CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The foregoing accounts give various aspects of two prominent Nayar 
tarawads of Malabar, the Koodali and the Kavalappara. Both were 
marumakkathayam tarawads and landed magnates having centuries old 
history. Their visible similarities are in general features like these. But they 
have some common features. Each had its own particularities, its own culture 
and legacies. They have been examples to the close connection between land, 
religion and power. They give instances to the strengthening of power along 
with the accumulation of landed property. And religion has been visibly and 
invisibly a strong factor in this. Thus this study is an attempt to understand 
the complex relationship between land, religion and power. Now these two 
families are no more in the form of the old marumakkathayam tarawads. The 
Koodali tarawad has been partitioned and the Kavalappara is awaiting 
partition.

Kavalappara family is in the Ottappalam taluk in Palakkad district and 
Koodali family in the Thalasseri taluk of Kannur district of Kerala. The 
history of these two families stretches back to centuries. The origin of the 
Nayar tarawads in Kerala is ascribed to the 12th century.
The origin of the Kavalappara family is related to the legend of Parachipetta Panthirukulam and this is reflected in the relation between this Nayar family which is believed to have descended from Karakkalamma, the daughter of Vararuchi and Mezhathur Agnihotri, the eldest son of Vararuchi and the chief of the Nambuthiries of Malabar. Kavalappara Nayar have been among the chieftains and independent ruling families that rose up following the fall of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram. Later it became of feudatory of the Raja of Palakkad and that of the Raja of Cochin and in these positions or Stanam engaged many powers and privileges. On the eve of the Moysorean invasion the Kavalappara family came into alliance with the King of Travancore and got rid of the control of the Zamorin of Calicut who had invaded him. This connection between the Kavalappara family and Travancore Raja lasted long. With the advent of the British rule the Nayar came into terms with the British. Thus the Kavalappara family has been a feudal family and a ruler, like a traditional Raja of Kerala. The Koodali family has been a typical feudal Nayar family whose history is traceable from the 16th century. It belonged to the Kalliat Swarupam that reigned over a territorial division of Puravazhinadu in North Malabar. The family had collateral branches. The family got its present name from the toponym of Koodali village where the family has been living for centuries. The karnavar of the family was called Gurikkallachan a title conferred on them by the Kottayam Raja.
The *tarawads* functioned as an agency of land monopoly through centuries. The colonial administration strengthened these institutions. The term *tarawad* evolved from the words *tara* and *wad*. *Tara* has been a self-sufficient economic unit having its own organisation for civil and administrative purpose and *wad* refers to a seat or centre. *Tarawad* is a joint family in accordance with the laws of *marumakkathayam* with joint property. The head of the *tarawad* called the *karanavar* had many a power and responsibility. Among other things he looked after the local affairs of the *tara* and supervised the cultivation of the lands of his chief in return for this. The fragmentation of political authority and vesting of power in the landowning hands were the main characteristics of the feudal society in Kerala also. The land relations in Kerala during the period under study have been complex. A *karanavar* of Nayar *tarawad* often had different kinds of land. The establishment of Nayar *tarawads* represents the emergence of non Brahmin landlords. The ownership of land involved ritual beliefs and service liabilities apart from its economic aspects.

The Nayar landlords were both overlords and vassals. The Kavalappara Moopil Nayar has been a feudatory of Palakkad Raja and Cochin Raja and an overlord of the land and people under him. The affluent Nayar *tarawads* had *kalaries* or military training centres attached to them which also involved many a ritual. These *tarawads* had the temples of their own tutelary deity and as the custodian of the temple, they wielded much power and prestige in the
locality. Among other things these landlords owned agrestic slaves. Among the responsibilities of this karanavar was military service to the king. Koodali tarawad as the trustee of temple of Daivathar had the extensive landed property. It had a kalari also and the karanavar was called Gurikkalachan. The Kavalappara Nayar had control over a large number of temples of which the most important was the Aryankavu. The influence of the tarawad was exposed through the rituals and festivals in these temples. Kavalappara Nayar family has been the traditional patron of the art form of Tholpavakuthu and Koodali family a patron of teyyam. Both are closely associated with the temples under their control and protection.

The advent of colonialism resulted in changes in the structure of these feudal families in the powers and responsibilities. When the karanavar happened to be without a major male member tarawad it came under the rule of the Court of Wards. It lasted from 1872 to 1910. Through this institution the British were consciously trying to preserve the aristocracy in Kerala in their own side and became successful to a great extent. It seems that the impact of colonialism especially in cultural matters as in the case of political aspects were first on this kind of noble families and from them they percolated to the lower strata of the society. The heads of these tarawads had rituals associated with their accession to power and the like and these were continued during the colonial period also.
The heads of both families all the powers and responsibilities of a typical Nayar tarawad of Malabar which included the maintenance of all the members of the family. Both were marumakkathayam tarawads and as such their karanavars were the representative of the families in all matters. The emergence of colonialism is closely linked with the British judicial institution which had a great influence on these Nayar tarawads.

Both Koodali and Kavalappara had kavus under their control. They had kalaries or military training centres attached to them. There would be a traditional instructor of arms in them. A shrine also would be attached to them and thus the kalaries had both spiritual and temporal significance. With the advent of colonialism kalaries lost their importance and responsibility in supplying troops to the naduvazhi but continued to have ritual importance. The rituals and celebrations associated with the festivals in the temples of these two families were also intended to project the superior status of these families both in temporal and spiritual matters. But now after the disintegration of the tarawads and decline of feudalism, they have become merely ritualistic.

Both the Kavalappara and Koodali used to have accession ceremonies of their karanavar. In the case of Kavalappara it was the Thandettam associated with much pomp and prestige. In the case of Koodali it was called Padathilirikkal. In all these the participation and guidance of the Nambuthiris
were indispensable and this connection between the ruling power and the sacerdotal group has been continuing through the ages.

During the period of colonialism these families came under the hegemony of colonial master. The age of colonial rule has not been merely a period of servitude but also one in which India entered into modernity. During this period the power centres in the society were greatly affected and there was a re-location of power in the society. The colonial system transformed many a medieval institution to which these families were closely associated. The British created changes in the land relations. They redefined the householders as a corporate one with inalienable rights of land. Along with this there occurred changes that led to the transformation of matrilineal tarawads in Malabar. The differences in the nature of property ownership and system of cultivation between Northern Kerala and Southern Kerala are reflected in the Koodali and Kavalappara families respectively. When compared with the South, North Malabar had extensive uncultivated lands and forest which provided for more opportunities for the expansion of cultivation into virgin lands which in its turn made the terms of contracts on lands flexible. In the South the bulk of big land lords were Nambuthiri illams and with the exemption a few families like Kavalappara, the Nayars were economically depended on bigger Nambuthiri jannies. In North Malabar the predominant form of land tenure was the kuzhikanam, a form of mortgage cum lease aimed at the reclamation of more lands. The lease holders had to
pay rent to the landowner and when they were unable to pay their dues to the landlord they were evicted from the lands held by them. The *janmi* used the device of *melcharthu* for evicting them. These added to the agrarian discontent in South and led to violent outbreak, like the Mappila riots. The process of subinfeudation and subcontracting of land made the landlord tenant relations more complex.

The period of Mysorean invasion was a period of stress and strain for both Koodali and Kavalappara. Following the Mysorean occupation of Malabar and the subsequent defeat of Tippu Sultan by the British, the latter got Malabar, conquered by the Mysorean Sultan, as a compensation. The British restructured the local administration. The *tara* organisation was changed into *hobaly* or subordinate district administration. The *amsam* system was organized. The head of the *amsam* was the *adhikari* appointed by the British. The *adhikari* has been an influential *desavazhi* and here he was placed in charge of people that had not acknowledged his power previously. The *amsam adkhikari* assisted by a *Menon* or accountant and peon or *kolkar* became the local representative of the government. The Nayars were stripped of their political freedom and their responsibilities of the management the land and its people and there by their role in local self government. The British were mistrusting the organization of Nayar *tarawads*. The women in the *tarawads* were affected by the new system. They were allowed to hold the post of *karanavar* only if the court acknowledged their right to such a post
and they were liable to be removed from the post of karanavar by an action of court of law. Tarawads were not destroyed in physical terms but they were broken as a political, social and ritual unit. The changes are seen in the Kavalappara and Koodali tarawads. Following the establishment of the rule of English East India Comapny over Malabar agreements were entered into between the British and the local chieftains. According to the agreement the Kavalappara Nayar was placed in charge of the administration of the regions under him on behalf of the Company. The Nayar was not to have direct relations with the regions beyond Malabar or any foreign powers. The chieftains of Malabar had lost the power of minting coins and revenue to the British were to be paid in terms of British rupees. The powers restored to them were so as to be suited to a colonial rule. Everywhere the British got an internal upper hand. One of the measures employed by the British to control local chieftains was taking over of the administration of property under each chieftain when the heir to the property was a minor. The devise for this was the institution of Court of Wards. The Kavalappara family came under the Court of Wards in 1872. The Court of Wards interfered in every aspect of the feudal families under them including the education of wards, their marriage and so on. The result was Europeanisation of these tarawads.

The dawn of the 20th century saw the decline of many of Nayar tarawads. It was the result of the changes that came in the wake of colonialism especially the colonial perception of family and culture.
Opposition to matrilineal system and systems of joint family and *Sambadham* marriage were an important feature of the social reform movement in Kerala and the matter of the abolition of the system became a legal issue. A large number of cases related to the same were going in the court of law. The legal abolition of *marumakkathayam* was with the passing of Malabar Marumakkathayam Act. Governmental Acts in connection with marriages in Malabar resulted in the decline of the *Sambadham* system. Law provided for the partition of the property of the *tarawads*. All these resulted in the decline of joint families and disappearance of *marumakkathayam*. Sometimes the partition was by the agreement of all the members, both *karanavars* and other members in the family. Sometimes it was through the interference of the court of law. Koodali family was partitioned in 1955 with the consent of all its members. But provisions were made for the maintenance of the public institutions of the family. The *stanam* of the *karanavar* as the ritual head of the family is also continuing. At the time of partition the Koodali family had 131 members.

The property of the Kavalappara family has not yet been partitioned and now it is under the charge of Receiver. But the system of joint family came to have its automatic end. Now the present members of the family live in different places.
The Land Reform Act of 1969 had its impact on both the Kavalappara and Koodali. These two families lost their property and the property of the temples under them which were leased out. But even now the heads of these families continue to have the titular authority and ritual powers of the old system of landlordism.

An important feature of the period of the decline and disintegration of the Nayar tarawads has been individualism and mobility among its members. This has all been more so with regard to Koodali and Kavalappara. The karanavars and other members of the family who were tied to their tarawads came out and began to participate in the affairs of the regions and the nation. At first they went out for the purpose of education, employment etc. The changes in marriage system also resulted in mobility. As a result of the decrease in the cross cousin marriage and the decline of Sambandham system ladies of these tarawads went out of their families. Some of them went out of the locality to other parts of the nation along with their husbands who were employed there. The educated members of these tarawads were among the pioneers in the field of nationalism. The members of both Koodali and Kavalappra figures in national politics. During the period of nationalism a few members of these tarawads cut across the boundaries of their localities and worked for the society as a whole. The best example to this has been K.T. Kunhikammaran Nambiar, K.T. Kunhiraman Nambiar, Kunhikrishnan Nambiar and Kunhikannan Nambiar of Koodali family. The Kavalappara
Nayars also was involved in the contemporary political and national movement. They figure in the rehabilitation movement following the Malabar Rebellion. In connection with the tenancy agitation the Kavalappara Moopil Nayar stood for the traditional right of the landholder. The Moopil Nayar has also been a social reformer and defender of Hindu culture.

Both these families have their own culture and legacy. Both have been patrons of art and literature and education. Patronage to these are continuing. Now these two tarawads and their structure and function have become a thing of past. But they are so typical that a study on them reveals many an aspect of society, polity and culture of the age in which they flourished and met with their inevitable decline. There is immense scope for further historical analysis on various subjects connected with these families. Their patronage to art and culture deserves extensive studies. Further the development of nationalism in these families is also a good topic of research. The researchers and historians are to respond to the challenges offered by the available historical facts on these families. History, "the unending dialogue between the present and past" will continue incorporating all these, it is hoped.