CHAPTER - VI

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Each and every society has their own organizations entrusted with the duty of defending their own group interest. The rapid socio-economic transformation taking place in the Travancore society compelled the different caste groups to organize themselves under the communal organizations. The impact of the Brahmin domination enforced the Savarna communities to attempt towards communal solidarity whereas the awareness created by the European missionaries influenced the untouchable communities and they organized under caste organizations. Thus from the end of 19th century caste sangams were organized by the Sambhavers, Nadars, and Vellalas of South Travancore. The Ezhavas of South Travancore rallied under the spiritual guidance of Sree Narayana Guru and accepted Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam as their communal organization. Similarly the Nayars of South Travancore came under the organizational frame works of the Nayar Service Society and worked for the N.S.S. Movement. It is felt that 31st October 1914 was an auspicious day for the Nayars of Kerala, since on that day the N.S.S was founded at Changanacherry. The historical event took place at the house of

1. No. 476 of 1930. List of political and quasipolitical Societies, Sabhas and Anjumans in the state for the year ending January 1930.
Mannathu Padmanabhan Pillai. Along with Padmanaphan thirteen Nayar men starting in front of a lighted oil lamp in the Mannathu house took the vow saying "I shall work for the progress of the N.S.S. In doing so I shall not wound the feelings of men of other faith. I dedicate myself to the betterment of the society and live according to the principles set by it, I do solemnly swear this true, true, true…”³

Early Organisations

Malayalee Social Union-Malayalee Sabha

Nayars had no organization of their own up to the first half of 19th century. The lovers of the Nayar community who were conscious of the renaissance of their society formed the first organization in this line. In 1877 an organization known as Malayalee Social Union was formed at Thiruvananthapuram.⁴ This organization was active till 1881. In 1884, Malayalee Social Union was converted as Malayali Sabha and the organization was re-organised under the leadership of Sri. C. Krishna Pillai. Malayali Sabha concentrated in extending financial aid to poor students, spreading western education and introducing welfare programmes. During the initial stage it was kept away from politics. But

³ The N.S.S. Charitha Grantham, Changanacherry, 1972, p. 154.
⁴ Mannathu Padmanabhan, op. cit., p. 58.
gradually it interfered in politics also. Gradually Malayali Sabha became the nerve centre of political thoughts in Travancore. It took up several social welfare measures intended for the up-lift of weaker sections of the society. Their programmes had a national vision and broad mindedness, which helped them to be in the forefront of the national movement in later years. Malayali Sabha was headed by famous personalities like C. Krishna Pillai, C.V. Raman Pillai, G.P. Pillai, C. Sankaran Nayar and P. Ayyappan Pillai.  

**Keraleeya Nayar Samajam**

Keraleeya Nayar Samajam was a unified organization of the early Nayar Samajams scattered over various regions of Travancore. It was the result of the struggles organized by the Keraleeya Nayar Samajam that the Government appointed Govinda Pillai Commission to submit report for the changes to be made in the matrilineal system of inheritance. The Nayar Regulation Bill of 1911 was enacted and passed through amendments based on the report of the above Commission. Keraleeya Nayar Samajam gave a strong voice, high thinking and deep insight to a society, which was groping in darkness for the last several decades.

Prof. E.J. Thomas records that Keraleeya Nayar Samajam succeeded in giving a clear picture of the backwardness of Nayars in the field of education, finance and politics. Nayars came forward to unite for a common cause by setting aside their narrow differences between sub-castes. Though Keraleeya Nayar Samajam did not last long, their efforts to bring sub-castes to the Nayar community proved beneficial in the later years.7

Nayar Bhrithyajana Sangham

31st October 1914 witnessed the birth of a great event in the history of Kerala, the birth of Nayar Bhrithyajana Sangham that was transformed as Nayar Service Society after one year. It had its origin at Mannathu Bhavanam (House of Mannathu Padmanabhan) of Perunna, Changanassery.8 Mannathu Padmanabhan and Sri. K. Kelappan along with his twelve friends sat in front of a holy light lit by his mother Parvathy Amma and held a brain storming discussion, which paved the way for the formation of great movement in Kerala.

The Nayar Bhrithyajana Sangham was formed under the leadership of Sri. K. Kelappan and Mannathu Padmanabhan on 31, October

8. Ibid., p. 49.
1914 (Thulam 15, 1090 - ME). The Nayar Bhrithyajana Sangham was formed in line with the Servants of India Society. It was through the sincere and tireless efforts of the lovers of the Nayar community that the public awareness activities, which were part and parcel of the Indian National Movement, led by Gopalakrishna Gokhale reached Kerala. The main activities of Nayar Bhrithyajana sangham in the early days were to enroll volunteers for the service of the society, to spread education, loyalty to nation and god worship among people, to end the social evils etc. The activities of Nayar Bhrithyajana sangham were extended to Malabar which was also under the leadership of Sri. K. Kelappan, the President of the Sangham.

The holy light lit from the Mannathu Bhavanam on 31, October 1914 spread its shining light throughout Kerala. It became the spirit, energy and leading force of majority of people. The social renaissance movement of Kerala had its birth from this holy light. It eradicated the dirt and darkness from the minds of the people and society. It became the guiding force of the social renaissance movement.

9. Ibid., p. 50.
The N.S.S. held the motto of service to the community in general and the Nayars in particular. The objective of the N.S.S. was eradication of the barriers of caste, the abolition of old decadent and wasteful practices, and bringing reforms in the traditional matrilineal system of inheritance. In summary the chief aims were, to change the matrilineal system of inheritance which had already started to degenerate in the Nayar Community, to strive for equal partition and the legalization of the Sambandham and to start schools and other institutions to compete with other communal organisations.

Another important event in the history of Nayar Service Society also took place in July 1915. Iravikurup of Nedamel house and Narayanan Nayar of Kunnappally donated eighty seven acres of land in Karukachal, to the Nayar Service Society. The new fields of work opened by the society and the increasing need for panchayat work demanded more and more of Mannathu Padmanabhan's time and efforts. When the interest of people in the working of Nayar Service Society increased, the important members of Nayar Community began to associate with society.

The next year was a very busy one for the workers of Nayar Service Society.

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Society. Though Nayar Service had its head quarters at Changanacherri, its founders and workers had aimed to make it a society spreading all over Kerala.\(^{15}\)

In the first ten years of its growth the Nayar Service Society progressed in many fields. The society started a magazine, *Service* in 1919. This publication helped in spreading the ideals of Nayars Service Society, any matter which would help the progress of Nayar Community was given special place in the service. The workers of this society became aware of the need to make it an approved organisation. So the society was registered according to Travancore Companies' Act on 30 July 1925. Hence some restrictions were imposed on matters of membership. In the early stage each member of the society had to pay twelve rupees. When the society was registered, the membership became categorized into two types: there were permanent members and life members. One who donated one thousand rupees or more would be a permanent member. A life member had to donate a sum of not less than five hundred rupees. When sixty percent of members agreed, one could be made life member with out paying anything.\(^{16}\)


\(^{16}\) Ibid., pp. 53-54.
The administration of Nayar Service Society was perfectly democratic. The representative of the karayogams and individual members elected the Director. Board members, President, Secretary, and Treasurer were elected by the members themselves. The Board of Directors selected a council of five members including the secretary and the president for the day-to-day administration of the Nayar Service Society including affairs connected with the capital of fund collection of Nayar Service Society.\(^{17}\)

**Local Administration of N.S.S**

**Karayogam**

“Karayogam denotes an association of Nayars, established in a kara by the service Society, and includes any organisation affiliated to the Society”.\(^ {18}\) In the organisational set up of N.S.S., karayogams constitute the lowest unit. If there is a heavy increase in population, the number of karayogams in a particular kara can be increased.

In the words of mannath Padmanabhan, “the karayogams form the basis of N.S.S organisation. If the N.S.S can be compared to a huge tree, the karayogams forms its roots. The ‘N.S.S. tree’ has managed

\(^{17}\) N.S.S. Diary - I Kanni, Changanassery, 1902, p. 43.

to survive in the midst of several storms mainly on account of the
strength of it in karayogam roots. Each karayogam is a self – governing
or autonomous unit, whose administration and management is looked
by its own members. The top hierarchy of N.S.S has only nominal
control, ones the karayogams through it has the responsibility to guide the
activities of the lowest in the right direction.

Major objectives of karayogams

1. To create units, Self respect, self sufficiency, mutual trust,
fraternity etc., among its members.

2. To organise and work as a member of N.S.S following its
rules and regulations for the unity and progress of the Nayar
community.

3. To modernise and economise the old customs and practice
relating to religion and community.

4. To enhance the economic conditions of the karayogam in
general and members in particular.

5. To educate the members regarding agriculture, trade,
handicrafts etc.

6. To create proper knowledge of religion with a view to purity of life.

7. To establish and manage the necessary schools, libraries, orphanages, childcare centres, temples, hospitals, cooperative societies, factories, estates etc.\(^2\)

8. To take necessary steps for storing water, improvement of facilities like transportation, sanitation, agriculture etc. within the universe of the kanayogam.

9. To act as mediation in setting disputes between or among the members regarding partition, agriculture etc.

10. To work as much as possible for the friendly relation with other communities and also for the welfare of the poor.

Membership

A karayogam should be registered as a member of the service society by paying the membership fee of Rs. 100. The karayogams are also members of the Taluk unions, created under the rules of the service society. Each karayogam has to select and send two members to the general body of the respective taluk union for a term of three years. The Registrar of the N.S.S. Karayogams has the right to cancel the membership

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 124.
of a karayogam or not permit a karayogam from taking membership in the Taluk union. A nominal supervision fee has to be remitted annually to the Taluk union, but a minor share of its goes to the organisation wing of N.S.S. Head office workers.\(^{23}\)

Any Nayar male / female who has completed the age of 18 years, who is having normal intelligence and who is a permanent resident within the territorial limit of the karayogam has the right to become its members.\(^{24}\) A karayogam has two kinds of members, house representative (Head of the family) and individual representative (Individuals others than house representations). Hindus other than Nayars who are will wishers of N.S.S are also permitted to become members of N.S.S karayogam. But this provision remains mostly mutual, in nature.

**Administration of Karayogams**

The administration of each karayogam is carried on by a karayogams committee elected by its general body from among its members for a term of three years. The General Body elects a president, secretary from among the members of the committee. The committee and also the general body should meet atleast once in a month. All decisions

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are taken by a majority vote. When there is a tie, the president exercises his casting vote. The general body has the power to remove the committee members from office. The General body of the karayogams conducts election for three purposes.

1. To the committee of the karayogam,
2. To an electoral members, is member to the electoral roll of the N.S.S general body.
3. To select two members to the general body of the Taluk union.

The karayogam should send the annual report of income and expenditure to the Taluk union and also to the office of the karayogam Registrar. The NSS council members, Registrar, Inspector, committee members of the union and group union or any one who is specially authorised by the karayogam. The registrar has the right to inspect the accounts, store etc. of the karayogam.

Taluk Unions

These are intermediary structures linking the grass – root karayogams with the head quarters of the N.S.S. Taluk union. (Taluk karayoga union) It means an association consisting of the representatives

26. Ibid., p. 172.
of karayogams elected under the Article of Association for the administration of karayogams. At present there are 57 Taluk unions all over Kerala. The karayogams which fall within the territorial limit of the Taluk union are recognised by the society as members of the union.

**Income**

a. Admission fees of members  

b. Monthly subscription  

c. Contribution relating to marriage  

d. Contribution relating to death  

e. 1. House warming 2. Naming  

3. First rice – giving 4. Birth-day contribution  

f. Pidiyari (a handful of rice kept apart for N.S.S every day, in a separate container, in each house and collected by the karayogam at the end of the month.  

g. First harvest – agricultural contribution  

h. Kettu Tengu, Kettukarmuk, Kettukodi (trees identified N.S.S collection from its yield)  

i. Balance of Karayogam, income from land, Agriculture, business, Commerce etc.

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j. Special collection in connection with Onam, Vishu etc.

k. Special Contributions

l. Income from temple, school, library etc

Nayar Service Society did not aim at active politics. Yet the secretary and other workers of the society were forced to take active part in election propaganda. In 1921 the president of the Nayar Service Society, Changanacherri Parameswaran Pillai was a candidate to the legislative assembly. It was a fortune for the Nayars.29

When the society was founded in 1914, casteism continued to be an ugly social institution in the princely state of Travancore. Different subcastes within the Nayar community observed untouchability and pollution. This caste feeling kept the Nayars aloof from other communal groups.30 In schools and public places they stood away from the lower castes. When a boy returned from school, he was asked to take a bath first and only then to enter his home. The caste identity and the travelling restrictions on the roads created tensions and ill-feelings in their social life. At this point N.S.S. decided to play a leadership role to mitigate the prejudices. To set an example, Padmanabhan himself ate with a low caste man of the pulaya community.31 In his leadership role to fight against

30. Ibid., p. 47.
caste system, the N.S.S. got an effective support from Nayar leaders like Chattampi Swamikal and other leaders like Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru. Inspired by the Indian National Congress, the society decided to work, for the eradication of the caste system. Under the leadership of Padmanabhan the N.S.S. took part in the Vaikkam Satyagraha on November 1, 1924. One of the high lights of the Satyagraha was the Savarna Jatha. Organised and led by the N.S.S. general secretary, the Vaikkam Satyagraha and the Savarna Jatha helped to influence public opinion in the state infavour of the temple entry for the low caste people to worship. While a majority of the public was infavour of temple entry the Brahmins objected to it. In order to accomplish freedom of worship for all hindus irrespective of their castes, the N.S.S. continued its campaign in various parts of Kerala.

The temple entry proclamation of 1936, effected a silent and blood less revolution in Hindu society of Kerala. Through this action it was made possible for all Hindus including the all lower castes to enter the Sri Padmanabha Swami temple of Trivandrum and worship together. Padmanabha notes in his Political words that what was achieved

33. Sankunni Pillai, op.cit., p. 131.
cannot be adequately described even by Vallathol a poet Laureate of Kerala. One of the chief aims of the N.S.S was to bring reforms in the traditional matrilineal system of inheritance. The N.S.S. wanted this reform because in recent times, the joint family system had failed to work harmoniously.\textsuperscript{35} Prior to the founding of the N.S.S. the Nayar leaders like Changanacherri Parameswaran Pillai introduced a bill suggesting the partition of thavazhis. This is known as the first Nayar act of 1912. Because it gave provisions only for the thavazhi partition most of the liberal leaders did not accept it.\textsuperscript{36}

When the first Nayar Act failed to work out another Nayar Act was proposed under the leadership of Padmanabhan. This was enacted in 1925. In this act provision was made not only for the thavazhi partition but it provided also for equal sharing of the tharavad property for all the tharavad members. The act also made polygamy illegal. It prohibited the marriage of a female under sixteen years of age. This age limit stopped the traditional custom of marriage in talikettu form, particularly of a girl before puberty. Following the Nayar Act of 1925 in Travancore another Nayar Regulation Act was introduced in Cochin in 1938. This

Nayar Act impressed all the previous Nayar Acts and completely terminated the matrilineal system in Kerala.\(^{37}\)

In the pattern of Christian Medical Mission Hospitals, the N.S.S also started hospitals in important centres. The activities of N.S.S. extended into various fields. Padmanabhan cherished the idea of providing medical services to the community. Many medical missions were introduced. The main aim of the mission was to render free medical service to the poor.\(^{38}\)

Another chief aim of the N.S.S. was to start a few English high schools. Soon after the founding of the society the general secretary began to concentrate its attention towards fulfilling the goal of establishing educational institutions.\(^{39}\) The N.S.S. was very much aware of the value of education to boost the economic and social conditions of Nayars. The Keraleeya Nayar Samajam also started schools in different parts of Travancore. In 1924, the total number of schools owned by the N.S.S. were five and the total number of students studying in those institutions were only 1063. In 1944 these were 53 and 11623 respectively.\(^{40}\)

\(^{38}\) The N.S.S. Golden Book, Changanassery, 1964, p. 12.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., p.145.
\(^{40}\) The N.S.S.Golden Book, Changanassery, 1964, p. 16.
The first college of N.S.S. was started at Changanacherri in July 1947 only with a Pre-University class. This was granted to the N.S.S. by C.P. Ramaswamy lyer who wanted the Nayar Community to support him. The Christians were against a Nayar college at Changanacherri as already there was one under the Christian management. They naturally thought that one was to undermine the Christian interests and resisted it through the press and platforms. As the resistance mounted day by day, C.P. Ramaswamy lyer proposed to Mannathu Padmanabhan an alternative plan which was ultimately agreed upon. The agreements were, 1). The main college of the N.S.S. must be shifted to Trivandrum. 2). Forty six acres of land will be acquired by government and handed over to the N.S.S freely. 3). A first grade college was to be started at Trivandrum and in Changanacherri with a Pre University college. The Government agreed to give five Lakhs of rupees as donation to start the college. This favour of C.P. Ramaswamy lyer to N.S.S. was probably to win the N.S.S. Mannathu Padmanabhan. He was ready to take as much favour as possible to nourish the N.S.S even though he was not at all ready to sacrifice his ideology. Sir C.P. Ramaswamy lyer could not do much, about this agreement as he left Travancore due to popular agitation.

The popular ministry formed by Pattam A. Thanu Pillai after independence executed the government agreement with the N.S.S.\textsuperscript{43}

M. Padmanabhan who was a thorough Gandhian, a nationalist, a man who worked hard for the emancipation of the downtrodden and a social revolutionary and also known as the father of N.S.S. He says "My God and Goddess and every thing is N.S.S".\textsuperscript{44}

Another important achievement of the Nayar Service Society was the laying of sound foundation of the society.\textsuperscript{45} Mannam founded many funds for the Nayar Service Society. The permanent fund, Education fund and college fund are some of them. Nayar Service Society aimed to introduce industries through co-operative societies of joint stock companies. The most important industrial venture by the Mannam society is Mannam Sugar Mills. A Co-operative society was formed in 1960 for the management of the sugar mill. The Nayar Service Society had rendered great service to temples with an aim to develop the numerous temples which were decaying due to difference of opinion between members of the administrative committee or their in difference, the society

\textsuperscript{44} Mannathu Padmanabhan, \textit{Manathinte Sampoorna Krithikal}, Kottayam, 1992, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{45} Mannathu Padmanbhan, \textit{Reminiscences of MY LIFE}, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 129.
began a Devaswom Corporation. The Nayar Service Society took over the administration of many ancient and neglected temples and restored their prominence and prosperity.\textsuperscript{46}

In temple entry movement, struggle for abolition of matrilineal system of inheritance, educational activities and re-conversion propaganda, the N.S.S. played a pioneer role. In South Travancore the Nayars were organized under \textbf{Karayogams} and came under the stream of N.S.S. activities.\textsuperscript{47} All Nayar quarters of South Travancore rallied under the communal unit in the village level and made commendable mobilization process in support of the N.S.S. Movement.

The different socio-economic background that emerged out of the Vellala Regulation of 1926, induced the enlightened vellala youths to support the social movements of the untouchable communities. But the Nayars of South Travancore failed to encourage such depressed class movements which altogether worked against the socio-political position of the Nayars. Further the N.S.S challenged the Christian movement successfully in North Travancore and obtained considerable progress in the educational activities.

\textsuperscript{46} Balakrishnan, V., R. Leela Devi., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 87-91.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 92.
As the L.M.S emerged to be a strong socio-religious force in South Travancore, the L.M.S. converts spearheaded an avarna movement mainly against the Nayar dominance. But the Nayars practically failed to cope with the new situation and attempted in vain for the re-conversion and solidarity move among the Hindus. This enables the other popular Savarna community namely the Nanjiland vellalas to organise movements and occupied a pre-eminent socio-economic position in south Travancore.

Evidently the N.S.S. movement in South Travancore failed to protect the interest of the Nayars which led to the disintegration of the social exclusiveness and traditional orders.

The Present Condition of NSS in South Travancore (Modern Kanyakumari District)

The NSS in Kanyakumari district was started in 24.12.1995. It became a registered body in 1996. (The Reg. No. 47/96) The district office bearers were, Advocate Sreekumar (President), Mr. N. Raghavan Nair (General Secretary, Mr. M. Balakrishnan Nayar (Treasurer) as on 2000. The important karayogams were at, Nagercoil, Padmanabhapuram, Suchindrum, Munchirai, Thiruvattar etc.

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Regulation & Functioning

The General body meeting of the N.S.S. will be conducted twice or thrice in a year. Now the office of the district organization functioning at Chunkankadai.

Each karayogam meet twice in a month. The district executive committee met once in a month during the last Saturday. They aimed to create more funds for their society and to help the poor families in this society.

Each karayogam members entered in to canvass for the accumulation of the members from their areas. The admission fees is collected from each member 25 rupees as entrance fees. Then five rupees collected as monthly subscription.

Services of the Society

Their main aim to promote the socio economic cultural condition of the Nayar society.

Social

The NSS in Kanyakumari District gave help in monetary level to the poor families for their family marriage purpose rupees 2000 to 3000/-. These family members should be the member of the karayogam.

There are 27 karayogams in Kanyakumari District. The details given above are until 2000.
In case of death in a poor family the NSS donate rupees 500 for that purpose. This amount paid those family even not a member in the karayogam.

During the marriage function of the member's family, the N.S.S. done free service for the successful completion of that function. While they serve in the dining hall they wore NSS padges. For this free service the wedding family should pay rupees hundred towards the marriage registration fees to the NSS.

**Educational**

The only (aided) NSS college in South Travancore is Sree Ayyappa College for Women at Chunkankadai, near Nagercoil.

To promote educational qualities the district NSS announced prizes for getting 1st rank in SSLC and HSC examination among the Nayar families. Each prize winners will be getting 1000 rupees as cash award. These prizes could be donated by V.I.P.ies among the N.S.S.

This was first started during June 1996 at their General body meeting held at Nagercoil. The Donors were Mr. V. Sreekumar District President and Mr. Thangappan Nair from Krishnan Kovil.

**Political**

They sent requisition to the Government of Tamilnadu for getting minority rights from the Government on linguistic basis.