CHAPTER – IV

SOCIAL SPECTRUM OF KALKULAM TALUK

The original inhabitants of the ancient Tamil country were tribals. It is not known from where they migrated and why they migrated from their homeland.\(^1\) The tribal identity of the inhabitants existed even after the introduction of caste system which appeared as early as the sangam period.\(^2\) With the advent of caste system, the society came to be divided into several castes.

Different Castes in Kalkulam

Nadars are one of the dominant communities in Kalkulam taluk. They outnumbered other castes. In the early days they settled in different regions of South Travancore including Kulasekharam and Eraniel in Kalkulam.\(^3\) Their early social status was not very significant. They could not find a suitable profession. But they were hard working and industrious. They grew Palmyra trees and toddy tapping became the traditional occupation of the early Nadars. They were mostly engaged in toddy tapping and jaggery making.\(^4\)

Nadars underwent hardships in their social and economic life. The high caste Hindus of Travancore considered Nadars as one of the polluting

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classes. They segregated Nadars and did not have any ties with them. 

Nadars should keep a distance of thirty six feet from a Brahmin and twelve from a Nair. The government collected various taxes from Nadars. The male member of a Nadar family aged between sixteen and sixty years had to pay a heavy poll tax. Every family was bound to pay the tax not only for the people who were alive but also for the dead. To escape from the exorbitant tax, several Nadar families emigrated to Thirunelveli. But the government took a step further and collected the tax from the representatives of the families thus emigrated.

Nadars had to pay many unconventional taxes. Some of the important taxes known to have been in force were professional tax, house tax, and land tax. In addition to these they also paid Mulaivari, birth tax, cavalry tax, Enikkaram, Thaikanam, Kuppakachi tax and Manai Meyppan Kollam Irai. Nadars also had to pay taxes for all types of trees possessed by them. Married women had to pay Tali Irai. These taxes were collected from them in a brutal way.

Nadars were expected to do gratuitory services to their high caste neighbours and the government. Such type of free service was called Oolium

service. As Nadars were called frequently to do Ooliam service, their own works were affected and thus they lived in poverty. Colonel Munro abolished this forced labour. He ordered that the people should not serve or make supplies to the state on cheaper rates. Eventhough the Christians were exempted from Ooliyam services on Sundays, they were caught and compelled to do Ooliyam services on Sundays too.

There were also many restrictions to Nadars. They were prohibited from carrying an umbrella, wearing shoes and gold ornaments. Their houses could not have more than one storey. They were not allowed to keep milk cows. Nadar women were not permitted to carry pots of water on their hips like the Nairs did. They were not allowed to cover the upper portions of their bodies.

Nadars were unhappy under the social system which existed in Travancore. The social structure did not give them any freedom. Till the middle of the 19th century there was no possibility for them to make progress. The L.M.S. Missionaries of Travancore from the beginning came into direct contact with the lower sections of the society. Nadar Christians appealed to the missionaries for various benefits and favours from the

government. When they found that their grievances were genuine, they influenced the government to get such benefits to Nadars.\textsuperscript{16}

Munro, the Resident of Travancore on the request of Christian Missionary Ringeltaube released an order in 1812 A.D. permitting the Christian converts to use upper garments.\textsuperscript{17} But Nairs opposed the order and made a complaint to the government. As a result the government released an order in 1814 A.D. regulating the dress for women.\textsuperscript{18} The order of 1814 A.D. prohibited the use of upper cloth by Nadar women. But it did not prevent the use of loose jackets called \textit{coopayam}.\textsuperscript{19}

The upper cloth revolt first started in the areas around Thuckalay and Eraniel in Kalkulam taluk in the beginning of May 1822 A.D. The missionaries encouraged Nadar women to wear upper cloth. Therefore in May 1822 A.D. Nadar Christian women in Kalkulam and Eraniel taluks appeared in market places with an upper cloth. But their jackets were torn to pieces and were ill treated.\textsuperscript{20} Nadars, who had the support of the backward classes and missionaries, rose against the caste Hindus.\textsuperscript{21} Charles Mead, the missionary of the district argued in the Padmanabhapuram court on behalf of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{17} C.M. Agur, \textit{op. cit.}, p. XVIII.
\bibitem{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. iii.
\bibitem{19} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{21} Joy Gnanadason, \textit{A Forgotten History}, Madras, 1994, p. 27f.
\end{thebibliography}
the Christians. The court decided in favour of Nadar Women. Nadars regarded the court verdict as an official sanction to wear upper cloth.

The hostile feelings of the caste Hindus were kindled when Nadar women appeared with upper clothes. Thus a riot broke out at Neyoor for the second time in 1828 A.D. It spread to Attoor, Kannanoor, Thirparappu, Arumanai, Udayarvilai and Pulippanam in Kalkulam taluk. The second struggle was more intense than the first one. Large number of Nairs assembled at Attoor to crush Nadar revolt. These disturbances went on for weeks together. Many of the Mission Schools and chapels were burnt down. On 25th December Christians were molested throughout the Neyyoor Mission District.

As matters went from bad to worse, the then Resident sympathized with the Christians and ordered for an official enquiry. On 3rd, February 1829 A.D., the Rani of Travancore issued a Royal Proclamation. It prevented Nadar women from wearing clothes over their breasts. But they could wear blouse as per the proclamation. Nadar women did not bother about the proclamation of 1829 A.D. Instead of loose jackets they began to wear coloured clothes. The Hindu Nadar women also began to cover their bosoms.

with upper clothes. This led to an open rivalry once again between the caste Hindus and Nadars and it continued from 1855 A.D. to 1859 A.D.

The missionaries presented a joint petition to the Government of Madras stating the facts of oppression and cruelty to Christians. The petition proved the political atmosphere of Travancore. The Government of Madras directed the British Resident of Travancore for an immediate enquiry. The British government thus interfered in the matter and directed the Travancore government to do something. Then the Raja of Travancore issued another proclamation on 26th July 1859 A.D. By the proclamation of 1859 A.D., the whole Nadar community got the right to cover their upper part in any manner, but not like women of high castes.

The temple entry agitation marked the next stage of Nadars struggle for social equality. Nadars and other low caste people were not allowed to enter the temples and worship their Gods or Goddesses. They had to stand a furlong away from the outer wall. They were forbidden not only to enter the temples but also to use the roads around it. They fed the temple elephants and paid taxes to support the temples, yet they were not recognised as Hindus and disallowed to enter into the temples to worship.

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Sri Mutukutty Swamihal was born for the deliverance of Nadars in 1809. A.D. He preached equality for everyone before God. He was the first one to give the call to all citizens to worship God in his temple without any difference of caste or creed. He established temples in the traditional pattern as was in the ancient Buddhist days. He encouraged Nadars to do the rituals of worship themselves in the most simplified way.

There were many temples in Kalkulam taluk which belonged to the Nadar community. One such example was the Naduvurkarai Badrakali Amman Coil of Manavalakurichi Village of Kalkulam taluk. Poojas in this temple were performed by Nadars only. The new pattern of worship made a revolution in the Hindu way of worship among the Hindu Nadars. Nadars found that if they entered the temple the goddess would not kill them on the spot or would not emit any fire of anger from her mouth or eyes. They wanted to re-establish their lost social status and organised temple entry movements.

The first historical event recorded in this respect was the Kumarakoil Temple Entry Movement. Nadars of Kalkulam organised the temple entry movement under the leadership of Sri Vellayan Nadar. He hailed from Kattuvilai, a village near Neyoor. He started this movement fifteen years before Mooka Nadar entered the Madurai Meenakshi Temple in

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Vellayan Nadar chose Subramanya Temple at Kumarakoil for his temple entry programme because he was not allowed to enter this temple.

A ritual noteworthy in the Kumarakoil temple was stepping into the pit of embers. The devotees had to walk bare-footed on the cinders made of burning logs in a pit. Usually a Brahmin priest performed the ritual every year. He could do it after having observed purity for a certain period of time. He would enter the pit at one end and walk on the cinders and get out at the other end. A huge crowd of devotees watched him when he performed the ritual.

Vellayan Nadar came forward to do the ritual. At first he was opposed and finally it was agreed that if he could perform a successful feat of Agni Kavadi he would be permitted to enter the Kumarakoil temple. An agreement was made and government officials were informed. At the appointed time the government officials of Travancore heaped up truckloads of firewood on the fire pit. Vellayan Nadar came forward after his purification ceremonies.

Vellayan Nadar took the Kavadi and jumped into the fire. The Brahmin priest used to accomplish the same in a few minutes. But Vellayan walked on the cinders for half an hour singing and dancing all the while.

Nearly twelve thousand people were watching it. Then he reached the Madankoil. It was sure that he would enter the temple and the sacred shrine.

Nairs decided not to allow him inside the shrine. Suddenly the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Nanu Pillai, came and asked him to change the route giving the excuse of the huge crowd gathered there. But Vellayan Nadar insisted that he must be allowed to enter the temple through the same direct route. Confusion arose and the result was a fierce riot. In this fight around 150 persons lost their lives. Nairs who were responsible for the riot got the support of the government administrative machinery and put the blame on Nadars.

Nadars were not granted permission to enter the central shrine. But they entered and garlanded the shrine and exit through the western door. After the incident the western door of Kumara koil closed had been forever. The caste fanatics temporarily called the achievement of Vellayan Nadar as Akkaani Porattam instead of Agini Porattam. It brought about an intense awakening among Nadars about their civil rights. The movement then spread to many other parts of Travancore.

The temple authorities and the Savarna leaders remained firm in their attitude. At last on November 12, 1936 Diwan C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer read out the historic Temple Entry Proclamation of Maharaja Chithra Thirunal

38. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
The proclamation allowed all people of all castes into Hindu temples in the princely state. The Nadar community got enlightenment only after the advent of Christianity. The missionary work among Nadars was successful which in turn improved their economic condition. In course of time they became better educated and several of them became responsible servants of the government.

The next large community found in Kalkulam Taluk was Nairs. Nairs held a position next in rank to the Brahmins, the *Kshatriyas* and the higher classes of *Ambalavasis*. They provided the army for the king during the pre-British period and afterwards there was the Nair Brigade. During the pre-British period the caste assemblies of Nairs exercised tremendous power and acted as a powerful check upon the rulers. They even administered justice in certain cases. The national council of *Pidakaikars* exercised more authority over the Southern Districts of Travancore than the government itself.

The Nair family was commonly described by the term *tharavad*. They lived in joint families under their own *Karanavan*, the eldest male member of the family. Traditionally the husband would not live with his wife, but in his own *tharavad* or *Illom*, if he was a *Namboodiri*. The

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42. A. Abdul Razak, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
Karanavan enjoyed absolute power over the younger members. He managed the entire property of the Tharavad. He should decide what family ceremonies were necessary. A transfer of land by a single member was quite invalid and all the members of the family must sign the document.\textsuperscript{46} The status and honour of Nairs came from the militia of Travancore attached to feudal nobles. They acted as Managers and tax collectors of temples and Brahmin landlords. They were arrogant proud and oppressive towards lower classes.\textsuperscript{47}

Their social position was rudely shocked when Marthanda Varma conquered the land of the feudal chieftains. He killed chiefs of leading Nair families and the women were sold to low caste fishermen.\textsuperscript{48} But they regained their political power and began to oppress Nadar community in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{49} However the oppressed people of South Travancore were liberated by separation on 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1956. Later on many of the Nairs became engrossed in agriculture, government service or their own affairs and proved themselves loyal citizens of the state.

Marumkkathayam, a peculiar system was practised by Nairs in Kalkulam taluk. By the system a man’s heir was not his son but his nephew. The family property descended through the female line or through sister’s

\textsuperscript{46} Samuel Mateer, \textit{Native Life in Travancore}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{49} D. Peter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.
children. Since the rulers of Travancore were practising Marumakkathayam, they encouraged people of several castes to adopt the system. By the system the family property could not be partitioned.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, Christian missionaries and the missionary society attempted to change the Law of Inheritance of Nairs in Travancore and Cochin. They realised the inability of a convert to inherit or to get a share of the family property. The Madras Government proposed to direct the Government of Travancore and Cochin to legislate for the removal of the Marumakkathayam Law. But the attempt failed because of the strong opposition of the Maharajas of Travancore and Cochin. Hence the British Government decided in 1898 A.D. not to pursue the matter any further because it struck at the root of the whole social structure of the country i.e. the joint family system.

The growth of higher education brought about a change in the Nair Taravads. All the members of the family liked to obtain collegiate education. As it was costly the Karanavan preferred to send his direct descendants to college. Other members were compelled to work in the fields. Thus it created rift in the Nair Tharavads. Many complained that the Karanavan

52. J.W. Gladstone, Protestant Christianity and People’s Movements in Kerala, 1850, 1936, p. 345.
used the *tharavad* income for his personal use. Nairs wanted to restructure their social system through the law of inheritance.

In 1900 many Nairs argued that paternal inheritance was the only way for the stability of Nair families. They felt it was essential for their social progress. They particularly wanted to put an end to the joint family system and the loose system of marriage. They also wanted to introduce the individual right of inheritance. As a result of much countrywide agitation the first Nair Regulation of 1912 was enacted. It declared that the Union of a Nair female with a Nair male or any male other than Nair should be a valid or a legal marriage. It recognised *Sambandhams* with Namboodiris as valid under the law. Under section 9 Polyandry was declared illegal.

In 1920 K. Govinda Pillai, a leader of Nairs in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly argued in favour of individual partition and the adoption of *Makkathayam* in the place of *Marumakkathayam* system of inheritance. He prayed for the grant of a law to remedy the evils of *Marumakkathayam* in the Nair *Tharavads*. After much deliberation a new regulation was passed on 13th April 1925. The Regulation had made far reaching changes in the customs relating to marriage and inheritance among Nairs. It made provision for the partition of the *taravad* properties among its members. By the

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56. Cover File No.67 of 1920, Assembly Subject: Nair Regulation Legislative Section, K.S.A., Trivandrum.
regulation, guardianship of children in the Nair families was transferred from the maternal uncle (Karanavan) to the father.\textsuperscript{58}

The regulation gave Nairs independence from the domination of Brahmins. It marked the beginning of the disintegration of the joint family system. But it stabilized the communal solidarity of Nairs. With the enactment of the Cochin Nair Act of 1113 M.E (1937) the institution of Marumakkathayam was given up by the Nairs.\textsuperscript{59} But a few Nair families and a section of Krishnavahakar still practice Marumakkathayam.

Brahmins\textsuperscript{60} who were at the apex of the social hierarchy were divided into two major classes. The Namboodiri and the Potti.\textsuperscript{61} The Namboodiri representing the true Malabar Brahmin and the Potti, Brahmin of Tulu extraction. During the invasion of Tipu Sultan in Kerala Brahmins from Palacaud and Trichur came and settled in Thiruvattar, and Padmanabhapuram,\textsuperscript{62} in Kalkulam taluk.

The Brahmin settlements were generally known as Gramam, Agraaharam, Aharam, Sadurvedimangalam and Mangalam.\textsuperscript{63} Certain village

\textsuperscript{58.} Cover File No.R.Dis.172, dated May 4, 1925. The Nair Regulation II of 1100 M.E, KSA, Trivandrum, p.5.
\textsuperscript{59.} A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 389.
\textsuperscript{60.} The term ‘Brahmin’ is derived from Brahma, the creator from whose mouth the Brahmins are said to have sprung and hence their caste name. V. Nagam Aiyar, Vol. II, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 234.
\textsuperscript{61.} \textit{Kerala Society Papers}, Vol. II, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 182.
names in Kalkulam taluk viz., Kuthumangalam, Seramangalam, Brahma Mangalam, Mummudichola Nallur Mangalam (Muttom) indicate that these villages were once exclusively Brahmin settlements. Malalikarai inscription of Ravikerala Varma of Venadu attribute the existence of both Sabai and Urar in the Kothanallur village of Kalkulam taluk. It is said that in those days big villages were inhabited by people of all castes. Perhaps Kothanallur was one such village, because it contained both the Sabaiyar and the Urar.

The existence of a tank called Brahmanakulam adjacent to the Sastha temple at Seramangalam further confirms the Brahmin settlement at Seramangalam. Seramangalam records of Jatavarman Sundara Chola Pandya state that the village Seramangalam was a Brahmadeya of Rajaraja Tennadu. In course of time the Brahmin settlement got the status of Brahmadeyams. Generally these settlements existed around the traditional temples.

The Brahmins functioned as trustees or Uralar of temples. Brahmadeyams were exempted from taxes. But they furnished the expenses

68. Sabai – Assembly of a Brahmanical village
69. Urar – Assembly of a Non Brahmanical village
for the support of the temples. After a longtime when the expenses of the state increased, a nominal tax was assessed as *Rajabhogam* (Royalty) on all Brahmin properties. V. Nagam Aiya gives an account of the high social position of *Namboodiris*. Tenants bowed to him not only as their landlord but as their royal lineage, benefactor, household deity, their very god on earth. He was the holiest of all human beings and the representative of god on Earth.

Since they held land and kings under their control, the society in general, came under the control of the priests. Marthanda Varma Maharaja under the influence of his Brahmin Prime Minister Ramayyan, took three steps by which the whole state was surrendered bound hand and foot to the Brahmins. The first was the surrender of the whole country to God Sri Padmanabha, the deity in Trivandrum, by which the ruler assumed the role of the vassal of that deity.

Secondly *Ootupurahs* or feeding houses were instituted throughout the state for the daily feeding of Brahmins. Thirdly the institution of *Murajapom*, once in every six years, fed Brahmins at a fabulous cost. In 1851 A.D., the expenditure on *Ootupurahs* had claimed to a new high of

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Rs. 3.36 lakhs.\textsuperscript{79} According to Barbasa, Brahmins never worked but enjoyed eating. The food, the low castes produced, yet the producers of that food were looked down upon as untouchables.\textsuperscript{80}

Brahmins were patrilineal and practised primogeniture. Only the eldest son in a \textit{Namboodiri} family married formally in his own caste. The \textit{Namboodiri} house was called an \textit{Ilam}. \textit{Illams} were set away from roads, surrounded by a high wall to prevent pollution. It had its own well and tank and a number of outbuildings. \textit{Namboodiri Illam} consisted of a large group of men like head \textit{Namboodiris} with his wives and children, his unmarried brothers and sisters, his eldest son and the son’s wives and children and his widowed mother and such relations. They passed their time in religious observances and visiting their Nair women.\textsuperscript{81}

The wealth was never divided but was administered by the eldest man in turn. Any property which an \textit{illam} member might acquire during his lifetime was returnable to the \textit{illam} at his death. The children of their union were being classed as Nairs.\textsuperscript{82} The Hindu Law not allowed the unions of \textit{Namboodiri} women with lower caste men. Hence avoidance of spinsterhood was difficult.\textsuperscript{83} They observed one abominable custom. The \textit{Namboodiri} girls usually married before the age of puberty.

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79} Robin Jeffrey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 195.
\item \textsuperscript{80} K. Rajayyan, \textit{History of Tamilnadu, Past and Present}, Madurai, 1994, p. 126.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Robin Jeffrey, \textit{op. cit.}, p.12.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Adrian L. Mayur, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 45.
\item \textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
When a girl happened to die as virgin, caste custom rigorously says that the inanimate corpse of the deceased should be subjected to a monstrous connection. However for many women the consolation was the *tali* thread. Hence the symbol of marriage was at last given away on the funeral pyre.\(^{84}\) If the eldest brother had no male issue he could marry one or two additional wives. Still if he had no children or died without issue the next in succession might marry them and so on. When the family was in danger of extinction, the daughter of the house was given in marriage to a *Namboodiri* and took him into the *Illam*. It was known as *Sarvasvadham* marriage.\(^{85}\) According to which the whole estate of the father-in-law pass after his death to the management of his son-in-law.

In course of time quarrels and allegations arose in *illams* because the senior member was not giving due proportions of income to his fellows. But the most important change in the inheritance system was introduced with the *Namboodiri* Act of 1933. By this Act younger *Namboodiris* had married Namboodiri girls. Every *Namboodiri* had a proprietary interest in the wealth of the *illam* even if he did not follow the orthodox custom or living away from the *illam*.\(^{86}\)

The term *Krishnavahakars* literally means people belonging to the same community of Lord Krishna. Tradition traces the origin of *Krishnavaha*

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86. Adrian L. Mayur, *op. cit.*, p.100.
caste to Ampadi, the place of Sri Krishna’s birth and early boyhood. Hence they got the name *Krishnavahakar*. They migrated to Kancheevaram and from there to Travancore.\(^{87}\) Thiruvidaikode in Kalkulam soon became a stronghold of the *Krishnavahakars*. There is reason to believe that the *Krishnavahakars* belonged to the old clan of Ays.\(^{88}\) They did not bring sufficient number of women with them when they migrated to Travancore. Hence some of their men married local Nair women and became *Marumakkathayis*. The rest married in their own community and followed *Makkathayam*. Both these sections still exist.\(^{89}\) The *Makkathayis* generally resemble, in their customs and manners the Vellalar and the *Marumakkathayis* the Nair.\(^{90}\)

The main occupation of *Krishnavahakar* in general was milk producing, vending milk and milk products and rearing mulch animals. In course of time the *Krishnavahakar* gave up their traditional occupation and took to agriculture.\(^{91}\) Since the Nair regulation, many prominent leaders of the *Krishnavaha Marumakkathayi* community wanted a Regulation on the lines of Nair Regulation for the benefit of the community.\(^{92}\) Hence the government appointed a committee consisting of nineteen members. The committee

\(^{89}\) *Census of India 1931*, Trivandrum, pp. 373f.  
\(^{90}\) *Census of India, 1911*, Part I, Trivandrum, p. 261  
travelled throughout South Travancore and gathered voluminous data.\textsuperscript{93} Finally the Travancore \textit{Krishnavahakars Marumakkathayam} Bill was introduced in the legislature on 21\textsuperscript{st} September 1939 and it came into force in 1940.\textsuperscript{94} As a result there was economic prosperity among the \textit{Krishnavahakkars}. Modern education was imparted to all children. Some of them acquired educational status and managed to secure employment in government service and also in various other sectors. They wielded great influence on society and politics.

\textit{Ezhavas} were a backward Hindu caste. They were originally known as \textit{Panickars}, but they called themselves as \textit{Ilathu Pillai} or \textit{Pillai}.\textsuperscript{95} There was no unanimity of opinion about the origin of this caste. \textit{Ezhavas} were found in Kalkulam Taluk and a large number of them had settled down at Tharuvai, Kuthumangalam and Parapattu areas of Manavalakurichi village. At Kuthumangalam and Parapattu they built their huts along the banks of ponds found in coconut gardens where coconut husks were being sunk for soaking. \textit{Ezhavas} residing at Tharuvai resemble Tamilians in habits and costume, whereas the \textit{Ezhavas} at Parapattu and Kuthumangalam areas resembled Malayalis in costume.\textsuperscript{96} Their traditional occupations were agriculture, toddy tapping, coir making and manual labour.

\textsuperscript{93} Proceedings of the Travancore Srimulam Assembly, Vol. XII, Trivandrum, p. 1171.
\textsuperscript{95} A. Aiyappan, Social Revolution in Kerala Village, New York, 1965, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{96} Interview with M.R. Rajendran, Tharuvai, dated 17\textsuperscript{th} July 2009.
Ezhavas of Kuthumangalam and Parapattu areas were following their original profession. But Ezhavas at Tharuvai were advanced and they were engaged in other professions such as shop keeping and hotel management. The Ezhava elders of this area excelled in palmistry.\textsuperscript{97} The Ezhava women equalled their men as earning members of the family. The womenfolk of this area made ropes and useful articles from the by-products of coconuts. They followed both forms of inheritance viz. the Makkathayam and the Marumakkathayam. Those who follow Marumakkathayam went through both forms of ceremony the talikettu kalyanam and the mangalam i.e. the real wedding.\textsuperscript{98}

In former days Ezhavas were treated as untouchables. There were many social humiliations as well. An Ezhava should keep himself at least thirty six feet away from a Namboodiri and twelve feet away from a Nair.\textsuperscript{99} In October 1932, the Travancore government declared new constitutional reforms,\textsuperscript{100} which did not satisfy the aspirations of Ezhavas. They demanded the abolition of property qualification universal adult franchise, communal electorates etc.\textsuperscript{101} The Travancore government turned down these demands. As a result of their struggle through Sree Narayanu Dharma Paripalana

Yogam (SNDP)\textsuperscript{102} Ezhavas could improve their condition. Improvement in education, employment opportunities and doing away with meaningless customs helped to uplift the Ezhava community on the whole.

The origin of the Paraiyas is not clearly known. There were different views regarding the origin of the Paraiyas. The Paraiyas of Kalkulam taluk were known as Sambavar. They were found in the rural parts and a large number of them were found Eraniel\textsuperscript{103} in Kalkulam taluk. They lived near paddy fields where they found their employment as coolies. They occupied a very low position in the social scale. The higher castes considered their approach as polluting.\textsuperscript{104} They had their own musicians, barbers and washer-men. Their huts were situated away from other villagers. Their residential quarters were called Paracheri.\textsuperscript{105}

They were subjected to severe oppression by their masters. They lived in servitude without the right to live in good houses or to wear good clothes. In view of this humiliation, a number of Sambavars had embraced Christianity.\textsuperscript{106} However the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936 had lifted the bans against the Paraiyas.\textsuperscript{107} With the passage of time a change came over the life of these people. Some rich Paraiya families were there in

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, p. 349.
\textsuperscript{103} Nagam Aiya, Vol. II, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 403.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} A.K. Perumal, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{106} District Census Hand Book of Kanyakumari, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 23.
Kalkulam Taluk. Some of their members were working in the countries in Middle East.

There are different views about the origin of the Vilakkuthalanayar. They were found in large numbers in Thuckalay, Eraniel and Thalakulam areas of Kalkulam Taluk. The Vilakkuthalanayar and Veluthada Nairs were not considered as Nairs by Nairs at all. Even though they formed a separate caste, they were also called Ambattan the barber caste of Tamilians. They followed Marumakkathayam system of inheritance. Some had given up their traditional occupation and taken to agriculture and other occupations.

The term Mudali means the first among others. It is said that the ruler of Kaveripoompattinam became a debtor to Siva Chetty, a merchant and liquidated his debts by giving his daughter to the merchants’ son. The descendants of this family came and settled down in Neyyoor, Eraniel and Palliyadi. The tribal name of this community was Sackaravarthy, a term that corrupted into Chackaravar. In the 1911 census, the Chakaravar were called Kavathis, a term which denoted a class of barbers. The Kavathis, with a view to raising their social status began to assume the name of Chackaravar. This was not liked by the Chackaravar who were weavers and merchants. They therefore assumed the new name of Kerala Muthali in the census of 1931.

109. Ibid.
The Kammalas were found in almost every village. They follow their ancestral crafts for which there was great demand. But during the later part of the 14th century Kammalas were regarded as slaves and not allowed to wear the sacred thread or to enter houses of caste Hindus except during construction, after which the houses were purified.

The Kammala community of Itankai class talked of high pedigrees for themselves. They even declared themselves superior to the Brahmanas and descendants of Visvakarma, the divine artificer who are now known as Visvakarmas. They wore the holy thread and claimed the right to officiate as priests at their own marriages and other religious ceremonies.

They were of two classes, the Malayalam speaking section and the Tamil speaking section. The latter were known as Pandy Kammalas. They are found in large numbers in Kalkulam. Visvakarmas were divided into five occupational castes namely Musari (Brazier), Kalthachchan or Kallasari (Stone Worker), Kollan (blacksmith), Thachchan or Asari (Carpenter) and Thattan (Goldsmith). Now these different sections of Kammalas wear the sacred thread and interdine and intermarry with one another.

A few barber families were found in the villages of Kalkulam Taluk.

112. Census of India, 1941, p. 132.
Their traditional occupation was hair dressing and shaving beard. They looked after everything including the performance of poojas during the marriages of poor Hindu Nadars. In olden days barber women acted as midwives. The men of this caste dug graves and buried dead bodies of the villagers. They also removed the soiled plantain leaves during feasts in the marriage houses. They were specially paid for these menial services.\textsuperscript{115}

A few washer-men families were also found in the villages of Kalkulam. Their traditional job was washing clothes. In olden days it was the duty of washer-men to provide umbrellas (\textit{Olakkuda}) made of Palmyra leaves to the villagers.\textsuperscript{116} In the funeral procession of Hindu Nadars, washer-men held a saree over the head of the elder son of the dead and on the occasion of a marriage they spread cloth on the path over which the bridegroom walked the bride’s residence. Again it was the duty of the washer men to spread cloth on the path of the devotees during temple processions.\textsuperscript{117}

Chettis were found largely in Kalkulam taluk.\textsuperscript{118} The ancestors of these families are believed to have immigrated from Vaniyampadi, a village in Tanjore District. They were probably attracted by the abundant growth of coconut trees in the region. Their main occupation was oil crushing. They extracted oil from neem and Alexandrian Laural (Punnai) seeds. In olden days they extracted oil by using country ghanis. With the advent of oil

\textsuperscript{115} Interview with K. Ramaswamy Nadar, Naduvurkarai, dated 25\textsuperscript{th} July, 2000.
\textsuperscript{116} K.P. Padmanabha Menon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{117} G.T. Vikraman Thambi, \textit{Varalattil Mandaicadu}, Parapattu, 1988, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{118} T.K. Velu Pillai, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 596.
crushing mills in the 1940s the country oil crushing in the village came to an end and the Chettis of the village started trading in dried coconut pieces (copra) which they sold in the market at Vadasery.\textsuperscript{119}

\textit{Kaanis} were a homogenous community without sub-tribal groupings. The name \textit{Kanikkar} meant proprietor of land. \textit{Kaani} a shortened form was used as a synonym as well as their title. The \textit{Kanikars} were also known as \textit{Kanis, Kaniyans, Velanmars, Malaiarasans} and \textit{Malavedans}.\textsuperscript{120} They were a primitive tribe, simple and straightforward living among picturesque surroundings. Most of the settlements of the \textit{Kanikkars} of Kalkulam taluk were found in the hilly regions of Pechiparai, Ponmanai, and Suralakodu. As they were familiar with dense forest they were satisfied with the commodities available around them. One settlement of \textit{Kanis} contained a minimum of fifteen families.\textsuperscript{121}

Their settlements, which they called \textit{Vadis}, consisted of huts made of bamboo and grass. The chief occupation of \textit{Kanis} was honey collection, agriculture, hunting, wick practices, and fishing. These people were employed in Travancore for digging elephant pits, and helping with bark ropes to conduct the animals into the taming cages.\textsuperscript{122}

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\textsuperscript{119} Interview with S.S. Chettiyar, Pudukadai Street, dated 17\textsuperscript{th} August, 2007. \\
\textsuperscript{120} Edgar Thurston, \textit{Castes and Tribes of South India}, Vol. III, Delhi, 1975, pp.150-151. \\
\textsuperscript{121} M. Gopala Krishnan, \textit{The Gazetteer of Kanyakumari District}, Madras, 1995, p. 1128. \\
\end{flushright}
The Kanikkar had a well organised social system which functioned in a hierarchical manner. Each Kaani settlement had a group leader. He was known as Muthukani. He looked after all the social affairs in the settlement. He acted as judge in all matters connected with the settlements. He also acted as Panchayat President. He enjoyed the power to receive the new comers to their settlements.

It was their culture to welcome any visitor with warmth, offer them *Ural*\textsuperscript{123} to sit and give tender coconuts, tapioca and honey.\textsuperscript{124} They were chiefly illiterate. They spoke a typical language. It was a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam. As the Kanis were educationally backward, the government provided special attention to spread education among them. The government Tribal Residential Higher Secondary School at Pechiparai was constructed mainly for the education of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. The school contained separate boarding facilities for boys and girls. They were provided with free uniform and other facilities upto 10\textsuperscript{th} standard.\textsuperscript{125} Most of the children of the Kanis were benefited by the school.

A welfare centre was opened at Pechiparai and the mobile medical van visits Pechiparai and Perunchani twice a week. A multi-purpose co-operative society was opened to help them to sell their products and also supply them with their requirements at a fair price. Since the housing

\textsuperscript{123} The Wooden Mortar for Pounding Paddy.
\textsuperscript{124} District Census Hand Book of Kanyakumari, op. cit., p.23.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
condition of the Kanikkars were poor, a scheme to construct three colonies one at Thirupparappu, another in Ponmani with 12 houses each and a third in Arumanalloor village with 6 houses was formulated. The then Governor of Tamilnadu inaugurated the colonies on 29th July 1958.126

The fisher folk of Kalkulam taluk were found in the coastal hamlets of Kurumbanai, Vaniakudi, Kodimunai, Colachel, Kottilpadu, Puthur, Kadiapatnam, and Muttom. These villages were densely populated. Frequent sea erosions in this area rendered many of the inhabitants landless and homeless. As there was not much land available for purchase beyond the existing limit of the villages, these villages had become overcrowded and majority of the people lived in poverty. The fishermen could not afford to settle down far away from the sea and continue their profession of fishing. Poverty and hard work had made the people addicted to toddy or arrack. They did not cultivate the land and the habit of saving was totally absent.127

Formerly most of the fishermen initiated their children into their traditional profession of fishing at a very early age. But now the situation is gradually changing. Since there are ample educational facilities, the children of fishermen go to school but after a few years of schooling they take to the traditional occupation. They were economically backward and poor. They had the feeling that their jobs were secure as long as the sea would exist.

126. Ibid.
Their food was scanty and their dress unclean. While the males caught fish, the females carried them to the market for sale. The nets were of cotton thread of their own make and repaired by themselves.\textsuperscript{128}

At Kalkulam taluk a large number of Muslims were found at Thiruvithancode, Manavalakurichi, Manalikkarai, Mekkamandapam, Azhakiamandapam, Colachel and Thuckalay. It is said that the Muslim traders and saints who used to visit Travancore, respected the customs of the state and maintained good relationship with the local population.\textsuperscript{129} Under their influence some Hindus embraced Islam. During early days Muslims preferred the towns along the coast for carrying on their trade but later they moved into the interior though in small numbers.\textsuperscript{130} The Muslim settlement at Thiruvithancode was the oldest one in Kalkulam taluk. Muslims settled here thousand years ago.\textsuperscript{131}

Since Padmanabhapuram became the capital of the then Venad rulers a large number of Muslims settled around the palace for trading purpose. It is said that the Meccai Palayam,\textsuperscript{132} the Muslim settlement at Thuckalay existed even five hundred years ago. Some of the Muslims of Thuckalay had settled at Rangoon, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and

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\textsuperscript{128} K.P. Padmanabha Menon, \textit{op. cit.}, p.468.  
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Census of India}, 1941, Trivandrum, p. 141.  
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid}, p. 125.  
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Aayvukalanchiyam}, Oct.2008.  
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Meccai Palayam} derived this name due to the large number of Arabian merchants in this settlement.
Indonesia where they had gone in search of livelihood.\textsuperscript{133} The clash of interest which had characterised the Hindu Muslim relations in other parts of India never existed in Kalkulam. Muslims here never adopted a policy of aloofness. They lived in peace and amity with their fellow citizens. They pursued their religious life in conformity with the times.

The food habit of the people of Kalkulam taluk was almost similar to that of the people of South Travancore. Their staple food was rice.\textsuperscript{134} Some sections of the Hindus were vegetarians. Christians and Muslims ate fish and meat more than others.\textsuperscript{135} Nairs and Ilavas were generally non-vegetarians and the Parayas meat eaters.

\textit{Kanji} (rice gruel) in the morning, a more substantial meal at noon and supper after sunset formed the daily routine food of the middle class of all castes.\textsuperscript{136} The low income groups used the cheaper tapioca in the place of rice.\textsuperscript{137} In course of time \textit{Kanji} had given place to tea and coffee. The working class used toddy, an intoxicant beverage. A good number of the people of Kalkulam taluk drank arrack.

People of different castes wore different kinds of dress. The older generation of all communities wore their traditional dress. Elderly ladies of the Nair caste wore Pudavai, Ravikai and the upper cloth all white in colour.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Aayvukalanchiyam}, Oct. 2008.
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Census of India} 1951, Trivandrum, p. xv.
\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Census of India}, 1941, Trivandrum, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{137} J. Sam Nathaniel, \textit{Travancore at the Cross Roads}, Nagercoil, 1948, p. 21.
The Nair men also wore white cloth with a coloured border. The old Brahmin men wore dhotis of four metres length in a peculiar fashion called *Panchkachham*. The old Brahmin ladies wore sarees having a length of nine metres with several folds (*madisar*). This type of dress was worn by Brahmins on ceremonial occasions. Formerly the elders had the practice of keeping pigtails. But now this practice has been completely given up.

The old *Marumakkathayam Krishnavahakar* women wore white dhotis around their waist and a white towel over their blouse. The *Makkathayam Krishnavahakar* women wore coarse variety of saree. As the people advanced in civilisation, they started using modern types of dress like shirt, coat, blouse, cotton and silk sarees and clothes of different colours. The white *mundu* was replaced by the *veshti* with broad borders and the towel with stripes had taken the place of the old simple *thorthu*.<sup>138</sup> As regards ornaments a change is noticeable. In the early times male elders used ornaments and the women pendants. It is noteworthy that down to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the lower castes were not permitted to wear ornaments of gold. However during the reign of Parvathai Bayi (1815 A.D. -1829 A.D) members of the lower castes were allowed to use gold and silver ornaments without paying tax.<sup>139</sup>

Formerly the women loaded the head, the ears, the nose, the neck, the arms, the waist and the ankles with heavy jewellery. But the heavy and

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crude ornaments particularly the ear-pendants had disappeared. These had given place to better-cut and more fashionable patterns. Blackening of the eyes and eyebrows with antimony was a common practice among the Hindu women. This practice still continues but is now done more artistically. In recent years talcum powder and cream have been used. Formerly it was easy to identify a caste with their distinctive mode of dressing the hair. This custom was fast disappearing. A uniform mode of tying the hair on the back portion of the head had been becoming more and more popular among all communities. Majority of Muslims, however have not given up their traditional costume. The Muslim ladies still adhere to the dress of the customary pattern which distinguishes their appearance from those of other communities.

In olden days joint family system was followed and so houses were built to suit the requirements of the joint family. Such houses were called Nalukettus. A wooden granary called pathayam was an indispensable adjunct of the traditional Nalukettu. In course of time the joint family system disappeared and the old Nalukettu houses were demolished. Independent families began to build terraced or tiled unitary houses with separate rooms for storage, kitchen, sleeping and sitting.

140. Census of India, 1941, Trivandrum, p.144.
141. Ibid, p. 143.
142. Nalukettu was the old type of houses with different apartments and a separate place of honour for the Karnavar.
143. A. Sreedhara Menon, Social and Cultural History of Kerala, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 128f.
In former times the weaker sections of the population were not permitted to tile their houses. The houses of the high and the low castes did not mingle together. But the dwellings of the rich and poor of the same caste were intermingled. The low castes were not even allowed to use timber for making rafters and trusses. Their single-room houses were built of mud with thatched roof of Cadjan or Palmyra leaves. The floor of the hut was in level with the ground, cleaned and smeared with cow dung. The oven was located in one corner of the hut which was generally ill ventilated. The people of the middle class lived in tiled houses built of sun-dried or burnt bricks. They were generally tiled. The rich people lived in fashionable houses with masonry and compound walls.

The ceremonies connected with marriage differed from community to community. But wearing tali (wedding chain) by the bride was a commonly accepted practice among all sections of the society except the Makkathayam Krishnavahakar. Nairs gave the practice of tali tying around the neck of the bride, only a place of secondary importance. But primary importance was given to a ceremony called Pudavakoda.

The goldsmiths tie tali with Sivan or Vishnu image known as Kazhuhan Tali to mark the wedding. Within 10 days of the marriage the yellow thread tali or Kazhuhan Tali would be removed at a function called

146. Pudavakoda is a ceremony in which Pudavai (saree) with golden bordered saree is offered to the bride on behalf of the bridegroom.
Pottukettu and a tali made of gold was worn by the bride.\textsuperscript{147} Christians considered tali tying ceremony in the church as the most important part of the wedding ceremony. The tali used by them had a cross on it.\textsuperscript{148} Muslims consider tali tying ceremony as a secondary one. For them the marriage oath taken by the bride’s father with the bridegroom in the presence of kith and kin affirmed the marriage and this ceremony was called \textit{Nikah}.

As the society remained orthodox and conservative, inter-caste marriages were not permitted. However inter-religious marriages between the Hindu Nadars and the Christian Nadars occurred in rare cases. Marriages between sister’s daughter and brother’s son and between brother’s daughter and sister’s son was quite common.

**Social Evil in Kalkulam**

Pulapedi was a dreadful custom in Travancore also observed in Kalkulam by the lower castes like Pulayas and Mannans. The census of 1891 shows that the Pulayas were soil slaves and they constituted 8.18\% of the total population.\textsuperscript{149} They were agricultural labourers found in the rural part of Kalkulam\textsuperscript{150} taluk. The low caste men like Pulayas, Parayas and Mannans could enjoy the privilege of harassing women belonging to the high caste

\textsuperscript{147} Interview with J. Mohan, Mandaicadu, dated 28\textsuperscript{th} December 2009.
\textsuperscript{148} A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Census of India} Travancore 1891, Madras, 1894, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{150} T.K. Velu Pillai, Vol. IV, p. 596.
during the month of Karkataka if they were seen outside their homes after sunset.\textsuperscript{151}

Pulapedi system was known variously as Pulappedi (fear of Pulaya), Parappedi (fear of Parayas) and \textit{Mannappedi} (fear of Mannan or Washer-man). It is very difficult to trace the origin of this custom. In early days the Parayas and the Pulayas held a high position in society. In due course they became the lowest castes. Hence whenever opportunities were made to them they tried to wreak vengeance on Nairs and other higher classes. These atrocities happened only when they gathered together. Hence this custom prevailed during festival seasons. At this season they gathered together after harvest to worship their Gods.\textsuperscript{152}

During the reign of Vira Kerala Varma an order was passed in 1871 M.E (1696 A.D) abolishing the cruel practice. By the order, the Pulaya who harassed a high caste woman could be caught and killed. Their family members including the children in the wombs of women were to be cut into pieces. The harassed women could cleanse herself by bathing in a tank.\textsuperscript{153}

When the order was promulgated by the king, courageous brothers of the Urali caste called Valiakesi and Kochchikesi massacred all the Pulayas and \textit{Mannans} of the villages of Kalkulam. They also reached Valliyar and entered into Kali Udayan’s house, situated on the bank of Valliyar and killed

\begin{footnotes}
\item[151] A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{A Survey of Kerala History, op. cit.}, p. 268.
\item[152] Samuel Mateer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 244.
\end{footnotes}
all the Pulayas and Mannans who were hiding in the house. Infuriated by this act Kali Udayan killed Valiakesi. On hearing the news of the death of his brother Kochchikesi committed suicide. But Kali Udayan feared that the spirit of Valiakesi would do harm to him and so he constructed a temple at Kadiapattinam on the bank of Valliyar now called Attu Madan Koil.

The devadasi system is believed to have been introduced in the temple at Sucindram by Rajaraja-I (985 A.D.-1014 A.D) and dedicated girls used to sing devotional hymns and regulate religious ceremonies and festivals. It found its way into some Temples in South Travancore. In Kalkulam taluk devadasis were found at Seramangalam Vishnu temple, Keralapuram Siva temple and Padmanabhapuram Ramaswamy temple. It is said that at Seramangalam Vishnu temple a few years ago, a hall was found near the temple called Devadasi Mandapam. It was further informed by the villagers that a few devadasi families were residing in a house called Kunju Veedu which was situated near the temple.

It was a custom that the devadasis were not allowed to retire from service until they dedicated their daughter for temple service. If they had

no female to dedicate, they were permitted to adopt girls from another family. Generally good looking Nair girls were chosen for adoption.\(^{159}\)

Dance was the main duty of the *devadasis*. They were taught to dance at an early age of five. Older girls, after being adopted to the profession were taught to dance. *Nattuvankams* or dance masters were appointed for teaching the art of dance to *devadasis* in the temples.\(^{160}\) They were asked to dance in the temple on all auspicious occasions. They were required to dance before the altar six times a day. This duty was carried out by them in turns. During the time of street procession of deities, it was the duty of the *devadasis* to amuse the God with their dance.\(^{161}\)

The *devadasis* attached to the temples of Kalkulam were required to do special duties like attending the two festivals (Navaratri and Mahanavami) at Padmanabhaswamy temple at Trivandrum\(^{162}\) and the Dusserah at the capital, meeting and escorting members of the royal family at their respective village limits, undertaking certain prescribed fasts for the Apamargam ceremony in connection with the annual festival of the temple. On these days strict continence was followed. They were fed at the temple, and allowed only one meal a day.\(^{163}\) In addition, they had to conduct religious dramas in the temples on festival days. Dancing girls of Kalkulam

\(^{159}\) File No.997/1915, Devaswom Department Records, Letter dated 12\(^{th}\) January 1914, KSA, Trivandrum.

\(^{160}\) File No.116/1916, Devaswom Department Records, KSA, Trivandrum.


\(^{162}\) File No.353/1911, Devaswom Department Records, KSA, Trivandrum.

\(^{163}\) Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, p.141.
Ramaswamy temple were even invited to Sri Padmanabha Swamy temple at Trivandrum to enact two dramas named *Rugmangalam* and *Sarangam*.\(^{164}\) For these services they received a daily allowance of cooked rice, monthly wages, *kaccapanam* and in some cases the enjoyment of *kudimanas*. *Devadasis* were relieved from work when they became old and unfit to conduct the service. The relieving of service was called *Toduvaippu* and it was a custom to have it in the palace.\(^{165}\) They were paid an allowance of one and a half *kattis* of food till their death and even for sixteen days after their death.\(^{166}\)

There is ample evidence to show that the *devadasis* enjoyed many religious privileges which pushed them to a respectable rank in society. They wanted to do the meritorious work of temple renovation. The Keralapuram inscription of 1317 A.D of Vira Udayamarthanda Varman records that Nilammai Kutti and Madammai, who belonged to the *Murrakudi* of dancing girls set up the pillar bearing the image of Kulasekara Perumal in the South Western corner of the Rishabha-Mandapa of Keralapuram Siva temple\(^{167}\) in Kalkulam.

In the succeeding years the social reformers felt that the existence of this system was a social injustice to society. Hence they wanted to uproot the system. In addition the government also insisted a law for the liberation of *devadasis*. In the meantime Muthu Lakshmi Reddi introduced the Prevention

\(^{164}\) File No.569/1909, Devaswom Department Records, KSA, Trivandrum.
\(^{165}\) File No.281/1916, Devaswom Department Records, KSA, Trivandrum.
\(^{166}\) File No.997/1915, Devaswom Department Records, KSA, Trivandrum.
\(^{167}\) TAS, Vol. V, pp. 93-94.
of Dedication of Hindu Temples Bill of 1930 in the Madras Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{168} However in the middle of 1930 the Government of Madras issued an order for the abolition of this system. With this Sethu Lakshmi Bai, the queen regent of Travancore state also abolished the \textit{devadasi} system in August 1930.\textsuperscript{169}

It is difficult to say when the institution of slavery originated in the south. The birth of caste system and the institution of slavery were closely allied.\textsuperscript{170} The slave system was hereditary.\textsuperscript{171} The factors which contributed to the enslavement were by birth, by operation of law and by purchase. Debtors who found difficult to pay back loans sold themselves to creditors and served them till the liability was over.\textsuperscript{172}

The government and the landlords owned slaves. It is said that Perianadars were appointed by the kings of Travancore to collect taxes. Marriages of children in the families of the Perianadars were arranged within their families only. Ten to fifteen slaves were given to the bride as part of her dowry. The Perianadars utilised the services of the slaves for the development of their landed properties. The area of land entrusted to each slave came to be called after his own name. As such the names of places like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{168} S. Muthu Lakshmi Reddi, \textit{My Experience as a Legislator}, Madras, 1930, p.119.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Ragini Devi, \textit{Dance, Dialects of India}, Delhi, 1972, p.49.
\item \textsuperscript{170} K.K. Kusuman, \textit{Slavery in Travancore}, Trivandrum, 1973, p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{172} K.K. Kusuman, \textit{op. cit.}, p.29.
\end{itemize}
Malavilagam, Kunnankadu, Sankarankudiyiruppu and Chithrankudiyiruppu at Manavalakurichy in Kalkulam taluk were derived from the names of slaves like Malan, Kunnan, Sankaran and Chithran respectively.\(^{173}\)

The slave caste primarily was composed of Pariahs and Pulayas. The Pulayas were the absolute property of the Thampurans or lords. They were employed labour which their masters pleased. They were not attached to the soil, but might be sold or transferred as their masters thought fit. A wife of a slave could not be sold separately. But children were separated from their parents and brothers from their sisters.\(^{174}\)

Generally the slaves were residing in miserable huts on mounds at the centre of the rice swamps or on the raised embankments in their vicinity. The price of a slave varied from six to nine rupees and in some parts as much as eighteen rupees was given. They were treated worse than even animals.\(^{175}\) Very often they were so cruelly tortured that they were disabled for months. But the court of justice was closed against them because they were not only slaves but also untouchables. Untouchables had no access to the court of justice.\(^{176}\) Any attempt to run away was usually met with horrible death. Emancipation was not possible without the assistance of an external force.

It was the missionaries of the London Missionary Society who raised their voice against slavery and drew the attention of the public as well


\(^{175}\) Ibid., p.45.

as the Government of Travancore to this social evil. In 1812 A.D Rani Lakshmi Bayi with the influence of Munro prohibited the purchase and sale of all slave. But this did not alter the situation much.

Mr. Mead, the Missionary of Travancore thought that the spread of education would weaken slavery. So he offered the school masters an additional pay of one fanam for every slave boy and one and a half fanams for every slave girl they brought into the Christian schools for education. In a year more than one thousand slave children were collected and brought into Christian education in all Neyoor congregations. The missionary ladies were able to bring a few slave girls into their boarding schools where they were taught the making of lace, along with reading and writing. The girls were paid for their work and the missionaries helped them to save that money. From such savings the missionaries tried to buy their freedom.

In 1843 the government of India passed the Slavery Abolition Act which declared the total emancipation of slaves. Even after, the slave trade continued. But after heavy pressure the Maharaja consented to order the total abolition of slavery by the royal proclamation of the 24th June 1855. As the Hindu Society of Travancore, the society of Kalkulam taluk was also divided

into two main sections, the high castes and the low castes. *Namboodiris,* Kshatriyas and Nairs were classed as high castes where as Ilavas, Nadars, Pulayas, Parayas etc. were classed as low castes. The caste Hindus or high caste people monopolised all social, economic and political opportunities available in the state. The non caste section or the *avarnas* were considered to be untouchables. They had to suffer untold miseries and lead a poor life.\(^{183}\)

The untouchables were forced to live away from the houses of Brahmins and Nairs. They were not allowed to live in comfortable houses. Their houses were called Madams or huts. They were prohibited from using bricks and were allowed to build mud walls and thatch the roof of their huts with palm leaves.\(^{184}\)

The low caste could not leave their isolated quarters or villages without striking a wooden clapper to warn off their obnoxious approach. The slaves and the downtrodden cultivated the fields. The landlords used to supervise the work of their labourers from a distance. They could not go near the labourers for fear of being polluted by the low castes.\(^{185}\) The caste Hindus had separate wells and they did not allow the low caste people to draw water from their wells. The Maharajas dug a few wells for being used by the low caste untouchables and they were known as *Tharmakinarus.*\(^{186}\)

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During the 19th century, Social reformers along with Christian Missionaries redeemed the downtrodden masses from ignorance and poverty. Their education and humanitarian work resulted in arousing the untouchables to the need for social reform. They felt that they had various rights and it was their duty to ask them for. Due to the effort of these reformers the Travancore Government began to nominate representatives to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly from the lower castes in 1907.

At the same time Brahmins and Nairs understood that their authority and dominance would decline if social freedom was conceded to the lower castes. They wanted that there was no change in the established customs, castes rules and in social relationships. But in course of time many schools were opened to the Parayas, Pulayas and others who were till then regarded as untouchables. The high caste Hindu who had till now despised and looked down upon his brother of the lower castes felt when they were mixed together in the temple of God worshipping in the same alter that in the eyes of God every man was equal. The Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936 A.D was welcomed throughout the world as the greatest religious reform in India after the time of Asoka.

188. S. Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, op. cit., p. 32.
189. *Information and Listener*, December 1948, Vol. IX, Trivandrum, p. 50