CONCLUSION

This study, in general, demonstrates that social transformations and changes happening in the society are mainly in correspondence to the socio-economic development, social demands and cultural requirements of the society. The study highlights and examines the changing processes operating in the social order and institutions at various dimensions overtime. The pattern of descent, nature of family organization and residence, form the major contours of the study, highlighting the collective and changing socio-cultural framework.

The descent system is one of the areas in which quite a lot of changes happened eventually. The property rights, succession of authority and placement of kin groups were governed positively by the descent system. In general, patriline and matriline are associated with male and female centered inheritance practices, and above this, it implies a network of relationships. The study shows that patriline and matriline co-existed in north Malabar a few decades back, especially, before the 19th Century and a cultural turn over in this regard happened mainly during the early part of the 20th Century. Thus, a significant transformation in the matrilineal practices happened during the early part of the 20th Century. Actually, the matrilineal system existed as part of the wider socio-cultural entity of Malabar. The study analyzes the social
milieu and identifies the variables which determine the distinctiveness and the inheritance pattern of the communities. The study has been attributed to show the category and nature of inheritance pattern among the various castes of Chirakkal village in north Malabar as a representative sample as the village had a complex system of social organization and power system, which is characterized as an ideal village for this study.

The origin and evolution of social institutions had been an area of dialogue among the anthropologists and the historians of earlier centuries. Morgan, E.B.Tylor, Bachofen, Engels and McLennan argued on the precedence of matriliny and the later origin of patriliny. While, Henry Maine was of the opinion that matriliny was not the first form. Historical reconstruction of social institutions and its evolutionary aspects were the main norm behind the contributions of these anthropologists.

It is by pointing out the wider cultural settings of humankind, an attempt has been made to analyze the social situation in Kerala on the basis of available historical and documental evidences. However, the origin and exact period of existence of marumakkathayam (matriliny) in Kerala remains obscure. The matrilineal system and associated practices and institutions existed among the Nayars of Kerala attracted even foreigners and anthropologists for long. It is not a hyperbole that in the cultural map of the world, Kerala got a significant place due to this peculiar institutional practice. However, most of the studies on matriliny and patriliny neglected the system of inheritance among the enduring Caste groups of Kerala.

The study examines how distinctiveness and cultural identity was constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth Century and how social
transformations happened in due course. To make the study more conducive, the study has been conducted in a Panchayat, Chirakkal, in Kannur district, which was the seat of one of the ancient royal dynasties in Kerala. The study has been attributed to show the category and nature of inheritance pattern among the various castes of north Malabar.

In addition, the shift had happened positively from matriliny towards patriliny. In that sense also, the continuum is operational. In another sense, matrilineal features are still enduring among the groups which had adopted patriliny. Moreover, though matriliny changed to patriliny, the changes have mainly happened in the economic sphere and least affected the religious sphere of the communities. Hence, it is a concept in apprehension to the transition from matrilineal to patrilineal societies or a nuance of societal distinctiveness between the two poles of typical matriliny and patriliny. The matrilineal and patrilineal features can be observed mainly in the inheritance, right to property, right to succession, right to power and right to residence. Hence, all these abstract and procedural attributes show that matrilineal features gave way to patriliny. Thus, the concept of matri-patri continuum emphasizes the transformations from one pole to the other and also implies the conception of social change.

Above these two polar concepts and societal framework, an egalitarian society is said to be usually bilateral, bilineal and neolocal and this would be possible, if same importance would impart to the father and the mother. The system of bilaterality and bilineality is accordingly introduced as a hypothetical construct or pertinent model which would amplify as a universally accepted principle in future. However, the communities which have already followed
patriliny are still continuing the system as such and not many changes have happened to the system. In fact, the patrilineal communities show or observe the conventional patrilineal features. This study has analyzed various combinations of these two systems and the nature of changes happening in the kinship organization of the communities over time and space and mainly involves an analysis of the functions of diverse kinship and descent systems. The rights and privileges that a child acquires in a system such as rights related to property, residence, naming conventions etc., are on the basis of membership and descent.

Major changes began to ensue in the descent system in the nineteenth Century due to a number of legislations, social mobility, opportunities for education, introduction of market oriented economy and diversification of caste bound occupational structure. Thus, a number of outmoded social institutions get disintegrated and transformed along with the patterns of family units, marriage pattern, authority structure and rules of inheritance of property. Later on, independent India found a number of legislations which are related to the major social institutions like marriage, family, and kinship. The shift altered the locality and practices of the people and disturbed the novel structure of performance and other religious observances. Along with the abolition of marumakkathayam system, marriage from within the caste group set widely as a norm among the upper caste groups.

Social structure always changes but the core changes in it happen when legal sanctions emerge. Matriliny changed and emerged patriliny, chiefly, because of the passing of various Acts and this change was initiated from the grass root level of the society. The emergence of patriliny and the changes
occurred in the agrarian relations of north Malabar have close liaison. It is seen that simultaneous with the emergence of patriliny, the agrarian relations in Malabar changed extensively and the extent of disintegration of matrilineal system reached at its peak. Actually, a system absolutely changes when the underlying institutional practices and custom changes.

The vigor of the society along with various legal enactments helped in this respect. As a result of this, changes and transformations happened in the traditional agrarian relations at wider level and legalisation of marriage, rights of children to properties of the father, partition of tarawad properties etc., occurred. The power of the Karanavar in the matrilineal system collapsed with the implementation of the Marumakkathayam Act of 1933. However, it is seen that the power shift mainly occurred in the economic sphere and the religious sphere remains unaffected. The responsibility of the father and husband in the family system got prominence with the passing of the Hindu Succession Act and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act of 1956.

Agrarian social structure was an important facet of the Kerala society. Associated with the agrarian life of Kerala, various land tenures such as Janmam, kanam and Verumpattom prevailed in the land of Malabar. This again, represents the social stratification that existed in Kerala and the nature of agrarian relations, and like the caste hierarchy; the agrarian relations were shaped and framed. However, peasant struggles against landlordism, growing demand for land, commercialization of agriculture, introduction of land revenue system etc., made a blow on the Janmi system in Malabar. The Malabar Compensation for Tenants Improvement Act 1886 -Madras Act No. I of 1887- was a turning point in changing the traditional agrarian life of the
villages. The Land Reforms Act of 1970 was a milestone to end the feudal practice in Kerala.

The study also shows the interrelations between the production process, agrarian and service relations existed in Malabar up to the early part of the 20th Century and the changes happened in these, and inheritance pattern in turn, changed the traditional social order and patriliny emerged as the pattern of the society. But the shift in descent and inheritance system was need of the society and influenced by several social, political, economic and religious factors.

In addition, emergence of patriliny and decline of traditional agrarian relations and social hierarchy happened simultaneously with the enactment of laws. It collapsed the land tenure system and landlordism and land reached in the hands of the cultivating group as well. Agrarian movements too, contributed to the change.

Even though Marumakkathayam Act came in 1933, it took many years to accomplish a place in the life ways of the people. It affected mainly the land owning high caste people and as a result of which changes began in the feudal system and caste relationship.

The cultural institutions change under the influence of diverse factors. But the long lasting effects of culture might be deliberate in its socio-cultural milieu. Legislative interventions brought throughout the State have also accelerated the abolition of matriliny from the land of Kerala. The emergence of patriliny made its affect on the society by changing the traditional social framework. It altered the framework by changing the family system, marriage
pattern, inheritance, residence pattern along with shifting the power structure in the household. However, patrilineal groups were least affected by this shift. Patriliny set down as the norm of the society, in a sense, that it created an atmosphere in which the father’s role in the family has increased. The traditional joint family system has collapsed and nuclear family as the pattern of the society emerged in the society. As the power and authority of the father increased, the children began to learn or became educated as per their needs and internal strife among the joint family system became a memory in the society.

Though patriliny emerged as a system, still the surname conventions of the people and taravadu name are subsequent to their old taravadu name and also religious spheres are operational along the matrilineal line and conventions. Legal significance lies in the fact that children began to consider both parents equally and the share of the property divided equally among the children, which would reduce the conflict situations existing in the society. The legislations gave a mode or pattern to the society in the matter of inheritance.

The study shows that Chirakkal dynasty declined as a result of external and internal factors. It is a macro dimension of the study in which, the collapse of matrilineal system, changes in the traditional agrarian relations, and more over the colonial powers contributed for the decline of Chirakkal dynasty. The conflicts aroused out of marumakkathayam system acted as the internal force or catalyst of change. The changes in traditional agrarian relations and the passing of land laws reduced the land and authoritarian dimensions of the Kolathiri dynasty. In short, the dynasty exhibits as the diminutive level of society and the changes in societal level very much reflected in the case of the
The dynasty is a miniature society in which the involvement of different caste people are usually happening. Thus, an overall structural modification had happened in the Chirakkal dynasty also. However, the remnants of the agrarian relations, marumakkathayam pattern and feudal role of the Thampuran (landlord and local ruler) are still there, through which one can trace the old notions of the society.

Chirakkal dynasty was one of the old political dynasties in Kerala. They are also known as Kolathiris. The Kolathiri family later split up into two branches, like the taravadus- and formed Palli and Udayamangalam. The Palli branch later on came to be known as Chirakkal Kovilakam and had residences at Madayi, Valarpattanam and Chirakkal.

The Kolathiri kingdom was a vital power in the Kerala politics especially during the 13th to 15th Century. The influx of foreign powers- Portuguese, Dutch followed by British- in Kerala at the end of the 15th Century and in the 16th Century for trade later on resulted in fight and this had marginalised the local powers. The cordial relationships existed among the native and foreign powers were only temporary, especially to meet their immediate needs, carry out trade activities, and to maintain their monopoly interests. In addition to these enduring warfares, the internal fight emerged among the princes of the Kolathiri family also played a vital role in the decline of the dynasty. The two conflicting sets of interests due to marumakkathayam pattern of inheritance existed in the Kolathiri family such as, those of his legal heirs, the children of his female relatives of various degrees and those of his natural heirs, his own wife and children. These conflicting situations led to quarrels among the members of the royal family. This was not only specific to the royal family, but
also most of the taravatu / houses in Kerala encountered with this problem. Besides these, the neighbouring Muslim powers also played a major role in the decline of the dynasty. The intrusion of neighbouring chieftains and local naduvazhis especially the Canarese powers and Ikkeri or Bednore Nayaks again created disturbances in the dynasty. In addition, the passing of Land Reforms Act alienated the vast land holdings of the dynasty.

However, education, employment opportunities, urbanization, migration, nuclearisation of family etc., have brought apparent changes in the traditional lineage systems and there by in gender relations, affecting institutional regimes, such as residence pattern, inheritance, gendered roles and status etc., of the society.

It is understood from the study that access to land and control over land in Chirakkal was strongly determined by customary inheritance practices. Such practices were strengthened by tradition and determine the status of family heads which were generally favoured men over women.

The gender dimensions of the society operate in such a manner that it would lead to an egalitarian society and bilinear system would be the norm of the society. The work participation of women in paid work, more employment opportunities and education would lead them to such a direction. The study, thus, hypothesizes that the future society would be an egalitarian society giving equal importance to the father and mother.

In the contemporary society, occupational and economic factors have a major role in the attainment of status. In the status enhancement of the women, occupation and education have an important role. These factors,
thus, have an important role in making the society egalitarian. The feminist argument of liberation of the women would be possible to a great extent through these. It is because of the fact that work participation of women in the society imparts space for them in the decision making process.

However, it is identified in this study that employed women take in greater power and decision making in domestic matters, by making economic contribution to household affairs, than home makers do. Thus, the study, in turn reveals that in dual-earner families, the husband and wife shares more or less equal responsibilities and decision making power.

The study highlights that, time, space, role, cultural norms and gender plays an imperative role in determining the power of decision making in the household. More over it is seen that gendered stratification in decision making power prevails even at the family level, but its rigidity dissolves corresponding to the nuclearisation of the family, participation of women in income generation etc. Therefore, decision making in most of the dual- earner families, found to be more or less egalitarian than families where the earner is only male member. In the decision making process also employment and educational status have an important place and these “resources” would generate a societal stratification where there is no hierarchy with regard to gender or economy.

Thus, the study overall highlights the role of such resources in determining power and decision making in the society and the role of nuclear family system and social innovations in changing the traditional domestic decision making mechanism. Accordingly, it implicates that all these gear together and locate women from periphery to the core.
The study argues that to ensure a gender balanced society the settlement of division of labour and family responsibilities equally for women and men are imperative. The study points out that women’s labour force participation increased significantly nowadays and the gap between women’s and men’s participation is narrowing down. The diversification in economic spheres also helped the female members to reach the higher crest of the work force. The increase in women’s labour force participation has been an input on the way to gender equality both at residence and in the workplace.

Male dominance or male oriented inheritance of property and rights in societies has regularly been recognized as a particular state affecting largely women’s status especially, social, economic, religious and political status. Actually male dominance was the net result of patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence, men’s control of economic resources and so on. In this study it was noted that all the patrilineal communities of Chirakkal village follow male oriented inheritance pattern, descent system and patrilocal residence which create total exclusion for women from the mainstream of the society. In addition, in most of the societies, a sense of patrilineality overrides community based property inheritance rules.

In brief, the entry of females into the labour market would support their autonomy and liberation in the society. Accordingly, in the contemporary intricate State society, more than that of kinship principles, ego based kindred relations, gendered roles and principles have inherently been acquiring a significant place.