Chapter 4

SOCIAL ASPECTS REFLECTED IN PLACE NAMES

The history of Lakshadweep has come down to us from two sources. One of them is the traditional lore which is intended to trace the origin of Islam in the Lakshadweep islands to a certain Ubaidulla and not to record the events which shaped the island communities in their present form. The other is from the occasional references in the traveler's accounts from the ancient up to medieval periods and the British administrators. The legend about Ubaidulla which explains the advent of Islam into the islands implies a pre-Islamic phase of history of islands but the acute scarcity of sources prevent us from making any statements about that phase. Nevertheless, there are a few references to the islands in the ocean which were conquered by the local rulers of the area of North Malabar. This gives us some clue to the political control

1 Athula in moosakavaramsham.
of the islands exercised by a mainland group and this indicates a vague manner. that the islands in the western sea and the cost of Malabar was connected with political power. The theory of conquest seems to suggest that the island yielded some valuables which had demands elsewhere. The subjugation of the islands by the mainland forces is well explained by this but details about the mode of acquisition and the date of the beginning of the alien rule in the islands are not known. Therefore it is essential to explore even the seemingly unlikely sources for ferreting out history from them. One such source is the Onomastics, the study of names of places, persons, objects and so on. This chapter is an embodiment of such an attempt to squeeze out whatever historical information are available from the place names and family names of the Lakshadweep with special reference to Androth and Kalpeni.

Before commencing the exercise, it seems to be necessary to make some statements about the peopling of the islands in the past. The exact date of the settling of Lakshadweep is not known. The islands were known to the travelers at least from the 4th century A.D. A few
travelers called Lakshadweep as "Divandrone" in common.²
Lakshadweep later became historically important from the time when
Portuguese traders came to the Kerala coast.

While analysing the place names and family names of Androth
and Kalpeni islands, it becomes clear that migrations to these islands
started from the middle ages onwards. It cannot be conclusively proved
that this migration took place at one time altogether. From the place
names and family names one could observe that the migration to
Lakshadweep took place at different times.

The language habits and the grammatical and structural aspects
of the language of the islanders unmistakably show that they speak
Malayalam, or more correctly, dialects of Malayalam. Each island has
developed its own dialect. It is clear from this that the interrelations
between the islands was minimal while all the islands had been peopled
by the migrants from the mainland of the Malabar coast, especially

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p.p.266
North Malabar. The Lakshadweep dialects and their folk songs etc. bear testimony to this observation. The language of the earlier islanders are irretrievably lost but the names of places, persons and objects continue to this day preserving the memory of a by gone age with its aspects of social order and economic pursuits. We are using some such names of places to explore the possibility of gathering information about the social history of Lakshadweep. Eg: anam, aram, unta, ola, kuluk, komam, kumpuram, kootu, koonam, chikkal, cheru, chetti, padala, pini, pitti, muttam, nada, thodu, tarika, karuka, chakkam, uttili, aippe, attudi, turampam, vakkadi. A casual examination of these names would show that they indicate advanced stages of life. In the first place, we refer to a group of place names which are consisting of one word. Some earlier scholars have taken these names to represent an early phase of culture.5

Anthropologists have recorded the existence of small communities in many parts of the world. Some such communities were found mostly in island nations which are cut off from other nations by

5 Refer family names. Chapter 2
oceans. They based their names of sects on animals, trees and grasses. In some places they are known as lion family, tortoise family, rat family, banyan tree family etc. There might be sub sects also of which some allowed intermarriage and some did not. These primitive communities used to include everything found in the universe in their system of classification. In Australia and other island nations anthropologists have recorded the presence of such families. They observe that before the division of labour individuals thought only about their sect. This is widely known as the totem theory.4

Due to some social or political reasons a considerable number of people might have migrated to the islands at various points of time. It can be observed that the migration adversely affected the structure and rhythm of the early primitive communities. The people who came later had more advanced knowledge and agricultural know-how. They were engaged in cultivating the islands by clearing the natural vegetation.

4 Emile Durkheim & Marcel Mauss Primitive classification (French) – Translated by Rodney Needham.
Each island was geographically divided as cheris for administrative purposes. There are smaller communities in these areas. They did not have marriage or occupational relation with other communities.

Agriculture was not the chief occupation during this period, nor was there any new technique for fishing.

There were frequent voyages for trading from India to East and middle Asia, Africa, and north west countries of India. Countries like China also had trade links with the ports in these countries. Weeks and months were necessary for the sailing vessels to reach the destinations. On their way they used to touch the island of Lakshadweep to collect drinking water, coconuts, coir, cowries, Amber etc. Barter system was in existence instead of exchange of money. Memories of such transactions were passed from generation to generations.

We can see as mentioned earlier that the island community was later divided into the subsects of Koya, Mali, Melacheri. This division is mainly based on labour. This shows that the people of islands were
conscious of the cast system. Interestingly, in Kalpeni there seems to be a survival of the practice of naming communities after plants. Some families in Kalpeni still keep their names connected to small trees and plants which are found in the island eco system.

We do not know whether these groups identified themselves with these plants or whether they counted these plants as their 'totem'. It is also not known whether these groups, who name them after plants, maintained any social customs on the basis of this identification.

*Shabayam* is a small tree which is about 10 to 11 feet tall. The shrub is not used as firewood, but its leaves are used as fodder. *Shabayam* was abundantly grown in Kalpeni (now the *Shabayam* does not mean one plant but a group of shrubs). A place is named *shabayam* at the southern end of Kalpeni. These small trees were seen near the house known as *cheriyapurakkad*. The families *purakkad, cheriyapurakkad Mannel, Kunnamkalam, Biyyappada, pokkilakam* and *kunadathumkara* are commonly known as *shabayatho*. These are the families settled at the southern part of Kalpeni. *Kunadathumkara* as shown by the name is at the eastern part of the island. Other houses in
this group also might have been either located in the south or separated from the common group Shabayam.

The plant *Chonam (Pempis acidula)* grew in abundance on the seashore. This is another species of a plant called *cheruthalam (pempis stronga)*. They are seen grown together usually. The leaves are small and fleshy. They require saline water to grow and it is not easy to distinguish. *Meppalli* people were once known as *chonotho*. (The house name *Chonam* is in use in Kavarathi island also).

*Eramku* is a species of maize and it was cultivated in islands. The people who belong to *Ediyakkal, Edathinappuram, Malmikakkada, Mathii and peechiyam* were commonly called *Erakamthatho(r)*. The members of *cheriyunnallal, perumpalli and Kunnippuvakkada* were also included in this group. Today, this division of people into plants is not followed but this information of such a classification was transmitted from generations to generation.

There might have been such families in other island of Lakshadweep also. However this system of identification of people
with plants and shrubs is completely forgotten probably due to the reason that such a classification does not have any function today. There is another set of place names, which refer to different agricultural activities, and variegated notions of space. The *nakaratthottam* indicates a field used for growing *nakara*, a variety of paddy, used on mainland for medicinal purposes. There were other place names such as *kara, kad, kulam, kunnu, kal, thottam* etc. which indicate social uses of spaces and social ideas of areas. A thottam stood for a garden land, the yield of which belonging to somebody. This type of toponyms seems to suggest that they came into being at a later stage of community life on the islands.

The initial division of place names must have been as *pura, Kad*, and *Thottam*. The middle portion in Androth island is a cultivable area. Beyond the farm, *Kad* could be seen. The prominent houses and Taravads were situated near the thottam. There was no cultivation in

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5 Refer Family names, Chapter 2, p.

6 The shape of island is saucer-like in general. (see Appendix No.6)
Kad in the beginning. Shrubs and trees grew there.\textsuperscript{7} The reason why people settled in this area was to have easy access to the farming area.

The following houses are situated at the border of the farms.

Kolikkad, Kerakkada, kanjarkakkada, Kakkarecikkada, Kaithad, Kottiyanthad, also Komalam and puthiyapura are on the banks of thottam. Most of these names have ‘kad’ as the generic. It is in this area that the houses were built and the families settled. Thus, we see an early stage of settling of the islands and the beginning of cultivation.

The next stage of development is characterised by a spread of thottams. Agriculture also progressed resulting in the metamorphosis of Kad to thottam.\textsuperscript{8} The soil accumulated in this process became ‘kunnu’, meaning a hillock. Isolated places in the midst of kad, with houses were converted to pacha. Avul’s are formed in the farm area.

\textsuperscript{7} In Kalpeni, they call thottam as kad and pacha as thottam. In Androth also the word thottam is used for pacha in olden days. After the formation of arable land they started to call it thottam and the abandoned thottam as pacha. We can imagine that though once the places in Kalpeni where kad existed were converted to thottam and they called it kad as early.

\textsuperscript{8} Dr. N. Muthukumar, "Lakshadweep Nootandukalitude" - pp.46.
Paddy cultivation was started in these 'avul's. It must be at this stage that the big country dams were constructed. The number of farmers, and cheri moopans to lead them also increased. Copra in small scale was exported and traded on the mainland. This progress in trade must have caught the attention of mainland rulers. Adikaries were appointed by them to collect taxes. These changes occurred with in a period of four or five centuries.

The families became owners of land during this third stage leading to the system of private property rights. When the mainland administrative system entered to the island society tax was started to be collected. Plots were separated and given to separate families. The individuals and their relatives obtained plots from representatives of the Rajas. They made use of the physical effort for the cultivation in the given plots and thus they became conscious of ownership. The plot that received by a family is known after their family name. But the boundaries of the plot were not clearly marked. Whichever plot they worked was considered to be their own. This was approved by others also. This was the circumstance that lead to named the plots after family names and also for the evolution of Place Names.
The house names also were formed from the Place Names where the house were constructed.

The next stage is a continuation of this migration. Administration in islands becomes well founded. Karyakkar and Kanakka Pillas who represented the King intensified tax collection. More labourers were brought from mainland for agricultural activities. This is the period when farms (Thottam) were fully developed.

Coconuts are planted in the ‘Kad’ areas. Pandaram land without settlers in them were divided into plots and distributed among the individuals of the islands. The system of awarding ownership to the individuals who had only family properties also started in this stage. Karyakkar and Kanakka Pillas settled in islands and entered into marriage relations with the islanders. Such island families acquired status in the island society. This must be the period when the agricultural community started dividing into different layers. Koya was a word used to address the representatives of the privileged groups respectfully. Gradually the title Koya became a special right of the members of their families and this became hereditary.

Thanikampirantavar is another division of the agricultural community.
The word means Swayambhoo meaning autochthnos. They claim that they were not under the control of anybody else and hence are independent. Those people who owned the agricultural land were referred as Thanikampiranth a Kudiyan⁸ in Arakkal and British records. This seems to suggest that their claims were accepted even by the ruling families. In due course this division also began to add the title koya to their names. The individual name Koya was spread in the island communities in the second half of 19th Century, when the royal powers were carried to the islands by the representatives of rulers. The relation between the islands and the mainland was strengthened by this. More and more sailing vessels were used for trade relations with Kerala Coast.

Among the settlers in the island a few were experts in navigation. Some of them acted as pilots to the ships coming from western Asia to the Malabar coast and they served the mariners for remuneration.⁹ They used to accompany the ships upto Beliyapaniyam which is an area

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¹ William Logan Malabar part II Appendix XXI Androth island 1887-Madras, P.CXCI.

² W. Robinson Report on the Laccadive Islands, 1848. Quoted from Dr. N.Muthukoya Lakshadweep - Nootandu Kabilude, P. 3 X 118.
of sub merged rock in the Arabian sea near Agathi island. After
signaling off the ships they returned to their islands in small rowing
boats. Though their main occupation was agriculture, once or twice in
a year they went for seafaring as a supplementary source of income.
The number of sailing vessels and the frequency to voyages to
mainland increased to a great extent and simultaneously the number of
people engaged in the sailing vessels also increased. It is worth
mentioning that there were expert sailors who evolved their own
navigational science and possessed knowledge about ports from
Hormuz to eastern Asia. These people were appointed to transport
Cargo in vessels. They enjoyed special status and administrative power
during such voyages. These sailors were known as ‘Mali.’ Their
families also were known as Malis. The captains of the sailing vessels
belong to these families. One section of Mali families are known as
‘URO-OR’. The word means the common people in the ‘Ur.’ They
are mainly engaged in agriculture. Urukkar are the people who settled
in islands during the first or second stage of migration.

10 Logan - Malabar Vol.11 Appendix, P CXCI.
The third sect *Melacherikkar* must have reached the islands and began to be known under that title during the end of the third stage. Expert labourers were required to look after the coconut cultivation and to pluck the nuts. They were sent to the island with the permission of rulers and were directed to undertake the work allied to coconut cultivation. They were not given accommodation in the *Kad* which belonged to *Koya* or *Mali*. They settled in *Melaba / Melacheri* near lagoons in the western coast. Thus the name *Melacheri* referred to a separate division of the island society.

As a subsidiary occupation the above people began to tap *neera* from the coconut trees. The income from *neera* was divided between the owners of the trees and the climbers on every alternate day. The remuneration for plucking the coconuts was one nut for every bunch. They were also to do all the menial work for the owners of the trees. There were barbers and fishermen among them. The ritual circumcision was also their right. They were given special gifts like land, trees, jack fruit tree, *Arimooda* (half bag rice) and cloths on such occasions.
There was another industrial product which became more important than coconuts. It was the coir. In the initial stage there was only limited production of coir which was traded to Kerala coast for procuring essential commodities. Industrial importance of coir increased during the third and fourth stages of migration. During the Portuguese invasion this importance still enhanced considerably. Coconut cultivation became mainly for the coir. Coconut husk\textsuperscript{11} was put into the pits in the sea shore and covered with stones dividing them to \textit{Param}. The decayed husk was taken out after six months and coir fibre was separated from them. The main occupation of the island women folk was twisting of fibre into yarn. This was done in the night by group of women in the house itself. All the primary work was done by the men while the separation of the fibre and production of coir were carried out by women. When the coir was made to \textit{choodi} and \textit{bendi} and given to authorities rice was supplied in exchange. Almost all families were engaged in this job. It is said that destruction of coconut husk was a crime which caused penalty. This shows the importance of

\textsuperscript{11} The coconut husk is known as \textit{shodi} in islands and \textit{thondu} means a coconut taken and discarded by rat. This \textit{thondu} is hollow.
the coconut husk in the island economy. The dry husk was used as firewood.

The ultimate aim of Arakkal dynasty and of Britishers in dividing the land into plots and distributing them to individuals was to make more profits. Pandaram land in the possession of rulers which included the land seized from the people as penalty, the land exchanged to authorities for titles and the barren uninhabited areas. There was a system in existence which gave possession for the authorities of the land belonged to families ended up without any inheritant. The people who went to mainland to engage them-selves in religious rituals and studies later created problems by claiming their rights over the family properties. Gradually the family properties were possessed by the individuals. Though such plots were known after the individuals, the land belonged to families.

There were farmers who conducted cultivation in the plots of others. The individual names entered the place names to refer that individual who worked there. The specific part indicates that the land was worked by the individual.
Eg. Kunjumuranakad, pokkumusaliyakad, khuranmakkhottotam, hamidbiyathottam, uuttiummeavul, ukkeavul, bibiyakunnu, karimkunnikk kunn, kannanpakkippacha, pokkerpacha, attakkakkekanda, mukrikkakkekanda, achiyar, kuyyanar, muthuvathagaskal, Uvvesal, alikkolam, kuttiyapperi.

When the individuals got land, the system of work and agriculture by their nominees came into existence. A portion of the yield was given to the land owners as a gift to the land owner. This was known as Kazhcha, and Kazhcha later became a right of the land owner. This must be the budding stage of tenancy in the economy of the islands.

Government gave Pandaram lands to individuals on lease. Pandaram and Pandam were the names of such plots. The land thus distributed were known as Karaima, Cowl and Pervili. The land given for long lease are cowls. Such land was sometimes mentioned as 'Kanda' also. Karaima is tree tax calculated from the number of trees in a land. One unit was 40 trees. Pervili plots also included in cowl
land. They were received by the authorities for awarding titles to individuals/families. There are more than 250 such cowl plots and 46 *pervili* plots in Androth. The islets and the northern end of Kalpeni are also *Pandaram* land. Most of the *pandaram* land in Androth and Kalpeni are in the possession of koya’s. *Melacheri* also possess a few *pandaram* land but Mali possess-comparatively less *pandaram* plots.

The people who were given land during the Arakkal rule are referred to as *Kudiyannar*. This gave rise to a new system in the island community and following this, some koya’s sublet some of their plots to Melachery and *uro-or* for farming and made them their tenants. There was another method of ‘making’ *Kudiyans*. While sending cargos in *odams*, the islanders had to depend on owners of *odams*. For the Port-clearance, a list of the owners of the cargo was prepared. The owner prepared separate lists for Kudiyans and the names included in that list becomes the Kudiyans. The poor man, who is unaware of this, becomes a kudiyan and the lists are considered by courts of law as valid documentary evidence for identifying kudiyan and their
Those who do not like this type of Kudiyayma vacates from the possession of land.  

When the people became conscious about property right, they invented several methods to acquire property. Since there was no much scope for reclamation of land, the existing land had to be divided among more members of the community. This situation led to a practice of ‘acquiring’ membership in an alien family. For example a family, called Mapplatt was about to be extinguished, the descendants of another family claimed that they belong to the Mapplatt family. The local authorities sanctioned the claim and the claimants became entitled for a portion of Mapplatt. The last member of the disintegrating family is given one share. After his death the property is passed to the new successors. Thus the new individual member becomes the owner of that land.

A.L. Pinhrya, Collector of Malabar, on 23.1.1903 finds “The Acquisition of wealth by non ruling class in the islands has been a noticeable feature of modern times and as Mr. Danes pointed out the Koyas or ruling class resenting the state of affairs have for years past been bringing speculative suits to obtain possession of lands in the possessions of old non ruling families and as a simple means to that and have resorted to some admission in a hitherto unheard of document produced from the custody of the amin himself a Koya and relative of most other Koya families. This fact alone should require that any document produced in such a case should be very carefully scrutinised before it is accepted.”
Another method to get land in possession was to start a quarrel between important and well known families. Each family which involved in this fight gathered maximum number of families in their side. Those who joined the sides, who belong to the same division, became part of the fighting families. The name of the families involved in the quarrel is prefixed to the name of the families which helped them. Later all of them become the members of the same family through cases in judicial courts and obtained right over the land. These are relevant in the present study since the system influenced the family names and place names as in the case of the following.

Eg. Chamayath Idayakkal, chamayath Nalakkom, Chamayath Cheriyannal, Kunnangalath Cheriyadam, Maplatt Musankakkada.

The division of land to Kadu, Thottam, pati, Avual, Pacha, and Kunnu. was based on the nature of land and its use. The location was also hinted by the words, keel. Kada, vathil. Eg. Nellikkekeel, Bayalkada, Putiyapallivathil.
Kad was mainly for coconut cultivation. Bimbi and sweet potatoe were cultivated here during the rainy season since the farms, would be full of water. In Kalpeni, Kad was extensively used for farming other than coconuts, whereas such farming areas are called thottam in Androth. In short what the word Kad, means in Kalpeni is the Thottam in Androth. Thottam was used for all cultivation except coconut. A few items cultivated were Varaku, Sweet Potatoes, Erangu (maize) and peas – Anchuballam bethakinta thottam, ‘Eluballam bethakkinta thottam, were used to refer to the farms. The measurement of farms were expressed in terms of seed capacity. Eg: anchu ballam bethakinta thottam, eg: mupparathottam. This also led to the creation of some place names. Avuls are the plots dug with in the thottam Avuls were utilized mainly for paddy cultivation and during the summer season sweet potatoe was cultivated in Avul.

13 William Logan Malabar Vol. II Madras. Appendix P.CCXC.

14 Vittupadu literally means seed-capacity instead of this term ballam is used.

15 The word Avul is probably from the verb akazh – means to dig. Arabic word howlu means water tank.
The agricultural products thus produced were enough for six months in a year. Some produced even a surplus and it is said that some agricultural products were exported to other islands from Kalpeni.\textsuperscript{16}

*Thottam* was prepared by removing soil from ordinary land. It was a gradual process over centuries. The soil thus removed was accumulated to form *kunnu*. This Dravidian term is still used by the islanders in the original sense.

*Kunnu* is generally a non-fertile area which is not cultivated except planting some coconuts here and there. Sometimes, sweet potatoe is cultivated by the side of the ‘kunnu’.

The cultivated *thottam* in the inhabited area are later known as *pacha*. The *pacha* must have been the result of the work done by individual families before the development of a *thottam* area in the middle of the island. Paddy was also cultivated in these plots besides Bimbi, colocossia, sweet potatoe etc. For unknown reasons this

pachas were left fallows in Androth and people started cultivation in the thottam.

*Pati* is the place where coconut seedlings are grown. Water is made available in the channel taken around the *Pati*. *Pati* is seen usually in the *pacha* near the *thottam*. Plantations, betel leaf and drumsticks were cultivated here. The word *Pati* is also used with a different sense in Kalpeni. The shallow spots found in the lagoon near the shore is covered at the boundary with stones like a submerged wall. This has an entrance from the sea. During high tide, the sea water enters in and during the low tide there would be a flow out. This is rectangular in shape and this was used as a trap to catch fish. Such traps are also called *patis*. Each family will have its own *pati*. There was a custom of lending these *Pati’s* on lease or even to others on will.

*Pati* was originated in the agricultural field. The transfer of this word to fishing shows that the society’s world view was formed on the basis of agriculture as in the case of the main landers.
The natives had considerable knowledge of paddy cultivation. At least five types of paddy were cultivated in these islands and this is reflected in the place names.

Eg: 1. Ashua – (Ashu vrihi, rice reapening during the monsoon.
   2. Bellarithottam – white rice (Bella + ari)
   3. Cheerattvathil – cheeru + kad) Cheeru is a type of rice.
   5. Nakarattithottam - Nakara – a type of rice

Some place names refer to paddy cultivation as follows:

Eg: Nelkkari Amal thottam - The place from where rice is given as tax.
    Kannilam - An important place for paddy cultivation.
    Ayam (Ayappu) - Agricultural field
    Phottayappu - Devided agricultural land
    (photta = devided, arable land)

Some lands were named after its shape as in the case of:

Ammithottam – ammi = grinder stone
Muttakkunnu  an egg like hillock
Pa thottam  mat like thottam
Untakunnu  round hillock

Place names indicating the size of the land

Kuttikkad, Valiyakad, Baliyathottakkunnu, Baliyakunnu, Neelakkanda, Neelapparati, Perumkulam, Perakkad, Una.

There are place names showing the geographical location and nature.

Eg: Kuntu, kad, kuleethottam, kallanathottam, kallikkunnu, kalkkupuram, parad, bemmanakkad, bentakkad, tattanalthottam, karakkad, mundaram, kumpuram, pallam, chikkal, cheru.

Some place names are related to the human activities. Such names also refer to agricultural needs, mobility and other life activities.
Eg: *kathu avul, mulla kurachakad, onakad, nayttiya kad, pachatti thottam, parathi thottam, kauttad, pathikkad, belikkad* are related with agricultural process.  

Kottimuricha kunnu, Kottiya tiru, Kumputti thottam (for road making)  
Kumputti kkunnu, Kumputti avul (dispute) Kalali kund, Kalali pacha,  
Kalali kunnu (entertainment and defence)  

Another Category of place names refer to the nature of land transactions. Such names would perhaps indicate the practice of allocating land for services rendered to the owner.  

Eg: *Teemaniya kad, khutba thottam, Kariyakkara kanda*  
Kariyakkara kunnu, Kariyakkara thottam, Kariyakkara pacha,  
Kariyakkara kalam (Administrative purpose)  

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17 The ‘onakadu’ is originated from the verb ‘phuka’ derived from the verb ‘akazhu’ which means to dig.  

18 This type of land is seen in the mainland society also. *Viruthi* a land given to a servant person for cultivation instead of money as salary. The lands, *Kariyakkara kanda (kad, kalam, kunnu, thottam), khutubthottam, the manna kad, patoli thottam, shakinathai (kanda)* may be viruthi lands.
Baliyala thottam. Cheriyala kunnu, Sekna tai (For religious purpose) Maliya kad, serankna thottam (connection with odam sailing) badkana thottam (for service) jammatti parampu (for fishing)

For carrying out different duties, land was given to the concerned parties. The system reminds us of the same practice on the main land where it was known as jivitam or viruthi.

According to some legends, Lakshadweep islands were discovered by the navigators who went in search of Cheraman Perumal who left Kerala on a pilgrimage to Mecca. They returned to Kerala and informed their king about the existence of such islands in the western sea. The king declared that those who are ready to undertake agriculture in the islands would have right over the land. The legend says that consequent to this declaration people from kolathunadu started to inhabit the islands. The islands were known to the outer world even before the time of the perumals as shown by the references to them in the early travel accounts.
Some place names in the islands are based on some official designation such as *thukki*. *Thukkidi* (Tokkiti) was an official name found in the early Malabar administrative system. ‘The Deputy’ of British regime changed to *thukkiti* or tokkeiti. Thukkidi did not rule the islands directly, but their representative namely Amins were appointed. The collector or Deputy collector of Malabar conducted annual inspection every year. Perhaps *Thokkitithottam* was the land given by such inspection officers like ‘thukidi’ or it must be a plot from where tender coconut was collected for their exclusive use.

There are two place names *Cherikkal* and *Cherikkal Achana thodu* in Androth.\(^\text{19}\) *Cherikkal* is the land owned by the King. Even now it is *Pandaram* land. To which King this land belonged is not conclusively proved. It is not clear whether *Cherikal Achana* was a king or not. In Androth there is a folk story of a certain Cherikkal achan who found pleasure in boating with a golden raw.\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^\text{19}\) Cherikkaachan: A land lord once lived in Androth. There were four achans as per a legend heard. Komalatha achan, pentanvelaachan, peumpaliachan & cherikkkal achan.

\(^\text{20}\) See footnote No.20 in Chapter 3.
Place names were given to plots where grasses and plants grew in abundance. We get a pleasing picture about the islands which were once covered with green vegetation.


Some place names are evidences to believe that there was a society who were aware of flowers and loved flowers was living in the islands. They must have been living there before embracing Islam because those who converted to Islam did not show that much affinity to flowers. It could also be possible that flowers were required for different rituals during the Jaina and Budha cultures.

Eg: *puhottam*, *Malli ka thottam*, *Sekki thottam*(IXORA), *Sekki kkunnu*, *Tamarampalli*, *Chittamara palli*, *Rosappu thottam*. 
The shrubs abundantly grew both on the seashore and in the interior of the islands. This became a part of place names.

Eg: *kaithatu* (*Pandanus oderatissimus*), *Karakkad*, *Karakkunnu*, *Karekeel thottam*, *Karekeel avul*, *Tannikkarakka kanta*, *Irukka kunnu* (*calotropis gigantea*), *Atachattar* (*pisonia grandis R. BR.*), *Cherutalam parampu* (*pempis stronga*) *Chemmala keel* (*guttarda speciosa*)

The trees familiar to the islanders are connected to place names. They include those, which give fruits, and those which are used for other economic purposes. Some of them are grown and the others are wild growth.

*Parathikkad / parathikkunnu / parathiyakeel* (*Hibicus tiliaceous L.*) – These are trees with broad leaves. ‘Orotti’ a native snack item is prepared using these leaves as cover for baking. The name *Paratti* perhaps indicates the spreading of rice flour on the leaves. The wood does not grow much in bulk and where dried becomes very light. This is a marine wood used in the construction of small boats.
Punna is known as *punna* in Androth and *Shethal* in Kalpeni and other islands. This is one of the most useful trees for the natives. In the absence of other industrially important trees, the wood of this tree was used for the construction of sailing vessels. The main reason for using this wood for vessels is because of its special quality. The planks made out of the wood does not break even when hit on the rocks. The dried wood helps the vessels to float since it is very light. The only mode of transportation for the islanders was ‘Odam’ (Country sailing vessel) small boats are also required in plenty for fishing. Some of the household implements are also carved out of *punna*.

The seeds of *Punna* is economically important. In early days the seeds were taken out of its cover to be dried and sold in Kerala. The oil extracted from *Punna* seed was used as a substitute even for Kerosene in lamps until recently. Since there was no extractor device in islands *punna seeds* were soaked in water and boiled. When boiled, oil would come out. This type of oil has been in use from the ancient days in India.
Chethilath is one of the islands in Lakshadweep. In early days this island was known as Shethilakam. The same was later transformed to Chethilath, Chethilam. The carpenters of Chethilath are famous for construction of sailing vessels. (Pinnakkunnu, Pinnakkad)

Shirani (Thespesia populnea)

This tree was cultivated on a large scale around house sites. The wood is used for buildings. Doors, windows, items of furniture, etc. are made out of the wood of this tree. Shirani is also used in the construction of sailing vessels. The leaves is a fodder liked by sheep. The Shirani leaf is also used as a medicine for Jaundice. The branches are used for fencing (sheeraniya keel kunnu).

Unnam – This was an important tree in the islands. Cotton fibre taken out of the dried nut is used to fill beds and pillows. There was a system of dividing and distributing the cotton available in one family among the thavazhi of that family. (Unnakulam). Some of the other trees found in islands are Bread fruit, lemon tree, wild almonds. Athi, Tamarind tree, Mango tree and Aracanut tree.
The presence of trees like bread fruit (Artocarpus incisa) caused in place names *Chakkathottam* and *chakkakkunu*. In the early days the common people in the islands did not get enough rice for their food. Bread fruit was a substitute for one time staple food. The wood of bread fruit tree was used in the house for many purposes. It was also used for furniture and for some portions in the sailing vessels.

Lemon trees were also grown in the islands. Different varieties of lemon were seen among them. The names *Narangappacha*, *narangathottam* and *narangapparmbu* indicates that there were lemon trees in those plot. The natives had to send the lemons collected from the trees to rulers in Kannur. This proves that the Arakkal rulers considered the islanders as their tenants, and the islands as their estates. Logan has observed that lemon pickles were prepared in the islands and sent to Kannur.

**Phalalam (Ficus Religiosa)**

Banyan tree is known as *phalalam* in the islands. There is a flow of white secretion similar to milk (Pal) from the leaves and cuts of the wood that is why this tree is named *phalalam*. The Peepal tree is called
in Lakshadweep. They are not commonly seen. This tree might have important during the Jaina and Budha periods. Perhaps these trees were not cultivated since this tree occupied a large area and did not allow any small plants or trees to grow under it. The migrating birds might have carried the seeds of this tree to the islands (palalakkunnu).

Manchadi, elangi, (*Adenanthera Pavonina, Mimusops Elengi*). These two trees are not now seen in the islands. The names of these trees were attached to the place names because of their special qualities (Manchadikkunnu, Elangiya keel).

**Fruit Bearing Trees**

Along with main cultivations some fruit bearing trees also grew in the islands. Some of the trees like citrus lemon were prohibited by the local authorities from growing in *Pandaram* lands. This prohibition was due to the belief that such trees absorbed too much fertilizer from the land.

Aracanut was grown in *pacha* and near houses. Thus came the word *Kavvna thottam, Kauttad*. Arecanut (*Arecca catecha*) is one of
the items for chewing. But a major portion of arecanuts were imported from Kerala Coast. The wood of arecanut is used for construction of sheds.

Mangoe. Tamarind, Alam (Terminalia cattappa), and athi (Ficus Glomerattda) were not cultivated. But might have grown out of natural disposal of seeds. The natives did know about such trees (wood of mango tree was used in the construction of houses). The following place names are related to these trees.

1. Manga thottam, Puleena keel, Alappalakkunnu. Alatha aar. Athikunnu

Among these trees mango was rare. Though pera (Pisidaum Guajabnt) seems to have reflected in the place names Perakod and Perakkulam. There was no possibility for the relation of Pera tree to these names. This tree came to India at a later stage after the place names were recorded. Per means large or big in the dravidian. Here this qualifier is a allied to Kodu and Kulam.
Presence of animals

Place names referring to animals are very rare in Androth and Kalpeni. There was no possibility for the animals to reach these coral islands easily from mainland. The animals were to be physically transported from mainland to the island. Animals like cows, sheep, cat and rats and many types of insects reached the island. Among birds hens and crows are only common in the islands. Migrating birds come to the islands periodically. During the British regime snakes and mongoose were transported to the island to control the rats. But they are extinct now.

There are a lot of creatures in the sea. But their name had not used in place names with an exception of Kombukad and uttili which are the two place names in Kalpeni. Pakkithottam and Pakkikkad, are two place names related to birds.\(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\) Pakki in Kalpeni is a word for bird. In Androth the word for the same is faski.
Agricultural products are related to many place names to identify the different places for different types of cultivation. We have already mentioned the place names connected to paddy cultivation.\(^2\)

Eg. *Bimbikad (eleusine coracana)*, *Pintaithottam (Colocassia)*,\(^3\) *hala thottam (Musa paradisata)*,\(^4\) *balappacha, varakintottam (Panicum miliaceum)*.

Certain place names are formed giving special qualification to the land. Eg. Ponthottam, Kasturikkunnu.

The natives were encouraged to grow more coconut trees during Arakkal and British regime. Most of the activities are related to coconut tree. In the judicial records also reference has been made more about coconut trees in connection with cases. This tree has multifarious influence on the life of the islanders.


\(^3\) Pinda *Colocassia antiquorum*.

\(^4\) Vazha *Musa paradisata*.
Every part of coconut tree has one or more use for man. In the daily transactions like agriculture, fishing and other activities coconut tree is depended on by the natives. Coconut shells, husk etc. were used for fire wood.

When the coconut tree is cut a sweet juice comes out of the cut ends. This is enjoyed by the local children as honey.

Different types of coconuts identified by different names, ie. Thodome (big) serkka (small) Karinga, cenga, chenthengu, Bellachentengu, kayyathali, ennathenga, Antu kayan. Kaliyathai are differentiated by their names. Certain variety of coconut trees produce 150 to 400 nuts in a bunch.

Each voyage of sailing vessel from the islands to main land is mentioned in relation to the variety of coconuts ie. Ennattenge ottam, Tannitenge ottam, kappere ottam, kayarina ottam, ennatenga,
tannitenga, copra and coir are the main commodities carried to mainland. Coconut occupies an important place in the social functions. The terms neyyedukkal, tenga odakkal, peera cherakkal are some of them. A few place names in connection with coconut tree are given below:—

Eg. tengad, tengatt avui, tengatt thottam, tengattu kkunnu, chentengin mottam, chentengin keel, sherkke keel, kavyattalikkanda, naithonam.

The term tengin tai place an important role in naming the places. Thayy or tai means coconut seedling. The small plantain is known as vazhakutti.

The fishermen have named certain places of the island connecting the term ‘tai’ to decide the direction and location.

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25 Coconut is used in different occasions for making oil to serve to mosques in connection with the birth of a child, etc.

26 Coconut tree of three years growth is known as thai.
Eg.: ottatai, eluta, tainataa, tainataala, taikeel.

Certain places in the island are named along with the term tai.

Eg.: thakkoottam, thaiyyeda, katu thaina ul

Two plants which were used as medicines were collaborated in place names. Eg. baka (*colubrine Asiatic brong*) is connected to bakethottam. The leaves were used to clean the hair as a shampoo) puvale ul is formed connecting the plant puvazha the root of which were used as medicine.

As the above murikku and muringa are also connected to place names murikknakeel and muringe keel, though Muringa was formerly used as a support to grow betel leaf its leaves, fruits and flowers were used to make curries and its outer skin and roots were used as medicines.
The direction and geographical position of places were also accurate in the formation of place names.\textsuperscript{27}

Eg. Keecheri (East) mecheri (West)

Cheemacheri (tenmecheri > cemmacheri (ie. South west)

Keelacheri

Melacheri, keelaba, melaba, edacheri

**Arakkala Pattam**

This is in Kalpeni. The name *arakkalappattam* must have been with reference to arakkal kings who ruled the islands. The meaning of the term Arakkal gradually undergone a transformation to government. Katcheri during british regime. ‘*Katcheri pattam*’ is in use at Androth instead of ‘arakkal pattam’.

*Parankiya Arutta Kunnu – Paranki* means Portuguese. While Portuguese invaders were active in Kerala they attempted robberies in

\textsuperscript{27} Refer - Structure of place names for Keecheri, Chapter 3.
Lakshadweep also both in the sea and in the land. During the periodic attack of Portuguese they used to molesting of women in many ways. One of the shipmen was caught and cut to death and buried in a place. This area was known afterwards as *parankiye Aruttakunnu* and is located at the south east part of Androth. The adjacent farm is known as *Parankithottam*.

**Kandath Kunnu**

It is believed that the Islam was propagated in Lakshadweep by Hazrath Ubaidullah. The year was said to be Alhijra 42 (AD 7th Century). The legend continues as follows. Ubaidulla received direction from the prophet in a dream. He reached the islands from Arabia by sailing vessel which wrecked in a cyclone near Ameni Island. Some how he reached Ameni islands. He married a woman named 'Fisya'. Later her name was changed to Hameedath. Since Ubaidullah was engaged in the religious propagation of Islam. The legend says that Ameni people developed a dislike towards him. He escaped to Androth. He stayed on a mount for sometime. The natives found him there and since the place was named *Kandeth kunnu*.
Following this legend a few poems as *Mappilapattu* and Arabic tributes are produced. One record in Arabic namely ‘Futhu hathul Jasair’ (means victory over the islands) mentions the voyage of Ubaidullah.

*Kandeth* is an area of land including *Kandeth Kunnu* perhaps this area must have been found by the natives for agriculture. *Salkummadakandeth* is the name given to this area of land and it is included in the cowl land belonging to government. *Salkkammada* must have been a family which ceased to exist and so the right over the properties fell into the Government. There are five hillocks called *Kandeth Kunnu* in the same plot. They belong to five individuals. The name *Kandeth* might have later been changed to *Kadethiya*, meaning that which was discovered.

The following place names are connected to history and administration. *Perumalthontam*, *cherikkal achana thodu*, *tokkidithottam*, *karyakkara kunnu*.
Accessibility to water sources is reflected in many place names. Activities like cultivation, fishing, travel; cudjant making, cleaning, food requirements etc. are related to water sources. *Kulam Avul, Kuval, eri, otti* are place names related to agriculture in general.

Eg. *Perunkulam, Perakulam, Kattikkulam, Umpoda avul, ukkeavul, Bitmaavul, assankakekuval, Kuttiyapperi, perotti, Kaduvanautti.*

*Aar* and *Azhi* are entrances to the land from the sea. Such entrances, the trees near them, houses and individuals became parts of place names. *Aru* is a dravidian word. When this word is used as generic we can observe the presence of a human community who were familiar with *aru*. They might have used this word to name the spots of such entrances.

Eg. *Adachathar, Lavanakkal ar, Tharuvakkear, Sediar, Perali, Kunchali belivili.*
Place name generic 'palli' is distributed in both Androth and Kalpeni over a total number of sixteen survey fields.\textsuperscript{28} Of these, nine are in Androth and the remaining are in Kalpeni. In modern local parlance, palli means a mosque, though in olden days it denoted a non-brahmanical Buddhist or Jain center of worship. Further, *palli* is a generic which is shared by the entire dravidian speaking South India. In the context of an Islamic community such as that of the Lakshadweep islanders, the generic easily passes for a Muslim mosque-site though only one or two sites are with mosque and this cultural context stands in the way of further explorations simply for the reason that the presence of a palli, mosque, need not be disputed either in the form of an intact structure or as indicated by remains. However, most of the survey fields with the palli generic do not have such evidences.

Interestingly, in Androth, some iconic representations of the Buddha and some Buddhist deities were brought to light while digging for agricultural purposes. The icons have been preserved in the Mahatma Gandhi College in Androth. What is noteworthy in these

\textsuperscript{28} Raghava Varner & Koyamna Koya. A note on the palli generic in the place names of Androth and Kalpeni islands, paper presented to the place names society of India 22\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Conference, Uduppi 2002. April 26-28
archaeological finds is that they are all obtained from areas near to the survey fields having the palli generic. All of them are made in locally available limestone there by indicating local production. The iconographic contexts of the Buddhist images, the generic palli in Androth and Kalpeni, though in an Islamic community area, should acquire the meaning of a Buddhist or Jaina worship center. The entire phase of pre-Islamic or pre-Arakkal history of Lakshadweep is shrouded in obscurity and in such a situation an earlier epoch of a Buddhist or Jaina phase becomes significant in the mutually corroborative evidence of the historical relics and the onomastic data in the form of palli generics denoting the presence of a non-Brahmanical shrine.

The pattern of occurrence of the names is also interesting. Some of the names are repeated in more than one place. Perumpalli, Chemmanampalli and Monthampalli are found both in Kalpeni as well as in Androth. This seems to indicate that the naming was based on some method in view of linking places for cultural purposes. Further it may also be noted that such toponyms would go a long way in establishing the idea of a sacred geography incorporating distant places.
and establishments in a wide cultural network. An interesting feature of some mosques in Androth is that they are known as *Puthiyapalli* meaning new mosque. But these are really old ones. Further, a Puthiyapalli in Androth and in Kalpeni are situated in the fields adjacent to tanks named *perumkulam*. In Androth the survey field adjacent to the west to the Perumkulam is *Madappalli*, a palli of *madan*, meaning a non-Brahmanical deity.²⁹

It is highly interesting in this context to dilate upon a place name in Androth, namely *Kattampalli*. This field also has yielded sculptural remains, and its Islamic connection is ruled out due to the conspicuous absence of a mosque either intact or in the form of relics. There are several *Kattampallis* in Kerala and all of them are found in association with Jaina relics. P.B. Desai has suggested that there were many

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²⁹ The following are the place names: Perumpalli, Chemmanampalli, Montharapalli, kattampalli, thachapalli, tamarampalli (tarampalli), chittanara palli, madappalli, palli ambala thottam (Androth), 
Perumpalli, Chemmanampalli, montsampalli, chattana palli, kodippalli, umerpalli, meppalli (Kalpeni).
villages bearing the name Kurandi possessing Jaina shrines called Kattampalli in various places in South India, especially in the Tamilnadu. These observations would make it possible to incorporate this Kattampalli of Androth into the wider network of Jain shrines called Kattampallis, thereby attaching a Jaina connection to the relics of the Androth island.

It has to be admitted that suggesting an accurate date for the relics found in Androth and Kalpeni is really difficult in the absence of any written records pertaining to them. Nor do we have any associated material from the layers which yielded the economic objects. The Lakshadweep islands are believed to have been inhabited in a much earlier period since they are mentioned in the account of the Graeco-Roman mariners of the early centuries of the Christian era. However,
the present population and their ethnic features, language, folk culture etc, indicate migrations from the coast of Malabar, especially from the area between Calicut and Ezhimala.

The available history of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep starts with the story of conversion of the islanders into Islam by a legendary Ubaidulla, immediately after the time of Prophet Mohammed. The story of conversion is not meant for any historiographical purpose but to legitimise the religious affinities of the islanders. The story unmistakably suggests the presence of a pre-Islamic population which had established linkages with the Jain and/or Buddhist religions. The evidences seem to suggest that this early cultural influence of the pre-Islamic phase of the history of islands came from the main land as indicated by the place names of wider distribution in Tamilakam and Kerala.

*Sattanappalli* and *Putiyapalli* were places of worship. Such Budha relics are found from the premises of these Palli’s. *Sattan* is a synonym for Budha (*Shattan* - *Chattan* - *Sasttave*). In these
circumstances we have to consider, that the house names were found after the place names. The possibility of imitating such name found in Kerala and South India cannot be rejected.

*Palli ambalathottam* is a place-name which requires special mentioning. Other place names in Androth and Kalpeni do not contain the word *ambalam*. There is a house name *Pettambalam* in *Agathi* island. Jaina temples were known as *Kallil* and *ambala*. The word *ambalam* also means the place where villagers assemble. In the word *palliambalathottam* we can see Palli and Ambalam. Hence there is every possibility this word meant a place of worship either owned or occupied by right by Jains or Buddhists.

The absence of names of Artisan groups is obvious in the place names of the islands. For the production of agricultural implements, blacksmiths are required, for house construction carpenters are unavoidable. Potter is required to make utensils. But such groups are not seen reflected in the place names of the islands. The only group found here is *tattan* (gold smith).
The reason for the above absence must have been the amalgamation of the artisan groups in the division Oorukkar. This has already been mentioned elsewhere that the other two sects namely Koya and Melacheri were later migrants to the islands. There was no possibility to form such artisan group from among them. Carpenters and masons were present in the first inhabitants namely Oorukkar. Individuals acquired expertise by experience in a particular trade. This did not continue as a hereditary one. Gold smiths came from mainland, worked in the island earned remuneration and returned to mainland. The only jobs that continued as a cast right are plucking of coconuts and tapping of t$eertr. All sects of the society go for fishing.

The other reason for the absence of artisans must be the non-availability of raw materials. Everything except water, coconuts and fish are to be imported from mainland even now. Some times fish is also imported. If the implements of one person are not working his neighbour lends his own. In short the members of the island society are mutually depended and helpful.
Let us see how the mutually depending system of life has developed in the island society. Those who possess the land (Thanikanpirantha Kudiyan and Mali) produce coconuts and other agricultural products in Kad and thottam. The neighbouring Melacheri pluck coconuts, carry cargo to aru and load in the vessel (Everybody make use of these spots for fishing and producing of coir). The vessels are captained to ports in mainland by ‘Mali’ and Koya will exchange the cargo for the essential commodities required by natives of islands. There are Srambi (warehouses) in the banks of ali, where the vessels come in the islands. The density of population increases in this area. The commodities unloaded and kept in the warehouses are distributed to the shops for sales. Thus a business center and culture develops leading to a total social system in which every individual is an integral part.

Along with the development of the above social system an effective administrative set up is evolved. Karanavar, Amin.
Gumasthan (Kanakkapilla) and Karyakkar are appointed from among the members of the sect tanikkanpirannavar (Koya). Khazi looks after the religious aspects of the community. Sheikh is an authority on the spiritual and philosophical principles of religion. Tareequat movements are born like this.