Chapter I

Introduction

I

This introductory chapter takes off from the specific topic of research chosen for the present study, moves over to the work done so far on the Syrian Christians and on the culture and society in Kerala, and then takes a look at the important studies and issues in the sphere of kinship and the family in India. The following section briefly deals with some significant sociological and anthropological studies on these institutions in the West. The last section describes the sampling procedure, the methods and process of data collection, and the general plan of the thesis.

The present study focuses its attention on the family organization and kinship system of the Orthodox Syrian Christians of Kerala. The locale for this study is rural; the population intensively studied is located in one village in the district of Kottayam (in the former Travancore State) and lives largely by agriculture. Even those who are engaged in salaried occupations or in trade, or professions derive part of their income from land.

The Orthodox Syrian Christians form an important group among the Syrian Christians. The Syrian Christians--known
locally as Nazranees—who constitute the oldest of the Christians in India are divided into a number of denominations. Perhaps starting as traders, over the centuries they acquired more and more interests of various grades in land and have been recognized as an important cultivating section of the population of the Malayalam speaking State.

With them is associated a strong tradition of conversion from among high caste Hindus. One significant point to keep in mind is that Christianity reached them earlier than it reached the Europeans and that Christianity did not come to them as representing the religion of the rulers. The development of their way of life took place in the setting of feudal, caste-based society of Kerala where also flourished other communities. It will not be an exaggeration to say that although the Bible provided some broad guidelines for socio-cultural institutions of the Christians the patterns that emerged were indigenous.

During the British rule the Syrian Christians were the first to take advantage of facilities for education and many took to salaried employment; but land retained its cultural value. In fact, there was greater investment in land during this period. For some time in the nineteenth century they also received special treatment in regard to the facilities for acquisition of land in Travancore and Cochin States. It is well known that the Syrian Christians have been the pioneers in developing plantations of cash
crops like tea, coffee, rubber, and pepper and there are a number of villages where the Syrian Christians constitute the predominant cultivating population. Whereas in Kottayam district the Syrian Christians in general and Orthodox Syrian Christians in particular are known as the kings of pepper and rubber estates, in Alleppy district they are known as Kayal Rajas or kings of cultivation of Kayal lands.

The Orthodox Syrian Christians are largely concentrated in the districts of Kottayam, Alleppy, and Quilon all included in the former State of Travancore, and in Ernakulam. It is difficult to obtain the exact proportions of rural and urban populations for the Orthodox Syrian Christians as a separate group; but there is an unmistakable tendency among the salaried and professional people working in urban areas to invest money in agricultural land, especially dry land and there would be very few urban based families which do not have kinship links with families located in rural areas. According to 1961 Census, the proportion of Christians in rural areas to those in urban areas in the state is 860 to 140. This means that 86 per cent Christians in Kerala reside in rural areas. In the 1961 census in Kottayam district 47.20 per cent of the population is Christian, while in the 1971 census it is 46.93 per cent. Kottayam district is a stronghold of the Orthodox Syrian
Christians. For this district the percentage of rural population (89.77) is higher than the State percentage of rural population (83.76).

Perhaps the first study of the Syrian Christians is that by L.K. Mankarshna Iyer entitled *Anthropology of Syrian Christians* published in 1926. It gives a detailed history, and a description of customs and manners of the people. S.G. Pothen's book *The Syrian Christians of Kerala* (1963) also provides a general outline of the people and their history. In a number of books on the history of Kerala, there is a specific mention of the Syrian Christians. There are many writings specifically devoted to the history and spread of Christianity in Kerala and also to a detailed account of the Syrian Christians, but these are largely religion oriented. Some of these are mentioned in the Chapter on Christianity in the present work. *Caste in Kerala Churches* by Ninan Koshy (1972) is an opinion survey to find out the level of distinction between old converts and new converts from the backward classes in three denominations namely, Orthodox Syrian Christians, Mar Thoma Syrian Christians and members of Church of South India (C.S.I.). George Kurian in his *The Indian Family in Transition* (1961) has attempted to cover some aspects of the institutions of marriage and family of the Syrian Christians. His latest paper "Child marriage: a case study in Kerala", 
published in *Explorations in the Family and other essays* edited by Dhirendra Narain (1975) tries to show the pattern of child marriages during some years in between 1923 to 1938 among the Syrian Christians of a rural area, about 45 miles away from the present field of study.

So far, the Syrian Christians have been treated almost as an undifferentiated group and the differences of denominations have hardly been taken note of. It must be said that, by and large, sociological/anthropological understanding of the specific culture and family organization and kinship system of any of the sections of Syrian Christians is lacking.

Though an important minority community of the country, the Christians of India as such have received scant attention from sociologists and anthropologists. Neither their culture and social institutions nor their peculiar problems have formed subjects of serious sociological enquiry. There are some studies on Anglo-Indians (e.g. *The Anglo-Indians* by V.R. Gaikwad (1967) and *Marriage among the Anglo-Indians* by S.K. Gupta (1968)). Although the Anglo-Indians share the religion of the Indian Christians they consider themselves distinct and are so mainly because of their hybrid character and the special privileges they had received during the British regime. In fact it is for their crisis of identification and problems of participation
in the national life that the Anglo-Indians have been studied. They have also been taken note of in fiction.

In a recent book *Change and Continuity* C.J. Godwin (1972) studies two Christian communities—the Kunbis, a peasant caste and the Bhandaris, toddy tappers—of the suburb of Bombay to find out how far they are alien to the mainstream of Indian culture. He deals with the family, and the customs and rituals associated with the life-crises of these sixteenth century converts by Portuguese Missionaries.

In the studies of tribal groups in many parts of the country the scholars have given some attention to the role of Christianity in bringing about changes in social institutions and economic and educational spheres, and to the problems of adjustment of the Christian tribals.

Often the distinction of caste carried over from their preconversion identities are maintained by Christians in matters of matrimonial relations, particularly where the distance between the groups under consideration is marked. The new converts from among the Avarnas are not accepted wholeheartedly. In Goa there are four caste-like groups known after the four Varna categories of the Hindus. All this remains to be studied carefully and the role of kinship and marriage in the maintenance of group boundaries needs to be analysed. Further, the custom of dowry
prevalent among many Christian groups, particularly in Southern and Western India needs to be placed in a proper perspective. In dissertations for M.A., M. Phil., and Ph.D. degrees some of these topics are being covered, but it will take some years before their results become available to the academic community.

II

Even though Kerala is considered to be a 'Paradise' for anthropologists/sociologists not enough attention has been paid to understand the family and kinship system of the various communities. Further, in spite of the presence of a large number of tribes with many peculiar features very few scholars have turned their attention towards them for intensive studies. We get brief notes about many tribes from the works of Thurston (1909), L.K. Amantakrishnan Iyer (1909-12, 1922) and L.A. Krishna Iyer (1937, 1939, 1941), Ehrenfels (1952) gives some features of kinship and marriage of the Kadar of Cochin while Furer-Haimendorf (1952) has provided with some data on the Kurumba tribes of Wynad. Aiyappan's (1937) work among the Nayadis needs special mention in this respect. Recently A.A.C. Luiz (1962) in his *Tribes of Kerala* has mentioned briefly some aspects of marriage and the family of 48 tribes of the region.
As Mencher and Unni (1973) have mentioned in their excellent survey a few scholars have studied some low castes like the Pulayas of South Kerala, but these works still remain unknown to the students of the family and kinship.

Because of unusual features of their kinship and marriage pattern the matrilineal Nayar have been much in discussion in anthropological literature almost since the turn of the century. The dual local pattern of marital residence with the absence of elementary family unit is found mentioned as a limiting case of universality of family. The issue of whether polyandry has existed among them evoked considerable discussion in scholarly journals (see Leela Dube, 1974). Since the last twenty five years or so the traditional kinship system of the Nayar and the changes therein have been studied through intensive field research by a number of scholars. K. Gough, Joan Mencher, Chie Nakane, and K. Raman Unni deserve a special mention here. M.S.A. Rao (1957) and Adrian Mayer (1960) took up the broader themes of social change in general, but inevitably had to consider kinship and marriage. With the help of her study of the Nayar of the Central Kerala, Gough (1959, 1961) has contributed to some important theoretical issues like universality of family, definition of marriage, and relationship of political and economic
structure with the kinship structure. Unni's (1956) insightful and data-filled substantial paper on visiting husbands provides an understanding of the changes in patterns of marital residence. The other matrilineal caste-groups studied in some detail are the Tiyyar and the avunculo-ar Nayar of North Kerala by Gough. A. Miyappan's study of the Izhava (1944 and 1965), who are the patrilineal counterpart of the Tiyyar, is well-known. Another important caste group of Kerala with extremely unusual patterns of kinship and marriage were the Nambudiri Brahmin among whom only the eldest son was allowed to marry in the caste and have legitimate children who would belong to Nambudiri caste. He could marry as many as three wives from the community while the junior sons of Nambudiri family could enter into Sambandham relationship with the women of Nayar and some other matrilineal caste groups. The common feature of the Nambudiri and "ayar kinship was the impartibility of the estate. Joan Mencher (along with Goldberg) (1967) have provided detailed descriptive analysis of the traditional Nambudiri kinship system.

Of the Muslim groups in Kerala, it is the matrilineal Mappilla who have received some attention. Gough has studied the Mappila of North Kerala. V.S. D'Souza's
(1959) pioneering work has been widely quoted and also included in representative works on Muslims. The State provides a rich virgin ground for the study of social organization in general and kinship organization in particular of the Muslims of Kerala who are divided into a number of groups. It should be borne in mind that in the early centuries of its coming to the Kerala Islam did not have the power of the sword with it, as it had when it entered and spread from the North west.

The matrilineal Muslims of Lakshadweep islands with their duolocal marital residence and the existence of a unique combination of matrilineal and Islamic laws and regulations in inheritance and other aspects of social life, have received considerable attention in recent years. Intensive studies of three island are available (A. R. Kutty, 1967; Census of India; and K. P. Ittaman, 1973). There is also an analytical study of interaction between Islam and matriliney on Kalpani island by Leela Dube (1969). Further research on this island is being carried out by Leela Dube and her students.

Unlike among the Patrilineal Nambudiri and matrilineal Nayar and other caste groups, the notion of impartibility of estate has been absent among the Christians. Nor does their system bear resemblance to Mitakshara system, although they can be described as patrilineal in organizing their domestic and economic life. An intensive study of a rural
based Christian group should bring into relief some significant alternative modes of solving the problems associated with the family and kinship like those of providing for the new generation and for the care of the old, and of providing a relatively less oppressive network of kin.

III

The many religious communities, castes, and tribes in different cultural regions of India present an extraordinary variety of patterns of kinship and family. Two recent publications deal with the work done in the field of kinship and the family in India in the twin disciplines of sociology and anthropology. Whereas Sociology of Kinship by Leela Dube (1974) is essentially an analytical and critical survey of sociological/anthropological literature on kinship and the family in the Indian subcontinent in his Household Dimension of the Family in India, by A.M. Shah (1973) after "an analytical description of households in a Gujarat Village", "critically examines writings on the Indian family since the middle of the nineteenth century with a view to establishing all India correlations and delineating the terminological
and theoretical issues posed by a sociological study of the Indian family". During the last four years or so a number of books and articles have been published in these fields which naturally do not find a mention in the above mentioned two books.

Information on patterns of kinship and the family is scattered in the compilations of manners and customs of castes and tribes in various parts of India carried out during the British regime broadly after the first half of the 19th century, in monographs on tribes largely by the administrative officers. The anthropologists come to the scene later but in most of these monographs kinship was treated forming a part of social organization. Barring a few exceptions such as W.H.R. Rivers' study of the Toda (1906) and K.P. Chattopadhyay's study of Khasi kinship and social organization (1941), kinship by itself did not attract the attention of ethnographers till about the late forties of the century. And yet kinship was such an important and almost all pervasive organizing principle in the life of the tribal groups that much information flowed in. Various kinds of descent systems, marriage forms and practices and family organization were described; it remains a fact, however, that these themes received far greater attention in tribal studies since the fifties. However, carefully thought out field
studies and comparative studies of family organization for the tribes are lacking. By and large kinship terminologies of the tribals have not been given as much attention as they deserved. Exceptions like Stephen Tylor's work among the Koya (1965) are very few.

Intensive studies of caste-groups concentrating on kinship and to some extent on the family are available. The Coorgs, the Rajputs of Western and Eastern U.P.; Malwa in Madhya Pradesh, and of the cis-Himalayan region; the Jat; the Pratihar Kailar of Ramnag Taluk are some such caste groups (Leela Dube, 1974). Some small groups among the scheduled castes have also been studied. The kinship patterns of the Brahmans, however, have received much greater attention from anthropologists/sociologists. T.N. Madan's study (1965) of Kashmiri pandits, K. Gough's (1956) of the Smartha Brahmin kinship and Louis Dumont's (1962, 1966 a) of the Sarayupari Brahmans of eastern U.P. deserve attention. These have had different theoretical orientations. It may be mentioned that Madan gives much attention to the household as the smallest unit in the family organization and views it in the context of the Pandit kinship system. In Gough's and Dumont's studies kinship terminologies of the respective groups have been analysed carefully, using different models—alliance model in one caste and descent group model in another.
Although most village studies discuss important aspects of kinship and the family and marital alliances, there are some which are considered, and rightly so, as significant contributions to the study of kinship in India. Adrian Mayer's *Caste and Kinship in Central India* (1960) deserves mention here. It studies kinship in reference to the internal structure of endogamous caste groups. His twin concepts of cooperation and recognition in reference to relatives have proved very useful. His attempt to understand kinship through native categories is commendable.

It is not possible to give an exhaustive survey of the whole field of kinship. Many of the empirical works mentioned in earlier pages have a distinct theoretical base and have also contributed to conceptual development. In considering theoretical and conceptual developments in the field of kinship in India in the last twenty five years or so, the two names that come to mind forcefully are those of Irawati Karve and Louis Dumont. Adrian Mayer, K. Gough, Nur Yalman, Joan Moncher and in very recent years Sylvia Vatuk, are some of those scholars who have carried forward some arguments and/or brought out new conceptual formulations to comprehend the empirical reality they were concerned with. Irawati Karve may be considered a pioneer in the field of comparative study of kinship. She views India as made up of four
cultural zones and presents her material in this comparative framework. She was interested in the process of acculturation and accommodation and as such tried to explain many customs, linguistic forms, and kinship terms in terms of origin, migratory influence, settlement and functional association, and geographical position. Her work has provided several invaluable insights and has thrown up provocative hypotheses. Karve tries to analyse the basic differences between Dravidian and Indo-Aryan kinship organization and talks of the central zone which is a kind of in-between the Sanskritric north and Dravidian south. Despite some sweeping generalizations, and insufficient localization of data Karve's work on family and caste is also very much related to her understanding of kinship patterns in India. It is not possible to discuss here all of Louis Dumont's contribution; "Dumont's theoretical formulations spring from the application of Levi-strauss's structural principle of complementary dualism or the logical principle of Opposition" (Leela Dube, 1974, p. 46). He did substantial field work in Tamil speaking areas, wrote a full-length book on the Pramalai Kallar, then attempted comparative studies of many caste groups and elaborated his theory regarding the role played by marriage in the sphere of kinship, the dichotomy between kin and affines and transmission of affinity over
generations. His main evidence or proof comes from kinship terminology, marriage rules, and ceremonial roles and gift-giving. Later Dumont has made a comparative analysis of north Indian kinship mainly on the basis of intensive study of one Brahmin group in eastern U.P. Dumont's provocative generalizations have received much attention from scholars. It may, however, be mentioned that his formulations are not particularly useful for Kerala whose patrilineal as well as matrilineal descent systems are of a different kind.

Various important features of kinship patterns in India such as descent principles, village exogamy, hypergamy, polyandry and polygamy, unequal status of bride-givers and bride-takers, and ties that bind descent groups of various orders have received considerable attention from scholars. Two recent books which concern themselves with marriage (essentially hypergamy) and kinship among two caste groups in Gujarat deserve mention. One is *Kanbi and Patidar : A Study of the Patidar Community of Gujarat* by D. Pocock (1972) and the other is: *I Give Thee My Daughter* by Klass van der Veen (1972).

*Kinship and Urbanization : White Collar Migrants in North India* by Sylvia Vatuk (1972) offers some very
significant findings on the basis of her empirical examination of relationship between kinship and urbanization in two mohallas of Meerut town. Although there is no rapid and radical change in the traditional family system, a class emerges as a surer guide to social relations; there is a predominence of nuclear households and neologal pattern of residence facilitates greater selectivity among available kin. Hence, despite its patrilineal structure the kinship system comes to have more bilateral emphasis. Sylvia Vatuk emphasises that it is the fact of urban residence per se but the underlying chain of forces of education, occupational mobility, geographical mobility, and neolocal residence pattern which provide a kind of causal chain for changes in kinship organization.

We now turn our attention to some significant works done in the field of family sociology. This is not to create an artificial distinction between the field of kinship and family for as we have seen, many works mentioned earlier do focus their attention on family embedded in kinship system. What is attempted here is an examination of some major problems taken up for examination and arguments by scholars working in the field of sociology of the family.
In the excellent selective annotated bibliography in A.M. Shah's recent book *The Household Dimension of the Family in India* (1973) there are 23 books and 68 articles and papers dealing with the various aspects of the family in India. He also includes one M.Litt dissertation. The latest publication that is included in this bibliography is of 1968. A perusal of the extensive bibliography in *Sociology of Kinship: An Analytical Study of Literature* by Leela Dube (1974) is also revealing. It brings us up to 1969-70 and the break-up of books, dissertations, and articles and papers dealing with the family, as follows: (a) books on the family-17; (b) books on other themes but having significant material concerning the family-56; (c) articles and papers including some unpublished papers-183; (d) unpublished dissertations on the family-10; and (e) unpublished dissertations on other themes but having significant material concerning the family-11. An elaborate account of the contributions in this sphere is naturally out of the question. What is attempted here, therefore, is to point out the major issues raised in discussions and empirical and comparative studies and to refer to some significant points made by scholars.

In the field of family sociology in India the major issues that have engaged the attention of scholars include: definition of joint family; whether joint family is giving way to nuclear family; whether joint family is more characteristic of rural areas or urban areas; classification of households on the basis of composition since household is the most easily observable familial unit (being a consumption unit with well-defined roles and day-to-day cooperation between members) and making of typologies of the family on the basis of types of residential units; understanding the process of development of domestic group; effects of industrialization and urbanization...
on the family; and changing interpersonal relations within the family.

Definition of joint family has been a controversial issue. Besides commensal and coresidential joint family, functional or multi-functional joint family with dispersed units has been stressed by scholars like K.M. Kapadia (1966) and I.P. Desai (1964). I.P. Desai made a clear cut distinction between family and household, ascertained that numerical strength is not equivalent to composition, and that the total number of persons living in households of the joint family type is a better index of the strength of joint family system. All these ideas have gone deep into the researches on the family in India. Kapadia was among the first sociologists to focus his attention on the study of the family. He has put forth his findings and ideas mainly through surveys, analysis of secondary data, and a full length book. He has traced the history of the Hindu joint family, and tried to relate the contemporary family to socio-economic variables like occupation and locale. According to him joint family living is much less emphasized in villages than in towns. He also stresses the significance of functionally joint family.

Joint family is looked upon by Bailey (1960), Mayer (1960), and others as a common property-holding unit irrespective of residence. Many idealized descriptions of joint family also harp on common property and functional jointness. Gradually the distinction between 'household' and 'family' has become sharp and clearcut. Household is the basic familial unit but the dispersed units recognize certain oneness with a large-scale 'family' which is based on patrilineal descent but includes the inmarrying wives. T.N. Madan demonstrates this very well and Pauline Kolenda (1968), talks of "...units that fit one within another as part of a single congery, the Indian family" (p.362). Closely related to this is the fact of levels of
partition or fission.

In trying to understand the patterns of and changes in family organization, the domestic group has been the principle focus of attention. Analysis of secondary and primary data on household composition has led to important findings. For instance, R. Mukherjee (1965) finds that higher castes which generally belong to higher economic levels have greater emphasis on joint family living and that joint family living is stronger in urban areas. Typologies of households have been evolved. R. Mukherjee (1969, 1962 & 1965) and Kolenda (1968) may be mentioned here. The significance of exact kin composition of households is rightly emphasized by A.M. Shah both in the analysis of his empirical data and in his conceptual formulations.

The recognition of developmental process of domestic groups has lead to the realization that the normative time of break-up of domestic groups differs across regions and across groups. The demographic processes and the normative time for break-up have been emphasized as important determinants of the proportions of different types of households in a population. A.M. Shah has taken into account both these factors and has also tried to relate the two for an analysis of his data. R. Mukherjee (1975) has made an excellent analysis of family structures with the help of various demographic characteristics of the Indian population. Kolenda tries to relate the normative time of break-up with the proportion of joint family households in her systematic comparisons of the data presented by others and further tries to examine these proportions in the light of socio-economic characteristics like land tenure system and kinship system. A.M. Shah has made a significant contribution to the study of the family embedded in kinship system and in relation to caste, occupation, and locale. He asserts that joint family is stronger in old towns, in long established populations in such
towns, and in relatively high castes. Trading communities usually have a strong emphasis on joint family system. M.S.A. Rao (1970) and others have shown that entrepreneurs find joint family more conducive to prosperity. Leela Dube (1974) while surveying others' findings throws much light on various aspects of the family in India.

Relation of the family to urbanization and industrialization has been an important area of investigation. Ross's (1961) work based on interview material was a pioneering attempt in this area. But she posits a moving over from idealized traditional joint family to isolated nuclear family of the West. Her discussion of interpersonal relations and attitudes is, however, very good. The most significant sociological work from conceptual and empirical point of view is Urbanization and Family Change by K.S. Gore (1968) which is a study of Aggarwal community in and around Delhi. His data indicate only a limited change. Sylvia Watuk's work has already been mentioned. In discussion of effects of industrialization on the family or vice-versa, it has been emphasized that the isolated nuclear family should not be considered as an inevitable consequence of industrialization either in the West or in India. Lambert (1963) shows a larger proportion of complex households among the factory workers of Poona, while H.Grenstein (1961) asserts that often paucity of accommodation in urban areas is responsible for joint living. Neera Desai (1974) emphasizes the need of relative's help for working women.

It is recognized that pritrilocal joint family households as also the familial norms and roles have much relevance for the consideration of status of women. Hence in studies on working women, as also in those concerned with status of women, family composition and familial relationships have featured prominently. (Neera Desai, 1969, 1974; C.Hale, 1948, 1969; Premilla Kapoor, 1970). Neera Desai has not only discussed the problems of joint family living, constraints
over women, and attitudes towards them in the context of familial role relationships, but has also pointed towards the changing texture of relationship between older and younger generation, particularly in urban areas.

Although there are very few tribal studies focused on the familial and household, and hardly any surveys of household composition among tribal groups, the micro-studies and sociological census presented in some studies gives a clear indication of the predominance of household nuclear family. However, supplemented nuclear households with widowed parents and younger siblings are not uncommon. In tribal groups like the Bhils the younger son continues to live with the parents with his wife and children, and some groups of settled cultivators with substantial land do have the norm of married sons continuing to live together till the death of the father (Leela Bube 1974, p.70). Among the Oraon of Chotanagpur a large scale three to four generation joint family household has been traditional.

A few studies of the pattern of kinship and the family among the minority communities of India such as the Muslims, the Parsees, the Christians have been and are being carried out by doctoral student individual scholars, and in the form of groups projects. Some foreign scholars are also engaged in such work. Much of this work is not yet published. Although many Muslim groups like those of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujerat, and Lakshadweep, Delhi, and Lucknow have received considerable attention that our understanding of kinship and the family among the Indian Muslims is not substantial. However, the Indian Christians appear to be the most neglected minority group in this area of investigation. Indeed, as has already been made clear, very little effort has gone into the sociological/anthropological understanding of this community.
Although an exhaustive survey has not been attempted, it seems worthwhile to have a broad look at some important studies on the family and kinship in the West which forms the most important part of the Christian world. A few studies of the non-Western Christian communities have also been taken up. In C.M. Arensberg and S.T. Kimball's book *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940) we get a comprehensive picture of the family and kinship systems of the Irish Christians. This pre-industrial Irish family is small in size with members belonging to two or three generations; there is strong subordination of children under the father who is the head of the household and owner of the property; and the role relationship between kin are determined by strong tradition.

Contradictory to this pre-industrial Western family system, Talcott Parsons (1943) in his much discussed paper on the "Kinship system of the contemporary United States" has emphasized that industrial American society is characterized by isolated nuclear family units which are a result of the following features: lack of distinction in terminology between the paternal and maternal families of orientation except in the
patrilineal inheritance of the family name, absence of any important terminologically recognized units which cut across conjugal units, terminological assimilation of siblings, spouses to sibling status, absence of any structural bias in favour of solidarity with the ascendant and descendant families in any one line of descent, lack of influence of kinship system on occupational or social status, and high mobility of conjugal units in status independently of kinship relationships.

This Parsonian view of the industrial Western urban family and kinship system set off a number of empirical studies to find out the importance of kinship and the family in the West. Scholars like M. Kerr (1958), R. Linton (1959), J. Klain (1965), and M. Anderson (1971) were mainly interested to see the effect of industrialization on the family system. The studies of Kerr (1958, *The People of Ship Street*) and of Klein (1965, *Samples from English Culture*) show that in industrial societies all families need not be 'isolated nuclear' types, and that even after marriage the couples show close relationship with kin and friends. Anderson (1971) in his comparative paper has shown that family units in pre-industrial England were also predominantly nuclear in nature and that in contemporary society due to industrialization there is a close relationship between parents and their married sons.
Many scholars have been interested in examining the nature of kin relationship and the importance of kin outside nuclear family. The most important of such studies are those of J. Mogey (1956), R. Firth (1956), E. Bott (1957), M. Young and P. Willmott (1957), E. Litwak (1960 a and b), B.N. Adams (1968) and C. Bell (1968).

Raymond Firth's book *Two Studies of Kinship in London* (1956) deals with the kinship system of working class people in London. It underlines the importance of kin outside the nuclear family, the structure and organization of their relationships, patterns of interpersonal relations under complex urban conditions, and the definition of the kinship universe of an individual, and of the nuclear family along with the social use made of it.

Elizabeth Bott (1957) provides a sociological analysis of variations in the performance of conjugal roles in her book *Family and Social Network* where she gives an understanding of the social and psychological orientation of urban families. She has shown that in the case of familial relationships the line between formal institutionalized expectations and individual expectations is often difficult to demarcate and that there is considerable variation in the role relationship
between the husband and wife. Further, it is shown that the daughter and hence her husband are more in touch with her mother even though the husband is not cut off from contact with his mother.

Young and Willmott explore the importance of kinship relationship in their book *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) while Willmott and Young in *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (1960) tries to see the differences between various classes, the influence of geographical mobility on kinship relationship, the status-consciousness and social interaction of the people, the importance of relatives especially in old age and the interpersonal relationship and its importance in different phases of life.

D.M. Schinder and G.C. Homan in their analytical paper (1955) examine the American kinship terminology and show the importance of Krober's principles for it.

In addition to the kin relationship the studies by E. Bott (1957) and C. Turner (1967) deal with the variations in conjugal roles and the importance of network in providing support to the nuclear family.

M.B. Sussman and L.G. Burchinal's paper in *Sociology of the Family* (ed M. Anderson, 1971) has summarized all major research works to give a clear
idea of the family and kinship of the Western industrial society. These studies show that American urban nuclear family units are not 'isolated' but related families are close to each other and form a functional network of families related through blood and marriage relations. A largely matricentral pattern in these relations has been discovered by many researchers. The members of such kin network have more or less regular contact with each other and provide financial assistance, advice, and services. Further the kinship system also helps its members to achieve social and occupational status in spite of geographical mobility. The strength of kinship ties have been much stronger among the middle-class urban families than families in other strata of the society.

The knowledge regarding the family and kinship systems of the rural Christian communities, both of the West and of the East, are very limited. Raymond Smith's book *The Negro Family in British Guiana* (1956) deals with various aspects of family such as ownership, headship and developmental cycle of the household, and certain features of kinship system of three coastal villages.

In *West Indian Family Structure* (1962) M.G. Smith gives a comparative account of the similarities and dissimilarities found in regard to headship and composition of household, patterns of mating and recognition of parenthood, and the family structure and kinship relationship among two urban samples from Grenville and
Kingston, two peasant samples from rural Jamaica and Latante, and a sea-faring and emigrant sample from Carriacou.

Along with others, two rural Christian communities are also dealt with in Whiting's (ed.) book *Six Cultures* (1963). From the Romneys' account of the Mixtecs of Juxtlahuaca in Mexico and the Nydeggers' account of the Tarong in Philippines we get some understanding of the family and kinship of these people, both of whom have a land based rural economy. In both these communities the predominant type of residence is patrilocal and the family is nuclear in composition.

V

For the present study a village from the district of Kottayam was selected. This district has got the highest percentage of Christians in Kerala, being 46.93 per cent. Orthodox Syrian Christians are concentrated in and nearby this district. The office of the Orthodox Syrian Church, the supreme head of the Church and many of the Church institutions including the theological seminary are all located in the same district. Kottayam is considered to be a stronghold of the Orthodox Syrian Christians.
The village of Manarcadu was selected because it fulfilled the following criteria set out for the area of study:

a. It had a numerically large Orthodox Syrian Christian population;

b. Most of the families were permanently settled in the village for many generations; and

c. Most of the Orthodox Syrian Christian households of the village were members of the Parish Church which is one of the most famous churches of Kerala.

Only a rural area can evince these characters together and there is no doubt, therefore, that such a rural area is the best place for gaining an understanding of the nature and working of the institutions like the family, marriage, and kinship of the Orthodox Syrian Christians. Manarcadu had one special advantage for me. My mother's natal family, mother's mother's natal family, and father's sister's conjugal family are located in three different wards of the same village. Many of the villagers knew my father who had worked as a teacher in the church school many years ago. It was thought that introduction to this village and establishing rapport with the people there would be easier for me. This hope was amply fulfilled.

The sample:

A stratified systematic sample was drawn for the study. All the five wards were selected for drawing the
sample from. Of the member households of this Parish of the Orthodox Syrian Christian Church who were located in each of these five wards, approximately 25 per cent were selected. The Parish member households in the five wards of the village numbered to a total of 860. For each ward a list of member households was prepared in accordance with the Church Census which had been taken in 1970-71. I was lucky to get this ready-made list of the Universe. The specified number of sample households for each ward was selected from this list taking every fourth household after randomising the first number. Table 1.1 gives the wardwise distribution of the member households of the Parish and the number of sample households selected in each ward.

The sample households were identified by the name of the head of the household and the name of the household. I was introduced to these households by some of my relatives, or by such of their neighbours who knew the members of the particular household well. In some case self-introduction was enough. It was clear that in all cases my identity was established through the kinship links I had with some households of the village.

While engaged in the preparation for drawing a sample mainly involving the work of obtaining a complete list of Orthodox Syrian Christian households for each ward
Table 1.1

Wardwise distribution of the Orthodox Syrian Christian households and the size of the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of ward</th>
<th>Total No. of households</th>
<th>Relative frequency</th>
<th>No. of households to be interviewed</th>
<th>No. of households interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manarcadu</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>.38139</td>
<td>81.99885</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuzhipuraydam</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>.29302</td>
<td>62.99930</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvenchoor</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.10930</td>
<td>23.49950</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malam</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>.19651</td>
<td>42.24965</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areeparampu</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.01976</td>
<td>4.24840</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 860

215
in Manarcadu from the Church Census, I conducted a few informal, intensive interviews and did some observation which helped me in formulating a comprehensive schedule to be used in the second field trip. The church functionaries and some knowledgeable persons were interviewed for obtaining the history of the church and the history of the village with special reference to the settlement and growth of Orthodox Syrian Christian population there. Some material published by the church about itself was also helpful.

The schedule which was the main instrument of data collection sought to obtain varied kinds of information regarding the sample households and its individual members. A part of the schedule pertained to the census of the sample population. The main kinds of information obtained included the following: demographic data, detailed data regarding the break up of households and their composition at the time of break up, dowry given and received, marital distance and relationship, if any, before marriage, occupational distribution, and so on. Most of this information was tried to be obtained also for those sons who had left the parental household while only selected information was obtained for the daughters of the households. As a part of the process of data collection eighteen genealogies having five to six generations depth were collected. Although the data
obtained through them have not been used for quantitative analysis of change, they have been helpful for discovering patterns, variations, and changes in various areas of life of the Orthodox Syrian Christians, particularly in the areas of economy, family, and kinship. They also provided many relevant case studies of fission and partition.

The present study is divided into ten chapters including the present one. Chapter II presents a sketch of Kerala and its development through centuries. Besides giving the geographical and historical data it tries to examine the effects of foreign contacts. The last section of this Chapter gives a brief account of the present people of Kerala. Chapter III deals with the history of Christianity in Kerala and its development in an overall atmosphere of harmony and cooperation with other religious groups, the contact of Eastern and later on Western Christianity and the resultant evolution of different Christian denominations. In the end it gives a broad picture of the Orthodox Syrian Church and its people in the course of history and its organization at present.

With this background we come to the village of Manaroadu, the locale of the present study. In Chapter IV the history of the village, which is in a way the history
of the migrations and settlement of the Orthodox Syrian Christians and the development of the Parish, is given. Chapter V attempts to examine the role of the Parish church and its functionaries in the life of the Orthodox Syrian Christians of the village. The account of the activities connected with the crises of life given in this chapter has its focus on the involvement of the church in them.

The economic aspect of the life of the sample households is presented in Chapter VI. It includes patterns of land ownership and land use, the variety of means of livelihood adopted by the people, the daily and seasonal economic activities, and so on. Since agriculture is the most important economic activity it has received considerable attention. Layout of the houses, division of labour within the household, educational standards in various occupations have also been considered. An effort has been made to use all this as a context for an understanding of the institutions of family and kinship.

Chapter VII attempts to give the various aspects of the institution of marriage. It examines the age at marriage of males and females, differential age between spouses, geographical and educational differences between spouses, the position of institution of dowry,
divorce, and remarriage. The common procedure of contacting marriage and of the settlement of marriage, and the wedding and post-wedding ceremonies are described. The changes in various aspects of marriage over an approximate period of 70 years have also been taken note of. The consequences of marriage focus attention on the family organization of the people.

The chapter on the Family (Chapter VIII) presents a wealth of quantitative data along with their analysis and interpretation aimed at an understanding of the family organization of the Orthodox Syrian Christians of Manarcadu. Some major aspects so covered are: the numerical size and types of households, the process of development of various types of households, norms and practices of separation of married sons from parental home, and the different situations and conditions associated with separation from and joint-living with the parents. A few cases of division and inheritance of property have also been given. In the last section an attempt has been made to compare this picture of the family organization of the Orthodox Syrian Christians of Manarcadu with what has been obtained by other scholars regarding Orthodox Syrian Christians in particular and regarding the various sections and areas in Indian society.

In Chapter IX an attempt is made to examine the different aspects of the kinship system. Efforts have been
made to see the importance of patrilineage i.e. the Kudumbam referred to here and taking note of the traditional kinship systems of the Nambudiri and the Nayar which have been the major source of influence, an analysis of the kinship terms of the Orthodox Syrian Christians of Manarcadu is made. Major regional variations in the kinship terms also have been considered in this context. Then a comparison of the kinship terms of the Orthodox Syrian Christian is made with that of the Nambudiri and the Nayar of the village and with those given for the Nambudiri and the Nayar by Joan Mencher (1967) and Gough (1961) respectively. By a close examination of the roles and obligations of various kin on special occasions like childbirth, Baptism, and marriage the importance of various categories of kin to a person is shown. Towards the last section of the chapter are given the role relationships and interpersonal behaviour between various pairs of relatives in order to give a better understanding of the operation of kin relations.

Chapter X gives the concluding remarks very briefly.