CHAPTER - I
THE UNTOUCHABLES AND UNTOUCHABILITY IN KERALA

The practice of untouchability and unapproachability prevailed in Kerala during the modern period. At this time, the Hindu society in Kerala had been divided into two classes, popularly known as the 'Savarnas' (touchables) or high caste Hindus and the 'Avarnas' (untouchables) or low caste Hindus. These evil practices touched every aspect of the life of the Hindus at this time.

MAIN CAUSES OF THE PRACTICE OF UNTOUCHABILITY AND UNAPPROACHABILITY

The main causes of the practice of Untouchability and Unapproachability might have been the distortion of Vedic ideas as the first cause and the forcible conversion from Hinduism to other religions as the second cause. The religious ideas and principles of unity and oneness enshrined in the Rigveda were ignored as a result of the distortion of vedic ideas. There is reference in the Rigveda about the secret of national stability which can be attained through the unity of men in all matters of their life in society. The Rigvedic advice to human beings is that for the enjoyment of good results of dharma and prosperity in a uniform nature, human unity through organisations and strength of mental unity through knowledge.
are essential for that purpose. Another Rigvedic suggestion to human beings is that for the achievement of the concept of prosperous future, that is, the paramount aim, the unity of Mantra, organisation and equality of thought are essential for the purpose. Rigvedic blessing to human beings is that for the achievement of establishing mutual friendship for ever, the equality in concept, heart and mental unity are essential for that purpose. The practice of untouchability and unapproachability and the concept of pollution are not in consonance with the above mentioned references cited from the Rigveda. The ideas in the Rigveda have been changed from period to period according to the influence of each period. The changed vedic ideas in each period helped to strengthen the caste structure and led to make gradual restrictions in regard to casteism.

Another important cause of the evil customs of untouchability and unapproachability might have been the forcible conversion from Hinduism to other religions. The

2. ibid, P.1097, V.3
3. ibid, P.1097-98, V.4
Resolutions passed at the meeting of the Vaidikas held at the Estate office of zamorin under the auspices of zamorin Manavikrama Raja and Malayam Collector R.H. Ellis on 20th August 1922 proves the fact that there occurred conversions from Hinduism to Islam as a result of Mappilla rebellion of 1921. Because the forcible violences from the side of Mappilas made customary violation to the Hindus. The defaulted persons are provided to get a receipt for information of their purification through temple worship from the owner or manager of the temple; and present it before the zamorin for the issue of a certificate from him by indicating their re-entry into their own caste by removing pollution through the expiatory functions at temples.

We may conclude here in the light of the above said Resolution that the programme of return of the converted Hindus to the Hindu fold might have been a practice here in the past, that is from the time of forcible conversions to other religions onwards. Gradually such conversions might have been increased here; and the rulers and people might have been

5. Resolution passed at the meeting of the Vaidikas held at Estate Office of Zamorin under the auspices of Zamorin Manavikrama Raja and Malayam Collector R.H. Ellis, on 20th August 1922 MS. (Malayalam) (Vallathol Vidya Peedam Library, Sukapuram, Edapal).

indifferent to this practice of return of the converted Hindus at a later time, because of pollution. The converted Hindus on the other hand might have been indifferent towards the expiratory procedure at temples. So this concept of pollution with the conjunction of changed vedic ideas might have been a cause of rigidity of casteism in Kerala and the evil practices of untouchability and unapproachability. The Resolution passed in 1922 must only have been a remnant of the past procedure to return the converted Hindus. So it is clear that the forcible conversions of the past were the root cause of the evil practices of untouchability and unapproachability in Kerala.

"Malabar law was custom modified in accordance with their needs by the Erhmins. Thus regulations regarding untouchability, unapproachability. Unperceivability etc. Were made by them and strictly enforced by the state which totally changed the manner of life of millions of low caste men who formed the majority of population of Kerala".7

CASTEISM IN KERALA

Casteism was prominent in Hindu Society at the beginning of the 19th century. The high caste Hindus like the Nambuthiris and the Kshatriyas enjoyed a

privileged status in society. Even high caste Nairs served the Nambuthiris as domestic servants. The untouchable castes who constituted the bulk of the population were in a very backward condition and severe restrictions were imposed upon their general freedom of movement.

The Nambuthiri Brahmins were the highest class in Kerala in the social hierarchy. The second important classes were the Kshatriyas. The Ambala Vasis and the high class Nairs belonged to the third category. The fourth category belonged to the Sudras which included the low class Nairs of Kerala as well as non-Brahmin (non-Malayali) castes of higher class. The fifth category applied to the untouchable castes and sixth category applied to the still lower unapproachable castes. From top to bottom of the social hierarchy, pollution was practiced in Kerala.

Each of the above said categories of Hindus had castes and sub-castes. Brahmins that is, the Nambuthiri Brahmins including all classes of Vedic and non-Vedic Brahmins were considered to belong to the first category of castes. The second category was the Kshatriyas which included Tampurans, Tampans, Samanthans etc. The third category was the Ambala Vasis. In Malabar Sociology, Vaisyas have been conspicuous by their absence. Adikal, Chakkiyar, Chakkiyar Nambiar.

Chengazhi Nambiar, Kollattu Kurup, Marar, Nambiyassan, Pisharodi, Poduval, Thiyyattunni, Variar etc, were included in Ambala Vasis. Below them stood the high caste Nairs including many sub-divisions in which the highest sub-castes were known as Kiriyam, in Malabar and Velayma in Cochin. Among them there were various grades of social status and the members of the higher sub-castes did not freely mingle with those of the lower. The Brahmins were deemed to be polluted by the touch of the Nairs. Below them was the status of low caste Sudras. "There are four inter-mediate castes between Nayars and the polluting Castes that may be called low class Sudras for want of a better generic name". Veluthedans, Velakka Thalavans, Chaliyans and Ezhuthachans etc, were included in this category. Nairs and the castes above the Nairs were polluted by the touch of these people. The non-Malayali Brahmins and some non-Malayali castes had the same status as those of the low class Sudras. The castes below the low caste Nairs were the popularly known untouchable and unapproachable castes.

The castes below the low caste Nairs were generally having social radii with varying degrees in accordance with their caste status. The Kammalans within the social distance of 24 Malabar feet polluted castes above them. The Ezhavans and Panans had to keep 32 feet away from the higher castes. The fishermen community as such as Mukkuvan, Valan, Arayan etc, had to keep a distance of 36 feet from the castes above them. The Kanakkans and Kootans had to keep a distance of 48 feet from the higher castes. The higher castes would be polluted by the approach of Cherumans or Pulayans within a distance of 64 Malabar feet. The Parayans and Vettuvans had to keep 72 feet distance from the higher castes. The Nayadies and Ulladans had to keep 74 feet distance from the higher castes.

Caste Restrictions and Pollution

The caste status stipulated that a member who acquired pollution by touch or approach or in any other manner but had not performed any purificatory ceremony would be severely dealt with, the nature of punishment depending on the degree of pollution acquired. The

10. There is reference in the following source about the social distance of each classes of people—
pollution varies in connection with inter-dining, inter-marriage and pollution by touch or approach. In connection with inter-dining, the higher caste members if partaking of the meals prepared by one of a lower caste was a caste offence. For example, no member of any higher caste prepared meals by a lower caste could be partaken by a higher caste. Similarly, a high class Nambudiri male may eat the food cooked by low class Nambudiries or even by Tirumulpadis, but their females cannot. Similarly Nayar males can partake of the meals prepared by any Nayar without distinction of sub-caste; but a female belonging to a lower caste may not sit in the same row for the purpose with those of a lower one. Similar rules are observed also among the lower castes. Inter-marriage also is generally governed by the same rules as those of inter-dining. A Nambudiri female can of course be married only in her own class, but a Nambudiri male can form Sambandham union in any caste below his, but not below that of Nayars. As a rule Nayar belonging to the Nayar and intermediate castes may marry only where they eat, that is, with equals and superiors, but these rules are not so strictly observed in these days as formerly, especially by the Nayars. Pollution is another element for caste differentiation, and there are some features of it which are peculiar to this part of India. A Nambudiri is polluted by the touch of any one below him in the Social Scale, while Kammalans and the castes below them pollute him, if they approach within a prescribed radius. Similarly, the members of any other castes are polluted by the touch or approach, as the case may be, of the castes below them.
caste eats with the Ezhavans or Tiyyans or chogamars. The higher male members were prevented from having sexual connection with lower caste females below the rank of Nairs and male members of all castes were prevented from having sexual relations with females of higher castes. The non-performance of funeral rites and non-observance of ceremonial pollutions such as death, birth and pollution in connection with women etc., were some of the offences to caste rules and restrictions. Similar offences, if committed between members of sub-castes, were treated as minor ones.

The eating of flesh, fish and the use of intoxicating drinks were prohibited to Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Ambala Vasis. But the Nayars and castes below them were prohibited from the use of beef only from their food. The accounts of 1901 Madras Census Report show that there were twenty two castes in Malabar which pollute even without touching but do not eat beef.\textsuperscript{12} It is noticeable that in feasts and on ceremonial occasions, some restricted formalities had to be observed in the allocation of seats in the dining hall according to social status. This customary status in Kerala bound up in all dealings between each caste.

with other castes. Widow remarriage was not allowed among Brahmins. Infant marriage was a common rule among the Malayalis and girls were enforced to marry before puberty in the Malayali caste system.

At this time the Hindus observed varying degrees of distances in pollution. These varying degrees of distances in pollution according to caste status were applicable to the whole of Kerala. Every man considered himself polluted by the touch or approach of one of a caste below him. "A Nambudiri is polluted by the touch of any one below him. in the Social Scale, while Kammalans and the

13. supra, P.16

14. Pharoah & Co., Gazetteer of Southern India, Athaeneum Press, Madras, 1855) P.518. It is said in this Gazetteer that the Thiyyas of Malabar were not allowed to approach within sixteen feet of Superior Hindus; but in the north of Malabar they may approach within five feet, and generally actual contact only is considered there to cause pollution.


The author rejects this above said distance by saying that "So far as my information goes, this does not appear to be correct. They (Thiyyas of North Malabar) cannot approach Brahman houses or temples, nor can they pass through Brahman Villages in Palghat. No member of any higher castes eats with them".

Prepared by BeeHive Digital Concepts Cochin for Mahatma Gandhi University Kottayam
castes below them pollute him if they approach within a prescribed radius. The Nambuthiri was considered himself polluted even by the approach of a Nair within six feet. Similarly, the members of any other castes were polluted by the touch or approach of the castes below them. The members of all castes must strictly obey the distance pollution. No such distance of pollution was associated with the Christians and Muslims whose touch was considered as polluting. Such type of pollution acquired by the Hindus varied on the grounds of their social status. It was decided by the Vaidikas that the suggested expiatory provisions to the defaults of Hindus in regard to the Mappila rebellion of 1921 at their meeting is enough to all Hindus except Brahmins. For example, if Brahmins acquired it by touch or by inter-dining or inter-marriage with them, they were ex-communicated from the caste. Similar was the case of all other Hindu castes, because of the Orthodox character of the society. The Mappila rebellion of 1921 also resulted in various degrees of pollution to some of the Hindus of British Malabar. The


17. Resolution passed at the meeting of the Vaidikas held at the Estate Office of Zamorin under the auspices of Zamorin Manavikrama Raja and Malayam Collector R.H.Ellis on 20th August 1922, P.2.
contacts by touch like Co-living and eating of the food prepared by the Mappilas inter-dining and so on, with the Hindus during the course of rebellion resulted in several types of pollution to the Hindus in regard to the period of rebellion. Thus inter-marriage, inter-dining and pollution by touch or approach were the tests by which caste-status or social status was determined in Kerala.

**Purification from pollution**

There were various kinds of purification which existed in Kerala in regard to pollution by touch or approach. The idea of purity or cleanliness was responsible for the pollution by touch or approach. The Nambuthiri Brahmins and Kshatriyas were polluted by the touch of high caste Nairs in such a way that the low caste Nairs who polluted the high caste Nairs by touch. The Kammalans polluted the Nairs by approaching within twelve feet. The approach of a Nayadi within a distance of three hundred feet is said to contaminate a Brahman, who has to bathe and put on a new sacred thread, to clean himself of pollution... If a Nayar touches a Brahman, the latter should bathe. If a thandan, Tiyan, Carpenter, blacksmith, gold smith, cheruman, Paraiyan.


or Nayadi approaches a Brahman or Nayar within the prohibited distance, they have to bathe to cleanse themselves from the pollution." A plunge bathe in the tank or stream was the method of washing off pollution of all kinds. But the pollution by touch or approach can be removed only with some purificatory ceremonies also besides bathe in water. For example, if a Nayadi who pollutes a Brahmin by approaching him within a distance of four feet (inspite of the 74 feet approach distance between the Nayadi and Brahmin), the Brahmin has to bathe, renew his sacred thread and drink Panchagavyam. Such kind of purificatory bathe and other purificatory ceremonies had been observed in Kerala during this time. The lower castes also observed pollutionary purifications, just as in the case of higher castes. Mr. K.V. Krishna Ayyar says that "A Pulayan almost at the other end of the social scale, would bathe five times if touched by a Parayan, and seven times if approached within the prohibited distance by an Ullatan, and symbolically empty himself of his polluted blood by pricking his finger.


21. Panchagavyam is a mixture of the five gifts of the cow - milk, curds, butter, urine and dung.
with a thorn and shedding a few drops before his last bathe: 22 In the same way, if a Vettuvan who was polluted by a Nayadi or an Ullatan, should have been taken purificatory bathes with fast for seven days; subsisting on water and toddy for the removal of pollution. 23 Thus the lower castes as well as the higher castes observed purificatory ceremonies for removing pollution.

The pollution acquired by the Hindus by the touch of other religionists like Christians and Muslims could be removed through the purificatory provisions ordered by the rulers. For example, during the time of Mappila Rebellion in 1921, the purification from the pollution acquired by the Hindus (excluding Brahmans) who had done any work at the time in contravention of Hindu religious Practices could be obtained by doing expiation as twenty one days Panchagavyam Seva with Vashivadus (offerings) and should be offered twelve thousand Namajapams (to utter name of the deity such as 'Siva' or 'Narayana') to their nearest temple according to the temple customs applicable to their castes. Each type of such pollution had each type of proper purifications like the above said, for the removal of pollution and again to become

24. Resolution passed at the meeting of the Vaidikas... pp.1-2.
Hindus. An interesting type of purification had existed in the Cochin State in regard to such pollutions. "In the case of caste offences meriting ex-communication, Sudras and persons inferior to them in caste could be saved from that penalty by the Raja of Cochin by presenting to them with his own hands a Kindi or vessel of water to drink." Few of the converted low caste peoples such as Pulayans, Fishermen etc; had taken this opportunity to return again to Hinduism from the converted religion. They had to take water from any member of the Cochin royal family for the removal of this pollution acquired by being converts.

Enforcement of Caste Rules

The Caste System of Kerala was the most rigid compared to other parts of India. The caste rules and ordinances were drastic and their observances were rigorously enforced. Even violation of its unimportant rules had merited penalty of various kinds and imposition of various degrees of purifications. Violation of its more important rules had merited complete ex-communication from the caste and society.

25. ibid-The Vaidikas decided in this meeting that the reading of Vedas by the Sudras, the wearing of earings by the Hindu females like Mappila women, draped dresses by the Hindu females etc. through the menace of Mappilas; and suggested expiation to these defaults as three days Panchagavyam Seva and should be offered not less than three thousand Namajapams.

Kerala had strictly observed atmospheric pollution with touch pollution, but other parts of India observed only touch pollution. "The tiny plant of untouchability grew into the mighty and many-branched tree of unapproachability in its priest-ridden and fertile soil." 27

Caste rules and restrictions were strictly enforced in Kerala through the agency of caste associations popularly known as enangpu and tara associations; and through the vaidikans and the ruler of the state. "The duty of the sovereign was to protect the Dharma (general law of this country) and uphold the Maryada or Acharam (customary rules) of each caste and locality." 28 These rules were enforced by the enangpu and tara associations in the case of minor offences and by the vaidikans and the ruler of the state in the case of more serious ones. 29 It was on the occasion of


29. Enangpu was the association of a number of families belonging to the same sub-caste in a village and tara was the association of the leading men of various castes in a village.
a death or marriage or other occurrences in a family, the family members of *enangu* system, who made the necessary arrangements for the occasion. On such occasions, the elders of the families used to settle all social disputes and dispose of minor caste offences. The type of punishments were suspension from the *enangu* association and imposed fines or other smaller punishments. The fines thus realised were paid into the funds of the village temple. Although this system did not exist and this association failed to take action, members of other castes and sub-castes came to take actions. The *tara* association punished for the breach of caste rules by suspending from the privileges of the village community such as the services of the village barber, washerman, chitikan or purifier from pollution etc. The more important cases were reported to the Vaidikans or a sort of head among priests, or His Highness, the Raja, according to the seriousness of the offence, and action

was taken according to their orders. Complete ex-
communication could not be passed without the sanction 
of the ruler. It is clear from the foregoing explanation 
that in the casteism, the practice of untouchability and 
unapproachability in Kerala was the imposed curse upon the 
people as a national product of the social structure and 
the strict enforcement of caste rules.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE UNTOUCHABLE AND UNAPPROACHABLE 
CASTES IN KERALA

From top to bottom of the social hierarchy 
untouchability and unapproachability was practiced in Kerala. 
These castes bearing different names, (for example, chéruman, 
pulayan etc.) but performing the same functions in different 
parts of the country, should be treated as belonging to the 
same caste or not. According to the customs of the Orthodox 
Hindu Society in Kerala, a large number of castes belonged to 
the impure category of population in regard to their socio, 
economic and religious status. The measurement scale of 
impurity varied from caste to caste. The most important

31. The pollution acquired by the Hindus except 
Brahmins during the time of Mappila rebellion 
of Malabar in 1921 is an example of more serious 
offences to caste rules. This case had been seen 
by the Zamorin of Calicut and Malayam Collector as 
one of a serious case. So a committee of Vaidikas 
held at the Estate office of Zamorin and Malayam 
Collector R.H. Ellis on 20th August 1922 and 
passed a resolution with some provisions in regard to 
remove such pollution.
impure sections among them were the low class Hindus, aboriginal tribes and lower caste immigrants from other parts of India. Each of these classes had castes and sub-castes.

Unapproachable class was a section of Hindu society in regard to the pollution in Kerala compared to other parts of India. In other parts of India, "Their (Polluting castes) essential characteristic is that, according to the tenets of orthodox Hinduism, they are, though within the Hindu system, 'untouchable', - that is to say, that for all other Hindus they cause pollution by touch and defile food or water. But in Kerala, the high caste Hindus had been polluted even the approach of polluting castes within a prescribed distance. Caste Status was important in the case of approach to a person. For example, the distance of approach was higher when approaching the higher castes like Brahmins and Kshatriyas and it was lower when approaching the Nairs. It is clear from the above fact that the approachable distance to higher castes was varying according to the caste status of higher castes. It is an interesting thing that the unapproachable castes also observed mutual pollution among them within the fold of polluting classes of Hindu Society, just as in the case of higher castes. So K. M. Panikkar observes

that "Untouchable Society was in fact an imitation of Hindu life, in all its weaknesses, often enforcing among themselves social distinctions as rigid as among caste Hindus, and consequently as broken up and divided as the other." 33

The low class Hindus can be divided into four sections in regard to the length of unapproachability. The first section can be called as higher unapproachable castes and the second section as lower unapproachable castes, the third section as the Forest and Hill tribes and the fourth section as non-indigenous castes. The higher unapproachable castes can be again divided into three groups, in regard to the distance of their unapproachability.

**Higher Unapproachable Castes**

The castes belonging to the first group of higher unapproachable section polluted the higher castes by approach within twenty four feet. In the distance of pollution, the artisan class, collectively known as the Kammalans belonged to the first group of polluting castes. Marassari or Carpenter, Kallassari or Mason.

Musari or brazier, Kollan or blacksmith, Tattan or goldsmith were included among the artisan community. Tolkollan or leather worker also included in the community of Kammalans.

The second group of higher unapproachable section included the castes like the Ezhavas, Panans, Velans, Mannans and Vilkurups. These castes had to keep a distance of thirty two feet away from the higher castes. The Ezhavas were known in different names at various parts of the country. "To the South this class is known as Shannars; to the north as Teeans. Denominations carrying with them but slight shades of distinction, and all may be considered as applicable to the same race". Palm cultivation and toddy drawing were their hereditary occupations but they were also engaged in agriculture. The Panans were engaged in sorcery as well as medicine. In the case of profession, the Panans were"... the musicians of the inferior order, but to this profession they add that of players, pretend to a knowledge of medicine and the occult sciences—the two latter accomplishments are here generally united—a doctor being necessarily a musician, and about equally

L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer states that some of the Panans were engaged in magical rites of a repulsive character, in order to become possessor of a powerful "medicine", the possession of which was believed to have the power of obtaining anything he wished. The Vilkurups were engaged in making umbrellas, bows and arrows. Vilkurups were so called because their occupation in former times was to train low caste youngmen to athletic feats and arms, and to make bows and arrows. There were no sub-caste among the Vilkurups. Velans and Mannas were the washermen of the polluting castes. They had to stand at a distance of thirty two feet from the Brahmins. The services of mannans and Velans were required by caste women for purification after delivery and monthly period. The Velans also acted as physicians of lower classes.

The fishermen community and some other castes below the rank of thirty two feet distance were polluting unapproachable castes. They had to keep a distance of thirty six feet away from the higher castes. Mukkuvan, Valan, Arayan etc. belonged to the fishermen community. They were

35. *ibid*, op.cit., p.156.
38. *ibid*, P.181.
engaged in works relating to fishing and sea. The Pulluvan caste was generally held to be inferior to Tiyyans. They were the singers before the Serpent Kavus. They sing at the Serpent Kavus a peculiar song, accompanied by the top of an instrument called Pulluva Kudam (a kind of pot). They were also employed in medicine and their females were midwives of the low castes. The Kaniyans belonged to this group of thirty-six feet distance castes. The chief occupation of the Kaniyans was to cast horoscopes and to choose the propitious time for the celebration of marriages and other ceremonies. Logan says, "His [Kaniyan's] work in short mixes him up with the gravest as with the most trivial of the domestic events of the people, and his influence and position are correspondingly great."


40. Serpent Kavus were the worshipping places of serpents. They were generally known in Kerala as Sirpa Kavus or Nagattom Kavus. The pulluvans had to keep a distance from the Serpent Kavus for singing songs.

41. L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, The Cochin Tribes and castes, Vol.I, Ch.XI, p.228. The author says that the Kaniyans had to keep thirty six feet from a Brahmin and twenty four feet from a Nair, but on marriage occasions a Nair gives a gift (dakshina) of four annas and betel leaves to the astrologer standing close beside him and yet there was no pollution.

The above mentioned three groups of castes were the highest unapproachable castes in Kerala and below them stands the position of lowest unapproachable castes. There were four groups among the lowest unapproachable castes.

The first group of the lowest polluting castes was the Kanakkans and Kootans. They had to keep a distance of forty eight feet away from the higher castes. The Kanakkans were good boat-men as well as agricultural labourers. The Kootans were agricultural labourers.

The second group of the lowest polluting castes was included the Pulayans. The Pulayans or Cherumans had to keep a distance of sixty four feet away from the higher castes. They were engaged in agricultural labour. The Malavedans of Travancore were not a hill tribe as their name implies. They were employed by 'Sudra' farmers to guard the crops from the ravages of wild beasts. The Malankuravans were engaged in agricultural labour found mostly in some taluks of Travancore areas, with two sections—one living in the jungles and the other in the plains. The Malankuravans were obliged to stand

at a distance of forty paces according to some castes, and according to others, sixty four paces from the high caste Hindus. 44

The Parayans and Vettuvans were included in the third group of lowest unapproachable castes. They were unapproachable to the higher castes within a prescribed radius of seventy two feet. The Parayans were engaged in agricultural field labour. The Parayans, the lowest class among the lower class Hindus were particularly regarded as one of the worst powers of witchcraft. 45 The Vettuvans were hunters by occupation; also engaged in agricultural labour and collection of forest productions.

The Nayadies and Ulladans were included in the fourth group of lowest unapproachable castes. They had to keep a distance of seventy four feet away from the superior castes. The Nayadies as a class were averse to manual labour. 47 Begging, watching crops in the plains, and collecting forest produce were their chief


45. Pharoad & Co., Gazetteer of Southern India, P.524.

occupations. The Ulladans were chiefly engaged in agricultural labour, felling trees and in scooping out logs for boats.

**Forest and Hill Tribes**

The approach of forest tribes and hill tribes also causes pollution to caste Hindus. They were influenced by all the prejudices of caste, and were divided into several distinct tribes with little intercourse with each other but their character was similar which partakes of the rude wildness of their hills, but it was in no instance ferocious.

The ruler treated the forest and hill tribes with great affection, eventhough the jungle and hill tribes cause pollution to the higher castes. Their approach

48. C. Achutha Menon, Census Report of Cochin, 1891, Pt.I, Ch.XI, P.114. par.274. There is a reference in this report about the Nayadies that "They are a lazy people and are the most irresperessible of beggars. They surprise the traveller by their clamorous howl for charity and follow him for miles together till they get something. On the receipt of some small present, they express their gratitude by discharging a volley of Billings gate".


50. L.K. Ananth Krishna Iyer, The Cochin Tribes and Castes, Vol.I, Ch.I, P.21. He says in the case of Kadors, of Cochin, that whenever His Highness the Raja tours in the forests they follow him carry him from place to place in Manjals or Palanquins, carry Samans and infact do everything for him. His Highness in return was much attached to them, feeds them, gives them clothes, ornaments, combs and looking glasses.
within twenty four feet causes pollution to caste Hindus.  

There were a large number of Forest and Hill tribes in Kerala. Some of them were the Irulas, Kadars Malayans, Mala Pantaram, Malapulayans, Malayarayans etc. The Irulas were a Semi-Brahmanised forest tribe who were found mainly in Malabar and Wynad. The Badagas of Nilgris was a Kanarese Caste and chiefly engaged in agriculture. The Eravallens were a Tamil and Malayalam speaking jungle tribe found in the Chittoor Taluk of Cochin State. Their chief occupation was agriculture. The Kadars and Malayans were the most typical of the forest tribes in Cochin. The Kadars were found in Nelliampathi and Parambikulam while the Malayans were found in other hills and forests. The Mala pantaram were a nomadic tribe found in the hill ranges near rivers and were also known as Paliyans. The Mala pulayans were found in the Anjanad Valley of the Devikulam Taluk in


52. Edgar Thurston, Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol.II, No.1, Badagas of Nilgris, (Government Press, Madras, 1897) P.1-The author says that "The name Badaga or Vadugan means 'northerner; and the Badagas, who speak a language allied to Kanarese, are no doubt descended from Kanarese Hindu colonists from the Mysore Country, who migrated, probably about three centuries ago, to the hills owing to famine, political turmoil, or local oppression in their own country".
North Travancore. The Malayarayans were nomadic agriculturists and hunters. The Mannans of Travancore was hill tribe; lived inside the forests under the custody of Forest Department. This department employed them for the collection of minor forest produces. The Kanikkars was a hill tribe in Travancore subsisting mainly on migratory cultivation, hunting and on forest produce. Their social status was no so low as that of the Pulayas. 53

There were also some other tribes in Kerala who were causing pollution to high caste Hindus. Some of them were Paniyans, Kurumans, Karimpalans and Mavilans. The members of Paniyan, a jungle tribe were engaged in agriculture and found chiefly in the Wynad and Kottayam taluks of Malabar. "Their position is said to be very little above that of a slave, for every Paniyan is landlord's 'Man', and though he is, of course, free to leave his master, he is at once traced and good care is taken that he does not get employment elsewhere". 54 The Kuruman was another


caste whose principal occupation was wood cutting and the collection of forest produce. Karimpalans were found in the northern taluks of Malabar District. The Kurichyas and Kurumbars were found in Malabar and engaged in the cultivation of the Cardamom trees which grow in the high parts of Malabar above the range of sukhein. Their Chief occupation were Kumeri (shifting) cultivation and gathering honey. Mavilans were found in the Chirakkal Taluk of Malabar and were employed as mahouts, also collect honey and other forest produces.

**Non-Indigenous Hindus**

Another type of polluting castes were the non-indigenous Hindus in Kerala. They had a similar status

55. R.Dis.No.4374/42 dated 30.4.1942, No.Perl. D.143-42 dated 14th April 1942. (Regional Archives, Kozhikode). In the Annual Report of 1942 about the primitive tribes and backward communities to the collector of Malabar from the Sub-Collector of Malappuram, states that the Paniyans and Kurumans were the only two backward communities found in large numbers in Nilambur, Amarambalam and Mambad anoms of Ernad Taluk of British Malabar.

56. Reports of a Joint Commission, Bengal and Bombay, appointed to inspect into the state & condition of the Province of Malabar in the years 1792 and 1793, Printed by H. Smith, (Fort Saint George Gazette Press, 1862) P.14, Par.15.
like the low caste Nairs. All foreign Hindus except Brahmins cause a Nambuthiri in Kerala by contact, while the low caste Hindus in Malabar cause atmospheric pollution. Some of these castes were the Ambattans, Andis, Chakkans, Devangas, Kaikolans, Odden, Palans etc.

The Ambattans were Tamil barbers and Andis were a class of Tamil beggars. The Chakkans were the Tamil oil pressers and dealers in oil. Devangas were a caste of weavers who speak Telugu or Canarese and were found in the Chittur and Talappilli Taluks of Cochin state. The Kaikolans were also weavers and immigrants from Tamil Nadu. Kudumbies were a Konkani speaking people and engaged in agriculture and field labour. It is possible that their

57. C. Achutha Menon, Cochin Census Report, 1891, Pt. I, Ch. XI, p. 114, par. 275.


59. Kudumbies were one of the immigrants from Konkani speaking state. They came to Kerala in regard to the inhuman practices of Portuguese invaders at Goa. Souvenir, issued for the All India Saraswath cultural organisation, 3rd conference by the General Secretary, G. Venugupalakamath (Vidya prints, Kaloor Road, Cochin, 1974) p. 19— K.P. Nayak in his essay on this Souvenir, says that an eminent researcher Valoulkar, established the fact that the capital of the Bilaharas was the famous town of Beli in Goa and the Bilaharas were the ancestors of Kudumbies today.
ignorance of Malayalam language might have been the cause which relegated the Kudumbies to a degraded level in Kerala. Odden was a Telugu caste who were engaged in earth work and digging tanks etc. Otans were other class of potters from Tamil Nadu. These were some of the foreign Hindus in Kerala who suffered the effects of untouchability in Kerala.

Social Status of the Low Caste Hindus

The low caste Hindus also observe mutual pollution among them, in the matter of food and drink. All the polluting castes such as the Kammalans, the Ezhavas, Fisherman, Pulayas etc. were forbidden to eat the food prepared by the castes lower than them as the case may be. But the food and water from the castes above them was acceptable to them. For example, the food of castes above the Kammalans such as the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Sudras were acceptable to the Kammalans; but they were forbidden to eat what ever was prepared by the barbers, washermen, and other casteman below them in status. No member of any higher castes eats with the Ezhavas. The Ezhavas eat at the hands of all castes above them in Social Status, but strictly abstain from taking the food of Kammalans.

valans, Arayans, and the members of other low castes. As regards social status, the Pulayans eat at the hands of all caste-men above them, but abstain from eating the food prepared by the Velakkathalavans, Mannans, Panans, Vettuvans, Parayans, Nayadis, Ulladans, Malayans and Kadars.

The polluting castes and sub-castes among each community was not free in the case of observing approach and touch pollution. In the case of touch pollution, all the artisan classes were polluted by the touch of tolkollans, a sub-caste among them. The degradation of the tolkollans was probably on account of their work in leather, which in its early stages was an unholy substance. The touch of the Malayans pollutes the Kadars and Vice Versa. In the case of approach pollution, the Pulayans were polluted by the Parayans, Nayadies and Ulladans. Parayans and Vettuvans had to keep few distances mutually. Pulayans and Vettuvans bathe when they approach one another, for, as regards their status there was a point of dispute as to who were superior to the other.

62. *ibid*, Ch.VI, P.120
The Nattu (Native) Malayans and Tamil Malayans had to keep a certain distance among them and the Tamil Malayans were not allowed to approach the Nattu Malayans within a certain distance. There was neither inter-marriage nor inter-dinning between them. Thus pollution by touch and approach and caste restrictions on inter-marriage and inter-dinning was also prevalent among the polluting Hindu castes according to their caste status in Kerala.

RELIGION

A mixture of vedantism and animism which is contained in the Hindu culture of India was the religion of Malayalies. The Brahmins observe Vedantic rites for religious observances. The castes below them such as the Kshatriyas follow the foot steps of Brahmins. But they were not allowed to read Vedas, or perform the purely Brahminical rites such as priestly functions, **Yagams** (Sacrifices), etc. The High Class Nairs and Ambala Vasis were not allowed even to read or hear the Vedas. "Their knowledge of religion is confined to what is gleaned from the Ithihasas and Puranas,


which practically form religious texts for the people in general, and are very widely read and studied by them.  

The Hindu castes below the high class Nairs and Ambala Vasis, worship the same gods as those of the higher castes. Besides this worship they also had faith in Sakti (female) worship. "Some of them have their own temples also, dedicated to Kali, or some manifestation of that Goddess, with priests chosen from amongst themselves, where they celebrate chiefly the Mandala pujas. They were ignorant about the vedic and Tantric forms of rituals of deities which was performed in temples by the Brahmin priests. Most of their religious knowledge had been coming from the epics of India such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. Because old members of these castes now alive (80 years or more old) including women have excellent knowledge about these two epics.  

Kammalans or Ezhavans had the right to worship the great Hindu gods in their own way and were not allowed to worship as in the case of higher castes in public religious or higher castes religious institutions, but with the influence of Sri. Narayana Guru, the Ezhavas

67. ibid. op.cit. pp.30-31
68. ibid. op.cit., p.31
had begun to worship higher forms of worship to Siva, Subramania and Ganapathi. The Pulayas and Parayas worshipped the deity through lesser forms of Hindu rituals. Their position on the other hand was different from that of an Ezhavan or Kammalan: there was nothing common between the beliefs, ritual and practice of the former and those of the latter, much less those of the Brahmin or the Nair.

"... the lower classes have their own particular temples, though receiving the deities of the higher orders; their worship of them however is generally postponed to a long list of inferior divinities, or minute demons, whom their gratitude or apprehension leads them frequently to propitiate, nor shall we wonder that the sacrificial libations which form so natural a part of those ceremonies, should so often lead to excess." They treated the super naturals with more fear and performed various rituals to propitiate the Gods; to win their favour. The Pulayans also believe that spirit exercise an influence


over the members of their families, and, therefore, regular offerings are given to them every year on Sankranthi days.\textsuperscript{72} Most of the polluting castes have done such offerings to inferior as well as superior deities.

The low caste people also had taken pilgrimages to other parts of the country. "Chowrymalay or Rama Eshwar are the limits of their journeys; they seldom take religious vows, or become sannases; a few may perhaps be met who have visited Benares, but it will generally be found that discontent or embarrassment has alone warmed their piety into such a pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{73} Sastha or Iyyappan's worship was common among the Malayalies. "Worshipped as he is by all castes of people in Southern India, especially, in Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore, he is more revered and feared by the low castes in rural parts.\textsuperscript{74} The lower castes worshipped this deity for protection against demons and all kinds of illness because most of these castes were doing work in agricultural fields and forests. The Brahmins also worshipped this deity. In the temple at Sabarimala,

\textsuperscript{72} L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, \textit{The Cochin Tribes and Castes}, Ch.VI, P.113.

\textsuperscript{73} WARD and CONNER, \textit{Geographical and Statistical Memoir}....

\textsuperscript{74} L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, \textit{The Cochin Tribes and Castes}, Vol.I, Ch.XVI, P.312.
there was no social discrimination in regard to worship from time immemorial and also before the time of temple entry movement in Kerala. "Amongst the crowd of shrines, that of Iyappa at Chowry Malay attracts particular devotion; incredible numbers (and many from the eastern coast) flocking to it at the period of the festival (January) to present their vows and offerings, although it is situated in the wildest country possible." 75

This land had certain number of Bhagavati Kavus. 76 These Kavus were built mainly of wood with tiled roofs. Some images of stones or idols stand in the open air space under big trees like A1 (Ficus religiosa), pala (alstonia scholaris) etc; these were also known as Kavus. Besides Bhagavati Kavus, Sastha, Vettakkorumakan and demons like Kuttichathan, Gulikan also have Kavus. These deities and demons were propitiated with sacrifices and their wishes had to be interpreted by oracles. Some of these Kavus like the Kavus of Sastha or Bhagavathi have


76. P. Anujan Achan, Archaeology, Leaf let No.3 of 1103 (Malayalam), Cochin Government Gazette dated 17th December 1927, Vol.LIII, No.16, supplement to pt. II Education Dept. p.13 - This document states that Bhagavathi Kavus were the ancient places of worship in Kerala.
offerings similar to those of the temples. Most of the low
castes were the worshippers of their own Kavus or other.
"Their religion is more purely animistic than that of
castes above them, and included in their number are the
devil-dancers, astrologers, and other representatives of
the primitive 'medicine-man'. 77

They have their own 'velicchapads' or oracles in
Kavus. "They visit private houses and declare their
oracles when they have worked themselves up into frenzy,
dancing 'withershines' round the yard, and slashing at
their foreheads with a sword". 78 Thus the lower castes
who had completely immersed in superstition, had their
own deities for worship and particular mode of worship and
offerings. Most of the oracles were from the castes
below the Nair. All Hindus had faith in magic and witch
craft. "... there are a multitude of pagodas called
Nuddees, dedicated to Bhagavadi (the Buddra Kali of the
Eastern Coast); her favour is bribed or resentment supposed
to be averted by annual sacrifice of buffaloes, sheep, or
poultry, at her altar; the Kirrupie of the village
performs the ceremonies; during the festivals instituted

77. C.A.INNES, Madras District Gazetteers 'MALABAR',
Vol.1, Ed.by.F.B.Evans, (B.S.Baliya, curator,
Madras Record office, 1906; Reprint; Govt.Press,

78. ibid., op.cit., p.155.
in honour of this gooddess, some of her votaties suspended from hooks are thus carried round her shrine*. 79

The hill tribes were purely animistic in religious life and worshiped demons of various denominations, tree-spirits, and hill Gods like Mala Vashi and Ayyappan. They revered these spirits and demons as patron of villages, protectors of springs and dwellers in forests. The stone or images under a tree was their worshipping place and made offerings to it. "Amongst the divinities peculiar to the hill tribes are the shawars or the dead heroes fabled to have fallen beneath the sword of panch a Pandoos". 80 "The polluting castes and hill tribes some times made offerings to the Brahmanic temples or public Hindu religious institutions in which they had no access, as an act of reality if their gods were troubled by some spirits of ancestors or demons.

The Panias of Malabar, a forest tribe have only very crude ideas of religion. "Believing in devils of all sorts and sizes, and professing to worship the Hindu divinities, they reverence especially the god of the jungles, Kad

79. WARD and CONNER, Geographical and Statistical Memoir... Vol. I, op Cit, p.104.

Bagavadi, or according to another version, a deity called Kuli, a malignant and terrible being of neither sex, whose shrines take the form of a stone placed under a tree, or sometimes a cairn of stones.81

The worship of ancestors, snakes, trees and animals was also prevalent among the Hindus. "Ancestors are worshipped with quite as much devotion as the Gods or Goddesses, and their relics are even enshrined and given offerings to."82 Usually, they were worshipped annually by commemorating the anniversary of the ancestor's death. "The Nayadi has to keep so far away from other people that he has no opportunity of knowing anything about the Hindu gods or the Puranas. He believes that his god is a Mala Devan - mountain god. He is also an ancestor worshipper, and keeps representations of the departed near the hut."83 The serpent worship occupies a prominent place in the religious worship of Nair castes. The place of serpent

worship was known as Sarpakavu or Nagattam Kavu which was in the middle of jungle trees. "Sirpakaw, they are covered with the image of a snake, a reptile here more than usually venerated, and whose worship would appear to be of a very ancient date." Before the temple compounds or within the temple peepal trees were found and worshipped. In festive occasions a miniature image of the deity is placed near the tree with a bhandaram or treasure box into which the votaries of the polluting castes drop their cash or jewel offerings. Plants like Tulasi (ocimum sanctum), Vilwam (Aegle marmelos) were also worshipped as sacred. The animals like cow, and bull, were also worshipped as sacred. So Francis Day rightly observes that "The Hindu adores nature in all its forms, from the sun in the sky, to the stone on the earth; the oxen and implements of agriculture are both alike venerated, as are also the kite soaring in the heavens, the monkeys in the trees, and the snakes

84. Ward and Conner, Geographical and Statistical Memoriv... Vol.I, op.cit, p.105.
on the ground: whilst killing a cow, has been considered as deserving of greater punishment, than slaying a low caste man. Thus the religious rites of the Hindus in Kerala were a mixture of Vedantism and Animism because of the diversified ideas in a common form of religious faith.

**SOCIAL LIFE**

The social life of the polluting classes in Kerala was in a very miserable condition. Like the higher castes, their dwellings also were polluted by the touch or approach of the castes below them in the social scale. The polluting castes must stand from a person of higher caste or his dwelling at the distance prescribed by the social scale, and they never lived in houses situated within a certain distance of each other. In ordinary conversation such expressions as a Tiya-pad or a Cheruma-pad (that is, the distance at which a Tiyan or cheruman has to keep) were commonly used.

The low caste Hindus were not permitted to live near the temples. "Place of residence becomes more


honourable as it approaches the vicinity of the temples,...

The higher castes were the residents near the temples and the lower castes resided in huts far away from the premises of temples. The polluting castes, especially the still lower sections among them lived far away from the vicinity of high caste men. Houses of parayas were situated away from other residences outside the village. These places were often unhealthy and unfit for human lives where they had no access to the amenities of cultured life. "Materially and Metaphorically their existence was dark, steeped as they were in filth and wretchedness, ignorance and superstition. Thus distance in the case of residents degraded to lower castes from the main stream of Hindu society.

They were denied admission into public places like temples, markets, public offices, public schools etc., for the cause of pollution. For example, the Pulayays were denied admission into public markets, and must stand at a distance to make their purchases or sales. The Ezhavas were not permitted to enter within a native court of

justice as they might pollute the judges, who were members of the higher castes. Caste restrictions were also made in connection with the use of dress, ornaments, dwellings etc. The polluting castes used certain words like Tampuran for addressing the higher castes. The polluting castes were forbidden to use public roads according to their wishes. When on or nearer a road, they announce their approach through sounds because their presence caused pollution to the higher castes. The Parayas dare not to approach the higher tribes, but if conversation between them prove at any time necessary they must call out aloud from as far as they can be heard. For example, S. Appadorai Iyer states that, "while travelling by rail or on the public roads in Malabar, one may observe a few ragged and dirty clothes spread near the road, with one or two copper coins on them; and at the same time, hear a chorus of stentorian voices at a distance of a hundred yards, emanating from a few miserable specimens of humanity, standing ghost-like with


dishevelled hair and jaded looks. The coins represent the alms given by the charitably disposed traveller and the persons are the Nayadis*. The sounds used by the low castes when passing through the roads helped the higher caste men go smoothly on the road without the attack of pollution and the lower castes from punishments. The result was that a man of any of the very low castes may undergo considerable inconvenience and delay in getting from one place to another. In this case, the preference of using the road was only the monopoly of higher castes at this time. The higher castes viewed the presence of untouchable castes at every place with alarm and indignation because of the defilement.

There were some restrictions in regard to drinking water. Even in rivers the lower classes had separate spots to cleanse themselves. "If any village draws its water from a river, the untouchables will be required to take their supply from a different point, lower down".

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This social custom might have been one of the products of the sixty four anacharams peculiar to Kerala and the eleventh among them was "you must bathe if you touch polluted wells or tanks (polluted by the touch of low castes)." The polluting castes were denied the use of water from the wells or tanks of the higher classes, public tanks and wells. One of the requests to the Zamorin about the pollution of Mankavu Kulam (tank) in Calicut by the Nairs and Menons of Mankavu was that the above said tank was being polluted by the touch and bathe of Tiyyas and Moplahs and so it became useless to them and they complained to the authorities. The tank was surrounded on all sides by Nair houses and Zamorin's letter to Mr. Thorne in connection with this case explains the seriousness of this pollution. He says in his letter dated 6th July 1925 to Mr. Thorne that, "Dear Mr. Thorne,

Please go through the enclosed petition I see from it that a similar petition has been submitted to

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97. File No.R.Dis 4468/25 dated 5.8.1925, petition of Mankavu residents dated 14th June 1925, MS.(Malayalam), (Regional Archives, Kozhikode)

98. Mr.Thorne - J.A. Thorne was The State Collector of the Zamorin of Calicut at this time.
you. I do not know what action you have taken on it. The facts stated in the petition are true. The tank in front of my palace is a temple tank and cannot be used by persons under pollution and the tank in question is the only other tank in the locality for the use of the caste residents. If the trespass complained in the petition is allowed to continue I am even afraid of breaches of the peace between the caste Hindus and the Thiyas and Moplas of the locality. I shall be, thankful, to you therefore if you will see your way to restrict the use of the tank in question to the caste Hindus of the locality. 99 Some extracts of the remarks of the chairman (Municipal) in this case to the collector was that "The tank is surrounded on all the sides by Nair houses; and it is situated near the place where the ladies of the Zamorin's Kovilakam reside". 100 "According to the ancient socio-religious custom, whenever a death takes place in a Nair family, the members have to perform funeral obsequies in a tank for a certain number of days; if any omits to perform them, he loses caste;  

100. ibid, Mankavu Kulam, op.cit, P.2, par.6
and he cannot perform them in a tank which is used or touched by the moplas, thiyyas or other so-called lower castes... There are no doubt, two other tanks in the village; they are private ones; one is attached to the zamorin's Kovilakam, and the other to a Nambudiri Illam and these cannot be touched by the Nairs for the purposes above mentioned."^101 "If the Moplas and Thiyyas are keen on having a tank for their use, they can apply to the Municipal Council to provide a tank for them, if they cannot-themselves find the means for sinking one."^102 The chairman concluded that in the interest of peace it is better to leave the tanks as they were.\(^103\)

In Cochin, the accounts of 1933 records shows that the total number of tanks and wells maintained by public funds and not open to all sections of the people were about 61 tanks and 123 wells in the state.\(^104\) In their petition regarding the use of Niloth Chira, (tank) at Panniankara (in British Malabar) by the lower castes, the petitioners suggest that if the low castes through

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101. ibid, op.cit, par.7.
102. ibid, op.cit, p.6, par.20
103. ibid.
104. Cochin Legislative Council proceedings, dated 12, December, 1928, p.471.
mistake, ignorance or intentionally the higher castes resumed to use it only after the customary purifications duly performed by the Brahmans. 105 These rules were also applicable to the temple tanks and wells. In 1929, one of the discussions in the Cochin Legislative Council was about the accessibility of the Koodalmanikkam temple tank 'Kuttan kulam', to the lower castes, the Panchayat member observed that, "it cannot be thrown open to all classes." 106 There was a well understood scale of distances within which persons of different castes may not approach each other without one of them polluting the other and they never live in houses situated within a certain distance of each other. 107 For example, in the case of Nairs, "The near approach anywhere near his vicinity of a cheruman, pulayan, or any inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with Sandal wood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can

105. File No.4468/25 dated 5.8.1925—Petition to the District Magistrate of Malabar by the residents of Fanniakkara Amson of Calicut Taluk. (Bundle No.26; Regional Archives, Kozhikode) p.1, par.4.


107. Letter dated 24 January 1871, No.60, from Mr.T. Shangunni Menon, Diwan of Cochin, to the British President, par.7; The Record of Administration, 1925 - Cochin State, pt.III, (Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam, 1925) p.86.
enter his house and eat... and the Brahmins do not fail to encourage impressions so favourable to their own interest, no class below the Nair dare approach their neighbourhood, and draw water from the tanks adjoining them, or presume to bathe in those lavatories...  

The denial of temple tanks and wells as well as public tanks and wells on the plea that they would be polluted if they bathe in them, and the provision of separate tanks and wells for the use of polluting castes were the existing practices which insulted the low caste Hindus. These kinds of pollution distances from public places segregated the lower castes from civilised life in Kerala.

It is clear from the facts described in this chapter that the rigidity of caste customs and usages were responsible for the denial of temple entry to untouchables. They were subjected to severe social disabilities in the matter of freedom of movement in regard to public places as well as in the vicinity of higher castes. The restricted rigid casteism had given the low caste Hindus a degraded status in society. At this time caste monopoly was reflected in


every aspect of life. The rigidity of this caste monopoly contributed to the Hindus in accordance with their occupational status, the denial of temple entry. The denial of temples and its premises to a section of Hindus, named them as low caste Hindus or polluting Hindus, was the final stage in the practice of untouchability and unapproachability evils in Kerala. As a result of the ban on entry into the precincts of temples and approach of higher castes made them strangers to the new turns of social life. Thus the practice of untouchability and unapproachability was a curse upon Hindu society in Kerala. These evil practices had been made a black spot upon Hinduism in Kerala, once upon a time these evils caused to forbidden temple entry to one section of Hindus, and segregated them from the enlightened principles of Hinduism by practicing stranger methods of Hinduism in the form of untouchability and unapproachability.