CHAPTER-1

SOCIO- CULTURAL CHANGES IN THE 19TH CENTURY

The social renaissance took place in Kerala in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century was the cause of the political awakening. The changes took place in the society as a result of the impact of various socio- religious reform movements. Kerala has an independent geographical and political entity from very early days and its peculiar geographical position helped the Keralites to develop a cultural social pattern which gave rise to social developments from the very beginning and continued up to the present time.

Cultural Pattern
The geographical position influenced the cultural pattern of the people of Kerala from very ancient times. We can get this information from various sources. The Sanskrit works like Aitareya Ēraḥyaka particularly mentions Kerala. The two epics Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata also give special information about this. Katyāyana, Patañjali and Kauṭilya have also mentioned Kerala, while Kālidasa's Rāghuvaṃśa has given an attractive narration about Kerala. Kerala has a composite culture to which several people have contributed. It merged with the aged traditions and new values. At first the people of Kerala followed the Dravidian way of life and religious practices. Kerala has a vast shore and it had trade links with Arabian and Western countries. The so called Ēryan system from the Himalayas made its appearance in Kerala.
and it competed with the Dravidian. As a result the early Dravidians lost their freedom and domination.

**Influence of Religion**

Kerala is a land of many religions-Indian and foreign professing many different philosophical systems. The fusion of the Dravidian and Ėryan cultures and the rise and fall of Buddhism and Jainism in Kerala are important events in this cultural blend. Kerala's commercial contacts with foreign countries helped the introduction of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The people accepted a cultural mixture.

The Hindu rules of Ancient Kerala had high religious toleration. They regularly went to Buddhist temples without any reservation until Buddhism began to decline from the 8th century AD. Buddhism was subjected to the slights of Hindu reformer
Sankaracharya. Though Buddhism completely departed in the 12\textsuperscript{th} century AD it greatly influenced the society and culture here and was absorbed into Hinduism. Some ceremonies and forms of worship such as the images, religious processions and Utsavams are followed by the society.

The Brähmaṇical culture and religion emerged in Kerala from 4\textsuperscript{th} century. According to the records of foreign travellers Christians gradually grew in number and superimposed itself over the Dravidian culture in certain areas. By 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D Ėryan culture dominated the society, mainly the upper class for which there is enough evidence in Saḿgham works. The Chera kings followed the advice of the local Brahmins in religious matters.

By the eighth century A.D, the ‘Ēryanisation’ of Kerala was completed. The Six Brahmin scholars
defeated the Buddhist and established their dominance of Vedic faith. “They founded a school for the propagation of Vedic studies in the land and enlisted a number of disciples of whom the most illustrious was Prībhīkara, the great Māmīmsaka.”

Buddhism and Jainism started to decline in Kerala due to the rise of Hinduism.

The Buddhist saints were the pioneers of education and promoted literacy in Kerala through their Vihīras. It consisted of schools and colleges as well. Ezhuthupalli a Malayalam term used for elementary school coming from the word Palli. Kerala had followed this type of educational institution which was a part of temples till the last century. Buddhism had also influenced the art and literature of Kerala. A large number of Palli words are seen in Malayalam language which influenced
Kerala poets and writers especially Kumaran Asan, in his works such as Karuṣa, Canjila Bikāuki, and Sri Buddha Caritam respectively. Buddhist terms like Ahiṃsa, casteless society, practice of āaraṇyamantra etc. are followed by the people. The Ayurvedic systems of medicine may be due to the Buddhist influence. Naga worship was there from early days.

“Some scholars believe that the famous deity Ájīsta or Ayyappan, is the Hinduised version of the Buddha and that the pilgrimage to the Ájīsta shrine at Áabarimala contains traces of Buddhist influence’. The concept of Áaraṇyaka can be traced to the influence of Buddhism.

Jainism spread in Kerala before the beginning of the Christian era. The Jain missionaries came in search of a peaceful atmosphere for meditation.
Jain prophets are mentioned in the Tamil epics - Cilappadikâram and Maśimeghalai. “The decline of Jainism started in Kerala about the 8th century A.D and it almost disappeared in the 16th century.” Jainism had a weaker impact on Kerala's life and culture. It was seen in architectures of temple and Mosques to a certain extent. When Buddhism and Jainism declined the Nambéthiri ascendancy had reached its peak. “The story of the rise and evolution of Hinduism in Kerala and its relationship with other religions also unfolds the interesting story of cultural synthesis.” The Works of Sankaracharya, Kulasekhara Alwar, Cheraman Perumal Nayanar and Virulminda Nayanar in the 9th Century ensured the union of Hinduism. The Bhakti movement is very important in the context of Éryanisation. The
predominance of Brāhmins made rapid changes in Kerala society.

The most Hindu spiritual teachers of Kerala was Sankaracharya (788-820 A.D.) “His system of Advaita Vedānta which has its roots in Upaniṣadic teachings, advocated the oneness of the individual soul with Brahman, the all-pervading cosmic force and permitted the worship of God in different forms.” Sankaracharya adopted metaphysics and Buddhist methods in his work with such a change that he attained names Praccanna Budhha. His attempt was to establish monism.

The work of Prībhīkara and Sankaracharya in promoting Hinduism had their own boundaries. Both of them were great scholars. Their teachings were in Sanskrit language. It was understood only by
the intelligent and they failed to influence the common people. It mostly affected the saints and savants of school of Bhakti and caused rapid progress of Hinduism. This contributed to the decline of Buddhism and Jainism. They enlightened people, prohibited infanticide, sati and other old customs of the society.

Social Conditions in Kerala

Indian society was a society of social stratification since the time of Vedic period. This kind of social classification came into existence in Kerala society from before the time of Sankaracharya. The Brāhmaṇical supremacy and the emergence of caste and caste proliferations were witnessed in Kerala society. Moreover various kinds of social customs and social evils prevailed in Kerala society
“In the traditional society the social institutions and social relations were based on Jītisambradīyam”. The society was a divided one with extreme inequalities among caste and communities. “The Brāhmaṇ is at the top of the society because he is more pure and sacred than others.” “Thus purity is the pivot on which the entire system turns. Rank, social position, economic conditions have no direct effect on the gradation from the standpoint of caste. Caste feeling was strong because the belief of the people regarding purity and pollution were rigid.” The Nambūthiri Brāhmaṇs in Kerala had a monopoly over learning for many centuries. It was one of the ways by which the Brahmans managed to secure such commanding influence in society. In short “caste is a complex and highly organized system, the development of
many centuries with which the customs of the people are closely connected and interrelated. In spite of its obvious defects the artificial barriers which it maintains among classes, the irrational customs which it sanctions and the rational practice which it forbids are not only the basis of social order but also, in a larger measure the source and inspiration of social morality.”

Caste System

The Éryans introduced caste system based on the principle of Cíturvar,ya. The political and social system became more complicated with caste system. It was harsher in Kerala than in the North. This is seen in the decreasing level of literacy. The á£dras were denied the right to education resulting
in discriminations and injustice. There was no dignity of labour and the social group was decided by the occupation they followed. The caste system was important in determining economic status. The equivalent word for caste was Varṣa which denotes-Jīti. The āдрas and Mlechas were of brown and black skin colour. The inter-caste wedding was prevalent on account of intolerance and difference in racial status.

**Origin of Caste System in Kerala**

The Caste system was on account of the arrival of Brāhmins to Kerala. Hindu's approach to fellow Hindus was strictly based on higher and lower division in the caste hierarchy. Untouchability and unapproachability changed the society into opposing groups. The upper classes believed that not only the touch but even the proximity of certain
classes caused pollution to them. Those classes were termed non-caste Hindus. The paths in certain important areas were restricted to them. The higher classes like Brahmins and Nairs were only allowed to use public roads; they need to move making loud noise fearing a low caste on the way.

“The word ‘casta’ is of Portuguese origin, being a form of ‘casta’. Garcia de Orta wrote in 1563 that no Hindu changed from his father's trade and that all those of the same casta of shoemakers were the same.” The word ‘casta’ means lineage or race. It is originated from the Latin word castus, which means pure. “The current spelling of the word is after the French word ‘caste’, which appears in 1740 in the academies’ and is hardly found before 1800.”
The caste is the base of Hindu culture. The caste in Kerala was four fold Brähmanas, Kâatriyas, vaiśyas and áśdras. Among them Brähmanas were the priestly class and they never accepted any class other than áśdras. Many Christians and Muslims were converts from Hinduism and they embraced Christianity or Islam to escape from the suppression of caste system.

Kerala had the most rigid and elaborate caste structure in India. The society denied to rights of the poor. They were not allowed to enter Hindu temples, not allowed to bath in temple ponds and also not allowed to go to the public markets. Neither men nor women were not allowed to wear covering cloths above the waist. They were also prohibited from wearing ornaments and they were also denied to put tiles on the roof of their houses.
Caste system in Kerala was created by the Namb$thiri Br$hmans. They also created a social system and behaviour which existed till the 19th century in Kerala. The Namb$thiris are Malayali Br$hmans who migrated to Kerala from the North and they were originally Vais$avas. The KÀatriyas occupied the second position in society. The Nairs were below the KÀartiyas. In Kerala, during those time Nairs constituted the largest single caste.

**Evolution of the Caste System**

The caste system appears in India due to the arrival of the Indo-European tribes known as the Ėryans around 1500 BC. The social organization of society was split into warriors, priests and the general public. The racial aspect of caste indicates the term Var$a, ie. colour in Sanskrit. The duties of four Var$as are like the following; Br$hmin was the
priest, KÀatriyas the kings and warriors, the Vai¿yas who did trade and agriculture were farmers and merchants, the last one á£dras were servants.

The position of á£dras improved during the epic period. They were permitted to listen R¡m¡ya¸a, Mah¡bh¡rata and Pur¡¸as. The epics and Pur¡¸¡s represented the KÀatriya tradition. The á£dra worshipped a new God called KriÀ¸a and also permitted to perform certain domestic rites. This improved the economic status of the á£dras. A Hindu saint Manu who lived in 300 B.C. speaks about the master plan for life in a multi-racial society in his code of conduct.

In India, classification of caste system has traditionally placed people in different levels in a hierarchy. The function of the caste system was to sort people into categories of wealth and status.
The higher castes were more powerful and pure. The lower castes were powerless and literally untouchable.

**Brähmaical Supremacy**

The Varṣa Dharma Concept of Brähmaical theology that governed the traditional Malayali mind is a social theory founded on the sanction of divinity. It is claimed that God created the four Varṣas for humans, with definite duties for them to be pursued in worldly life”

“The Hindu society was a formation of Varṣa groups hierarchically divided on the basis of their callings. They were to render different types of service to the Brähmaṣas. i.e., the Kāatriyas for political, the Vaiṣyas for economic, and the āśdras for menial and personal service” The social pecking order, the lower class people was bound
always to serve the high class people and all those who were under the Brāhmaṇas and bound to serve them and respect their power.

In Kerala Nambūthiris were a separate class of Brahmins who believed that they were the owners of Vedic literature. Based on the occupations they were the priests and managers in the temple. There are five subdivisions among them. The first position was the ‘Tampurakkal’ who are the owners of wealth, and administrators of temples. The second ‘Ē·hyas’ are the absolute spiritual beings who have direct contact with the Almighty. The third was the ‘Śimśīnyas’ the ordinary persons who study Veda, and medicinal plants. The last one ‘Jītimatras’ were occupied in traditional learning and philosophy.
Brähmins had a give and take relationship with the invading forces and achieved their goal in underestimating the Buddhists. The Brähmin treated almost all as áśdras and a very few like the local rulers who were called as KÀatriyas. Brähmins became the largest land owning group in the eleventh century. They influenced the society in religious, political, social, economical and cultural fields. "The emergence of the Brähmaṇas as the hegemonic class in Kerala has a long history of centuries. Their colonization of the land had its beginning during the Sa’gham age." Kerala had developed a cruel and rigid caste system existed in India. The elite Hindu caste-the Nambëthiries governed over the people of low caste who were denied entry into public markets and had to go naked above the waist regardless of sexual
category. The Nambéthiries considered themselves polluted if they saw a low caste man on their way and could punish them to death. Nambéthiri women were accepted to remain as virgins while women of the next caste down— the Nair’s were likely to satisfy the sexual desires of Nambéthiri man.

Other Castes

The second class Brahmins are Ambalavazis and they lived in Ambalam. There was a house attached to the temples. Their duty was to help the high priest in the religious ceremony and obey all orders of the high caste people in their personal life also. The Nairs who are traditional warriors and feudal land lords served the KÀatriyas. Their duty was to protect the land from the invaders. The Rajas gave titles such as Pillai, Panicker, Nambiar,
Menon etc. The titles became common in the families; later these titles gave rise to more - caste.

The Nairs and Ezhavas were the followers of Hinduism and Buddhism. Many other castes were based on occupation. The Ezhavas were toddy tappers. The derivation of the Pulayís, Parayas, Ve¶¶uvas, Arayan, Vílan, Ėari, Kollan, etc. are based on their duty. A person who serves in the pulam (extensive land) called Pulayas. Poraiyan (Those who live on the hills) were also called Parayan. Ve¶¶uvan were also known as Ve¶lan. The carpenter’s occupation was carpentry. These people were considered as untouchables. Their position in the society was posted on the basis of their financial position. The Pulayan and the Parayan was the most inferior among untouchables.
Condition of Women

The condition of women were very miserable in the existing social hierarchy. They were suppressed in every field in all caste. The women of the Nambéthiri were called ‘Antarjanam’. This community was governed by rigid rules and beliefs. The women of this community had a separate customs and practices in their life unlike in the other communities. Smírtavicíram was a means to achieve enforcement of morality. How the trial of a suspicious woman was to be conducted is given in detail in Smírtavicíram. The strict enforcement of Smírtavicíram is indicative of the possibility of adultery frequently being committed by both sexes in the closed family life of a secluded community like that of the Brjhmins.
Women were subjected to a number of taboos which are proposed to keep them aloof from social life. They were not expected to enjoy freedom and were to be subordinated to men. They required no higher learning and were to be satisfied only with the basic knowledge. Like the á£dras they were also forbidden from listening to the chanting of Vedic hymns. Entertainment and body adornment were denied to women.

“Women have got higher position in Veda. A house is become house through the presence of women. Dayananda Saraswati propagated rights of women in all time” “He wrote Upadesa Manjari for the promotion of women due to the effect of child marriage he became very sad. Then he promoted women's upliftment”.

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The woman of the family who inherited the property was controlled by her brother, uncle or granduncle who ever be the head of the family. The Nambéthiris had Sambandham with many of the noble Nair women. This was determined by the status of whole family and the community.

The social humiliation of women even among the Pínas, the Parayas and the other decent classes, made their position very poor. The Pínas were the court poet of early society. It changed the Bríhmins power. The position of women in the society was very low. Child marriage became prevalent. The young girls and men were forced to take up family life after giving up their dreams. Women enjoyed lesser freedom and inequalities unlike in the earlier days. Lives of the widows are in worse condition.
Untouchability

The Nambéthiris formulated altering rules concerning the ritual pollution when interacting with different person. By this all castes practiced untouchability principles with the classes under them. Many lower castes were converted into Christianity. Rules of untouchability were severe to begin with and they were very strictly enforced by the time of Dutch East India Company in 17th century. According to this, a Nair may approach, but cannot touch a Nambéthiri Brahmin, a Chovan must remain 36 paces off and Pulaya 96 steps distant etc. South Indians were more narrow-minded people compared to North Indians.

Untouchability and inapproachability led to the condition of the entire life of the people in difficulty in social religious and political institutions. They
created a condition of extreme inequality. The Administration was feudalized. This made vast majority of population slave classes and they were exploited in every field. In the case of simple crime the punishment was very cruel.

The Pulappedi or Mannappedi was an evil custom existed in society at that time. It was a cruel custom of harassing women of higher caste especially the Nairs by the lower caste people coming from Pulayas and Mannans. “The custom was that those women of the Nair caste who were thus carried away by Pulayas and Mannans or at least ‘polluted by their touch’ or even hit by a stone or stick thrown at by them, were treated as out castes”

Marumakkattiyam
“A distinctive feature of the social organization of Kerala till recent times was the prevalence of Marumakkattiyam or the matrilineal system among certain castes and communities.” The Marumakkattiyam was practiced both in the Nair and Ezhava communities. This system provides importance to mother. She is the head of the family and her progeny is known by her Gotra. Married daughters remain in their mother’s house; the husbands come to sleep every night. The maternal uncle has greater authority than the paternal uncle and the heirs to property are matrilineal, the legacy going to his sister’s son only. This system is called ‘Marumakkattiyam’. It helped probably to settle issues of property inheritance by children and maintains to wives in this kind of families; that the Nambethiris evolved the ‘Marumakkattiyam’ which
later spread among Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

The family is called Taravad, where having hundred to two hundred inhabitants are living for generations. Everyone has a common right to property but doesn’t get separated. The Taravad is independent one and it contained a huge house at the middle portion. It was encircled by flower and fruit gardens along with a barn house and a lake. The North-West corner is for Sarpakįvyu for worshipping God Naga. There are sacred groves where the plants were conserved and occasionally having a small shrine for Kuladevata. The South-East corner is the cremation ground and rooms on the Northern side are for unmarried girls and newly delivered women and those in the South are for elderly women. After marriage every girl gets an
independent bedroom. Men and women live separately. The social system was matriarchal and not patriarchal.

**Other Social Evils**

In Kerala society, among the Nairs and Ezhava women some kind of social practices prevailed. The girls have three important events in their life: the Tilikukalyanam, Teradukuli and Sambandham.

**Tilikukalyanam**

In Tikukalyanam, the main function is the selected groom called ‘Manavalan’ tying a Tili around the neck of the girl ceremoniously with pomp and show. The couple is taken to a decorated room and not allowed to leave for three days. On the fourth day they are taken to the lake in a procession for bath and return. After bath they are eating in the same leaf after that a garment of theirs are cut
into two and the pieces are exchanged. It was marking the end of their relationship.

**Sambandham**

Sambandham is an illegal type of marriage. It was followed by the Nambethiris. Sometimes Brähmin boys or mother of the girl ties tali. The girl can have ‘Sambandham’ with any boy, even the Maavilan himself. Occasionally, his consent is necessary to marry others; and if he dies she has to observe 15 days of mourning but not if he is a Brahmin. “The most characteristic custom of the Nair is connected with their marriage. Every Nair girl is married in one sense at a very early age”

**Tera dukuli**

It is the celebration when the girl attains youth and gets her first menstrual period. It is the main function of Nair women’s life. On an auspicious
evening the groom coming in procession is welcomed by the bride’s relatives, presents nine, eleven, seventeen or twenty one garments to the bride and everyone sprinkles over the couple under great pomp and show. The bride and the groom spend a night in a decorated room. The girl stays in her own Taravad and her husband comes to her every night and returns home every morning.

**Kerala Society from 8th to 16th Century A.D**

At the end of 8th century after Sa´gham age, Kerala remained static with regard to the social development. After the revival of Chera power, under Kulasekhara Varman, in 800 A.D brought about all round development in political, social and cultural fields. Kulasekara Alwar was a great scholar and a great patron of arts. The Sa´gham society was a caste –ridden one. "Caste groups
as in a Varna-based Hindu society cannot be detected in the Sa´gham society”.

All the Sa´gham people became Avar¸as in the presence of the Br¡hma¸as, and their descendants who were not brought in to the Varna fold remained to be so until they were documentarily included in the category of Hindu population through census reporting. But the process of Hinduisation of the society in this land had begun during the Sa´gham period itself”.

The Post-Chera period saw a gradual decline of the Namb£thiris. Until 16th century, they put off their affairs to Nairs. The Namb£thiri- Nair alliance came into existence. There was a great difference of opinion among higher and lower classes and this led to further sub-division of four-fold classification, based on occupation, habit etc, still the untouchability and inapproachability did not
disappear. The section of class employed in manual labour suffered the most.

**Invasion of Europeans**

European contact with Kerala began in the 15th century. The Ottoman Empire established a land route to India. The Portuguese wanted to take up the profitable spice trade which was possessed by Arabs alone. Therefore, Portuguese king ordered to find a route to India.

The arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 was a landmark event in history of Kerala. At that time Kerala was experiencing great political problem. However, Portuguese succeeded to establish some trade facilities at Cannore. Portuguese insisted on Arabs to stop their trade in India. Moreover, the enmity between Cochin and Calicut became worse because the Raja of Cochin
was a Portuguese supporter. The main aim of Portuguese was the monopoly of trade with India, excluding all others. Portuguese even had a strong impact on educational and cultural life of people of Kerala. The introduction of printing press in Kerala was one of the biggest achievements. But their rule marked a great religious intolerance and stupidity among the people.

The great gift of Calicut was because of the victory of Arabs over their enemies at China. A lot of Muslim merchants coming from Arabia and Egypt had settled down in Calicut. They started a commercial trade from the sixth centuries, ie before the arrival of the Portuguese. The traders of these countries made themselves rich and Calicut became prosperous. But the significant fact was that they never tried to interfere in the political life of
the natives and also not attempted to disturb the
calm social and religious life of Malabar. “The
religious policy of Portuguese was not based on
liberal and enlightened principles. They were
extremely fanatical and narrow-minded in their
dealings with all religious communities including St.
Thomas Christians.’’. Dutch monopolized their
trades in Purakkad, Kayankulam and Quilon by
1662. Conquering Cochin in 1663 is one of the
most achievements of Dutch. They performed well
as traders. Their trade centre in Kerala was most
native, because no other place, they could exert so
much power. Most important political and
intellectual involvement of Dutch in Kerala was
Hortus Malabaricus- the famous work on herbal
plants.
British came as traders to India. They managed to gain permission to use all the Portuguese forts in Kerala from Zamorin. But they had to face considerable opposition from Dutch and French. Several revolts took place in 18th and 19th century which challenged British authority. Travancore was the central stage in political arena of Kerala around 18th century, being the credit of Marthanda Varma and Rama Varma. Travancore was governed by many great administrators and became prosperous. The agricultural problem of Malabar became very bitter during that time. The characteristic feature of agrarian society was the monopoly of landlords.

**Traditional System of Education**

“Kerala has an impressive record of its own in the field of education and learning”. In the Sa´gham age promoted the literacy and education were very
high. The society never denied education to all. Éryanisation increased the level of caste system and the high caste Brahmins enjoyed monopoly in this field.

Education was attached with Hindu temples and they had schools or colleges known as Sīlais. The most important are Kandalur, Partivākekharapuram, Thiruvalla and Muzhikulam. The Kandalur Salai figures prominently in many of the famous inscriptions of the age including Chola inscriptions. It has been called as “the Nalanda of the south”.

The age of Kulasekhara saw a high literary establishment in Sanskrit and Tamil. Education was imparted only through these two languages. Malayalam was a distinct language evolving gradually during the time of Kulasekhara. There
was a Kulasekhara boarding school. The Brahmin youth got free boarding and lodging and started a course of instruction in the Vedas and other branches of Sanskrit. The education was aimed at the moral, intellectual and physical well being of the pupils. The Sılai offered special courses such as philosophy, Theology, Law, Grammar etc. With regular education the Sılai made endowments for students for participating in the programmes of recitation and the exposition of Purı¸ic stories in temples. There was a good collection of books. To encourage the study of Veda the temple authorities conducted Vedic recitals and competitive tests.

The literature flourished that time and Unnineeli Sandeṣam was written that period. In Calicut there was the great learning centre in South India under Zamorins. Revatipattattınam was an annual
assembly of scholars held in the Thulīm at Tali Temple and a winner got the title “Bhīṭta” and also cash awards. The assembly discussed on the subjects of Mimīmsa, Vedīnta and Vyākarana etc.

In 14th and 15th centuries under the Raja of Kolathiri at Taliparamba patronized the cultural activities. Competitions were held in Kēṭh, Kēdiyattam, Melam and Music. Chembakasseri was another learning centre at Ambalapuzha in that period. After āḷlai education their proficiency tests were conducted in Ṭgveda at Kadavallur in the temple of Sri Rama. This is known as “Kadavallur Anyonyam”

In addition to āḷlai a parallel system of Village school was started. It is known as “Ezhuthupalli” for the non-Brahmins. This was under the control of Ezhuthachan. The pupils were taught reading,
writing, arithmetic, astronomy and astrology. The advanced course for both boys and girls included the detailed study of Kīvyaśa, Alankīra, Niḥakas Logic, Grammar and Āyurveda. The girls were given special subjects for study, short poems inculcating moral ethics. Tiruvitirakali is a very good exercise for girls and they were taught there. The Ezhuthupalli made remarkable change in the society. Tunchat Ezhuthachan was a remarkable figure in 17th century. He was called “the father of Malayalam Language”.

The Kalari also had importance in the system of education. Kalari has played a particular role in the history of Kerala on many crucial occasions. All studied in Kalari. ‘Kalarippayattu’ was a regular scheme of physical education for the youth. It came to an end due to the increase of guns and cannon in
18th century. The Ezhuthuppalli declined with the arrival of British. “Kerala has a record of its own in the field of theological education. The áîlais and Sabha Mutt described earlier served in a way the needs of theological education as far as the Hindus were concerned”. The Muslims had Madrasas and Arabic colleges. The church gave theological education.

**Western Education**

The British were responsible for the introduction to Western Education. English education played a great role in social and cultural life of people. “Modern education became a powerful instrument in increasing the number of those who learnt to think independently.” The foundations of English education were firmly laid in India. The Beginning of Western Education is
associated with the work of Christian Missionaries. This led to the establishment of institutions offering technical courses, oriental studies and fine arts. East India Company took no interest in the promotion of Education among the masses. “Indigenous Pathasalas and Madrasas were functioning in every part of South India on individual initiative with no aid from the state where traditional system of education was imparted in Sanskrit, Arabic and Vernacular languages set up for the establishment of education”. This traditional system of education was imparted in Sanskrit, Arabic and Vernacular languages.

Correspondences with the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British resulted in the creation of a Eurasian- community. There was a quick transformation in to egalitarian society. The
peaceful reformation resulted in the tolerance and resilience of all original classes. The gradual fusion of various groups brought a superficial uniformity in Kerala. The traditional superiority of the Brahmins was extended in to the political field by the policy of making English education. They alone followed by their entry into the high Government posts and occupations. Thus, with their social positions and intellectual superiority they occupied key positions in the political life.

A new economic order had developed in Kerala, resulting from the economic boost in certain fields. It was affected by the emergence of European powers- the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. Kerala had a significant part in the freedom struggle movement. Lower castes in South India fought the British Governments. Tippu and
other nationalists were killed by the British. If Tippu had not been killed, he would have overrun Thiruvitancore, Cochin and united South India. The British would have been defeated thereby ending the British rule of India. They were suspicious about the high caste nationalists and were different in democracy. The intellectuals in Kerala gained much when the British introduced Western education, which also played a great role in the social and cultural life of the Kerala.

**Missionary Activities**

Colonization and Missionary enterprises all over the world had a clear vision; the centre of study being Missionary. The Missionaries were aware of how difficult it was to convert the people of the society. The society was, deeply associated with Jñā hierarchy. It was very difficult to preach an ideology
which tells that all are equal before God. “Most of the Christians and Muslims were converts from Hinduism and they had embraced Christianity or Islam to escape from the oppressiveness of caste system. However the prospects of the caste system were doomed when the society was gradually incorporated in to the British administrative and judicial practices. In the new colonial environment many aspects of the caste system underwent great changes.” The commercial economy also affected the family organization, inheritance laws and social relations.

The Missionaries urged for Christianization of India peaked in England long before the 1813 Charter Act. They established schools to popularize the Western ways through the language of the common man; throughout the society. The changed
situations made new strategies and made the Indian subcontinent as the consumers of British Industrial products. The local person familiarizes European goods and life style which helped them consume more European goods. In the 18th century several English officers, pioneered by Charles Grant, made proposals for Indian education. In the 19th century the Government highly encouraged a new educational system on Western line. It was really the missionaries who promoted regional dialects to ensure the spread of Christianity. This paved the way to the vernacular translations of the Bible.

The Missionaries also realized that education of women was essential to modify the traditional society, as part of influencing Indian women. In 1822 MA.Cooke started the first girls’ school in
Calcutta. It was based on not only textual knowledge but also the knowledge of cooking, needle work and family management. Through these women modernity found ways to enter the household of the native life. The English education provided a new way of socio-political thinking. It also helped the people to have the realisation of a new sense of individuality, dignity, and self respect.

**Influence of Social Change in Malayalam Literature.**

Tunchat Ezhuttacchan changed the society of Kerala by his works, *Adhyātma Rāmāyānam* and *Srī Mahābhāratam* and *Irupathinalu Vāttam* and *Harināmakirttanam*. It was a landmark in the history of Malayalam language. The Bhakti cult finds its supreme literary expression in Malayalam works. They also show a harmonious synthesis of the
Éryans and Dravidian streams in Malayalam. He taught the poor people in Ezhuthupalli.

Kunchan Nambiar was another poet who helped the people for removing their darkness through the work of “Tullal”. It refers to the contemporary social evils. “Nambiar used Malayalam poetry for the first time as an instrument of social change and has therefore come to be regarded as a pioneer. He was won fame as the people poet”. Kumaranasan was another poet who made effective use of poetry as an instrument of social change. “Asan carried crusade through his poems against such social evils untouchability.” “His ‘Can·įla Bhiksuki’ which has for its theme a Buddhist monk drinking water from an untouchable girl is a scratching indictment of caste system”. The ‘Duravastha’ deals with the marriage of a
Nambethiri woman with a Pulaya man is a passionate plea for social change. Nalini, L śl a, Sri Buddha Caritam, Prarodanam, Cintivisthayaya Scta, Karu a etc. reveal the traces of Buddhist influence.

“O. Chandu Menon’s Indulekha was a landmark as it was a social novel which threw light on the impact of western education on traditional Nair society under the matrilineal system of inheritance.”

The prose literature in Malayalam has made striking progress in recent times under the influence of western novels, short stories and dramas. Sanskrit language was patronized in 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries by the rulers of Travancore and Kochi. Kerala has a rich tradition of Sanskrit literature from early days.

**Socio-Religious Movements in Kerala**
The attitude of Keralites underwent a sea change during period of British rule. The new humanism which came in the wake gave Keralites an opportunity for introspection regarding the existing social situation. The educated people challenged the monopoly of the Brähmins and began to criticize the cruelty of the higher castes towards the weaker sections. These educated intellectuals became the burn down of modernity in Kerala and they had started clamouring for social reforms in various parts of the country also influenced the Malayali and they endeavoured for certain positive changes in the existing social and religious condition. This is the general circumstances in the nineteenth century Kerala which facilitated the rise of certain socio- religious reform movements lead by charming reformers like Chattampi Swamikal,
Narayana Guru, Ayyankali and Brahmananda Swami. The social reform movement was aimed at the removal of social disabilities of the entire section of population and to create self-governing society. It virtually affected the major communities in Kerala the Ezhavas, the Nairs, and Pulayas. These reforms were aimed at creating a new uniform society and promoting equality.

The reform idea reached the south through the activities of missionaries. The social reform movements like the Brahma Samaj, Ėrya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Theosophical society and other reform movements born outside the state did not give better impact on Kerala society. The undeniable efforts of Swami Agamananda (1876-1961) the founder of Ramakrishna Advaita Ėramam at Kalady, worked for eradication of caste
barriers and Harijan upliftment. The victims of injustice and oppression were those with the deepest impact of the oppressive. The social and political histories of Modern Kerala are deeply changed, those who deeply changed the social and political histories of Modern Kerala are the upper caste organisations like Nambéthiri Yuvajana Sa´gham and YogakÁema Sabha.

The social renaissance in the 19th and 20th centuries immediately caused political awakenings. It is necessary to know the changes in the society and it was influenced by various socio-religious reform movements, before dealing with political developments and freedom struggle. The contributions of Chattampi Swamikal and Sri Narayana Guru are very important.
In this context the researcher is mentioning first Narayana Guru after Chattampi Swamikal because the study gives prime importance to Chattampi Swamikal in the coming chapters.

**Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam**

The social reform movement was started by the Ezhavas who were a comparatively advanced caste of Avaras. The reforms were achieved by Sri Narayana Guru (1854--1928) the religious and social reformer of modern Kerala. Sri Narayana Guru started his activities in 1887, and campaigned against the social evils. Due to his effort the abolition of the caste system was achieved. Dr.Palpu was the main leader of the Ezhava Memorial. Narayana Guru urged the Ezhavas and other backward castes to make use of modern education, industrial and commercial
pursuits for achieving social and economic improvement and founded the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam in 1903 to work for the backward community. Dr.Palpu, Kumaranasan, N.Govindan were his associates initially. His famous dictum “one caste, one religion and one God for Man” makes evident his intellectual outlook on religious matters. Thus he is hailed as the father of Modern Kerala Renaissance. The social revolution propagated by him helped to create a scenario for political awakening in Kerala.

The teachings of Sri Narayana Guru inspired many other Ezhava leaders, who made contributions to the social reforms during their time. TK.Madhavan, the editor of Desabhimani sought the SNDP Yogam to start a programme aimed at
realization of temple-entry and civil rights. The agreement with the ideals of the Indian National Congress he got membership.

C. Krishnan, the editor of ‘Mitavati’, started a war against for the eradication of untouchability in Malabar. The Malabar Collector had denied freedom to Ezhava’s and other backward classes to walk along the approach road to the Tijli Temple. It was in Kozhikode District. The new awareness among the backward classes and stressed on the need for quick eradication of untouchability. The people realised their rights mainly through for his activity.

**Samatva Samijam.**

The impressive reformer in modern Kerala was Vaikunda Swami (1809-1851). He was from Kanyakumari. In 1836 he founded an earliest social
union `Samatva Samijam. As a radical reformist, he fought for the redress of the Avaras. The Shanar women of South Travancore had revolted against the undeserved law. He was inspired on social equality and was put in jail in Thiruvananthapuram during the rule of Swathi Thirunal.

Sidhramam

Brhmananda Swami Sivayogi (1852-1929) was born in Nair a family. He founded the Sidhramam at Alathur in Palakkad district. He was a very good social reformer and he fought against caste barriers, idol worship, Marumakkattiyam, law of inheritance and propagated widow marriage, female education, etc. He laid stress on non-violence, peace and social equality. “According to Sivayogi caste and the associated evils like inequality are the creations
of the mind. He was a critique of caste. The human soul has no caste or religion’’. The most important work of Swami was, MokÀa Pradipakha, danam’. In this work he criticized the idol worship.

**Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sa´gham**

Ayyankali (1866-1941) the Pulaya leader, inspired by Sri Narayana Guru. In 1907, he organized the depressed classes in Travancore, under the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sa´gham; following the model of the SNDP. His efforts enabled the Pulayas and other castes to protect their rights to walk with freedom on public roads. He threatened non co-operation with the higher caste. They rejected his demands. The temple entry proclamation of 1936 was in response to the uprisings by the lower castes. It was formed by the deeds of Ayyankali and others. Ayyankali was thus
proclaimed as the Pulaya Raja, by Mahatma Gandhi, who visited Ayyankali's birth place at Venganur.

&ethmavidya &sagham

Vagabandanada Gurudeva (1885-1939), was born in a backward caste, in Pattyam, Kannur. His original name was Kunhikannan. He was a disciple of Brahmananda Swami. He stared the ‘&ethmavidya &sagham’. It was a cultural organisation. He pointed out that the foundation of a good society life is on belief in religion and God. This movement was based on to cut across caste barriers, prohibition of widow marriage and idol worship.

Sahodhara &sagham

In 1917 K.Ayyappan (1889-1968) founded the Sahodara Sa´gham in Cherai. The aim was to eradicate caste evils and to popularize the ideas to
encourage the Ezhavas, Pulayas, Arayas, etc. Through this he was subjected to severe boycott and was even called ‘Pulayan Ayyappan’. The Sahodara Sa´gham succeeded in popularizing the ideas of inter-dining among the Ezhavas and the other backward classes. Being a rationalist, he modified Sri Narayana Guru’s dictum to ‘No caste, No religion, No God’.

**YogakÀema Sabha**

The YogakÀema Sabha, was started in 1908. The main aim was to eradicate all evil social practices and to ensure overall social progress. Its leader was Karur Unninamb£thiri. He stressed the need for Namb£thiris to take up English education. The Namb£thiri Yuvajana Sa´gham, made radical changes in society. The catchphrase of the YogakÀema Sabha was ‘Make Namb£thiri a human
being’. He was succeeded by the great reformers like VT. Battathiripad and KN. Kuttan Nambéthiri. A magazine was published for the welfare of the Nambéthiris. Its name was ‘Unninambéthiri’. In 1921 another organization was formed known as ‘Nambéthiri Yuvajana Sa´gham’.

**Nair Service Society**

Chattampi Swamikal; was born in a Nair family and he worked for the socially oppressed suffering from illiteracy and inequality. He moved his pen for emergence of the poor people. By this to a great extent he succeeded it and after that so many organisation came and they served the progressive attitude.

There was a great social revolt during the second half of the 19th century. The Brahmins were
attacked by the Nairs not only for their domination but also for their interference with the family life. Educated Nairs gave evidences against the marriage alliance system to the Marriage Commission. The commission visited Malabar in 1891. The Nair tenants were even feared by their Bríhmin landlords if they opposed the system of marriage, to which they fought fearlessly through press and literary works. The famous novel ‘Indulekha’ is a classic example of the literary revolt against Bríhmin influence and indolence. A petition was signed by non-Bríhmin Hindus, Christian and Muslims of Travancore. The Malayali Memorial was submitted to the Maharaja in 1891, marking the revolt against political domination of Bríhmins. For the promotion of Nair families NSS was started under the leadership of Manath
Padmanabhan for the union of Nair ‘Samudaya’.
“The society gave importance mainly to education. There are many sub castes among Nairs and they never ate food together. And also there were no relation of marriage among these castes. When Tippu conquered this land all Nairs were compelled to eat food together and they tried to start for their samudaya.’”
The new economic forces generated during the British period and socio religious reform movement initiated by the saints and reformers, led to some fundamental changes in the caste system. Caste had been the central factor of the social structure. It was a complex, deep rooted and highly organized system which had suffocated the masses for centuries. The Brāhmins, who had the right to exercise judicial power over members of the low castes, were deprived of their privilege by the newly enacted secular laws which were based on the principle of equality for all people. The new legal order brought about a sea change by throwing open position of dignity and responsibility to all sections of society.

Caste is the antithesis of the principle that all new are born equal, for the hierarchy of castes was
based on the assumption that neither man nor women could be equal. Inequality was due to moral or evaluative standards which assigned high or low positions in society to particular caste. The caste associations and other social organizations were sprang up during this period. It was succeeded in blotting out some of the objectionable aspects of the caste system.

“One of the most significant effects of colonial rule was the emergence of caste association as important socio-economic groups. They stored for the self-advancement of the respective castes and were anxious to share power. Modern education became a powerful instrument for fostering unity and liberating the law castes from traditionalism. They realized that wealth and education were indispensable for betterment”.
The practice of untouchability and unapproachability had not only prevented them from enjoying equality of status and opportunity but also denied them basic human rights. It had forbidden them to make use of public through fares. It had denied them admission to educational institution and public offices and prohibited them from serving in certain important department of administration. Sri Narayana Guru, the spiritual leader questioned the superstitious and irrational custom of Hindus.

The caste association with the active support of social reformers and progressive sections of society fought against untouchability. Most of the government schools were opened to all as a result of their efforts. Succumbing to the pressure of the progressive forces the Travancore government abolished the practice of untouchability and
unapproachability in November 1935. The Maharaja of Travancore as the trustee of Hindu temples, allowed temple entry to all Hindus in 1936.

The law of succession and inheritance of Nairs, Ezhavas and the Nanjinad Vellalas who followed the joint family system had failed to keep pace with the progress of society. Abuses that had crept into the working of the joint family system produced tensions and conflict with families. Conflict arose between the interests of the Kíra¸avan and other members of the Taravad. Kíra¸avar was an individual and he has duties as the manager of the family. The growth of population and the gradual rise in the standard of living of the members of the joint families increased the friction. As per the request of reforms the government enacted new inheritance laws and dissolved the joint families.
The Taravad property was partitioned on per capita basis. “Another field that called for reform was that of marriage-Sambandha, Putavako ukkal and Talike u were the different forms of marriage prevalent in the society. The practice of polygamy and polyandry was common with the advancement of education; people began to be ashamed of the absence of legal marriages among them”

Most of the Hindu communities demanded legislative enactments on marriage, succession and partition of toward properties. In response to their demands, the government appointed committees and on the basis of their recommendations enacted laws were enacted one by one. “Even at the beginning of the twentieth century some roads were not open to all castes or communities. A few of such roads were situated near palaces, while others
were either near temples or the residence of members of the upper castes.” Notices prohibiting the entry of polluting castes were put up at the entry of these roads.

The progressive sections of the society and reformers demanded the statutory abolition of untouchability in the state. TK.Madhavan, Secretary of SNDP Yogam championed the course of temple entry to all Hindus. Gandhiji and the Indian National Congress took initiative and the Vaikam Satyagraha movement enlisted the sympathy of large sections of the people and the government moved slowly to end the untouchability in favor of the low castes and finally abolished the practice in 1935.

The educated class had shown remarkable capacity for change and adaptation. They stood for the humanization of the mentality of the orthodox
Hindus. They helped the government to replace the traditional code of customs and practices that were associated with the caste system by a simple social code based on reasons and equality. English education was a powerful weapon that the reformers used to change the society.

The whole the agitations for the eradication of some of the glaring evils of traditional society were crowned with success. They served to eliminate many of the traditional and hereditary inequality. The traditional order was no longer able to resist the new forces and the new aspirations of the hither to unprivileged people. The occupational aspect of the caste system, the artificial grading of castes on the basis of arbitrary standards of sanctity and custom isolated them as though they were stricken with pestilence and were cast into oblivion with
the emergence of a new social and political consciousness. More and more people in the lower social strata became aware of their place in society. The social reformers, teachings of the saints, the press and the colonial environment prepared the ground for change.

The ruling dynasties and the powerful political elements in Kerala had no clue that the English company was a sign of complete European Imperialism. It was in 1792, when Malabar came under Madras Presidency, that the full impact of the West was felt and led to the foundation of the ‘The New Kerala’. The period under the British Government and the enlightened rulers of Travancore and Kochi brought about sustainable development in the administrative, social, economic and cultural fields of Kerala. The judicial and legal
systems were re-organized and many humanitarian welfare measures like the abolition of slavery, the ban on the wearing of upper clothes by the lower castes were undertaken. Special attention was laid on the roads, irrigation and communication.

Kerala was released from the intellectual isolation and was exposed to Western Civilization during the 19th century through Christian Missionaries and Western English education. Reforms invariably led to changes in the conditions and outlook of the people which further created more reforms. In Kerala upper caste people followed untouchability and inapproachability during that time and a Satyagraha was started in Vaikam in [1924-1925] and Guruvayur in (1931-32). The people started a procession by burning Nilavilakku and Nirapara. All people took part in this
Jītha. It was a great success. In 1925 Vaikam temple was opened to all communities. Gandhiji supported this Satyagraha by writing an article. Under the leadership of K. Kelappan Guruvayoor Satyagraha started. At last in 1932 temple was opened to all Hindus.

Chattampi Swamikal the great social reformer who travelled all over Kerala and earned a number of disciples. He encouraged the people to organize groups for cultural activities, for intellectual discussions and this group formed new ideas. His discussion was conducted in temples or in houses. There he gave discourse on Vedanta and other subjects. The exploitation of Nairs by Brahmins during the time of Swamikal was very cruel. Chattampi Swamikal rose to become a historical personage by waging an ideological war against
religious superstition. The detailed study of the biographical sketch of Chattampi Swamikal is dealt with in the next chapter.

NOTES AND REFERENCES