

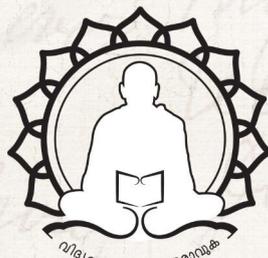
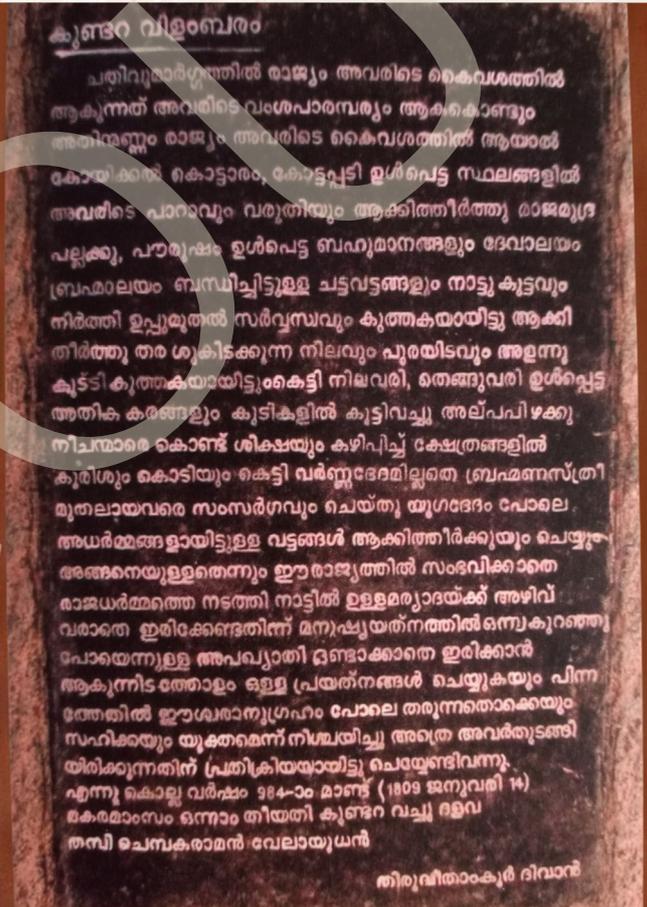
# HISTORY OF MODERN KERALA:

## Problems and Perspectives

Post Graduate Programme in History

M21HS06DC

## Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU  
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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# History of Modern Kerala: Problems and Perspectives

Course Code: M21HS06DC  
Semester- II

Master of Arts  
History  
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## History of Modern Kerala: Problems and Perspectives Semester II



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I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centers around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India. His name is a reminder for us to ensure quality in the delivery of all academic endeavors.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities.

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Feel free to write to us about anything that seems relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.



Regards,

Dr. P.M. Mubarak Pasha

01.11.2023

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# Consolidation and Early Resistance

**BLOCK-01**



# UNIT 1 Colonial Settings in 19<sup>th</sup> century

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, learners will be able to:

- ◆ identify the process of colonial intervention in Kerala
- ◆ analyse the nature and characteristics of colonial measures
- ◆ explain the response of 'native' states to these new measures

## Background

A number of changes occurred in South India's political and administrative landscape by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The politics of South India was mainly centered on two units, Mysore and the British, after the French influence in India began to decline. Mysore developed into a significant force and a British foe in the South under Hyder Ali and Tipu. The invasion of Malabar by Mysore alarmed the other local Rajas who feared a foreign invasion. The native states of Travancore and Cochin signed an alliance treaty with the British East India Company for protection against Mysore. Mysore withdrew from Malabar and came under the direct rule of the British after the Third Anglo-Mysore War and the Seringapatam Treaty was signed. The decline of Mysore and the union of native states with the British resulted in the colonial supremacy over all of Kerala. This unit discusses the efforts of the colonial apparatus for incorporating Kerala in to the colonial regime.

## Keywords

Colonial Dominance, Administrative Reforms, Centralised Authority, Economic Transformation, Educational Reforms, Judicial System, Revenue Administration

## Discussion

The land of Kerala once remained an integral part of the erstwhile ancient Tamilakam. Thereafter, by the beginning of the modern age, this political terrain was divided into



◆ *Establishment of the British control*

three territorial units; Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. The Zamorin of Calicut remained the principal ruler of the Malabar area till the establishment of the British hegemony. Until 1800, Malabar formed a part of the Bombay Presidency and thereafter it came under the Madras Presidency. However, Travancore and Cochin continued to be administered by Rajas, who were assisted by chieftains, but actual power was held by British Residents.

**1.1.1 Administrative Reforms of the British in Malabar**

◆ *Transformation of Malabar*

Malabar was ceded to the British by the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792. The British rule in Malabar was characterised by the imposition of colonial administrative mechanisms and practices, which were pervasive across British India, notably within the Madras presidency that extended to Malabar. This transformation brought significant changes to various facets of Malabar society, encompassing administration, economy, social conditions, politics, judiciary, documentation, and geographical reorganisation. As a consequence of British administrative reforms, authority of local chieftains diminished, and centralised governance was established. This led to Malabar's inclusion in the Madras presidency, a major political entity within British India.

◆ *Shift in political Economy*

The colonial government's administrative reforms were driven by specific goals, including the consolidation of control over both land and the local population, the maximisation of revenue extraction, and the establishment of a new class of individuals who were loyal to the colonial authorities. Due to colonial intervention, Malabar, along with other regions in Kerala, became integrated into the capitalist mode of production and the global market. This transformation led to a significant shift in the political economy of the region, with a heightened focus on the production of commodities to meet the demands of the global market.

◆ *Shift to commercial agriculture*

The political economy of the region shifted to the production of commodities for global demand. With European investment, high-altitude areas were transformed into plantations of tea, coffee, teak, cinchona, rubber, and other crops. The development of plantations resulted in a demographic shift in these hilly areas with the settlements of European planters, migrant labourers, and indigenous tribes. Plantations for coffee, tea, timber, and rubber were established in the hilly areas of Malabar, Cochin, and

Travancore. The establishment of plantations represented a shift in production from food crops to cash crops.

◆ *Shift to factory mode of production*

The industrial sector underwent another change, with the emergence of both domestic and foreign capital in oil, coir, clothing, and other industrial structures. The coastal tracts were transformed into coconut plantations, and coir emerged as the dominant industry. The export of coir, planting goods, fish, and natural oils changed the pre-existing village mode of production to a factory mode of production with a capitalist labour economy. With the construction of numerous roads, canals, and railway lines for efficient transportation and communication, the inland areas were connected to port cities and towns, improving the movement of people and goods.

◆ *Creation of a class that aided colonial rule*

The goal of the colonial educational reforms was to create a well-educated class of officials and aides under British rule. The Christian missionaries strove to raise educational standards, particularly for the socially disadvantaged. In Tellicherry, the first English school was founded in 1856. The German missionary Herman Gundert wrote books and dictionaries in the Malayalam language. His writings were crucial for the development of the Malayalam language and for educational reforms. In Tellicherry, the Brennan School was established in 1862.

◆ *Centralised administration*

District administration and revenue administration were divided into upper and lower-level categories. Malabar was one of the taluk-divided districts under the Madras presidency and villages like Cannanore, Calicut and Tellicherry changed into municipalities. The introduction of a complex administrative structure with the collector at its top and sub-collectors and other subordinate officials helped to manage the daily operations of the system. The Company rule over Malabar produced a more centralised administrative system under the control of Madras; as the political system changed, the Rajas of the region were transformed into the Company's agents.

◆ *Military system was overhauled*

The military system was changed to resemble that of Europe. By establishing a standing army in the British territories and dependent native states, the army was made more professional. The internal security and peace of the native states were being upheld by the colonial army. The Company and native kingdoms had agreements requiring grants or military support costs from the native kingdoms. The movement of troops and the repression of unrest against

colonial or local rule were made possible by an improved communication and transportation system.

◆ *Judicial system in Malabar*

The judicial system that existed in Malabar was based on the local customs, beliefs and caste structures. The local rulers, chieftains, priests, or headmen had the authority to perform the judicial functions. The existing system was tangled with religious laws, local customs and caste hierarchy. They prohibited local rulers from exercising or performing judicial functions, introduced new types of judicial measures that provided greater protection for people and property.

◆ *Civil and criminal justice regulations*

The Joint Commission enacted a new law code in 1793. The civil and criminal justice regulations introduced a greater degree of protection and security for persons and property – the emergence of a centralized judicial system with varying levels of the court structure. *Darogas*, or local judges appointed to perform the judicial functions at the primary level, established *Darogas* in Cannanore, Quilandi, Tirur, Tirurangadi, Ponnani, Chettuvai and Palghat for criminal justice. The higher institutions of district courts were founded in Calicut and Tellicherry, and provincial courts in Tellicherry. The Superintendents were the higher authorities of criminal and civil justice. The Joint Commission's judicial reforms resulted in a centralised system of justice in Malabar. The Joint Commission and its action took Malabar into a new mode of administration and judicial reforms. This established British supremacy over local rulers, centralised the power of the administrative and revenue structures.

**1.1.1.1 Joint Commissioners' Report and Revenue Settlements**

◆ *Company's control over Malabar solidified*

The Seringapatam treaty ceded control of the region to colonial authorities and declared it to be under the rule of Mysore. Creating a Joint Commission for Malabar's administrative and judicial reforms was the first step taken by British authorities. The Commission's goal was to establish British dominance over regional authorities and indigenous populations. Charles Boddam, Jonathan Dunken, Farmer and Major Dovy were the members of the Commission. The Joint Commissioners' Report represented data gathered through field research and interviews. The Third Anglo-Mysore War served as the backdrop for the report, which sought to end internal conflicts among chiefs, establish a regular administrative and judicial system, and solidify the Company's control over Malabar.

◆ *Local rulers were reduced to agents*

The Commission's main goal was to seal an agreement between the Rajas of the nearby principalities and the Company, under the latter's rule. In accordance with the contracts, the local rajas of Chirakkal, Kadathanad, Kottayam, Calicut, Kurumbranad, Ernad, and other places came under the Company's control and served as its agents. The English East India Company and the Commissioners were in charge of the political affairs of the states. Malabar had to be split into two divisions, one in the north and one in the south, with Tellicherry and Cherpulasseri serving as the divisional centers. The administrative center in Calicut was a distinct entity that reported directly to a supervisor.

◆ *Revenue administration*

The Company's Commissioners and supervisors took the place of the *Raja* and landlords in the area. The Joint Commission introduced new administrative reforms that reduced the authority of the earlier Rajas and transformed them into tax collection intermediaries, the new types of methods used for assessing and collecting revenue. Revenue management of the Rajas was taken over by the Company. Land was given to landlords in absolute ownership following the restoration of inherited land ownership. The rights of the local rulers were finally settled by the Commission, who gave them pensions or *malikhana*. Local leaders were forbidden from accepting gifts and performing judicial duties. The Rajas of Malabar reached an agreement regarding the quarterly revenue settlement and the annual settlements were withdrawn. The district was divided into Taluks; taluks later divided into villages. Each unit had its officers for administration. Native Diwans were appointed for the help of supervisors and superintendents in revenue administration.

◆ *Punitive action taken against agitators*

The military system was the major integrative factor in Malabar. The Company took military action against the agitating and rebel groups like local chieftains, landlords, peasants and tribal groups with the help of native and European military. For the success of these actions, they set up a communication and transport system in Malabar that connected inlands into administrative centres and neighbouring regions for the movement of soldiers, military apparatus and other commodities.

The Joint Commissioners, who also established rules for custom house collections, forbade the export of slaves and gunpowder and warlike weapons dealings. They declared the trade in timber to be free of charge and granted the

◆ *Colonial economic policy*

supervising authority to impose a modern tax in the form of a license on the retail tobacco industry. They imposed a monopoly in pepper trade, while allowing free trade for all other goods and additionally set up a Malabar-wide mint and standardised the monetary system. In the first of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Joint Commission was abolished by placing a collector and three sub-collectors, separating Malabar from Bombay and integrating it into the Madras Presidency.

## 1.1.2 British Paramountcy in Travancore and Cochin

### 1.1.2.1 Travancore

The name Travancore has its roots in 'Thiruvithamcode' or 'Sreevazhumcode', an erstwhile princely state in southern India. Marthanda Varma, who ruled from 1729 to 1758, is credited with founding modern Travancore through his rigorous policies. Subsequent rulers continued to shape its history. The British East India Company's influence in Travancore administration increased towards the end of this period. Through a series of treaties of perpetual alliances of 1788, 1793, 1795 and in 1805, Travancore became a subsidiary state to the British East India Company. The British had established a system of administration of justice and a system of laws in the kingdoms of local rulers.

◆ *Treaty of perpetual alliances*

Following the establishment of the subsidiary system, Residents were posted in all the princely states who virtually became the *de facto* rulers of the state. They brought with them their laws and ideas of government which gradually transformed the country and completely changed its indigenous system of laws and administration. There occurred a serious misunderstanding between the *Raja* and the Resident on the exercise of their authority. The system of administration of justice which they brought into India was different from the system of judicial administration known to the common people. The treaties of perpetual alliances between the British East India Company and Travancore contemplated the tendering of advice by the British in the formation of rules and regulations.

◆ *Travancore under British*

The 19<sup>th</sup> century Regulations of Travancore adopted British Indian Acts as their basis. Memorials became a common way for the people to voice their grievances and seek redress. The era saw an increase in memorials addressing the wrongs committed by the rulers, especially regarding oppressive taxes and restrictions imposed on various castes

◆ *Resistance and agitations*

and communities. However, the upper castes were exempted from taxation, burdening the landless lower castes. Many agricultural labourers worked with semi-slave status, even after the abolition of slavery in 1855. This led to resistance and agitations by marginalised groups.

◆ *Pioneer in representative governance*

Travancore's policy of spreading education increased people's political awareness. *Maharaja* Sri Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma, who ascended the throne in 1885, pursued a constitutional approach. He established the Legislative Council in 1888, recognising the importance of non-official representation, though it remained a deliberative body with no administrative authority. Any bill passed required the *Maharaja's* assent for it to become law. Despite its limitations, it marked a significant step in Kerala's legislative history, making Travancore a pioneer among native states in recognising the value of a Legislative Council in governance.

### 1.1.2.2 Cochin

◆ *The power dynamics in Cochin*

The Cochin state, originally called 'Perumpadappu Nadu', was ruled by the Perumpadappu Swaroopam family. Political units were dispersed, with the *nadu* (village republic) and *koottam* (assembly) representing upper castes and holding significant power. While the *Raja* theoretically held supreme authority, in practice, the Brahmins and other elite sections wielded considerable influence, leading to conflicts with other segments of society. Political units were unstable and marked by factional fights, which played into the hands of European trading companies, fostering their political ideology.

◆ *British control in Cochin*

In a treaty signed with the Company in 1791, the Cochin *Raja* agreed to become an English vassal and pay an annual tribute. The Company agreed to assist the *Raja* in reclaiming the lands Tipu Sultan had conquered from Cochin, but he was to exercise control over them under the Company's supreme direction. The British also offered the *Raja* all the protection due to a loyal ally. Cochin State was thus placed under the political rule of the English when it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Madras Government in 1800. Since the signing of the treaty of 1791 with the British, they practically established control over the princely state of Cochin in all matters. Like the other princely states, the ruler of Cochin had to support British rule in India by suppressing popular movements. The administration was under *Diwan*. Consequently, Cochin became associated with anti-British sentiments, anti-*Diwan* movements, and the struggle for responsible government.

◆ *Reasons behind the popular agitations*

The perception that the *Maharaja's* authority was constrained by the colonial state, symbolising British power through Residents and Diwans in Cochin State, was one of the reasons behind the popular movements. The British government's protection of Indian Native Princes in exchange for loyalty to the crown positioned the princes and their states as a bulwark against the growing tide of popular agitation for freedom. This arrangement dissuaded rulers from instituting necessary reforms.

◆ *Political awakening*

The echoes of democratic movement in British India were heard in Cochin early in the last century. There was a gradual awakening among the people clamouring for democratic rights. This is evident through the newspaper reports stating that Cochin was rich in educated talents but there was no opportunity for them. The administrative process through which the political will of colonialism as personified by the *Diwan*, became the target of the people's movement.

### 1.1.3 Land Tenure System and the Regulations

◆ *Division of land*

Lands were broadly divided into *janmam*, *sircar* or *pandaravaka* and others before the formation of modern Kerala. The *Janmam* tenure comprises lands that were entered before independence in the *Sircar* (Government) Revenue Accounts under the heads of *Devaswomvaka*, *Brahmaswomvaka* and *Madambimavaka*. *Devaswomvaka* and *Brahmaswomvaka* were related to lands owned by private *Devaswoms* and *Brahmaswoms*, while *Madambimavaka* encompassed all lands owned by non-Brahmins and non-*Devaswom* janmis. Initially, *Janmam* lands were exempted from taxes, although some were subjected to a nominal tax called *rajabhogam* when transferred for monetary consideration. Until the Land Tax Proclamation of 1946, a basic tax was imposed on all *Janmam* lands.

◆ *Caste based land structures*

While the British established their control in Kerala, caste hierarchy and customs regulated agrarian relations in Kerala. The land structure of the pre-colonial rule was deeply rooted in the caste system. Land tenure systems in pre-modern Kerala were characterised by various types of landholdings, including *Janmam*, *Sircar*, and *Pandaravaka* lands. These systems underwent significant changes over the years, culminating in the *Janmi-Kudiyan* Regulation of 1896 and subsequent amendments, which reshaped land ownership and tenant relationships in the region.

◆ *Land Tenure system in Malabar*

Malabar's land tenure system was complex and feudalistic, with a chain of intermediaries. With the arrival of the British, *Janmi* was made the ultimate landowner. The Malabar agrarian relations in the nineteenth century were characterised by land monopoly and large landlordism. In Malabar, the janmis held absolute ownership rights over the entire land, whereas in Cochin, half of the land belonged to the state and the other half to feudal chieftains, devaswoms, and other janmis.

◆ *Land Tenure system in Cochin*

Pre-colonial agrarian relations in Cochin State were governed by caste hierarchy and customs, with the state attempting to crush chieftains' powers and strengthen state power. Only one-third of cultivated area was with the state, with land under the state known as *Pandaravaka* or *sircar* lands and the rest as *puravaka* or *janmam* land. The state did not interfere in the affairs of janmies and their tenants. *Puravaka* land was owned by large janmies, Namboothiri families, chieftains, and royal palace families. Peasants in these lands had miserable conditions, and the government did not control landlords' unrestricted powers. In *sircar* lands, most holders were *Pandarapattom* cultivators, with no ownership rights or transfer rights. Some tenure had *otti* tenants with more rights and allowed land transfer.

◆ *Land Tenure system in Cochin*

Travancore's land policy differed significantly from Malabar, as it was a powerful state that suppressed feudal chieftains and expanded territories with the help of East India Company. Three-fourths of the land in Travancore was owned by the state, with the remainder being *Jenmom* estates. As a result, the ownership and control of property by various agencies such as the State, Naduvazhis, Desavazhis, Madambis, Devaswoms, and Janmis resulted in a confusing variety of land relations in the region. In 1788, Travancore state became the largest land *janmi*, annexing conquered territories and converting them into state land. The land tenure system in Travancore was different from other parts of Kerala, with tenants' rights in *Sircar* lands and other lands considered. *Sircar* land, known as *pandaravaka*, was divided into *Pandaravaka pattom* and *Pandaravaka otti*, with *Pandaravaka otti* holders having more rights than *pattom* holders.

After the *Janmi-Kudiyam* Regulation of 1896 was enacted, there were difficulties and opposition from *Janmi*. In 1933, the government passed a regulation that significantly limited the rights of the *Janmi*, effectively reducing them to the

◆ *Janmi-Kudiyan Regulation of 1896*

recipients of *janmikaram* dues. Annual payments, renewal fees, and customary payments were converted into annual *janmikaram*, with *Kudiyan* (tenants) becoming landowners subject to these payments.

◆ *Royal lands and land grants*

*Sircar* and *Pandaravaka* lands referred to those owned or acquired by the government or rulers. These lands had various tenures, many of which had unclear origins due to historical complexities. *Pandarapattom* originally functioned as a lease without proprietary or transferable rights. However, the *Pandarapattam* Proclamation of 1865 granted full proprietary rights to the landholders, making the lands private, heritable, saleable, and transferable property. *Inam* were land grants made for services rendered or to be rendered to the state or as royal favours. They were categorised as service *Inam* (granted for specific services) and personal *Inam* (granted for the support of individuals or families). A Royal Proclamation in 1912 allowed personal *Inams* to be mortgaged, sold, or transferred, subject to the payment of quit-rent.

◆ *Land grants in lieu of religious or social service*

*Viruthi* involved services provided at no cost to the government, temples, officials, and landlords. Those holding temple or government lands were called *viruthikar* and were obliged to supply various items and services, including free labour. The *Viruthi* Proclamation of 1882 revised this system, arranging services and redistributing surplus lands. *Thiruppuvaram* was the assignment of a specific portion of land revenue to a third party, often linked to money lent to the government, *michavaram* owed to the *janmi*, or an allowance to a religious or charitable institution.

### 1.1.4 Impact of Colonial Intervention

◆ *Colonial control and modernisation*

Following the establishment of colonial control over the administrative structure of Kerala, traditional administrative institutions underwent selective adaptations to accommodate the demands of modernisation. During this period, political power was shared and safeguarded by colonial authorities through treaties signed with native rulers. Political activities gained momentum, mirroring the model of British India's system.

Both the native and colonial political systems largely disregarded the role of the common people. The people of Kerala found themselves victimised by both feudal oppression and colonial exploitation simultaneously from

◆ *Dual exploitation of the people*

two elite groups. To the subalterns, the goal of the freedom struggle was to overthrow the colonial government and introduce a democratic system.

◆ *Political structure in princely states*

Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the political administration of princely states revolved around two key figures: the Resident, a British subject and a representative of the colonial power, and the *Diwan*, a representative of the princely state. The *Diwan*, equivalent to the Resident, wielded significant power, leading to corruption and favouritism in hiring his relatives. At the local level, the previously segmented political structure continued. However, the newly established legislative assemblies did not significantly differ from customary court assemblies in princely states.

◆ *Limitations on franchise for the marginalised*

The last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought about qualitative changes in the administrative sphere. Political modernisation and representative politics became apparent in administration. In the native states, people were given the opportunity to engage in legislative work. In theory, these assemblies were formed to voice the needs and desires of the people and represent their opinions on government policies. Nonetheless, the franchise was limited, based on land ownership, income, and educational qualifications in native states. This restricted franchise system stifled the true essence of these institutions and failed to create genuine representative bodies. Additionally, the subaltern section of Kerala society, deprived of property and educational qualifications, was excluded from participating in these legislative assemblies. In essence, the political involvement of the marginalised population in Kerala was a long-standing aspiration.

## Summarised Overview

The British colonial rule over Malabar was established through administrative reforms and colonial measures, which significantly transformed the region's political, economic, and social landscape. These reforms established centralised authority, making Malabar part of the Madras Presidency. The existing judicial system was abolished by the Joint Commission in 1793, and a new law code was introduced to standardise legal processes. Malabar shifted from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture, with European investments leading to the development of plantations for tea, coffee, rubber, and other cash crops. The industrial sector also transformed, with domestic and foreign capital investing in

coir production. British colonial authorities invested in infrastructure, improving transportation and communication, connecting inland areas to port cities and towns.

The British East India Company gained influence in Travancore administration through treaties of perpetual alliances in 1788, 1793, 1795, and 1805. They established a system of justice and laws in local rulers' kingdoms. In 1791, the Cochin *Raja* agreed to become an English vassal, pay tribute, and reclaim conquered lands. Cochin State was placed under the Madras Government's jurisdiction in 1800, and the ruler had to support British rule by suppressing popular movements.

Pre-modern Kerala's land tenure and taxation systems were diverse and discriminatory. Land was categorised into *Janmam*, *Sircar*, and *Pandaravaka* lands, with Namboothiri Brahmins predominantly owning *Janmam* lands. Landlord-Tenant relationships were complex, involving various tenures. The 'Janmi-Kudiyan Regulation of 1896' aimed to address disparities but faced opposition.

## Assignments

1. Write a note on the administrative reforms introduced by the British in Malabar.
2. Discuss the significance of the Joint Commission Report in introducing new administrative reforms.
3. What was the main difference in the Land Tenure system in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore?
4. Analyse the impact of colonial intervention in the political structure of Kerala.
5. Compare the policies of the British over Malabar and Princely states of Travancore and Cochin.

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### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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## Early Resistance

### Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, learners will be able to:

- ◆ evaluate the character and strategies of resistance to colonial governance
- ◆ investigate the groups involved in protests and the driving forces behind their actions
- ◆ review the counter measures and policies adopted by the colonial authorities in response to resistance

### Background

Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the whole of the Kerala region, encompassing areas like Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore, came under the direct or indirect control of colonial powers. Prior to this period, European involvement in the region was primarily through alliances with native states for trade purposes. However, as the 18<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, the British emerged as the predominant political authority, firmly establishing their influence throughout Kerala. As the British shifted from being mere trading agents to political rulers, a number of uprisings and protests against colonial governance began to surface. Colonial intervention in the political, social, cultural, and economic aspects of various segments of society, including royal families, local leaders, peasants, and tribal communities, gave rise to opposition to colonial rule. This unit delves into the early acts of resistance against colonialism by diverse groups during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Keywords

Anjengo Revolt, Pazhassi Raja, Kurichiyas, Hereditary Rights, Colonial Intervention, Malabar Manual



## Discussion

### 1.2.1 Anjengo Revolt / Attingal Outbreak (1721)

#### ◆ Trading Factory at Anjengo

The Dutch wrested control of territories previously held by the Portuguese in Kerala. Subsequently, the English relocated from Cochin to Calicut, seeking better opportunities for trade. However, challenges in their trading activities in Calicut prompted them to explore new locations for their trade endeavours. In 1684, they obtained permission from Attingal *Rani* to establish a trading factory at Anchuthengu (Anjengo). In 1690, they secured another consent to construct a fort in Anjengo, which was completed in 1695. The construction of these factories, forts, and warehouses significantly facilitated British trade operations along the west coast. Consequently, Anjengo emerged as the principal trading hub, a pivotal port town, and a settlement on the Malabar coast. To safeguard their trading center and settlement, the British established an armoury within the fort. However, the presence of the British in Anjengo met with local resistance, as British traders compelled the local populace to sell pepper at predetermined prices. In 1697, an unsuccessful attempt was made by locals to attack the fort, driven by resentment over British influence and coercive tactics.

#### ◆ Provocation of local population

A crisis erupted in the Anjengo factory's operations in 1721. The Chief of the Company William Gyfford, had alienated the local populace with their shady dealings and domineering demeanour, but they had been keeping the *Rani* of Attingal happy by presenting her with pricey gifts annually. In 1721, Pillais and Matampis demanded to hand over the annual dues and customary gift to the *Rani* through them. Gyfford's refusal led to an immediate provocation.

#### ◆ Establishment of English Factories and monopoly of pepper

Gyfford went to Attingal palace leading a group of 140 Englishmen to handover the gifts to the *Rani* personally. This display of power infuriated the local populace. On April 15, 1721, they assaulted the gathering and slaughtered every Englishman. After that, the rebels moved on to Anjengo and besieged the fort, which gunner Samuel Ince was defending. The siege continued for six months. It was the first organised revolt against the British in Kerala. The British troops stationed in Tellicherry came to the aid of Anjengo, quelling the uprising. Following the neutralisation of the

besieging forces, the British engaged in negotiations with the Attingal *Rani*, ultimately securing advantageous terms, including the monopoly on pepper. The Company received compensation for all of the losses it had incurred during the attack on Anjengo. In addition, the Company was granted the right to establish factories anywhere it chose.

### 1.2.2 Pazhassi Revolt

During the Anglo-Mysore War, the Malabar Rajas extended their support to the British under the impression that the British would reinstate hereditary rulers to the power following their military success. In response to this situation, a joint commission was established to mediate and address the contractual arrangements between the Company and the local Rajas in the region. This process involved the formalisation of the rights of the local chieftains and their recognition as agents of the East India Company. Initially, the Company granted early chieftains the authority to collect taxes from their respective local areas. However, a notable exception was made in the case of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja of Kottayam, who was denied this privilege. This denial became the catalyst for his rebellion against the British. Previously, during the Third Anglo-Mysore War, Pazhassi aligned himself with the British forces. It is important to note that the Pazhassi uprising unfolded in two distinct phases between 1793 and 1805.

◆ *Denial of hereditary rights led to the uprising*

#### 1.2.2.1 The First Pazhassi Revolt (1793-1797)

Following the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the administration of Malabar, under the control of the East India Company and local landlords, aimed to reestablish the Company's authority in the region. As a part of this effort, the East India Company introduced a novel taxation system characterised by higher tax rates, and local chieftains were tasked with tax collection. In this milieu, the East India Company conferred the authority to collect taxes in the Kottayam region to the Kurumbanad chief, while Pazhassi held the position of ruler in this area. Collaborating with local landowners, peasants, and tribal groups, Pazhassi initiated a resistance movement against the British. His cause garnered support from diverse communities, including the Nair, Mappila, Kurichya, and Kurumba groups, all of whom rallied against British rule. Subsequent to a British assault on Pazhassi's palace, he sought refuge in the forests of Wayanad, where he adopted a guerrilla warfare strategy against British forces. The persistent hit-

◆ *Guerrilla warfare of Pazhassi*

and-run attacks by Pazhassi's forces compelled the British troops to relocate to the plains. Ultimately, a compromise was reached between Pazhassi and the British, resulting in the agreement of an annual pension of 8000 rupees. This treaty effectively marked the conclusion of the initial phase of the Pazhassi uprising.

### 1.2.2.2 The Second Pazhassi Revolt (1800-1805)

One of the major reasons for the second uprising was the British efforts to acquire Wayanad, which was ceded to Pazhassi as per the Partition Treaty after the fall of Seringapatam in 1799. Pazhassi claimed Wayanad and staunchly opposed the British in their attempts to assert control over it. In order to counter such efforts, he gathered a force including Nairs, Kurichyas and local Mappilas and organised a formidable army. The guerilla warfare group of the Pazhassi included Kannavath Sankaran Nambiar, Kaiteri Ambu Nair, Edachanna Kungan Nair, and the Kurichiya leader, Talakkal Chandu.

◆ *British intention to acquire Wayanad*

The insurgency entered another phase when Pazhassi Raja descended the ghats of Kuttyadi, and there he joined with Unni Moota Muppan and many of the chief landholders of Iruvazhinad such as Kamburath, Peruvayal and Kannavath Nambiar. On 1 March, 1803, a group of armed rebels organised an attack on the prison in Calicut with the intention of aiding the escape of prisoners. Subsequently, Arthur Wellesley, who had assumed the position of army head, embarked on a personal mission to confront these insurgents in Wayanad. Meanwhile, Pazhassi's forces launched assaults on British forts located in Panamaram and plantations situated in Anjarakandy.

◆ *Attack on British forts*

To counteract the guerrilla warfare tactics employed by Pazhassi and his supporters, the colonial government undertook the construction of roads and established military camps in the region. Peasants and tribal organisations support Pazhassi, partly in response to the implementation of a new monetary system and increased taxation. For information about Pazhassi and his troops, the company offered grants and prizes. Additionally, a native military group known as the 'Kolkar' was formed with the specific objective of suppressing the uprising. The 'Kolkar' had knowledge about the local geography and forests, and their experience in local conditions was significant in suppressing the revolt. Ultimately, leaders and warriors from Pazhassi's

◆ *Pazhassi's death*



forces were arrested and subsequently executed. The conflict ended on 30 November, 1805, with the death of Pazhassi Raja in an encounter with troops of the British officer Thomas Harvey Baber.

◆ *Restorative movement*

A British anthropologist, Kathleen Gough characterises the Pazhassi uprising as a movement aimed at restoring the authority and traditional positions of local chieftains. Pazhassi garnered support from various segments of the society, including Nair landlords, Mappilas, peasants, and tribal organisations in their struggle against British rule. The policies imposed by the British generated an anti-British sentiment among local chieftains, landlords, peasants, and tribal groups in the Malabar region.

◆ *Mappilas and local chiefs*

Pazhassi's cause received both military and other assistance from Parappanad Raja, Kannavath Shekharan Nambiar, Elampulayan Kunhan, Kaitheri Ambu, Kaiteri Kumaran, Kaiteri Eman, Puttan Veetil Rairu, Meena Koran, Shekhara Varier, Paitalott Nair, Mylodan Kanchan Nambiar and others. The Mappila groups from both southern and northern Malabar regions rallied behind Pazhassi in opposition to British colonial rule. Anti-British leaders, including figures like Unni Mootha Moopan of Elampilasseri, Attan Gurukul of Manjeri, Chemban Pokker of Vellattiri and Hydros Kutty of Chavakkad, played crucial roles in this movement. The southern Mappilas were often pejoratively labeled as "robbing Mappilas" or "jungle Mappilas" by the British administration. Mappila leaders in the northern regions, such as Chalad Thangal, Haidar Kunhikutty, Elampulan Kunhan, Vavantullan Kunhi, and Kunhi Moideen Muppan of Elathur (a leader from Kurumbranad), were closely associated with Pazhassi Raja.

◆ *Anti- British Sentiments*

It is important to note that the Pazhassi revolt was not solely driven by the ambition to restore the power of a local chieftain or assert supremacy. Rather, it symbolised the collective expression of the anti-British sentiments among the indigenous population, encompassing peasants, tribal communities, and landlords who opposed British intervention in their daily lives, socio-economic conditions, cultural practices, and customs.

### 1.2.3 Velu Thampi and the British

As a result of the Subsidiary Alliance between the Company and the native states, the latter came under the indirect rule of the Company. Cochin and Travancore, which were the

◆ *Velu Thampi's Dalawaship*

princely states, resisted the Company's inversion of internal affairs and loss of Raja's sovereignty. This resistance was being led by Velu Thampi and Paliyathachan, who were the Prime Ministers of Travancore and Cochin, respectively. Velu Thampi became *Dalawa* (Prime Minister) of Travancore after organising a protest against bureaucratic misrule and compelling the *Raja* to heed the people's demand.

◆ *Attack on the Resident*

The 1805 treaty between Travancore and the British was largely the result of Velu Thampi's influence. The intervention of the Resident, Col. Macaulay, in state affairs, led to Veluthampi's opposition to the British. Macaulay cancelled Dalawa's order to attach the lands of Mathu Tharakan, an influential merchant who owed significant sums of money to the Travancore Exchequer in taxes. The Resident also forced *Dalawa* to pay arrears of tribute to the Company when Travancore was in a financial crisis. These factors made the conflict between Velu Thampi and the British very worse. On the midnight of 18 December, 1808, the Resident's residence at Cochin was attacked by the joined forces of Velu Thampi and Paliyathachan; but he escaped to Malabar.

◆ *Velu Thampi's Proclamation*

### 1.2.3.1 The Kundara Proclamation (1809)

During the early stages of the revolt, Velu Thampi moved from Alleppey to Quilon. Following the Dalawa's departure, some British personnel were killed at Alleppey. From Kundara, where he established his headquarters, the *Dalawa* issued his famous 'declaration' dated 11 January, 1809, or 1st *Makaram* 984, accusing British domination and urging the populace to unite behind his banner for a patriotic fight against the British. The populace heartily embraced the call from the *Dalawa*. Quilon saw a bloody combat in which the British soldiers demolished the Dalawas' home and caused severe casualties to the rebels. Faced with the British suppression of his rebellion and the capture of his strongholds, he chose to end his life. Velu Thampi committed suicide in Bhagavathi temple at Mannadi.

### 1.2.4. Colonial Intervention in Tribal life and Kurichya Revolts of Wayanad (1812)

The British colonial administration had a significant impact on the social and economic conditions of tribal groups in Malabar, particularly the Kurichyas and Kurumbras, who actively participated in the Pazhassi revolt. The policies implemented by the colonial authorities had adverse effects

◆ *Economic crisis and oppression*

on the lives and livelihoods of these tribal communities. Because of their involvement in the Pazhassi revolts, the Kurichyas and Kurumbars faced adverse consequences, including the loss of their small landholdings. They were also prohibited from practicing slash-and-burn agriculture and were required to use new coinage and pay taxes in cash instead of agricultural produce. These policies imposed by the British led to a severe material and economic crisis among the tribal populations. Many of their movable properties were auctioned off to meet their revenue obligations. Furthermore, colonial officials regarded them as subordinate and subjected them to oppressive measures.

◆ *Uprising against Colonial authorities*

The reforms initiated by the British posed challenges to the daily life and existence of the tribal people. Pazhassi inspired them to resist British rule. Religious priests, such as *Velichapads* and community elders, played a crucial role in motivating the tribes to fight for their beliefs and values, often invoking the deities, the *Murikkanmar* of Pulpally. The oppression and mistreatment by local British officers, known as *Vattathoppikar*, severely impacted tribal life and identity. Consequently, tribal rebels aligned themselves with Pazhassi Raja in a bid to restore the native kingdom. Native peons and policemen abandoned their occupations to join them. Ramanambi, Palakka Chanthu, Konthappan, and Neela Thodan were the leaders of this revolt, which spanned from 25 March to 1 May, 1812. Although the Kurichya revolt was ultimately quelled by the British forces from Mysore and Canara, it remains a significant historical event as the sole tribal uprising in Kerala against colonial authorities.

◆ *Factors fuelling anti-British sentiments*

The amalgamation of factors such as the introduction of new economic policies, changes in the monetary system, the prohibition of slash-and-burn agriculture, subjugation by colonial officers, confiscation of properties, social exclusions, the legacy of Pazhassi and the influence of tribal headmen collectively fuelled an anti-British sentiments and led to the uprising among the tribal groups.

### **1.2.5 William Logan's Report and the Malabar Manual**

The British administration in Malabar faced resistance from various groups like local chieftains, royal family members, landlords, and tribal and peasant groups. The resistance of peasant groups, who were Mappilas, from the southern taluks of the districts of Ernad, Valluvanad, and

◆ *Mappila  
Resistance*

Ponnani taluks became the centre of agrarian agitations from the 1830s to 1880s. A good number of peasant agitations occurred in these southern taluks. These agitations were against both landlords, who were Hindu upper castes and colonial administration.

◆ *Agrarian  
policies and  
uprisings*

The main reason for the revolts was the agrarian policies of the colonial Government. After the decline of Mysore, the British restored the pre-Mysorean social and economic relations. The upper caste Hindus became the land owners, and land became private property. The southern taluks of the Malabar district witnessed a large number of agitations from 1830s to the 1880s and from 1836 to 1853, when 12 agitations took place. Rural poverty and agricultural disturbances were the main reasons of these uprisings, caused by the British-adopted policies in Malabar. The British collected a larger amount of land revenue from Malabar; the revenue in 1821 was 94749. The British revenue method has two characteristics: the first, state appropriates the largest share of products, and secondly, *Janmi* is the absolute proprietor of the land. It restored the right and supremacy of landlords who were upper caste Hindus.

◆ *Land revenue  
collection*

The colonial authorities collected 66 percent of land revenue from agricultural crops; 70 percent of revenue from agricultural crops was collected in Southern taluks such as Ernad, Valluvanad, Palghat and Ponnani. The imperial policy of land revenue was contracted with *Verumpattakar* or intermediaries and *janmies*; the actual peasants or cultivating tenants got only one-third of the produce. During the same period the population of Malabar increased without industrial or technological developments and no increase in cultivating lands; these put pressure on agricultural tenants. The government collected more produce than the fixed land revenue. The increase in population, absence of technological development and no increase in cultivating land helped landlords to acquire competitive rents from tenants and increase the chances of eviction.

Another reason behind the uprising was the eviction of tenants from the lands they cultivated. The reasons for eviction were the inability to give rent in time, the inadequacy of customary presents, improper public observance or even a slip of the tongue during conversation. The competitive mode of tenancy resulted in pressure to make surplus revenue, paying high rent on land, increasing the chance of eviction and money lending from the intermediaries, creating poverty

◆ *Economic factors in uprising*

in the rural peasantry. Poverty, fear of evictions, pressure on surplus production and debts resulted in peasants uprising in southern taluks against the new policies and landlords. The peasants attacked the landlords and killed them; they did not escape after the crime and believed in the religious motif of 'shahid'. The British accounts explain the uprising in southern Malabar based on religious conflicts, such as the rivalry between Hindu landlords and Mappila peasants. The Mappila peasants were against the British policies and actions of landlords. The relationship between rural poverty and agricultural disturbances was addressed later by Willam Logan.

◆ *Logan's report*

In 1881, William Logan, a special commissioner was appointed to study the Mappila uprisings in the southern taluks. He prepared a comprehensive report, by examining various documents, conducting interviews and field work. Logan interviewed 7994 peasants in 1881, of whom 4401 were in debt for about 17 lakhs of rupees at interest rates ranging from 12 to 36 percent. The landlords were Nairs or Namboothiris, and of the 511 principal janmis, only 12 were Mappilas. The tenants or kudiyanas were Mappila peasants. The Logan report concentrated on poverty and agricultural relations, unauthorised eviction, and the burden of peasants are the reason for crime and riots rather than religious matters.

◆ *Recommendation of Logan Report*

The Logan Report addressed the actual reason for the rebellions, which differed from the other colonial views. Logan addressed the issues with the agricultural problems related to cultivators and landlords, avoiding the religious conflicts in the rebellions. He rejected the view of the religious nature of Hindu-Muslim conflicts in colonial accounts. He recommended the solution of eliminating the uprisings by suggesting reforms in agricultural and land relations. He recommended a decrease in the rate of rent of cultivating land and prohibition on evictions. He stood for saving tenants from unauthorised evictions, removing tenants from other duties and taxes, regulating money lenders, and the tenants evicted from land getting compensation, and suggested necessary legislation for the relation between the actual cultivator and landlord. He recommended *kudikidappu* or the right of residence and introduction of compensation for tenants under the Tenant improvement Act 1887.

## Summarised Overview

The early resistance against the British in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar was characterised by diverse and multifaceted movements, rooted in various grievances and socio-economic conditions. One notable uprising occurred in 1697 in Anjengo, where British traders faced resistance from local inhabitants.

Another significant revolt was the Pazhassi Revolt, which unfolded in two phases between 1793 and 1805. It was ignited by the denial of hereditary rights to local chieftains, notably Pazhassi, who led a formidable resistance against British colonial presence. Velu Thampi attacked on the British Resident's residence and his subsequent suicide, marking a significant event in the history of anti-British struggle. The colonial policies ignited the Kurichya Revolts of Wayanad in 1812, with tribal groups aligning with the legacy of leaders like Pazhassi to resist British rule.

Finally, a series of agrarian uprisings from the 1830s to the 1880s in the southern taluks of Malabar reflected growing discontent with British agrarian policies. William Logan's comprehensive report in 1882 highlighted the economic and agrarian distress that underpinned these revolts. His recommendations for reform focused on reducing rent rates, prohibiting evictions, and regulating moneylenders to address the grievances of the peasants. Logan's findings emphasised that these uprisings were predominantly rooted in economic factors rather than religious conflicts, as suggested by other colonial views.

## Assignments

1. Examine how British policies affected the peasant and tribal life in Malabar.
2. Critically examine the peasant revolts in Kerala during the colonial period.
3. What was the nature of resistance against the British in Kerala?
4. Write a short note on the Kurichiya revolt.
5. Analyse the recommendation of William Logan's Report.
6. Examine the factors and results of the resistance in the princely state of Travancore and Cochin against the British.
7. Discuss the reasons behind the Pazhassi revolts and their impact on the history of Malabar.
8. Early resistance movements were called 'restorative rebellions'. Examine.



## Suggested Reading

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SGOU



# Towards Modernity

**BLOCK-02**



# Administrative Reforms and Missionary Activities

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, learners will be able to:

- ◆ understand the development of Aikya Kerala Movement
- ◆ evaluate the administrative reforms of the British
- ◆ understand the system of slavery in Medieval Kerala
- ◆ review the rise of missionaries and their activities in Kerala

## Background

In the early nineteenth century, the British and Indian authorities introduced an array of administrative and social reforms in Kerala. Their objective was to modernise the administration and society of Kerala. Notably, the abolition of slavery was a significant step towards the establishment of a new social order in Malabar, Travancore, and Cochin. Moreover, the administrative structures in these three territorial regions underwent a significant overhaul to bring them to align with modern governance. During this period, in order to qualify for government employment, many of the local communities – especially the Christians and Nairs – embraced Western education. The role of Christian missionaries in promoting Western education and liberal ideals is significant in this context. This Unit provides a quick overview of the administrative reforms of the British in Kerala and the major contributions of the missionaries to Kerala's educational development.

## Keywords

Slave Trade, Missionaries, Act V of 1843, Proclamation of 1855, LMS, CMS, Basel Mission, Printing press



# Discussion

## 2.1.1 Administrative Reforms- Slavery and its Abolition

### 2.1.1.1 Practice of Slavery in Kerala

#### ◆ Abolition of slavery

As a social custom of the feudal period, slavery existed in Kerala. The untouchable cast (Avarnas) were relegated to the status of slaves. They had to perform the most demanding physical labour in agriculture. Their work was central to wetland paddy cultivation and later expanded to plantations. With the establishment of British rule in India, they tried to abolish many obnoxious customs and practices like Sati, child marriage, slavery, etc., through social legislation. The abolition of slavery was a significant movement in the British Empire, and it became a bombshell to the orthodox sections of society.

#### ◆ Writings on slavery

To understand the system of slavery in Kerala, one can rely on several works on the theme, such as *Slavery in Travancore* by K.K. Kusuman (1973), *Modernity of Slavery* by P. Sanal Mohan (2015), *Slavery in Kerala* by Adoor K.K. Ramachandran Nair (1986), *Agrarian Relations in Late Medieval Kerala* by M.T. Narayanan (2003), *Malabar Manual* of William Logan (1887) etc.

#### ◆ Agrestic slavery

Agrestic slavery was prevalent in the 19th century, where enslaved people were bound to the land and treated as trade commodities. In Malabar, these enslaved people were called 'Cherumars' and were employed as agricultural labourers and coolies. Despite their numerical strength, they were denied fundamental social rights by caste Hindus, including access to public places. The caste system was deeply rooted, dividing people into numerous castes and subcastes, each in a closed endogamy group with taboos of untouchability. There was a prescribed pollution distance for the Avarnas and they were not allowed to perform intermarriage and inter-dining.

#### ◆ Provisions for slaves

Early marriage was permitted, as it would procreate more slave children and increase the property of the master. Masters would give presents of cloths, oils, and grain or *fanams* upon the birth, death, and marriage of an enslaved person. Slaves were paid some crops to guard the field during harvest time and it was known as '*Punchakaval*'.

However, the agrestic slaves in Malabar had certain rights and privileges, such as not being sold or exchanged but being transferred or given as gifts for new cultivators.

◆ *Evidence of the slave trade*

Slave trade and slave markets were held in medieval Kerala. The price of slaves was considered in terms of certain domestic animals. A pair of enslaved people may be worth four pairs of buffaloes. Wayanad, Changanassery, Mavelikkara, etc., were the centres of the slave trade. Several Church documents provide evidence on the existence of slave trade in Kerala.

### 2.1.1.2 Abolition of Slavery

◆ *Efforts to abolish slavery*

With the establishment of British rule, they tried to wipe out many terrible practices connected with slave labour. In 1792, Joint Commissioners were appointed to inspect Malabar's agrarian system and servitude. In Travancore, Christian missionaries, the LMS, and CMS raised their voices against slavery. In 1812, Travancore ruler *Rani* Gouri Lakshmi Bai prohibited the purchase and sale of slaves other than those attached to the soil. The government of Travancore abolished poll tax on lower classes, removed restrictions on dress, ornaments, and construction of houses and exempted converts from compulsory labour. Non-caste Hindus were allowed to do any work they liked, except for agrestic enslaved people. However, social injustices associated with the caste system persisted. In December 1819, the British Commissioners ordered the stopping of selling slaves for revenue arrears.

◆ *Uzhiyam*

In 1829, the government of Travancore issued an order abolishing the converted Christian Channars from the *uzhiyam* on Sundays at Hindu temples. *Uzhiyam* was the system in which lower-caste society was forced to do free labour for the government, temples, and upper-caste households. It encompassed three types of services: regular service to the state as required, duties without remuneration but with access to government lands and services required during significant events every twenty, fifty, or hundred years. These labour practices led to discontent among peasants, who found it increasingly difficult to attend to their own lands and cultivate them, resulting in financial losses and debts. The government's adamant stance and punitive actions against those refusing *uzhiyam* services exacerbated the situation, with potential land forfeiture for those who failed to fulfil their obligations. Later, the government eliminated the

unpaid labour system with a wage and salary-based service system.

◆ *Acts related to the abolition*

The British government decided to enact an Act in 1843 for the emancipation of slaves. The Act was enacted in which the right over the slave was not to be scrutinised by any public officers or court. The government also proclaimed that they should never interfere in the mortgage or transfer of slaves from one owner to another.

◆ *Steps towards the abolition of Slavery*

In 1847, missionaries presented a memorandum to the *Maharaja* of Travancore, urging for the emancipation of slaves. They proposed measures such as making trafficking a penal offence, giving slaves property rights, and eliminating hereditary slavery. They also demanded the emancipation of *Sircar* slaves from their bondage. The Government of Madras urged the British Resident to take action to emancipate the slaves. In 1852, issues on the slave trade increased, leading to a draft of the Proclamation of 1853, which legally abolished slavery. All children of *Sircar* slaves born after the declaration were declared free, but caste distinctions were to be respected. Litigation regarding slavery was not entertained by officials or courts. The government should protect the slave property, penalise cruelties against slaves, and ensure full wages for government work. When slaves were sold, parents and children should not be separated except by mutual consent and restricted sales or transfer beyond a certain distance from their place of birth.

◆ *Abolition of slavery in Travancore*

The Proclamation of 1853 was met with dissatisfaction from the British due to its loopholes and the slippery attitude of Travancore rulers. Apart from that, the Governor General's Council received complaints about selling free persons as slaves in southern Travancore. Under British pressure, the ruler of Travancore issued a proclamation in June 1855, which completely abolished slavery, declared all *Sircar* slaves free, and abolished slave taxes. This was a significant milestone in the history of the emancipation of slave castes in Travancore.

◆ *Abolition of slavery in Cochin*

Likewise, in Cochin, the system of slavery was abolished by the intervention of the British Resident. On 16 February, 1854, the *Maharaja* of Cochin issued a Proclamation, allowing children born to *Sircar* slaves to be free. However, the Proclamation was not a chance to incorporate Act V of 1843, so the British insisted on bringing another one. Consequently, in March 1855, the *Maharaja* issued a second



proclamation against slavery based on Act V of 1843 of the Government of India.

A successful attempt on the question of slavery and emancipation of slaves in Malabar was made by F. Clemenston in 1836. The Government accepted his recommendations in favour of the emancipation of slaves in Malabar. In Malabar, the Slavery Abolition Act of 1843 did not immediately solve the problem of Slavery. Malabar was not significantly impacted by the Act, because of the feudal land ownership structure that existed. The slave trade in Malabar was carried out with the full approval of the British between 1852 and 1855. However, the transactions remained undisclosed. The Indian Penal Code, which imposed severe penalties on the slave trade, went into effect on 1 January, 1862, dealing a fatal blow to the system of slavery in British India.

◆ *Abolition in Malabar*

### **2.1.2 Channar Agitation or the Upper Cloth Movement (1813-1859)**

The conversion of lower castes to Christianity was the first challenge that the Hindu society faced after the arrival of the European missionaries. The rigid caste rules and slavery restricted socio-economic mobility, leading to lower castes violating the rules with the encouragement of missionaries. Missionaries also tried to improve their material conditions by providing alternate employment opportunities in British India and Ceylon. In some parts of Kerala, women's breasts were bared as a symbol of respect to higher castes. Caste Hindus (savarnas) imposed discrimination on the depressed classes, preventing them from wearing clothing above the waist. Lower caste women, such as the Ezhavas, Channars, Pulayas, and Parayas, were not allowed to cover their upper body. The Caste Hindus used every opportunity to molest those who violated the caste dress stipulation.

◆ *Restriction on clothing*

The Channar Rebellion was a social uprising in Kerala, where the Channar community, also known as Nadars, fought for the right to wear upper clothing. The movement was also known as the Upper Cloth Agitation, Santor Agitation, Breast Cloth Controversy, *Melmundu Kalapam*, *Melseela Kalapam*, *Sheela Vazhakku*, *Tholsheela Samaram* etc. It was sparked by the arrival of Protestant missionaries of the CMS and the LMS. Converted women realised that traditional dress styles were incompatible with women's modesty, leading them to cover the upper part of their bodies. This led to atrocities by the Caste Hindus, who retaliated against the converted Christians.

◆ *Channar Rebellion*



◆ *Upper caste protests*

In 1812, due to the complaints sent by the LMS missionaries, the Resident and the *Diwan* of Travancore, Colonel John Munro ordered the *tahsildar* of Trivandrum and Neyyattinkara to ensure no obstacles were placed in allowing the Channars to cover their upper part of their bodies, especially the Christian converted Channars. The upper caste protested against the order, and the Resident declared that using upper cloth similar to that worn by Nair ladies was prohibited. In 1813, Colonel John Munro, granted permission to Channar women to cover their breasts. The Caste Hindus were unwilling to compromise with the deep-rooted customs, and it erupted in the shape of an organised agitation for social equality.

◆ *Phases of Agitation*

The Upper Cloth Agitation in India occurred in three phases. In the first phase, Nairs attacked converted channar women in the marketplace, and LMS Missionaries of Travancore petitioned the Padmanabhapuram Court for relief. The court ruled in favour of the lower strata, providing relief to the converted Channar women. However, the peace was short-lived as upper castes publicly persecuted lower castes, particularly the Channars. In 1827-28, Caste Hindus attacked Channar women who did not participate in *Uzhiyam* on Sundays, stripping their clothes and setting fire to their houses. In 1829, the government introduced an order regarding the use of covering their upper part with jackets, not pinafores (clothes over the jackets), but the converted Channars continued to resist. The final phase of the agitation occurred after the abolition of slavery in 1855. The government freed all slaves, allowing the lower castes to move freely for their daily livelihood with their dresses. The lower castes imitated caste Hindus like Nairs, leading to a series of riots in various locations such as Parassala, Kottar, Puthenkada, Arumanur, Nagercoil, Maidaly, Aralumoodu, Thittavila, etc.

◆ *Diwan's order*

As soon as the disturbance was noticed, the *Diwan* issued a public warning that it was clearly wrong to disobey ancient customs without authority and that whosoever did so would be strictly punished. LMS missionaries petitioned the *Maharaja* of Travancore, Uthram Thirunal, for the cancellation of the *Diwan's* unfair order, but the *Diwan* replied that the only course open to the Channars was to observe the order of 1829.

In the first three months of 1859, Channar women were forcibly torn off their jackets and upper clothes by

◆ Right to wear upper clothes

caste Hindus at Nagercoil. They took asylum in a nearby Christian church. However, the *Diwan*, with Captain Dally's help and the Nair Brigade's troops, restored tranquillity. LMS missionaries appealed to the atrocities of the Nairs to the Governor of Madras, Sir Charles Trevelyan, and Chief Secretary of the Madras Government, Sir Thomas Pycroft. Under pressure from the British, the *Diwan* and *Maharaja* agreed to abolish rules prohibiting covering the upper parts. On 26 July, 1859, Uthram Thirunal, the *Maharaja* of Travancore, issued a proclamation allowing Channar women to grant perfect liberty to meet decency requirements without imitating the dress of higher castes.

### 2.1.3 Western Education and Christian Missionaries

◆ Missionary groups

The emergence of the modern world witnessed the spreading of the Christian faith by the European Missionaries in their colonised regions of Asia and Africa. The colonial masters like Portugal, Spain, Denmark, the British, etc., promoted missionary activities in their colonies. Thus the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Mission Society (LMS), the Church Mission Society (CMS), the Methodist Mission Society, the Foreign Bible Society, the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (BEM), the Committee for Foreign Missions for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions etc., were the major missionary groups that worked in different parts of south India. Among them, LMS, CMS and BEM became more prominent in Kerala.

#### 2.1.3.1 The London Mission Society (LMS)

◆ Formation of LMS

The London Mission Society was the first Protestant Missionary group which sent missionaries to Kerala. This Society was formed on 21 September, 1795 in London as a non-denominational missionary society, with the sole object of spreading the knowledge of Christ among the non-Christians. This society was formerly known as the Missionary Society. When other Missionary Societies were formed, it came to be known as the London Mission Society (LMS), which became the missionary agency of the Congregational Churches in England.

William Tobias Ringeltaube was the first missionary of the LMS in South Travancore. He was a German missionary, sent to India and reached Tranquebar (Tarangabadi) near Madras, lived there, and learned Tamil. In 1806, he arrived at

◆ *Girls education*

South Travancore as invited by Vedamanickam Maharasan, a convert to Protestant Christianity. In 1809, the Travancore government allowed the erection of a Church at Mylady near Nagercoil. Ringeltaube opened the first modern English School in Kerala, laying the foundation for modern missionary education in Travancore. Charles Mead, known as the father of the south Kerala mission, arrived in 1817 and shifted the mission headquarters from Mylady to Nagercoil. In 1819, Mead opened the famous Scott Christian College at Nagercoil. Johanna Mead, his wife, was the pioneer missionary in women's education in Kerala. She started the first girl's school in Kerala, at Nagercoil in 1819. The work she initiated became a movement with Martha Mault, the wife of Charles Mault.

◆ *Propagation of Western education*

The people were very reluctant to be educated, and their masters were also against the activities of the missionaries due to economic reasons. The lower classes were considered the agrestic slaves, working for their masters from dawn to dusk. They never thought about education for their children. The missionaries propagated the idea of Western education on the school system model. In 1831, they published a pamphlet in Tamil titled "On the Advantages of Female Education". Martha Mault and Johanna Mead combined classroom teaching and vocational training in the 1820s; the lace industry was started in the Girl's Boarding School at Nagercoil.

◆ *Establishment of schools across Kerala*

The schools opened in different regions and were the nucleus of social progress. In 1822, they established a school outside the mission compound named 'Bazaar School'. The LMS had opened mission centres in Thiruvananthapuram (1821), Quilon (1821), Parassala (1838), Vakkom (1895) and Attingal (1900). In 1827, the Nagercoil Mission was divided into Western and Eastern Missions, with their headquarters at Nagercoil (Eastern Division) and Neyyoor (Western Division). The Eastern Division was under the control of Charles Mault, whereas Charles Mead supervised the Western. In 1821, there were fifteen schools in Nagercoil alone. In 1821, the missionaries started a school in Thiruvananthapuram near Valiathura.

As a result of the encouragement given by Charles Mead, 'the Ladies Society for the Promotion of Female Education in the East' started a school for girls in Thiruvananthapuram in 1858. The school was under the charge of Mrs D' Veigas and supervised by Charles Mead, who was then the first

◆ *Girls schools*

superintendent of the departmental district schools. In 1884, Samuel Mateer opened a girls' school at Karamana. In 1885, another girl's school was founded at the Mission compound at Thiruvananthapuram. After opening a new station at Parassala in 1838, John Abbs and his wife worked hard to establish churches and schools. Evening schools were opened in the villages of Kollam in 1848.

◆ *Consolidation of education*

In 1875, the Travancore government provided a sum of 15,000 rupees as grant-in-aid to schools which were not under direct government supervision. The period after 1880 was a time of consolidation and progress of education in Travancore. The leading missionaries during this period were Duthie and Allan in Nagercoil, Hacker in Neyyoor, James Emlyn, Knowles and Foster in Parassala and Samuel Mateer in Thiruvananthapuram. Female education at Parassala progressed under Mrs Knowles, who arrived at Parassala with her husband in 1880, and new girls' schools were opened in Amaravila, Kaliyikkavila and Marthandam.

◆ *Grant in aid- code and declaration of 1904*

In 1894, a new grant-in-aid code was introduced by the Government to change the educational pattern of the state and the whole educational system was brought under one authority. The code prevented Christian missionaries from using textbooks related to Christianity in schools and stipulated that teachers were required to pass government examinations to qualify. In 1904, the Travancore government declared that the government was fully aware of their responsibility in the matter of primary education, and their goal was to ensure that no child in the state between the ages of five and ten, regardless of caste, is allowed to grow up without the benefits of education. The Government order of 1904 regarding free education to the backward classes was a turning point in education in Travancore.

◆ *First to appoint female teachers*

The LMS missionaries established a Christian College at Nagercoil for higher education and started a college at Nagercoil named the Scott Christian College in 1893. For higher education among females, many women's colleges were formed in various parts of India, and Women Christian College at Madras was among them. Samuel Mateer founded the Thiruvananthapuram branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1873. He wrote two books, 'The Land of Charity' and 'Native Life in Travancore'. The Sunday Schools, a kind of religious education the churches gave, were started by the LMS in 1883.

◆ *Medical Mission*

The people were also aware of cleanliness, etiquette, nutrition, manners, girls' education, widow remarriage etc., from the missionaries. The missionaries also started health activities along with preaching the Gospel of God. Thompson, a medical missionary, trained women in midwifery; two were Devai and Paripuram. MacDonnell was a fully qualified nurse missionary who arrived in Travancore and opened a maternity ward at Neyyoor. Another medical missionary of South Travancore, Dr. Sargood Fry and his wife, who were in charge of the Medical Mission, treated lepers. A Christian Farm Colony was created to educate women in cultivation.

◆ *CMS Mission in Kerala*

### 2.1.3.2 The Church Missionary Society (CMS)

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was the child of Evangelical Anglicanism, and its original name was 'the Society for Mission to Africa and the East.' It originated in England to evangelise non-Christians. In 1806, Claudius Buchanan, a Chaplain of the East India Company, demanded before the CMS to send a 'Mission of Help' to the Syrian Church in Kerala. In 1814, the first batch of CMS missionaries was sent to India. Col. Munroe, the Resident of Travancore and Cochin, was mainly responsible for the beginning of the CMS in Central Travancore. He requested Marmaduke Thompson, the CMS Secretary in Madras, to send a few clergy members to work among the Syrian Churches in North Travancore. Thus, the CMS started its activities in Travancore in 1816 with Kottayam as its headquarters.

◆ *Thomas Norton- Father of Christian missions*

Thomas Norton, a pioneer missionary of the Church Missionary Society in North Travancore, established a school at Alappuzha in 1816 under Col. Munroe's guidance. Norton's wife also started a female school in 1820. Notable figures in the CMS include Claudius Buchanan and Benjamin Bailey.

◆ *Benjamin Bailey*

Benjamin Bailey was a notable missionary of the CMS who worked at Kottayam. He was a priest of the Anglican Church and started the first Seminary College at Kottayam, CMS College (Kottayam College), in 1817. He was also the principal of the CMS Seminary College, Kottayam (1817-1819). He laid the foundation of modern higher education in Kerala with a new curriculum and syllabi. He learned Sanskrit and Malayalam.

In 1821, William Bailey founded the CMS press in Kerala, the first multilingual (polyglot) printing press in Kerala. It printed Latin, Sanskrit, Malayalam, and Syrian books.

◆ *First Malayalam printing press*

Bailey is considered the father of Malayalam printing and publishing in Kerala. He was also considered the first Malayalam typographer and printed the first Malayalam book, *Cherupaithangalku Upakarartham Englishilninnnum Paribhasapeduthiya Kathakal*. Bailey also translated the Holy Bible into Malayalam and published it as *Bailey's Malayalam Bible* in 1829. He was patronised by the *Maharaja Swathy Thirunal* of Travancore.

◆ *First Malayalam and English dictionary*

William Bailey was the first lexicographer in Malayalam and created the first Malayalam and English dictionary in 1846 titled 'the Dictionary of High and Colloquial Malayalam and English (*Baley's Nighandu*). He translated Raja Ram Mohan Roy's commentary on *Isa* and *Kena Upanishad*' into Malayalam and published the first Malayalam Journal, *Jnananikshepam* (Treasure of Knowledge), in 1848. He also wrote books in Malayalam, such as *Aaradhanakramam*, *Randu Attinkuttikal*, *Koodaravum Altharayum*, *Indiayile Punyayatrakal* etc. His wife, Mrs. Bailey, started a girls' school in Kottayam in 1822, which developed into a school.

◆ *Henry Baker*

Henry Baker, a CMS missionary, played a significant role in the educational advancement of Travancore. He managed 34 schools in Kottayam from 1828-29, including the Grammar Schools and female boarding schools where food and clothes were free. In 1829, the Madras Committee granted each school Rs. 60 per month, significantly advancing female education in Kerala. Amelia Dorothea Baker, Henry Baker's wife, was a pioneer in girls' education in North Travancore, starting the first girl's school in 1820. In memory of Amelia Baker, the Baker Memorial Girls' School was opened at Kottayam in 1869. Later, the Madras Government gave it the status of a Lower Secondary School (1894) and in 1903, it was converted into the Baker Memorial High School.

◆ *Thomas Dawson*

The first missionary at Cochin was Thomas Dawson, who started the first English school at Mattancherry in 1818. When the missionaries arrived at Cochin, the Jews at Jew Town, Mattancherry wanted to establish a school for them and, thus, started the first school at Cochin.

Augusta M. Blandford, a missionary from the Zenana Mission, founded the Fort Girls' School in Trivandrum in 1864. The school was opened by *Diwan* T. Madhava Rao and taught upper-caste girls. Blandford also opened a Tamil English school and a Maratha English school for Maratha Sudras in Trivandrum. The school's enrollment increased

◆ *The Zenana Mission*

from 245 girls in 1900 to 400 in 1916. The Zenana Mission also established girls' schools in other areas. In 1880, the Catholic Missionaries established a high school for girls, which was first in Kerala. The Buchanan Institute in Kottayam was the first training institute for women teachers at the elementary level.

◆ *Merging of CMS and LMS to CSI*

To promote college education to women, the CMS Missionaries, with the support of six British and six American missionary societies, opened Women's Christian College at Madras on 7 July, 1915. St. Christopher Training College, Madras, was a teacher training institution for women, which was the united venture of LMS and CMS. In order to adjust to the current situation, the CMS and LMS merged as the 'Church of South India' (CSI) in 1947.

◆ *Malabar mission*

### 2.1.3.3 The Basel Evangelical Mission (BEM)

The German Missionary Society, later known as the Basel Evangelical Missionary (BEM) Society, had a long-standing plan to establish a mission in India. The first batch of missionaries was sent in 1834, with Hermann Gundert founding the Malabar Mission. In 1839, the first BEM centre was opened in Nettur, Thalassery. In 1839, Gundert started the first English school in Malabar, and in 1839, Julie Gundert, a Swiss missionary lady and wife of Herman Gundert, opened the first girl's school in Malabar. Herman Gundert and Julie Gundert established a Female English Day School at Thalassery in 1840.

◆ *BEM centres*

The BEM began in Kannur and Ancharakandy in 1841, with Hebich starting a school in Kannur. John Michael, a BEM missionary, opened a Boys' School in Kozhikode in 1841. Margaret Fritz and Carolina Mook were the first educational missionaries to promote female education. In 1849, Christian Muller started schools for boys and girls. A new school was opened for Konkani-speaking *Brahmin* girls in Thalassery.

◆ *Medical Mission of BEM*

Medical missions in Malabar was initiated by Eugene Liebendorfer, who established a small hospital in Kozhikode. Miss Hanhart and Sister Kathe, who served as missionary nurses, also established a Leper Asylum in Chevayur. In 1906, Mrs. Weismann introduced the Pillow-Lace Industry in the orphanage at Kombala, which became a recognised industrial training school in 1911.

## Herman Gundert

### ◆ Gundert in Kerala

Herman Gundert, a pioneer in Malayalam journalism, language, and literature, arrived in India as a missionary of the Basel Evangelical Mission in 1836. He began his mission work in northern Kerala and South Canara and established a BEM branch at Thalassery. Gundert was interested in printing books and journals.

### ◆ Contributions of Gundert

In November 1843, Gundert visited the CMS centre at Kottayam. With the influence of Benjamin Bailey, on 23 October, 1845, he started the first printing press at Malabar, 'Basel Mission Lithographic Press' (*Thalassery Chapitham*) at Illikkunnu. The first printed book from Basel Mission Press was *Malayalam Panchangam* in 1846. *Rajyasamacharam* (June 1847), the first Malayalam newspaper, and *Paschimodayam* (October 1847), were printed and published by Gundert at Illikkunnu. He published *Rajyasamacharam* for forty-two issues up to 1850. *Kerala pazhama* is a history text related to the history of Kerala, especially on the Portuguese period published in *Paschimodayam*. He translated the famous *Keralamahatyam* into Malayalam. *Malayala Rajyam*, the first geography book in Malayalam, was written by Gundert. He translated the Bible into Malayalam, named *Satyaveda Ithihasam*.

### ◆ Gundert's translation works

In 1856, Gundert completely translated the 'New Testament' into Malayalam. *Vajrasuchi* of Ashvaghosha, a famous Buddhist philosophical text and *Nalacharitha Sarasodana*, a Sanskrit book that dealt with the story of Nala and Damayanthi were also translated into Malayalam. Payyannur *Pattukal* and Thalassery Records were brought to light by Gundert. He wrote *Muhammed Charitham*, a biography of Prophet Muhammed. He completed a Malayalam grammar text, *Malayala Vyakaran*, in 1851 and a textbook for school students named *Padamala*. Malayalam-English Dictionary (Gundert's *Nighandu*), a dictionary, was compiled and published by Gundert in 1872. He also authored many books in Malayalam, such as *Polycarpcharitham*, *Smaranavidya*, *Sanchariyudeprayanam*, *Manushyahridayam*, *Christusabha Charitham*, *Orayiram Pazhanchollukal*, *Pazhancholmala*, *Kerala Pazhama* etc.

As an educationist, Gundert started the first English School in Malabar on 6 May, 1839 at Thalassery. In 1857, he was appointed as the first school inspector for Malabar and South Canara by Albert Knot, Director of Public Instruction



of Madras. In 1859, Gundert returned to Germany and breathed his last in 1893.

### 2.1.3.4 Lower Caste Conversion to Christianity

The conversion of lower caste Hindus to Christianity led to landowners denying them the land for cultivation and evicting them from their holdings. The Hindu law of inheritance prevented Christian converts from inheriting and enjoying their Hindu parents' property. This led to conflict and rural unrest in Travancore. The Government of Travancore intervened and protected tenants from eviction. The Religious Disabilities Act of 1856 and the Government of Travancore enactments saved the property rights of converts whose parents were Hindus. When an Ezhava youth converted to Christianity and walked on public roads at Thiruvalla, he faced opposition from caste Hindus. The government's official record titled "The Treatment of Native Christians in Travancore" stated by *Diwan* that "an Illower (Ezhava) must remain an Illower even after becoming a Christian.

◆ *Property rights of the converts*

The European planters who tried to invest capital in the plantation industry in the state needed a labour force. The agricultural workers were attached to the soil, and enslavers were caste-Hindu landowners. They were paid at the reduced wage rates in kind. The caste structure of society ensured the landowners a legal basis for increasing their wealth by extra-economic coercion.

◆ *Need for labour*

### 2.1.4 Printing

Printing presses were first established in India by foreigners, either missionaries or Indologists. In northern India, foreign domination was centred on Bengal, leading to the emergence of printing in that region. Latin priest John Gonzalvez, a Jesuit missionary, is credited with being the first to create typographs in Indian languages, creating printing letters at Ambazhakkad near Cochin. The earliest printing in India was centred on the Malabar Coast, with Portuguese priests setting up presses in Goa, Kochi, and Kollam. The Portuguese also established presses in Vaipinkotta and Ambazhakkad.

◆ *Setting up of printing presses*

The first book printed in an Indian language was the *Doctrina Christum En Lingua Malauar Tamul*, by St. Francis Xavier on 20 October, 1578. He was a Jesuit and a professor at the University of Paris. Another '*Doctrina Christina*'



◆ *Books in Indian languages*

(*Christiyavanakkam*) was printed at Cochin (Ambazhakkad) in 1579. A Tamil Dictionary compiled by Fr. Frinza and a Tamil grammar book made by Fr. Da Costa was printed at Ambazhakkad. The Jesuits established a printing press at Vaipin in 1602.

◆ *Compilation of Hortus Malabaricus*

The Malayalam script underwent significant changes during the printing journey from Malayalam to modern Malayalam. The first book to contain the Malayalam script was *Hoerti Malabarici (Hortus Malabaricus)*. The book used square letters and was compiled under Admiral Van Rheed, the Dutch Governor of Cochin. The 12 volumes were printed in Amsterdam between 1678 and 1703. Kollattu Veetil Itty Achuthan, an Ayurvedic physician, and Gouda Sarasa Brahmin physicians, such as Appu Bhatt, Rangabhatt, and Vinayaka Pandit, assisted Admiral Van Rheed in compiling the *Hortus Malabaricus*. The *Hortus Malabaricus*, a collection of plants from Kerala, was translated into Latin by priest Johan Kasarious and Dutch civil secretary Christian Herman Dadonov. The book features 79,000 pictures and uses Malayalam, Arabic, Latin, and Devanagari scripts to denote plant names. The first volume features a certificate of Kollattu Itty Achuthan in *Kolezhuthu* script. In 1774, J. Hill published an abridged version in English.

◆ *Printing of various books in Malayalam*

Ernst Hanxleden (Arnos Pathiri), a German Jesuit, wrote a grammar and dictionary in Latin in 1699, while Fr. Clement Pianos published the first Malayalam book in 1772 named *Samkshepa Vedartham*, which was the first book printed entirely in Malayalam script. The first travelogue in Malayalam was *Varthamana Pusthakam* written by Parammekkal Thoma Kathanar. Robert Drummond published a Malayalam grammar book in 1799. The first printing of Malayalam script in India occurred in 1811 at the Bombay Courier Press. Philipose Ramban of Kayamkulam translated the Bible to Malayalam for the first time.

◆ *Rise of print Capitalism*

After the Treaty of Seringapatam (1792), the English took control of the Malabar region, initially part of the Bombay Presidency. So, Bombay Courier Press developed Malayalam printing types for printing orders. Benjamin Bailey led CMS Press in Kottayam, which paved the way for print culture and the transformation of Malayalam script. The first Malayalam book printed with engraved prints was '*Cherpaithangalku Upakarartham Englishilninnum Paribhasapeduthiya Kathakal*'. The establishment of printing presses at the government level in 1836 led to the rise of print capitalism in Malayalam.

◆ *The advent of government presses and missionaries*

Malayalam has been enriched by literary works in Malayalam script, and the advent of government presses and missionaries created sections that made a living by dealing with knowledge. Printing provided daily government affairs, census reports, government gazettes, and administrative reports, leading to great movements in knowledge, socio-cultural, and political spheres. Print culture in Kerala society was embraced as colonial modernity allowed for the printing of poems, stories, and articles in book forms. This led to the evolution of the printing press into a publishing house, resulting in the European style of literature and scientific forms, marking a turning point in the knowledge explosion.

◆ *Emergence of publishing house*

Printing became a new commodity in the market place, leading to the emergence of modern-style bookstores and publishing houses in Kerala. The habit of buying and storing printed books and magazines for money, along with reading rooms and libraries, significantly impacted print publishing. Etymological grammarians were employed to check typographical errors, diagnose linguistic mistakes, and proofread literary and scientific texts.

### **2.1.5 Other Industries**

◆ *Development of industries*

The traditional industry in modern Kerala began with the first coir factory in Alappuzha, established by James Darragh in 1859. The coir wheel ratt was invented by Collins, a manager of the Darragh Smail Company. Leading coir companies included Madurai Company Pvt. Ltd, Coir Yarn Company (Palluruthy), Wolkart Bros., Pears Lesly & Co., Hydraulic Press and Coir Yarn Yard, Aspinwall and Companies. The Basel Evangelical Mission (BEM) was the first group of missionaries in India to start the tile industry, with George Pleb being the earliest propounder. In 1900, Cameron Company started the first tile factory in Kollam. The first sawmill was established in Thrissur in 1905. The first matchbox industry was started at Thenmala in Kollam. The first cashew company was started in Kollam in 1925, and it became the main centre of cashew processes and export in Kerala.

## Summarised Overview

Slavery was prevalent in Kerala during the medieval period. It prompted the British Parliament to enact regulations to stop it. These regulations were implemented in the colonised regions, such as the princely states of Travancore and Cochin, where slavery and bonded labour (*uzhiyam*) were common practices.

During the period when lower castes were denied fundamental human rights, the channar agitation (upper cloth movement), emerged as the first lower caste agitation in South India seeking the rights of channar woman to wear upper clothes. The influence of the missionaries instilled a sense of pride among the channars (Nadars) of southern Travancore and the agitation achieved success in 1859 with the support of the British.

During the colonial era, European powers like Portugal, Spain, Denmark, and the British promoted missionary activities to exert cultural and religious influence in their colonies. These missionary efforts had a profound impact on regions like Kerala in India. Three primary missionary organisations played a pivotal role in introducing and propagating Christianity in Kerala, shaping its religious landscape.

The London Missionary Society was one of the leading organisations responsible for bringing Protestant Christian missionaries to Kerala, specifically in South Travancore. It was led by missionaries like William Tobias Ringeltaube, who played a significant role in spreading the Christian faith and educating the local population in Kerala by establishing churches, schools, and communities. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) played a significant role in Northern Travancore and Cochin, fostering the growth of Christianity. Missionaries like Thomas Norton engaged in evangelization efforts, extending beyond religious conversion to educational initiatives and social welfare projects. The Basel Mission, initiated in 1839, played a significant role in the Malabar region of Kerala, focusing on education, healthcare, and social development. A noteworthy figure in this mission was Herman Gundert, a well-known polyglot with linguistic expertise. The efforts of these Christian missionaries, supported by their respective missionary societies, went beyond religious conversion, shaping the educational and social landscape of Kerala.

## Assignments

1. Find out the contributions of Hermen Gundert in translation works.
2. Discuss the role of CMS missionaries in the history of Travancore.
3. Discuss the circumstances that led to the Channar revolt.
4. Examine different steps taken towards the abolition of slavery.
5. Examine the impact of the missionaries' activities on Kerala society.
6. Discuss the content of Hortus Malabaricus.
7. Analyse the print culture in colonial Kerala.
8. Discuss the development of Malayalam script.

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## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





# Social Reform Movements

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, learners will be able to:

- ◆ understand the reasons for the rise of the socio-religious movement in Kerala
- ◆ discuss the role of various socio-religious reformers in sparking a revolution in Kerala society
- ◆ know the activities of the anti-caste reformers who fought against the caste system and untouchability

## Background

In medieval Kerala, the society was divided into two major social groups: the 'Savarnas', i.e., the Brahmins and other castes and the sub-castes accepting the supremacy and dominance of the Brahmins; and the 'Avarnas', namely, those social groups resisting the Brahmin domination. The Brahmins enjoyed social superiority and controlled the exercise of state power, while the Avarnas were denied human rights, social, economic, and political rights. This led to a society characterised by magic, animism, animal sacrifices, Brahmanical ritualism, and dominance of priesthood. Idol worship and polytheism further strengthened the position of the Brahmins in society. All these necessitated the traditional intellectuals to question the caste system, social inequality, and injustices, leading to the emergence of caste organisations. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Kerala became a centre of social and religious reforms, mainly due to colonial modernity and with the influence of the reform movements in the other parts of India. Let us have a closer look at the impact of the socio-religious movements in Kerala.

## Keywords

Theosophical Society, Sree Narayana Movements, Brahma Samaj, Atma Vidhya Sangham, Depressed Class Movement



# Discussion

## 2.2.1 Context of the Reform Movements

The reform movements in India were closely linked to the rise of Western-educated intellectuals and it marked the quest for a renewed Indian identity. The establishment of Arya Samaj and Swami Dayanand Saraswati's call for a return to Vedas had a profound impact on the Indian intellectuals. Indian elites attempted to advocate the codification of Hinduism as a unified religion. The upper caste and middle-class sections of the society aimed to revive ancient traditions as a response to Western modernity. In Bengal, the upper castes were mostly associated with the term 'renaissance'. These newly educated upper caste youth were fearful of the colonial reforms that would challenge the established caste system in India and they were concerned about losing their social position in the society.

◆ *Upper caste educated youths*

However, in South India, the situation was different. In the late nineteenth century, the lower castes were responsible for the formation of social reform movements. The communities including Ezhavas and several slave castes in Travancore were mostly mobilised for the caste reform. Prominent figures such as Narayana Guru, Periyar and Ayyankali played major roles in these reform movements. Important to note that the involvement of the upper caste middle class in the reform movements in South India was limited.

◆ *South Indian reform movements*

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Kerala underwent a remarkable awakening, which marked the beginning of various social reform movements. The colonial modernity and the reform movements in the other part of India influenced the social reform movements in Kerala. The caste system, social inequality, injustices etc., were questioned by the 'traditional' intellectuals. The caste organisations emerged as a reaction against preserving the social order. They sought the help of common people to participate in these movements.

◆ *Preservation of social order*

Various other reasons that contributed to the emergence of the socio-religious movement were the 'political unity' brought by the British, the influence of print culture, and the development of transport and communication, which played a significant role in connecting different regions and spreading ideas. The rise of modern education, the land reforms in the princely states and the prevalence of the caste

◆ *Other reasons*



system and other evil practices associated with it, etc; further fuelled the movement.

◆ *Caste atrocities*

As mentioned, one of the major reasons was the oppressive caste system. The nineteenth century saw oppressed communities facing a deeply rooted caste system, with people divided into multiple castes and subcastes, each with taboos of untouchability, unapproachability, and unseeability. The upper castes believed that the touch or sight of lower castes caused pollution, leading to attempts to prevent outcastes from entering public spaces. It was also during this time, that the British introduced a novel administrative system, including the classification of the people through the census. The decennial census reports highlighted the aspects of castes, sub-castes, communities etc., which was one of the reasons behind the gradually awakened caste consciousness. Later, it acted as a catalyst for social reform movements.

### 2.2.2 Socio-Religious Reform Movements and Reformers in Kerala

◆ *Theosophical Society*

The Theosophical Society, founded in 1875 in New York, was the first organization to work on Kerala's soil. It aimed to combat the caste system, black magic, illiteracy, and fake priests in Kerala. The society was founded by A. Sankaraia, the *Diwan* Peshkar of Cochin and later society established branches in Malabar. Annie Besant, a leading figure of the Theosophical Society, visited Kerala in 1904.

◆ *Brahmo Samaj*

Northern Indian reform movements like the Brahmo Samaj also started branches in Kerala. Ayyathan Gopalan established the first Brahmo Samaj branch in Kozhikode in 1898, publishing many books related to Brahmo ideas. He also founded another branch of Brahmo Samaj at Alappuzha. One of the staunch followers of the Brahmo Samaj in Malabar was Vagbhatananda.

◆ *Vagbhatananda*

Vagbhatananda (Kunji Kannan Gurukkal) was an admirer of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and a propagator of Sankaracharya's Advaita Philosophy. He established '*Tatwaprakashikashram*', a Sanskrit school at Kozhikode in 1906, and '*Raja Yogananda Koumudi Yogasala*' at Kallayi in 1911. Vagbhatananda initiated '*Atmavidya Sangham*', a reform movement based on the Brahmo Samaj, in 1917. He wrote an Advaita treatise, *Atmavidya*, which became the manifesto of Atmavidya Sangham. Vagbhatananda also criticised the Arya Samaj of Dayananda Saraswathy for its conversion to Hinduism. Vagbhatananda was a propagator of *Nirguna Upasana*

(worship without an idol). He opposed social inequalities, illiteracy, idleness, poverty, exploitation, and immorality. To spread his ideas, he also wrote *Atmavidyayuddam* and *Atmavidyakahalam*. His works included a Malayalam journal *Abhinavakeralam* (1921), a monthly *Shivayogi Vilasam* (1919), and a newspaper 'Yajamanan'. He organised inter-caste marriage and inter-dining to protest against the caste system.

◆ *Ramakrishna Mission*

The Ramakrishna Mission, started by Swami Vivekananda, started its first branch in Kerala at Haripad in 1912. Other centres included Thiruvalla, Thiruvananthapuram, Pala, Koilandi, Kalady, Kozhikode, Muvattupuzha, and Thrissur. These centres carried out socio-religious and cultural activities, providing medical and educational services to poor people and providing meritorious services in women's education.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the soil of Kerala gave birth to several social and religious reformers. The following movements and personalities occupy prominent positions:

### 2.2.2.1 Vaikunda Swami and 'Samatwa Samajam'

◆ *Established social organisation*

Vaikunda Swami, born in 1809 in Swamithoppu near Nagercoil, was a Channar caste reformer who started 'Samatva Samajam' (society of equality) in 1836. It was the first social organisation in southern India and he ridiculed the rule of Swathy Thirunal of Travancore and the British rule as 'neechan' (devil) and 'venneechan' (white devil). In 1837, he was arrested and imprisoned at Singarathope Jail, making him the only reformer in Kerala captured by rulers. Vaikunda Swami was also the first social reformer of the south to perform the consecration of the mirror as an idol (*kannadi prathishta*).

◆ *Social equality*

Christianity had a profound influence on Vaikunda Swami. He critiqued social and religious practices in Travancore. He criticised idol worship, expensive rituals, social misconceptions about God, caste injustice, and upper-caste oppression of the poor. He advocated for social equality and the abolition of slavery. He never retreated to a meditative seclusion, but rather engaged and communicated with society. In 1813, he mobilised the channar women into a march wearing upper clothes. He also led the channar peasants into a temple, opposing lower-caste taxes and leading them into revolt. He popularised inter-caste dining to fight against caste discrimination and sought to achieve



social equality through the concept of 'samatva samajam'.

◆ **Important works**

To attract the lower caste devotees, Vaikunda Swami built small temples like *Nizhal Thangal*, and *Munthiri Kinaru* (well) in his *Ashram*. He started educational centres called 'Pathikal' and wrote works like *Akhila Tirattu Ammame*, *the Bible of Ayyavazhi*, and *Arul Nul*. *Chathu Neettolai* was part of *Arul Nul*, containing historical events related to Ayya Vaikundar. Vaikundapati, a place in Maruthuva Malai, was his meditation seat. He urged for 'One Caste, One Religion, One God, One Language, One World', which was later adopted by Thycaud Ayya Guru. His followers referred to him as 'Ayya' (meaning father) and called their lifestyle the 'Ayya Path' or 'Ayya Vazhi'.

### 2.2.2.2 Thycaud Ayya Guru

◆ **Teacher of Chattambi Swami and Narayana Guru**

Ayya Guru, also known as Sadananda Swami or Subbarayan, was born in 1814 in Tamil Nadu. He learned English, Tamil and Sanskrit. In 1873, he was appointed as the superintendent of the Residency Service at Travancore during Ayiliam Thirunal's reign. He taught 'Hatha Yoga' to prominent figures like Chattambi Swami and Sree Narayana Guru, and later became an admirer of Vaikunda Swami. Ayya used to deliver lectures on *Bhakti*, *Yoga*, and *Vedanta* at *Jnanaprajagaram*, a gathering where prominent literary, social, and spiritual figures from Thiruvananthapuram and its vicinity would convene to engage in discussions.

◆ **Guru's major activities**

Ayya Guru wrote *Brahmotharakhandam*, *Pazhani Vaibhavam*, *Ujjaini Mahakali Pancharatnam*, *Kumara Kovil Kuravan*, *Ullor Amarntha Guhan*, *Thiruwozhoor Murukan*, etc. He followed his guru Vaikunda Swami's words- "one caste, one religion, one God". Ayya Guru was the founder member of the '*Saiva Prakashika Sabha*' at Thiruvananthapuram, along with Manonmaniyam Sundaram Pillai. In 1909, Ayya Guru attained *samadhi* as a Siva Yogi and in 1943, a Sivalinga was consecrated over his *Samadhi*. It is now known as the Thycaud Siva temple.

### 2.2.2.3 Chattambi Swami

Parama Bhattara Sree Vidhyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal, popularly known as Chattambi Swami born in 1853, was a saint without saffron and a learned intellectual genius. He received his education from Pettayil Raman Pillai Asan. He supervised his class; therefore, he came to be known as *Chattambi*, which means 'monitor'. He was acquainted with

◆ *Religious reform*

*Jnanaprajagaram*, founded by Raman Pillai. There he learned Tamil, Philosophy and Yoga. He learned 'Hatha Yoga' from the Aiyya Guru of Thycaud, along with Sree Narayana Guru. Swami travelled throughout South India and gained knowledge in various languages and religions. He also learned about Christianity, Islam and Sufi mysticism. His realisation that the essence of all religions is the same made him referred to as 'Swami'. He was an eminent scholar and man of letters, writing poems, devotional songs, essays, and reviews. As a member of the Nair community, he liberated himself from the psychological submission of the Brahmins and became a crusader against Brahmin domination. He adopted religion as a tool for community reform.

◆ *Works of Chattambi Swami*

Chattambi Swami always supported the cause of the oppressed people. He stood for social justice and equality for all sections of society. This is evident in his *Vedadhikara Nirupanam*, in which he challenged the monopoly of the Brahmins to study the Vedas. His work in *Pracheena Malayalam*, published in 1913, fearlessly criticised the monopoly and superiority of the Brahmins in Kerala. He wrote *Mokshapradeepa khandanam* against the works of *Mokshapradeepam* of Brahmananda Sivayogi. In his *Adhibhasa*, he formulated the theory that Tamil was the earliest language of the human race. His other literary works include *Advaita Chinta Paddhati*, *Jeevakarunya nirupanam*, *Christumata nirupanam*, *Advaita Panjaram*, *Brahmatvanirbhasam*, *Nijanandavilasam*, *Vedantasaram Chidakasalayam*, *Tamilakam*, *Tarkkarahasyam*, *Srichakrapoojakalpam*, etc.

◆ *Titles of Chattambi Swami*

After attaining Sainthood at Vadiveeswaram, he received the *Sanyasa* name 'Shanmukhadasan'. The titles like 'Balabhataraka', 'Sri Bhattaraka', 'Parivrajakacharya', 'Parama Bhattaraka' etc. were adorned by Chattambi Swami. On 5 May, 1924, Chattambi Swami breathed his last at C. P. Grandhasala at Panmana near Chavara, where a Sivalinga was consecrated later and made into a Shiva temple. Neelakanda Theerthapada, Theerthapada Paramahansa etc., were the followers of Chattambi Swami.

#### 2.2.2.4 Sree Narayana Guru

The reformers in Kerala fought against the caste system, untouchability, pollution, and social inequalities. These issues were deeply rooted in people's minds, leading to dissatisfaction and the emergence of new social reform movements. Sree Narayana Guru, with deep insight into Kerala society, understood the plight of suppressed Hindu



◆ *Early life of Sree Narayana Guru*

sections better than anyone else. He is considered the 'morning star' of the Kerala Renaissance. Narayana Guru, whose birth name was Nanu, was born in 1856 as the son of an Ezhava peasant, Madanasan and Kuttiyamma at Vayalvarathu Veedu near Chempazhanthy in Thiruvananthapuram. Nanu was influenced by Kummanpallil Raman Pillai Asan, the headmaster of a Sanskrit school at Kayamkulam and learned Sanskrit from him. He helped neighbouring children learn the basics of Malayalam and Sanskrit and came to be known as 'Nanu Asan'.

◆ *Emancipation of lower castes*

In 1882, Nanu met Chattambi Swami and lived with him for several months. They travelled together, developing a critical attitude towards social evils like the caste system. Chattambi Swami introduced Nanu Asan to Aiyya Swami, who taught him Yoga. He also took Nanu to Aruvippuram, where he meditated and practised Yoga. He dissuaded local people from superstitious beliefs, meaningless rituals, expensive ceremonies, and notorious caste practices. Nanu Asan reiterated the proclamation of Vaikunda Swami: 'One caste, One religion and One God.' Nanu Asan became known as 'Narayana Guru' by this time. He realised religion was a significant obstacle to the emancipation of the lower caste Hindus, leading him to focus on religious reforms.

◆ *Caste reforms*

At the time, lower caste Hindus were not allowed to approach even the periphery of caste Hindu temples and could not install the same deities worshipped in Hindu temples. The conservatives did not tolerate any violation of customs. In this context, Guru decided to install an idol of Siva in Aruvippuram, consecrated on 10 February, 1888, on the sacred Sivaratri day. The community members and the caste Hindus raised doubts about the rights of the Guru in this regard. The Brahmins became much agitated, and one of them raised doubts about the validity of his act. But he replied that he had installed an 'Ezhava Siva', not a 'Brahmin Siva'. The 'Aruvippuram Revolution' was the first of its kind in modern Kerala.

It was around this time that Dr. Padmanabhan Palpu, the first medical degree holder among the Ezhavas formed the 'Thiruvithamcore Ezhava Mahasabha' to provide better opportunities for the community. In 1896 he wrote the 'Treatment of Tiyyas in Thiruvithamcore' in English and 'Thiruvithamcotte Ezhavar' in Malayalam. On the model of the Malayali memorial, Dr. Palpu submitted memorials to the government, including the Ezhava Memorial of

◆ *Activities of Dr.Palpu*

1896 signed by 13,176 members. He was advised by Swami Vivekananda to form an organisation under the guidance of a saint and hence, he sought help from Narayana Guru to mobilise the Ezhavas. When SNDP Yogam started in 1903, Dr.Palpu became its first vice-president.

◆ *Kumaranasan as a social reformer*

Meanwhile, Kumaranasan, a renowned poet and social reformer from Kerala, became a follower of Sree Narayana Guru. He joined Narayana Guru at Aruvippuram in 1891. He received Western education at Chamarajendra Sanskrit College in Bangalore. After tasting the bitterness of the caste system, he did not complete his studies. However, he stayed in Madras and Calcutta for knowledge acquisition. In 1900, he returned to Aruvippuram Ashramam and became part of future programmes of Sree Narayana Guru. In 1909, Kumaranasan was nominated to the Sri Moolam Popular Assembly by the Travancore government to promote his social reform activities. He advocated for the entry of the lower castes into Brahmanical temples and public services. Kumaranasan, as a poet, advocated for social change through his works like *Chandalabhikshuki*. Through his poetry *Duravastha*, he warned the orthodox community: 'Change the rule. If not, it would change you.'

◆ *Formation of SNDP*

After the consecration of Sivalingam at Aruvippuram, Narayana Guru established 'Vavoottu Yogam', the predecessor of SNDP Yogam. In 1898, it was renamed 'Aruvippuram Kshetra Yogam'. Dr. Palpu wanted to encourage religious and secular education and industrious habits among the Ezhava community and he urged it in the gathering of the *Yogam* held in 1903. Accordingly, the Yogam was registered under the Indian Companies Act, No.6, 1882. In the same year, 'Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam' (SNDP Yogam) was officially formed with Sree Narayana Guru as the president, Dr. Palpu as its vice president and Kumaranasan as the first secretary. The Malayalam literary journal, *Vivekodayam*, to provide a voice to the underprivileged sections, was started in 1904 under Kumaranasan's editorship. Kollam later became the headquarters of SNDP Yogam.

The Ezhava community followed certain social customs like *Thalickettu Kalyanam*, *Thirandukuli*, and *Pulikudi*. Guru realised that these outdated customs were not beneficial for the welfare of the people and the society he envisioned. Guru preached on religion, ethics, morality, education, and industry to help the masses progress materially and spiritually. He rejected superstitious rituals, promoted worship in its best form,

◆ *Rejected superstitious rituals*

and encouraged building temples and mutts. He stressed the importance of rejecting harmful customs and adopting civilised ones. He encouraged primary education, starting schools and libraries, and promoting thrift, agriculture, trade, and handicrafts.

◆ *Tagore and Gandhi visited Guru*

Sree Narayana Guru believed all religions were equally beneficial for spiritual welfare and material welfare. His faith in all religions found expression in a Parliament of religions held at Aluva in 1924, aiming to convince people of the unity of all religions, with representatives from all major religions participating. The slogan was “to know and make known, not to argue and win.” In November 1922, Rabindranath Tagore visited Sivagiri and engaged in a discussion with Sree Narayana Guru. Tagore acknowledged Narayana Guru as the spiritually greater figure he had encountered. In 1925, Mahatma Gandhi met Narayana Guru at Sivagiri for an extensive discussion on *Varnashrama Dharma*, leading Gandhi to realise its hollowness.

◆ *Consecration of temples*

Guru’s message ‘One Caste, One Religion, One God for Man’ emphasised that all men belonged to the same species and had no difference. (This is the first line of his poem *Jathi Nirnayam*). Another message, ‘Whatever be a man’s religion, it is enough if he becomes good,’ has evoked tremendous influence on the elite and the poor sections of society. Sree Narayana Guru established over 100 places of worship for Avarnas in Kerala within a decade. After Aruvippuram installation, he installed images in four temples, transforming from Brahmanical pantheon gods to elementary and inexpensive images. He installed a shield bearing truth, kindness and righteousness at Murukkumpuzha Temple near Chirayinkil. Guru installed a lightning lamp at Karamukku Temple (Thrissur) and consecrated a mirror at Kalavamkodam temple near Cherthala.

◆ *Importance to education*

Guru settled in Sivagiri in 1904 for spiritual pursuits and social reform. In 1912, a temple was built for Sarada Devi, and he started a Sanskrit school at Varkala. He encouraged pilgrims to understand pilgrimage as a movement for education, devotion to God, and self-awareness. He encouraged them to educate, enlighten, and become strong through organisation. Guru also advised spreading cleanliness throughout the country. He consecrated several temples in various locations and established the Advaita Ashramam in 1913, a Brahma Vidyalaya for religious study and universal brotherhood.

◆ *Works of Guru*

Sree Narayana Guru wrote *Atmopadesasatakam, Daiva Shatakam, Jeevakarunya Panchakam, Anukampa Dasakam, Nirvriti Panchakam, Swanubhavageeti, Adwaita Deepika, Atmavilasam, Daiva Vichinthanam, Darsanamala, Jati Mimamsa, Swasatakam, Kundalinippattu, Vairagya Dasakam, Municharya Panchakam, Kalinatakam, Jananinavaratnamanjari*, etc. He translated *Isavasya Upanishad* and *Thirukkural* from Sanskrit and Tamil, respectively. The father of the new Kerala society, Sree Narayana Guru, breathed his last at Sivagiri on 20, September, 1928.

◆ *Guru's admirers*

K. Ayyappan, C. V. Kunjiraman of Mayyanad, T. K. Madhavan of Alappuzha, C. Krishnan of Calicut, Murkoth Kumaran of Thalassery, C. Kesavan of Mayyanad etc., were the ardent admirers of Sree Narayana Guru and stood for social justice, temple entry and against the caste system.

### 2.2.2.5 Sahodaran Ayyappan

◆ *Early life of Ayyappan*

Sahodaran Ayyappan was born in an Ezhava family at Cherai in Vypin island of Ernakulam district on 21 August, 1889. After completing his education in Cherai and North Paravoor, he pursued further studies at Malabar Christian College and Maharaja's College, Ernakulam. Ayyappan's talent in public speeches led to his acquaintance with Sree Narayana Guru, who influenced his ideas on a social revolution against the caste system and untouchability.

◆ *Misrabhojanam*

Sahodaran Ayyappan founded the 'Sahodara Sangamam' (Confluence of Brotherhood) organisation in 1917, because of which he came to be known as 'Sahodaran Ayyappan'. He organised an inter-caste dining (*Misrabhojanam*) event at Cherai, attracting 200 people from various castes. Despite opposition from orthodox Nairs and Ezhava households, Ayyappan hailed it as an honour. Narayana Guru blessed him in 1921 for his inter-dining and inter-caste marriage initiatives under 'Sahodara Sangham'.

◆ *Leadership to working class*

Ayyappan aimed for social reform and launched 'Sahodaran', a periodical promoting progressive articles and poems against superstitious beliefs and social evils. In 1928, he started 'Yukthivadi', a magazine promoting rational thinking. Ayyappan had a great devotion to Sree Narayana Guru, whom he believed had influenced Vedantic atheism in his thoughts and social actions. As a rationalist, he changed the sayings of Narayana Guru to 'No caste, No religion, No God for man.' Ayyappan, who pioneered working-class politics and trade union leadership, served as a member of

the Cochin Legislative Council and became a minister in the Cochin Legislative Assembly and Thiru Kochi Assembly. He gathered respect from all the sections of the society. Ayyappan passed away on 6 March, 1968.

### 2.2.2.6 Mannath Padmanabhan and Nair Service Society (NSS)

#### ◆ Formation of NSS

In 1905, Nair youths in Thiruvananthapuram formed the 'Keraliya Nair Sabha' under C. Krishna Pillai to introduce social reforms. However, they realised that without government support, social legislation was impossible. In 1911, a 'Karayogam' was established in Perunna near Changanassery, under the leadership of Mannathu Padmanabhan. Later, in 1914, English-educated Nairs formed the *Nair Samudhaya 'Bhrityajana Sangham'* with K. Kelappan as President and Mannath Padmanabhan, as Secretary. It changed its name to 'Nair Service Society' (NSS) in 1915, on the model of the 'Servants of India Society' of Gopala Krishna Gokhale. They also started a magazine named 'Service' in 1919. The NSS aimed to spread Western education and oppose traditional customs like *Sambandham*, *Thalickettu Kalyanam*, *Marumakkathayam*, etc. They started collecting alms from the community for educational institutions, which helped to uphold the strength and durability of their community. The Nair Samjams merged with NSS under Padmanabhan, with its headquarters in Changanassery.

### 2.2.2.7 Yogakshema Sabha and V. T. Bhattathiripad

#### ◆ Aims of Yogakshema sabha

To improve the condition of the Namboothiri Brahmins in Kerala, the Namboothiris formed an organisation called 'Yogakshema Sabha' in 1908 under the Desamangalam Valiya Sankaran Namboothiri and Kurur Unni Namboothiri. The main aim of 'Yogakshema Sabha' was the abolition of polygamy, propagation of widow remarriage, abolition of *Sambandham*, child marriage, etc. The 'Yogakshemam' (1911), an official journal, was started for the propagation of the Sabha. Yogakshema Sabha's youth wing, 'Namboothiri Yuvajana Sangham' (1928), worked among the Namboothiri youths, mainly eradicating the age-old customs and the propagation of Western education. Kurur Unni Namboothirippad stood for the propagation of education among the Namboothiri youths.

There existed many evils among the Namboothiri Brahmins, especially against the ladies. The Namboothiri women followed *Ghosha* (a shawl wrapping the torso) and

◆ *Smarthavicharam*

*Marakkuda* (an umbrella to cover their face from the public). They were styled as *Antharjanam* or *Agathammar*, who were kept inside the house, denied education and strict caste rules were implemented on them. '*Smarthavicharam*' was a special trial of caste exclusiveness among the Namboothiri woman, who was charged with infidelity. They were permanently expelled from the *mana* (house of Namboothiri Brahmin). Likewise, all men engaged in inappropriate relations with the accused were also subject to excommunication. In 1905, Kuriyedath Thathri was subjected to '*smarthavicharam*'. During the trial, she revealed the names of several men including upper-caste men who were involved. It caused a huge shock in the Namboothiri community. It led to a '*purushavicharam*' (cross-examination by the accused men) and involved unprecedented procedures. However, all men who were accused were excommunicated after the trial. It was a significant protest against the patriarchal hegemony of the Namboothiri landlords.

◆ *V. T. Bhattathiripad*

V.T. Bhattathiripad or Vellithuruthi Thazhathu Karutha Patteri Raman Bhattathiripad, a prominent member of the 'Yuvajana Sangham', was a social reformer among the Namboothiris. He was born in 1896 in Kaippilly Mana at Mezathur. As an illiterate, he was inspired by a Tiyyadi girl and studied the Malayalam alphabets from her. In 1919, he joined the Third Form at Namboothiri Vidyalaya in Thrissur. It was during that time a magazine '*Vidhyarthi*' was published under the editorship of V. T. Bhattathiripad. He attended the Indian National Congress meeting in Ahmedabad.

◆ *Efforts of Yogakshema Sabha*

Bhattathiripad was a radical among '*Yogakshema Sabha*' members, ridiculing traditional Namboothiri customs like *Sambandham*, *Ghosh*, and *Adhivedanam* (polygamy). He wrote a famous play, *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekku*, which was enacted in 1929 at Edakkunni in connection with the 22nd anniversary of *Yogakshema Sabha*. V. T. Bhattathiripad advocated for inter-caste marriages in '*Yogakshema Mahasabha*', demonstrating by marrying his sister to a Nair youth. By this time, Sabha opened Namboothiri vidhyalayams in different parts of the State and by 1930, their efforts led to the abolition of *Ghosh*.

In 1925, '*Yogakshema Sabha*' elected two leaders to the first Legislative Council of Cochin State and these members introduced the Namboothiri Bill. Despite opposition, the Bill passed in the Travancore Legislature but failed in Cochin. It was later accepted as '*Namboothiri Law*' in

◆ *Changes in property rights*

Malabar through legislation in the Assembly of the Madras Presidency. The 'Yogakshema Sabha' changed property laws for Namboothiris, which were traditionally based on primogeniture (the eldest male as the sole legal heir to the family property). The 'Namboothiri Law' made each family member entitled to an equal share of property. It was a fundamental transformation of property relations, which was the result of V. T. Bhattathirippad's efforts.

◆ *Widow remarriage*

In 1934, despite the resistance, a resolution for widow marriage was passed. V. T. Bhattathirippad initiated the widow remarriage, arranging for Mulla Mangalath Raman Bhattathirippad to marry a widow. Bhattathirippad also carried out activities like *sudhham* (purity) and *misrabhojanam* (intercaste dining).

◆ *Efforts of Namboothiri youths against the evils*

The progressive-minded Namboothiri youths produced several literary works against the evils of the Namboothiris: *Marakkudakkullile Maha Narakam* (Hell Inside the Palm Leaf Umbrella), a drama by Mulla Mangalathu Raman Bhattathirippad (MRB), inspired Namboothiri women to cast away the umbrella behind which they had to hide. '*Aphante Makal*' was a novel written by Muthringodu Bhavatravan Namboothirippad in 1932. In 1945, E. M. S. Namboodirippad presided over the annual meeting of 'Yogakshema Sabha' at Ongallor and delivered a revolutionary speech by which he proclaimed that 'the aim is to make the Namboothiri a human being'.

◆ *Organisation of Namboothiri women*

With the emergence of the social reform movements among the Namboothiris, the Namboothiri women tried to break up the caste rules and male dominance. The 'Antharjana Samajam', under the leadership of Parvathy Nenmenimangalam, Arya Pallam, Lalithambika Antharjanam etc., paved the way for social reforms among the Namboothiri women in Kerala.

## 2.2.3 Movements for the Oppressed Classes

### 2.2.3.1 Ayyankali and Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam

Mahatma Ayyankali, born on 28 August, 1863 in Venganoor, Thiruvananthapuram, was a prominent figure in organising the downtrodden sections of the society for the rights of education, the right to use the public roads and above all the basic rights of equality and the right to be recognised as human beings. Despite receiving only non-formal education, he was active in village life, earning the nickname 'Urpillai'

◆ *Ayyankali  
Brigade*

or 'Moothapullai' by the locals. Ayyankali's indomitable will and courage led him to fight a battle against social evils such as untouchability, caste-related discrimination, and human rights violations. Ayyankali became aware of the local social and economic conditions of the lower castes and the bondage enforced on them by the higher classes. He led the struggle of the Pulayas and all lower castes for nearly half a century, starting with the organisation of the 'Ayyankali Brigade', a group of brave youths trained in martial arts. Many of the victories of the Ayyankali movement were largely due to the sheer physical force of the brigade.

◆ *Villuvandi  
Samaram and  
the access to  
public roads*

The famous '*Villuvandi Samaram*' conducted by Ayyankali in 1893 raised him to the position of widely accepted leader. As a young and brave lower caste, in 1893, Ayyankali conducted a '*Villuvandi Samaram*' for the opening of public roads to the lower caste. He dressed and appeared on the public road of Nedumangad market like a Nair landlord, wearing a golden turban, while seated on a *Villuvandi* (bullock cart) he had purchased. The bullock carts were then used only by the upper castes. In the morning, he set off from home in the cart. Ayyankali faced opposition from upper caste youths, as dress and vehicle were powerful signifiers as it was capable of emitting messages of dominance and insubordination. Despite their attempts to block his path, Ayyankali resisted and drove them away. He continued his journey through forbidden roads, challenging the upper caste's social dominance. Ayyankali's protest led to demonstrations among marginalised castes in Travancore, compelling the government to grant the pulayas access to all public roads in the State by 1900, except those leading to the temple.

◆ *Formation of  
Sadhu Jana  
Paripalana  
Sangham*

In 1907, Ayyankali founded the Sadhu Jana Paripalana 'Sangham' (SJPS) and started a school at Venganoor. Meanwhile, the converted Christian leaders such as V.J. Thomas Vadhyar and Harris Vadhyar, who focused on combating untouchability, became part of the SJPS. As part of his social formation and uplift of the Pulayas, the *Sangham* modelled after the SNDP Yogam. It emphasised the virtues of cleanliness and discipline among the members, freedom of movement, the right to education, proper clothing and so on. The Sangham demanded six-day work for workers and observed Sunday as a holiday. '*Sadhujana Paripalini*', the official newsletter, was published in 1913 with Chempanthara Kali Chothi Karuppan as its first editor, emphasising education among lower castes.

◆ *Admission to public schools*

Aiyya Swami and Sree Narayana Guru inspired Ayyankali in his fights against social evils. Due to his persistent efforts in pressuring the government to make public schools accessible to children from untouchable castes, tangible results were seen. A government order favouring the entry of untouchable children to schools was issued in 1907. This provoked the upper castes, leading them to set fire to the school at Ooruttambalam, where a Pulaya girl named Panchami had been enrolled.

◆ *Representative of Pulaya community*

From 1914 onwards, Ayyankali became a member of the Sri Moolam Praja Sabha of Travancore, representing the Pulaya community. He addressed various issues, including securing cultivable lands, allocating land for the homeless, facilitating the admission of lower castes to educational institutions, and advocating for scholarships and fee concessions. The Sangham, under his leadership, identified and addressed concerns specific to the Pulaya community, such as the scarcity of government service appointments, the absence of mid-day meals for students, and the shortage of agricultural land for the community.

◆ *Agitations associated with Ayyankali and SJPS*

When the leaders of the Sangham attempted to resist the policies of the caste Hindus, it resulted in clashes in various locations, including Perinad, Nedumangad, Manacaud, Kaniyapuram, Kazhakuttam, and Balaramapuram. The rebellions, such as 'Thonnuramandu Lahala', 'Perinadu Rebellion', and 'Ooruttambalam Riot', were linked to the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham. The 'Kallu-Mala Samaram' (*Kallumala* Agitation), also associated with Ayyankali and the SJPS, marked a chilling chapter in the history of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam.

◆ *Kallumala Agitation (1915)*

In those days, lower caste women were compelled to wear bead necklaces (*Kallu-Mala*) and iron bangles (*irumpuvala*) as symbols of subjugation. The SJPS encouraged them to discard these necklaces and to wear dresses. However, Nairs in various localities contested this. In December 1915, a group of Savarnas attempted to resist Sangham activities at Kollam, leading to the Nair-Pulaya riots in Perinad. Leaders like Ayyankali and Changanassery Parameswara Pillai intervened, affirming the right of the lower castes to wear their own dresses and ornaments. Immediately after the meeting, lower caste women in Perinad discarded their '*Kallu-Mala*', considering it as barbaric.

Ayyankali initiated another movement to acquire the

◆ *Temple entry of the Avarnas*

right for the Avarnas to enter temples, breaking centuries-old taboos. This led to clashes and the authorities opening temple doors to all, regardless of castes and creeds. As a reward to Ayyankali, in 1937, Mahatma Gandhi visited him at Venganoor and called him the '*Pulaya Raja*' (King of the Pulayas). He was a dedicated and active leader of his community who worked tirelessly to provide educational opportunities for the oppressed until his death on June 18, 1941. Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, unveiled the statue of Ayyankali in 1980 at Vellayambalam, Thiruvananthapuram. The activities of Ayyankali and SJPS also influenced northern Kerala, and its ideas were spread to the princely states of Cochin and British Malabar.

◆ *Sangham losing its prominence*

The leaders like Krishnadi Asan (Cochin Pulaya Mahasabha), Pambadi John Joseph (Travancore Cheramar Mahajana Sabha), Pandit K. P. Karuppan (Vala Samudaya Parishkarani Sabha), K. P. Vallon, P. C. Chachan, Kurumban Daivathan, Kavarikkulam Kandan Kumaran, Dakshayani Velayudan, P. C. Chathan Master etc., were greatly influenced by the activities of the Sangham. In the course of time, the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham lost its prominence and in 1938, it was registered as 'Travancore Pulaya Mahasabha', the forerunner of the 'Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha' (KPMS). His activities were compiled very late by his fellow brethren such as T. H. P. Chentharassery, Abhimanue, N. K. Jose, Kunnukuzhi M. S. Mani etc.

### **2.2.3.2 Pandit K. P. Karuppan**

◆ *K.P. Karuppan's roles*

Pandit K. P. Karuppan was born on 24 May, 1885 at Cheranallur as the son of Kandathilparambu Pappu (Ayyan) and Kochupennu of the Vala community. Among many difficulties as an Avarna, Pandit Karuppan learned Sanskrit from Mangalappillil Krishnan Asan at Cherai and Annamanada Rama Pothuval. Later, he joined the Kodungallur Gurukulam. In 1905 he joined St. Teresa's Convent High School as Sanskrit Munshi. About five years later, he joined as a clerk in the newly formed fisheries department by the government of Cochin. In 1912, he became the Sanskrit teacher at the Caste Girl's High School, Ernakulam. Later, he became the Assistant Protector of the depressed classes, Secretary to the Elementary Education Committee and the '*Bhashaparishkarana* Committee' and the Superintendent of Vernacular education of the Cochin state. In 1932, he was appointed as a lecturer in Sanskrit at the Maharajas College, Ernakulam, where he continued until his

death on 23 March, 1938. Later in 1934, he voluntarily retired from his job to concentrate more on social reforms.

◆ *Organisations under Karuppan*

In 1909, K.P. Karuppan established the first Vala organization in Anappuzha, known as the 'Kalyana Dayini Sabha'. Later, he established several other organizations, including 'Prabodha Chandrodaya Sabha', 'Jnanodaya Sabha', 'Araya Vamsodharani Sabha', and 'Vala Seva Samithi'. In 1913, he organised the 'Cochin Pulaya Maha Sabha' and called a 'Kayal Sammelanam' the same year. In 1918, he formed the 'All Kerala Araya Mahasabha', which was initiated by V. V. Velukkutty Arayan, at Alappuzha. In 1925, he was nominated as a member of the Cochin Legislative Assembly, advocating for the downtrodden against inequality in education, caste oppression, and equal opportunity in public services. His establishment of caste associations provided a network for the emancipation of the lower caste, particularly the Valas of Kerala.

◆ *Karuppan's works*

As an erudite scholar and writer, Karuppan wrote *Acharabhushanam*, *Balakaresham*, *Jathi Kummi*, *Udyana Virunnu* etc. His poems and dramas challenged the caste system and its intolerable side effects. In 1913, Karuppan was honoured by the *Maharaja* of Cochin with the title of '*Kavi Thilakan*'.

### 2.2.3.3 K. P. Vallon

◆ *Eradication of untouchability*

K. P. Vallon was a social reformer among the Pulayas of Cochin, born in 1894 at Mulavukad, Cochin. He advocated for the progress of education among marginalised castes. In 1913, the Pulayas of Cochin formed an organisation called 'Samastha Cochin Pulaya Mahasabha' (Kochi Pulaya Mahasabha), led by Krishnadi Asan and K. P. Karuppan. When Krishnadi Asan converted to Christianity, K. P. Vallon became its secretary and also held the post of president. As an active reformer for eradicating untouchability, Vallon also participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924.

◆ *Later activities and conversion to Buddhism*

Vallon fought for the dress allowance for the Dalit students in schools, as the Backward Class Department supplied low-quality dress materials to them. He was nominated twice as a member of the Legislative Council of Cochin in 1930 and 1935. He introduced a resolution in 1933 to secure government help for depressed classes through the Director of Public Instruction in Cochin. In 1935, he converted to Buddhism to fight against caste inequality and the exploitation of the Dalits.

◆ *His Death*

In 1936, he initiated a Malayalam monthly called 'Adhakrithan', which translated Mahatma Gandhi's articles in 'Harijan'. In 1939, he started a Harijan Students Hostel in Ernakulam. After repeated representations, the government granted 500 acres of land to the Pulayas in Malipuram near Chalakudy. He died on 14 April, 1940, at the age of 46, while working among the Dalits of Mala village, which was infected with smallpox.

### 2.2.3.4 Poikayil Yohannan

◆ *Plight of converted lower castes*

Poikayil Kumara Gurudevan, also known as Poikayil Yohannan, was born in 1879 to a poor, illiterate untouchable family in Eraviperoor, near Thiruvalla. They belonged to the *kudiyan* (tenant) Syrian Christian family called Sankaramangalam. He and his family converted to Christianity and adopted the name Yohannan. Initially, he served as an *Upadeshi* of the Marthoma Church, propagating Christianity. However, he later realised that converted lower castes did not receive equal status among Christians.

◆ *Formation of Pratyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha*

In 1907, he joined Ayyankali's SJPS and was involved in the Pulaya movements. Later, in 1909, he initiated a Protestant Movement known as 'Pratyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha' (PRDS) to protest the elitism within the Christian community and became known as 'Appachan'. The PRDS aimed to unite all slave castes and emancipate communities from their age-old disabilities and bondage. However, PRDS were subjected to attacks by elite Christians and Caste Hindus.

◆ *As Sri Moolam Praja Sabha member*

In due recognition of his greatness and the service rendered to the depressed classes, Yohannan was nominated to the Sree Moolam Praja Sabha in 1921 and 1931. As a representative of the lower castes, he advocated for their upliftment and highlighted the educational backwardness of these groups. Yohannan criticised the writings of the Savarnas, stating that he could only see the history of others but not his own.

### 2.2.3.5 Pampady John Joseph

Pampady John Joseph, an ardent follower of Ayyankali and a Dalit activist and social reformer in Travancore, was born in 1887 into a Pulaya family in Manjoor near Kottayam. He was converted to Christianity under the influence of CMS missionaries. In 1921, he founded the Cheramar Mahajana Sabha, a social organisation based on lineage rather than religion, and changed the caste name from Pulayas to Cheramar. The Sabha had Pampady John Joseph as its secretary and Parody Abraham Joseph as its president. John

◆ Formation  
of Cheramar  
Mahajana Sabha

Joseph also initiated a magazine called *Sadhujana Dootan* and, in 1923, a biweekly news magazine called '*Cheramar Dootan*' from Kottayam. He authored a book titled "Cheramar Boy." In 1935, he submitted a memorandum to the British Parliament requesting civil rights for the Dalits. John Joseph passed away in 1940 at the age of 53.

## 2.2.4 Movements for Eradication of Untouchability

◆ Campaign  
against  
untouchability

The most significant of Kerala's social reform movements was the campaign to abolish untouchability. The movement was inspired not only by the message of social reformers such as Chattampi Swami, Sree Narayana Guru, and Kumaran Asan and social organisations such as the N.S.S. and S.N.D.P. Yogam but also by the Indian National Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi. C. Krishnan, Editor of '*Mitavadi*' in Calicut, was a key leader in the movement against untouchability. In 1917, he defied the Malabar Collector's order to allow Tiyyas and other backward classes to walk along the approach roads to the Tali temple, Calicut. This incident, supported by political activist Manjeri Rama Iyer, emphasised the need for early eradication of untouchability and drew public attention to the issue. T.K. Madhavan, a leader with a passion for social justice, was a fearless journalist in Kerala. He championed the untouchables' cause in the columns of *Desabhimani* and focused on opening approach roads to temples for the Avarnas. Madhavan attended the Coconada Congress in 1923 and sought Congress support in his fight for social justice.

### 2.2.4.1 Vaikam Satyagraha

◆ Struggle for  
using approach  
roads of the  
temples

Vaikam Satyagraha (1924-1925) was a significant struggle aimed at opening approach roads to the Vaikam temple for the Avarnas. The movement was led by T. K. Madhavan and other leaders like K. P. Kesava Menon, Mannath Padmanabhan, Changanacherry Parameswaran Pillai, C.V. Kunhiraman and K. Kelappan. The *Savarna Jatha*, organised by caste Hindus who supported the *Satyagraha* under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan, was one of the highlights of the *Satyagraha*. *Savarna Jatha* submitted their demand before the Regent Setu Lakshmi Bai. The *Satyagraha* and the *Savarna Jatha* helped influence public opinion in favour of temple entry. Despite facing arrests and harassment, the *Satyagraha* ended in 1925 with Mahatma Gandhi's intervention. Gandhi visited Travancore and discussed with the *Rani* and also met Sree Narayana Guru



at Varkala. The approach roads to the temple were officially opened to all Hindus, regardless of caste. However, this concession was not extended to the Avarnas in other temples in Travancore. Movements for opening approach roads to the Avarnas were organised in various centres, such as Ambalapuzha, Tiruvarpu, Suchindram, etc. and by 1928, approach roads to all temples in Travancore were open to all Hindus, regardless of caste.

#### 2.2.4.2 Guruvayur Satyagraha

The Guruvayur Satyagraha (1931-33) was a significant campaign in Kerala to eradicate untouchability. It began on 1 November, 1931, under the Kerala Provincial Congress, with the goal of opening the Guruvayur temple to all Hindus. The leaders of the *Satyagraha* were K. Kelappan and the Captain of the Volunteer Corps, A.K. Gopalan. The movement gained nationwide attention, with political workers from across India converging on Guruvayur to support the Satyagrahis. The Zamorin, the temple's trustee, remained uncompromising towards the demand for temple entry. However, On November 7, T.Subramanian Tirumumbu, the captain of the temple entry campaign, was arrested, and temple officials brutally assaulted P. Krishna Pillai for ringing the bell in the temple—a practice reserved solely for Brahmins. On December 26, opponents of the *Satyagraha* attacked A.K. Gopalan, leading people to forcibly enter the temple by removing barricades.

◆ *Struggle for entry into the temple*

The *Satyagraha* lasted for 10 months, culminating in K. Kelappan entering an indefinite fast before the temple on 21 September, 1932. He discontinued the fast on 2 October, 1932, following Gandhi's advice. A limited referendum was held under Congress to determine the views of the Hindus of Ponnani taluk on temple entry, with 70% of the people supporting temple entry for Harijans, with the majority being conservative women. Despite not achieving its immediate objective, the Guruvayur Satyagraha became a major milestone towards eradicating untouchability.

◆ *Step towards the eradication of untouchability*

#### 2.2.4.3 Temple Entry

The movement for temple entry achieved its victory with the 'Temple Entry Proclamation', issued by *Maharaja* of Travancore, Sri Chitra Tirunal Balarama Varma on 12 November, 1936. It marked the beginning of the movement for temple entry in India. This historic document was hailed as a "miracle of modern times" by Gandhi. Despite being

◆ *Temple Entry in Travancore*

a shock to orthodox Hindu circles, it provided hope and a sense of hope to the Harijans and other backward classes. The reform was later introduced in Cochin and Malabar with the Temple Entry Authorisation Proclamation V of 1123 (1947-48) and the Madras Temple Entry Act of 1947, respectively. With the advent of Independence, untouchability was abolished by legislation, making those who practised it liable to punishment.

#### 2.2.4.4 Paliyam Satyagraha

The campaign for eradicating untouchability in India continued to be observed in the post-independence period, leading to the formation of the Action Council to organise a *Satyagraha* to force the Paliyam family to open the road to all people, regardless of caste or religion. The *Satyagraha* took place from December to April 1948, and the volunteers were subjected to repressive measures like arrest and lathi-charge. However, the movement evoked the willing participation of even princes of the royal families of Cochin and Kodungallur, as well as members of Namboothiri families. On the hundredth day of the *Satyagraha*, freedom fighter A.G. Velayudhan met with a tragic death in a police lathi-charge, and the *Satyagraha* was suspended. On Vishu day in 1948, all temples in Cochin were opened to all Hindus, allowing Avarnas and non-Hindus to walk along the Paliyam road.

◆ *Temple entry in Cochin*

◆ *Reforms in the Muslim community*

#### 2.2.5 Religious Reform Movements

Like the Hindu reformers of Kerala, the other religionists, especially the Muslims and the Christians, introduced reforms in their religions. Kerala's Muslim community faced significant religious and social issues, including the high-handedness of priests and religious taboos. They deviated from the original teachings of Islam, leading to superstitions and wrong beliefs. This plight inspired enlightened members to address the problem of educating the masses. The Muslim community also faced social issues, including unwanted rites, traditionalism, polygamy, and child marriage. They were against modern education and had acquired knowledge from the *Othupalli (Madrasa)*, which was unsystematic. The Malayalam language was considered Brahmanic, while English was considered the language of hell due to their hostility to the British and conservatives called for the abolition of both languages.

Like many other progressive thinkers, the Muslim

◆ *Muslim reformers*

reformers also opposed polygamy and the '*pardha*' (veil) system. They called for an end to costly and extravagant ceremonies such as *Kuri kallyanam* (a price-seeking ceremony similar to a wedding), *Markka Kalyanam* (circumcision), and *Kathukuthu Kalyanam* (ear-piercing ceremony), among others. The reformers believed that proper education was the only way to eliminate these practices. They emphasised the need for the Muslim youth, particularly women, to receive education. Some notable reformers, such as Syed Alavi Thangal of Mampuram, Umar Qai of Veliyamkodu, Fasal Pookoya Thangal of Mampuram, Sanaullah Makti Thangal of Veliyamcode, Shaik Hamadani Thangal of Alappuzha, and M. Abdul Khadar Moulavi of Vakkom, contributed to the renaissance of the Muslim community in modern Kerala.

◆ *Islamic reformism in Kerala*

The Islamic reformism (Islahi Movement) in Kerala began with Vakkom Moulavi, but traditional intellectuals like Umar Qazi and Fazal Pookoya Thangal worked to uplift the Muslim downtrodden from the clutches of landlordism and colonial exploitation. Umar Qazi initiated a non-cooperative agitation against the British government in Malabar, advocating for equality and brotherhood. Syed Alavi Thangal and his son Fazal Pookoya Thangal, known as 'Mampuram Thangal', encouraged the poor to uphold a self-respectful attitude against landlords and slavery. Mampuram Thangal, the leader of the Cheror rebellion, led a revolt against the British, marking one of the first anti-British peasant appraisals in modern Kerala. These intellectuals questioned the unwanted interventions of feudal lords and colonial intruders, advocating for reforms and modernity among the Muslims of Malabar. They preached to ordinary people to unite against feudal atrocities and colonial maladministration.

### **2.2.5.1 Sanaulla Makti Thangal**

Sanaulla Makti Thangal, born in Veliyankode, Ponnani Taluk in 1847, was the son of Sayyed Ahmed Thangal, who was a religious leader and a disciple of Veliyamcode Umar Qazi. His family is considered to be the descendants of Prophet Muhammad. He received both secular and religious education in Ponnani, mastering English, Persian, Urdu, Tamil, Arabic, and Malayalam. Initially appointed as an Excise Inspector under the British government, he resigned from the post in 1892 and became a reformer. He raised his voice against traditional customs such as the matrilineal system, polygamy, and superstitions. In response to the Christian Missionary propaganda, Makti Thangal, along with

◆ Works of Makti Tangal

Qadir Shah Haji Bappu Sahib alias Kakka Sahib of Fort Kochi, initiated '*Satyaprakasam*' (1888). He also published '*Tuhfat Ul Akhyar Wa Hidathul Ashrar*', a fortnightly publication in Arabi-Malayalam. Makti Tangal authored several books, including *Kadora Koodaram* (1884), *Muslim Janavum Vidhyabhyasavum*, *Satyadarshini* (1891), *Kadoravajram*, *Christeeya Vayadappu*, *Parkaleetha Porkalam*, *Moodahankaram Mahandhakaram*, *Palilla payasam* and *Ahankarogasham*.

◆ Against criticism from Christian missionaries

During the period when Islam was heavily criticised by Christian missionaries, Makti Tangal wrote a book titled *Christeeya Mooda Proudhi Darppanam* (1900) and a Malayalam journal titled *Paropakari* (1898). He started a printing press, *Muhammadiya Press*, in Kochi in 1890 and wrote a biography of Prophet Muhammad, *Nabinanayam*. He also criticised '*Marumakkathayam*' among the Mappilas of Malabar, an un-Islamic practice. In 1889, he organised a 'Sabha' at Kannur, with the support of Sultan Ali Raja, to liberate the Mappilas through education. He also attempted to translate the Holy Quran into Malayalam.

◆ Addressed Muslim women issues

Makti Tangal was the first Muslim Reformer of Kerala who addressed the problems faced by the Muslim women. *Naari Narabhichari*, a monograph by Makti Tangal, contained the issues of polygamy, gender equality, women's freedom, female education etc. He fought against the views of orthodox Ulema, who believed English was the language of hell and Malayalam was the language of non-believers. He supported the study of English and vernacular languages and ridiculed orthodox Muslims who proclaimed English as the language of hell. He passed away in 1912.

### 2.2.5.2 Muhammad Mahin Hamadani Thangal

Muhammad Mahin Hamadani Thangal, born in 1870 in Vaduthala, was a significant Muslim reformer in Kerala, focusing on modern education. He attempted to establish a Muslim college in Travancore and submitted a memorial to P. Rajagopalachari. Thangal was granted around eight acres of land at Aluva to construct a Muslim College on the Aligarh model. However, his efforts didn't become successful due to the lack of support from the community. As a follower of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, he supported reformist activities on the Aligarh model. His leadership and inspiration led to the formation of social and religious organisations like '*Lajanathul Hamadania*' of Azhikode and '*Lajanathul Islam Sangam*' of Eriyad in Cochin State. He wrote a book named *Irfat al-Islam* to condemn all unIslamic beliefs and practices.

◆ *Attempts to spread modern education among Muslims*

He was proficient in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages and published several articles to spread modern education among Muslims. Thangal, a member of the Sri Moolam Popular Assembly, advocated for improved educational facilities for Muslims in Travancore, and the government made provisions for teaching Arabic at schools. Despite his efforts, his life and activities were not properly documented in social reform movements in Kerala.

### 2.2.5.3 Vakkom Abdul Khadar Maulavi

◆ *Maulavi's works*

Vakkom Abdul Khadar Maulavi, the father of the Islamic reformist movement in modern Kerala. He was born on 28 December, 1873 at Vakkom in Chirayinkil Taluk. He was influenced by Muslim scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Mohammed Ibn Abdul Vahab (1703-1792) etc. He acquired proficiency in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Tamil, Sanskrit and English. As a scholar and reformer, he fought against anti-Islamic practices among Muslims and advocated for Western education. He also encouraged print culture and popularised liberal ideas of social reforms through journals and newspapers like '*Swadeshabhimani*' (1905), '*The Muslim*' (1906), '*Al-Islam*' (1918) and '*Deepika*' (1931). Maulavi published the first Malayalam magazine of the 'Muslims', of Travancore, titled *Muslim*, on 1 January, 1906. He translated the 'Quran' and other theological works into Malayalam. He wrote an Arabic Malayalam book, '*Lawh al Sabah*' and translated works from Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English into Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam, including al-Ghazali's '*Kimiya - i Saadat*'.

◆ *Banning of Swadeshabhimani and arrest of Ramakrishna Pillai*

Maulavi started the newspaper *Swadeshabhimani* on 19 January, 1905 at Anjengo to educate people about their rights and responsibilities and campaign for a responsible government committed to public welfare in Travancore. The newspaper became popular with the editor, K. Ramakrishna Pillai, popularly known as '*Swadeshabhimani*' K. Ramakrishna Pillai. It vehemently criticised the corruption of government authorities and *Diwan*. On September 26, 1910, the British authorities banned the newspaper, confiscated the printing press, and arrested and deported Ramakrishna Pillai to Madras.

With continuous efforts through his journals and his associates in the Sri Moolam Popular Assembly, Vakkom Maulavi tried to bring changes in the educational policies of the government of Travancore. The government introduced a proceeding to support Maulavi's efforts, introducing a



◆ *Intervention in the educational policies*

Mohammedan Inspector for Schools, Arabic tutors, Muslim scholarships, female education, and foreign education opportunities for Muslims. Vakkom Maulavi also supported the establishment of reformist organisations like '*Islam Dharma Paripalana Sangham*' (1906), '*Chirayinkil Taluk Muslim Samajam*', '*Hadiyyul Islam Sangham*', '*Jama't-i Irshad*', etc., in the state of Travancore.

◆ *Formation of Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham*

'*Travancore Muslim Mahasabha*' was established with Moulavi's support, promoting progressive ideals in the community. '*The Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham*', popularly known as '*Aikya Sangham*', formed at Kodungalloor in 1922, provided a forum for intellectuals in the community to discuss social and religious issues concerned with the Muslims. The first anniversary of '*Muslim Aikya Sangham*' was held in 1923 at Eriyadu under the presidentship of Vakkom Moulavi. The Sangham published two journals: '*Muslim Aikyam*' in Malayalam and '*Al-Irshad*' in Arabi-Malayalam. As a nationalist, Moulavi attended the Ottappalam Conference of the Indian National Congress and the *Kerala Majlis al-Ulama* Conference in 1921. He established the Islamic Publishing House in 1931 at Vakkom. He breathed his last in 1932.

◆ *Modernisation of the Muslims*

According to some scholars, the services rendered by Vakkom Moulavi to the Muslim Community are comparable to the service rendered by Dr Palpu to the cause of the Ezhavas or Ayyankali for the Pulayas. With these multitudes of socio-religious reform initiatives, the Muslim reformers paved the way for modernising the Muslim masses.

#### **2.2.5.4 Palakkunnathu Abraham Malpan**

◆ *Necessity for reform*

Caste consciousness persisted among Christians, with higher strata dominating offices, causing conflicts. The Protestant Missionaries from Europe expanded in Kerala with the support of colonial authorities. The Syrian Christians (*Nazrani Mappilas*), who played a significant role in Christians' socio-economic and cultural life, and other Eastern and Catholic congregations sought to reform their churches with colonial modernity and social reforms. Meanwhile, reformers like Abraham Malpan and Chavarayachan sought to purify unwanted practices and inequalities within the Christian community.

Palakkunnathu Abraham Malpan, a prominent theologian, social reformer, and progenitor of the Marthoma Sabha, was born in Pathanamthitta in 1796. He belonged to the Syrian Christian community of Kerala, who stood against the

◆ *Reformist activities of Malpan*

Latinisation attempts by the Portuguese. He is considered 'Martin Luther' among the Kerala Christians. He studied Syriac language and religious education from Puthuppallyil Padinjarekuttu Kora Malpan. He was ordained as *Kattanaar* (priest) in 1815. Malpan raised his voice against the social inequalities and superstitions that prevailed among the members of the 'Malankara Sabha'. His first step to reform was to change the Syrian rites and prayers in Malayalam, which were first performed at the Maramon Church in Pathanamthitta in 1837. With the reformist activities of Abraham Malpan and the Anglican Church's influence, a schism occurred in the 'Malankara Yakobaya Suriyani Sabha' and a new group, 'Malankara Marthoma Syrian Church', separated from it.

### 2.2.5.5 Kuraiakose Elias Chavara

◆ *Early life of Kuriakose Elias Chavara*

Kuriakose Elias, also known as Chavarayachan, was born in 1805 in Kainakary, Alappuzha. He began his education in martial arts, Kalari and learned Malayalam, Arithmetic, Tamil, and Sanskrit. At thirteen, he entered the seminary at Pallipuram and learned new languages like Syrian, Latin, and Portuguese. On 29 November, 1829, he received the priesthood from Bishop Maurilius Stablini at St. Andrews Church in Arthunkal.

◆ *Activities of Chavarayachan*

In 1831, he founded the first indigenous religious Congregation, the Carmelite of Mary Immaculate (CMI), along with Fr. Thomas Palackal and Fr. Porukara Thomas. He established a Sanskrit School at Mannanam in 1846 and a monastery for teaching Sanskrit to his community and lower castes, and in 1865, Archbishop Bernadinos urged parishes to form educational institutions (*pallikkoru pallikoodam*). He also founded a residence at Mannanam in 1831. He visualised the emancipation of women through establishing the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) on 13th February 1866 at Koonammavu along with Fr. Leopold. To alleviate hunger and malnutrition, he initiated the *Pidiyari* system (1866), collecting food grains. In 1869, he founded the first charity house in Kerala, 'Upavisala' or 'Dharamshala'.

Chavarayachan founded St. Joseph printing press at Mannanam in 1846. There were only two printing presses in Kerala at that time- one belonged to the protestant missionaries and another one run by the state government. The first book published by the press was *Gyana Peeyusham* (1847), a Malayalam prayer book. The Catholic daily, *Nazrani Deepika*, was first printed in 1887. The first monthly of Syrian



◆ *Contributions of Chavarayachan*

Christians of Malabar, '*Karmala Kusumam*', was published in 1903. Chavarayachan also wrote numerous books, including the *Nalla Appante Chavarul* (1868), a moral code for believers, the *Naalagamangal*, *Athmanuthapam*, *Maranaveettil Paduvanulla Pana*, *Anasthasiayude Raktasakshitwam* (1861), *Dhyana Sallapangal*, and 10 Eclogues (Shepherd plays). *Athmanuthapam*, written around 1869-70, contains 13 parts and describes the life of Jesus and Mother Mary. Before finishing the 13th part of the book, he breathed his last in 1871. He is considered the 'Saint of Kuttanad'. In recognition of his contributions, the Catholic Church canonised him as a saint in 2014.

## Summarised Overview

Socio-religious reforms in India during the 19th and 20th centuries brought forth revolutionary ideas, including opposition to slavery, caste discrimination, and untouchability. European ideas influenced the youth of the orthodox upper-caste class through education and inspired similar movements. Some reformers also emerged from lower-caste and lower-class backgrounds. These socio-religious and caste reform movements emerged in many parts of the country. Kerala also underwent a socio-political awakening due to several socio-economic, political and religious factors.

Saints like Vaikunda Swami, Thycaud Aiyya Swami, Chattambi Swami, and Sree Narayana Guru in Kerala addressed the challenges of their era by reconsidering religious beliefs and societal norms. They questioned the caste system and encouraged people to resist imposed restrictions. V.T. Bhattathiripad played a significant role in breaking caste rules and challenging various rituals and customs that discriminated against Namboothiri women. Ayyankali's efforts eventually led to the acquisition of several basic rights by the lower caste and untouchables, including the right to use public roads and access temples. Reformers such as Makti Thangal and Vakkom Maulavi contributed to the promotion of modern education among Muslims and fought against unwanted practices within the community. Similarly, reformers like Abraham Malpan and Chavarayachan aimed to purify and rectify unwanted practices and inequalities within the Christian community.

## Assignments

1. Mention the role of Sahodaran Ayyapan in the social revolution against the caste system and untouchability.
2. Write a short note on the rise and growth of Namboothiri Movements in Kerala.
3. Briefly explain the significance of *Kallumala* agitation in the history of Kerala.
4. Elucidate the role of religious reformers in bringing changes in their own communities.
5. Explain the socio-economic context that led to the formation of reform movements in Kerala.
6. Discuss the role of religious and social reformers in introducing modern education among Muslims.
7. Analyse the role of Sree Narayana Guru and Dr. Palpu in the emancipation of Ezhavas.
8. Describe the role of Ayyankali in the upliftment of lower caste population in Kerala.

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SGOU

# Freedom Movement

**BLOCK-03**



# Freedom Struggle in Malabar

## Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learners will be able to :

- ◆ understand the nature of the Freedom Movement in Malabar
- ◆ analyse the emergence of the Indian National Congress in Malabar
- ◆ familiarise themselves with the influence of Non-Co-operation, Khilafat, Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements in Kerala
- ◆ discuss the nature of Malabar Rebellion

## Background

Early resistance against the British policies in Kerala during the colonial period were labelled as “restorative rebellions.” Most of them were initiated and organised by the peasants with the help of rebel local rulers who lost their position after the establishment of the British paramountcy. These uprisings were not organised by any kind of ideology or large-scale mobilisation. However, the colonial power suppressed these rebellions with the help of some native rulers. The situation changed in the late 19th century. We saw the emergence of an English educated middle class who became conscious about the nationalist movements in different parts of India. The social reform movements also helped the people irrespective of caste and creed to think against colonial oppression.

With the formation of the Indian National Congress, there was an organised movement against British imperialism all over India. In Kerala, the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 united the people under an organisation for the cause of Indian independence. In this unit, we discuss the emergence of the Indian National Congress and its activities in Malabar. We also analyse the repercussions of nationalist movements in Malabar and one of the most important incidents in the Nationalist Movement of Kerala- the Malabar Rebellion.

## Keywords

Indian National Congress, Non- Cooperation Movement, *Khilafat*, Malabar, *Janmi*, Peasantry, National Movement



## Discussion

### 3.1.1 Emergence of Indian National Congress in Malabar

#### ◆ *Anti-feudal and anti-colonial*

Nationalism served as a unifying factor and a source of identity throughout the twentieth century. The Nationalist Movement in Malabar was more active than in the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin. Feudal oppression, colonial exploitation, and general economic despair were widespread and drove people to the brink of starvation. Hence, the nationalist movement in Malabar was anti-feudal and anti-colonial in nature.

#### ◆ *Nature of Nationalist Movement in Malabar*

From its inception in 1885, the Indian National Congress(INC)had its supporters in Malabar. K. Sankaran Nair, a prominent person from Malabar, presided over the Congress Conference held at Amaravati in 1897. In 1904, a conference was held under the auspices of the Indian National Congress in Calicut under the chairmanship of Vijayaraghavacharya. In 1908, the District Congress Committee was formed in Malabar. K. P. Kesava Menon became the Secretary of the District Committee of the Congress. The District Congress Committee meetings, which were conducted once or twice a year, were largely used to elect a few delegates to the annual session of the Indian National Congress. The District Congress Provincial Conference was held in Calicut in 1913 and was somewhat successful in creating a political stir among the people.

#### ◆ *Home Rule League*

In 1916, a branch of the All India Home Rule League, founded by Annie Besant, also started working in the area. K. P. Kesava Menon, who was the secretary of the District Committee of the Congress, assumed the role of the secretary of the Home Rule League as well.

#### ◆ *Political resolutions of Congress Committee*

From 1916 onwards, political conferences were held in Malabar to redress the grievances of the people against the government. In May 1916, the first Malabar District Political Conference of the Congress was held in Palghat under the presidency of Annie Besant. Annie Besant believed that the District Conference should focus on specific problems of regional interest and offer improvements to the general administrative system. The meeting passed several resolutions requesting Indian government authorities to grant home rule and release political prisoners. It should be

highlighted that the success of the Palghat Conference was a source of inspiration for both leaders and followers.

◆ *Growth of nationalist feelings*

Meanwhile, the First World War (1914-1918) gave impetus to the Malabar nationalist movement. In 1916, a public meeting was held in Calicut Town Hall to mobilise public support for the war efforts of the British government. During the meeting, K. P. Kesava Menon was denied permission to speak in Malayalam by the British Civil Servant Charles Innes. Hence, he walked out from the stage, and many of the audience also left the hall. This event was symbolic of the growing momentum of the nationalist movement in Kerala.

◆ *Political Conferences*

The second Political Conference was held in Calicut in April 1917, presided over by C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. Several representatives from Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore participated in this Conference. There was a procession led by C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and Annie Besant in the main streets of the town. The Committee wished to conduct the meeting on the lawns of Mananchira. However, The authorities were, skeptical of the Congress activities at that time and the British Civil Servants refused permission. Hence the meeting was held in the compound of the residence of K. P. Raman Menon. Tellicherry hosted the third Political Conference and Badagara hosted the fourth.

### **3.1.1.1 Manjeri Conference (1920)**

◆ *Discussions at the Manjeri conference*

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 were announced at the end of the war, sparking a heated debate over whether the reforms should be implemented. The 5th Malabar District Political Committee was held on 28 April 1920 in Manjeri in the presence of Annie Besant, and it passed a resolution declaring the reforms unsatisfactory and hopeless. It also advocated the speedy implementation of agrarian reforms in Malabar. The conference was attended by 1,309 delegates from all over the district. The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were the primary focus of discussion. The leader of the radical group K. P. Raman Menon introduced a main political resolution, which declared that India was in a state for self-government and that the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were inadequate. Annie Besant opposed the motion. But when it was presented to a vote, it was passed by a large margin. This prompted Annie Besant and her supporters to walk out of the conference.

At the conference, another resolution calling for tenancy reform, demanding legislation for safeguarding the interests

◆ *Split in Congress Conference in Kerala*

of the tenants, was also passed. Following the resolution's passage, there was a division at the conference between moderate and extremist elements. The moderate group, which consisted of landlords and wealthy men, left the Congress organisation and the leadership of the INC was passed to the extremists who championed the cause of peasants, workers, and the middle class. The Manjeri Conference witnessed the first open split in the Congress in Kerala between extremists and moderates. Manjeri has been described as 'a Surat in reverse' because, in Surat in 1907, the extremists left the Congress. Thus, the Manjeri Conference demonstrated Malabar's increasing wave of nationalism. Malabar was soon engulfed in the swirl of an active movement inspired and headed by Mahatma Gandhi.

### **3.1.2 Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Kerala**

#### **3.1.2.1 Formation of Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC)**

◆ *Formation of KPCC*

The Indian National Congress decided at Nagpur in 1920 to reorganise the Congress Committees on a linguistic basis, and membership in the party was made available to everyone who could afford a quarter-rupee as an annual fee. The base of the Indian National Congress in Malabar was broadened by enlisting the people. The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) was founded, with K. Madhavan Nair as its Secretary, and five District Committees were brought under its control, namely Tellicherry, Calicut, Palghat, Cochin, and Travancore. The Congress Committees, Khilafat Committees and Kudiyan Sanghams all collaborated to make the movement a huge success. The activities were coordinated by the Congress leader Muhammad Abdur Rahman. Political gatherings in the district were prohibited by orders issued by the British government. Violations of the order became usual in political activities, and those who did so were arrested and imprisoned.

◆ *Ottappalam Conference*

In April 1921, the newly formed Kerala Provincial Congress Committee met for the first time at Ottappalam. Delegates from the District Congress Committees were drawn to Ottappalam for the meeting. There were separate sessions to examine tenant-landlord issues and student issues in addition to the general session. The appeal for the Khilafat and Non-Co-operation was also discussed. The meeting adopted a number of resolutions encouraging the

government to take steps to improve the living conditions of the oppressed and to resolve tenant-landlord disputes amicably. The Conference backed the Nagpur Congress's Non-Co-operation resolution and pushed the people to join the struggle for *Swaraj*. The members of the Home Rule League and moderate Congressmen boycotted the Ottapalam meeting because they opposed the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movement. The district authorities were outraged by the attendance of delegates from all over Kerala, as well as the smooth running of the meeting and the enthusiasm of the people.

◆ *Gained public attention*

At the conclusion of the session, police beat up the Congress volunteers. However, the Congressmen acted with caution and avoided a confrontation with the police. A dispute erupted after police assaulted Ramunni Menon, Secretary of the Ottapalam Conference, and Ahmad Khan, a Madras-based Khilafat leader. However, the leaders reassured the Congressmen and asked them to remain calm even in provocation. The Ottapalam Conference received extensive coverage in Malayalam newspapers, drawing public attention to the oppressive policy of the government.

◆ *Inception of Malabar Khilafat Movement*

In August 1920, Mahatma Gandhi and Shaukat Ali visited Malabar. Their appeal for Non-Co-operation was met with little enthusiasm, but the Khilafat movement received an immediate response from the Muslims, particularly in South Malabar. The nature of the movement was non-violent and non-cooperation. Khilafat committees were formed in various parts of the Malabar. However, the movement's popularity alarmed the colonial authorities. They slapped prohibitory orders on all Khilafat gatherings on 5 February, 1921, claiming that the Khilafat meetings incited the Muslims against the British Government and the Hindus. On 16 February 1921, all the important Congress and Khilafat leaders, including Yakub Hassan, U. Gopala Menon, P. Moideen Koya, and K. Madhavan Nair, were arrested. As a result of the arrest of the leaders, the movement devolved into a violent mode.

### **3.1.3 Malabar Rebellion (1921)**

The sufferings of the peasants under the colonial regime caused an upsurge of protests, particularly in Malabar. During colonial rule, economic exploitation was at its peak, and the land revenue system worsened the conditions of the peasants. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ernad and Valluvanad taluks of the Malabar

◆ *Genesis of Malabar Rebellions*

districts experienced continuous upheavals, leading to Mappila uprisings against the landlords and the colonial government. There were thirty-three such incidents between 1836 and 1921, which the Madras government referred to as “Moplah Outrages.” The rebellion of 1921 took place during the Khilafat and Non-Co-operation Movements; therefore, the involvement of the people was high. Most of these revolts took place in the taluks of Valluvanad and Ernad, where the peasants were mostly Muslims. The Hindus owned most of the property, and the Mappila peasants leased it directly from the Hindu landlords or through an intermediary.

◆ *Tirurangadi incident*

On 19 August, 1921, District Magistrate E. F. Thomas marched to Tirurangadi with a group of police to arrest some Mappila leaders, including Ali Musaliar, the popular priest in the Mambram Mosque. He also had a warrant to search the mosques and houses. He arrived at Tirurangadi on August 20; however, Ali Musaliar was not at the Mosque at that time, and three Khilafat volunteers were arrested. The rumour circulated that the British had assaulted and destroyed the Mambram Mosque. The Muslims marched to Mambram, particularly the Mappilas who had gathered at Kottakkal’s weekly fair. On their way, they were joined by the Muslims from Tanur and Parappanangadi. Unarmed Muslims gathered at Tirurangadi and demanded the release of the detained volunteers. The army opened fire on an unarmed and peaceful mob that had gathered there, killing around 300 individuals. The mob became aggressive. They assaulted the officers, and the government buildings were burned, treasuries were robbed, and documents were destroyed. The Tirurangadi incident resulted in the Malabar Rebellion of 1921.

◆ *Nature of Malabar Rebellion*

The Malabar Rebellion began in Tirurangadi and extended to the taluks of Ernad, Valluvanad, and Ponnani. They marched to Pookkottur, but no crimes against the Hindus were reported. They set fire to the record room in Kovilakam. There was no harm done to any member of Kovilakam. This was the nature of rebellian activity in South Malabar during the early phases of the uprising. They robbed the treasury and attacked government offices at Manjeri, Tirur, Perintalmanna, Malappuram and other areas. The infamous officers were also targeted. However, no harm was done to the poor Hindus or landowners. Many Hindu rebels actively participated in the rebellion by damaging bridges and attacking police stations in Mannarkkad.

◆ *Spread of the movement*

The important leaders of the rebellion were Variamkunnath Kunhammad Haji, Kalathingal Mammad, and Ali Musaliar in Ernad, and Sithi Koya Thangal and Embichi Koya Thangal in Valluvanad. The 'Republic' of Ernad was established and Kunhammad Haji and Kalathingal Mammad declared themselves as its Presidents. The insurgents held complete control of the territory for another six months. During the early stages of the uprising, the Nairs, Mappilas, and other members of the Non-cooperation were detained and arbitrarily punished. On 29 August 1921, martial law was declared in Ernad, Ponnani, Calicut and Valluvanad.

◆ *Suppression of the rebellion*

The government suppressed the uprising ruthlessly with the support of additional forces such as the Gurkha. In an encounter with the rebels and Khilafat volunteers, the government forces attacked the Tirurangadi Mosque, and its leader, Ali Musaliar, surrendered. Police atrocities against the rebels continued, and many of them were killed in police stations. In the early stages of the insurrection, the Hindus joined with the Mappila peasants, but later, the Nairs and others supported the British troops, robbed Mappila houses, and abused their women. The Mappila rebels saw it as treachery and retaliated by attacking them. As a result, rather than being against imperialism and landlordism, the insurrection took on a more communal colour.

◆ *Relief works by Congressmen*

Muhammad Abdurahaman, a progressive leader, and K. Madhavan Nair, a Congress activist, were involved in peace-making campaigns and relief work for Mappila rebellion refugees. As a Congress activist, he was critical of British imperialism. Abdurahaman's communal harmony hindered the British strategy of dividing people into conflicting religions. In October 1921, the police arrested and imprisoned him for two years, claiming he conspired and was involved in communal mobilisation.

### **3.1.3.1 Wagon Tragedy**

The most tragic episode in the Malabar Rebellion was the 'Wagon Tragedy'. On 20 November, 1921, a large number of prisoners were sent to Tirur Sub jail. Sergeant Andrews and traffic inspector Revvee, who were in charge of prisoner transport, decided to bring one hundred prisoners to Bellary Jail. Though two wagons were available, Andrews preferred only one wagon, claiming that it was sufficient. One hundred prisoners had been forced into a wagon. The police closed and locked the doors. Sergeant Andrews and seven police

◆ *Mass killing*

officers escorted the prisoners. In the scene at Podanur when the door was opened, sixty-one out of ninety people were discovered dead, and all the dead bodies were dragged onto the railway platform. Historian Sumit Sarkar referred to it as the 'Black Hole of Podanur'.

◆ *Economic and Communal reasons*

There are differing opinions about the nature of the Malabar uprising. Most of the colonial writers saw it as merely a communal insurrection. According to William Logan and E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the reason for the insurrection was agricultural dissatisfaction, with the *janmi* classes exploiting the peasants with the help of colonial authorities, causing the peasants to turn against them.

◆ *Rebels were mostly peasants*

According to K. N. Panikkar, "the Rebellion of 1921 cannot be really interpreted in communal terms. On the contrary, given the background of the economic condition of the peasantry, the pattern of rebel activity, and the classes to which the participants belonged, it is reasonable to suggest that the Rebellion was a continuation of the agrarian conflicts of the nineteenth century." Rao Bahadur C. S. Subramanyam, addressing the Legislative Assembly, made it clear that the rebels were impoverished peasants with little property, and the men of property and the upper classes were not among them.

◆ *Lasted for a long time*

The Viceroy, Lord Reading, also agreed that agrarian decline was the root cause of the uprising. He proposed that an agrarian reform to be implemented to maintain peace in Malabar and to make the Muslims loyal citizens. In 1930, the government developed comprehensive tenancy legislation. Malabar's insurgency lasted longer than any other Indian peasant uprising.

### 3.1.4 Civil Disobedience Movement (1932)

Following the failure of the Round Table Conference in London, the Second Civil Disobedience Movement in India began in January 1932 and Malabar played a significant part in the Movement,. Payyannur was the main venue of the Salt Satyagraha. Several Satyagrahis from Calicut, Palghat, and other districts of Kerala marched to Payyannur to participate in the movement. Despite the satyagrahis' peaceful attitude, the government resorted to a series of coercive measures in order to break up the movement. The Congress was declared an illegal organisation, and the British government launched

◆ *Course of the Movement*

a series of Ordinances to crush the movement. Despite this, many individuals came out to join the movement. Boycotts of courts of law, educational institutions, foreign commodities, and toddy shops accompanied the movement. The four hundred participants who attended the 6<sup>th</sup> All Kerala Political Conference in Calicut in September 1932 were all imprisoned.

◆ *Women participation*

A notable characteristic of the movement was the enormous number of women who actively participated in it and courted arrest. The arrest, trial, and conviction of Lalitha Prabhu in Tellicherry for picketing shops selling foreign products deserve special mention. When she refused to pay the fine of Rs. 1,000 imposed by the court, she was ordered to relinquish all gold jewels on her body, including the *tali* or *mangalya sutra* (marriage insignia). The actions of the authorities drew national attention and sparked significant demonstrations. The government was eventually obliged to yield to popular pressure and return the *tali* to Lalitha Prabhu. In May 1935, the Civil Disobedience Movement was declared withdrawn.

◆ *Split in the Congress*

Following the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress organisation in Kerala split into two groups - the Rightists and the Leftists. The latter formed the Kerala section of the All India Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and operated as a separate organisation within the Congress under the leadership of E. M. S. Namboodiripad (EMS) and P. Krishna Pillai.

### **3.1.5 Quit India Movement (1942)**

◆ *Repercussion of world events*

The Quit India Movement of 1942 had little repercussions in Malabar. This was due to a shift in the Communist Party's policies following Russia's entry into the Second World War against the Axis powers. The Communist Party in India chose a policy of co-operation with the British Government in their war operations. However, some young workers inside the Congress formed a Socialist Party under the leadership of K. B. Menon and participated in the 'Quit India' Movement. They held meetings and protests violating the government's ban and also participated in the boycott of schools, colleges, and courts of law. During this time, a secret journal called 'Swatantra Bharatam' was published. There were also a few violent episodes involving communication interruptions and attacks on government offices and police stations. The most significant episode of the fight was the Keezhariyur bomb case, in which 27 people were charged, including K. B. Menon.

## Summarised Overview

1. The formation of the Indian National Congress gave new enthusiasm for the nationalist movement in India. Kerala welcomed the Indian National Congress (INC), which was formed in 1885. The establishment of the Indian National Congress District Committee in 1908 was a significant political event in colonial Malabar. With the formation of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, the activities of the INC became more vibrant in Malabar.

Gandhi and Maulana Shaukat Ali travelled to Malabar to establish Khilafat Committees and to increase the pace of the national movement against British authorities. The British authorities proclaimed the Congress and Khilafat meetings illegal throughout the country. This declaration, together with the following oppression of Khilafat meetings in Ernad and Valluvanad taluks, sparked the Malabar revolt in 1921. Historians differ in their opinions on the nature of the Malabar Rebellion. The fact that it occurred in the context of the Khilafat Movement has given the incident a special significance in the history of the Indian National Movement.

Kerala enthusiastically reacted to Gandhi's appeal to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. Satyagrahis from Calicut, Palghat, and other districts of Kerala marched to Payyannur to join the Salt Satyagraha. Following the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress split into two wings- the Rightists and the Leftists. In 1934, those who criticised the moderate agenda of the Congress created the Congress Socialist Party. Due to a shift in the Communist Party's policies, the Quit India Movement had only faint echoes in Malabar. However, a radical group under K. B. Menon actively participated in the Quit India Movement.

## Assignments

1. Trace the circumstances that led to the Malabar Rebellion.
2. Mention the significance of the Manjeri Conference.
3. Write a short note on the Civil Disobedience Movement in Kerala.
4. What led to the split in the Indian National Congress in Kerala after the Civil Disobedience Movement?
5. Explain the formation of the Indian National Congress in Kerala.
6. Analyse the nature of the Malabar Rebellion.
7. Bring out the role of women in the Nationalist Movement in Kerala.



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SGOU





# Struggle for Representation in the Princely States

## Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the early political struggles in Travancore
- ◆ discuss the political agitations in Travancore in the early 1930s
- ◆ analyse the influence of left ideology in Kerala
- ◆ evaluate the peasant and workers movement in Kerala

## Background

The political consciousness of the people in Travancore began in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the early British period, the princely states of Travancore and Cochin had their own political struggles and agitations that sought to establish good governance, while later agitations sought to achieve political rights. The educated middle class of Travancore asserted themselves in the late nineteenth century. The Civic Rights Movements were led by G. P. Pillai, a nationalist leader in Kerala. He initiated agitations for civic rights in Travancore in 1885, which was more political than in Cochin and Malabar. Two important popular representations, the Malayali Memorial and the Ezhava Memorial, offer us an indication of the scope of political action in Travancore. The Constitutional agitation was staged against the constitutional reforms of 1932 (Legislative Reforms Act of 1108 K.E. (1932-33)). The Peasants and Workers Movement was not organised or unified until the formation of *Kudiyam Sangham* in 1915. The Left radicals in the Congress Party initiated peasant's and worker's movements and organised protests on a class basis in the late 1930s. This unit provides a brief history of these agitations and focuses on the struggles for establishing responsible government in Travancore and Cochin.

## Keywords

Malayali Memorial, Ezhava Memorial, Responsible Government, Abstention Movement, Trade Union, Peasant Movements, *Karshaka Sangham*, Communist Party



## Discussion

### ◆ Rise of middle class and Western education

Travancore showed signs of a transition on many fronts by the turn of the nineteenth century. For example, the establishment of British rule and the subsequent political changes resulted in the transformation of the conventional social order. In the place of nobility, a Western-educated middle class arose, demanding equality, justice, and democratic institutions. With the influence of Western education, a new generation emerged and developed a broad social and political worldview. They also developed an independent spirit and a critical mindset. The educated class were aware of their rights and responsibilities.

### ◆ Growth of civic consciousness

The newly Western-educated middle class demanded affiliations with the administration and presented memorandums to the government to address their grievances. They felt they should have more representation in the administration process to address the prevailing social, political, and economic inequalities. English education has become a requirement for employment. As a result, unrepresented and underprivileged groups demanded special treatment regarding nominations. During this period, non-Malayali Brahmins outperformed the Malayalis in higher education.

### ◆ Constitutional struggles

#### 3.2.1. Malayali Memorial

In the late nineteenth century, the educated middle class of Travancore asserted themselves, and a series of constitutional struggles followed. The educated classes were widely opposed to the government's policy of importing people from outside, primarily Tamil Brahmins, to fill the most important positions in the public sector, even when people with comparable abilities were available within the State. It should be noted that the incorporation of the Tamil Brahmins into the Travancore government service began during Ramayyan Dalawa's reign and lasted throughout the nineteenth century.

In 1882, three students at the Maharajas College in Trivandrum were dismissed on suspicion of writing articles in newspapers opposing the State Government's policy of appointing non-Travancoreans to the State service. G. Parameswaran Pillai (G. P. Pillai), R. Ranga Rao (son of *Diwan* Peishkar R. Ranganatha Rao), and N. Raman Pillai

◆ *Public opposition to the government policy*

(son of former *Diwan* Nanu Pillai) were among them. The *Diwan* Rama Iyengar issued the dismissal order with the special sanction of the *Raja*, ignoring the opposition voiced by the College Principal, John Ross, an Englishman. Because of his active role in the agitation, G. Parameswaran Pillai came to be known as 'the father of political movement' in modern Travancore.

◆ *Submission of Malayali Memorial*

The people's displeasure on the policy of selecting outsiders to the Travancore Government service found concrete expression in the 'Malayali Memorial' submitted to the *Maharaja* on 1 January, 1891. The petition, signed by 10,028 people of various castes and creeds, brought the *Maharaja's* attention to the exclusion of educated natives from higher levels of government service and pleaded for legislation to be enacted to provide them with a fair percentage of government positions. G. P. Pillai, a renowned nationalist, was the driving force behind the entire operation.

### 3.2.2 Ezhava Memorial

◆ *Memorandum for equality in opportunity*

The 'Malayali Memorial' agitation fulfilled its aim by raising people's political consciousness and paving the way for the submission of a Memorial to the *Maharaja* on 3 September, 1896. The Memorial is popularly known as the Ezhava Memorial. The Ezhava Memorial was signed by 13,176 Ezhava community members led by Dr. Palpu. The Ezhavas and other backward people were formerly denied access to Government schools or entry into public services. After being denied entry as a Doctor in the Travancore Medical Department, Dr. Palpu was forced to seek employment in the Mysore service. The main aim of the Ezhava Memorial was to provide the Ezhavas with the same rights and advantages as those of their caste who had converted to Christianity. The Travancore Government's reaction to the Ezhava Memorial was hostile, and the memorialists were dissatisfied.

◆ *Failure of Ezhava Memorial*

The leaders of the Ezhava community presented a second 'Ezhava Memorial' to Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, during his visit to Trivandrum in 1900. It drew the Viceroy's attention to the numerous problems of the Ezhava community and urged immediate redressal. The Viceroy asserted that the Crown could not intervene in such "minor details of administration." As a result, the second Ezhava Memorial also failed to yield a beneficial outcome. Nonetheless, the Ezhava Memorial agitation helped to raise the social and political consciousness of the Ezhavas and prepare them for future efforts for social justice.

### 3.2.3 Early Activities of the Congress in Travancore and Cochin

#### ◆ Establishment of Travancore Congress

The Indian National Congress started its activity in Travancore during the reign of Sri Moolam Tirunal. Around 1919, a Congress Committee was established in Trivandrum on the initiative of young activists such as A. K. Pillai, V. Achutha Menon, and others, and they organised a boycott of foreign goods. A State People's Conference was held in Travancore in 1929, presided over by M. Visweswariah, and passed resolutions advocating the establishment of responsible Government in Indian states. The formation of the Youth League in Travancore in 1931 boosted the political involvement of the people in the National Movement. During the civil disobedience campaign of the early 1930s, the new organisation was instrumental in organising a boycott movement of foreign goods.

#### ◆ The State Congress in Cochin

The National Movement in India, led by the Indian National Congress, had echoes in Cochin. Even as early as 1919, an Indian National Congress Committee was functioning in Trichur. Several Congressmen from the state participated in non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements led by Gandhi and were arrested. The peasants and workers of Cranganore pushed for relief from the debt burden in 1933, and appropriate reforms were made to address their concerns. In the late 1930s, the Cochin District Congress Committee became involved in Cochin's civic life. Pattabhi Sitaramiah presided over a political Conference in Trichur in 1937. In Cochin, the struggle for responsible government began during this period.

### 3.2.4 Abstention Movement / Nivarthana Agitation

#### ◆ Agitation for representation in Legislature

Travancore experienced one of the most turbulent political upheavals in its history in the early 1930s. In protest against the Constitutional Amendments of 1932, the *Nivarthana* (Abstention) Movement was launched. The Ezhavas, Muslims, and a segment of the Christian community were concerned that under the new scheme, they would receive fewer seats in the State Legislature than they were entitled to on the basis of population. In contrast, the Nairs, as the largest group of tax payers, would receive more seats than they deserved based on the voting strength. As a result, these communities demanded representation in the Legislature in proportion to their numerical strength. As the demand

was not met quickly, they founded their own organisation, *Samyukta Rashtriya Samiti* (Joint Political Congress), and urged voters not to vote in the new scheme of elections. N. V. Joseph, T. M. Varghese, and C. Kesavan were among the organisation's leaders.

◆ Representation of backward communities

The *Nivarthana* (Abstention) Movement spread throughout the state. C. Kesavan was detained in June 1935 after delivering a speech at Kozhencherry. He was convicted of sedition and sentenced to two years imprisonment. On the other hand, the government constituted a Public Service Commission to ensure fair representation of backward communities in public services through a communal rotation scheme, and it also expanded the franchise by reducing the property qualification. The Ezhava, Muslim, and Christian communities received a set of seats. The Government publicly announced the revisions in electoral law in August 1936. The candidates put forth by the Joint Political Congress were successful in a considerable number of constituencies in the elections to the reformed Legislature conducted in April-May 1937. T. M. Varghese, the party's leader in the Sri Moolam Assembly, was chosen as Deputy President.

### 3.2.5 Struggle for Responsible Government in Travancore and Cochin

◆ Direct action for responsible government

The events in Travancore emphasised the urgent necessity of achieving responsible government as soon as possible. In February 1938, the Joint Political Congress was reorganised as the Travancore State Congress, with Pattom A. Thanu Pillai as its first President. C. Kesavan, T. M. Varghese, and other prominent leaders of the Joint Political Congress became State Congress leaders as well. The new organisation's goal was to attain fully responsible government for the people of Travancore. To attain their purpose, the Travancore State Congress decided to take direct action. Before taking the final step, it presented a memorandum to the *Maharaja* requesting the early grant of responsible government to the people of the State. The memorandum also contained many complaints against *Diwan* C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar and demanded his resignation.

The Government of Travancore suppressed the agitations by declaring the State Congress and Youth League as unlawful organisations. As a result, the State Congress Working Committee launched a Civil Disobedience Movement on 26 August, 1938. The movement began violently, with

◆ *Massive demonstration in Trivandrum*

the arrest of top Congress leaders, and they were sent to prison. In Neyyattinkara, police opened fire, and one person named Raghavan was killed. In Alleppey, workers went on a general strike, paralysing the public life of Travancore. On 24 October, 1938, a massive public demonstration took place, with police firing at the protesters. In November 1938, the State Congress planned a massive demonstration in Trivandrum on the Birthday of *Maharaja* of Travancore. The government lifted the ban on the Congress and released its leaders. However, the Congress struggled to continue its political activities due to hostile government attitudes. The *Diwan*, C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar, demanded the removal of a memorial for constitutional reforms. The State Congress Working Committee, following Gandhi's advice, retracted the memorial, leading to a split, and the radical section left the organisation.

◆ *Police firing at Pettah*

In 1946-47, Travancore experienced a series of significant events, including the Indian Independence Act (1946), which allowed the British Crown to lapse its paramountcy over the Indian states. C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar announced the independence of Travancore on 11 June, 1947, sparking a political struggle. The government used repressive measures, including a police firing at Pettah, Trivandrum, in which three persons, including a student by the name of Rajendran, were killed. A few days after the incident, an unsuccessful attack was made on C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar's life, and he escaped with minor injuries and very soon left the state. The *Maharaja* informed Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General, of Travancore's decision to join the Indian Union. C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar resigned from the position of *Diwan* on 19 August, 1947, and was succeeded by P. G. N. Unnithan.

◆ *Climax of the Movement*

The *Maharaja* of Travancore announced plans to establish a responsible Government in Travancore on 4 September, 1947. As per the announcement, the new assembly, called the Representative Body, was to function as a Constituent Assembly. It consisted of 120 members. The Assembly held its first sitting on 20 March, 1948 with its president A. J. John in the chair. G. Chandrashekhara Pillai was the Deputy president. At the first meeting itself, the Assembly expressed the desire to be invested with powers and functions of a Legislative Assembly and to have a ministry responsible to it. In accordance with that desire, the *Maharaja* promulgated the Travancore Interim Constitution Act on 24 March, 1948, with provision for a council of ministers headed by a

Prime Minister collectively responsible to the Assembly. The *Maharaja* became the constitutional head with a Council of Ministers headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai as Prime Minister and they assumed office on 24 March, 1948.

◆ *Agitation for Responsible Government*

By its Haripura Resolution of 1938, the Indian National Congress decided to stay out of active involvement in the affairs of the Native States, and thus the idea of an agitation for responsible government under the auspices of the Congress was put on hold for the time being. Meanwhile, to appease the public, the Government of Cochin announced a plan for Constitutional reforms. In this context, it is worth noting that, while the government in Travancore attempted to suppress political agitations for responsible government in the state, the other side in Cochin adopted an enlightened policy of meeting the demand in stages.

◆ *Political activities in Cochin*

In 1941, the Cochin State Praja Mandal was formed to begin an agitation for the achievement of responsible government in Cochin. Despite being banned, its first annual session took place in 1942, leading to the arrest of some delegates. The 'Quit India' Movement in 1942 revived its political activity in Cochin, with demonstrations and meetings. The Praja Mandal was rehabilitated, with 12 out of 19 candidates elected in the Cochin Legislature elections of May 1945. The *Maharaja* of Cochin transferred some departments to the Legislature and appointed one more Minister among its members.

◆ *Responsible Government Day*

In July 1946, the Cochin State Praja Mandal held its annual session in Ernakulam and designed plans for a state-wide agitation for responsible government in Cochin. 29 July, 1946, when the State Legislature convened in Ernakulam, was designated as "Responsible Government Day." The Praja Mandal members boycotted the session, and 20 members of the Legislature later submitted a Memorial to the *Maharaja* urging the early grant of responsible government. A no-confidence motion led to the resignation of the Council of Ministers, and their departments were transferred to the *Diwan*. The *Maharaja* transferred all State Government departments except Law and Order and Finance to the State Legislature. The Praja Mandal formed a Ministry, with Panampilli Govinda Menon, C. R. Iyyunni, K. Ayyappan, and T. K. Nair taking office.

### 3.2.6 Left Ideology and Politics

Under the leadership of P. Krishna Pillai and E. M. S. Namboodiripad, a group of young activists from the

◆ *Formation of  
C S P*

Provincial Congress created the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in 1934. The CSP 's rise was aided by the growing participation of the peasants and workers who had taken part in the Civil Disobedience Movement. A progressive group of Congressmen from Malabar, as well as many others, joined the Socialist Party and helped the CSP to gain control of the Provincial Congress. However, until a break during the Second World War, the CSP remained an integral part of the Provincial Congress and All India Congress Committee (AICC). Kerala had been increasingly engaged in the national liberation struggle from 1938 onwards. At the same time, they fought for responsible government in the Princely State of Travancore.

◆ *Formation of  
peasant's  
organisation*

All India Kisan Sabha was founded in 1936 with the goal of gaining absolute independence from the exploitative socio-economic system. 'All Malabar Karshaka Sangham' was formed as an extension of the All India Kisan Sabha, with constituent groups ranging from district and taluk levels to the villages. Even landless tillers were included in the *Sangham*. Naturally, it was a diverse group of tenants from various castes. Peasants in the lowest group, on the other hand, had no fixed tenure and were at the mercy of the landlords. As a result, organising them into a body was difficult because many of them were afraid of severe retaliation from their landlords. The leftist ideology influenced the peasants, and they united and organised against the landlords and British imperialism.

◆ *Left Civil  
Disobedience  
Movement*

Peasant activists in Kerala were focused on anti-feudal struggles in 1937-39. They were desperately attempting to address the issue of abject poverty and widespread starvation among artisans, craftspeople, and landless tillers. Their actions were classified as part of the Left Civil Disobedience Movement, and activists from both the Congress and the CSP were imprisoned under the Defence of India Act. A general claim was that these people organised militant operations involving criminal intimidation, social boycotts, no-rent and no-tax campaigns, and taking the law into their own hands to run a parallel government.

◆ *Intrusion of  
Leftist ideology*

### **3.2.6.1 Communist Party**

The rise of the Communist Movement in Kerala is inextricably intertwined with the anti-imperialist and anti-landlord struggles in British Malabar. All these movements had evident and mutually beneficial ties. The Communist

Movement in Kerala was notable for its strong association with the movements for social change, temple entry, and anti-caste oppression. Though the Communist Party of India was founded only in 1937 in Kerala, the effects of socialist ideals were obvious in Kerala in the early twentieth century.

◆ *Formation of Communist Party in Kerala*

During the Second World War, the Socialists controlled the Provincial Congress, which refused to cooperate with the AICC's call for Individual Satyagraha. They sought to organise a campaign against the war and a revolt against imperialism. This prompted a split, which resulted in the formation of the Communist Party. A secret group consisting of P. Krishna Pillai, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, N. C. Sekhar, and K. Damodaran met at Pinarayi in December 1939 to form the Communist Party of Kerala, as recognised by S. V. Ghate of the Communist Party of India. The AICC's call did not affect most of the peasants, who were already aware of the need for strong political action.

◆ *Peasant mobilisation*

On 15 September, 1940, the Communist Party, along with All Malabar Karshaka Sangham, declared an Anti-Repression Day. Despite the ban on processions and meetings, peasants and workers gathered in large numbers to protest against repression. The police mistreated the protesting peasants in Tellicherry, Mattannur, Kayyur and Morazha, leading to violence and police firing. Soon after, the British government declared the All Malabar Karshaka Sangham and its local units illegal, allowing the police to repress them. The government labelled all peasant activists and nationalists in north Malabar as Communists. As a result, anti-landlord and anti-imperialist struggles became deeply rooted and secretive in Malabar. Meanwhile, the police arrested and imprisoned senior Congress leader Abdur Rahaman, who was affiliated with Subhash Chandra Bose's All India Forward Bloc at the time. The Communist Movement meant peasant mobilisation for radical action against the landlords and the British government. The Communists prioritised the political mobilisation of the peasants against the landlords and the British.

### **3.2.7 Trade Union Movements**

#### **3.2.7.1 Trade Union Movement in Malabar**

◆ *Organisation of Working Class*

The Kerala Congress Socialist Party leaders began to organise hitherto unorganised groups of society such as labourers, peasants, teachers, and the rural poor. These sections were organised around specific class demands,



and their actions were integrated into the anti-imperialist movement. As Malabar lacked large-scale industries, labour was limited to a few tile manufacturers and weaving mills. Beedi production required a large number of labourers. Working conditions were often poor, and there was no job security. Working hours in certain factories exceeded eight hours per day, while others exceeded nine hours per day.

◆ *Pathetic working conditions*

The employees received no insurance or provident fund benefits. The workers were paid very low wages. One reason for this was the development of a system in which factory managers, particularly the tile manufacturers of Calicut, entered into contracts with the people who supplied labourers, and they did not contact the workers. A demand for a minimum wage of eight 'annas' was also raised. Weavers were paid four 'annas' for every yard weaved. The average wage for beedi workers was five 'annas' per thousand beedies produced. Garden labourers were paid six 'annas' for men and four annas for women.

◆ *Factory regulations in Malabar*

The factory regulations and other labour-related attempts failed to improve working conditions because factory owners devised dubious ways to get around these rules. In 1935, factory regulations limited the number of working hours in industries to fifty-four per week. The factory owners then made the workers work ten hours daily for five days and four hours on the sixth. This allowed them to pay only half a day's salary on the sixth day, thus removing half a day's salary. Thus, government regulations increased workers' daily burden while reducing their weekly salaries. Similarly, the government abolished the procedure of collecting penalties from the workers in 1937. Workers were then suspended by the owners of the factory.

◆ *Formation of the trade unions*

Militant trade unions were formed in and around Calicut at the beginning of 1935. The first divisions to be organised were the tile plant and spinning mill workers. Later, the Soap Workers Union, Press Workers Union, Cart Load Workers Union, and Umbrella Workers Union were established. In 1935, the Labour Brotherhood Union was organised in Trichur. They led several unions, consisting of the Motor Workers Union, the Engineering Workers Union, the Press Workers Union, and the Rickshaw Workers Union.

An All Kerala Workers Conference was held at Calicut in May 1935. P. Krishna Pillai was appointed as Secretary of the All Kerala Workers Union. Following the formation

◆ *Activities of All Kerala Workers Union*

of unions, several strikes erupted at Feroke, Tiruvannur and other localities. Many of these strikes were localised and focused on one or two factories. However, in 1936, the workers began to experience a sense of belongingness. When the management of a weaving mill in Chirakkal imposed a wage decrease, members of two other manufacturers' unions organised a joint meeting and protested against the wage cut.

◆ *Strike in Factories*

This collective feeling was heightened in 1937, and throughout the year, there were many strikes involving thousands of workers. Workers at weaving factories in Talap, Kakkad, and Chovva in Chirakkal Taluk went on strike demanding higher wages. Workers from four Tellicherry weaving firms went on strike in June 1937. These strikes differed from the previous ones that had occurred in 1935, not only in duration but also in the number of people involved. It should also be noted that the number had increased because workers from various factories went on strike. The workers' collective feelings were also expressed in resolutions passed by the beedi workers, supporting the weaving industry workers. During and after the strikes, the Socialists held public meetings and organised relief committees to assist the striking workers.

◆ *Demands Declaration Day*

Political resolutions began to be passed in trade union meetings as their focus was not confined to economic concerns. A hartal was organised against the new Constitution on 1 April, 1937. In meetings ahead of the hartal, the socialists urged the workers to make the hartal a success. On 19 September, 1937, which was observed as 'Demands Declaration Day', a procession was organised in Calicut. Workers from all trade unions in Calicut marched in a massive procession, waving red flags. The jathas gathered on the beach for a meeting presided over by P. Narayanan Nair. On 14 November, the All Malabar Labour Conference, presided over by S. A. Dange passed a resolution demanding 48 hours of work per week and recognition of trade unions.

◆ *Unification of Trade Unions and formation of Volunteer Corps*

Several resolutions were passed; the most notable of them was the extension of the Moratorium of Debts Bill passed by the government. Though there were numerous strikes in the latter half of 1937 and 1938, they were primarily for increasing wages and better working conditions. The period between 1937 and 1939 saw the efforts for the unification of trade unions and attempts to create workers' volunteer corps. The efforts to unify various trade unions should be

viewed as an attempt to strengthen the organisation. In 1937, the Cannanore Beedi Workers Union was established. Cannanore hosted the All Malabar Beedi Workers Conference in 1939. By December 1938, it was claimed that there were well-organised workers, Volunteer Corps in Calicut, Tellicherry and Cannanore. They managed people during protests, provided a guard of honour before conferences, and assisted in organising the meetings.

◆ *Anti-war and anti-imperialist activities*

By 1939, an increasing number of workers joined in anti-war and anti-imperialist activities. Strikes lasted throughout the second half of 1939. Workers also supported the struggles of other segments of society, particularly aided primary school teachers and peasants. In trade union meetings, resolutions were passed, expressing greetings to Russia, requesting the repeal of the ban on the Communist Party of India, and denouncing the war. These efforts, it appears, were not driven by narrow interests. They also worked hard for the triumph of the Congress candidates and rejoiced when a Congress Ministry was sworn in on 14 July, 1937. Workers demonstrated against the arrests of Meher Ali and Jayaprakash Narayan at joint meetings of the Congress and several trade unions. They engaged in anti-war and anti-recruitment campaigns in 1939 and 1940. They also took part in the hartal against the imperialist war on 26 January, 1940, and 'Anti-Repression Day' on 15 September, 1940. As it can be seen, the trade union movement was not limited to efforts to improve workers' economic conditions.

◆ *'People's War Policy'*

The workers formed a social base for the Congress and the Kerala Congress Socialist Party in the Taluk headquarters and towns. The repression of political activists on a large scale hampered the trade union movement. Certain worldwide happenings at the time altered the situation in India. Following the outbreak of the war in September 1939, Germany advanced to Europe, and Japan advanced to South East Asia. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's 1942 discussions led to a hardening of the Congress stance. In August, the AICC session in Bombay passed the "Quit India" resolution. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's entry into the war on the side of the Allies in June 1941 caused the Communists to reconsider their view of the war. The Polit Bureau approved the 'People's War Policy' in December.

This was followed by a decision to refrain from protesting and instead support war operations. The ban on the Communist Party of India was lifted on 23 July, 1942. The

◆ *Establishment of rival trade unions and Formation of National Unions*

people's war strategy caused a divide in the labour movement, resulting in the establishment of rival trade unions. On 3 November, 1942, the All Kerala National Workers Union was created in Cannanore by the weaving and plant workers. Beedi workers founded similar 'National Unions' in Tellicherry, Ponnani, and Cannanore. After the war, there was a rebirth of militant trade union activity. The Port Cargo Labour Union was founded in Cochin in December 1945. Trichur Tile Factory Workers were organised at Pudukkad, Manali, Ollur, and Karuvannur. Amballur Textiles was the site of one of the most significant strikes during this period. In September 1946, the Municipal Workers of Calicut went on strike.

◆ *Worker welfare organisation*

### 3.2.7.2 Trade Union Movement in Travancore

The employees' humanitarian and social concerns prompted the formation of trade unions in both Travancore and Cochin. The labourers, at least a few of them, were involved in movements such as prohibition, caste eradication, temple entry, and so on. Organisations such as K. Ayyappan's 'Brotherhood Movement' in Cochin pushed the desire for a new worker solidarity. Initially, the trade union movement was essentially a worker welfare organisation rather than a workers' union advocating for workers' rights.

◆ *First Labour Union in Alleppey*

The history of the Alleppey Coir Workers' Movement exemplifies this early stage of trade unionism. Alleppey was the nerve centre of the coir industry. On 31 March, 1922, the first 'Labour Union' was formed in Alleppey, most likely the first of its kind in Kerala. It even received the support of manufacturing owners as a solely worker welfare organization.

◆ *Travancore Labour Association*

◆ *Welfare activities of the Trade union*

The character of the labour union likewise changed gradually over the 1920s. The labour union was renamed Travancore Labour Association (TLA) in July 1922. The printing and distribution of leaflets to promote the importance and use of labour unions became a significant activity. By 1924, the society was able to launch its official newspaper, 'Thozhilali.' In the shed next to the union office, a night school for workers was established. There workers received instruction in English, Malayalam, and Arithmetic, as well as public speaking. During that time, the association was especially interested in connecting its members with the 'Madya Marjana Prasthanam' (Temperance Movement). Other welfare projects undertaken during the period included

the establishment of mutual aid schemes such as the Death Benefit Fund and the Annual Health Care System, as well as the formation of a workers' co-operative society, which was registered on 18 July, 1926 as Alleppey Labourers 'Paraspara Sahayaka Sangham.' All these efforts are clear indicators of the Association's latent potential in its early years.

◆ *TLA's entry into the National movement*

There were also efforts on the side of the workers to situate themselves within the larger political reality. As a result, nationalistic aspirations were forming and colouring their attitudes. The Travancore Labour Association hosted a banquet route to Payyannur for the Salt Satyagraha march from Trivandrum. Jawaharlal Nehru was given an official welcome on his visit to Alappuzha. The Travancore Labour Association also took part in the foreign cloth boycott campaign.

◆ *Decline of coir industry*

The coir industry in Travancore was in an unusual state in the 1930s. Exports were increasing significantly while prices were declining drastically. As a result, this time was noted for significant salary cuts. The working conditions quickly deteriorated. With surplus labour pouring into the industries, the Mooppans, the original labour contractors, became arrogant, arbitrary, and symbols of exploitation. The 1930s economic downturn, as previously said, hastened the rate of utter disruption and worsening of working-class living conditions.

◆ *Working class struggles*

As a result, numerous strikes broke out in the Alleppey (Cherthala) region's coir industry during that period. TLA had progressed from a workers' welfare organization to a new stage in which economic issues would be addressed and resolved. The Association's leadership struggled to mediate the strikes and struggles of the period. The tensions and pressures in bringing about resolution between militant employees on the one hand and stubborn industrial owners on the other were to blame for the association's numerous leadership changes during the 1930s. Workers preferred a more militant and assertive leadership.

◆ *Establishment of trade union branches*

Kesava Dev, a notable literary personality in Malayalam, rose to the position of the TLA secretary in 1933. Workers' class solidarity and improved negotiating power were clear indicators of workers' rising class consciousness. They realized that their economic interests were completely opposed to those of their employers. In a variety of ways, the developing class awareness enriched the working-

class movement. They noticed that the working conditions of workers in rural locations were worse than those in large factories. The TLA established trade union branches in different parts of Ambalapuzha and Cherthala taluks. Muhamma became an important centre of the rural working class struggles.

◆ *Progressive literary movement in Malayalam*

The literature of the time, which was shortly to emerge as the Progressive Literary Movement in Malayalam, contains echoes of this developing social consciousness. The coir workers possessed an impressive level of reading and literary awareness. By that time, the weekly circulation of the *Thozhilali* was nearly doubled. During the years 1932-35, the weekly serialized extracts from Karl Marx's 'Capital.' The new philosophy was also infiltrating the creative mind. Kadamangalam Pappukutty's lyrics were popular among the workers, and he was dubbed 'the poet of the working class.' Lines from his poem *Kadathuvanchi* demonstrate the novel interpretation of the new ideology: "Time calls on us to stand firm hand in hand. The path for the forward march is all clear now. There goes the grand train of revolution. Come on comrades, enough we have suffered, the cruelty, the hunger of this wicked world."

◆ *Jatha agitation*

The TLA decided to launch a *jatha* from Alleppey to Trivandrum to bring the government's attention to wage reductions. It was also decided to present a memorandum to the *Maharaja* seeking remedy for the issues of the workers. The workers' struggle was aimed against the state government for the first time. The *jatha* agitation created enthusiasm among the workers. In preparation, fourteen special propaganda conventions were organized in Alleppey town. The government, however, immediately banned the *jatha* and jailed TLA leaders. Though the government was successful in suppressing the *jatha*, in an unprecedented display of class solidarity, workers across the industrial area went on strike in protest.

◆ *Participation in struggle for responsible government*

The early 1930s experienced the conflicts and slogans that inspired the class unity and class awareness it generated, and the new hopes and desires it brought forth, prepared the Travancore Trade Union Movement to enter a new phase in the late 1930s. The radical political theory of socialism enhanced and reaffirmed the recognition of the worker's political role. The activities of CSP cadres from Malabar, Youth League, and Radical Group members in Travancore resulted in this critical development. For the first time, the

working class took on the political stage in 1938, as part of the movement for responsible government.

◆ *Entry into the political struggles*

To demonstrate their support for the democratic cause, they called a nationwide strike in October 1938. The strike was supported by trade unions from all over Travancore. The water transportation system was shut down since the Boat Workers Union went on strike. The appearance of twenty-five red shirt volunteers in the massive State Congress rally headed by Akkamma Cherian was a symbolic announcement of the working classes' entry into Travancore's democratic political struggles. As a result, the strike, led by the CSP and Youth Leaguers, was a huge success.

◆ *Government attitude towards the trade union*

Realizing the working class as the driving force, the government resorted to harsh repression. The army was called in and they attacked the working class centres. Trade union offices were vandalised, and workers were assaulted and arrested. A person was killed and around 260 were injured in police action. The resistance of workers was tremendous, and the strike lasted twenty-five days, despite all obstacles. The unpleasant experiences gave the employees a clear understanding of the anatomy of the State's power structure and left a residue of anti-princely state attitudes in them. The CSP and the Youth Leaguers were regarded as firm and reliable supporters. The Communists took the leadership responsibilities left by the State Congress, effectively claiming the whole support of Travancore's working class. During this period, the TLA was formally renamed the 'Thiruvitamkur' / Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union (TCFWU).

### 3.2.7.3 Trade Union Movement in Cochin

◆ *Constitutional and political developments*

The general political situation in Cochin was significantly different. Though the penetration of trade union operations was practically the same as in Travancore under the leadership of the Communists and the Socialists, the Cochin government's approach was different. Significantly, the government announced a few constitutional revisions that pleased the Cochin Praja Mandalam's conservative leadership. The constitutional amendments made all departments, save finance and home, accountable to the legislature and administered by people's representatives. The demand for greater serious reforms and total democracy was then limited to a few radicals in the Prajamandalam and the Communists and Socialists in Cochin State. The struggle

did not dominate Cochin's political developments.

◆ *Organising working class*

The CSP activists in Cochin state were successful in organising the working class in two centres, Trichur and Cochin. 'Peedika Thozhilali Union', 'Rickshaw Thozhilali Union', 'General Workers Union', 'Amballoor Textile Workers Union', 'Toddy Workers Union' and others were active trade unions in Trichur at the time. 'Ship Workers Union', 'Factory Workers Union', and 'Navika Thozhilali Union' were powerful trade unions in Cochin.

◆ *Amballoor and Anthicad strikes*

However, the wave of strikes that emerged after the war, shows the level of political consciousness attained by Cochin's working classes. One of the largest strikes was at Amballoor Textile Mills, and another was by Anthicadu toddy workers. The Communists gave leadership to the Anthicadu Struggle. The agitation prolonged and lasted for a few months. Even while they struggled for a solution of their economic concerns, the Anthicadu toddy workers held a firm ideological belief that the inequalities could only be corrected by achieving full democratic rights for the people. During the agitation, they were able to gain the support of several labour unions as well as the general public.

◆ *A Pan -Kerala organisation*

The attempt to develop the organisation on a pan-Kerala basis was a notable achievement of the trade union movement in the 1930s. The first conference of trade unions in Kerala was held at Calicut in 1935, in conjunction with the Congress Socialist Party Conference. The main topic of debate during the workers' conference was the importance of an all-Kerala trade union movement. In 1937, it was agreed to hold the second All Kerala Workers' Conference in Trichur. In February 1939, the 3rd All Kerala Workers' Conference was held at Kanjikuzhy, near Alleppey, in Travancore. The Kerala State Trade Union Council was formed as a result of this meeting. These developments in the trade union movement had a significant impact on the activities of the 'Aikya Kerala Prasthanam', which culminated in Kerala's successful unification.

◆ *Role in Punnapra -Vayalar revolt*

Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the 1940s witnessed the political consolidation and systematic growth of the trade union movement. It led to the spread of Communist ideas among the rural population. When compared to the earlier phase of labour union consciousness, the resulting political consciousness now was more constructive. The working classes started realising their historical position as liberators of the society and the forefront of a new world.

Their focus was on elucidating the working-class experience of the 1940s and bringing the Punnapra - Vayalar uprisings of 1946 to light.

### 3.2.8 Peasant Movements

During the 1940s, peasant movements in Kerala gained strength. The peasants united for a common cause, and the *Karshaka Sangham* became a symbol of their solidarity. The Sangham's activities became more militant during this period. The peasants forcibly harvested the crops of tyrannical landlords and plundered their granaries. The police suppressed the peasant movements in Kayyur and Morazha, and police officers were murdered in these clashes. Because of these activities, the *Karshaka Sangham* was suppressed by the police, with the help of landlords. The Communist Party was also banned for its anti-war activities, and most of its leaders were jailed, while some went underground. When the war ended and India gained independence, the Communist Party declared March 29 as 'All India Kisan's Day' in memory of those peasant martyrs. When the Communist Party changed its stance on the Second World War, the *Karshaka Sangham* joined them in supporting the colonial Government, but its position against the landlords remained "a matter of class interests based on Marxist ideology of class struggle."

◆ *Role of Karshaka Sangham in organising peasants*

◆ *Anti-imperialist struggle of peasants*

◆ *Crisis during the Second World War*

The Communist-led peasant movements were historically the most powerful anti-colonialist force in Kerala, particularly in North Malabar. Peasants were not interested in the individual Satyagraha of the Congress Party during the Second World War. The Communist Party radicalised and mobilised them, and they took part in various aggressive struggles against British rule. Such uprisings occurred in Mattanur, Morazha, Tellicherry, and Kayyur, although they were not supported by arms and ammunition.

#### 3.2.8.1 Tellicherry, Morazha and Mattanur

The peasant movement became increasingly militant after the foundation of peasant organizations such as *Karshaka Sangham* and political organizations like the Communist Party. The *Karshaka Sangham* mobilized the peasants and provided leadership in their struggle against feudalism and landlordism. The peasants' situation deteriorated during the Second World War. The prices of goods increased significantly and peasants were unable to meet their daily expenses with their low income. As a result, food scarcity

was a serious issue for the common people. In many places, peasants harvested the landlords' crops under the supervision of *Karshaka Sangham*. This led to clashes between peasants and police, who were backed by the landlords. The lives of common people became miserable as necessary items were sent to the black market.

◆ *Anti- Depression Day*

The District Magistrate of Malabar issued an order under the Defence of India Rule on 12 September, 1940, prohibiting meetings, processions, or assemblies in Malabar. The KPCC declared 15 September, 1940, as "Protest Day" or "Anti-Depression Day." The Communist Party's ban was lifted over time, and they held processions and public gatherings in several places. The police attempted to disrupt the gatherings, and there were confrontations between the public and the police. A meeting was held at Jawahar Ghat in Tellicherry, and during the meeting, police opened fire. Abu and Chathukutty were murdered by the police; they became the "first 'martyrs' in Kerala in the cause of Communism." It was the first organized militant resistance against the police by a political party.

◆ *Morazha and Mattannur incidents*

Morazha, in the Chirakkal taluk, was also an important centre of peasant activity. On 15 September, 1940, in Morazha, there was a confrontation between citizens and police that resulted in the death of a police Sub-Inspector and a Constable of Police. K. P. R. Gopalan, a founding member of the Communist Party of Kerala and the chief organizer of the Morazha demonstration against the British Government's decision to enter the Second World War, was arrested and sentenced to death. Hundreds of representations were written to the British government in protest of K. P. R. Gopalan's death sentence. As a result of all of this, his death sentence was commuted to life in prison. Many agitators, including V. M. Vishnu Bharatiyan, was arrested. On 15 September, 1940, Mattannur police dissolved the Protest Day assembly, and in the ensuing conflict, a police constable, Raman Nair, was critically injured and he eventually died. Following these fights, the government banned the All Malabar Karshaka Sangham and its units.

### 3.2.8.2 Kayyur Revolt (1941)

Kayyur is a small village in the Kasaragod area where peasants have historically struggled against feudalism and British imperialism. The anti-war propaganda and militant operations of the Communist Party and *Karshaka Sangham*

◆ *Demonstration against police atrocities*

caused the police to disseminate atrocities and terror throughout the region. As a result of a court warrant, the harvest of the peasant was attached for the landlord in Kinanur, one of the villages of Nileswhar Firka in Kasaragod Taluk. The *Karshaka Sangham* supported the peasants in harvesting the landlord's crop, and Kayyur Karshaka Sangham workers actively participated in this incident. The villagers protested against the police atrocities by staging a huge demonstration on 28 March, 1941. Many of the protestors belonged to the Kayyur *Karshaka Sangham*. Villagers asked Subbaraiyah, a policeman standing in the way of the procession, to hold the Congress flag. He declined and was threatened by the mob. Finally, he jumped into the river. The enraged mob shouted "Don't leave the policeman!" and threw stones at him and killed him. The police detained approximately sixty persons and most of them were members of the *Karshaka Sangham*.

◆ *Impact of Kayyur revolt*

For a period, the Communist Party had been banned and many of its leaders were jailed or forced to go underground. Peasants formed defence committees to defend the accused in the Kayyur rebellion. All attempts to save them were futile, and four of them, Abu Backer, Madathil Appu, Koyithattil Chirukantan, and Kunhambu Nair, were hanged on March 29, 1943, in the Cannanore Central jail. After India's independence, the Communist Party designated March 29 as All India Kisan Sabha in honour of the Kayyur peasant martyrs. 'All Malabar Karshaka Sangham' and 'Kasaragod Karshaka Sangham' were banned as a result of the disturbances.

◆ *Class consciousness among the peasants*

The Kayyur revolt was an important event in the history of India's peasant movement. Militant peasant resistance under the Communist leadership created class consciousness and unity among the peasants. The 'Karshaka Union' in Malabar and South Canara were proclaimed illegal following the Kayyur Revolt on 25 April, 1941. Rural people experienced poverty, distress, and unhappiness during the post-war period. Peasants formed the People's Food Committees to prevent food grain hoarding and ensure proper distribution. Though the government sponsored 'produce more food' programmes, land monopolists attempted to allocate such areas only to the rich peasants. So, the peasantry embraced the 'right to wasteland cultivation program', and the 15th of December 1946 was designated as a 'day of observation' to invade these fields. The encouragement given to mass struggles, particularly among farmers and workers,

prompted a series of peasant revolts in the Cheeminile estate, Karivelloor, and Kavumbayi, among other places.

### 3.2.8.3 Karivelloor Incident

The post-war period made the life of the common people extremely difficult. Acute food scarcity had pushed people to the brink of starvation. Hoarding and black marketing were rampant. Peasants launched militant campaigns against black marketers, hoarders, and landlords. An instance of the peasants' aggressive attitude was the Karivelloor episode. Karivelloor was Malabar region's northernmost settlement, with a history of peasant protests. Raja Varma Valiya Raja of Chirakkal was one of Karivelloor's absentee landowners. He collected over 10,000 seers of paddy from his tenants as rent and stored it in his granary. Due to the acute shortage of food grains following the Second World War in 1946, the *Karshaka Sangham* demanded that the *Raja* should hand over the paddy he received from the tenants for distribution to the villagers at a fair price through the local co-operative store. However, *Raja* refused it and then, he gained permission to carry the grains from Karivelloor to Chirakkal for use in his temple. The *Karshaka Sangham* attempted to disrupt transport, but the *Raja* requested police protection. A large crowd gathered there, shouting anti-grain transportation slogans and resisting the transportation. Thitil Kannan and Kenneeri Kunhikannan, both *Sangham* activists, were slain in the police firing.

◆ *Resistance of peasants*

The *Karshaka Sangham* in Kavumbai planned to cultivate land owned by local landlords. Clashes between police and peasants occurred, resulting in police firing and the death of four peasants, Pulava Kumaran, Manheri Govindan Nambiar, Tengil Appu Nambiar, and Alorambal Krishnan as well as the arrest of a significant number of peasants and *Sangham* activists. A similar problem occurred in Koothali. The government refused to allow the villagers to cultivate Koothali Nair's land, which was acquired by the government following his death in the absence of proper legal successors. Koothali Nair allowed peasants to practice *punam* cultivation (shifting cultivation in Kerala). The government's attitude was hostile, which harmed the peasants who relied on *punam* cultivation.

◆ *Kavumbai and Koothali incidents*

The *Karshaka Sangham* attempted to cultivate government wasteland. They raised the slogan 'chathalum chethum koothali' (we will cultivate the land at any cost). The government suppressed the resistance and evicted the

◆ *Struggle for the right to cultivate in wasteland*

peasants from the Muthukad area of the Koothali estates in 1954. The *Karshaka Sangham*, led by C. H. Kanaran and M. K. Kelu, organised protests. In a final settlement with the government and peasants, the land was re-allotted to the evicted peasants. Such struggles continued, and many peasants were imprisoned. On 23 January, 1947, the Madras government issued an ordinance to put down these struggles and imprison the Communists.

### 3.2.8.4 Korom and Onchiyam

The *Karshaka Sangham* in Korom decided to seize surplus paddy stocks from Mavila Kunhambu Nambiar's granaries as part of their fight against feudal landlords and hoarding. On April 12, 1948, the *Sangham* captured the paddy stocks and distributed them to the public. The leaders were arrested, and there was a clash between the people and the police. The police opened fire on the protesters, killing one of them, B. Pokkan. Peasants confiscated food grains from the janmi's dwelling in Payam and Thillankeri as well. In Thillankeri, police opened fire on a peasant march to *janmi's* house, killing five peasant activists.

◆ *Anti-feudal struggles*

Similar incidents occurred in Pazhassi, where two peasants, Athikka Unni Gurukkal and Vayali Damu, were killed by the police force and *janmi's* goons. On April 29, 1948, the Communist Party convened a secret meeting in Onchiyam. After receiving information about the meeting, the police decided to arrest the leaders who were attending the meeting. People resisted arrest, resulting in police firing and the death of eight people, two of whom were murdered in police lockups. As a result of the Onchiyam conflict, eleven persons were killed.

◆ *Onchiyam Incident*

The Communist activists resolved to fight back and gathered in Munayakunnu with guns. However, the police learned about this and attacked forty-two leaders who were within the refuge on 1 May, 1948. Six peasant leaders were killed in police firing. The feudal landlord Kandai Adhikari prevented Oorada Kannan Nair, a *Karshaka Sangham* worker, from harvesting the crops in Padikunnu. The *Karshaka Sangham* decided to harvest the crops, and the *janmi* requested police assistance in suppressing the peasants. The workers were detained and taken to a police camp. The police took three individuals from the villages and executed them. The government prohibited the publication of anything critical of the government, and many charges were filed against

◆ *Repressive measures of the police*



the distribution of booklets and pamphlets, which were an essential source of information for the common people during the independence movement, particularly by the Communist Party.

### 3.2.9 Punnapra-Vayalar Uprising (1946)

◆ *Rejection of the American Model of CP*

The harsh tactics of the government in Travancore resulted in violent conflicts between the peasantry-working class and the police. The repressive policies of *Diwan* C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar, as well as his desire to build a separate Travancore State on the 'American Model,' were rejected by the people, who raised the slogan 'American Model Arabikkadallil'. The 'American Model' was challenged by the State Congress and the Communists. During that time, the Travancore Coir Factory Workers' Union, Muhamma Coir Factory Workers' Union, and Cherthala Coir Factory Workers' Union met and resolved to go on strike, raising 27 demands, including the end of *Diwan* control and the establishment of responsible government. An Action Committee was formed, with T. V. Thomas as the convener.

◆ *Conflict between agricultural workers and police*

On 24 October, 1946, police arrived at Punnapra beach, where thousands of workers had gathered. The officers opened fire on the workers. There was severe fighting between the police and the protesters. The government and others gave various figures regarding the number of deaths. According to the official statistics, four police officers were killed, and some of the police were taken by the workers. *Diwan* C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar declared martial law in Alleppey on 25 October. The army marched the next day to Kattur Agitation Camp, eight kilometres from Alleppey. The workers stopped the army, which resulted in the death of a worker in the police firing and several injuries. The *Diwan* assumed command of the army. Workers demolished the Mayithara Bridge in Mararikkulam to prevent the troops from marching to north Alleppey. It was destroyed again when the troops restored it. Five workers were killed in police firing.

◆ *Casualties*

On 27 October, 1946, troops arrived at the Vayalar agitation camp. Many people were killed in the police firing, and many others jumped into the backwaters to escape. Almost 800 people were killed, and many more were reported missing. The total number of deaths in Punnapra-Vayalar varied as well. The Punnapra-Vayalar conveyed a new message to Malabar's workers and peasants, urging them to fight against feudalism, agrarian relations, and imperialism.

◆ *Class consciousness among the workers*

With the nearing of Indian independence, the radical movement had grown into a broad-based organisation with a solid basis and tremendous inner strength. The labour unions supplied organisational leadership, while the Communist thought offered ideological vigour, allowing the movement to face severe challenges. The most important result was that the working class became conscious of their critical role in

## Summarised Overview

The constitutional struggle that began in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the presentation of the Malayali and Ezhava Memorials had its origins in the growing demand of the educated middle class for a larger proportion of jobs in public services. Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress, established in Travancore in 1919, organised a boycott of foreign goods and advocated for responsible government in Indian states. Its influence extended to Cochin, where Congressmen participated in Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience movement, and a campaign for responsible government. In the early 1930s, Travancore faced political upheavals due to the Nivarthana Movement, which protested against the Constitutional Amendments of 1932. The government revised electoral law and elected candidates. Agitations for responsible government were the major political movement in the 1940s in Travancore and Cochin.

The Congress Socialist Party organised workers in Malabar, Travancore, and Cochin, with militant trade unionism emerging in Calicut in 1935. They fought against wage and working hours injustices. The movement culminated in the Punnapra-Vayalar revolt of 1946, where peasants and agricultural labourers fought against C.P. Ramaswamy's idea to transform Travancore into an independent state in an 'American Model'. The nationalist movement fuelled peasant movements. Class awareness began with the creation of the Congress Socialist Party. The Communist-led peasant movements were historically the most powerful anti-colonialist and anti-feudal force in Kerala, particularly in North Malabar. Uprisings occurred in Mattanur, Morazha, Tellicherry, and Kayyur, although they were not supported by arms and ammunition.

## Assignments

1. Give an account of Punnapra - Vayalar upheaval in Kerala.
2. Trace the importance of the Malayali Memorial and Ezhava Memorial.
3. Write a short note on the Abstention Movement.
4. Give an account of the formation and activities of the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala.
5. What do you know about the 'All-Malabar Karshaka Sangham'?
6. Assess the significance of the Leftist Movement in the 1930s and 1940s.
7. Analyse the role of Trade Union movements in the history of Kerala.
8. Bring out the role of women in the Trade Union Movement in Kerala.
9. Examine the nature of the peasant movement in Kerala.

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## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

# Kerala, The Motherland of the Malayalee

**BLOCK-04**



# Into Democracy

## Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ understand the development of *Aikya Kerala* Movement
- ◆ analyse the integration of the people of the three areas of Malabar, Travancore and Cochin
- ◆ evaluate the land reforms and education policy of the first Communist Ministry

## Background

One of the most significant popular movements in modern Kerala was the *Aikya Kerala* movement. It was a peaceful, statewide initiative that encompassed all segments of the Malayalam-speaking population and gained momentum over more than three decades. The Malayalam language, renowned for its rich literary heritage, played a crucial role in emotionally and culturally uniting the people from the regions of Malabar, Travancore, and Cochin, which now collectively constitute the state of Kerala.

Historically, attempts at unifying Kerala were made by figures such as the Zamorin of Calicut and Marthanda Varma of Travancore. However, their efforts faced challenges, including opposition from the Portuguese and Dutch. The concept of a 'United Kerala' persisted and was actively pursued by leaders across Kerala in modern times, ultimately transforming into a people's movement known as the *Aikya Kerala* Movement. This unit explores the process of integrating the princely states of Kerala, namely Travancore and Cochin, with Malabar, which was under direct British rule. It also provides an overview of political developments following the formation of the Kerala State. Furthermore, it delves into the establishment of the Communist Government in 1957 and thoroughly examines the radical reforms it introduced, such as land reforms and educational reforms.

## Keywords

*Aikya Kerala*, *Vimochana Samaram*, State Reorganisation Commission, Communist Ministry, Land Reforms, Educational Reforms



## Discussion

### 4.1.1 Aikya Kerala Movement

The Malayalam speaking people had been in favour of the formation of a unified state on the basis of language since the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The division of Kerala into three administrative units, *viz*, Malabar, Travancore and Cochin was an obstacle to the early creation of such a state. Moreover, a portion of the Malayalam speaking area, *viz*, the present Kasaragod and Hosdurg taluks formed the part of the district of South Canara.

#### 4.1.1.1 The Congress and Linguistic States

Kerala Provincial Congress Committee came into existence in 1921 on a linguistic basis included the whole of the Malabar district and the states of Travancore and Cochin. This was taken to mean that the Congress had committed itself to the idea of linguistic states in free India. The first All Kerala Provincial Conference under the auspices of the Congress met at Ottappalam in 1921. It was for the first time that representatives from Malabar, Travancore and Cochin attended a conference of such political significance and size. It helped to create a sense of 'Kerala identity' in the minds of the people.

◆ Sense of  
'Kerala identity'

In 1927, the Indian National Congress expressed the view that the time was appropriate for the linguistic reorganisation of provinces in India. The question was examined by the Nehru Committee set up in 1928 by the All Parties' Conference to draft a model Constitution for free India. The Committee expressed itself in favour of linguistic states on the ground that such states would promote the cultural wellbeing of the people, ensure greater educational advancement and enable the people to participate actively in public activities. Between 1928 and 1947, the Congress officially endorsed the idea of linguistic states on quite a few occasions. The election manifesto issued by the Congress in 1945 assured the people that the state of India would be reorganised on a linguistic basis, as far as possible, if the party was voted to power.

◆ Demand for  
linguistic  
reorganisation

#### 4.1.1.2 Demand for Aikya Keralam

The demand for a separate state for the Malayalam speaking people has been gathering strength since the twenties. Conferences such as the State People's and the All



◆ *Efforts for the formation of separate province of Kerala*

Kerala Kudiyan Conferences held at Ernakulam in 1928 and the political Conferences held at Payyannur in 1928, Badagara in 1931 and Calicut in 1935 passed resolutions emphasizing the need for the formation of a separate province of Kerala in the new constitutional set up. The political conference was held under the auspices of the Travancore District Congress Committee at Trivandrum in 1938 with Pattabhi Sitaramaiah in the Chair. It passed a resolution favouring a sub federation comprising Malabar, Travancore and Cochin. It was however only in the logic of things that such a united Kerala state could not have been formed so long as British rule lasted in India and the native states of Travancore and Cochin continued to be under princely rule.

◆ *Demand of Maharaja of Cochin*

During the period after the Second World War (1939-1945) when negotiations for the transfer of power were in progress in India, the question of formation of linguistic states again assumed greater importance. The ruler of Cochin extended his full support to the proposal. In a message sent to the Cochin Legislative Council on 29 July, 1946, the *Maharaja* of Cochin stressed the need for the formation of a united state of Kerala and expressed his readiness to merge Cochin in such a state in the general interest of the people. The Cochin State Praja Mandal which was formed in 1941 had also been endorsing the demand for a separate Kerala state at its successive annual sessions. Only the Government of Travancore was lukewarm to the proposal. Cultural organisations like the 'Samastha Kerala Sahithya Parishad' however, welcomed the idea of a Malayalam speaking state with greater enthusiasm.

◆ *Idea of a united Travancore-Cochin State*

The Kerala Provincial Congress Committee took the lead in this matter and set up a sub-committee in 1946 to carry on the movement of *Aikya Kerala* with the utmost vigour. A meeting of the sub-committee was held at Cheruthuruthy late in 1946 under the chairmanship of K. P. Kesava Menon, with leading figures from all parts of Kerala, including Mahakavi Vallathol, participating in it. The main leader of the movement was Sri Kerala Varma II, the reigning *Maharaja* of Cochin, who gained the title 'Aikya Keralam Thampuran'. He was the first to suggest the idea of a united Travancore-Cochin State, inspired by the national policy of integration.

It was in pursuance of the decision taken at this meeting that the famous *Aikya Kerala* Conference was held at Trichur in April 1947 under the chairmanship of K. Kelappan. Hundreds of delegates from all parts of Kerala representing various cultural organisations and political parties were present at

◆ *Aikya Kerala Conference in 1947*

the meeting. In fact, the Conference was more representative than any other of its kind held till then. The Conference passed a resolution, moved by the veteran Congress leader, E. Moidu Maulavi, demanding the early formation of *Aikya Kerala*. It also elected an *Aikya Kerala* Council of hundred members to take appropriate steps for the attainment of the goal.

◆ *Aikya Kerala demand before Dhar Commission*

In 1949 another representative convention was held at Alwaye under the auspices of the *Aikya Kerala* Council. Delegates from Malabar, Travancore and Cochin attended the convention and appointed a more compact action committee of 15 members with K. Kelappan as president and K. A. Damodara Menon as secretary to supervise the earlier *Aikya Kerala* Council of 100 members. In a memorandum submitted before the Dhar Commission set up by the president of the Indian Constituent Assembly to consider the question of reorganisation of states in India, the *Aikya Kerala* Committee demanded the formation of a new Kerala State comprising Malabar, Travancore, Cochin, Coorg, Nilgiris, Guddalore, South Canara, Mahe and Lakshadweep.

### 4.1.2 Travancore – Cochin Integration

◆ *Formation of Thiru-Kochi*

As a first step towards the unification of Kerala, Travancore and Cochin were integrated to form a new state named Travancore-Cochin or Thiru-Kochi. The rulers of the two States willingly signed the Covenant of Integration. The new state was formed as a 'Part B' state on 1 July, 1949. It was originally called the United State of Travancore and Cochin but later renamed as the State of Travancore-Cochin in January 1950. The *Raja* of Travancore, Sree Chithira Thirunal BalaramaVarma became the *Rajapramukh* of the newly formed state. The *Raja* of Cochin, Rama Varma Pareekshith Thamburan renounced his crown for the general interests of the people. Paravoor T. K. Narayana Pillai, became the first Chief Minister of Travancore- Cochin.

◆ *Ministership in Thiru- Kochi*

The members of the Travancore representative body and the Cochin Legislative Assembly became the members of the assembly of the United State of Thiru-Kochi. The membership of Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly became 178 (120 of Travancore and 58 of Cochin) T. M. Varghese was the first speaker of Travancore- Cochin. He was also the first person to be called speaker, instead of the president or presidency officer. When Paravoor T. K. Narayana Pillai resigned in 1951, C. Kesavan became the Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin.

A. J. John was the first elected Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin after the election conducted in 1951-52. He remained in office till 1954 when he resigned. In 1954, Pattom Thanu Pillai of the Praja Socialist Party became Chief Minister and continued till 1955. He was the first non-Congress Malayali to be a Chief Minister. Panampilly Govinda Menon was the fifth and last Chief Minister of Travancore - Cochin state (1955-56). When he resigned in 1956, the state came under the President's rule.

### 4.1.3 Formation of Kerala State (1956)

The formation of Travancore- Cochin on 1 July, 1949 as a 'Part B' state of the Indian Union by the merger of the two princely states was an important step towards the realisation of the ideal of Kerala State. T. K. Narayana Pillai and E. Ikkanda Warriar who headed the Governments of Travancore and Cochin respectively at that time welcomed the formation of the new state as the first step towards the formation of *Aikya Kerala*. V. P. Menon, the Secretary of the state Ministry, Government of India, also expressed the same view. However, the optimism of these leaders was not shared by all. K. Kelappan, who resigned the presidentship of the *Aikya Kerala* Committee as he thought that the formation of the new state with a *Maharaja* as the Head of the State (*Rajpramukh*) would not be helpful to the formation of a democratic Kerala state. Kelappan's place as the President of the committee was taken by K. P. Kesava Menon and it continued its efforts in pursuit of the cherished goal with greater vigour.

◆ *Dissension on Rajpramukh*

Another *Aikya Kerala* Conference held at Palghat in November 1949 on the initiative of this committee adopted a resolution calling for the formation of a Kerala state without a *Rajpramukh*. However, one of the obstacles which the movement had to face at this time was the stand taken by an influential section of Malabar Congressmen in favour of a southern state (*Dhakshina Samsthanam*) by bringing about the merger Travancore - Cochin into the Madras Province. The political conference held at Palghat in April 1956 under the auspices of the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee formally endorsed the above proposal. The Travancore - Cochin Pradesh Congress Committee and the Government of Travancore-Cochin were, however, in favour of *Aikya Kerala*. They were opposed to the idea of a 'Southern State.' A conference which was held at Calicut under the auspices of the *Aikya Kerala* Committee, however, helped to influence

◆ *Kerala state without a Rajpramukh*

public opinion in Malabar in favour of the formation of *Aikya Kerala*.

◆ *Formation of Kerala*

It was at this juncture that the State Reorganisation Commission under the chairmanship of Syed Fazl Ali was appointed by the Government of India (December 1953) to address the question of linguistic reorganisation of states in India. The Government of Travancore-Cochin, the *Aikya Kerala* Committee and several public organisations and cultural bodies submitted a memorandum before the Commission setting forth their views. The Government of India made the decision to reorganise the States of the Indian Union on a linguistic basis during the period of President's rule in Travancore-Cochin. The four southern taluks of Tovala, Agasteeswaram, Kalkulam, and Vilavancode, as well as a portion of the Shencottah taluk, were removed from Travancore-Cochin and placed in Madras State by the States Reorganisation Act of 1956. The Malabar district and the Kasaragod taluk of South Canara district were merged to the remaining Travancore-Cochin to form the new state of Kerala. Thus the long cherished dream of the Malayalis for a separate state became a reality on 1 November, 1956.

#### **4.1.4. First Communist Ministry**

◆ *First General Election*

After the formation of the Kerala State in 1956, the first General election to the Kerala Legislative Assembly was conducted in February and March 1957. The Communist Party of Kerala got majority in the 1957 election. Accordingly, a Communist Government came to power in Kerala. This was the first time in the history of Communism in the world that a Communist Party came to power through general elections. The ministry took charge on 5 April, 1957 with E. M. S. Namboodiripad as Chief Minister.

#### **4.1.4.1. First Election**

◆ *First Communist Ministry*

The Kerala Legislative Assembly election of 1957 was the first Assembly election in the Indian state of Kerala. The major contest was between the Congress and the Communists. The Communist Party won the election with 60 seats in 126 constituencies. On 5 April, 1957, the Communist Party formed the government with the assistance of a few independent legislators, with E. M. S. Namboodiripad as Chief Minister.

The council of Ministers are listed below.



	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Ministry / Portfolio</b>
1	E. M. S. Namboodiripad	Chief Minister
2	C. Achutha Menon	Minister of Finance
3	K. P. Gopalan	Minister of Industry
4	K. R. Gowri Amma	Minister of Revenue and Exercise
5	Joseph Mundassery	Minister of Education and Cooperation
6	T.V. Thomas	Minister of Labour Employment and Transport
7	P.K. Chathan Master	Minister of Local Self Government
8	T. A. Majeed	Minister for Public Works
9	K.C. George	Minister for Food and Forest
10	V. R. Krishna Iyer	Minister for Irrigation, Prison, Law, Electricity
11	A.R. Menon	Minister for Health

◆ *Reforms of Communist Ministry*

The initial Communist Ministry in Kerala had a relatively short tenure of twenty-eight months, during which it encountered significant opposition. Nevertheless, it made pioneering efforts in various areas, including land reforms, administrative restructuring, decentralisation, education, public health enhancement, and improvements in distribution systems. These efforts also included the establishment of minimum wage standards and social security measures within this relatively brief period. During their electoral campaign, the Communist Party had made comprehensive promises to reform various aspects of Kerala's socio-economic and political landscape. Notably, the government introduced two progressive legislations that faced opposition from conservative segments of society. The first was the Agrarian Relations Bill, which imposed limits on private land holdings held by landlords in Kerala, and the second was the Education Bill, aimed at regulating the extensive authority exercised by private educational institutions.

#### **4.1.4.2 Land Reform**

The most important progressive reform of Kerala during the post-Independence era which heralded fundamental

◆ *Initiative taken for land reforms*

economic changes was the 'Land Reform Act.' Kerala became the first state in India to abolish landlordism or the *Janmi* system, by the progressive agrarian reform. This was made possible due to the growth of the leftist movements in Kerala and continued peasant struggles of the 1930's and the 1940's. The demand of the peasant organisations that had emerged in north Malabar during the 1930s was to abolish landlordism.

◆ *Land to the landless*

The Government's first priority was land reforms; the communist party announced unequivocally that all cultivable government waste land would be transferred to landless and poor peasants, and that all evicted tenants would be restored. The party was committed to introduce comprehensive agrarian reform legislation that would try to determine fair rent, provide tenants with security of tenure, set limits on land ownership, and redistribute surplus land to the landless.

◆ *Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceeding Ordinance 1957*

Peasant organisations made their demands known to the government, and the Communist Party introduced more extensive land legislation. Within a week of assuming power, the party issued the 'Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceeding Ordinance' of 1957. This law helped to keep the tenants and hutment dwellers from being evicted until substantial agrarian reforms were drafted. The Ordinance stopped all eviction and related actions against all types of tenants, including new types of leases and *kudikidappukar* (hutment dwellers), and prevented the courts from taking new eviction petitions.

◆ *Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill*

The Ministry drafted an Agrarian Relations Bill, which was introduced in the Assembly on 21 December, 1957, by the then-Revenue Minister K. R. Gowri Amma. The introduction of the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill was a historic turning point in the history of land legislation in post-independence India. The Communist Government's progressive land reform measures of 1957 provided Kerala with a unique paradigm for social transformation and agricultural development.

#### **4.1.4.3. Features of the Bill**

The Bill, divided into four chapters, aimed to provide tenants with security of tenure. It allowed landlords to retake possession of tenants' land only for religious purposes, construction of houses, and self-cultivation. The Bill fixed

◆ *Provisions of Agrarian Bill*

fair rent for double-crop rice fields, allowing a ceiling area of fifteen acres for adults or households of five. A family with more members can receive an additional acre with maximum of 25 acres. Religious and charitable institutions' land was exempted. The government could exempt land for public interest, ordered to surrender the excess land for compensation, and invalidate transfers after specific dates. The Bill established the Land Board and Land Tribunal to ensure people's representation in the implementation of the Act. Lands surrendered to the government were distributed by the Land Board among landless and those with land less than the ceiling mark. The Land Board consisted of three officials and members elected by the state legislature.

◆ *Resignation of EMS Ministry*  
◆ *Redrafting of the Bill*

The Bill finally passed on 10 June, 1959 and was sent to the President of India for approval on 27 July, 1959. The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill did not receive the President's assent, and the Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional and directed that it be amended. The EMS Ministry resigned because of the 'Liberation Struggle'. The Praja Socialist Party (PSP)-Congress alliance won the next legislative Assembly election, and the PSP-Congress Ministry took power on 22 February 1960. The President returned the Agrarian Relations Bill to the Assembly for review in July 1960. The Bill was redrafted by the Congress-PSP government that was in office at the time. The Bill was passed on October 15, 1960. Due to the intervention of the Kerala High Court and the Supreme Court on Ryotwari lands in Hosdurg, Kasaragod, and Travancore, the Act could not be implemented. Later the Kerala Land Reform Bill was amended by the Assembly in December 1963 and approved by the President on December 31, 1963.

◆ *Abolition of Janmi system in Kerala*

The United Front Ministry resigned in 1969 due to internal differences, and a coalition led by the CPI formed the government. C. Achutha Menon continued as Chief Minister until 1977, after falling out of power in June 1970. Finally, the Kerala Land Reform Amendment Act 1969 abolished the *Janmi* system in Kerala with effect from 1 January, 1970 onwards. The slogan 'land to the tiller' raised by the peasants for decades now became a reality with the implementation of this act. With the implementation of this act, over twenty-seven lakhs of tenants became free and holders of the land they cultivate. With the abolition of the *janmi* system, which had existed in Kerala for centuries, small peasants became the owners of the land in which they had tilled for the benefit of the *janmi* (land lord), earlier. This act recorded a new chapter

in the history of the land reform activities in independent India and it paved the way for the fundamental changes in the realms of social and economic conditions of Kerala.

The main provisions of the Agrarian Relations Bill were:

- (1) limiting land ownership to 15 acres per family;
- (2) granting tenure to all types of tenants, including sharecroppers; and

(3) limiting land resumption by owners to the extension of any place of public religious worship, the construction of residential buildings by landowners, or self-cultivation.

(4) Tenants were granted the right to purchase the land on which they worked by paying 16 times the fair rent set by the Bill, or 12 times the contract rent in 16 equal annual installments.

The Bill established the Land Board and Land Tribunal to ensure people's representation in the implementation of Act. People's committees composed of Panchayat members and representatives from mass organisations have been formed to oversee the operation and implementation of land reform measures.

◆ *People's representation*

#### **4.1.4.4. Education Policy**

The Communist Ministry was pledged to regulate the education system as one of the main points on the electoral platform. Soon after coming to power, the Government announced that the statutory basis for the improvement of general education and of the conditions of teachers was in active preparation. The Kerala Education Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 7 July, 1957. The Bill was, simply and purely, a piece of protective legislation intended to secure and safeguard the interests of teachers employed in schools under private management in Kerala. Education Minister Joseph Mundassery said that the aim of the Bill was to protect the rights of the teachers. The Communist Government conceded that the private educational institutions had rendered commendable service in the matter of promoting education, whether for proselytisation or to protect or perhaps for self-rewarding social service. The Education Act included the regulation of appointment and conditions of service of the teachers of the private schools, the empowering of the government to take action against the mismanagement, direct payment of the salaries of the

◆ *Kerala Education Bill*



private school by the government and the take over of any school required in the interest of education.

◆ *Compulsory Education*

The Education Bill was a huge step toward ensuring teachers could serve with dignity. The Education Act had insisted that the government should provide free and compulsory education for all children within a certain period of time. It was also stipulated that the government should provide noonday meal, clothing, books and other writing materials to students free of cost. Collection of tuition fee at the primary and upper primary levels was abolished.

◆ *Vimochana Samaram*

The opposition parties, aided by religious communities, primarily Nairs and Christian communities, generated a popular agitation against the passing of the Agrarian Relations Bill and Education Bill. The agitation known as *Vimochana Samaram* or 'Liberation Struggle' began on 12 June, 1958 under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan, the Nair Service Society (NSS) leader, and was supported by all of Kerala's non-communist political parties, including the Congress, the PSP, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Muslim League. The goal of the movement, according to the NSS, Christian churches, Praja Socialist Party, Muslim League, and Congress Party, was to defend the state from Communist attacks and to promote peace, democracy, and democratic governments. Statewide hartals and public meetings were held to urge the immediate resignation of the Ministry.

◆ *Dismissal of Communist Ministry*

Picketing of government offices and educational institutions, as well as school closures, were ongoing. Mannath Padmanabhan called for a combined agitation of all elements of society, regardless of caste or creed, to the dismissal of the Communist ministry. The NSS opposition was mainly on the land reforms and asked for an income-based ceiling. The opposition of the Church was mainly inspired by the Education Bill. The conflict lasted fifty days and resulted in the removal of the Ministry. According to the Governor's report to the President of India, the Constitutional machinery in the State had broken down because of the agitation, and on the advice of the Union Cabinet, the President of India dismissed the Ministry, dissolved the Assembly. The President took over the administration of the State on 31 July, 1959, in accordance with Article 356 of the Constitution. This was the first time that a democratically elected government was dismissed using the provisions of the Indian Constitution.

### 4.1.5 Coalition Ministry

#### ◆ *Ministry of R. Sankar*

Interim elections were conducted in 1960 which resulted in the formation of the coalition ministry of the Praja Socialist Party, Congress and the Muslim League, headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai. Though the Muslim League withdrew its support to the ministry, it survived the crisis for the time being. But within a short time, a difference of opinion arose between the Chief Minister Pattom Thanu Pillai and the deputy Chief Minister and the Congress leader, R. Sankar. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai was appointed as the Governor of Punjab State in September 1962, and R. Sankar was appointed Chief Minister. Hence a new ministry was formed in Kerala. But soon the Praja Socialist members resigned. Another no confidence motion was moved by P. K. Kunju against the Sankar Ministry, which was supported by fifteen Congress members of the assembly headed by K. M. George. In September 1964, the Sankar Ministry had to resign as the no-confidence motion was passed by the Assembly. The defeated Congressmen under the leadership of K. M. George formed a new party named the Kerala Congress.

### 4.1.6. Split in Communist Party

#### ◆ *Division of CPI*

After the fall of the Sankar ministry, once again President's rule was imposed on Kerala. In 1964, the Communist Party of India faced a split into two and the two - Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist). The split within the Communist Movement of India was not exactly on a theoretical basis. A majority of the workers and sympathisers, especially in Bengal and Kerala, went to the side of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

#### ◆ *Political instability*

After the President's rule of 1964, Kerala witnessed fresh Assembly election in 1965. However, no party got a majority in the assembly. So, the President's rule continued for some more time. As a result of the General election of February 1967, a new ministry was formed with E.M.S Namboodiripad as the Chief Minister. This was a coalition ministry of seven different parties with different ideologies. This ministry had to resign after a short period in power. The 1970's and 1980's also witnessed the same political instability in Kerala. Ministries were coming to power and going out. The only exception was the ministry headed by C. Achutha Menon in the 1970s which had completed its full term of five years.

## Summarised Overview

The *Aikya Kerala* Movement was the concrete manifestation of Malayalam-speaking peoples' desire for their own state. The Provincial Congress pushed for the formation of a linguistic state in Kerala through an '*Aikya Kerala* Movement' in 1946. The movement gained strength in 1949 with the merger of Cochin, and Travancore into the Travancore - Cochin State, led by the Raja of Travancore. After the fall of the ministry in 1956, it came under the President's rule. The States Reorganisation Commission recommended language as the basis for determining state boundaries, leading to the formation of Kerala on 1 November, 1956, uniting the princely states of Travancore, Cochin and the Malabar District of Madras Presidency and the Kasaragod area of South Canara as a territory of Malayalam language.

In Kerala's first Assembly Election, held in March 1957, the Communist Party won 60 seats, forming the world's first democratically elected Communist government. The Agrarian Relations Bill, introduced by Minister K. R. Gowri and the Education Bill, introduced by Joseph Mundassery, created a statewide movement against the Communist ministry, called *Vimochana Samaram* or 'Liberation struggle'. Finally the President of India on the advice of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dissolved the state legislature on 31 July, 1959. Majority of the ministries formed till the 1980s were short-lived.

## Assignments

1. Discuss the formation of the *Aikya Kerala* Movement.
2. Write a short note on the coalition ministries formed in Kerala between 1959 and 1970.
3. Analyse the important features of the Agrarian Relations Bill of 1957.
4. Mention the significance of the Education Bill of the first Communist Ministry.
5. Critically evaluate the provisions of the Agrarian Relations Bill and the Education Bill of the first Communist Ministry.
6. Analyse the political agenda behind the *Vimochana Samaram* or Liberation Struggle.



## Suggested Reading

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## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



# Kerala Towards a Model

## Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner would be able to:

- ◆ understand the ‘Kerala Model Development’
- ◆ be familiar with the parameters of Kerala model of development
- ◆ analyse the process of decentralisation in Kerala
- ◆ evaluate the people’s plan campaign

## Background

On November 1, 1956, Kerala became a constituent state of the Indian Union, comprising three regions: Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar. This reorganisation was based on the recommendation of the Linguistic Reorganisation Committee, which advocated for states to be organised according to the predominant language spoken in the region, with Malayalam as the unifying language for Kerala.

Kerala has made significant progress in social and educational development, achieving standards comparable to Western countries. However, it has not seen similar levels of industrial and economic growth. The Kerala development model is a collaborative effort and set of measures adopted by the government and people of Kerala to attain higher productivity, reduced infant mortality rates, lower population growth rates, higher life expectancy, and improved healthcare facilities. Although Kerala has a lower per capita income, the state can compete with many developed nations by implementing only radical improvement measures that need fewer resources and use less energy.

In the 1990s, many Indian states granted greater powers and responsibilities to local elected bodies, following the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments that took effect in April 1993. Kerala’s approach to this decentralisation process, known as the ‘People’s Campaign,’ was remarkable in its extent, intensity, and innovative methods. It aimed to engage the public in the development process, rather than just transferring administrative authority from the state government to local panchayats.



## Keywords

Literacy, Mortality, Decentralisation, Unemployment, Kerala Model Development, People's planning

## Discussion

### 4.2.1 Kerala Model Development

The 'Kerala Model' refers to the development approach in Kerala, which emphasises social well-being, including factors like high life expectancy, low infant mortality, quality education, strong healthcare, and a low birth rate. This model originated from a study conducted by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the UN in 1971. The Kerala model prioritised child welfare, education, land reforms, and poverty reduction. Key figures like K.N. Raj and Amartya Sen influenced the adoption of human development indicators in Kerala, which then influenced policy-making. The state has a very high literacy rate, a life expectancy nearly equal to that of developed countries, the world's lowest infant mortality rate, and one of the world's best-controlled population growth rates. Kerala accomplished all of this as a result of the state's affirmative development action, which prioritised basic education, healthcare, land reforms, and social security through employment and pensions. Kerala's achievements are the result of systematic development in a number of interrelated fields, including the economy, society, intellectual ideas, and political consciousness.

◆ *Indicators of Kerala model*

#### 4.2.1.1 Parameters of Kerala Model Development

1. High social development
2. Progressive demographic features
3. Large volume of expatriates and high dependence of remittances
4. High standard of living and per-capita consumption expenditure
5. Better social infrastructure, health and education
6. High socio-economic status of women and marginalised groups
7. High sex ratio

8. High health standards, high life expectancy, low infant mortality rate and low maternal mortality rate
9. High literacy and educational attainments

◆ *Attaining progress*

The economists observed that, despite its low income, the state had politically active, well-literate, and healthy people. The mismatch between the state's advanced development indices and the state's per poor capita income, which was significantly lower than the national average, astonished experts. How could a state with exceptionally high unemployment and massive budget deficits achieve top progress indicators that are only found in industrialised countries? Kerala had also successfully addressed gender disparities and access disparities in higher education.

◆ *Migration of population*

From the 1970s onwards, economic migration to the Persian Gulf countries became a prominent phenomena, and remittances by non-resident Keralites became a valuable source of revenue for the state. Kerala's rise in migration to the Gulf, as well as the flow of worker remittances, has resulted in unparalleled economic growth in the state since the mid-1970s. It supported the government's social development programs. The maintenance of high literacy, a low infant mortality rate, managed population expansion, improved healthcare services, and increased life expectancy necessitated a stable financial situation. Consistent efforts by succeeding governments were required to assure economic growth for normal development as well. This required widespread political participation and activism among ordinary people, as well as a large number of committed leaders at all levels.

◆ *Devolution of social governance*

### 4.2.2 Decentralisation of Power and Peoples Planning

Great political pressure from the people at the grass root level has brought better devolution of social governance in Kerala. Under British rule, Kerala was divided into three areas- Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. However, the social conditions in all the three areas were almost similar, with the upper caste dominating the lower caste. Kerala witnessed a strong socio-religious reform movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The reform movements at the grass root level helped the people to understand the rights, duties and responsibilities of the state and encouraged them to

articulate their needs. This, in turn played an important role in laying a strong foundation for decentralisation in Kerala.

◆ *Decentralisation of power*

After the formation of Kerala State in 1956, E.M.S Namboodiripad, the first Chief Minister of Kerala, chaired the administrative Reform Committee in 1957 for the newly formed state of Kerala. The committee, which submitted its report on 26 July, 1958 tabled the need to set up panchayats (for rural areas) and municipalities (for urban areas), and empower them with revenue administration and other regulatory functions. Taking into account the recommendations of the administrative reforms committee, the Kerala Panchayat Act 1960, the Kerala Municipalities Act 1960 and the Kerala Corporation Act 1961 were passed, unifying the laws governing the local bodies in Kerala. The first round of elections to 922 Panchayats in Kerala took place in 1963. However, there was a long interval before the second round of elections to Panchayats took place in 1979 and then the third in 1988.

◆ *Empowering Local Self Government*

Even though the report submitted by the Administrative Reforms Committee called for a wider scope, the role of Local Self Government in the state was limited to civic duties. Though the successive governments in the state introduced several Bills for empowering the Local Self Government in Kerala, all the initiatives failed to meet the desired results, as they were poorly executed. The political differences over the powers to be enjoyed by Local Self Governments further slowed down the process of decentralisation in Kerala.

◆ *Kerala Panchayat Raj Act*

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments stipulated amendments of the state laws by 24 April, 1994 to conform to the Constitutional requirements on Local Self Governments. Kerala did not act upon it for several months after the amendments came into force in 1993, while ambiguity persisted on the enactment of a new law within the prescribed time. It was only in March 1994 that the state government introduced the Kerala Panchayat Raj Bill in the state legislature. The Bill was criticised from different quarters for being highly restrictive. As a result of strong public opinion against it, several changes were made to the Bill and a new version of the Kerala Panchayat Act was introduced. It was enacted in April 1994. The first election to the new Panchayat Raj system was conducted in September 1995 and panchayats came into force in Kerala on 2 October, 1995.

The new state Government that came to power in 1996,

◆ *People's Plan Campaign*

actively pursued a policy of decentralisation. It launched the 'People's Plan Campaign' on 17 August, 1996 with the objective of strengthening Local Self Government in the state. The Government also earmarked 35-40 percent of the plan funds for development projects undertaken by Local Self Governments. The campaign ensured maximum autonomy to the local bodies in preparing the development plans by providing them united grants-in-aid. Apart from developing funds and granting maximum autonomy, the campaign initiated mass participation through grama sabhas in rural areas and ward committees in urban areas. The People's plan campaign ensured that public participation was not limited to elected representatives, but included ordinary people in grama sabhas and ward committees for preparing reports, formulating projects and drafting plans.

#### **4.2.2.1 Success of Decentralisation**

Kerala was a state that seriously took up the implementation of the constitutional mandate for decentralisation. Following the adoption of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment at the national level in 1992, the Kerala Panchayat Act 1994 and Kerala Municipalities Act 1994 were enacted. The first election to the 3 tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) came into existence by the last quarter of 1995.

Some major initiatives have already been launched.

◆ *Initiatives of decentralisation*

- i) A local self-government action plan
- ii) A Modernising Government Programme (MGP)
- iii) A decentralisation support programme
- iv) A project for capacity development for decentralisation

◆ *Modernising governance*

The most important of these are, of course, the programme for modernising governance. Thirty-three out of the 100 initiatives of the MGP relate to local self governments which are a package of initiatives, meant to strengthen the local governments so as to sustain the gains of decentralisation.

#### **4.2.2.2 People's Planning and Literacy Campaign**

◆ *Decentralised planning*

In the backdrop of the alleged crisis of the developmental experience of Kerala, the prospectus of its recent experiments with the world's first sub national campaign, known as the 'People's Campaign' or Decentralised Planning (PCDP) or Literacy Campaign needs to be delineated. This experiment with the decentralisation programme in Kerala is likely to

display a model of participatory democracy and participatory development, provided it can remain free from the clutches of over politicisation and bureaucratisation ingrained in Kerala society.

◆ *People - centred planning*

The people's campaign was formally inaugurated on 17 August, 1996. It was an outcome of the long drawn out and extensive development dialogue in Kerala, sparked off, as it were by the crisis of Kerala model. As a result, there evolved a consensus in favour of a decentralised process of decision-making and revival of the old legacy of collective intervention by the people in development activities. Defined in the broad sense, the campaign was an attempt to conceptualise, operationalise and institutionalise a system of multi-level, people centred planning process suitable to the regional specificities of Kerala. More specifically, the primary objective of the campaign has been to motivate and empower the local self governments to take up the new challenges of development planning. It was sought to be achieved by mobilising people, regardless of their political affiliation, religion, caste or gender to help the local governments in all the stages of development planning from plan formulation and implementation to maintenance.

◆ *PCDP programme*

Under the People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning (PCDP) programme, all the 990 panchayats (village councils), 52 municipalites, three municipal corporations, 152 community development block panchayats and 14 districts in the state were able to develop local and regional plan for their own developmental agenda. For the first time in the history of independent India's development effort, 35 to 40 percent of the proposed state budget for the 9th Five Year Plan was earmarked for projects and programmes drawn up by local and regional institutions. The 9<sup>th</sup> Five Year plan aimed to tackle social and economic issues through active public participation and effective administrative and political measures. People were to meet PCDP promoters and government officials to discuss and then design their own plans for development. The movers of PCDP prepared handbooks, organised comprehensive training programmes, and created new methodologies for people to become empowered and to participate in decentralised planning.

## Summarised Overview

The Kerala model emerged as a set of recommendations on specific concerns related to the growth of Kerala. During the 1970s, it was recommended by a UN study team led by K. N. Raj. It is intended as an equitable growth strategy that emphasises land reforms, poverty reduction, access to education, and child welfare. The Kerala model refers to the methods and policies that enabled the state government to achieve high literacy, widespread social access to healthcare, low infant mortality, increased life expectancy, and extraordinary social development.

Kerala's decentralisation process, which began in 1996, is a significant reform in public governance. It has evolved over time, with a focus on institutionalising decentralised government and incorporating technology. The 9<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, aimed to address social and economic challenges with active participation from the people and effective administrative and political measures. The "People's Campaign" played a crucial role in this process by engaging the local community in planning. It mainly involved grama panchayats (village councils) and utilised various strategies to build consensus and enhance capacities for development.

## Assignments

1. Discuss the salient features of Kerala Model Development.
2. Write a short note on the decentralisation process of Kerala.
3. Analyse the achievements and challenges of Kerala Model Development.
4. Critically evaluate the People's Plan Campaign.

## Suggested Reading

1. Dreze Jean, Sen Amartya, (Ed.), *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011.
2. Prakash, B. A., Jerry, Alwin (Ed.) *Kerala's Economic Development: Emerging Issues and Challenges*, Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2018.
3. Raman, K. Ravi, *Development, Democracy and the State: Critiquing the Kerala Model of Development*, Routledge Contemporary South Asia, 2012.



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1. Franke, W. Richard, & Barbara H. Chasin, Kerala: Development through Radical Reforms, Promilla and Co, San Francisco, 1992.
2. Gurukkal, Rajan and Raghava Varier, History of Kerala: From Prehistory to the Present, The Orient Blackswan, 2018.
3. Menon A. Sreedhara., A Survey of Kerala History, DC Books, Kottayam, 2007.
4. Sharma, Rashmi, "Kerala's Decentralisation: Idea in Practice" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 38, No. 36, 2003.
5. T. M., Thomas Isaac and Michael Tharakan P. K., "Kerala: Towards a New Agenda", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 30, No. 31/32, 1995.

### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

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# History of Modern Kerala: Problems and Perspectives

Course Code: M21HS06DC



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