INTRODUCTION

THE TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND THE NEW FACTORS AT WORK

The people of Travancore, during the period under study (1858–1947) consisted of three main religious groups – Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. Each of them was divided into sub-castes or sections occupying various levels of social status. The Hindus constituted the major portion of the population. Among the Hindus, backward communities formed the largest group. Even though the population was thus vertically and horizontally divided the whole area beyond the Western Ghats was identical in people, language and custom except by the accident of divided political administration. Tradition regulated their day to day life. This traditional socio-economic, religious and political framework led to the predominance of an exploiting minority and the society to be highly tyrannical and oppressive while others were condemned to servitude. It was this predominant minority that mostly came to the attraction of others. Thomas Hardy Baber, an officer of the British Government who served in various capacities in Malabar testified before the British Parliamentary Committee of them as "the most intelligent and best informed of any natives I have ever met with". But the Maharaja commented, "they are an uncultivated people --- prone to litigation and liable to become clamorous and refractory on the slightest occasion."
According to caste, the Hindus were divided into caste Hindus and non-caste Hindus. The Hindus constituted an aristocracy with vested interests and the non-caste Hindus the toiling peasantry. Altogether a total of 192 divisions and 1050 sub-divisions existed in Travancore\(^3\). Among the caste Hindus Nambudiris occupied the highest position according to the ritual status. Most of their time was consumed in ritual functions in temple. Ritual duties and social position made them the most exclusive and conservative of all castes of the Malabar coast and hence they observed the caste rules more rigidly. They enjoyed royal patronage till the end of the princely rule. This privileged position was acquired through the peculiar set up of Kerala.

The hierarchical formation of the society provided for the ascendency of the Brahmins in the medieval period. This position they managed to keep almost till the end of the 19th century. Many factors contributed to this situation during the middle ages the Brahmins gained prestige because of the spiritual conquest of India by Sankaracharya. They appeared before the local chieftains as the holiest of human beings and representatives of God on earth,\(^4\) and people were ready to believe it. For feeding them, giving them valuable presents, conducting costly ceremonies, payment of fees and submission to their superiority, they promised a happy transmigration, elevation in the ritual status\(^5\) and mitigation of sins. Later, they mixed religious superiority with politics, and could
associate with the affairs of the state by acting as its ministers, officers, judges and advisers of the kings and as diplomats. This position in secular affairs was much enhanced by their hold over temples.

The influence of the Nambudiris over the temples made their domination more secure. A large number of temples sprang up under their aegis, mainly after the decline of Buddhism in the Malabar Coast. Whatever might have been the objective large tracts of land and revenues were dedicated to these temples. Such fabulous wealth made the temples immensely rich. The temples with their endowments were known as Devaswoms. "These Devaswoms is in law a corporation sole and acted through its officers". The general superintendence was vested with the secular chiefs. But their right to superintend did not entitle them to enjoy the property of the temples. All these Devaswoms had their own independent jurisdiction and within which the Brahmins possessed independent authority. The Brahmins, along with those who were attached to the temples were collectively known as Yogam. The nature and extent of the power exercised by these independent authorities varied from place to place. They possessed almost sovereign powers within their jurisdiction over social, civil and criminal affairs. They were a "self-working, self-contained community" and recognised no sovereign except the Yogam. The governing authority of all these was vested with the trustees and the managing members who were the representatives of the secular chiefs elected for the purpose. The semi-independent temples actually infringed considerably the
powers of the king. They were the strongholds of the priestly class and centers of socio-cultural life. They lost their political significance with the rise of secularism and the growth of secular authority. Finally the Government resolved in 989 ME, during the Dewanship of Col. Munro, to assume the management of 348 temples with their properties.

The Nambudiri's scholarship of Sanskrit placed them in an advantageous position. They became the acknowledged scholars of that language and jealously protected that monopoly by every possible means, particularly by forbidding its study by other castes. This religious, political and intellectual predominance were used for enhancing the influence over economic and social life.

Till the arrival of the Western capitalism, land was the major factor of production. But it was mostly under the exclusive control of the Brahmins. There existed none to compete with them in land holding. As they were the land holders and there was no occupational mobility it gave them considerable influence over the social life of the people. Their influence over the society was made use for the preservation of landed property and wealth by some peculiar method of matrimonial alliance with their subordinate castes.

Through matrimonial alliances the Brahmins wielded enormous power and influence in the society. In the traditional society, according to the customs of the Nambudiris, only the eldest son could marry from within their community. Younger members had to consort with women of the Kshatriya and aristocratic Nairs. This sort of marriage was known as
Sambandham. It had no religious or legal sanction but only the sanction of tradition. By sambandham the Nambudiris could cohabit with any women he liked, without incurring any kind of future obligations or responsibilities. Their religious, social, political and economic predominance helped to perpetuate such relation. Their subordinate castes also considered it a great honour to receive them through the sambandham alliances. In some cases it was even obtained by paying an honorarium by the Nairs. It was only very late in the 19th Century that this system began to be questioned.

The other Brahmins of Travancore were those from Tamil, Telugu and Maratha people. Among these the Tamil Brahmins were the most important. As Brahmins they enjoyed a social status similar to that of the Nambudiris. But unlike the Nambudiris they did not maintain any seclusion. Their customs and manners differed considerably from those of the Nambudiris. They engaged mostly in administrative and commercial activities and were never averse to new opportunities to enhance their position. "When English education was widely available, they readily added academic qualifications to their ritual status". The Census of 1875 found them as the second largest group in the Government service and were mostly engaged in the higher cadres.

Other caste Hindus who had ritual superiority over the Nairs were Ambalavasis and Kshatriyas. The Ambalavasis were subdivided according to their services in the temples. The Kshatriyas belonged to the ruling families of the State. These two communities were a minority.
The Nair formed the majority of the caste Hindus. During the mediaeval period they were the military aristocracy. Certain mediaeval institutions helped them to keep their marital spirit. As a caste they were subdivided. These sub-divisions maintained the distinctions scrupulously. But all these sub-divisions commanded almost equal respect from their social inferiors. Even though they were termed as Malayala Sudras, they enjoyed a number of privileges. But the Nambudiris considered Nairs as untouchables. Interdining was also not prevalent among them. The Nairs were allowed to enter the temples for worship but they were not allowed to get inside the sanctum sanctorium or use the sacred bell at the time of their worship.

The Nair followed the marumakkathayam system of inheritance. Whatever might be the origin of the system, Nair women enjoyed much freedom under it. It permitted them to have a number of sambandhakars. The contracting parties were at liberty to form such alliances at their choice and pleasure for any duration of time with any man of their own caste or higher caste. The children born out of this relation belonged to the mother's caste and hence, their touch polluted the Nambudiri father. It was considered as the simplest and the loosest form of matrilocal polyandry. Nambudiris, it is believed, adopted this as a preventive measure against disintegration of their wealth, and landed property by partition. The result of all this had been that their population remained small and exclusive and property undivided. The Nairs also were benefited by the system by preventing the partition of their property. According to the
marumakkathayam system relations were counted in relation to the mother and women were considered as the proprietors of the tarwad properties. But, they or their children had no claim or right over the husband's or father's property as the case might be. The eldest male member acted as the manager of the tarwad property. He was known as the Karanasvan. He had absolute and unlimited powers. The tarwad property was considered indivisible. But each member had right to use it and share the income during his or her stay in the tarwad. However, the marumakkathayam system led to social stagnation in the two important communities of the state.

Though the Nairs also belonged to the landed aristocracy, by the peculiar landholding system they had to remain under the command of the Brahmin land lords. The indivisible feature of the marumakkathyam system prevented them from undertaking any new enterprises. A few of them were in the Government service, mostly in the lower cadres. Usually they had their traditional system of education in indigenous schools which mostly consisted of the study of a few Sanskrit texts.

Backward Communities, Ezhavas

Among the Hindus, the backward communities and the depressed classes formed the subordinate majority. Ezhavas and their sub-divisions constituted the highest and the most important section. They were known by different names in different places. But there were restrictions on the social intercourse among their sub castes. In the caste hierarchy
the Ezhavas occupied an intermediate position below the Nairs and above the slave castes. Being a non-caste group, they did not enjoy any rights and had deplorable humiliating social conditions. They were strictly prohibited from entering the temples, schools and public offices. They had to observe the prescribed pollution distance from the caste Hindus according to their ritual status. Often they had to show humiliating submission as a token of respect to caste superiors. The Ezhavas followed many of the social customs and ceremonies of their caste superiors. They followed three systems of inheritance such as marumakkathayam, makkathayam and misravazhi.

In the traditional society, economically Ezhavas remained backward and were mostly engaged as free labourers, farmers and toddy tapers. Some others were engaged in the coir industry, weaving and Ayurvedic medicine. Thus, they had been weaker till about the middle of the 19th century. Their economic and social status deprived them of the benefits of modern education till the beginning of the 20th century. However, there were a few noted Sanskrit scholars among them.

Other backward important communities were Kanians, Vannans, Kammalas, Mukkuvans, Kanakkars, Kanians were the village astrologers. In the traditional society Vannans were the washermen and their caste occupation was associated with many ritual functions. The Kammalas comprised of artisans like goldsmith, carpenters, blacksmiths and braziers. They belonged to more or less the same group. Interdining and intermarriage were permitted among them. Mukkuvans were generally boatsmen.
and in some places agricultural labourers. Kanakkars were another caste whose occupation was salt manufacturing. In the caste structure these castes carried varying degrees of pollution to the higher castes. As there was no occupational mobility in the traditional society they followed their old calling. Thus, they formed the economically weaker section. None of them except the Kanians had any education.

At the lowest step of the social ladder were the depressed classes consisting of Pulaya, Paraya, Kurava and other castes. They were subjected to slavery throughout the Malabar Coast. They were often purchased for slavery by the neighbouring territories from Travancore. In Anjengo, a British territory, a few miles away from Trivandrum, enquiries showed that slaves of that area originally belonged to Travancore.

Besides the slave castes, other sources from which slaves came were outcaste Hindu women, kidnapped free born children, poverty and famine, imports from Arabia and Abyssinia. Sometimes treacherous methods were also used. A document given about slavery in Anjengo shows that a female of the 'Eloovati' caste was sold for 70 fanams by a person with whom she had eloped. Social customs also helped for the perpetuation of this custom. For instance, in the tyrannical social set up, to become the slave of an influential Nambudiri was considered as the best means to escape from oppression.

The material condition of the slaves were miserable and their life was always confined to the swampy fields. They
They were not at all cared for by their masters and kept them only so long as they could work as agricultural labourers, with little or no food, both during day and night. Their wages and allowances were meagre. When aged or sick they were not provided for or helped. They were considered only as a transferable property. There existed different methods of transfer of slaves such as kanam, jennum and pattam. Quite often they were sold like livestock of the land and even offered as presents. Relations were sold separately. Their price varied in proportion to their physical fitness. Law and justice neither provided protection nor recognised their legal status. According to the custom of the land their masters did not have to account for their life, and their usual punishments were flogging, putting in stocks and mutilation. They were often ill-treated and prevented from exercising any civic rights. Because of poverty and depressed condition the slaves often indulged in crimes. But in many cases they acted as mere instruments of their masters and occasionally they were convenient scapegoats for their masters.

Improvement in the condition of the slaves were mostly carried out at the instance of the British. The British public opinion disfavoured Englishmen who indulged in the nefarious slave trade for plantation labour. The earliest of all attempt to improve their condition was made by Col. Munro in 1812 by a Proclamation. It prohibited the purchase and sale of slaves other than those already attached to the soil for agricultural purpose. Severe punishments like confiscation
of the property and banishment from the state were suggested for its violation. The Proclamation did not bring much relief to the issue. Hence the emancipation of the Sircar slaves was pressed by the Imperial authorities. But the Travancore Government were reluctant to accept it. However, as the British Government were keen on the total abolition of slavery it was finally done away with in June 1855.

By the emancipation, legal recognition of sale, purchase and possession of slaves was removed. But the slave owners were not willing to emancipate them and it was effected only when the slaves became old, sick or infirm. The Report of the Administration of Travancore for the year 1869–70 rightly described the situation, "In short the former self is now a free man throughout the country but in several parts in the position of ignorant helpless freeman depend on the land owners for employment and subsistence. Due to ignorance, helplessness and difficulty to merge with the new situation many preferred to stay in the condition where they had been. Even though slavery was legally prohibited it continued clandestinely."

Caste and social disabilities of the backward communities

The backward communities were denied all social amenities and civic rights. It was due to the caste system, conservatism and reactionary policies of the Government and the people. These communities were denied the right to use fine cloth, wheeled carriage, milch cows, music, public roads, public tanks and ponds, foot wear, upper cloth, gold ornaments, sandal paste, umbrella, brass vessels, decoration or construction or
tiling of house beyond the prescribed height and design, entering the temples, and these were only a few of such innumerable humiliating restrictions. They were also debarred from all profitable vocations. It was by keeping them in a state of ignorance, seclusion and isolation that the socially higher-ups tried to maintain their special status. 18.

It was believed that the socially underprivileged carried pollution within a distance of 90 feet and distances were prescribed for various castes. The unapproachable distance decreased according to one's rise in the caste status. It is curious to know that the depressed classes also observed unapproachability and untouchability among them. Severe punishments were inflicted on untouchables for its violation and hence none dared to violate them. They produced a peculiar sound to warn their caste superiors of their approach. Caste pollution was considered removable by the polluted person immersing himself and his clothes in running water. On all occasions ranging from the construction of a house to daily affairs particular care was taken to avoid pollution. Articles like a piece of new cloth or letter were thrown to the higher caste. It was considered that a short transit through the air, breaking the line of contact, could avoid pollution. But old cloth used by the depressed classes were considered as a source of pollution. They had to keep their goods for sale on the high ways and to retire to the appointed distance shouting to the passers-by to by, and to have a purchase they were supposed to keep the money on a stone or leaf and to retire to the
prescribed distance. While speaking to a higher caste persons they had to keep their hand over the mouth. These are only a few instances of the scrupulous observance of untouchability and unapproachability.

In the traditional society the Government had their own share in perpetuating these customs. The ruling elite belonged to the higher castes and the establishment. Thus, the stability of the society meant nothing more than the stability of the establishment. So they vigorously maintained it. The State even imposed so many oppressive taxes on the so called untouchables.

Submission and servitude were expected from the non-caste people in every possible manner. When speaking to the higher castes, they had to use the word 'old' as a prefix to their eye, ear and other physical organs. Children of Pulayas and Parays were called calves and monkeys respectively. They commenced their speaking with the word 'adiyan' and the use of the word 'I' was denied to them. Nairs were addressed as 'Tampuran' and Brahmins as 'Thirumanassu'. The lower castes referred to their paddy as chaff and rice as 'karikkadi'. Instances of such degrading expressions are innumerable.

Colonies and abodes of different castes were called by different names. Such as 'cheri' for Pariahs, 'chala' or 'madam' for Pulayas, 'kudi' for artisans, 'pura' for Tiyyas, 'veedu' or 'bhavanam' for Nairs, 'idam' for aristocratic Natts, 'pumadam' for Ambalavasis, 'kovilakam' or 'kottaram' for Rajas, 'illum' for Nambudiris, 'mana' or 'manakkal' for Nambudiris of higher
status. Traditionally both men and women of the lower castes were permitted only to use a loincloth which did not go below the knee or above the waist. Violation of the custom was considered as an insult to the socially privileged classes.

Minority communities - Christians

The minority communities of Travancore consisted of the Christians and Muslims. It is believed that Christianity came to Kerala during the first century A.D. and the first converts belonged to the high castes Hindus such as Nambudiris and Naiks. The Syrian Christians, as they are usually called, were much esteemed and were considered as a socially privileged section. Being converts many of them retained their old habits, beliefs and social customs. Though they were an identifiable group, there existed a number of sects and denominations among them. It is noteworthy that many of the decrees of the Synod of Drexper, on 20 June 1599, attempted to restrict them from observing Hindu customs. The Syrians observed caste pollution like Hindus, and such distinctions were observed in Churches also. They firmly believed in the Doctrine of Trinity, transubstantiation, supplication through saints, extreme unction, confession before the priests, burning of incense, Lent, abstention of all non-vegetarian food on certain occasion. One can also see some variations in their belief according to the denominational differences. Their priests were known as 'Katanars'. Katanars were said to be "as ignorant as the people in general and many of them afford but bad examples in their life and conduct". 19 There was as much superstition among
them as among the Hindus.

Christians had been mainly land owners, agriculturists and traders. Except the fisherfolk converted by the Catholic Missionaries, financially they were sound. Before the arrival of the Protestant Missionaries they followed the education of the Hindus and in some cases even in the latter part of the 19th century. It was with the British domination and modern education that some began to join the Government service. Still their representation was unsatisfactory. Hence, many of them turned to profitable economic pursuits brought in by the Western capitalism. At the same time some of the Hindu communities remained satisfied with petty Government jobs. The result was that while the Christians prospered they remained economically stagnant. However, this had not been the case of those Christians converted by the Protestant Missionaries in the 19th Century.

Socially, economically and politically the converted Christians remained more or less in their old condition. They had little association with the Syrian Christians. Like the Syrian Christians they also carried with them many of their old social habits, custom and ceremonies and even names. Socially and educationally and politically they remained weak.

Muslims

The date of their arrival still remains an undecided question. The Muslims of Kerala mainly belonged to the Indian and foreign elements and were generally known as 'Mappilas'.

According to their ancestry they were known by different names in different places. They were considered among the socially privileged group. The Muslims strictly followed their religious teachings. All their prayers were said in Arabic. Still the Hindu culture had its influence over the Muslims. In the performance of certain ceremonies there were some similarities with those of the Hindus. They observed post-natal pollution for 40 days. Like Hindus they practised early marriage, some of them followed the Warumakkathyam system of inheritance. It is interesting to note that those Hindus who go on pilgrimage to Sabarimalai pay homage also to 'Vavar' who is believed to have been a Muslim. But unlike the Christians they never observed caste pollution nor did they show any discrimination to their converts.

From the very early period the Muslims engaged in trade and commerce. Foreign trade was mostly conducted by them. Some had landed property. Economically, except those converts from the Hindu backward communities their financial condition was sound. They were unwilling to take modern education offered by the Protestant Missionaries and consequently their representation in the Government service was practically nil.

**Women and social condition**

In the traditional society social condition, status, custom and usages of women did not differ considerably from one community to another except in case of the Warumakkathayes. Most of the social disabilities which the women suffered were associated with the marriage system. The great amount of freedom
enjoyed by the Nair women in the traditional society is a striking feature because they enjoyed almost equal rights with men. Even though the marumakkathayam gave some freedom to the women of the Nair community it ultimately became a means of their exploitation. It led to a lot of misunderstanding and was considered as a stain on their character. Kshatriyas and Ezhavas were the two other important communities which followed marumakkathayam. Besides them a section of the converted Christians and Muslims also followed it. They were mostly converts and had no marriage alliance with the Brahmins.

Widow remarriage was not allowed among certain communities. Tamil Brahmins did not favour the second marriage. Among the Nairs, Ezhavas, Nadars and Muslims it was allowed. Christian widows rarely remarried. Child marriage or early marriage were prevalent among all communities. Among the Brahmins a religious touch was given to it, but in case of other communities it was mere expediency. This led to many social evils such as disproportionate age of couples, premature conception and death, and begetting of unhealthy children. Fraternal polyandry was prevalent among the artisans. Sororate and levirate marriages were also prevalent among some of the backward communities. Polyandry was absent among the Brahmins, Christians and Muslims. The Brahmins, Muslims and some of the backward communities widely practised polygamy. But it was absent among the Christians. The dowry system was common among all the communities which did not follow the marumakkathayam system of inheritance.
All castes among the Hindus, except the Brahmins, followed the ilkattukalyanam thirandukuli, and pulikudi was observed by all Hindus and a section of the Christians. Besides this, all the communities observed postnatal and menstrual pollution. There were some restriction peculiar to the lower caste women, relating to their ornaments and dress. Only the higher caste women were permitted to use gold and silver ornaments. The Nair women were permitted to use an upper dress, but it had to be removed in the presence of people of the royal birth, caste superior and in temples. This custom continued because of the force of tradition attached to it. The Christian and Muslim did not observe these restriction. The Brahmin women who were suspected for unchaste activities were subjected to a trial by her castemen, known as smarthavicharam and orderals. Those found guilty were immediately declared outcastes for ever and sometimes sold as slaves. Nair women were also severely treated for unchaste activities. Except among the Nambudiris such trials and ordeals did not exist in any caste.

The Devadasi system though limited existed in Travancore with all its vicious features. It was prevalent only in South Travancore. However, sati and female infanticide were unknown in the Malabar Coast.

Economically the condition of women was unsatisfactory. Except in case of malamakkathayam tarwads women had only very little right over the property of their family. Among the marumakkathayees they were the sole owners of the tarwad property. But, when the Karavanam in his capacity as the manager became the absolute power, women's position shrank to that of a
mere titular head. Economically they were dependant in all communities. Only a minority among the Hindus and Christian women knew how to read and write. But, the system of instruction was not extensive enough to promote intellectual activity. Moreover it was considered undesirable among the women of socially privileged sections to appear in public or go for education. Among the women of socially underprivileged to get education was beyond their reach because of caste restrictions and economic backwardness.

The Administrative System

The dawn of the 19th century saw the British domination over the affairs of Travancore. Col. Munro was appointed as the second British Resident in Travancore and later as the Dewan in 1811. This marked the beginning of a new era. He reorganised the entire administration on modern lines. But after his departure many of the old vices again crept in. On a later occasion, the Maharaja referred "bribery and fraud which is in my country were carried on to a degree exceeding belief." The entire administrative system was manned by the caste Hindus. For instance, the Nair Brigade, a small unit of the army which was described as being "without arms or discipline" was another source of oppression. Administration of justice can be taken as a cross section representing the whole administration. Even judicially convicted persons got high appointments in the judiciary, if he was socially privileged. Cases lingered for years without trial or conviction. The judicial system was highly discriminatory and trial and conviction and method of inflicting punishments depended on social and ritual status.
Land and economic condition

In the traditional society Carite Hindus, Syrian Christians and Muslims held most of the land. Land ownership did not change even after the unification of Travancore or British predominance. As land was the only important factor of production in the traditional feudalistic economy, the economic condition of the backward communities - evidently the landless - who constituted the labouring peasantry, was highly unsatisfactory. Those who owned land commanded considerable influence and authority because agriculture was the main activity, labour was paid in kind and the population subsisted largely on what it could grow. Such a landholding system most adversely affected the poor. The whole economy remained static because those who had capital never found it necessary to improve its productivity. Whenever the land owning classes required money it was exacted from the tenants on some pretext or the other.

The New Factors at Work

Because of the interaction of several new factors a sort of social stagnation which had come over the 'paradise of fools where everyone was happy in his ignorance, in his superstition and his age long social bondage' began to disappear gradually. By the second quarter of the 18th century a more progressive trend appeared in the political scene of Travancore by the rise of Mathanda Varma. He followed a policy of annexation and unification. This an exactionist policy broke the importance of the feudal chiefs, leading to a single system of administration in the whole area south of the Kingdom of Cochin.
The Mysorean invasion and occupation of Malabar gave a rude shock to the feudalistic system of the west coast. Nambudiris and Nair were deprived of many of their old privileges. Peasants were relieved of their feudal burden by the introduction of a new land revenue system. The Nairs were asked to discontinue their polyandry and orders were issued asking their women to cover their breasts. Moreover, it gave the British a chance to contract a political alliance with Travancore which paved the way for greater influence in subsequent years.

Various treaty alliances with the British East India Company reduced Travancore to the status of a political ally. But the administrative machinery of Travancore was permitted to turn according to its own policies. Still, when the customs and practices got mixed up with the policies of the state and adversely affected the administrative system or finance the British were firm. But as regards those customs which had the sanction of tradition, they were cautious in attempting to remove them even if they were repugnant. Col. Munro as the British Resident guided the affairs of the state towards a progressive line. He stopped a member of oppressive customs and practices affecting the underprivileged classes. Besides these, the British Residents were able to prevail over the Travancore Government in respect of decision making. As the administrative machinery was dominated by the Caste Hindus it had little sympathy for the socially underprivileged classes. When such oppressive tendency was brought to the notice of the British Government, they never failed to express their deep
They were not reluctant to criticize even their own officers in case of failure to adopt impartial and timely steps. For instance, the traditional feudalistic theocratic judicial system was reorganized on the lines of British Indian judiciary by the Regulation V of 1810. Still the judiciary was defective, whenever instances of delay in the disposal of justice came to the notice of the higher British authorities they strongly expressed their displeasure. Their displeasure was often made more clear in the financial affairs of the state charities. The Maharaja usually went beyond the reasonable limits of charity. The ceremonies had an adverse effect on the finances and administration of the state. Another expensive item of the so-called charity was the maintenance of the cottumuras for the Brahmins. These charities were offered only to the privileged class. When expense of the charity increased considerably against the advice of the British Government, a report was called for from the Resident and directions were given to curtail the expenditure. Moreover, the reorganized administrative machinery and much of the new legislation passed followed the British examples. These paved the way for a more independent personal and economic relation with the lower and higher social strata. Approval of the British Resident was made necessary for inflicting capital punishment.

The British Government showed much interest in the abolition of slavery and improvement of their condition. The Parliamentary Committees which conducted many enquiries about slavery had also taken evidence from Travancore. An enlightened section of the British public too was in favour of the abolition of slavery and they insisted on the punishment of those Englishmen who indulged in slave trade. The Travancore Government first manumitted their slaves. It was followed by the private owners.
But as regards the manumission of private slaves they had to a more cautious policy of persuasion.43

The Shanar revolt was another incident in which the Britishers displayed the sense of justice and fairplay. They were fully convinced of the reasonableness of the agitation for the limited right of their women folk to cover the upper part of their body, which was hitherto the sole privilege of caste Hindu women. The following words clearly brings out the policy of the British Government regarding such social issues. The Madras Government stated, "The degree of interference which for many years past had been exercised by the representative of the British Government, in the affairs of Travancore is so large and his intervention so general that the credit or discredit of the administration greatly rest with the British Government and it has thereby became their duty to insist upon a system of toleration in a more decided manner than they would be at liberty to adopt if they had merely to bring that influence to bear on an independent state."44 Later, the British Parliament appointed a Committee to go into the affairs.45 But as regards those customs which did not affect the social rights of the general public they considered it was not for them to pull it down.46 Their dominance had its positive influence.

As the British had great influence over the affairs of Travancore quite often people approached the Resident or other higher British authorities for the redressal of their grievances. The British were believed to be a power above the Maharaja. Meanwhile they wished to free the Kingdom from corruption, nepotism and favouritism which marred the administrative
efficiency. Lastly, the British Imperialism and their domination had the effect of bringing Travancore from its isolation to the outer world. A century back she was much less influenced by the events outside her boundaries. But with the domination of the British, events outside her boundaries had its influence in the life of the people in one way or other.

Protestant Missionaries

The Protestant Missionaries arrived in Travancore by the first decade of the 19th Century. During the Residency of Col. Munro, many facilities were offered to them. This encouragement led to a phenomenal increase in their activities. The Missionary work can be classified according to the nature of their work as evangelistic, pastoral, political, industrial, medical, educational and literary.

The Protestant Missionaries did not attach much importance to caste status and this offered a great challenge to traditional society. Conversion to Christianity was a part of this challenge. To an average missionary Hindu gods were mere devils, demons and hydra-headed monsters, and Nambudiris were illiterate social parasites and the whole inhabitants were 'natives'. This was a great blow to the mythical superiority of the microscopic minority, which none had hitherto dared to challenge. Missionaries got more converts from slave castes. So slavery and the deplorable condition of slaves agitated the minds of the missionaries from the very beginning. They failed to see any valid reason for a distinction among men based on caste which ultimately led to the slavery of a vast majority. They tried to bring the plight of the slaves through memorandum, propaganda work and
through publications. Eventually they succeeded in getting the system abolished.

The Shanar revolt was the first outward manifestation of the urge of the depressed classes to have more civic rights. The Missionaries prevailed over the British Resident to compel the Travancore Government to issue the necessary orders. The Travancore Government were unwilling to change the age-old customs and usages. During the period of agitation the missionaries were threatened and assaulted and had to suffer damage to their property. Finally the Maharaja issued a Proclamation on 26 July 1859. As an evidence of developed manners and refinement among Shanars of the South Travancore the L.M.S. missionaries in their annual report mentioned the sale of "no less than 350 women's jackets." 

As most of the converts belonged to the backward communities, industrial training occupied an important position among their activities. In Mission centres, industrial training was imported to their adherents. These institutions had brought many advantages to the missionary bodies and to their converts. Another method by which they could go deep into the hearts of their adherents and those who came into contact with them was the medical mission. Because of the benevolence and skill exercised in healing, more approached the medical mission. The missionaries themselves accepted that in the hours of distress and agony people were willing to hear the Gospel.

The major contribution of the missionaries was in the field of modern education. They had started a number of educational institutions throughout the area of their work
with the sole purpose of educating the backward communities.\textsuperscript{56} Rev. Ringeltaube was the pioneer in the field of modern education in Travancore. The missionaries received financial support, during the initial decades of their work from the state, without any condition or control.\textsuperscript{57} The field of missionary labour began to be noted with innumerable schools attended by the boys and girls belonging to the Syrian Christians, Anglicans, Nairs and Ezhavas. The Missionary schools were better attended than the Government schools. Educational institutions consumed a major portion of their financial resource. The system of grant-in-aid, started in the year 1866, offered them only little relief because it was confined to Trivandrum town alone.\textsuperscript{58} The policy of the Travancore Government to the educational institutions of the missionaries was liberal during the 19th century.\textsuperscript{59} However, in the subsequent period they had difference of opinion on many issues.\textsuperscript{60} But their work received wide appreciation.\textsuperscript{61}

Education of females also received their attention. But they found it extremely difficult to attract the Caste Hindu girls to attend their schools regularly. So in the beginning they had to start separate schools and to offer prizes and other inducements for regular attendance and better performance.\textsuperscript{62}

Another field of major contribution of the missionaries was the development of modern Malayalam literature. Till then Sanskrit was the important medium of expression of the socially privileged. The newly developed Malayalam prose became the language of the people. The credit of compiling the first Malayalam Dictionary on scientific basis goes to a German Missionary. They also published innumerable Malayalam works.
Their object was obviously to bring the Gospel in the language of those for whom it was intended.

The Missionaries always tried to widen the scope of their activities. In 1863 they were permitted to start evangelical activities in jails. They met with some success among the plantation labourers, fishermen and weavers.  

Results of the Missionary Labour

With selfless earnestness and dedication various missionary bodies worked among the backward classes and it led a rapid advance in their moral, intellectual and material conditions. Response of various communities varied considerably to the call of the missionaries. It was the backward communities who responded most favourably. What really brought the backward communities under the influence of the missionaries was that they could impress the converts as their sympathisers who worked to elevate them from degradation. Thus conversion to other religions like Christianity and Islam provided the lower caste people with a chance to escape from the oppression of the caste. After conversion they did not have to observe untouchability or unapproachability. It helped them considerably to come into contact with other sections of the population and awakened among them a better sense of earthly existence. So association of the backward communities with the missionaries was the end of an old way of life and the beginning of a new era. They began to show delightful changes, and crimes among them decreased considerably. The mission schools contributed so much that requests were made for more schools.
The missionaries were concerned not only with the physical and material welfare but also over the moral welfare of their converts. Use of intoxicants was a matter of much concern to them\textsuperscript{68} and suggestions were made for the formation of United Temperance Society\textsuperscript{69} and often their efforts proved successful. They devoted much attention to check the evil by bringing to the notice of the people the defects of the use of opium, betel leaf and tobacco. They also tried to put an end to some other social evils which affected the economic condition of their adherents such as the excess fondness for jewellery and the dowry system.\textsuperscript{70} Moreover, the missionaries could influence even the non-converts through imparting new ideas till then unknown to them.\textsuperscript{71} All this gave a new life and vigour to the society.

Economic Factors

A number of economic factors had tremendously influenced the social life of Kerala. Those factors were highly interconnected and, together they evolved a new socio-economic order. Backward communities were suffering from religious, social, political and economic disabilities. These disabilities continued to exist because of the wide economic disparity of various castes. When once changes began to appear in the traditional feudalistic agricultural economy, other disabilities began to be questioned. These economic forces manifested itself in many ways.

It was the Europeans who took the major share in the inauguration of new undertakings such as coffee, tea and
rubber plantations from 1830's and small industries from 1850's. The cultivation and export of cash crops increased considerably. The coir mats and matting industry was introduced in Travancore in 1859. Moreover these centers of work improved the habituation and wage earning capacity. Alleppey became the chief harbour and business centre. Its importance can be seen from the fact that the first post office in Travancore was opened at Alleppey in 1857. By the beginning of the 20th century Quilon also became a chief centre of business with the arrival of Harrison and Crossfield Ltd., incorporated in England, in 1910. Importance of Quilon increased with the introduction of railways. Total number of factories, by the beginning of the present century, in Travancore was 108, of which 27 were owned by the local people. During the first decade of the 20th century undertakings like rubber production and oil mills doubled in number. During 1914 itself, eight joint stock companies were registered besides the 86 factories already existing. During 1916, 26 co-operative societies were registered. During the 1920's the number of joint stock companies increased from 192 to 372. A Department of Industries was also organised during this time. The importance of this development can be seen from the regional distribution of these industries. There were 125 in the Southern, 91 in the Central and 43 in the Northern and 68 in the High Range Division. The tremendous development of certain communities can be seen by comparing the communitywise distribution of ownership of industries in first decade of 1900's. Christians 7, Muslims 4, Brahmins 5, Chetti 1, Ezhavas 2, Konkani 2, Nair 2, Reddi 1 and Vellala 3. In 1910's the figures were the Ezhavas 66, Indian Christians 53, Muslims 18, Nair 15, Brahmin 6, Vellala 5.
Distribution of various castes employed in this field shows the importance of the development of industries from the social point of view. The Census Report 1921 says, "The notable increase when compared with the figures of 1911 observed is among Ezhavas 700 percent, Nairs 180 percent and Indian Christian 105 percent. While Nadars and Salias have entered the field only in this decade". During the 1920's those who were employed in the coir and cashew industry increased by 33 percent and 15 percent respectively. Apart from the economic development, this progress in industrialization was an important factor for social development. It gave rise to a new influential middle class and a new working class without any relevance to caste or religion. It was this new group which in subsequent years worked at the apex of various sociopolitical activities. Rigid caste feeling began to wear away because on many occasions they had to stand together for their economic rights. These new economic activities increased mobility among the population.

In the feudalistic society labour was almost an obligation. In the new state of affairs labour classes were raised from the status of a mere agricultural labourer to that of a labourer working for wage for stipulated hours of a day. The social stagnation which once existed in Travancore had been due to the extreme immobility in the territorial, occupational and religious life of the people. From the social point of view migration or territorial mobility is important. Custom and
usage which none dared to violate restricted the mobility of people in the traditional society. It was also due to the lack of interest and need. This reluctance to move appeared more among the socially privileged who were the feudal aristocracy of the land. But the backward communities were generally free from such bonds, and hence they readily made greater use of the new avenues of life than other social groups.

Though not considerable in percentage, by the beginning of the last quarter of the 19th century their began and increasing tendency to migrate to towns. During the decade of 1891 - 1901 the population classified as urban showed an increase of 70.7 percent. Centers with a population between 5000-10000 had increased both in number and population and their was a similar increase both in number and population in case of towns of different population groups and the total number of towns increased from 11 to 38. Population in the rural areas decreased from 96.4 to 89.9 between the years 1911-1921. Migration to various natural division was another type of territorial mobility. There was increase of population in the eastern natural division for agricultural purposes. During the years between 1875 to 1911, the population in the eastern natural division increased approximately from 9 lakhs and 30 thousands to 14 lakhs and 53 thousands. The ratio of growth returned from 1875 to 1911 shows a growth rate of 56.2 percent in the eastern natural division, and 43 percent in the Western natural division, where the newly started small industries began to come up. Migration to various natural divisions since 1911 shows that mountainous area where plantations were located registered an increase of 21.9 percent. According to the Census of 1921,
since 1875 the High Range Administrative Division was in an advantageous position in respect of the percentage of internal variation in the density of population. The extended cultivation of tea and rubber drew a large number of immigrants from various parts of the state and from outside. The Census Report of 1931 shows internal migration to the eastern natural division to be 136.2 percent.

Various construction works started by the Government also resulted in considerable temporary migration. Another form of mobility was migration to outside the state to seek new occupations. Thousands were absorbed in plantations. The policies of the British Government towards such labourers was favourable. By the beginning of the 20th century, thousands migrated to foreign countries and demand for their labour continued to increase. Thus territorial mobility brought certain distinct advantages to the people.

The social and economic importance of the migration was that most of those who migrated to the hilly tracts or plantations belonged to the backward communities. In the old social system it was the caste status and the extent of land under one's possession which determined one's position in the society. Under the feudal set up, land was mostly controlled by the higher castes, namely, Brahmins, Nairs and a section of the Christians and Muslims. Hence in the traditional society day to day life of the people was greatly influenced by the land holding system. So the feudalistic aristocracy could control and dictate the social, and economic life of their subordinates distinctly to their own advantage. In this system,
the majority of the actual cultivators belonged to the backward communities. But when new avenues of life were opened to them out of the control of the feudal class the control over the social life of their tenants began to decrease gradually and the social subordinates came to be less at the mercy of their land lords because as against the past their overlords could not force them to unquestionable obedience. Economically it considerably increased the financial condition of the families of those migrants. This gradually contributed to the rise of a new middle class in the traditional society leading to a change in the old pattern of personal relationship and facilitated occupational mobility.

Importance of occupational mobility can be ascertained only when it is studied in the context of the peculiar socio-feudal set up which existed in Kerala. In the traditional society caste determined the occupation of a person. But when new occupational avenues were opened many left their traditional caste determined occupation and joined new occupations. It was the lower class who were most advantageously affected by it. The Census of 1875 found that the ordinary cooly in the village used to get only an anna or an anna and half and one meal a day's work. "In the present altered state of things a labourer can not be hired for less than 4 annas and one meal, though his hours of work have also been diminished since formerly". This was assisted by the starting of developmental activities. The Census of 1911 says of the occupational mobility of the population as a whole "The most prominent by no means, unexpected fact brought by the return is the marked extent to which traditional occupation are being gradually departed from by all classes. In thousand actual workers in the community only
147 were returned as following the actual calling, 225 persons have settled down as land holders and tenants while the remainder is mostly distributed among the learned and artistic profession (131) trade (128) public administration (118) and domestic service 164. Among certain classes mechanisation of certain profession like oil pressing weaving etc. virtually pushed out many from the field. It because no longer profitable. Among the Ezhava and Marakkans a considerable percentage changed to occupation like cultivation, trade and industry. On the other side of the list appear the Pulayan, Ambattan and Veluthedan who had deviated least from their hereditary calling. Above them came the Kuravas, Vaniyans and Nairs who were in greater or less measure adhering to their respective functions. Improved territorial and occupational mobility and easy availability of cheap food relieved to a certain extent the feudal burden.

Tapioca was introduced in the state by Vishakam Thirunal. It was introduced during a period when there was considerable labour market, increased wage, better bargaining power and tapioca provided an easily available staple food. Within a few years it gathered much popularity. By 1934, it became the largest crop in total area under cultivation. The 15th issue of the Statistics of Travancore says that it was very cheap in places like Neyyattinkara, Kottarakara, Kottayam and other places. Besides these, conversion gave the backward communities a 'whole horizon of changes' from the toilsome, uncertain and undignified means of subsistance to which custom has condemned them.
In the traditional Hindu society, caste status was a sort of resource which caste Hindus alone had. But even when it became oppressive, backward communities had no alternative but to remain in it. Moreover, there was none to take their leadership or plead on their behalf. But when the backward communities began to adopt Christianity most of their social disabilities due to caste were washed away and they could claim greater social status. And, at a time when those converted communities were economically and educationally backward, it was compensated by the influence of the missionaries over the British administration at various levels. This support was received by the backward communities till the time when they were able intellectually, educationally and economically, to stand on their own feet.

Land as a social factor

In the traditional society, land was used for both agricultural purposes, and as a means of oppression and subjugation and to keep the social predominance of the land-owning communities. In this state of affairs, the backward communities were the worst sufferers because of their limited employment opportunities. As land was the only important means of production in an agricultural economy, it had a great influence on the socio-economic life of the people. But instead of developing the land or new productive resources, landlords exacted money from the tenants on every pretext. This unjust state of affairs could virtually cripple the tenants economically and socially. But, importance of land as a controlling factor of the social life began to decline with the arrival of new employment opportunities and loosened the control which the land lords once had over their tenants. By the middle of the 19th century, land legislation
were initiated in Travancore. Various other social legislations passed subsequently also had the effect of loosening the hold of caste Hindus over the land, because these legislations permitted per-capita partition which invariably led to large scale fragmentation and transfer of ownership. Above all, interaction of the increased avenues of employment and diminishing importance of land as an economic factor gave more advantages to backward communities in their social development by a redistribution of percentage of income and land.

The stresses and strains of a competitive economy affected all the communities. This led to the formation of new income group and thereby to a new class formation. A study of income distribution by 1931 shows some phenomenal change in the per-capita earning of various communities Nairs 147, Ezhavas 109, Depressed class Hindus 57, other Hindus 104, Syrian Christians 275, other Christians 110, Muslims 210. By this time a similar change also appeared in the average land-holding of each community — Brahmins 5.91, Nairs 3.12, Ezhavas 2.29, Depressed Classes 1.93, other Hindus 1.93, Syrian Christians 4.46, other Christians 2.06, Muslims 2.68.

Decline of joint families, villages and temples

The break up of the joint family system was the most outstanding result of the economic change. The break up of the system gave sufficient opportunities and resources for the younger generation of such families for independent occupation. Under the new family system one's survival depends upon one's own effort whereas in the old system their existed
a sort of collective inactivity and the entire system was a
curb on the initiative of the members. With this started the
search for new pasture land. This tendency proved detrimen-
tal to the old villages.

In the traditional society old villages were mostly
self-sufficient units. They had their own caste determined
functional groups, and the wants of the people were limited.
Their administrative, political, economic and social function
were controlled by the land-owning class. Hence, in the caste
ridden society, functional groups were under the control of
the higher castes. Villages became the centers of caste
oppression where the lower castes were denied many civic rights.
Moreover due to the lack of other economic opportunities
elsewhere, the backward communities who were the labouring
class and the backbone of the villages were tied down to the
village. Like other institutions of the medieval period,
traditional villages could not withstand the pressure of
modernisation and mobility. Hence the bond of interdependence
usually associated with the village life had naturally loosened.
Villages began to decline both in numbers and in populations.

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<th>Village classified by population</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population group</td>
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The figures given above disclose some important facts. It shows the trend in the movement of population. It can be seen that places of higher population groups were growing up decade after decade. It may be assumed that such a trend began because of the ever increasing employment opportunities and other facilities in the more populous centers. A new "society has thus emerged into a wider world of today far from the comparative isolation and delightful simplicity of the remote but self-contained villages meeting its simple wants from the services of the people".

It is to be remembered that it was from such urban area that caste and religion first began to decline. Thus when caste and religion were in a declining state, position of the temples became precarious.

Once the temples were the citadels of tradition and culture and of social, religious and political life, and exerted considerable influence on the socio-economic religious and political life of the people. But, they had remained the strong holds of savarnas. A number of private temples under one's control became a status symbol of aristocracy. During the Dawanship of Col. Munro, due to mismanagement the administration of major temples were assumed by the Government. Subsequently, with the decline of feudalism there evolved a new society and the savarnas could no longer retain hold on the temples as the source of their power. The Decrease in the number of temples from 21658 in 1920 to 9250 in 1931-41 can be taken as an index of this change.

Modern Education

Although education on modern lines was started only with the arrival of Protestant Missionaries like the C.M.S. and L.M.S., people of Travancore were not illiterate. It was mainly the traditional Sanskrit education that was followed. There were
many factors contributed for the development of modern education in the state like the interest shown by the rulers of the state, political stability, high percentage of Christian population, social status of women, desire to enter the Government service, limited population, Government assistance, advice of the social reform leaders, destruction of the old joint family system and the desire shown by the people to come out of the old social bondage through education.

From the days of the Regency of Sethu Parvathi Bai (1815-1819) the Government began to show interest in modern education. It can be said that the Government formally entered the field with the establishment of an English School in 1834 at Trivandrum. They assumed the control of it in 1836. Thereafter, various steps were taken to improve the education in the State. The question of improving Vernacular education also engaged the attention of the Government from 1860's. In 1866 a Central Vernacular School was started at Trivandrum. In 1870, the Maharaja ordered the establishment of proverty schools in every district. Later, these schools became the backbone of primary education in the state.

Besides the Government effort private schools also contributed a lot for the education of the state. Rev. Ringeltaube and Rev. Charles Mead were the most important figures associated with modern education in the state. Missionary labour was periodically assisted by the Government. In order to have a certain control over the privately managed schools the Government introduced a Grant-in-aid Code in 1894. Female education and industrial education were first attempted by the missionaries. The earliest attempt for female education was made in 1818 by Mrs. Mead in Nagercoil for the Christian converts.
From the social point of view the modern education had a lot of influence in the development of the state. The schools increased mobility among the younger generation. In their attempt to get higher education many travelled to the distant parts of the state. The English schools opened before them new concepts of a society, rights and western ideas. Most important of the influence was that pupils belonging to different castes studied together. The missionaries were particular about implementing this policy. Most of the later leaders and progressive minded Government officials came up from such schools. They felt caste distinction as baseless and man made.

Socio-religious reformers

Another factor which contributed for social change was the activities of the socio-religious reformers. Leaders of social reform activities were produced by all communities. Among them Chattampi Swamikal (1854-1924) and Sree Narayana Guru (1856-1928) stand prominent. They were contemporaries and close associates. The former belonged to the Nair community and the latter to the Ezhava community. It was their activities which stirred the Hindu community from slumber and lethargy. They tried to raise their own community as well as those below them. This helped to a great extent to check the growth of Christianity among the backward communities. A peculiar feature of their activity was that both of them questioned the mythical superiority of the Brahmins and tried to reform the Hindu religion from within.

Chattampi Swamikal challenged to the predominance of the Brahmins in the political, social and cultural life of the Hindus of Kerala, and he was determined to see that major Hindu
communities like Nairs and Ezhavas played their legitimate role in bringing about a radical change in the social order.

The contributions of Sree Narayana Guru are manifold. His first act as a socio-religious reformer was the consecration of a Siva temple at Aruvipuram in (1885). It was a very significant occurrence of historical importance. Till then, this function had been a close preserve of Brahmins. The importance of this act lies in the fact that it struck at the root of all socio-religious evils, because the whole super structure of socio-religious superiority was maintained from behind the temples. Spiritual predominance was retained as the most important attribute of the Brahmins. But he set an example showing that through wisdom, knowledge and spiritual attainment, an avarna like him could do any religious activity. Temples consecrated by him were opened to all communities. This philosopher saint fought against the caste system and reformed the Hindu religion by propagating the principle of "one caste, one religion and one God". He advised the members of his community to educate, organise and to take up business activities. Hence the Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam — the first of its nature in Travancore — was organised. The importance of the role of Sree Narayana Guru as a social reformer lies in the fact that members of his community offered unquestionable faith and obedience to his wisdom and spiritual attainment. So, his advice on religious matters, social issues, socio-religious ceremonies and his condemnation of unjust practices were accepted without question, obeyed with utmost respect and carried out earnestly. In subsequent years there came up a number of leaders who were closely associated with these socio-religious reformers.
Most of the leaders of social reform belonged to the modern educated intellectuals of the newly raised middle class, who came together without giving any consideration to caste differences. This middle class was mainly formed out of the lower strata of the high caste Hindu and upper strata of the low caste Hindus. This group included professionals of various occupation. Often they fought together on various issues. An important feature is that many of them had cultural contacts with people outside the Malabar Coast and in some cases even outside India during the formative period of their life. Most of them were in one way or another associated with journalism and social organisations which gave them effectiveness.

Religious reforms inaugurated by Sree Narayana Guru did not confine to his community alone. Seeing the tremendous progress of Ezhavas, attained under the leadership of the S.N.D.P. Yogam, other communities also began to organise themselves. The modern educated intellectual middle class came to realise the strength of organized effort. Even Nambudiris, when they found those below them in social hierarchy coming up, organised themselves and worked to make Nambudiri 'a human'. Both the Christians and converted Christians had their organisations. The aims and objects of these organisation were to regenerate the community on modern lines. Besides the regional social organisations, some All India Social Organisations like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Hindu Mission and Rama Krishna Mission had their units in Kerala. But except for the Rama Krishna Mission, other organisations could not make
much headway.

Influence of Journalism

The press had tremendous influence on the people of Kerala. By the 1860's, attempts were made in various parts of Kerala to establish journalism on regular and modern lines. They gave almost equal importance to literary, scientific and socio-cultural matters. These journals had an informative and reformatory effect. By the beginning of this century, journalism grew to its full extent in Kerala. Most of the social reform organisations and communities had their own journals. It made the task of these social organisations much easier because of the wide readership they had. Social organisations and social issues were widely discussed in them. The journals became the acknowledged organs of Public opinion. Through them new ideas and social concepts filtered into different strata of various communities. Those who had modern education strived to disseminate their ideas through the journals. They could educate the people to be conscious of their rights and to fight against all sorts of injustice.

Work of literary figures

The work of various literary figures also had a reformatory and educative effect. It was Kunjan Nambiyar who used literature as a media for social criticism. The degenerated society came under his ridicule.

Leaders of various social reform activities were often the authors of these works. Literary compositions like plays,
novels, and poems, dealing satirically with the social life of the people began to appear by 1889. O. Chandu Manon wrote "Indulekha", 'Sarada' dealing with the conditions of Nair tarwads. The field of social literature was enriched by others like N. Kumaran Asan, K.P. Karuppan, Kocherilpan Tharanak, Pallathu Raman, V.T. Bhattathiripad, C.V. Raman Pillai, M.R. Bhattathiripad, Kurkottukumar, K. Ajyappan, K. Damodaran and K. Narayana Kurukkal. Most of the works received wide acclaim from the public.

Communist Movement

By the middle of the 1930's the Communists started their activities in Kerala and in subsequent years they could influence the working class drawn from various communities. They fought together on many economic, social and labour issues without any caste or religious consideration.

Thus, quite a number of factors, in close association with one another, worked for a tremendous change of the society.

In short, by educating and bringing up the backward communities and the depressed classes, the missionaries showed that they were equal to their caste superiors and the British administration gave confirmation to it. The religious foundation on which Brahminical superiority was based began to melt away before the spiritual attainment and wisdom of Sree Narayana Guru and Chattampi Swamikal. Finally, the western educated youngmen, from the newly formed middle class began to question the Brahminical superiority in temporal affairs. It reached its climax by the introduction of the Malabar Marriage, Bill, the Malayali Memorial,
the Ezhava Memorial and the Nair Regulation. Besides these, interaction of new economic factors and numerical superiority brought support to the backward and the depressed classes at various stages of their struggle.

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58. Cover File No. 15817, Letter from the Dewan of Travancore to the British Resident, Travancore, dated Nuzum cutthery, Trivandrum, July 1872.


60. Travancore Government Gazettee Supplement, Vol. XXII, No. 29, Tuesday 16 August 1904, p. 179; and,
UTC, LMS 81, TDCM, 1875–1941, half yearly committee meeting held at Trivandrum 7–12 August 1900.

61. UTC, LMS 69, Letters 1914–1932, Letter from H.H. Rama Varma, the Maharaja of Travancore to Rev. Arthur Parker, dated Palace Trivandrum, 25 September 1917; and,

62. UTC, CMS 15, Letter from M.A. Clark, Girls Schools, Cottayam dated September 1898, p. 294; and,
The Missionary Conference South India and Ceylon 1879, Vol. I, 13 June 1879, First Paper, Missionary work amongst High Caste Hindu Women in Trivandrum by Miss. Blandford, p. 191; and

63. UTC, LMS 79, TDCM, 1875–1941, Meeting held at Parachaly 10–13 August 1886.

64. The Report of the General meeting of the LMS, 1860, Neyyoor, South Travancore, P. 76.
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66. UTC, Report the LMS 1864, South Travancore, Nagercoil, pp93-94 and,
Report of the Administration of Travancore for the year 1869-70, p. 40, pp. 99; and,

67. CMS Intelligencer and Record, Vol. XX, New Series, 1895, p. 918.

68. UTC, LMS 7C, TDCM 1875-1941, Meeting held at Neyypoor August 1883; and,
LMS 80, Meeting held at Neyypoor from 11-18 August 1891.

69. UTC, LMS 81, TDCM 1875-1941, meeting held at Parachalay, p. 38; and,

70. UTC, LMS 82, TDCM, meeting held at Parachalay, 29th July to 1st August 1912; and,
LMS 83, TDCM, meeting held at Trivandrum 15-17 February 1916;

71. Proceedings of the South Travancore Missionary Conference held at Oottacsamund, 19 April to May 5, 1858, p. 302.


73. Ibid., p. 55.


77. Census of India, 1921, Vol. XXV Travancore, Part I, p. 27.

78. Gazetteer of Southern India, by Pharrah & Co, p. 53.

79. Census of India, 1901, Vol. XXVI Travancore, Part I, p. 227; and,

80. Report of the Administration of Travancore, 1869-70; and,
UTC, LMS 79, TDCM, meeting held at Parachalay 10-13 August 1886.

81. Census of India, 1901, Vol. XXVI Travancore, Part I, p. 56


85. Ibid., Part 1, p. 80.


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