village Assembly of a Brahmadeya Village.
groups. It became the Grammam of the Namboodiris, the tara of the nairs and the Cheri of the lower castes.\textsuperscript{10} The Panchayat, which represented the people, administered each village. The officers like Adhikari, Patanayakan, Kizh Patanayakan, Bhandaram Kappan, Matilnayagam etc. assisted the administration.

Since the Kulasekara Cheras, Kalkulam taluk came under the Cholas, and the Chola Pandya Viceroy ruled this area. The most striking feature of the Chola period was the functioning of the autonomous rural institutions with vigour.\textsuperscript{11} The method of election for the local self governing bodies under them was known as ‘Kudavolai Murai’ or ‘Pot Ticket System’.\textsuperscript{12} The candidates whose names were written on the leaves and picked up by a child were declared elected. The members thus elected constituted various variams or committees. The members of the variams who discharged their respective functions were known as variaperumakkal.\textsuperscript{13} The duration of the membership was one year. A big banyan tree in the village of the village Mandapa served as the office.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} By this system the names of the contesting candidates was written on Palmyra leaves put in a pot, shuffled and a child was asked to take out as many leaves as the total number of candidates needed to be elected. (K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, \textit{The Cholas}, Madras, 1975, p. 517).
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Thotta Variya Perumakkal, Eri-Variya Perumakkal and Kalani Variya Perumakkal} were some of the committees existed in Kalkulam. (\textit{TAS}, Vol. IV, p. 25)
\textsuperscript{14} M. Gopalakrishnan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 780.
Twelfth century saw the break-up of the Chera kingdom of Mahodayapuram and the emergence of minor principalities.\textsuperscript{15} During this period, the polity was feudal in character. There was no organised central authority. The administrative structure however remained basically the same as that of the Kulasekara Cheras. In addition to the \textit{Naduvazhis}, there were a number of nair feudal chieftains, \textit{Madambis}.\textsuperscript{16} But the day to day affairs were managed by the local assemblies and temple \textit{sabhas}.

The inscription at Trivandrum of 1209 A.D and yet another at Manalikara of Kalkulam of 1235 A.D. indicate that the local affairs were under the purview of the assemblies.\textsuperscript{17} These \textit{sabhas} were not mere occasional assemblies, but were permanent and well constituted public bodies. They acted as buffers between the people and the government.\textsuperscript{18} Nachjilnattu Nattar, hailing from a neighbouring place of Kalkulam, assembled on various occasions at Vadasery Asramam and Easanthimangalam and passed resolutions against some of the oppressive Government Legislations.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Origin of Kalkulam Taluk}

Marthanda Varma (1729 A.D.-1758 A.D.), the maker of modern Travancore, ousted the hereditary chiefs and annexed their principalities. He replaced the feudal organisation into a despotic monarchy. He developed a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Elamthottam K. Sukumaran, \textit{Political and Social History of Cheranadu}, Nagercoil, 2005, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{TAS}, Vol. V, Part-I, p. 66.
\item \textsuperscript{17} K.K. Pillay, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{18} P. Sundaram Pillai, \textit{Some Early Sovereigns of Travancore}, Madras, 1894, p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{19} M. Gopalakrishnan, \textit{op. cit.}, p.731.
\end{itemize}
different system of government.\textsuperscript{20} The State was then divided into a number of 
mukhams, mukhams into mantapams, mantapams into provritis.\textsuperscript{21} The important feature of his administrative policy was the formation of 
Mandapathuvathukal\textsuperscript{22} (similar to Taluk). The first Taluk so formed was Thiruvananthapuram 
Mandapathuvathukal. All taluks were subsequently identified as Mandapathuvathukal. Mandapathuvathukal was under the charge of an Officer called Karyakkar whose functions were more or less identified with that of the present day Tahsildar.\textsuperscript{23}

For proper administration the proviti was taken as the unit and put under the charge of an officer called Provrithikar. His primary duties were collection of revenues and management of Village Irrigation System. He acted as a Magistrate with jurisdiction to try petty criminal cases in the village.\textsuperscript{24} He was assisted by one or two assistants and a Thandakara (Peon).\textsuperscript{25}

Ramavarma Karthika Thirumal (1758 A.D.-1798 A.D.) divided the state into three big divisions viz., Vadakke Mughom (Northern Division), Thekke Mughom (Southern Division) and the Padinjara Mughom (Western Division).\textsuperscript{26} The present Kalkulam taluk and the whole of Kanyakumari formed part of Thekke Mughom (Southern Division). Each of these divisions was placed

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{22} Mandapathuvathukal consisted of a group of villages.
\bibitem{23} M. Gopalakrishnan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 86.
\bibitem{24} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{25} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{26} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{thebibliography}
under Valia Sarvathi Karyakar. Sarvathi Karyakars were in charge of subordinate Mughoms and Karyakars in charge of the inferior districts or Mandapathuvathukal or Taluks.27 Provrithikars were in charge of Pakuthis. Chandrakars, Thurakars and Velkars were menials who worked under the Provrithikars. Accounts were maintained by a chain of clerks also appointed, graded downwards from the Thirumughom Pidicha Pillai to Pillai or ordinary accountant.28

The Karyakars formed the backbone of the Administrative System. They were in fact military, social and Civil Governors in their respective districts. They exercised multifarious functions with subordination to the chief authorities of the state. The investiture of their office was given by the Rajah with a sword. The sword together with the ensigns of their office was carefully displayed wherever they appeared.29

Colonel Munro as the Dewan of Travancore State (1810A.D.-1814A.D.) gradually abolished the offices of Valia Sarvathikaryakar and Sarvathikaryakar. The Karyakars were deprived of all Civil and Criminal authorities over the people. They were reduced to the position of revenue subordinates, pure and simple. The very designation of Karyakar was changed

28. N. Parameswaran Pillai, A Concise History of Travancore, Trivandrum, p. 28.
29. Ulloor S. Parameswara Aiyer, op. cit., p. 47.
into Tahsildar.\textsuperscript{30} This system of a Tahsildar for a Taluk and \textit{Provritikar} for a \textit{kelvi} or \textit{Pakuthi} remained more or less unchanged but for some changes of jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{31}

During the reign of Uttaram Thirunal Marthanda Varma (1847 A.D.-1860 A.D), Lieutenant General Cullen suggested on 25\textsuperscript{th}, August 1855 A.D. the appointment of two division Peishcars for the two divisions of the state. Accordingly the southern division comprising the taluks of Thovala, Agustheeswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancodu was placed under a division Peishcar.\textsuperscript{32}

The Division Peishcars looked after the Pagodas, Palaces, \textit{Ootupurahs}, \textit{Provriti Cutcheris}, English and vernacular schools and Residencies.\textsuperscript{33} Again for the sake of administrative convenience the whole state of Travancore was divided into four Revenue divisions viz. Padmanabhapuram, Trivandrum, Quilon and Kottayam.\textsuperscript{34} The country was divided into 31 Taluks, of which, Kalkulam, Eraniel, Agustheeswaram, Thovalai and Vilavancodu came under Padmanabhapuram division. The Taluks were graded into I, II, and III classes based on their size and importance. Kalkulam was graded as the class II Taluk. The officers who worked in the Kalkulam Taluk were Head \textit{Samprathy}, Assistant \textit{Samprathy}, Rayasom, Deputy Rayasom, \textit{Keelkuttu}

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Census of India 1961, op. cit.}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Travancore Administrative Report}, 1899-1900, Trivandrum, 1901, p. 2.
Pillamars, Shroff, Record Keeper, Copyist, Magistrate, Kumasthas, Peons, etc. The Tahsildar of Kalkulam acted as the Special Assistant to the Dewan Peishkar of Padmanabhapuram.

The Southern Division of Travancore contained 427 pakuthis, of which 11 belonged to Kalkulam. The average size of a Pakuthi was 15.3 square miles with the population of 6,925. The important pakuthi of present Kalkulam Taluk known as Eraniel, Kadiapattinam, Colachel and Thiruvithancode became the pakuthis of the then Eraniel Taluk. Kara or Muri was the smaller division of Pakuthi. But it was not an administrative unit and hence it had no separate Officer. But the people of the Kara well understood the boundaries of the Kara. Since 1901 the Kara was regarded as the village for the purposes of census. The average area of a Kara was 1.9 square miles.

According to the Census of Travancore 1931, 30 Taluks were their in Travancore. The Southern division contained eight Taluks excluding Eraniel. Parts of the Pakuthis of former Eraniel taluk was attached to Kalkulam and Eraniel became a Pakuthi of Kalkulam. Kalkulam consisted of 341 villages and five towns, viz. Padmanabhapuram, Colachel, Eraniel.

37. Census of India, 1911, Trivandrum, 1912, p. 52.
38. Ibid, p. ccxiii
40. Ibid.
Thiruvithancodu, and Thiruvattar. In 1934 the number of Pakuthis increased to 18 and they were Kappiyara, Valvatchagoshtam, Attoor, Thuckalai, Kalkulam, Kothanallur, Mekkodu, Aruvikara, Thiruvattar, Thirparappu, Ponmana, Aloor, Eraniel, Thalakulam, Kadiapattanam, Manavalakurichi, Colachel and Thiruvithamcodu.

**Origin of Panchayats**

In Kalkulam, Panchayats had roots in the past. They played a vital role in the integration and development of village life. But the village Assemblies which once functioned in Travancore had long ceased to exist. It became therefore necessary to enact a law for the formation of village Panchayats. In many of the sessions of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly demands were made for the formation of local boards. The then Government of Travancore also felt the necessity of the formation of Local Boards for the rural sector (i.e) non-town or non-municipal areas. This took practical shape in the promulgation of the Travancore Village Panchayat Act (1100 M.E), 1925.

By the Act of 1925 Village Panchayats were constituted at Boothapandy, Nedumangad, Paravur, Sambur Vadakara, Ettumanur and Perumbavur. A provision was made by the Act to elect the President for the Panchayat. The panchayats derived their source of revenue from land cess, professional tax,

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42. Directory of Travancore 1934, Trivandrum, 1933, p. 385.
44. H. D. Malaviga, op. cit., p. 510.
house tax, vehicle tax and licence fees. The taxes were collected after passing the bye-laws in a special meeting of the Panchayat. The approval of the government was also necessary. Under Section 46 of the Travancore Village Panchayat Act VII of 1100 M.E the government fixed the rate of taxes. 46

But the Panchayats which were constituted by the Act of 1925 A.D. were not working properly. The Government therefore proposed to introduce a scheme to rehabilitate the village Panchayats. Thus Panchayats were opened in every Pakuthi in each Taluk for the rural welfare work. 47 These Panchayats were expected to undertake as many duties as possible according to the needs of the villages. 48 Another Act was passed in the year 1935. 49 By the Act of 1935, the Government had powers to declare any village or a cluster of villages as a village Panchayat. It consisted of not less than five and not more than eleven members. 50 The Act stressed that the taxes collected from the people and the government grants to the Panchayat should be spent for the benefit of the respective Panchayats alone. 51

There was no provision for the removal of a member if he was absent for a long time for the meetings. Hence to regulate it, Travancore Village Panchayat Regulation (1111 M.E.) 1936 was passed. Accordingly the government had the power to remove any member if he was absent for three

consecutive months in the meetings of the Panchayat. With a view to
affording better opportunity to the people for making the village organisations
more useful and beneficial, the Government decided to bring another Act to
suit modern conditions and the Travancore Village Unions Act was passed by
His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore on 28th Thulam, 1115 M.E. 1940.

During the time a revenue village meant any local area which was
recognised as a Pakuthi in the revenue accounts. Kalkulam taluk contained seven
Pakuthies viz. Valvachagoshtam, Thuckalai, Kothanallur, Meycode,
Kadiapattinam, Thiruvithancode, Kappiyara. Any Revenue Village or adjacent
revenue villages or portions constituted a Village Union. The Village Unions
were a type of self governing organisations slightly less powerful than village
Panchayats. In the three divisions of Trivandrum, Quilon and Kottayam of
Travancore twenty six Village Unions were constituted. Kalkulam Taluk
contained two Village Unions one at Eraniel and another at Kadiapattinam.

Each of these Unions contained a President, Vice-President, six non-
officials and five officials. The Tahsildar of the Taluk where the village
Union was situated or any other official member nominated by the Government

52. Regulations and Proclamations of Travancore, Vol. VIII, Trivandrum, 1937,
p. 93.
was the President of the village Union. The President presided over the meeting of the village Union and in his absence the Vice-President presided. In the absence of both the President and Vice-President, a member chosen from the council presided for the occasion. The term of office was fixed for three years and they did not receive any remuneration. After a few years these village Unions were brought under the control of the Registrar of Village Unions and Panchayats.

The election of the Vice-President was held in the office of the Village Union. The President of the Village Union specially convened a meeting of its members for the election of the Vice-President. He ought to have announced the day and hour of the meeting seven days previously. The candidate for the post of Vice-President was proposed by a member and seconded by another. The President finally read out their names. Every person whose name appeared in the Electoral roll of the Village Union was entitled to vote. The person who was entitled to vote at an election was qualified to be elected as a member. A person not residing in the village, deaf, leper, unsound person, dismissed from the government service, convicted for any offence, held any salaried office etc. was considered as disqualified.

The name of the elected candidate was immediately published in the office of

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the village Union and at the cutchery of the Pakuthy.\textsuperscript{64} The village Union meetings were held at the office of the Union. Ordinary meetings were held at least once in every month. The Union determined the day and time of all the meetings. The President convened a special meeting of the Union on the written requisition of three of its members. The quorum for all ordinary meetings was out less than five members and special meetings had seven members. If the quorum was not present within half an hour after the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting would be adjourned. Within seven days of the date of meeting a copy of the minutes of the proceedings would be forwarded to the Registrar.\textsuperscript{65}

As the other village Unions, the Village Unions of Kalkulam taluk concentrated on activities such as public works, supervision of public health and sanitation, promotion of agriculture, cottage industries collection of rates and taxes etc. The village Unions also attended to the street lighting, sweeping etc.\textsuperscript{66} The Village Unions also maintained a village fund for their utilization in connection with their duties. When the Union proposed to levy a rate tax, cess or fee, it published the proposal by beat of tom-tom in the village. A notice also affixed in the office of the village Union fifteen days earlier.\textsuperscript{67} The President of the village Union heard the objections and decided the rates of taxes after thirty days of the notice. He prepared the final list of taxes and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} \textit{The Acts and Proclamations of Travancore}, Vol. XI, Trivandrum, 1942, pp. 518f.
\item \textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{66} \textit{Report on the Administration of Travancore Cochin}, Trivandrum, 1950, p.87.
\item \textsuperscript{67} \textit{The Acts and Proclamations of Travancore, op. cit}, p. 518.
\end{itemize}
signed it. Then this tax amount was entered in the assessment Book. All appeals and complaints against the assessment and collection of rates and taxes, cesses and fees were sent to the Division Peishkar whose decision was final.  

Rates, taxes, cesses and fees were paid in cash to the agent. The amount was paid within the prescribed time notified in the union. The village Union fund was deposited in the nearest treasury. A sum not exceeding Rs.25 was not kept in the custody of the President. At every monthly meeting of the Union, the Day Book with the Receipt Book and Vouchers in support of all payments and a Pass Book of the treasury should be placed before the Union. The examiner of Local Fund Accounts audited the accounts of receipts and expenditure annually.

The village Union was directed to prepare and submit a budget. The government also contributed an amount equal to the amount collected by the village Union during a particular year. But the maximum amount however was limited to Rs.1,000. The President had the power to sanction all expenditure upto Rs.25. The Registrar had the power to sanction any amount higher than Rs.25 and upto Rs.100. The Government had the power to sanction all expenses above Rs.100. The village Unions of Kalkulam continued its scheduled activities for the improvement of Rural conditions.

68. Ibid.
Village Administration in Kalkulam after Independence

The constitution of India had envisaged the creation of village Panchayats as autonomous units of local self Government. In pursuance of this objective, the government of Madras enacted the Village Panchayat Act of 1950. It facilitated the constitution of a Panchayat for each village with a population of 500 and above with elected members. It also conferred very large powers on Panchayats and limited the control of the District Collectors to certain emergency powers. Following the example of Madras, the Travancore State Legislature enacted the Travancore Panchayat Act 1950 in reconstructing the Panchayat and making revolutionary changes in their nature and scope. In April 1950 the Government of Travancore appointed a Panchayat Delimitation Committee. The committee was appointed in each of the thirty Taluks of the Travancore State.

As per the recommendations of the committees the final list of Panchayats was published in the Gazette. For the governance of Village Panchayat the rural local bodies in Travancore and Cochin were reconstituted to form 548 Panchayats of which Kalkulam Taluk contained twelve panchayats under Trivandrum District. The twelve panchayats were Attur, Thiruvattar, Colachel, Thiruvithancode, Thirupparappu, Thalakulam, Kadia-

73. N.R. Visalakshi, Administration of Village Panchayats in Kerala, Trivandrum, 1967, p. 56.
75. N.R. Visalakshi, op. cit, p.56.
pattinam, Eraniel, Manavalakurichi, Kothannallur, Valvachagostom, Ponmana and Aravikara. They were divided into wards for conducting elections. The ward-wise electoral rolls were published on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 1953.\textsuperscript{76} The Panchayats of Kalkulam Taluk as a constituent part of the Travancore-Cochin State took part in the Panchayat elections in June 1953 and it came to be administered by the elected representatives of the village. The members were elected for three years. Soon after their election, the members of each Panchayat in turn elected the President and the Vice-President.\textsuperscript{77}

The administration of the Panchayat was vested with the Panchayat Committee. All the activities were carried on in accordance with the decision of the Panchayat Committee. Every Panchayat was expected to maintain a Fund. The main sources of revenue derived from land cess, entertainment tax, vehicle tax, licence fees, magisterial fines, income from markets, profession tax, house tax etc.\textsuperscript{78} Besides, the government also granted an annual statutory contribution. This was limited to the sum collected by the Panchayat during the year by way of taxes and fees etc. Moreover the government had given special grants for specific purposes like building and establishment to the Panchayats.\textsuperscript{79}

Under the Village Panchayat Act of 1950, the Panchayats of Kalkulam were empowered to perform a variety of functions of a civic nature,

\textsuperscript{76} Administration of Travancore Cochin, 1953-54, Trivandrum, 1955, p. 181.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} A. Sreedhara Menon, op. cit., p. 631.
\textsuperscript{79} Visalakshi, op. cit, Madras, p. 57.
some of them were obligatory and some voluntary. The obligatory functions were,

- Construction, repair and maintenance of all public roads in the village.
- The lighting of public roads and public places.
- The construction of drains and the disposal of drainage water and sewage.
- The cleaning of streets, the removal of rubbish heaps, jungle growth and filling of disused wells and other improvements relating to the sanitary condition of the village.
- The provision of public latrines and arrangements to cleanse latrines, whether public or private.
- The opening and maintenance of burial and cremation grounds.
- The construction and maintenance of water-works for the supply of water for washing and bathing purposes and of protected water for drinking purposes.
- Preventive and remedial measures connected with any epidemic.  

Voluntary Functions were:

- Planting and preservation of trees on the sides of public roads in the village.

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• Opening and maintenance of elementary schools, reading rooms, public markets, public landing places, cart-stands, and public slaughter houses.
• Control of fairs and festivals.
• Registration of births and deaths.
• Improvement of agriculture.
• Promotion and encouragement of cottage industries.
• Establishment and maintenance of maternity and child welfare centres.
• Veterinary relief.
• Other measures of public utility.⁸¹

The reorganisation of states in 1956 on the basis of the recommendation of the Fazl Ali Commission resulted in the merger of the Tamil speaking Southern Taluks of Thovala, Agasteesvaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode with the Madras state on 1st November 1956.⁸² The administrative setup of the local bodies then in existence in Kalkulam were allowed to continue until 31st March 1962. The Tamilnadu Panchayats Act 1958 was extended to the Kanyakumari District with effect from 1st April 1962.⁸³

The entire Kanyakumari District, with the exception of the four municipal councils⁸⁴ consisting of forty six Panchayats have been grouped into nine Panchayat Unions or Panchayat Development Blocks. They were

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⁸¹ A. Sreedhara Menon, *op.cit*, p. 628.
⁸² C. Thomas, *Mahan Nesamony*, Marthandam, 1933, p. 44
⁸⁴ Padmanabhapuram, Colchel, Nagercoil, Kuzhithurai Municipal Councils.
Rajakkamangalam, Agastiswaram, munchirai, Melpuram, Killiyur, Thalakulam (later became Kurunthencode) Thuckalay, Thovalai, Thiruvattar.\textsuperscript{85} Of the nine Panchayat Unions in Kanyakumari District, Kalkulam Taluk contained three Panchayat Unions i.e. Kurunthencode, Thuckalay and Thiruvattar. Though these blocks vary in size and population, the average block did not fall short of 150 square miles and the average population was 75000.\textsuperscript{86}

The Kurunthencode Panchayat Union was originally named as Thalakulam Block and its head quarters was at Kurunthencode. During the formation of Community Development Block on 1\textsuperscript{st} April 1958 it got converted into a full fledged Panchayat Union, known as Kurunthencode Panchayat Union.\textsuperscript{87} The headquarters of Thuckalay and Thiruvattar Panchayat Unions were Kozhiporevilai and Thiruvattar respectively.\textsuperscript{88}

Panchayat Union Council was the governing body of the Panchayat Union. It was constituted on the principle that it was a Co-operative Union of all the constituent panchayats in the Block. The Presidents of all Panchayats in the Panchayat Union were the members of the Panchayat Union Council.\textsuperscript{89} Every Panchayat Union Council elected its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among the Councillors. The Government appointed the Panchayat Union Commissioner who was the statutory executive authority of every Panchayat

\textsuperscript{86} Census of India 1961, District Census Hand Book of Kanyakumari, Madras, 1966, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{87} M. Gopalakrishnan, op. cit., p. 777.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, p. 777f.
Union. The Block Development Officer who headed the extension service team in every development block became the Panchayat Union Commissioner. The Panchayat Union Councillors were to hold office for a period of 5 years.  

Every Panchayat Union should meet regularly once in a month. The commissioner, as the head of the Union attended all the meetings of the council and the committees and he should know all information required for such meetings. The Chairman fixed the date of the meetings. He could adjourn any meeting of a Panchayat Union Council and record the valid reasons in the minute book. Once a meeting was adjourned by the Chairman it could not continue its session. No meeting should be held without prior notification of at least five days of the meeting. The Chairman might convene an urgent meeting by giving notice before twenty-four hours.

The Commissioner prepared the agenda in consultation with the Chairman. All questions of the council should be decided by a majority of the members present. If a quorum was not present within half an hour and if all the members disagreed to wait, the meeting should stand adjourned. The government directed that copies of the meeting notices and agenda of the meeting should be supplied to the Local Press representatives.

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The Chairman who was the member of the District Development Council forwarded the minutes of proceedings to the Secretary of the District Development Council. He should forward copies of such proceedings to the Collector and the Additional Development Commissioner for information. He should forward the proceedings with the approval of the Collector to the Chief District Officer or to the Government. The Government directed that all correspondence should pass through the Chairman only. But in matters involving the maintenance of law and order and other urgent matters it need not pass through the Chairman. The Commissioner discussed personally with the Collector any administrative question whenever necessary.

The implementation of various development programmes of the State and Central Governments was the main function of the Panchayat Union. These Panchayat Unions were responsible for providing education, medical facilities and drinking water. The Panchayat Union got its income from Local cess. Local cess was levied at a uniform rate of 45 per cent of land revenue. Entertainment tax was another source of revenue. Besides these the government had extended various grants from time to time. The collection of various taxes was entrusted to the Bill Collectors. This system which was in existence in the former Travancore Cochin administration still continued.

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village Panchayats and the town Panchayats were the constituent unit of the federal set up of Panchayat administration. As per the Tamilnadu Panchayat Act of 1958 all Panchayats with a population of not less than 5000 and an annual income estimated at not less than Rs.10,000 were classified as Town Panchayats. Kalkulam taluk contained 28 town panchayats and 21 village Panchayats and 379 hamlets.

The Village or Town Panchayat was divided into wards. Thuckalay Panchayat Union contained 155 wards, Kurunthencode Panchayat Union contained 156 wards and Thiruvattar Panchayat Union contained 137 wards. On the basis of population, the total number of members was fixed for the Panchayat. But the minimum was five and the maximum fifteen. The Government appointed an Executive Officer to function as the statutory executive of every Panchayat. However in respect of village Panchayats, the elected President functioned not only as the President of the village Panchayat but also as its executive authority.

Election was conducted by adult franchise and by secret ballot. The members of the wards were elected directly by the people. They in turn, elected the Presidents of the Panchayats. The activities of the Panchayats covered all aspects of rural welfare. Conservancy arrangements, sweeping of streets,

street lighting, improvement of roads and construction of public wells, tanks, latrines and midwifery service were some of the items of work of these local bodies. Besides they also served as rural reconstruction centres by maintaining libraries, reading rooms, encouraging compost making, distributing improved seeds and maintaining stud bulls.\(^{106}\) The Town Panchayats of Kalkulam Taluk were also incharge of implementation of the State and Central Development Programmes.

Formation of Municipalities in Kalkulam

Lord Ripon’s resolutions on Local Self government were great landmarks in the growth of the Local Self government in the country. The Resolution of 1881 initiated measures to develop the idea of local self government. This resolution and the British Administration had its echoes in the Native States also.

Prior to Ripon’s Resolutions, the Travancore government passed a set of rules in 1878 A.D.\(^ {107}\) to govern sanitation and other matters connected with the improvement of towns. But these rules were not comprehensive enough to meet the growing needs of the towns. Hence, on the basis of Ripon’s resolution, the government of Travancore passed an Act in 1894 A.D.\(^ {108}\) This was the earliest legislation relating to local self government in Travancore. It emphasized the formation of Town Improvement Committees.

\(^{106}\) Kanyakumari District Census Hand Book, op. cit., p. 54.
\(^{108}\) Ibid.
Accordingly five committees were set up in the Travancore State. The first Town Improvement Committee of the present Kanyakumari District was appointed at Nagercoil. In the year 1913, the towns of Colachel and Padmanabhapuram in Kalkulam taluk were brought under the Town Improvement Regulation.\textsuperscript{109}

The number of members of the committees varied from five to nine with a permanent official majority. As per the regulation, a fund known as the Town Improvement Committee Fund was created. But the powers of the committees were limited and their duties confined to the supervision of sanitary arrangements alone in the town. The committees had no power of taxation.\textsuperscript{110} Subsequently the committees were authorized to collect taxes with the previous sanction of the Government. This enabled the committees to augment their resources and to widen the scope of their usefulness. The committees were further empowered to enforce licenses, collect fees, house tax etc.\textsuperscript{111} The taxpayers elected half of the members of the committees, and the government appointed the other half. The government also appointed the Presidents of the committees.\textsuperscript{112}

The work assigned to the Town Improvement Committees were the maintenance of public wells, public conveniences, street lights, provision of roads etc. In the years followed, other duties such as provision of private

\begin{footnotes}
\item[109.] Gopalakrishnan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 733.
\item[110.] \textit{District Census Hand Book of Kanyakumari, op. cit.}, p. 53.
\item[111.] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 53.
\item[112.] \textit{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
scavenging, traffic regulations, provisions of public health etc. were also assigned to the Town Improvement Committee. The Presidents of the committees were vested with powers of inspecting and controlling the manufacture of food materials. The supervision of cattle pounds also was brought under the control of the committee.  

In the years followed the committees gained experience in their working and they demanded greater powers. There was also the need for the progress of local bodies. This led to the promulgation of the Municipal Act of Travancore (1095 M.E) 1920. It marked an important epoch in the history of the local self government. The Act was drafted in line with the Madras District Municipalities Act 1884 A.D., and the Punjab Municipalities Act, 1891 A.D. The Act made better provisions for the organisation and administration of Municipal towns.

As per the regulation, the towns under Regulation III of 1076 M.E. were constituted into Municipalities. Thus the two Municipalities of Kalkulam taluk viz. Colachel and Padmanabhapuram come into existence. Municipal councils replaced Town Improvement Committees. Padmanabhapuram Municipal Council consisted of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, 2 Official Councilors, i.e. the Local Medical Officer and the Local P.W.D. Sub-division Officer.

113. M. Gopalakrishnan, op. cit., p. 733.
115. A. Sreedhara Menon, op. cit, p. 625.
116. District Census Hand Book of Kanyakumari, op. cit, p. 53.
2 appointed councilors and 10 elected councillors. The Municipal Council at Colachel consisted of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Medical Officer, 3 appointed Councillors and 6 elected councilors. After the merging of the Kanyakumari District with the Madras State in 1956, the Government of Madras extended the provisions of the Madras District Municipalities Act 1920 as amended to these municipalities with effect from 1st April 1959.

Of the four Taluks of Kanyakumari District, Kalkulam was the only taluk which contained 2 municipalities i.e. Padmanabhapuram Municipality and Colachel Municipality. The office of the Padmanabhapuram Municipality was located at Thuckalay. The municipality had jurisdiction over an area of 6.47 sq.km. which included portions of Kalkulam and Thuckalay revenue villages. The jurisdiction of Colachel Municipality spreads over an area of 5.18 sq.km. The financial condition of the Colachel Municipality was not sound during its formation. Hence it was regarded as a third grade Municipality.

The Padmanabhapuram Municipality consisted of twenty wards and a councilor represented each ward. The ward numbers 13 and 17 were reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes respectively. Ward number 15 was reserved for woman. Colachel Municipality had been divided into 24 wards.

118. Kanyakumari District Census Hand Book of Kanyakumari, op. cit, p. 53.
119. Report from the Managing Director of TWAD Board, Madras, (nd.)
Ward numbers 13 and 19 were reserved for women and scheduled castes respectively.  

The chairman and the councilors were elected directly by the electorate and the vice chairman elected from among the councilors. The Government had the power to fix the strength of the council. There was a separate electoral roll for the Municipalities. All persons who had attained the age of 18 and who enrolled as voters in the municipal electoral roll were entitled to exercise their franchise to elect their representatives to the municipal councils. The councilors held their office normally for a period of five years. No salary or remuneration was paid to the chairman, the vice-chairman and the councilors. Municipality was headed by the Commissioner in the official side, the chairman and his council in the non-official side. The Collector was the supreme authority to control the local bodies at the district level.

Municipalities performed both obligatory and discretionary duties. The obligatory duties were the relief during famine and scarcity. Maintenance of public roads, streets, lanes, culverts, causeways, reading room, parks and gardens, play grounds hospital and dispensaries, avenues and street lighting, conduct of exhibition and fairs, cleaning of streets, drains and scavenging, elementary education, water supply, public service connection, drainage and town planning. Discretionary Functions were the secondary education,

122. *Ibid*.
libraries and museums, poor home orphanage, housing, provision of veterinary hospitals etc. All financial matters, especially the power to tax and the power to sanction expenditure was vested with the council.\textsuperscript{124} As in other municipalities the municipalities of Padmanabhapuram and Colachel derived their income from property tax, entertainment tax, remunerative enterprises such as markets, bus stands and rent of land and buildings, profession tax, vehicle tax, cart tax, animal tax, license fees for various trades and surcharges.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{124} K.S.K. Velumani, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1073.  
\textsuperscript{125} Gopalakrishnan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 738.