

**An Agent of the State: The Transformation of
kolkar in Colonial Malabar, 1800-1947**

Thesis
Submitted to the University of Calicut
for the award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

Haridasan V



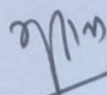
**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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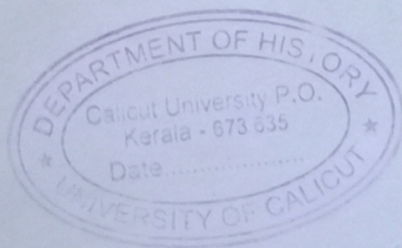
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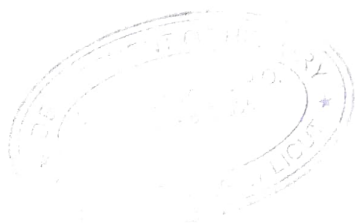
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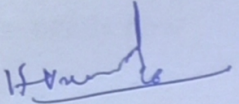


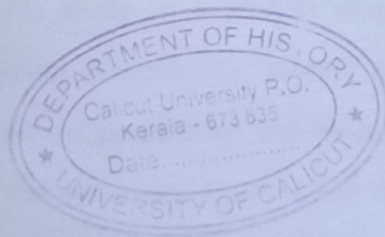
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I, Haridasan V, hereby certify that the thesis entitled **An Agent of the State: The Transformation of *kolkar* in Colonial Malabar, 1800-1947** is a bonafide research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Sivadasan P, Professor, Department of History, University of Calicut. This work has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Scholarship or other similar title of recognition.

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Abbreviation

Glossary

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	:	Andaman Colonisation Files
ARMP	:	Administration Report of the Madras Police
CUHDA	:	Calicut University History Department Archives
MAMP	:	Manual of the Administration of Madras Presidency
MCF	:	Madras Correspondence Files
MGG	:	Malabar Government Gazette
RAK	:	Regional Archives, Kozhikode
RAMP	:	Report on the Administration of Madras Presidency
TSA	:	Tamil Nadu State Archives

GLOSSARY

<i>adhikari</i>	-	Village Officer
<i>amsam</i>	-	village
<i>ananthiravan</i>	-	nephew
<i>chaturvarnya</i>	-	four caste system
<i>chavady</i>	-	village jails
<i>cutcheri</i>	-	court
<i>desam</i>	-	subdivisions of taluks
<i>gramam</i>	-	village
<i>gumastah</i>	-	clerk
<i>hobly</i>	-	revenue division by grouping two or more villages
<i>jamma</i>	-	amount of tax to be collected for a year
<i>janmakkar</i>	-	landlords
<i>janmam</i>	-	permanent ownership over land
<i>janmi</i>	-	landlord
<i>kachcham</i>	-	rules/regulations
<i>karam</i>	-	tax
<i>karanavar</i>	-	head of the family
<i>karyasthan</i>	-	manager
<i>kovilakam</i>	-	royal house
<i>kudiyam</i>	-	tenant
<i>maryada</i>	-	law
<i>menon</i>	-	accountant
<i>mooppan</i>	-	chief
<i>nadu</i>	-	the area under a chief or king

- parambu* - garden lands
- sambandham* - a loose marriage alliance between *namboothiri* men and *nair* women
- tarah* - a group of villages
- tarawad* - ancestral family
- varam* - share of the landholder or government

-,

Chapter 1

Introduction

The word *kolkar* features multiple times throughout the narratives of ancient and medieval south Indian history as the close associates of the feudal chief. In these narratives, they are invariably seen to be employed as personal guards and assistants of their feudal overlords. In the context of modern Kerala, the historical narratives evince them as the distinct police force formed by T H Baber to handle the opposition raised by Pazhassi Raja. More specifically, to those living in the villages of South Malabar, the word *kolkaran* meant a subordinate staff in the village office. One can further witness the transformation of this class through different periods in tune with the character of the contemporary state and bureaucracy. In other words, a researcher can perceive the transforming character of *kolkar* over a period in the historical narratives of Kerala. Such a context therefore prompts numerous questions to be raised pertaining to their identity and its dynamics ranging from who they actually were to what made them subject to these transformations. It is against this backdrop, an endeavour is made here to explore the history of this class of officers in the history of Malabar from 1800 to 1947.

Numerous detailed accounts have been articulated by both Indian and European historians pertaining to the European elements of colonial bureaucracy. Aspects like their social and educational background, professional training and service careers are generally studied in detail.¹ However, one can spot lacunae in existing knowledge since no detail or elaborate studies have been conducted regarding the role of indigenous elements in the British Indian Civil Service. Even those few cursory studies conducted were mainly concentrated on elucidating the role of natives in the military and police departments. Hence, there is a wider scope

¹ David Arnold, 'Bureaucratic Recruitment and Subordination in Colonial India: The Madras Constabulary 1859-1947' in Ranajith Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies* Vol. IV, *Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985, p. 1.

for the study of the native elements in the British Indian Civil Service especially at the grass-root level. This study further assumes greater relevance given the fact that this land was entirely new to Europeans in terms of language, religion, culture, law and political institutions and that the administration of conquered territories was deemed near impossible without securing the cooperation of its natives.

In every part of the world, colonial powers have depended heavily upon indigenous manpower and brainpower for running their administrative machinery.² The system of 'discipline and surveillance' followed by European governments necessitated the service of a regular bureaucracy. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this system finds its way into the British East India Company's territories of India. Removal of intermediaries and the direct subordination of the agrarian economy to the scrutiny and regulation of the state were the major objectives. The Ryotwari system implemented in major parts of the Madras Presidency was a prime example for the new regime in operation.³ Land revenue was the most important source of income to the Company during early years of administration. The appropriation of it was important both economically and politically. Hence, revenue administration was the first offshoot or arm of government to be made operational. For systematizing the land revenue administration in accordance with their needs, the British reorganized the structure of pre-colonial Indian villages.

The British administration in India was a system of 'alien few ruled the native many'. A small group of European officers in the Indian Civil Service, otherwise known as the covenanted service, with thousands of subordinate Indian servants, controlled the entire affairs of the government. There were about nine hundred covenanted servants who distributed from the central secretariat at the top to the districts at the bottom. As W. R Lawrence states, "while the English

² Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, University of California Press, London, 1971, p. 32.

³ David Arnold, 'Bureaucratic Recruitment and Subordination in Colonial India: The Madras Constabulary 1859-1947', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

district officers give impulse and the secretariat gave direction; the real administration was in the hands of the Indian officials".⁴ Though Indians had freedom to take the entrance examination, their representation was nominal in the civil service. The British were able to rule India with a few European officers because of the support of some of the native subjects. Anil Seal has described them as 'collaborators'.⁵ The support of the minority of the natives and the passivity of the majority was the reason for the success of the British Raj in India. The British administrative system in India was apparently an autocratic system. It was guided by the British higher-level bureaucracy and guarded by their 'redcoats'. Below them was another system of Indian support and consent. It was functioned as a mediating agency between the commands of the government house and the obedience of the men in the fields.⁶ The Indians were ready to serve under the British regime due to a variety of reasons. Some wanted to keep a position of importance or hope of gaining such a position, some others for recognition in society and many others for economic gains. What some others wanted was that his neighbors should know that he had sat a certain time with the *sahib*.⁷ Anil Seal calls them collaborators as their actions fell into line with the purposes of the British.⁸ The foreign rulers prior to the British widely used the service of the natives. Like that, the British also required the support from a large body of native bureaucrats. Many of the subdivisions, and *taluk* divisions were administered by Indian officers who controlled another hierarchy of Indian officers down the village officers.

The present study titled 'An Agent of the State: Transformation of *kolkar* in Colonial Malabar, 1800-1947' tries to analyse the ways and strategies implemented

⁴ W. R Lawrence, *The India We Served*, Cassel and Company Ltd., London, 1928, p. 113.

⁵ Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1971.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷ W. R Lawrence, *The India We Served*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-14.

⁸ Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

by the British for the administration of the villages of Malabar using the native servants. Almost all the servants in the taluks and villages of Malabar were natives of the region. The *tahsildar* and his assistants controlled the affairs of *taluk* divisions. There were three categories of village servants in Malabar named *adhipari* or village officer, *menon* or accountant and *kolkaran* or executive assistant. In the earlier period, *kolkaranmar* or *kolkar* worked both in villages and *taluk* divisions. Later, their service was limited to the villages as an executive assistant of the *adhipari*. The study focusses on how the *kolkar* became an important group of native servants under the British and how they were recruited and utilized by the colonial government to control the village communities of Malabar. It also tries to analyse the changes in their powers and functions from time to time.

Throughout history, the recurrent theme of human history has been the control of man over man. However, the nature of this control and the methods employed for it differed from time to time. Such a control was aimed at establishing and maintaining unequal relationships.⁹ In the earlier stage of state formation, there was no need for any establishments like police or military to control the people as social control was the responsibility of individual citizens. In fact, village heads and his assistants, watch and ward committees etc., exercised control over society. Further, during this period, customs, traditions, moral values, religious beliefs and family bonds also contributed to maintain order in the society. In other words, kinship was the uniting factor in the society. In such societies, disputes were settled through negotiations and mediations. Loose forms of arbitrary courts functioned without formal proceedings and decisions were taken through consensus. However, the inability of such systems to control the situations like war and riots led to the development of military forces in due course to meet

⁹ Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793-1920*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989, p. 1.

such situations. The gradual development of police force for control over the society during times of peace was also a later phenomenon.

On the other hand, state control stands for control over the resources of a region, including economic, intellectual, political and social. Appropriation of resources is possible only through control and force. Hence, the primary aim of every government in modern times is to develop a system of control, supervision and surveillance sufficient to the time and space. Not only in Malabar, but in India as a whole, the British government followed a system of modulating and re-modulating the existing system of control and it passed through several stages of transformation. In Malabar, the transformation of the *kolkar* also was a part of this policy. Historical and cross-cultural factors contributed for this transformation.

As noted earlier, the development of modern type of police system was a gradual process and is closely associated with the development of states. Such a change occurred because of the transition from the kinship-based society to a class dominated society. According to Rousseau, the state was conceived of originally by the rich man to protect himself against those who could attack his position.¹⁰ Cyril B. Robinson and Richard Scaglione have argued that the origin of modern police force is closely linked with development of economic specialization and differential access to resources.¹¹ They developed their arguments on the basis of certain assumptions. They are: (a) the origin of a specialized police function depends upon the division of society into dominant and subordinate classes with antagonistic interests; (b) organized and specialized police force is seen in the societies politically organized as states; (c) In the period of transition there was an ongoing attempt to convert the social control or policing mechanism from an integral part of the community structure to an agent of the emerging dominant class; and (d) the new police force was used by the emerging dominant class as an instrument of

¹⁰ Ronald Cohen, 'State Origins: A Reappraisal' in Henri J. M. Classen, Peter Skalnik (eds.), *The Early State*, Mouton Publishers, New York, 1978, p. 38.

¹¹ Cyril B. Robinson and Richard Scaglione, 'The Origin and Development of Police Functions in Society: Notes Toward a Theory' in *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1987), p. 111.

the preservation of its control over restricted access to limited resources, over the political apparatus governing this access, and over the labour force necessary to provide the surplus upon which the dominant class lives.¹²

Even though social stratification was an important correlate of early states, many scholars, while analysing the ancient societies of the world, have attributed evolutionary factors as reasons for such social changes. Nonetheless, the elements of the involvement of any power groups or interest of any particular classes were absent in such analyses. As a result, most of the writings about police and police functions in societies were concentrated on modern states. These studies have laid a starting point to analyse the entire societies in respect of policing and the involvement of interest groups in its transformation. In India, the deliberate effort for creating a police force was initiated by the colonial government and it was implemented for protecting their interests.

Studies by various early Anthropologists that elucidate the emergence of bureaucratic agencies including police have invariably supported an evolutionary theory of state formation. Lewis Henry Morgan is the first prominent scholar to give a detailed analysis of state formation in the early period.¹³ According to him, the crucial point of societal change was the transition from stateless society to state society. Scholars like Frederic Engels and Morton H. Fried also explained the formation of early states in the evolutionary way. Engels described that before state formation society was divided into classes.¹⁴ According to him, technological development led to production of commodities beyond the needs of societies. Progress in technology and overproduction marked the end of primitive communism. Surplus production led to the beginning of exchange which in turn facilitated the specialization of labour, use of money and the growth of a new

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ For details see Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, Charles H Kerr and Company, Chicago, 1877.

¹⁴ For details see, Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, EPUB, Penguin Books, London, 2010 (1884).

commercial capitalist class of middlemen who would profit from selling goods rather than producing them. This led to the rise of a powerful minority of entrepreneurs and a system of polarized antagonistic classes – the exploiters and the exploited.¹⁵ Laws backed by force were created to preserve the system. Scholars like Gordon Childe, Leslie White and Julian Steward have accepted this theory. Morton Fried, a twentieth century anthropologist, considerably modified the theory of Engels and other orthodox communist thinkers. He rejected the elements of commodity production or commercial capitalism as a constitutive factor for the rise of early states. Instead, societies could become stratified into rulers and ruled in a different way. He explained that stratification could have arisen from population growth which resulted in some kin-groups remaining in possession of the original richer lands like river bottom lands with fertile soil and abundant water and others became poorer and helpless in peripheral areas.¹⁶ Though, Fried admitted the role of economic factor for the transformation of society, he superimposed the elements of favourable versus less-favourable ecological factors over the commodity production and commercial capitalism focused by the orthodox Marxian scholars.¹⁷

The structure and functions of states were further modified by the process of industrialization. In every state, instead of village centered communities, urban communities began to develop. Social activities became more complex as development of trade unions, regulation of economic activities, access to life sustaining resources through salaries etc. made Industrial states as a separate kind of society with distinct political problems and adaptive solutions.¹⁸ This complexity in society was managed by the states by using a bureaucracy which was a privileged

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶ Elman R. Service, 'Obituary on Morton H. Fried' in *American Anthropologist New Series*, Vol. 90. No. 1, March 1988, pp. 148-152.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Classen and Skalnik, *The Early State*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

class in the society and acted as an agent to the state. They also functioned as a link between the people and state.

When British entered India as a colonial power, their primary aim was the appropriation of resources of India. To achieve this aim, they had to determine the extent to which India was a fundamentally different society and to what extent it possessed institutions similar to those of Europe. How far the Indians ought to be transformed and how far they should live according to the levels of their own culture had also to be determined. The British, during the eighteenth century, constructed their rule in India upon the intellectual foundations. The colonial ideologies like 'Oriental Despotism' and 'Civilizing Mission' guided the British administrators. Forces of liberalism, evangelicalism and capitalism also influenced British rule in India. By 1800, men like Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, Edmund Burke and Thomas Munroe begun to lay out ordering principles for the British Indian Empire.¹⁹ During the eighteenth century the Company depended more on Indian intermediaries both in collection of revenue and administration of justice. This dependence frustrated the British superior officers. Company servants like William Jones suggested learning Sanskrit and Persian, compiling a complete digest of Indian laws and excluding *pandits* and *Moulavis* from the courts of justice as a remedy to this 'evil'.²⁰ In 1798, Jones published the 'Digest'. Despite its publication, Hindu and Muslim legal advisors continued to serve in the British Indian courts until the end of the Company rule thereby prolonging the British frustration throughout this period.

The dawn of the nineteenth century was marked by the spread of romanticism in England. Its concern for individual introspection and focus on emotions and glories of the past challenged many of the reforms in the Cornwallis system. Instead of a limited government, the Romantics in India believed in an

¹⁹ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2018 (1995), p. 2

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

active government. For this they sought to make the district collector, instead of judge, the central figure of British administration. They rejected the role of landed intermediaries in the administration. By 1800, the district collector became the central figure of Indian governance and a systematic bureaucracy also began to evolve. For getting more intimate knowledge about India the government initiated many detailed surveys that subsequently defined British comprehension of India and its people. For instance, the report of Francis Buchanan helped the Company to rule Malabar based more on direct observation and measurement than depending on the local chiefs and landlords. They followed a policy of adapting with the existing system and transform it gradually in accordance with their needs. Every element of Indian society and politics passed through this transformation process.

Indian Villages

India was a land of villages from the ancient period itself where people lived as communities. Baden Powell defined villages as a group of land holdings, usually, with a central aggregate of resources and the inhabitants of which have certain relations and some kind of union or bond of common government.²¹ Gradually, modifications happened in the structure of Indian villages. But the basic elements of villages remained the same. Morison argues that many archaic elements existed in Indian villages even in the British period. Agricultural lands in the villages were owned either by individual landlord or by family groups or tribes.²² Powell admits that the types of villages defined above were not seen in the districts like Malabar and Canara where we find individuals or group of connected families with separate land holdings. In Malabar, there was no word for 'village', and the word *thara* meant street was used to identify a family group and its dependencies.²³ Here for the purpose of administration, these *thara* divisions were grouped into circles called villages under headmen or chiefs for the need of state management. The

²¹ B. H Baden Powell, *Land Systems of British India*, Vol. I, Clarendon Press, London, 1892, p. 97.

²² Theodore Morison, *The Economic Transition in India*, John Murray, London, 1911, p. 38.

²³ Baden Powell, *Land Systems of British India*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

newly appointed headmen, initially, like in the customary villages in other parts of India, collected revenue share to the government, preserved law and order, and administered justice. Generally, headmen of Indian villages were either tribal heads or leading landowners of villages as they always enjoyed a higher status than the other inhabitants of the village.

In Ancient India, formation of villages was the result of natural instincts. Grouping of men was essential in North India to prepare lands for agriculture by clearing forests and protecting crops from wild animals. They had also to prevent the raids of hill-tribe men and local robbers. In places where there were no hills and forests, the structure of villages was slightly different. It was the hard work of villagers which fed and clothed the people of the land. Village was the smallest economic and political unit. Every village was a self-sufficient economic unit. Division of labour was existed among the villagers. Some read the Holy Scriptures, some were the administrators, some tilled the land, and some others produced ploughs and sickles. The weavers supplied clothes, the potters made utensils, and the cobbler, the washer man, the barber and the grocer, each carried on their special trade.²⁴ Each village had its market days, its fairs and festivals and temples for worship. In every village, there were shady trees under which the headmen and other elders meet to transact their business.²⁵ These self-sufficient villages lived in harmony and every inhabitant made his own contribution to the wellbeing of the entire community.

The harmonious divisions of labour in community gradually shifted to unhealthy destructions. Love for integration gave place to love for position and power. The collective outlook gave way to the tendency on the part of the individual to dominate his co-villagers economically and in other ways.²⁶ The need

²⁴ *Manual for Village Level Workers*, Community Project Administration, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, 1953, p. 1.

²⁵ M. Elphinstone, *The History of India*, Vol. I, John Murray, London, 1843, p. 334.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

for protection from internal and external threats forced the inhabitants to concede before the dominant group. When a tract of land was brought under the control of a central power there arise the needs to meet the demands of the revenue agents of the ruler. Each member of the community was obliged to pay a share for the purpose of protection and security. The collection of revenue by the ruler or village head and his responsibility to protect the people necessitated the introduction of certain systems or regulations, not written, in the society. There was a group of members of the villages for deciding matters. Before the coming of dynasties and rulers, villages had their own Panchayats or committee of elders functioned in a democratic way to arbitrate the grievances of the villagers. The *panchayath* divisions oversaw maintaining peace and order in the villages. Thus, the villages had its own administrative systems. Though dynasties and rulers came one after another, the basic structure of Indian villages remained unchanged. The village *panchayath* of ancient India was distinctively effective local organization which gave decisions on communal matters, decided civil disputes and punished offenders by imposing reparation and fine.²⁷ In the administration of land revenue village communities and its heads had important role. Service of village heads was important in the collection of revenue and keeping necessary accounts. There were servants for collection of revenue, supervision of production, supply of water to agricultural land and for the protection of life and property of the inhabitants of the villages. In every ancient Indian village, there were twelve village servants called the *barabooloty* or 'twelve men'.²⁸ Among them the first five only rendered service to the government or were recognized as parts of revenue administration.²⁹ Village headman was the first and most important among them. In villages, whether formed under traditional customs or later creation by colonists and

²⁷ John Mathai, *Village Government in British India*, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., London, 1915, p. ix.

²⁸ *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, hereafter MAMP, Vol. I, Government Press, Madras, 1885, p. 154.

²⁹ The '*barabooloty*' were (1) Village headmen (2) Curnum or accountant (3) Shroff or Notagar (4) Neergunty (5) Joty or Taliyary (6) Potter (7) Smith (8) Jeweller (9) Carpenter (10) Barber (11) Washer man (12) Astrologer. See *ibid.* Also see T. Morrison, *The Economic Transition in India, op. cit.*, p. 39.

settlers, it was natural that a man should take the lead as the representative of the village.³⁰ When states were formed, the headmen had to watch the cultivation of land and threshing centers for fixing and collecting the state share. It brought him closer to the rulers. Naturally, he became a state officer and representative of the state in the villages. The office of headmen soon acquired a hereditary status. In course of time, there were ups and downs in the importance of the office of village headmen and their emoluments under different rulers and dynasties. But one fact is clear that headmen in villages were inevitable to rulers of all regions of India and that office survived when many other institutions of village had disappeared. In every village, from where the ruler collected a share had a headman. In the early texts, village headmen were mentioned as the *gramadhikar* and later a variety of names like *patel*, *mandal*, *pradhan*, *mukhaddam* and *lambradar* were used to identify them.³¹ In Malabar, names like *desavazhi*, *desadkikari*, *mukhyasta*, and *adhikari* were used for the headmen. When functions of the state expanded, the duties and responsibilities of the village headmen increased. It transformed the nature of the office by many additions and deletions. When the size of the villages increased, the headmen needed assistants like accountants and peons as upkeep of collection of information from a vast area was impossible by a single person.

It is well known that India witnessed a series of immigrations of various tribes and races, through land and sea, stretches back into the remote past. All groups of people lived depending upon land and naturally there was a system of cultivation, collection and distribution of produces. At a later stage when complexities arose, there was the need of policing and judiciary.

The Research Problem

The *kolkaran* can be seen in the pre-colonial and colonial records as being attached with the state in the feudal system of Malabar. This staff of the state has

³⁰ Baden Powell, *Land Systems of British India*, Vol. I, *op . cit.*, p. 253.

³¹ *Ibid.*

been travelling through the feudal society, Mysorean administration, the rule of the East India Company, the British governance and post-independence period in the history of Malabar. With their image continuously changing over the period, the study looks to explore and map their transformation in detail as this would also explain their gradual disappearance from the circles of authority and power by the period of independence in India.

The *kolkaran* had been a very familiar term to the people of Malabar till the end of the twentieth century. After independence, *kolkaran* was a field assistant in village offices. His duties were to assist the *adhikari* or village officer and *menon* or accountant in collection of revenue, survey and measurement of land. *Kolkaran* is also a term which can be spotted multiple times in most records of the British period. He is mentioned in many correspondence records of Pazhassi Raja too.³² The name itself shows the nature of the job and symbol of this servant. While the term *kol* means a staff or rode, the word *kolkaran* refers to a 'man with a rode or staff'. The meaning of the word *kolkaran* in the Malayalam lexicon pertains to either a peon, or bodyguard, or one who bear the rode of power.³³ During the rule of the Poligars of Tamil region, a servant named *kavalkaran* was employed in villages to extend their power to remote villages. These *Kavalkar* acted as the agents of the Poligars in villages.³⁴ However, the villages in Malabar were not like the villages in other parts of South India. Agricultural lands were scattered in Malabar. Thus, the security of the agricultural land in Malabar was not as much important and it was not possible like in other parts. But village servants were essential for other duties like revenue collection and supervisory duties. Just like the *kavalkar*, the *kolkar* did similar duties in Malabar. Here *kolkar* were the agents

³² Pazhassi Raja was a feudatory in Malabar who fought against the East India Company in the end of the eighteenth century. For Details see Joseph Skaria (ed.), *Pazhassi Rekhakal*, D. C Books, Kottayam, 1994.

³³ Sreekanteswaram G. Padmanabha Pillai, *Sabdatharavali* (32 ed.), Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society, Kottayam, 2008, p. 680.

³⁴ Bishop R. Caldwell, *A History of Tinnevely*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1989, p. 104.

of the local rulers during the pre-British period and later served in the same capacity for the British.

Under the British, the *kolkar* underwent many stages of transformation. In the beginning of British rule, *kolkar* were a class of attenders and messengers of the native rulers and chiefs. But the British realized the importance of this group in the interior villages of Malabar. Hence, the colonial administrators made them a part of the bureaucracy of Malabar. The service of the *kolkar* to the colonial government varied from time to time. They were a class of servants worked in the grass root level with military, police, revenue and judicial duties. When the British used the *kolkar* for a variety of duties, the native chiefs and *raja* chiefs during the colonial period used them for duties like revenue collection and transferring messages. Under the local rulers the post of *kolkaran* was considered as the lowest one. In an editorial of the *Mithavathi* newspaper, the editor expressed his discontent with the Samoothiri of Kozhikode in avoiding *ezhava* community members even to the post of a *kolkaran*.³⁵ Quite against this, under the British, *kolkar* had a key role in the day-to-day affairs of the government in all departments in the early stage and later in the village administration.

It is against such a backdrop that the present study aims to examine the role of the *kolkar* as an agent of the state in a bureaucratic set up. It also attempts to analyse the impact of British rule in Malabar villages by exploring different stages in the transformation of *kolkar*. While an agent literally means a person, who acts on behalf of another person or group, a bureaucracy stands for an instrument of the government to implement its plans in the order of priority and importance. Colonial governments have generally recruited public servants who then formed a bureaucracy to meet the colonial needs. Likewise, in Malabar, for a long period, the *kolkar* mainly performed policing and revenue duties, especially in the villages.

³⁵ *The Mithavathi*, July 1915, p. 4.

Though the basic idea behind the formation of a police force was enforcement of 'rule of law', colonial police force made use of *kolkar* far beyond that measure.

In British India, a central model of police force was operational only after a hundred years of colonial administration. Till that time, colonial policing was based on local needs. Police power was occasionally used to supplement the legal process as well. However, in Malabar, besides the revenue and crime control functions, the *kolkar* also performed political functions. They were considered as the agents of the state because the political will of the colonial state was reflected in the villages through them. The colonial rulers implemented their will in the Malabar villages through the officers called *Adhikari* officials and in the *thaluk* divisions through the *tahsildar*. The *kolkar* functioned under both these officers. Almost all servants in villages and *thaluk* divisions were native inhabitants and thereby the British could easily keep away from the discontent of the people. Thus, the *kolkar* served as an agent of the state at the grass-root level under the supervision of Indian masters.

Area of Study

The term 'Malabar' used in the foreign notices of first and second millennium A. D does not stand for a specific geographical region, as mentioned in this thesis. The name 'Malabar' was not in general use among the indigenous people. It was used by foreigners and English-speaking natives. The ordinary name used was 'Malayalam' or 'Malayam' which means hilly region. Foreign travellers and traders who visited the region at different times used the term Malabar to specify the entire region of coastal Kerala. There is no consensus among scholars on the etymology of the name Malabar. Innes and Evans opine that Al Biruni was the first to call the country Malabar.³⁶ Words like *Manibar*, *Malibar* and *Menibar* are some other variants used by travellers to mention the land. But it is agreeable that the word was derived from *mala*, a Dravidian word which means hill and a

³⁶ Innes and Evans, *Malabar*, Vol. I and II, The State Editor, Kerala Gazetteers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997 (1908), p. 2.

Persian or Arabic word *barr* which means a country. In short, Malabar meant 'land of hills'. Nieuhoff, in his accounts on Malabar, refers it as the land of speaking 'Malabar' language.³⁷ It starts from fifty league south of Goa and extends up to Kanyakumari.³⁸ The Graeco-Roman description of the first millennium about Malabar was limited to certain ports of Kerala coast and trade activities through these ports. Malabar, as conceived in the Graeco-Roman descriptions of the first millennium or in that of the travellers of the second millennium, was not a single political entity.³⁹ The ports visited by the traders and travellers were under different rulers. The political fragmentation that existed in Malabar Coast was not visible in other similar coastal regions.⁴⁰ From the ancient period itself, sea trade flourished all over the world and as Malabar was a coastal region, many merchants and travellers visited the place and narrated its geography, fauna-flora, rivers, mountains, people and their culture. Due to the scarcity of indigenous written sources, these travelogues and other records of foreigners were used by historians and scholars to construct the history of ancient and medieval Kerala.⁴¹ They were used to corroborate the evidences available in indigenous literature and vice versa. The celebrated classical geographers, Pliny and the author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, who visited India in the 1st century A. D, made reference about Kerala. Pliny called the Kerala rulers as 'celebothras' and Periplus as 'keprobotos'.⁴²

³⁷ John Nieuhoff was a Dutch representative deputed to carry on trade negotiations with the kings and chiefs of Malabar. He travelled through Kerala from 1662 to 1664 and described about the land in his 'Travels and Voyages' composed in Dutch language. For details see K. Sivasankaran Nair, *Nieuhoff Kanda Keralam* (Malayalam), Kerala Gazetteers Department, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996, and Suranad P. N Kunjan Pillai, ed., *Malabar in the Eyes of Travellers*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1940, pp. 60-82.

³⁸ K. Sivasankaran Nair, *Nieuhoff Kanda Keralam*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³⁹ K. N Ganesh, *Reflections on Pre Modern Kerala*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 2016, p. 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ For a long period political history was the major concern of historians and for this they depended mainly written sources. When the trend was shifted to socio-economic history, more importance was given to ethnographic, archaeological and epigraphic sources. For details see R. S Sharma's *Rethinking India's Past*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 23-45.

⁴² G. W. B Huntingford (ed.), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1980, p. 155.

Many other travellers who visited the place in the first and second millennium also wrote about Malabar. But those were descriptions about almost the entire Kerala.

The geographical region that becomes the core of this study is colonial Malabar. However, it did not comprise the entire area of the above-mentioned Malabar. It includes the area which came directly under the British rule from 1800 to 1947. Ward and Conner outline a picture of the geographical boundaries of British Malabar. On the northern side, it was bounded by the district of Canara, on the east by those of Coorg and Mysore. On the south-east, the boundary of Malabar was Coimbatore and on south, Cochin.⁴³ It in fact comprised a total area of 6262 square miles. The land was separated from other parts on the eastern side by the Western Ghats and on the west by the Arabian Sea. More notably, the breadth of Malabar varies from place to place. At the extreme south, it was less than five miles and in the middle part it was above seventy miles.⁴⁴ Further, there were nine taluks in Malabar proper. They were Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Calicut, Eranad, Walluvanad, Ponnani and Palakkad. Cochin taluk also was a part of Malabar under the British. It includes the town of British Cochin and some estates within the area of Cochin State.

Period of Study

The period selected for this study is from A. D 1800 to A. D 1947. It was in 1800, Malabar province was put under the control of Madras Presidency. In 1792, through the treaty of Sreerangapattanam, Malabar was ceded to the British East India Company by Tipu Sulthan. From 1792 to 1800, the territory was under the supervision of the Governor of Bombay. Commissioners and supervisors controlled the administration of Malabar during this period. When the district was transferred to the Madras Presidency, Collectors were appointed to rule the district. From that

⁴³ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoire of Malabar*, Collectorate Press, Calicut, 1906, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Innes and Evans, *Malabar*, Vol. I and II, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

period onwards, a regular system of administration began in Malabar. The upper lock period is 1947, the year of end of the British rule in Malabar and India.

Significance of the Study

British Malabar, the geographical area under study, was directly ruled by the British for more than a century. The period brought unprecedented imprints upon the political, social, cultural and economic life of Malabar. Many age-old customs and beliefs of the people were gradually transformed during the period. The administrative system of the region was subjected to a thorough reorganization. The British started their rule by absorbing the local elements of governments up to the taluk level. At the same time, they transformed the system in accordance with colonial needs. Many changes that took place during the period in different sectors of government were the result of the deliberate efforts of the colonial administrators. However, some others were the indirect results of these efforts. As this study mainly focusses on the role of the *kolkar* under the British, it examines the role of this group of servants in different departments from village to the district level. Such an examination provides a vivid picture of the involvement of the native inhabitants as public servants under the colonial bureaucratic system to safeguard the interests of an exploitative government. While subsequently analysing this aspect, it is also pertinent to observe influence of contemporary social and political environment on policing and revenue administration of Malabar villages. Further, it is interesting and germane to collect and record information about the administration of villages in matters of revenue, police and judiciary as they combinedly formed the most important concerns of governments at all times. Such an approach helps one to compare, analyse as well as draw parallels in the context of present-day society. This study opens many areas for further studies as well. For instance, the village administration of Malabar during the British period is one area to be studied in detail. The impact of different rules and regulations introduced by the colonial government upon the people of villages are also worthy of further examination and analysis. It is also important to study in detail, how the

colonial village administrative system made its imprint on the national movement of Malabar.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has the following objectives-

1. To understand the space of *kolkar* in pre-colonial Malabar
2. To analyse the method of recruitment, training, nature of service and remuneration.
3. To evaluate the class representation of the *kolkar* during the colonial period.
4. To understand the structure of village administration during the British period.
5. To evaluate the changes in the role of the *kolkar* in villages of British Malabar.
6. To find out the service of the *kolkar* in the suppression of anti-British struggles of the natives.
7. To analyse the change in the economic condition and social status of the *kolkar* during the colonial period.
8. To explain the transformation of the *kolkar* according to the changes in the approaches of the British towards the government of Malabar.
9. To evaluate how far the concept of an 'agent' was relevant with respect to the class of *kolkar*.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses are the basis of the present study –

1. The *kolkar* assisted the landlords in Malabar to assess and collect land tax during the pre-colonial period.
2. During the pre-colonial period, the *kolkar* came from the upper castes.
3. During the colonial period, the *kolkar* discharged military duties.
4. The general tendencies of petty tyranny, corruption and brutality of police forces were reflected in the services of *kolkar*.
5. The Company rulers recruited *kolkar* from all communities.
6. The *kolkar* lost their social status in the later colonial period.

Review of Literature

Though nobody has attempted to explore this issue in Kerala history, a limited number of studies have endeavored to examine the *kolkar* in suppressing the Pazhassi Revolt of Wynad. *The History of Tellicherry Factory* written by Professor K. K. N. Kurup is an example. A. Sreedhara Menon in his *A Survey of Kerala History* describes the *kolkar* in connection with the Pazhassi Revolt. William Logan's *Malabar Manual* provides some reference about the *kolkar* during the pre-colonial period. He has in fact furnished a description on the role of the *kolkar* in suppressing the Pazhassi Revolt.

The *Village Government in British India*, by John Mathai is a work which deals with the general structure of village administration in British India. This work was published in 1915. It hardly provides any substantial details about Malabar villages or the role of *kolkar* in Malabar. The chapters titled, 'watch and ward' and 'administration of justice' give some clues about the village administration of

Malabar. In this work, references are given about village police and judicial administration of Madras Presidency.

The 1923 book, *The Moplah Rebellion, 1921*, written by C. Gopalan Nair gives some references about *kolkar* and *Adhikari* people. The descriptions made by the author in this work helps to develop an idea about the approach of the ordinary people, especially the *mappila* opposition towards the village officials of Malabar. Many *adhikari* and *kolkar* officials were attacked or killed by the strikers during the period of the struggle of 1921. Hindu village officials thus left their villages during the period of revolt.⁴⁵

Many Europeans, especially the British Indian administrators, in their reports and narratives did comment about *kolkar* and their services in various capacities to the maintenance of British power in Malabar. The earlier reports like, *Joint Commissioners Report of 1792-93*, Munroe's Report, Graeme's Report, T. L Strange's Report, Frazer Report etc., has made many valuable references about the police, judicial and revenue administration of Malabar and about the *kolkar*. The book titled, *The Administration of the East India Company* by J. W. Kaye helps to get an idea about the general approach of the Company towards India and Indian affairs. The third volume of the *History of the Madras Army* by W. J. Wilson published in 1883, includes some descriptions about the events of Malabar during the period of Pazhassi Rebellion. The *Malabar Gazetteer* by Innes and Evans gives some information about the Malabar villages and the *kolkar*. Like Logan's Manual, this work also describes about the police and military duties done by the *kolkar* of North Malabar during the period of the Pazhassi revolt. The Volume III of *The Land Systems of British India* by Baden Powell, provides some details about the revenue administration of Malabar during the pre-British and British periods. But no details about the *kolkar* are available from this work. The second volume of the *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency* published in 1885 detailed about the

⁴⁵ C. Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion, 1921*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1923, pp. 28-29.

revenue administration and village structure of Malabar, before and during the British period. But it does not explain about the *kolkar* or other village servants in detail. *Some South Indian Villages* edited by Gilbert Slater is a work composed of case studies about some selected villages of British Malabar. It helps to get an idea about the system of village administration in Malabar during that period. *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras 1859- 1957*, is a work written by David Arnold. It discusses the history of colonial police in Madras. It also deals with the system of rural policing in the Madras province.

Thomas R. Metcalf's *Ideologies of the Raj* helps to construct a theoretical framework of the study. It deals with the relation of British political ideologies and its impact on the administration of India. Anil Seal's *Emergence of Indian Nationalism* also is a work of this kind. It exposes the neo-classical interpretation of colonialism in India. *The Limited Raj* of Anand A. Yang is a work describing about the system of control and collaboration worked out by the British in India. He explained it by examining the developments in Saran districts of Bihar. The examples of Saran district are applicable to Malabar also.

Many works on South India deal with the revenue and village administration during and before the British period. The works of authors like K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, K. Rajayyan, Noboru Karashima, Y. Subbarayalu and Kesavan Veluthat are important among them. These works help to develop some ideas about the evolution of village servants in South India. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri's *A History of South India* is one of the earliest works on South Indian polity. It describes about the use of measuring rods or *kol* in the region.

The Early Medieval in South India by Kesavan Veluthat deals with medieval Tamilakam and Kerala. State and society, land relations and social stratifications of the period were explained in this work. Y. Subbarayalu's *South India under the Cholas* is another important work related to this study. It explains about the

measurement, classification and assessment of land during the Chola period with the support of inscriptions.

M. G. S Narayanan's *Perumals of Kerala* is an important work which narrates the political condition of early medieval Kerala. It helps to form a picture about the development of many institutions of government which became a system during the later period. *A Tragic Decade in Kerala History* by T. P Sankarankutty Nair gives a general picture about the political condition of Malabar during the pre-colonial period and in the initial years of Company's rule. K. N Panikkar's *Against Lord and State* and M. Gangadharan's *Malabar Rebellion* help to get an idea about the issues related to the revenue administration and problems of Malabar peasants in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The *Pazhassi Rekhakal* and *Thalasseri Rekhakal*, two important works edited by Dr. Skariah Joseph are highly useful to know about the history, social life, state and judiciary of Malabar during the early years of the Colonial period. Both these works are the collection of correspondences among the Company administrators and native chiefs of Malabar.

Sources and Methodology

Scientific, historical and interdisciplinary methods have been adopted for this study. Both primary and secondary sources were critically analysed. Primary sources comprise archival sources, newspaper reports, journals and manuscripts. Field visits and oral testimonies have also been meticulously depended upon. Primary sources were accessed from different archives and libraries of inside and outside Kerala. The National Archives, New Delhi, State Archives of Tamil Nadu, Egmore, Chennai, State Archives of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode, Kerala are some of the important repositories from where primary sources have been collected. The History Department Archives of Calicut University, Centre for Kerala Studies, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Sree Chithra Thirunal Library Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Institute of Local Administration (KILA) Library, Thrissur and Appan Tampuran Library, Ayyanthole, Thrissur have also helped to access some valuable sources for the study. Archival records of Regional Archives Kozhikode contributed much for the completion of the study. Correspondence files, revenue records, police files, Andaman colonisation files and many other confidential files related to British Malabar available at the Kerala State Regional Archives Kozhikode were used for this study. The general administration reports, police administration reports, Madras Gazettes, Malabar District Gazettes and Malabar Special Police records have been consulted. Interviews with the family members of *adhikari* officials and *kolkar* who worked under the British helped to augment this study. Secondary sources were collected from Connemara Public Library, Egmore, Chennai, Theosophical Society Library, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, Kerala University Library, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Legislature Library, Thiruvananthapuram, History Department Library, Government Victoria College, Palakkad, C. H. Mohammed Koya Library, University of Calicut, History Department Library, University of Calicut, and General library, SNGS College Pattambi.

Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into seven chapters including the 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion'. Instead of adhering to a thematic pattern, a chronological order is accepted for the arrangement of chapters. The first chapter is entitled 'Introduction'.

The second chapter, 'The State and Resource Collection', deals with the evolution of village administration and rural policing in India. It offers an overview of the progress and transformation of the system of village administration and methods of revenue collection practiced by different rulers of India at various times. The chapter provides an overview of village administration and revenue collection of the Harappan, Vedic, Mauryan and post-Mauryan, Sultanate, Mughal and Satavahana periods of Indian history. The developments in rural administration

of South India from the Tamilakam period are also described with much focus. The development of measurement of land, use of different types of *kol* or rods, *kaval* system, development of village power groups and coming up of a visible power centre are also discussed. The changes brought in by the Mysore rulers in land administration of Malabar also have been included in this chapter.

The third chapter titled, 'The Beginning of the *kolkar* Force' deals with the developments related to the absorption of the *kolkar* into the Company service and consequent formation of the *kolkar* force. The initial troubles faced by the Company administrators and various trial and error measures adopted by the government from 1792 to 1816 have been detailed in this chapter. The Pazhassi Revolt and the resistances of the *Mappila* chiefs of Malabar are also illustrated. The formation of Watson's Corps and the role of *kolkar* in suppressing the disturbances of the period are discussed.

The fourth chapter, 'Recruitment, Service and Payment' discusses the strategies and procedures followed by the British for the recruitment of the natives to the government services. It focuses on the recruitment of the *kolkar* in the village and taluk services. It also deals with the nature of the service of the *kolkar*, pay and perks, recruitment parameters and difference of policies and approach of administrative heads in the recruitment process, deployment and payment. The risk involved in the service of the *kolkar* and the rewards by the government for their meritorious service are also delineated in this chapter.

The fifth chapter, 'Under the East India Company' deals with the rules and regulations introduced by the English East India Company in the administration of revenue, police and judiciary, and how that transformed the *kolkar* and their services. The developments in villages and taluks until 1858 are analyzed here. The regulations passed by the Company from year to year, the reforms of Thomas Munro, recommendations of Graeme, reforms under Canolly and formation of a special police force in the 1850s are elaborated here. Moot questions like how

these events influenced the transformation of the *kolkar*, how they became a powerful group, what role they played in the suppression of the *Mappila* agitations of the region are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter six of this study 'An Agent of the State' deals with the changes in the nature of service of the *kolkar* after 1858. During the period between 1858 and 1947, Malabar had been under the direct control of the British government. Many changes took place in the administration of revenue, police and judiciary during this period. Naturally, the village government also underwent many changes. Such changes had its impact upon the *kolkar*. The land surveys and settlements, reforms in the field of revenue collection, formation of village *panchayath* courts, the struggle of 1921, and the growth of National Movement are discussed in this chapter in connection with the transformation of the *kolkar*.

Chapter seven is entitled 'Conclusion'. The observations and opinions of the researcher about the topic are explained here. A detailed bibliography, glossary, abbreviations, and an appendix are also attached for further exploration and as evidence for sources consulted during the study.

Chapter 2

The State and Resource Collection

Introduction

The *kolkar* were the new tool of state intervention identified by the East India Company in Malabar after 1792. It was this group which helped the Company government to collect revenue and perform police duties in a totally unfamiliar geographical territory. It is in this backdrop, an examination of the evolution of revenue and police administrations in different regions and states of pre-colonial India with special reference to South India is made in this chapter.

The basic requirement for the formation of a state is its control over resources. It includes both natural resources and human resources. From the very beginning of human history a form of control existed. At first it was based on kinship and the clan heads controlled the resources of their group. Though there was no coercion, the clan members were subordinate to their chief. Gradually, when social life became more complex, there was an instinct among people to develop a system for the smooth functioning of society. This instinct led to the development of initial form of states and its peripheral components like military, police, law, judiciary and administration of revenue. Resource was an essential thing for the maintenance of different organs of the state. To get control over the resources of a region, the state had to protect the interests of the people. The most important among them was protection of life and property, which was made possible by the agencies like police and military. These agencies were used by state for the subordination and suppression of the people. As revenue collection was the most important aim of a state, the police, military, judiciary and revenue departments worked in cooperation or as a single department. Land was the most important source of revenue to the rulers of ancient, medieval and early modern

period and so all developments related to state were centered on control over land and its resources. Trade and commerce was secondary concern of those states.

Control of Resources in Pre-Colonial India

As elsewhere in the world, in India also the system of appropriation of resources and the mechanism for the control of the subordinate class was a gradual process. Vastness of territory and existence of heterogeneous types of states caused for the evolution of a variety of system of appropriation. From the time of Harappan culture to the second half of the eighteenth century, the period when the British had got political control over the territories of Bengal, India witnessed the rule of hundreds of *rajās*, chieftains and emperors. As this study is about the transformation of the *kolkar*, a group of servants mainly deputed for revenue collection and police duties in the villages and taluks of colonial Malabar, it is useful to examine the transformation of the system of administration of Indian villages in different periods before the coming of the British.

Archaeological evidences proved that a planned system of administration existed in India during the period of Harappan culture which originated in the north-western part of Indian subcontinent in the third millennium B C. The town planning and religious life of the people were exemplified by historians for the existence of an organized state system. Planned constructions and trade contacts with distant regions led to the postulation that the Harappans had a developed state organization.¹ Scholars had difference of opinion about the nature of Harappan state. Some opines that they had a state controlled by priests, while some others had the opinion that the Harappan state was controlled by traders. Their script has not yet been deciphered and so all statements about the nature of state are mere speculations.

¹ D. N. Jha, *Ancient India: In Historical Outline* (revised edition), Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2009, p. 33

Written sources mingled with myths and legends galore about Vedic age. In the Vedic period great changes took place in the nature of state. State in the early Vedic period was tribal.² Kinship bonds united communities. Gradually economic complexities entered into the society and kinship was shifted to kingship. The system of *chaturvarnya* brought stratification of society. Division of society into master class and subordinate class necessitated the introduction of law and law implementing agencies. Another change was that the king became the owner of land. The first important indication of the process by which king claims the ownership of the soil is found in *Manusmriti*.³ It describes king as *mahipati* or 'lord of the earth'. Katyayana calls the king as *bhuswamin* or 'owner of the earth'.⁴ Many synonyms like *kshitindra*, *kshitipati*, *prithwipati*, *vasudheswara* and *mahipati* are used in many Sanskrit and Jain works of the period. It shows that by the close of the Vedic period, king became the sole master of the land. It also reveals that ruler was protector of the land than the protector of the people. Soil, whether arable, pastoral or forest brought income to the king. When land became a source of income to the king, it was essential to appoint officers and agents to manage or supervise it. To ensure the receipt of king's share from land, proper system of land and assessment and revenue administration was to be introduced. Institutions like judiciary, police and army were needed. Law and surveillance over lawbreakers were also essential. The 'Santiparva' of *Mahabharata* presented occasional speculations about the origin of states. But it explains that creation of law and state is the result of the involvement of god. Such speculations without the support of scientific reasoning are not acceptable to academic community. Anyway, several kingdoms came into being in North India towards the end of the Vedic period. The strength of territorial monarchy was derived from the tax they collected from the land. An official called *bhagadugha* is mentioned in the later Vedic texts who was

² Dr. A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1972, p. 43.

³ R. S. Sharma, *Rethinking India's Past*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*

authorized to collect king's share of the produce.⁵ The income from taxes enabled the rulers to appoint more officers. Full-fledged territorial states with multiple types of officers developed during the period of *mahajanapada*. The growth of *mahajanapada* during the pre-Mauryan period owed a great deal to the income from land tax as it was a permanent source of income to royal treasuries. New taxes like *bhaga* and *kara* were collected during this period. The fertility of the soil of the Gangetic valley helped for the rise of a rich class of peasants. They were able to pay taxes to the state. Besides the peasants, traders and artisans also were tax-paying classes during this period. When the income from taxation increased, the expense of the state also began to increase. States were in search of more and more income through taxation. Naturally oppressive measures were followed by most rulers to meet their needs for money. Two types of officers called *tundiya* and *akasiya* were described in the *Jataka* stories as collectors of tax either by beating and binding them or by dispossessing them of their earnings.⁶ There were many other references for kings accumulating wealth by indiscreet fund raising measures. Instead of one tax collector, *bhagadugha* in the later Vedic period, at least half a dozen revenue collecting officers are mentioned in the Buddhist literatures of the pre-Mauryan period.

Along with the growth of taxation administrative machinery of the states also began to develop. Ministers and advisors were appointed to assist the king. In the countryside local administration was entrusted with village headmen. Previously these persons were leaders of tribal militia. When states were founded, these tribal military leaders of villages were incorporated to the state machinery and they were known by several names like *gramadhyaksha*, *gramani* and *gramika*. In the Buddhist literature, it is described that there were 80, 000 *gramika* staff during the time of Bimbisara, the ruler of 'Haryanka' dynasty of Magadha.⁷ Though

⁵ D. N. Jha, *Ancient India: In Historical Outline*, op. cit., p. 57.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁷ *Ibid.*

the figure is an exaggeration, it is evident that villages and village administration were an important concern of every state in the post-Vedic period. Some states followed republican form of government and some others embraced monarchy. Whatever was the type of state there needed huge amount of money for the day to day affairs of the state and so the rulers used force and suppressive measures to collect taxes. Village headman and his assistants became an important instrument for the collection of taxes. Accountants, messengers, tax collectors, water suppliers, and village police were important among the assistants of headmen. It is clear that administrative machinery from the village to centre became complex and the power of the state became strong.

Along with the development of states, urban centers also began to develop in North India. State capitals and trade centers developed into towns and cities. Growth of population and expansion of agriculture resulted in surplus production. Agricultural surplus in the villages provided food for townspeople who did not produce their own food. Urbanization and the formation of states are dependent on the realization of a surplus in production and on the methods by which this was made possible.⁸ Surplus production had to be gathered and distributed and an effective agency was needed to control it. Surplus production also necessitated storing and transportation of goods. People wanted security to their products from robbers and natural calamities. When a minority came forward to control and supervised the economic activities and gave protection to their life and property, it was acceptable to the larger society. Thus the elements of state began to penetrate from the centre to remote villages.

When agriculture was well established, tribal groups settled down to agriculture and *gramani* became head of village with multiple functions under a central authority. Different titles like *gramabhojaka* and *gramika* were attributed to him. They assessed and collected taxes from the villages and maintained law and

⁸ Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origin to AD 1300*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2003, p. 142.

order in their locality. Collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order were possible by use of power and oppression. There was no regularised system or centralized law for this. Village headmen used their own ways to achieve their objectives. The guiding factors were customs and traditions. To administer the villages, headmen must appoint assistants. Their duties were to collect taxes, observe the law and order issues and reporting of important matters to the headman. It is obvious that a person with the duties of collection of government share and maintenance of law and order had to keep in hand some weapons and symbol of power. The most common and possible weapon at that time to a village assistant was nothing but stick or rode. Gradually, it became a symbol of their power. Rulers and their representatives in the provinces and other sub-divisions also used it as a symbol of their power and special privileges. When land became a property under the king, its measurement, though not much accurate, was needed for assigning it to the agents of the king and to fix the revenue. Sticks with specific measurements were used to measure the land and fix tax. Men with the duty of measuring land always had a stick with them.

Rod or kol in Arthasasthra

Village administrative system began to shape in the pre-Mauryan states and it reached in a mature stage during the Maurya and Gupta periods. Mauryan Empire, the first largest empire in India had elaborate administrative machinery. With the help of a huge army, the Maurya rule achieved political supremacy over the whole of India except the extreme south. Chandra Gupta Maurya, under the guidance of Kautilya, introduced many political and economic reforms. Many of their reforms were experiments upon already existing systems. Kautilya in his *Arthasasthra* pictures an ideal king and kingdom in his dream. All aspects of statecraft were described in detail in this work which divided into fifteen books. Section I, chapter IV of book I establishes the importance of wealth. Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade constitute the economy of the state as it yields grain, cattle, money, forest produce and labour. By these the king can bring under his

sway, his own people. The enemies also can be put under his control by the use of money and army. Here Kautilya focuses on the use of rod or *danda* by the king. The proper wielding of rod is essential for the king to ensure the pursuit of philosophy, the Vedas and economics.⁹ Proper administration of the rod constitute for the acquisition of the things not possessed, preservation of the things possessed and augmentation of the possessed things. The maintenance of law and order is also depending on it.

Kautilya, by quoting the ancient teachers, states that no other weapon is effective like the rode to subjugate the beings. So the king should always keep lifted up the rod to strike, for the orderly maintenance of worldly life. The use of rode in a sensible way will bring spiritual good, material well-being and pleasure of senses to the subjects. The unjust use of rod will enrage all people including the ascetics. A king who is not using the rode means lawlessness in the kingdom. So the king who uses the rode in a sensible way will last long. From this theory of Kautilya came the concept of *dandaniti* or law of the rod. Here rod simply denotes power of the king. He can exercise the power by using force. For that the kings need money and military. The *danda* or stick became the symbol of power. It was used from the centre to the villages. To the upper level officers it was only a symbol of power, while in the villages it was both a symbol of power and a weapon for action. The village servants used their rods to beat the people to subdue them.

As in the earlier times villages were the real centres of social life and important units of empire's economy. The *Arthasasthra* endorses the importance of village headmen and many inscriptions in the provinces refer the names of village headmen. Besides the tax collection, military and police duties, village headmen organized works of public utility and recreation, settled the disputes among the villagers, and acted as trustees for the property of minors.¹⁰ Kautilya gave great importance to spy system and efficiency of the secret service under the

⁹ R. P Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra* Part II, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1997, p. 9.

¹⁰ Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-26.

government. Spies were recruited and deputed to strategically important places to prevent any conspiracy against the empire. *Arthashastra* reveals that royal control was exercised in a large area of the empire. Mauryan period witnessed the introduction of many new taxes collected from peasants artisans and traders. For the administration of this an efficient machinery of officers was needed from centre to villages. Assessment, collection and storage were the important tasks. The Mauryan rulers attached more importance to assessment than storage.¹¹ There were rural storehouses to preserve the taxes collected in kinds. The rural storehouses were to meet the situations of famine and draught. The supervision and protection of rural storehouses were the duties of village headmen, his accountant and other assistants.

Changes in the Post-Mauryan Period

Post-Mauryan period witnessed many changes in the administrative system and land relations of north India. Instead of centralization of power during the Maurya period, decentralization became the practice of rulers. The Satavahana, an important dynasty which ruled the Deccan after the decline of the Mauryan Empire, started the practice of donating lands with fiscal and administrative powers to Brahmins and Buddhist monks. It weakened the central authority. Initially the lands granted to the priests and other religious institutions had only the privilege of tax exemption. But gradually the administrative power of these regions also was surrendered to them. Royal officials were instructed not to interfere in the administration of the donated field or villages. Naturally the village officials like headmen, accountant and other assistants of headmen became the servants of landlords or priests. They conducted the village affairs according to the will of their masters. Most headmen were landlords. So the severity of oppression increased. An important aftereffect of land grant system was expansion of agriculture and increase in the number of village units. Unlike the Maurya, the Satvahana rule had

¹¹ R. S Sharma, *India's Ancient Past*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 182.

no vast bureaucracy to regulate agriculture, trade or any other economic activities. Expansion of trade and agriculture depended on individual efforts.¹² Hence, the protection of agricultural fields, commodities and store houses was the responsibility of private entrepreneurs. They evolved their own methods of supervision, control and policing of their locality. It caused for regional variations in the structure of village administration.

The Gupta rulers did not possess a large professional army or an elaborate and organized bureaucracy.¹³ The volume of granting land to priests and temples were increased during the period and it caused for the decentralization of administrative authority. Increasing popularity of land grants led to the emergence of a class of land lords who became intermediaries between the state and the peasants. The landlords leased their lands to cultivators for rent. They appointed their own assistants for the collection of rent. Coercive measures were used for the collection of rent and landlords used armed staff for it. These landlords became the officers of law and order in the villages and the inhabitants obeyed them either by fear or by respect. The villages granted to the beneficiaries could not be entered by royal agents and the beneficiaries were also empowered to punish criminals. Feudal elements were more visible in north India during the Gupta time. Because of the expansion of land grant system the Guptas had no need of any elaborate bureaucracy to rule the kingdom. The land grant system caused for the expansion of agriculture. The land owners forced the villagers and tribal people to work in the agricultural field. Forced labour or *vishti* was a recognized system during the Gupta period. It was possible only by using tools of power and the landowners maintained their own guards for this. Difficult jobs like clearing of forests and preparation of new lands for agriculture were done by this forced labour. Harsha, who ruled north India in the first half of the 7th century A D, also promoted granting lands to priests

¹² D. N. Jha, *Ancient India: In Historical Outline, op. cit.*, pp. 122, 129.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53

and officers. All these shows that there was a powerful apparatus working as the hands and wings of the state to perform these desired actions.

Changing Land Relations

The period between the collapse of Harsha's empire and the beginning of the regime of the Delhi Sultans, from 648 to 1206 A. D, no Indian states were able to achieve an imperial position or a high degree of centralization. It was a period of the decline of the centralized states and the rise of localized aristocracies. During the period big landholders cultivated vast area of agricultural land by hired labourers. A part of their produce was surrendered to the king's men, intermediaries or other rural sovereigns. R. S Sharma describes this period as the period of growing 'Indian feudalism'.¹⁴ Similar political structure had existed in south India also and it gave the basis for the theory of 'segmentary state' by Burton Stein.¹⁵

The growth of Indian feudalism was related to certain changes in the caste system. Caste division became more rigid during this period. Humiliating disabilities were imposed upon the lower communities. It was to subjugate them and exploit their physical power for increasing production. Landholders and their assistants belonged to upper castes. Alberuni, who visited north India in the first half of the 11th century, attested the inferior status of some occupational groups.¹⁶ Changes in land relations and social hierarchy brought changes in the system of village administration. Instead of a central authority, the village heads and their assistants were recruited, supervised and controlled by native chiefs, princes or *zamindar*.

¹⁴ For details see, Ram Sharan Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: c. AD 300-1200*, Macmillan Publishers India Ltd, Delhi, 2009 (1965), pp. 276-317.

¹⁵ See for details Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1994.

¹⁶ Irfan Habib, *Medieval India: The Study of a Civilization*, National Book Trust, India, 2008, p. 8.

State Control under the Muslim Rule

From the thirteenth century to the eighteenth century, a major part of India was ruled by rulers who followed Islamic faith. The first three centuries were the period of Delhi Sultanate and it was followed by the Mughals. The Bahmanis ruled the Deccan region for a short period. Most important feature of the medieval period was the entry of many Persian elements into the state and administration of India. It was started during the Delhi Sultanate and continued under the Mughal rulers.

Delhi Sultanate

The Sultanate period in India witnessed many changes in the land relations. The control of the central authority over the provinces and villages were also changed during the period. As related to the tax resources and the nature of kingship, the Sultanate period was different from its predecessors. The early Sultanate rulers introduced the *iqta* system in India. Under this system the land of the state was divided into many *iqta* and assigned to the soldiers, government officers and nobles. Holders of the *iqta* were called *muqti* or *wali* and they were required to maintain troops for royal service. The expense for the maintenance of the troops had to meet from the revenue of the land assigned. The remaining land called *khalisa* was under the direct control of the *sultan*. At the beginning, the *iqta* was based on salary of the employee or military chief. The surplus revenue, if any, was required to pay in the royal treasury. Many nobles and military leaders led luxurious life by the income from their *iqta* lands. As the early Sultanate rulers could not control the nobles, they exploited the peasants and coerced a major share of their produce. But Alauddin Khalji, who established the first all India empire after the Maurya rulers, curtailed the powers of the nobles and the village headmen. The small *iqta* holders were put under the direct control of the central government. The Khalji period witnessed the consolidation of the administration of the Sultanate. The simple arrangements for revenue collection which existed in

earlier period were considerably modified. The *iqta* holders had lost absolute control over the revenues of their land.¹⁷ The vastness of the empire provided larger income to the ruler and by using this income Alauddin maintained a strong central government. The expansion policy was continued by the Tuglaq rulers. In order to control the larger *iqta* holders, called the *muqaddam*, revenue charges were separated from the military command.¹⁸ It provoked the nobility and outbreaks started in provinces and finally it led to the disintegration of the Sultanate.

Mughal Period

During the Mughal period, central judicial and police system applied up to the cities. The *kotwal* were the officers in charge of police in towns and cities. He was the head of the police as well as the officer in charge of the entire administration of the city. His duties and responsibilities were almost equal to the *nagaraka* of the Mauryan period. In the districts *faujdar* were in charge of civil, police and military jurisdiction. They acted as the assistants of *amil*. The Mughal rulers did not enforce their police and judicial system into the villages. Villages had the freedom to retain their caste and village panchayats under its headmen.¹⁹ They administered petty disputes of religious, social, civil and criminal. Religious or caste usages and customary laws were the basis on which the village headmen settled the disputes. Respect of the villagers towards public opinion was the basis of the authority of the headmen. The village headmen and their subordinate watchmen called *chaukidar* were responsible for the prevention and detection of crimes in villages. The headmen had to find out the thieves or robbers within a time limit. Otherwise, they had to compensate the loss to the individual. The entire village was responsible for the loss of property by a theft or gang robbery. This system was

¹⁷ Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2007, p. 83.

¹⁸ Irfan Habib, *Medieval India: The Study of a Civilization*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹⁹ Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *Mughal Polity*, Idarah-i Adabiyat-i, Delhi, 1984, p. 209.

very strict under Sher Shah, but the Mughal rulers were not so vigorous to implement it. Village watchmen system in India from the very ancient period continued to exist in the Mughal period. For thousands of years they were the servants of the village community. Their remuneration was grains and no money payment was allowed during the Mughal period. They were responsible to report the matters to the *zamindar* in the village assigned to them and to the *faujdar*, the officer in charge of the villages under the direct control of the emperor. When the Mughal state broke down, there were no more *faujdar* offices and the allegiance of the watchmen usually reverted to the *zamindar*.²⁰ Generally village headmen were either the *zamindar* people themselves or their relatives. Hence, the affairs of the villages were supervised by the *zamindar*. They were the heads of police and judicial administration in their region. Cornwallis abolished the police and judicial powers of the *zamindar* and the village watchmen were put under the newly created police officers called *darogahs*.

The system of measuring land had existed in the Mughal period. The share of the agricultural produce to the government was assessed after measuring the land under each crop. The productivity of the land was calculated by sample cutting at the time of harvest and according to that the tax rate was fixed. It can be assumed that in villages, *zamindars* or village heads had done the duty of measuring and assessing the land revenue also.

Legacy of South India

The transformation of the polity and society of South India was considerably different from that of North India. Centralized administration and the concept of empire were experienced by the North from an earlier period. There had been multiple stages of transitions in North India. But in South India, things proceeded on different ways. Unlike North India, sources for the study of South India during

²⁰ Philip Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1963, pp. 168-69.

the ancient period are very limited. The archaeological evidences were the sole source for the study of pre-Tamilakam period. So the scope for knowledge about the system of production, distribution and appropriation of surplus was very little. Along with the archaeological and literary sources, the Sangham period is supplemented by numismatic evidence from Roman coins and descriptions by Greek and Roman travellers. The society of *Tamilakam* in the Sangam age was kin-based. The basic unit was *ur* or village with few families living in small huts. Each *ur* was under its own head man. Growth of population in different eco-zones of the region, surplus production and growth of exchange brought basic changes in the structure of society. By using the surplus the headmen of the *ur* and the chieftains of the *natu* became powerful.²¹ The society was developed beyond clan kin network. Products were redistributed in three levels corresponding to the three categories of chiefly powers, namely the *ventar*, *velir* and *kizhar*.²² The *ventar* were the chieftains of the three major lineages, Chera, Chola and Pandya, *velir* were minor chieftains with martial connections with the *ventar* and the *kizhar* were the chief households of the cultivating area.²³ The producers were controlled by the chiefs and headmen by monopolizing the surplus. The monopoly over production was possible only by using power. For this, the chieftains developed instruments like army and officials.

The bards known as *panar*, by receiving gifts from the chieftains travelled through villages and sang the songs praising their masters.²⁴ Such Tamil heroic songs were the basis for our knowledge about the political system of Tamilakam. The poems address *ventar* as *kavalar* or protector of the settlers. The ruler would exact something from the settlers for the protection offered by him. All the three

²¹ See for details, Y. Subbarayalu, *South India under the Cholas*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012, pp. 124-37.

²² Rajan Gurukkal and M. R. Raghava Varier (ed.), *Cultural History of Kerala* Vol. I, Department of Cultural Publications, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 176.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 26-27.

ventar are referred to in the poems with the term *iraivan* which means one who exacts. The returns from exchanges helped them to accumulate wealth. A large body of dependents like kinsmen, scholarly bards, warrior chiefs and warrior men was maintained by them. As the *ventar* had not maintained a permanent army, they always depended local chiefs with kinship relations for mobilizing an army for plunder raid or war. The system contributed to strengthen the power of village chiefs as they were always the masters of a group of warrior men. Besides, in the earlier period they were the members in the assemblies called *sabha*. Gradually, the structure of the state became more complex and the power of the kings increased much with the nexus between rulers and Vedic Brahmanism. More hierarchical institutions were set up to strengthen the power of the central authority. Still, in South India, the power and position of village heads continued without any change. They were the heads of law and order and the appropriation of resources. They had to control the labour force of the village also. The kinship ties were the source of authority to them. The recurring predatory marches and ravaging of settlements forced the village heads to keep a warrior group always with them. Continuous raids and plunders in villages caused for migration and consequent immigration of people in different villages. This loosened the clan kin tie in the villages. So the village heads and other chiefs had to maintain a permanent professional group who were loyal to their masters only on the basis of the remuneration they received either in cash or kind. The coming of the Brahmins to South India and the establishment of Brahmin villages brought more rules and regulations to the day to day life and administration of villages. Though they were a minority in the region, their control over the agricultural land empowered them to dictate discipline and standardize the pattern of social stratification.²⁵ The land grants to the Brahmins during the time of the Pallava rule marked the beginning of a three tier structure in the matter of land rights. The state was at the top in the hierarchy with rights to collect tax from the land. Theoretically, state had the final

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

right over land. The Brahmin owners of the land were the intermediaries in the hierarchy. Unlike the previous system, the new owners had certain privileges over the land. The tenant cultivators were at the bottom of the hierarchy. The Pandyan rulers also granted land to Brahmin individuals and to temples of both Hindus and Jains. In the Chera kingdom, three types of ownership of land existed. The land owned by the Brahmins was mentioned in the inscriptions as *brahmaswam*. The property of the temple was called as *devaswam* and *cherikkal* was the land under direct control of the King. The copper plate records of the Pallava and Pandya rule in the seventh and eighth centuries AD give information on different levels of rights over land and the position of various sections in society depending upon the nature of rights that one enjoyed on a piece of land. The owners of land never directly engaged or supervised in the cultivation process. They distributed it to *karalar* or tenants and again to *kutiyalar* or occupants. Under the Cholas, the ownership over land was known with different titles but the pattern of tenure was not different.

Measurement of Land and Use of the *kol*

The above analysis of the ancient and medieval history of India proves that agriculture was the most important source of income both to people and governments. In an agricultural society the role of land is pivotal. All rights and privileges of an individual in a society were depended on the agricultural land or produce he owned. On the basis of the ownership over cultivating land or its produces, power structures were developed. It was by using the income from land, states were formed and institutions for suppression and coercion were formed. Such coercive institutions of governments always kept their ears and eyes on land and collection of its revenue. Hence, from the ancient period onwards the administration of revenue, police and judiciary was closely associated or handled by the same department.

In South India too, the economy mainly depended on land. When state became an elaborate agency of administration, it needed large amount of money.

The growth of population also necessitated the increase of production. It became essential to bring more land under cultivation. When land became a property with productive value, a type of measurement was essential to calculate the production and fix the rent to the government. It was also essential to register the rights of the cultivators over their land. The terms *kol* and *kolkaran* can be traced from the system of measuring land by using rods. Many inscriptions of Tamilakam in the early medieval period mentioned about different units of land measurement. The inscriptional references reveal that the measurement units, though same in name, varied from region to region. Words like *kuli* and *veli* were names of widely used land measuring units in Tamilakam from the Sangam period onwards. The largest standard unit of land, widely used in the region, was *veli*.²⁶ It was divided into minute fractions like 1/20 and 1/80. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri has opined that the measurement unit *veli* existed from the early period to the end of the Chola period.²⁷ This was prevalent in some villages of South India even during the British period.²⁸ The extent of *veli* was different from one place to another. It was because of the length of the measuring rod or the *kol* was not the same. To identify the extent of *veli* different names were added with the *kol* used for its measuring. Some examples are *kadigaikkalattu-kol*, *sri-pada-kol*, and the *maligai-kol*.²⁹

Information from the literary and inscriptional sources reveal that the only land measuring instrument used in the region was the rod or pole called *kol*. It was based either on human span or foot. The *kol* with human span was called *chankol* and with foot was called *atikal*. The length of the *kol* was also attached with its name like 12- *chan kol* and 16- *ati kol*. The most common *kol* during the Chola period was the 16-span *kol*.³⁰

²⁶ Y. Subbarayalu, *South India under the Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

²⁷ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas* (2nded.), University of Madras, Madras, 1955, p. 621.

²⁸ F. R. Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore*, Government Press, Madras, 1906, p. 135.

²⁹ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas*, *op. cit.*

³⁰ Y. Subbarayalu, *South India under the Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

For the purpose of assessing tax, land was classified into different categories. The fertility of the soil, availability of irrigation facilities, number of annual crops cultivated was considered for fixing the land tax. It was during the time of the Chola rulers that an attempt for a systematic survey and assessment of land was done. Nilakanta Sastri has stated that there were *taram* (classified) lands and *taramili* (unclassified) lands. Lands were classified into more than 12 categories.³¹ Y. Subbarayalu, by analysing more inscriptions of the Chola period has argued that there were about 20 different types of land in different localities of Tamilakam.³² The changes in the climate, developments in the irrigational facilities, changes in the items of production and changes in the fertility of land necessitated periodical revision of the types of lands and rate of taxes. Encroachments of nearby forest lands and grasslands by cultivators also necessitated reassessment. Besides, when land was donated to any individuals or institutions for charity purposes, its grade was lowered in order to lessen the tax rate. Anyway, during the Chola period, measurement, assessment and classification of land became a complex process.

Rise of Power Groups in Villages

From the Sangam period itself, land and trade were the important source of income to the rulers. The share of the king was not clearly stated anywhere. Foreign trade flourished during that time and so customs duties were an important source of income.³³ Towns and roads were guarded by king's men during day and night to prevent smuggling and robbery. The post-Sangam period witnessed increase in the number of taxes and tax collectors. Besides the land tax, there were taxes on non-agricultural professions, compulsory presents and judicial fines. Compulsory labour service called *corvee* also was in practice to the works of public utilities like the construction of water tanks, canals and roads. The compulsory

³¹ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 528.

³² Subbarayalu, *South India under the Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

³³ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar* (4th Edition, reprint), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2017, p. 120.

labour service was known as *vetti* in some inscriptions.³⁴ It was mainly used for the maintenance of water tanks and canals. The village administrative bodies like *sabha* and *ur* were the agencies who demanded these levies.³⁵ Land tax was collected both in cash and kind. There was strict and cruel methods of collecting taxes and often people abandoned their homesteads and settle somewhere else to escape from the huge burden of taxes. The threat of village depopulation was the most effective check upon the greed of tax collectors. The village authorities were responsible for the collection of taxes. The central government provided assistance like military service when there was problem in collection. Besides the land taxes the village heads and his assistants collected all other dues to the state. So they always kept a force under them to achieve the target and keep the inhabitants under their strict control. The special payments to the temples and other religious institutions were also collected by the village heads. Some of them were collected by the temple administrators themselves. They were permitted to use force for the collection.³⁶ Another system existed during the period was the system of village watch. Watchmen were appointed for the protection of the life and property of the inhabitants. Each village appointed its own *kavalkaran*. He was well paid by the village administrators. The system is known as *padi kaval*. It was a system existed in the South Indian villages for the protection of the life and property of the inhabitants. A special tax, *padikavalkuli*, was levied upon the natives towards the expense of *padi kaval*. The *kavalkkar* patrolled villages during day and night. The village guards were under the control and supervision of the village heads. The system of *padikaval* and *padi kaval kuli* was practiced under the Pandya rulers also.³⁷ This tax was paid by the landholders to the local chiefs in charge of watchmanship. The artisans and the merchants also paid a share of their taxes as *padikkaval*. The *kaval* system contributed to strengthen the power of the local

³⁴ Y. Subbarayalu, *South India under the Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 525.

³⁷ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Pandyan Kingdom: From the Earliest Times to the Sixteenth Century*, Luzac and Co. London, 1929, p. 218.

chiefs. They kept a loyal class of servants under them in the name of keeping internal peace and security. This *kavalkkar* or village police became a permanent establishment in south India with regional variation in its structure and behaviour. Besides the duties of police and revenue, this group did multifarious duties like intelligence gathering and communication. The authority to survey and classify land, fix the land tax and other dues to the state and responsibility of collection of tax and security to the life and property of villagers made the village administrative bodies powerful. They had maintained guards with police and military character. When the central authorities became weak these village head men and his local guards became the sole masters of villages. As concerned to the villagers the change in the central authority was not an important matter because there were no corresponding changes in the system of village affairs.

The *poligar* and the *kaval* System

The *poligar* institution of Tamil Nadu and *kaval* system introduced under this system had an important role in the development of village level administration of revenue and police in Kerala also. The *poligar* system was inherited from the Vijayanagara rulers. When the Vijayanagara rulers conquered the country from the Muslim and Tamil powers they had to face protest from regional chiefs and princely families. To keep their position secure, the emperors followed policy of conciliation. As a part of this policy, they accommodated members of the royal family, local chieftains and dedicated servants into the new administrative set up.³⁸ The entire territory was divided into *nayakatthinams* and its charge was entrusted with the chieftains called *nayaka*. During the reign of Emperor Achyuta Raya (1529-1542 A. D), there were more than two hundred *nayaka* and among them the *nayak* of Madurai, Tanjavoor and Ikkeri were most powerful.³⁹ Under the system, the *nayakar* were military leaders. Territories were given to them for maintaining military forces for the king. They were also entrusted

³⁸ K. Rajayyan, *History of Tamil Nadu 1565-1982*, Raj Publishers, Madurai, 1982, p. 20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

with the administration of the given territory, including tax collection, police and law. When the central powers were weak the *nayakar* became virtual rulers of their territory and it brought new socio-political changes in South India.

The *poligari* system was a subordinate political set up developed under the Vijayanagara *nayakar*. Under this system the territories of the *nayakar* were subdivided into *palayam*⁴⁰ under *palayakkar* or *poligar*. The duties of the Mughal *jagirdar* and *zamindar* were done by the *poligar* under the Vijayanagar rulers. They were obliged to render both military and revenue service to their masters.⁴¹ In Tamil country, the *poligar* of Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, and Panchalamkurichi were most powerful. The subdivision of *nayaka* territories into *palayam* brought systematic governance at the micro level. The *poligar* were real rulers who collected taxes, administered justice, maintained internal security, kept own troops and had performed other economic and charitable duties.⁴² As the ruler in charge of the micro unit, the primary duty of the *poligar* was collection of revenue. Agriculture was the major source of revenue of the period and the smooth collection of it depended on the maintenance of law and order. Utmost care and vigilance were given by the *poligar* for the maintenance of internal peace. For this a system of police called *kaval* was set up. The word *kaval* means 'watch' and the person deputed to perform this duty was called *kavalkar* or *taliyari*.⁴³

The Context of Malabar

Malabar, the area of study in this thesis was a part of Tamilakam during the Sangam period and so the political, social and economic condition of ancient Malabar was more or less the same. The history of Malabar and Kerala as a whole during the Stone Age and Iron Age is constructed mainly from archaeological evidences. Observations upon the megalithic monuments of Kerala led writers of

⁴⁰ *Palamu* in Telugu, literally mean armed camp.

⁴¹ Under the Mughals the *jagirdars* rendered military service and *Zamindars* revenue service.

⁴² Rajayyan, *History of Tamil Nadu 1565-1982*, *op. cit.*, p. 53

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

ancient Kerala history to the conclusion that social hierarchy and political power groups existed in the region during the megalithic period itself. The grand burials like dolmenoid cists and rock-cut chamber tombs approximately built in the last two or three centuries before Christ prove the existence of a class structured society.⁴⁴ The Iron Age people lived by adapting themselves with the peculiar ecosystem of Kerala during the time. A large part of Kerala was covered by thick forest. Forest land was intersected by marshy tracts and waterlogged planes. Such areas were used for the cultivation of different types of crops. The megalithic constructions can be viewed as efforts of the chieftains or other power groups who constructed them by appropriating the labour and wealth of the majority common people of the society. It was a period of small chiefdoms and later these chiefdoms were transformed to big chiefdoms. Predatory raids by chiefs along with their kin guards to nearby chiefdoms led to subjugation of some chiefdom by others and led to the making of bigger chiefdoms. The recurring of predatory raids made the clansmen warriors and gradually professional warrior groups aroused for the protection of the acquired wealth and territory and to conquer new territories. The chieftains collected a share of the products of the natives and used it for maintaining his guards and other assistants. Some poems in the *purananuru* have references about the accumulation of harvest as heaps at the residences of chieftains.⁴⁵ Transportation of agricultural products from the hilly regions to the sea shore and coastal products like salt and fish to the reverse direction necessitated the maintenance of a security system in the trade routes. It was managed and supervised by the local chieftains later who were under the control of big chieftains. The local people were always loyal to their immediate masters in return to the protection for their life and property. Thus like elsewhere in India Malabar also witnessed the growth village power magnets.

⁴⁴ Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varrier, *Cultural History of Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 145.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

Trade with distant lands also flourished during the period. There was trade through land and sea routes with other parts of the sub continent and with other countries. Many pre- Mauryan punch marked coins and Roman coins from the reigns of Augustus to Constantine (first century B. C to fourth century A. D) were discovered from different centers of South India. Among them many centers like Eyyal, and Puthenchira are in Kerala. The accounts of ancient travellers like Pliny and the author of the *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* mentioned names of many ancient ports of Kerala like Muziris, Tyndis, Nelcynda, and Borace.⁴⁶ Romans, Greeks, Persians and Arabs traded with Malabar during the period.

The post- Sangam period witnessed some important changes in the socio-political conditions in the region. Almost all the chief characteristics of the Sangam period seem to have disappeared. The Chera, Chola and Pandya chiefdoms declined. Along with the disappearance of the well known chiefdoms, the practice of raids and booty redistribution also discontinued. Historians associated this 'period of discontinuity' with the inroads of the Kalabhhra rulers of Karnataka. Many factors contributed to these changes. Major reason was the decline of the kinship relations on land. During the period many Brahmin families began to settle in Tamilakam. In the case of Kerala also this was true. Individual settlements sprang up in different parts of Kerala, including Malabar. The patronage of chieftains also caused for the control of larger quantity of productive land under their control. This marked a basic shift in the age-old system of land relations. It was not merely a shift from the clan ownership of land to the ownership by Brahmins. More than that, it brought some fundamental changes in the relations of production. In the clan ownership kinship bonds defined production relations. As the Brahmins were a non-producing class, an alternative system of production had emerged. The increase in the number of Brahmin households had a reverse impact on the land relations based on kinship. As the Brahmins did not directly involve in the process of cultivation, they had to depend upon the neighbouring clan groups for

⁴⁶ G. W. B Huntingford (ed.), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

production. The loss of land ownership to the clan heads naturally made its members landless and jobless. At the same time the Brahmin landholders wanted labourers to cultivate their land. So some arrangements were necessary to meet the needs of the situation. The Brahmins used the labour force of nearby clan groups to cultivate their lands. This attachment of clan people to Brahmin lands is attested by the urn burials and other burial monuments identified in the vicinity of many Brahmin settlements of Malabar. The new system represented a nexus of new relations of production and new mode of appropriation of labour force as well as surplus. It marked the beginning of a new power centre and ideology based on Vedic texts.⁴⁷ Along with the mass migration of Brahmins into Kerala many temples were built in different parts. Agricultural lands in bulk quantities were attached to each temple. It gradually led to the proliferation of agricultural specialization and its ordering into a hierarchy.⁴⁸ Many inscriptions of Kerala issued during the early medieval period throw light on the nature of Brahmin settlements and the system of management of land attached to Brahmins and temples. The Tiruvatur inscription of early eleventh century gives details about the invitation and settlement of twenty-four Brahmin families with land and other privileges around a newly constructed temple in north Kerala.⁴⁹ Such records expose the nature of the temple centered agricultural operations of early medieval Kerala.

The beginning of the ninth century was particularly important to Kerala. The period witnessed the rise of a new kingdom in Kerala, the Chera Kingdom. They were also known as the Kulasekhara or the Perumal chieftains. After that, remarkable changes took place in the pattern of land tenure in Kerala. Changes in land relations naturally brought changes in the administration of revenue, police and judiciary. During the period between the ninth and twelfth centuries more and more lands were brought under cultivation by clearing forest and opening up of

⁴⁷ Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varrier, *Cultural History of Kerala*, op. cit., p. 240.

⁴⁸ Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formation of Early South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010, p. 292.

⁴⁹ Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, op. cit., p. 281.

river valleys. Many inscriptions are found in the period which exclusively deals with the land tenures and other related affairs of Kerala. The Vazhappalli inscription, Terisappally inscription and Jewish copper plates are examples for such records. References about the economic, political and social aspects are also available from these records. A major portion of the cultivable lands, attached to temples, was managed by the committee of Brahmins. Special laws called *kachcham* were prepared and imposed by them. The nature of the ownership and proprietorship of land was clearly defined and which became the permanent system of land relations in Malabar till the Mysorean period. According to the descriptions in the *Keralolpathi*, the Brahmins who were brought to Kerala were divided into *ardhabrahmana* and *vedabrahmana*. The *ardhabrahmana* were deputed for administration and protection of the land and advised to take the profession of arms. They were exempted from the study of Veda. The *vedabrahmana* were deputed for the job of temple administration. The *ardhabrahmana* donated land to *vedabrahmana*. The *sudra* cultivators were brought from different places and settled there with many privileges.⁵⁰ They became the servants and tenants of the Brahmins. A smaller portion of the production was distributed among the tenants and the remaining major portion was taken over by the Brahmins. The nature of ownership of land was also defined. The right of *brahmana* over land was permanent and it is known as *janmam* and that of the tenant was *kanam* which was not permanent. Authenticity of the narration in the *Keralolpathi* is a matter of dispute. But the newly created land relation called *kana-janma-maryada*, became the essential aspect of the landlordism of Kerala. It became the law of the land for centuries. It was attested by inscriptional evidences. M. G. S Narayanan in his *Perumals of Kerala* incorporated a detailed list of inscriptions of the period with its content summary.⁵¹ The land owned by the *brahmanar* and the local chiefs were leased to intermediaries called *karalar* or tenants on the condition of payment of a

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁵¹ M. G. S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy* (Revised edition), Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 2013, pp. 435-501.

share of the produce annually. A village officer called *pattamalan* is mentioned in some records who was in charge of the collection of dues from the tenants.⁵² Generally, all rights and ownership of land were hereditary in nature. Besides, *karanmai* and *uranmai* another type of proprietorship was *virutti* or service tenure. It was land assigned as remuneration to the service rendered by the person to the state. The nature of service was indicated by the name itself. The *santhiviruthi* is the land allotted to the temple priests and *kottikalvirutti* was the land allotted to the drummers. The *kavalvirutti* was the land to the watchmen.

It is evident from the land transactions records of the Perumal period that land became a property and an important item of investment. Land owners ensured a regular income from the rent paid by the tenants. People began to invest their all other assets for procuring land. Possession of land was a matter of societal status. Sometimes to attract the *brahmanar*, merchants and other commercial groups to their region, rulers offered land with proprietary rights and privileges. The new approach towards land caused for the faster extension of agricultural land. All such lands were occupied by the new agrarian and commercial classes and it marked the shaping of traditional land system of Kerala.

Development of the new land system had its impact in the socio-political sector also. In the villages the councils like *ur*, represented by elder members of the *brahmana* families controlled the affairs. The meetings of these local assemblies were often presided over by the representatives of the ruler or the ruler himself. Thus the *brahmana* and *kshatriya* elements combined in the administration of Malabar villages. Mainly three categories of duties were performed by these village bodies. The first duty was collection and payment of the king's share of revenue from the village. They appointed agents or deputies for it. In return for the payment from the villages the king was obliged to the protection of the property and life of the villagers. The second duty was the settlement of disputes among the

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 317.

uralar and the third, management of *karalar* by imposing on them a code of conduct by means of law and punishment. There was an accountant called *poduvaal* to keep accounts of the temples, who were generally *nair* people.⁵³ The *brahmanar* were obedient to the royal authority as they had common economic interests. The rules and regulations called *kachcham* were prepared by the *brahmana* councils. They were approved by the royal authorities and accepted as the rules of the day. The *Kachcham* rules were intended to protect the interests of the *brahmanar* as *uralar*, tenants or *karalar* and the state. Clauses were included to punish the landlords and tenants those who committed any malpractice in matters of payment of due shares to temples and state. Types of malpractices and punishments for such crimes have been listed in the *muzhikkulam kachcham* which was prepared in the ninth or tenth century A. D.⁵⁴

The *janmi* System

The system of land relations evolved in Kerala during the early medieval period paved the way for development of the *janmi* system. By the late medieval period, the *janmi* system with certain rules and regulations backed by socio-religious customs was prevalent in all parts of Kerala. The Mysorean rulers tried to revise it. But they failed to do it because of the protest from the native *janmi* and later on the Mysorean rule was overthrown by the British. The British tried to reinstate the old system with certain modifications beneficial to them.

The *devaswam-brahmaswam* land relations made the *brahmanar* the most powerful elite in Kerala society. Temples owned vast areas of cultivating land. As the *brahmanar* were the proprietors of this land, they needed an efficient system of control and administration.⁵⁵ They were the law makers and interpreters and in

⁵³ Dr. N. Sam (ed.), *Elamkulam Kunjanpillayude Thiranjedutha Krithikal*- Part I, International Centre for Kerala Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005, p. 602.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 605-09.

⁵⁵ Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1970, p. 333.

certain occasions they even controlled the rulers. As the non-cultivating landholders, the *brahmanar* always distributed their lands through the *nair* intermediaries. When the *uralar* tried to impose illegal terms upon the *karalar*, they protested. In many places the *nair* took their bows and arrows towards the *brahmanar*. But some other *nair* groups supported the *Brahmins* and they blamed the protesters as sinners. The illegal payments demanded by the *uralar* actually suffered the real tillers of the land and they supported the protesting tenants. In this way the land became bone of contention in many places. Besides, when the control over the *uralar* loosened due to political disintegration, many temple properties were divided among the members of the *ur sabha*. The land thus received became the private property of the individual. He became the owner of the piece of land and arrangements were made independently for the collection of revenue and payment of share to the temple. In many cases they transferred the land either partially or fully to other members of the family or relatives. This caused increase in the number of owners of land. Increase in number of land owners was another reason for the spread of *janmi* system. The *janmi* made their own arrangement for the collection of land tax from the tillers. Separate staff members were appointed for the assessment and collection of revenue.

In Malabar, the political condition during the reign of Mysore brought about the rise of new landlords. Many *brahmana* landholders left their land and escaped to Travancore due to the threat from Tipu's army. Some of them transferred their land to new owners for nominal payments and some others without any payments. Abandoned lands were occupied by new owners and they became the proprietors of that land. Thus new social groups like *mappila* and *thiyyar* also became land owners or *janmam* holders in Malabar. At the beginning of the British period, this *janmi* class was an important pressure group in Malabar and they controlled the affairs of villages.

Police and Revenue Administration

During the British period, duties of the *kolkar* and village administrative authorities included policing and revenue collection. So it is essential to analyse the evolution of both these systems in Malabar. Expansion of agrarian settlements and social hierarchy on the basis of that caused for the conflicts and power struggles in Malabar. It forced the political authorities to form a system for the maintenance of peace and collection of revenue. In modern period, except in war times, maintenance of internal peace and security is the duty of the police. But there was no regular police force in Malabar till the British period. *Raja, Naduvazhi*, governor and other reputed persons used their own bodyguards and trusted companions for their safety.⁵⁶ They were counted in hundreds and thousands.⁵⁷ During the pre-British period, there was no distinction between the civil and military duties. M G S Narayanan opines that the *nooruvar* or hundreds were the guards or the force under the district governors and *aayiram* or thousand were force under the king. The hundreds in the districts had police duties also. They had to protect the institutions like temples, their properties, the trade centres, and other public places. Every *naduvazhi* maintained at least a hundred *nair* guards. The *desavazhi* or village head never commanded more than 100 *nair* men.⁵⁸ These guards showed their deep loyalty to their masters and were ready to sacrifice their lives for his protection. The system of personal guards under *naduvazhi* continued even after the Perumal period.

The members in the 'hundreds' and 'thousands' gradually became prominent in the society. They had great concern from their masters and high respect in the society. They received agricultural lands as remuneration to their service. It again increased their position in the society. Generally, in Kerala, the

⁵⁶ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, op. cit., p. 231.

⁵⁷ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Sukapuram, 1992, p. 72.

⁵⁸ *Graeme's Report on the Revenue Administration of Malabar 1822* (reprint), Kerala State Archives, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 46.

members in these suicidal squads were *nair* men and they acquired a high position in the administrative affairs of the region. The increased reputation to the *nair* gang might be a cause for the deputation of them for the collection of revenue from villages. Reputation backed by permission to use force and arms made the collection of dues to the government from the inhabitants more easy.

There was no permanent system of taxation in the medieval and early modern Kerala. But there were evidences for different kinds of dues collected by rulers. In a feudal system, where land ownership and administrative functions were combined together it was very difficult to differentiate the terms like tax, rent and tenant's dues. There was no fixed rate of tax and no documents either to the government or to individuals to know the dues. Separate dues were collected from traders, from Brahmin villages and *cherikkal* villages. As temples owned a large share of the land, its administrators collected different types of dues from the people. The *rakshabhoga*, a tax collected from the people for the protection offered to them, *dandam*- the tax collected as fines from defaulters, and *prayaschitham*- received as remorse from the guilty were some of the important income to the temple villages.⁵⁹ Generally, the king or *naduvazhi* used to collect a lump sum payment from *brahmana* ruled villages annually. An annual due called *attaikol* was collected from the villages in return for the protection and supervision exercised by the ruler and his officers.⁶⁰

The *karalar*, who received the lands on lease collected the dues from the peasants and paid the share to the *brahmanar*. They were primarily non-*brahmanar*. During the medieval period they became the second dominant class in the temple centered society. Later they came to be called *nair* people. It was from this caste that the *samanta* chieftains emerged. Most of the military recruits were also from this caste. According to the *Keralolpathi* tradition the supreme

⁵⁹ Rajan Gurukkal, *Social Formation of Early South India*, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

⁶⁰ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

commander of the armed forces of the Perumal was known as *patamel nair*.⁶¹ The *sambandham* (a type of marriage relation of *brahmana* male members with *nair* women) was an added factor to the special consideration to the *nair* people in the society. On the basis of the nature of land control by the *karalar* several divisions aroused among them. Gradually some of them became part of the ruling class and assumed titles like *varma*, *panikkar*, and *menon*. The *menon* were accountants of *brahmana* landholders. They also received lands for their service. Many *naduvazhikal* of the later Chera period were members from these groups. Thus along with the development of *brahmana* hegemony, the *nadu* and their chiefs were also developed and among them a reciprocal relation was existed and it was crucial in the development of Kerala as a political entity.⁶² The general pattern of government under the Perumal rule was the monarch at the centre, subordinate governors in the district and under them a number of ordinary villages and units of trading and agricultural communities. The duty of protection or policing was done by the *nair* forces of the king and the heads of the *nadu*. The revenue collected from the cultivators, traders and craftsmen was divided among the king, governors and the village bodies.⁶³

Changes under the *swarupam*

The decline of the Perumal rule during the beginning of the twelfth century had its impact in the socio-political system of Kerala. With the decline of the Perumal rule the *nadu* system also underwent changes. The period from the twelfth century to the end of sixteenth century was marked by the expansion and reorganization of many *nadu* units. As there was no central authority, the powerful *naduvazhikal* conquered the nearby territories with the aim of its income and privileges. In such an attempt the *valluvakonathiri* surrendered his control over Tirunavaya and the *mamankam* festival to the *samoothiri* of Kozhikode.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁶² Prof. K. N Ganesh, *Reflections on Pre Modern Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁶³ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

The *swarupam* became the centres of power in a *nadu* after the Perumal period. Many names of *swarupam* related to place names and geographical location of the ruling family appeared in the *granthavari* texts. Territorial authority was the basis of the origin of the *swarupam*. The descriptions in different *granthavaris* texts reveal the nature of land relations during the period. In a *swarupam*, the family members from the eldest to the youngest had certain powers. The elder member was the head of the *swarupam*. All other members of the families had separate *kovilakam*. Separate territories were allotted to each family with limited political and judicial powers. It caused for the rivalry among family members on issues of succession and revenue collection. Protection forces and followers called *akampadikkar* were recruited and maintained by each *swarupam*. They were used for the collection of revenue and maintenance of peace and protection to the property and life of the people. Each family in the *swarupam* attempted to establish political and judicial power over their regions. Military guards were essential for the *naduvazhi* at that time as there was recurring rivalries among and within the *swarupam*. Political power was fragmented under the new system. Besides individuals and temples, *naduvazhi* and *desavazhi* also became owners of land in their territories.⁶⁴ Along with the share from *cherikkal* land, *naduvazhi* chiefs collected a share from the products of the peasants. Special dues like *ankam*, *chungam*, *pizha*, *karkkidaka chelavu*, *onachelavu* and *changatam* became common during the post-Perumal period. All these payments were collected by the *naduvazhi* on different occasions. For the reason of the introduction of new types of *karam* or taxes, separate officers were needed for the collection of it. During the Perumal period payments by the cultivators or tenants, though obligatory, were made without any compulsion. It was because the share to the landholders or king was affordable and reasonable to the payer. There were no multiple type taxes. But by the last phase of the *Perumal* rule, certain new taxes came into practice. To collect these taxes a group of officials were appointed. There

⁶⁴ Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, *Keralacharithram* (Mal.), Vallathole Vidyavidyalayam, Sukapuram, 1992, p. 208.

are references about officials like *karyakkār*, *adhikārī* and *thurakkār*. Though there did not exist a department of revenue administration, these officials acted as representatives of the *swarupam* in villages.

Fragmentation of political power under the *swarupam* system was the reason for decentralization of power. Many power centres developed in Malabar with limited territories under control. As a consequence of that, rules and regulations in relation to police, judicial, and revenue administration were different from one *swarupam* to another. During the Perumal period *kachcham* like *muzhikulam kachcham* were the general law of the land. Instead of that different customs and laws called *maryada* existed in different *nadu* units. The terms like *nattumaryada*, and *desamaryada* used to mention laws of a land.

During the period under discussion there was natural and gradual rise in population. It created shortage of food products. New tracts of lands were brought under cultivation with or without the initiative of the rulers. Population growth and shortage of food grains made land a more valuable asset. Nobody likes to depart with the absolute ownership of land. K. K. N Kurup has said that land became a commodity in Malabar even before the coming of the British.⁶⁵ Ownership of land was a matter of recognition in the society. The landowners had a distinctive role in the villages. Lands were mortgaged or transferred to the tenants and sub-tenants on strict conditions and they were recorded in palm leaves and exchanged. Besides paddy lands, *parambu* or dry land cultivation was popular during the period.

Increase in the number of non-cultivating people was another feature of the period. The tenants who received land from the landholders subdivided it among sub-tenants. The number of royal families, village heads or *mukhyastar* and their followers and assistants, priests, and astrologers had not directly engaged in agricultural activities. Locality names like *thara*, and *kara* were used during the period. These localities were developed as power centres around a chief's house or

⁶⁵ K. K. N Kurup., *Koodali Granthavari*, University of Calicut, Calicut University, 1995, p. XIII.

under an occupational group and they held various rights and privileges.⁶⁶ There was no proportionate increase in the production due to shortage in the number of cultivators and cultivating land. To meet the shortage of income from land, the landholders increased the rate of *patta* which invited more hardships to the cultivators.⁶⁷ In *swarupam*, *cherikkal* lands were divided and officers were appointed for the collection of revenue and payment of it to royal treasury. Under the Nediyrippu *swarupam*, different types of dues were listed and *adhikarikal* deputed for the collection were strictly observed by guards of the king called *lokar*.⁶⁸ Strict and harsh steps were taken by the representatives of the landholders and rulers for the collection of dues.

Along with the expansion of *parambu* cultivation produces other than food crops were cultivated in large scale. It increased the volume of trade; trade with distant land was developed. Foreign traders were attracted to Malabar Coast. Trade also became a means of income to the rulers. Thus it turned into a field of competition. As it was an activity aimed at profit, there was scope to malpractices. So regulation and intervention of state representatives was needed in the activities of trade also.

The predominance of the *nair* in the socio-political and economic sector of Malabar was another development during the period. From the Perumal period itself, most of the *karalar* were *nair* people. Fragmentation of political power in the later period increased their influence in the agricultural activities. More than that, their military service as *akampadikkar* or *lokar* to the *swarupam* and *kaval* or *changatham* to temple and temple properties again increased their status. When economic activities began to be complicated more and more, officials and agents were appointed by rulers to observe and supervise it. Many *nair* people from

⁶⁶ K. N Ganesh, *Reflections on Pre Modern Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁶⁷ Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, *Keralacharithram*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁶⁸ M. R. Raghava Varier, *Madhyakalakeralam: Swaroopaneethiyute Charithrapatungal*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam, 2014, p. 16.

different parts of Malabar became part of state apparatus during the period. Under the *samoothiri* of Kozhikode, hereditary positions like *achan*, *kaimal*, *paranambi* and *menon* were given to the *nair*.⁶⁹

Mysorean Interlude and the Introduction of Land Tax

The disunity of the rulers of Malabar and the aggressive designs of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sulthan resulted in the subjugation of Malabar by the Mysore Empire. The Mysore intervention was short in number of years, but the period brought far reaching political, social and economic consequences in the region. The most important reform introduced by the Mysore rulers in Malabar was their land revenue administration. The feudal elements in the land administration system were replaced by a centralized system of government. As the *naduvazhi* and their *nair* militia fled from Malabar to escape from the wrath of Tipu, the revenue officers of Tipu made settlement with the tenants. Arshed Begh Khan, the *amildar* who was in charge of the civil and military administration of Malabar made revenue settlements with the cultivators. For making a settlement, Arshed Begh did not consider the previous system. Instead of the *patta* system in which the *patta* was shared among the landlord and cultivator, he introduced a system in which the landlord's share was directly collected by the state. For assessing the land tax no proper surveys were conducted. Assessment was made on the basis of an estimated produce. This system opened up opportunities for corruption and nepotism. Mysore revenue officers were bribed by the native rulers and chiefs for under assessment or for moderate assessment. As a result, some tenants were over taxed and some others lower taxed. It created discontent among the cultivators. At the same time, the system of direct assessment with the tenant gave him dignity and the interests of the *janmi* or landlord were adversely affected. The defective revenue administration system introduced by the Mysore rulers was continued by the Company under the Commissioners. It was one of the reasons for

⁶⁹ K. V Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938, p. 275

the opposition from the people of Malabar faced by the Company in its early years. Anyway, the centralized land revenue administration system and introduction of land tax came into being during the Mysore period and continued with modifications under the British. When this system became permanent, recruitment to revenue department was also systematized. Regulations and acts were introduced to regulate the system and the traditional mechanism for revenue administration in Malabar became a part of this new system with periodical transformations.

Conclusion

The transformation of the society, economy and government of Malabar had been closely associated with the changes in other parts of India. Due to the geographical barriers, Malabar was isolated from other parts of the sub-continent for centuries. But the advent of Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism brought north Indian elements of religion, socio-economic life and government into Malabar. The penetration of north Indian aspects completely changed the traditional systems that existed here. The new land relations brought changes in the social relations. The traditional tribal or clan society was replaced by caste based hierarchical society. Land became a valuable property. Ownership of land was a matter of prestige and social status. Many new non-cultivating groups were formed and actual tillers had to meet the needs of all those groups. They had to pay for the state, religious institutions, priests and other intermediary groups created for the management and supervision of land and agriculture. Social divisions became more rigid and rules and regulations were dictated by the power centres. In the political field also basic changes were introduced. King's authority was always sanctioned and supported by the religious heads and a close relation was maintained between them. Many new institutions and offices were developed in the political field also to help the King. Formation of military guards was an important change. The military guards did the duties of both military and police. They worked as the body guards of rulers and other members of the royal family, protected temples, priests

and temple properties, and served for the maintenance of law and order. Though the general structure of the society and politics was common, there were regional variations from one state to another in matters of law, rate of government share from agriculture and trade, system of trial and punishment etc. It was in such a situation that the Mysorean rulers subdued Malabar and they were succeeded by the British. The Mysoreans brought some reforms in the revenue administration of Malabar and the British followed it. There was no single model of policing and revenue administration in pre-British India that the colonial government could implement. Regional experiences and history decided matters. As in other sectors like education, among the administrators, there was difference of opinion about the system to be implemented in the field of revenue and police administration. Some stood for the continuation of the traditional system, while some others for a more radical and anglicized version. The first stage of reforms introduced by the British in Malabar was based on the reforms of Tipu Sultan and later their own innovations were brought into the region.

The development of a systematic village administration and the formation and transformation of *kolkar* and other village officials were closely associated with these reforms. This is to be discussed in detail which is done in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Beginning of the *kolkar* Force

Introduction

The last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century were decisive pertaining to the political history of Malabar. The period witnessed subjugation of Malabar by the British power. The defeat of Tipu Sulthan in the third Anglo-Mysore war was the culmination of the British effort to conquer Malabar. The fourth Anglo-Mysore war completely wiped out the Mysorean influence from Malabar. The political map of Malabar was redrawn. Many petty principalities were dismembered. Most of the *raja* chiefs and chieftains become mere tax collectors under the English East India Company. The people-state relation was significantly changed. Sprouting of a systematic bureaucratic state was another development of the period. Instead of the customs and conventions guiding the socio-political life of the people, strict rules and regulations began to be implemented. The inhabitants of Malabar started to experience the presence of an alien government in their everyday life.

The English East India Company made earnest effort to study the land, its laws, customs and habits of the people. Many commissions were appointed to study and report on affairs of Malabar during aforesaid decades. It was on the basis of these studies and reports, the Company chalked out its plans to administer the land. The collection of information and descriptions done by the colonial administrators at the beginning helped to reconstruct an approximate picture of the social and political milieu of Malabar during the pre-Mysorean period.¹ As the land was entirely strange to the British civil servants and traders all its flaws reflected in their studies and reports. Also, it reflected in the political strategies adopted by the Company in Malabar. The defective political strategy backed by the

¹ Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar 1790-1805*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 6.

profit motive of a trading company invited serious challenges to the British authority from the very beginning. The ill treatment towards the local *raja* chiefs, chieftains and land lords invited opposition against the Company. The defective revenue policy persuaded a large section of the inhabitants of Malabar to rally behind the rebel leaders. The above mentioned couple of decades saw many organized and unorganized rebellions against the foreign domination and the trial and error strategies of the East India Company to handle it. The development of *kolkar* as an organized military- cum-police force happened during this period.

Company and the Local Rulers

Immediately after the acquisition of Malabar, the Company decided to make a temporary settlement with all *raja* heads and chieftains of Malabar. The Joint Commissioners, deputed for this purpose, were directed to pay strict regard to the promises given by the Company at the time of war with Tipu Sulthan. At the same time, the Bombay governor asked the commissioners to always keep in mind the fact that although the power of Tipu Sulthan considerably declined; it was not completely wiped out.² Many of the local rulers and chiefs of Malabar, independent of Tipu, actively supported the Company during the war. To give them confidence of protection, a strong military force was stationed at Kannur (Cannanore in colonial records), Thalasseri (Tellichery in colonial records), Kozhikode (Calicut in colonial records) and Palakkad (Palghat in colonial records).³ It was also an instrument to subdue the *raja* people and other chiefs. The maintenance of the army cost a huge amount and the Company wanted to realize it from them. All the *cowls* granted to the *raja* and other chieftains had implied the message that they could not retain their countries and its revenues free and independent from the control of the Company.

² *The Joint Commissioners' Report on Malabar 1792-93*, reprint, (hereafter *JCR*), Kerala State Archives Department, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010 (1862), Para 81, p. 100.

³ Dr. K. K. N Kurup, *History of the Tellichery Factory 1683- 1794*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut University, 1985, p. 213.

With all the general instructions kept in mind, the Bombay Commissioners⁴ made their first settlement with the *raja* of Kadathanad on 25th April 1792. This agreement clearly reveals the strategy which the Company was going to implement in Malabar for establishing its political domination and making the local chiefs as their agents for revenue collection and maintenance of law and order. This temporary arrangement promised to the *raja* all the rights and authority of government subject only to the control of the Company. The *raja* should accommodate a resident or representative of the Company at his head quarters to enquire into any complaints of oppression towards the inhabitants and to report, if any, to the Chief of Tellicherry.⁵ A joint committee of four members representing the Company and the *raja* was suggested to make a valuation of the revenues of each district. Provisions were included in the agreement for fixing the annual rent to be paid by the inhabitants to the *raja* and the tribute payable by the Raja to the Company. The merchants to be appointed by the Company should have the exclusive privilege of purchasing what products remaining with them.⁶ Similar agreements were made with the *rajas* of Chirakkal and Kottayam.

All the agreements entered into with the local rulers were aimed to ensure fixed revenue to the Company. The Company wanted a large amount of money to meet the expenses of Mysore wars and that of the military stationed in different parts of Malabar. At the same time, Company was not ready to take the responsibility of the collection as they realized the difficulties of the job in a newly conquered area. It was like the policy of 'power without responsibility'

⁴ William Gamul Farmer, a senior merchant of Tellicherry and Alexander Dow, the Military Commandant at Tellicherry were appointed as Commissioners to Malabar and authorized to establish a temporary scheme for internal administration until the introduction of a permanent system. As both of them were members of the Bombay Presidency and appointed by Sir Robert Abercromby, the Governor of Bombay, they were generally known as Bombay Commissioners. Later in December 1792, Jonathan Duncan and Charles Boddam, the Commissioners sent from Bengal by Lord Cornwallis joined with them.

⁵ JCR, op. cit., pp. 102-03, see William Logan (ed.), *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, reprint, Kerala Gazetteers Department, Thiruvananthapuram, 1998 (1879), pp. 147-48

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

experimented by Robert Clive in Bengal.⁷ At a glance, the agreements put forward by the commissioners were attractive to the *raja* and other chieftains of Malabar. The amount fixed by the commissioners as tribute didn't disturb them. They felt happy that the Company government reinstated the old powers and privileges which had been taken away by the Mysore rulers. But soon they realized that, the Company was growing as the real political power of Malabar and the former were becoming the agents or intermediaries in the administration of the province. Though all authority of government, under the control of the Company, was promised to the *raja* chiefs of Malabar, it was not materialized. Instead, their powers and privileges were losing one after another. Through a proclamation dated 20th December 1792, general freedom of trade in all article of merchandise except pepper, which was held as a monopoly of the Company, was declared without considering the interest of the local rulers.⁸ The Commissioners justified the proclamation as a step to increase the volume of trade and promote the prosperity of the inhabitants in the district of Malabar. In January 1793, another decision came from the Commissioners that, in future no *raja* or chieftain should receive any tributes from the inhabitants other than the revenue fixed in the agreement with the government.⁹ It put an end to the age-old practice of receiving special gifts in times of festivals like *onam*, *vishu* and on special occasions like marriages, birthdays and other ceremonies in the houses of the lords. Thus, by different means, the economic, social and political powers enjoyed by the feudal chiefs were lost. The ill-treatment and disregard towards the rights and privileges of the native chieftains sowed the seeds of discontent among them. Many of them were

⁷ After the Battle of Buxar, a novel system of administration, 'dual government' was introduced in Bengal. By a grant of the Mughal ruler, the Company received the *Diwani* or right of collecting the revenues of Bengal Bihar and Orissa. Thus Company became the revenue collecting agent of the Emperor in these provinces on the condition of paying a fixed amount to him. Instead of taking the responsibility of revenue collection directly, Robert Clive appointed two native nobles as Deputy *Diwans* to do the job. But the Nizamat or control of military and police jurisdiction was nominally remained in the hands of the *Nawab*. A fixed amount was paid to the *Nawab*, out of the revenue collected, to cover the expenses. In effect both the *Diwani* and *Nizamat* powers were enjoyed by the Company. For details see Ramsay Muir, *The Making of British India: 1756-1858*, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1917, pp. 75-101.

⁸ Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

adjusted to the situation but some others rose in revolt. The revolts of such *raja* chiefs influenced the Company in the formation of a defense mechanism for Malabar. The deployment of *kolkar* as a military-cum- police force was a part of that defense mechanism.

Company: Early Relations with the Malabar Society

At the time of the conquest of Malabar, the Company authorities had only a vague picture about the social relations and customs among the people of Malabar. The Governor of Bombay gave clear directions to the Commissioners how to handle the situation. Thus the Commissioners collected details about the society, culture and history of Malabar from indigenous sources. They collected and analyzed facts from traditional literature, stories and proverbs prevalent among the inhabitants, verbal information and their own observations to mold the present picture of Malabar.¹⁰ Swaminath Pattar, the *sarvadhikaryakkar* or Chief Minister of the *samoothiri* of Kozhikode was an important source of information to the Commissioners about the socio-economic relations, political condition and system of land tenure existed in Malabar before and during the Mysore periods.¹¹ The present state of affairs in Malabar was very complicated and required a diplomatic intervention of the political authority. The communal feud between the *nair* and *mappila* people created a turbulent situation in Malabar.

The revenue reforms of Tipu Sulthan brought remarkable changes in the land relations of Malabar. It made majority of the *mappila* peasants of Malabar the owners of land and land revenue was collected directly from them.¹² It provoked the *nair* and *namboothiri* communities and they wanted to reinstate the old system of land relations. The schism between the *mappila* and *nair* communities was a major challenge faced by the Commissioners at the very beginning of their administration in the region. They tried to raise a feeling of protection among both

¹⁰ *JCR, op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹¹ The Commissioners granted one per cent of the revenue collections from the Zamorin's districts to Swaminath Pattar for services rendered by him to the Company, William Logan, *Malabar Manual, op. cit.*, p. 499.

¹² For details see A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mysore-Kerala Relations in the Eighteenth Century*, Kerala Historical Society, Thiruvananthapuram, 1975, pp. 56-72.

groups by their initial administrative measures. Priority was given to *nair*, *namboothiri* and *ezhava* people for selection to the posts of revenue, police and military services. Certain orders and proclamations were issued to pacify the *Mappila* people also. By a proclamation of 26th June 1792, the *nair* people were warned against their oppression to the *mappila* people of Kondotty.¹³ The circular against the collection of special tributes by the local *raja* heads was relieving to the actual cultivators of Malabar. The proclamation for general amnesty to all the acts of homicide, maiming, robbery and theft was another act mainly to conciliate the *Mappila* people of Malabar.¹⁴ By this proclamation the Commissioners intended to bring back the unity among the people of the region and to forget the evil days of the past few years. In June 1793, a circular was published, prohibiting the discrimination and malpractices of the *pravarthikkar*, *kariakkar* and *menon* employed for the collection of revenue.¹⁵ Just before the Joint Commission was dissolved,¹⁶ the Supervisor issued a grant to Kondotty Thangal, exempting his lands from payment of the revenue, as it was the custom in Tipu's time, on the condition that the Thangal and his people would be loyal to the Company.¹⁷ All these reforms were introduced by the Company to create an atmosphere of peace and tranquility in order to facilitate the collection of revenue in the new order. As a trading organization the primary aim of the British East India Company was to maximize its profit. Their attempt of collecting revenue to achieve this aim invited many organized and unorganized resistance movements in the early two decades. When the discontented *raja* heads and chieftains took the banner of revolt against the Company, many of the inhabitants rallied behind them. The support of a section of the inhabitants to the rebel leaders was a challenge to the new government. The

¹³ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 152

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77

¹⁵ There was complaint about the Hindu revenue servants that they forcefully collecting arrear revenue for the years 1791 and 1792 which was against the agreement with the Company. Besides, there was complaint about the same revenue servants, of difference in rating the assessment between the Hindus and Muslims, rating the latter at more than the former. For details see Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, pp. 189-90.

¹⁶ The Joint Commission was dissolved on 11th October 1793.

¹⁷ Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 501.

attitude of the common people of Malabar also contributed in deciding the strategies for recruitment and nature of service of the *kolkar*.

Early Resistance Movements against the Company

Most of the early circulars and proclamations of the British were intended to raise a feeling of protection among the *mappila* people of Malabar. But the power and privileges reinstated to the upper caste Hindus especially the *nair* men made their attempts futile. The new arrangements implemented for the revenue collection caused legitimized continuance of exploitation and oppression. The aforementioned circular against discrimination and malpractices of the revenue servants was an apt example for analysing the new situation. The *mappila* tenants of Malabar feared that the alliance between the British and the Hindu landlords of Malabar would endanger their present position in the land relations introduced by Tipu's revenue officers. In order to alleviate the enmity and to strike a balance between the Hindu *janmi* chiefs and *mappila* tenants, the government through a regulation declared that the *mappila* people and others who in various instances dispossessed the Hindus by force prior to September 1787 were not to be disturbed in that possession.¹⁸ But its efficacy was very limited because majority of the *mappila* people acquired *janmam* right on their land after 1787. Besides the *mappila* people and other rent paying tenants, many local chiefs and members of the royal families were also dissatisfied with the new settlements. Violation of promises, loss of finance and dignity, ill treatment by the Company servants persuaded them to take up arms.¹⁹ The revolts against British rule in Malabar during the early decades were led by *mappila* chiefs like Manjeri Attan Gurukkal, Unni Mussa Muppan of Payanad, and Chempan Pokkar, and Keralavarma Pazhassi Raja.²⁰ The entire British Malabar was affected by these revolts.²¹ Political

¹⁸ Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980, p. 76.

¹⁹ Robert Taylor, the chief of Tellicherry Factory, as per the instruction from Bombay, promised to the Malabar *raja* chiefs that 'they would not be deserted in the event of the Honorable Company coming to an open rupture with Tipu.' In March 1790 general assurances of protection were issued by the factors of Tellicherry. For details see Logan, *Malabar Manual, op. cit.*, pp. 462-463.

²⁰ M. Gangadharan, *The Malabar Rebellion*, DC Books, Kottayam, 2008, p. 23

aspirations and desire for social and economic betterment persuaded them to cooperate against the common enemy. The British force in hands with the native servants exterminated all these revolts by 1805. It was this period of turmoil which became the causative factor for the formation of the *kolkar* as a military-cum-police force.

Revolt of the *Mappila* Peasants and its Suppression

The sympathetic and conciliatory attitude of the British towards the *mappila* community did not last long. The oppression of the land lords and the support of the administrative machinery of the state to this oppression instigated them to be turbulent and aggressive.²² The system of 'farming' land revenue introduced by the British exposed the peasants to many illegal exactions by the local chieftains and their agents. The arrangements introduced by the Company in Malabar for the collection of revenue involved the use of the traditional influence of the *janmimar*, who were almost all upper caste Hindus, and of other traditionally influential persons. It was through this system of revenue collection the British form of state management penetrated into the political arena of Malabar. This system forced the peasants to share the products from land between the tenants, the landlords and the government.²³ The landlords and the state were the beneficiaries of this arrangement. A major portion of the produce was taken away by these two agencies. The newly created British judicial system and the police facilitated for the exploitation.²⁴ The *mappila* people of South Malabar refused to pay land revenue and in some areas open encounters took place between them and the agents of the chieftains. In Valluvanad, when the Company government restored the management of the region to the Vellattiri Raja, it was soon proved that he was incapable to repress the feud between the *nair* and *mappila* people.

²¹ South Malabar was the area of influence to the *mappila* chieftains and Pazhassi Raja led the revolt in north Malabar.

²² British administrators like Jonathan Duncan interpreted the *Mappila* outbreaks as the result of inherent aggressive character and lack of civilization of the *Mappila* community. Cf., K. N Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 57.

²³ M. Gangadharan, *The Malabar Rebellion*, *op. cit.*, p. 23

²⁴ *Ibid.*

So, in May 1793, the Joint Commissioners decided to take the territory back and manage directly. The escape of the Raja and his family to Travancore at the time of turmoil and non-extension of assistance to the Company in its war against Tipu Sulthan were other factors for this decision by the Commissioners.²⁵ The resistance encountered by the revenue agents crippled collection of revenue in many parts, especially in south Malabar.²⁶ Farmer, one of the Commissioners reported that, the *mappila* people will not be brought back to their old positions under Hindu landlords without the risk of resistance and rebellion from the places distinguished by the names of *mappila* districts.²⁷ The problem was very serious in the remote villages of the southern *taluk* units.²⁸ The *Mappila* people in that quarter, wrote Major Dow (on deputation in that part of the country), had been very troublesome in marauding about the countries in armed parties, and in burning temples and houses of the *nair* people, in the course of which they had put a Hindu headman to death.²⁹ Captain Burchal, who was commanding a battalion of *sepoys* in the southern districts, reported to Colonel Hartley, the commander of the troops in Malabar, that instead of holding out *cowls* and seeking measures of conciliation, marching of the battalion of army through Valluvanad alone will bring them into subjugation.³⁰ The Valluvanad Raja promised assistance of 2000 armed *nair* men for the support of Company battalion. The *nair* militia of Malabar landlords helped the British in many of their operations in Malabar. The commanding officers and other administrators of the Company had a good impression about the valour and sacrificing mentality of these native troops. The valour and sacrifice shown by the *mappila* armed force under the banner of rebel *muppanmar* was equal or more than that of the native troops. It reflected in the recruitment to the Watson's Corps and the *kolkar* during the time of rebellions at the beginning of 19th century.

²⁵ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, pp. 482-83.

²⁶ South Malabar is roughly corresponding to the taluks of Ernad, Valluvanad, Ponnani and Palakkad.

²⁷ *JCR*, *op. cit.*, para 201, p. 192.

²⁸ The British administrators described these regions as '*Mappila districts*' and the *Mappilas* as '*jungle Mappilas*'. For details see *JCR*, *op. cit.*, para 187, pp. 176-77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, para 284, p. 266.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

The disturbances in Chavakkad and Mannarkkad were most serious and invited direct intervention of the government.³¹ When the violent resistance of the poor *Mappila* people under their regional leaders against the new revenue farming system was beyond the control of the Company, Major Dow proposed the formation of a *mappila* militia.³² His proposal was to adopt the plan of Tipu Sulthan to recruit the fittest persons from among the *Mappila* community as revenue collectors with the title of *mooppan* or headmen under the Superintendents of the concerned divisions. They would have the duty of collection of the revenues and maintenance of tranquility and order in the districts. According to the plan of Dow, each *mooppan* can maintain a fixed number of armed *Mappilas* to assist in the discharge of his duties. The table below describes the plan proposed by Dow.³³

Name of Districts/Taluks	Number of Moopas/ Headmen	Pay/ month in rupees	Number of armed militia	Pay/ month In rupees
Vettatunad	1	@ 25	50	@ 4
Ponnany	1	@ 25	50	@ 4
Chavakkad	1	@ 25	50	@ 4
Walluvanad	2	@25	100	@4
Shernad	1	@ 25	50	@ 4
Ramnad	1	@ 25	50	@ 4

As per the plan the monthly expense for the collection of revenue and preservation of peace and order in these taluks was rupees 1, 335. But this plan was kept in abeyance for consideration in future.

The proclamation of general pardon to all offences issued in 1793 had no desired effect. Reports of gang robberies, inhuman murders, sending threatening letters to extort money and provisions from peaceable inhabitants were repeatedly

³¹ K. N Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, op. cit., p. 56.

³² JCR, op. cit, para 217, p. 214.

³³ *Ibid.*

received to the Commissioners even after the proclamation.³⁴ In Valluvanad and Vettatnad, the *mappila* chief Hydrose led the dacoits. Major Dow was deputed to the region to bring Hydrose in terms with the Company but failed. According to the First Commissioners, Hydrose and Unni Mutha were the two most noted and active heads of gangs in the whole province.³⁵ The turbulent condition of the district forced the British to create and enforce the power of state agencies like military, police and judiciary.³⁶ The decline of the Mysorean power and finally the death of Tipu Sulthan also stimulated the British to harden the actions against the *mappila* protesters.

The new revenue policy of the British caused the establishment of a loose confederation of *mappila mooppan* of south Malabar. The revolts led by Elampulasserri Unni Mutha Moopman, Chempan Poker and Manjeri Athan Gurukkal nearly paralyzed the administration of the British in the southern taluks of Malabar. During the period of Mysore rule in Malabar, these *mappila* chiefs amassed considerable wealth and it brought them power and influence among the *mappila* natives. Unni Mutha Mooppan kept with him four head *mooppan* as heads of gangs and about two hundred armed men. There were many subordinates who paid him tributes, acknowledging him as their chief and assuming to join him when required. Previously Unni Mutha and his 100 followers served for Tipu in his war against the English East India Company in 1791.³⁷ After the defeat of Tipu and his cession of Malabar, Unni Mutha became inimical to British rule. Unni Mutha had political ambitions and he acted like an independent chieftain than a subject. On 2nd February 1794, the Bengal Commissioners submitted a supplementary report

³⁴ *Ibid.*, para 216, p. 214.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ The Court of Justice was started functioning in Malabar in 1793 itself with the intention of impressing the natives with the idea that, the government was determined to protect their rights, lives and properties. *JCR, op. cit.*, para 156.

³⁷ Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987, p. 104.

dealing many of the subjects of troubles including Unni Mutha *Moopan*.³⁸ In the same year the government signed an agreement with Unni Mutha by which the estate of Elampulasserri was restored to him and an annual allowance of one thousand rupees was granted.³⁹ But he refused it and demanded a share of the revenue from the region. Unni Mutha made alliance with Tipu Sulthan and from whom he received funds.⁴⁰ He collected revenue and other tolls from large areas of Ernad and Shernad. From the information about the fund mobilization of Unni Mutha and refusal of allowance offered to him, the government convinced that his ambitions were more than that of protection and enjoyment of his usurped *janmam* right over his lands. When the Padinjare Kovilakam *Rajas* of the *samoothiri* family proceeded to south Malabar to raise disturbances, Unni Mutha joined them.⁴¹ The Supervisor thereupon revoked the agreement and in lieu of it offered a reward of three thousand rupees for his capture. Captain MacDonald seized and demolished his stronghold on the Pandallur Hill near Malappuram, as well as several other fortified houses belonging to him and his followers and pursued him as far as to the jungles. Unni Mutha continued his rebellious activities till 1797, when the Governor of Bombay pardoned him. In 1800, when Pazhassi Raja restarted his rebellion against the government, Unni Mutha along with Manjeri Athan Gurukkal and Iruvalinad Nambiars joined him.⁴² When the second phase of the Pazhassi rebellion was more awful, Colonel Wellesley himself drew up the plan of military campaign in Malabar. Two regiments of cavalry were dispatched through Palakkad Gap to suppress the rebels of South Malabar. In 1802, Unni Mutha and many of his followers were killed in an encounter with the Captain Watson's *kolkar* at Kalipar Hill.

³⁸ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, pp. 502-03

³⁹ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁴⁰ Stephen F Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁴¹ Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 499.

⁴² C. A Innes and F. B Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

Athan Gurukkal was an influential *mappila mooppan* of Manjeri. He amassed large area of landed property during the Mysore rule. The power and recognition achieved by Gurukkal under the Mysore rulers brought to him many loyal followers. The political developments of Malabar after 1792, made them uncomfortable. After the quinquennial settlement of 1794,⁴³ Zamorin of Calicut was authorized to collect the revenue of Ernad. But he failed to fulfill his responsibility due to many reasons. The fierce resistance of the *Mappila* people of the region was a major obstacle for achieving his target. Besides, he could not collect the due share from his *nair* subjects as well. Most of them refused to pay the revenue as they dreamt of the return of the no tax days of the pre-Mysorean time.⁴⁴ The British suspected that the *samoothiri* concealed the actual collection from his assigned territory. The Second Commissioners' in their report of 28th July 1801 reported that the Hindu revenue officers of the *samoothiri* collected more than the sanctioned rate as per the agreement with the Company. The severity of the exaction was clear in the appeal of the *mappila* cultivators that they were ready to pay not merely the half but two third of Harshed Begh's *jumma* for both the current and preceding years, if they might be released from the payment of their rents to their Hindu land lords.⁴⁵ Almost all revenue officials of Ernad were *mappila* men. The situation of the region necessitated to take such a decision. These *mappila* revenue officials uniformly betrayed the interests of the *samoothiri*. The *mappila mooppan* appointed for the revenue collection acted as semi- autonomous rulers of the region. Attan Gurukkal was chief among such officials. In 1796, due to continuous disorder and confusion, the British temporarily took the direct control of the revenue collection in the region of *samoothiri*. Many British officials including Duncan reported that the situation of south Malabar could be controlled only by strong hand of power and not by leniency. But the higher level

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 73

⁴⁴ Stephen S. Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁴⁵ J. Spencer, J. Smee and A. Walker, *A Report on the Administration of Malabar*, Collectorate Press, Calicut, 1910, para 79, p. 21.

administrators were not affirmative to this opinion as the menace of Tipu Sulthan loomed over and many of the *mappila* rebels of Malabar had clandestine relations with him. Hence, the British, even after taking the direct charge of revenue collection from the holding of *samoothiri*, sought the help of *mooppan* like Atthan Gurukkal to re-establish peace and tranquility.

In 1797, when the *samoothiri* relinquished the revenue collection duty of the taluk of Ernad, Attan Gurukkal was appointed by the Company as the *darogah* of Ernad with the expectation of utilizing his influence over the *mappila* inhabitants of the region to maintain peace and order and facilitate the collection of revenue. The police establishment newly created under Attan Gurukkal consisted of 100 armed *mappila* men.⁴⁶ But the future developments were quite opposite to the expectations of the Company. By the newly acquired police and magisterial power, through the office of *darogah*, Attan Gurukkal increased his influence, wealth and position in the region.⁴⁷ The *darogah* had considerable magisterial powers like deciding civil suits to the extent of 200 rupees and inflicting corporal punishments.⁴⁸ Men like Attan Gurukkal used these powers to extend their economic and religious interests. Attan Gurukkal was a distant relative of Unni Mutta and it gave him opportunity to lead secret operations against the government. He wanted to revenge upon the Company for the execution of his brother-in-law, Muhammed Musliar.⁴⁹ With a force of armed followers, Gurukkal took away the body of his brother-in-law from the site of execution and buried at his residence. It was an open challenge to the authority of British government. Unni Mutta also had a same grievance with the Company as his brother was executed in 1799 for the crime of harbouring an outlaw. The immediate provocations and

⁴⁶ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 252

⁴⁷ Up to the time of the insurrection of 1800, the charge of the police in interior south Malabar was vested with the *darogah* of that caste.

⁴⁸ Conrad Wood, *The Mappila Rebellion and Its Genesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁴⁹ Muhammed Musliar was arrested and convicted of the murder of a *nair* in 1795 and was executed in 1799.

family relations brought them together to ally themselves with Chempan Pocker, another prominent *mappila* of South Malabar.

Chempan Pocker was employed by the Company as the revenue collector of Shernad region. Due to the complaint of bribery and extortion, he was caught and imprisoned at Palakkad fortress. In 1799 he escaped from jail and returned to Shernad. Following that his possessions were seized and his house was destroyed by T. H Baber, the Assistant Collector of Shernad. The British administrators expected that these steps would prompt him to flee into jungle to escape capture. The similar events in the last months of 1799 experienced by Unni Mutha, Athan Gurukkal and Chempan Pocker easily brought them together and they formed a dangerous military threat to the power of the English East India Company in south Malabar. In January 1800, Chempan Pocker secretly abetted by Attan Gurukkal, made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of G. Waddell, the acting Superintendent of the southern division. Now the British had no other way but to use force.

When the second phase of the Pazhassi rebellion started at north Malabar in 1800, the insurrections of the *mappila mooppan* in south Malabar created considerable discomfiture to the government. But it was fortunate to the British that the participation of the *mappila* population of South Malabar in these outbreaks was less than that in the rising of 1921. The rebel leaders did not attempt to mobilize the community in the name of religion. The rebel leaders conducted their operations with the armed followers selected from among the *mappila* people. The dissension and jealousy among the rebel leaders prevented them from constituting a centralized rebel organization. Each one of them operated from his local power base.⁵⁰ The rebellion took the form of haphazard warfare waged by different groups of *mappila* guerillas. The rebellion was short lived and ended in 1802. The rebel leaders and their armed followers were completely wiped out by the government forces.

⁵⁰ Attan Gurukkal at Manjeri in Ernad, Chempan Pocker in Areacode region of Shernad, and Unni Mutta in Thiruvazhamkunnu near Mannarkkad in Valluvanad *taluk*.

The outbreak of 1800 under the *mappila* chiefs revealed their attitude towards the defeat and death of Tipu Sulthan. They feared that the establishment of British authority in Malabar would endanger their religious and economic interests. The system of revenue collection introduced by the British was tough and systematic. The influence of the traditional *janmi* system visible in the mechanism for revenue collection introduced by the Company, made the low caste and poor cultivators, especially the *Mappilas* desperate. Though, *nair* and *thiyyar* people also cultivated in lands, the peculiar caste hierarchy existed in the Hindu religion kept them away from the rebellions against the high caste land lords. They were loyal both to their masters and the British government. When the *Mappila* people feared the reforms of the Company as a threat to their interests, the *nair* community and other high caste Hindu people wanted the immediate reinstatement of the old system. There was recurring of *mappila-nair* conflicts in different parts of Malabar. So the initial years of the Company rule were a time of general insecurity. Another reason for the initial troubles was the injudicious haste of the early administrators in matters of revenue farming.⁵¹ They gave more importance to trade and profit than the administration of the region. The result was blatant exploitation of the people.

Resistance of Pazhassi Raja

The second stage of the Pazhassi Revolt (1800-05) was an important period in the development of the police establishment in Malabar. The rebellions and insurrection of the last decade of the eighteenth century were suppressed mainly by the military power of the British. The military was supported by the unorganized and ill-trained armed native servants. The armed force of the local *raja* people, allied with the Company government, assisted the English army. In January 1796, a special commission was appointed by the Bombay government to enquire about the charges of corruption and bribery of the administrators of Malabar brought

⁵¹ T. K Ravindran, *Malabar under Bombay Presidency: A Study of the Early British Judicial System in Malabar 1792-1802*, Mascot Press, 1969, p. 6.

before the government by the *samootheri*.⁵² The Commission was authorized to enquire and propose their suggestions in other matters also.⁵³ Considering the recommendation of the new commission, two *Siband* corps of *nair* and *Mappila* men were organized. It was decided to station the *nair* corps in the Southern Division of the Province and the *mappila* corps in the Northern Division.⁵⁴ The government, through this step, expected to bring back peace and harmony among the people of the district. But the developments in the district during the years of 1799-1800 were quite against the expectations of the British. The rebel leaders of Malabar began to organize together and led combined operations against the foreign government. Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja was the chief among the rebel leaders and he resumed the fight against the Company in 1800.

The resistance of Pazhassi Raja was the greatest challenge faced by the Company after the establishment of its government in Malabar. The settlement of 1797 between the *raja* and the Company brought temporary peace in the northern division. The relation was strained by the end of 1799 and open encounters started in 1800. The violation of the treaty of 1797 and the rebellion of the Raja for a second time forced the Company to counter it with strict measures. The alliance of the *raja* with the enemies of the British both inside and outside the province prevented the government from any measures of discussion and conciliation.⁵⁵ The defeat and death of Tipu Sulthan not only eliminated the number one enemy of the Company in South India but it also brought some economic gains. After the fourth Anglo-Mysore war, the Company acquired the province of Canara, Coimbatore and Wyanad. The annual revenue of this province was estimated at 7, 77, 170 pagodas

⁵² William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

⁵³ In May 1796 and September 1797, this commission was reconstituted and strengthened by adding more members including the Officer commanding of the Province.

⁵⁴ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 524.

⁵⁵ Tipu Sulthan carried on correspondence with Pazhassi Raja during the years of 1797-99 to get the assistance of the Raja in his operations against the Company. The British suspected that the *raja chiefs* of Chirakkal and Pazhassi aided Tipu with men and provision. See William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, pp. 526, 529.

per annum.⁵⁶ Though the Company spent 2 00, 000 *pagoda* as expense for the maintenance of the families of Hyder and Tipu, there was a balance of more than 5 lakhs *pagoda*. The surplus income prompted the authorities to suppress the rebellious elements with the help of a strong army, an efficient police corps and other paid servants for intelligence gathering.

Failure of the Army

Many parts of the Madras province were in trouble during the first decade of the nineteenth century. The government was forced to deploy their army in a scattered manner. It caused for many setbacks to the Company. Limited number of armies stationed in different parts of the Presidency was not enough to meet the situations of revolts and uprisings. Due to the insufficient military support, they had to face many setbacks in Malabar. The Panamaram incident of Wyanad in October 1802 was an example for the inefficiency of the British army in Malabar. A body of *nair* men, about 400 in number, made a surprise attack on the army stationed at Panamaram.⁵⁷ The *nair* force was divided into three groups and attacked the barracks where the arms and ammunitions were kept, the sepoy's stationed and the officers of the Company stayed.⁵⁸ Two European officer⁵⁹ and twenty-four sepoy's were killed, twenty-one were wounded and all the buildings were set on fire and brought down.⁶⁰ The method of guerilla warfare followed by the rebels of Malabar proved that the sepoy's and European troops alone were not sufficient to suppress them. From the beginning of its rule in Malabar, the Company spent a major portion of their revenue as expense for the military service.⁶¹ Different wings of the British army were the major instrument to counter the challenges against their rule. In the year 1793-94 more than 75 per cent of the total revenue of the

⁵⁶ Lieutenant Colonel W. J Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, Vol. II, Government Press, Madras, 1883, p. 334.

⁵⁷ W. J Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, Vol. III, Government Press, Madras, 1883, p. 55.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Captain Dickinson and Lieutenant Maxwell

⁶⁰ W. J. Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ K. K. N Kurup, *Modern Kerala: Studies in Social and Agrarian Relations*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1988, p. 8.

Company siphoned off the military establishment in Malabar.⁶² But in many occasions the operations of the army proved to be failure. The province was garrisoned by Bombay troops from the period of their acquisition in 1792, up to the end of 1804. After that most of the Bombay regiments were replaced by the Madras establishment.

Tranquility was temporarily established in Malabar by the year 1801. But the reforms introduced by Macleod, the first Principal Collector of Malabar, in revenue and coinage enraged the inhabitants, the dissatisfied chieftains and *raja* people.⁶³ There were outbreaks again in Wyanad and other parts of Malabar in 1802. Although maximum force was stationed in Malabar, the rebellion could not put down. The table below shows the deployment of the troops in different parts of Malabar district during 1803-04.⁶⁴ More than eight thousand men stationed in different parts of Malabar during 1803. It was because of the serious nature of the insurrections of the year that persuaded the government to provide such a big number of troops to Malabar.

May, 1803			October, 1804		
Sl. No	Description	Number	Sl. No	Description	Number
1	Bombay European Regiment	854	1	Bombay European Regiment	393
2	Bombay Native Infantry	5909	2	Bombay Native Infantry	4015
3	Bombay Pioneers	390	3	Bombay Pioneers	412
4	Madras Native Infantry	994	4	Madras Native Infantry	999
Total		8147	Total		5819

⁶² Out of the total revenue of Rs. 16, 72, 009 a sum of Rs. 12, 79, 504 were spent on the Company's military establishment in Malabar.

⁶³ In 1803, Macleod attempted to revise the land revenue of Malabar district within a short period of forty days. The rates of exchange were also raised. The fabrication of accounts, the over assessment of produce, the assessment of produce that did not exist, the assessment imposed on wrong people, and the rigid methods of exaction of revenue from the people were the results of his reforms. Added to these, the ill-advised changes in the rates of exchanges created more suffering to the tax payers. Later his reforms were withdrawn by Mr. Rickards. For details see William Logan, *Malabar Manual, op. cit.*, pp. 616-17

⁶⁴ Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 146

The strength of the troops mentioned in the table could not bring peace and tranquility in the district. The troubles in Malabar were a threat to other territories under the Company in the Coast. In December 1803, Colonel Montresor complained to the authority that his attempt to restore tranquility was unsuccessful due to the deficiency of troops. So he asked for more troops. But the Madras government was not in a position to provide even a single battalion. Out of the eighteen battalions of native infantry of Bombay establishment, 6 to 8 were constantly employed in Malabar and Canara.⁶⁵ The service in Malabar, especially in north Malabar, was most unpopular among the Bombay troops. The factors like unfavourable climate, long distance from their homes and the length of time separated from their families badly affected the efficiency of the Bombay force. No regiments could be kept complete because of the difficulty in getting recruits. By the end of 1804, a considerable body of Madras army was sent to Malabar under Lieutenant Colonel A. Macleod. Because of the failure of the British army in maintaining peace in the district, special powers were invested with Macleod, to try under martial law, persons in arms against the state and carry out death sentence without reference to the government.⁶⁶

The experiences of the administrators of Malabar during the period of rebellion proved that mere muscle power of the army alone would not bring tranquility in the district. Instead of increasing the credibility of the government, the increased number of troops and its operations in the Province increased fear among the people. Due to failure in establishing peace and security to the life and property of the inhabitants by using the strength of the British troops, the government was compelled to recruit and train more natives for information gathering, revenue collection and policing.⁶⁷ The *kolkaran* was a best three-in-one

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-47

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ A unified police organization was established in the Madras presidency only after the enactment of the Madras Police Act of 1859. Again the police administration was reorganized after the Indian Police Act of 1861, according to the recommendation of the Central Police Commission of 1860. The Commission recommended reorganizing British Indian police on the model of the Irish Constabulary. Till that time, in Malabar, police duties were done by *kolkar*. They were designated in different terms like police peons, police *kolkar*, armed *kolkar*, jail guards etc.

instrument, available in Malabar, for the purpose. It was during this time that the duties of the *kolkar* diverted to many areas besides the already doing duties as assistants for land settlements and revenue collection.

Towards a New Force

Admission of natives into British military and internal security wings was not a new thing. From the beginning of the Company administration in India they recruited local inhabitants to strengthen their administrative machinery. It was experimented and found effective at the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁸ In Malabar also such experiments were started before the establishment of Malabar Province under the Company. In 1734, the fortress of Dharmapattanam was defended from the Canarese by a force of 400 men which included 140 *nair* and 120 *thiyyar*.⁶⁹ In 1736, *mappila* people also were enlisted in the force by the Tellichery Factors. When the influence of Hyder Ali was piercing north Malabar, certain operations were conducted under the Tellicherry Factors according to the directions of Bombay government. In such operations, locally recruited men served in the army. In March 1768, one such expedition was conducted against Ali Raja of Cannanore under the command of Captain Thomas Henry. This detachment consisted of 716 effective men besides officers. It included 232 Bombay *sepoys*, 80 of the Honorable Company's Narangapurath *nair* and 175 *thiyyar*. Besides, the prince of Kolathunadu and the *raja* of Kottayam joined in the detachment with 1700 *nair* men.⁷⁰ The first commissioners of Malabar had the opinion of co-operating the establishments of the native *raja* for the collection of revenue. They negotiated with the *samoothiri* for a joint collection by the servants of the Company and the *raja*. They proposed the establishment of a *canongoe*

⁶⁸ Utilization of local people for the defense of the colonial state was tested by the Company authorities in the wars of Plassey and Buxar and in the administrative reforms like Dual Government. For details, see Ramsay Muir, *The Making of British India: 1756-1858*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-101.

⁶⁹ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 365

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 418.

department throughout the district by including English and native servants.⁷¹ The commissioners expected that, through this system, the Company could permeate to even the innermost parts of the district. The officers were paid and kept altogether by the Company, they would gradually become dependents of the new government, the officials believed. They were highly useful to bring into and keep in order the accounts of the land and revenue, to serve as local assistants, intelligence officers and guides to the supervisor and superintendents in performing their duties. The system will also act as a check on the illicit and undue exactions of the local chiefs and landlords.⁷² This proposal of the Commissioners was materialized in 1793 when the *samoothiri* agreed for a permanent *canongoe* establishment and for the collection of revenue being made jointly by his and the Company's officers. As the *samoothiri* agreed to this, all his subordinate *raja* men also obliged. Hence, a major part of central and south Malabar came under a uniform system of revenue collection and a close acquaintance with the native servants and the Company government.

When the Joint Commissioners were in thought of strengthening of the administration of justice in the Province, they suggested recruiting respectable natives to officiate and assist in the courts.⁷³ When the revenue collection of south Malabar was in trouble due to the *Mappila* insurrections, the Company decided to depute *darogah* like Athan Gurukkal from their own community with revenue, judicial and law and order responsibilities. Such *darogah* had permission to maintain paid armed followers for the maintenance of law and order and to help for revenue collection.

In April 1797, Jonathan Duncan, the Governor and Lieutenant General Stuart, the Commander-in-Chief, arrived in Malabar to investigate the affairs of the district. It was, the result of a proclamation of 10th April 1797, for the purpose of

⁷¹ Canongoe department was to supervise and control the revenue administration of the region.

⁷² *JCR, op. cit.*, para 309, pp. 280- 81.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, para 491, p. 393.

accomplishing certain objects materially affecting the public welfare.⁷⁴ This committee was appointed in the light of the rebellion of Pazhassi Raja. Just before the arrival of this committee, the Commissioners took steps to raise a levy of irregular troops to harass the Pazhassi Raja.⁷⁵ The Kootali Nair of Payyoormala was employed as the head of this new troop. The aim of this troop was the subjugation of Pazhassi Raja. The government through another declaration required all subjects not to molest or obstruct the *nair* in the execution of his duties but to assist to the utmost of their power in forwarding his service.⁷⁶ This troop was raised on the advice of Swaminath Pattar, minister of the *samoothiri*. But soon a treaty was concluded with Pazhassi Raja and temporary peace was established in the region. The militia specially set up under Kootali Nair was then disbanded. Two *Sibandi* corps of *nair* and *Mappila* people were organized.

Frequent complaints and representations from the landholders and ryots of Malabar, about the inequality of the present system of realizing the revenue of the province, persuaded the Commissioners to take steps for a comprehensive inspection of estates. It was conducted under the supervision of Smee, one of the members in the Commission. He was authorized to select qualified men for the completion of the task. The survey and assessment were intended to redress whatever grievances existing and to obtain an accurate knowledge of the resources, products and rights of every individual.⁷⁷ For this survey Smee depended mainly on native servants in the village level like *parbutties* (*pravarthikkar*), *menon* and *kolkar*.

By 1799, due to the failure of the native *raja* and chiefs in fulfilling their engagements, the government assumed the charge of the collection of the revenue

⁷⁴ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

⁷⁵ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 522.

⁷⁶ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309.

⁷⁷ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309

at major parts of the district. Consequently, the revenue establishments of these regions directly came into the control of the Company. It was in the same year Tipu Sulthan was defeated and killed in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war and consequently Wyanad was ceded to the British. But Pazhassi Raja laid claim to Wyanad and persisted in keeping possession of it. To use pressure he raised a large body of men consisting of *nair* and *Mappila* people including the disbanded troops of Tipu Sulthan.⁷⁸ The government decided to severely punish the Raja. As part of this decision special native force like *kolkar* was raised and effectively used for the suppression of the rebellion.

Watson's Corps

In the middle of 1800, certain important changes took place in the administration of Malabar which had its impact on the events thereafter. The posts of two superintendents were abolished. With effect from 1st July 1800, the administration of Malabar district was transferred from Bombay presidency to Madras Presidency. Lord Clive, the Governor of Madras, after an analysis of the system of government then existed in Malabar, assumed that the system had proved incapable of asserting and maintaining the supremacy of British power either in the realization of the revenues or in enforcement of the verdicts passed of the criminal courts.⁷⁹ Certain reforms in the existing system was introduced by Clive to meet the challenges from the rebel *mappila*, and chiefs which include (1) abolition of the control and supervision of the Commission, (2) suspension of the functions of the criminal courts, (3) extension of the criminal jurisdiction power of the Officer Commanding the forces in Malabar, for the purpose of bringing the rebels to trial by summary process, to all cases of criminal nature (4) appointment of one Principal Collector and subordinate collectors with the power to administer

⁷⁸ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 530.

⁷⁹ Walter Kelley Firminger (ed.), *The Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company* dated 28th July 1812, (hereafter Fifth Report of 1812), R. Cambay & Company, Calcutta, 1917. P. 242, <http://14.139.60.114:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/126>, accessed on 20/07/2018 at 1pm.

justice in civil cases.⁸⁰ The military administration of Malabar was already in the hands of the Madras government.

Attempt of the government in collection of revenue backed by the troops was not a success. The military regulation prevalent at the time prevented the troops directly involve in the collection of revenue.⁸¹ In 1805, the Governor of Madras directed the Principal Collector of Malabar to withdraw the regular troops stationed in the district for the collection of revenue. If it was found necessary to retain the troops for the purpose there should be ample reason for that.⁸² This decision proved that the government was trying to avoid the presence of regular troops in the civil administration of Malabar so as to get the support of the people. The service of both the revenue *kolkar* and police *kolkar* were available for the purpose of revenue collection. In many ways it was more convenient for the government. They were civil servants in nature. The Principal Collector and his subordinate officers could control and direct them. Almost all the *kolkar* recruited were natives of the region they were working and had close relation with the local people. Through the employment of the locals for the collection of revenue, the East India Company expected to achieve the popular face of its governance.

In 1800, Captain Watson was entrusted to the organization of an armed police corps for the collection of the revenue.⁸³ The new police corps consisted of 500 men trained and equipped in the model of the constabulary force later formed in London.⁸⁴ It was after that, the Malabar militia, an irregular and undisciplined force maintained and served under the native *rajās* and chiefs was disbanded. The

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Previously troops were used for the collection of revenue in Bengal and other British Indian territories. For details see Stephen Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation, op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁸² Letter dated 19th April 1805, *Madras Correspondence Files*, (hereafter MCF), Vol. 2245, pp. 3-4, Regional Archives Kozhikode, (hereafter RAK).

⁸³ Logan, *Malabar Manual, op. cit.*, p. 532.

⁸⁴ The first police force was set up in London in 1829 by Robert Peel, the then home secretary, after passing the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. The formal structure of the police bureaucracy established in Madras and in other provinces owed much to the Irish Constabulary and London Metropolitan and country police force in England and Wales. For details see David Arnold, 'Bureaucratic Recruitment and Subordination in Colonial India: The Madras Constabulary 1859-1947', *op. cit.*, pp. 1-53.

decline of the power of the native *raja* chiefs caused the decline of employment in the royal courts. Many of the natives who served as troopers, revenue servants and other workers in the region became unemployed. It was an opportunity for the British to get recruits for their service.⁸⁵ At the time of formation the corps, the British intended to the extirpation of gangs of *mappila* thieves and robbers whose cruelties and depredations had for a length of time kept the district south of the Beypore river in a relentless state of trouble and confusion.⁸⁶ There were many obstacles in the collection of revenue and as a result a large amount remained as arrears. Warden opined in his report that the service of the *kolkar* corps was beyond the expectations of the Commissioners upon whose recommendation the Corps was originally raised. The sincere and dedicated service of this corps inspired the authorities to increase the number of the Corps and deploy them in all turbulent parts of the district.

Watson's police *kolkar* force was the chief instrument for the suppression of the rebellions of Malabar, especially in Wyanad, in the early years of the nineteenth century. Before 1800, *kolkar* were mainly served as revenue collectors, messengers, and assistants to the survey officers. But the turbulent condition of Malabar at the beginning of the nineteenth century compelled the Company to recruit more locals to meet the situation. The administrators had opinion to use the native servants for military and police purpose. Gillis, the Sub collector of Northern division, shared his concern about the security of the division due to the presence of the rebels in Thalasseri, Kannur and Mahe.⁸⁷ The sub collector complained about the shortage of force in the division. He proposed the recruitment of local

⁸⁵ It was the general characteristic of British India. By the beginning of the nineteenth century many Indian states were either completely conquered or made dependent to British government. It reduced employment opportunities for the native service families and thrown them into relative poverty. To protect the status and influence in the society they were ready to serve under the foreign government. These servants were effectively used by the British for information gathering, communication and for the administration of law and order. For details see C. A Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1996.

⁸⁶ Report of Thomas Warden dated 10th July 1804, para. 5.

⁸⁷ Letter dated 9th March 1803, MCF, Vol. 2225, pp. 35-36, RAK.

inhabitants with *mooppan* as heads to defend the region.⁸⁸ Such recruits worked along with the *kolkar* trained under Watson. The armed district *kolkar* and the other native recruits were used for night patrolling also.⁸⁹ Though there was revenue and police *kolkar*, they were inter- changeably deputed for both duties. The specially trained police *kolkar* were placed under the commanding officer till 1805. After that, their control was transferred to the district Collector.⁹⁰

The period between 1800 and 1805 was decisive to the Company government as concerned to the political stability and administration of the district. Besides the Pazhassi rebellion with its strong hold at north Malabar, the government faced many challenges from other parts of Malabar also. The discontented people from different sections of the society wore the dress of rebels and took up arms against the British. The government, to a great extent, used the force of the *kolkar* to meet such challenges. Many encounters were taken place between the rebels and the *kolkar*. In many occasions, the British officers under whom the *kolkar* served eulogized the dedication and sincerity of this native force.⁹¹ An examination of the service of the *kolkar* to the foreign government at this critical point of time helps to convince anybody the fact that why the British officers praised the service of the *kolkar*, though they were a grass root level servants under the Company with a low salary and other service perks.

The *kolkar* in Policing Malabar

The British government found the raids of local chieftains in Malabar as gang robbery. These robberies were part and parcel of the livelihood of Malabar with the arrival of Europeans and the end of the raja rule. Gang robbery and depredations were common in Malabar during the early years of the British rule. It became a regular phenomenon throughout the district at the time of the second

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Letter from Fort St. Gorge to Collector dated 19th January 1805, MCF Vol. 2240, p. 77, RAK.

⁹¹ Letter from Gillis to the Collector dated 2nd February 1804, MCF Vol. 2160, p. 22, RAK.

phase of the Pazhassi rebellion. During this period the entire *taluk* units of the province were affected either partially or fully by the rebellious activities. The atmosphere of troubles facilitated for the activities of robberies in the region. Religious, economic and political reasons contributed to this. In South Malabar, gang robberies organized by rebel leaders like Unni Moota, Hydroose and Chempan Pocker disturbed internal peace of the *taluk* divisions of Valluvanad, Ernad, Shernad and Ponnani. Besides gang robberies, they committed inhuman murders, and extorting money and provisions from the inhabitants.⁹² Religious fanaticism, starvation and agrarian discontents inspired the poor *mappila* people to rally behind them. The image of the British, constructed by the rebel *mappila* leaders among their followers, was that along with the *nair people* they were celebrating any incidents of humiliation to the *Mappila* people.⁹³ The antipathetic attitude towards the British government and their supporters, created by the *mappila* leaders among their followers, inspired the poor *mappila* people to fight like suicidal squads. They actively participated in all operations of the protesters. There were many instances of gang robberies in Ernad taluk by small *mappila* groups in 1803. Rickards, in a letter reported that the police *kolkar* of Watson ably defended such operations with great losses on the side of the marauders.⁹⁴

In North Malabar also, gang robbery was one of the important issues to be settled by the Company government to establish their credibility among the inhabitants. The subjugation of the native *raja* chiefs and local chieftains by the East India Company and the introduction of new system of revenue administration left many of the natives unemployed or underemployed. Some of them resorted to robberies for their livelihood. There were reports of many such incidents during the years of the Pazhassi resistance.⁹⁵ The armies could not prevent such violence

⁹² *JCR, op. cit.*, Para 216, p. 214.

⁹³ Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis, op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁹⁴ Letter from First Judge to Fort St. George, dtd. 30th March 1803, Book No G/12, Calicut University History Department Archives, hereafter CUHDA, p. 11.

⁹⁵ Letter from W. Wilson, Assistant Collector northern division to the Commanding Officer, Kottaparamba dated 2nd February 1804, MCF 2160, pp. 35-36, RAK.

effectively. The *kolkar* were deputed in such places and open encounters were common between them. The teams of the *kolkar* were able either to kill or to secure the rebels in hands and put them for trial. In the central division also the law and order situation was not perfect during the period of Pazhassi rebellion. The revenue collection was not carried out successfully. The bandit leaders like Eltoor Moopah and Imbichunni were captured by the British with the dedicated service of the *kolkar* deployed there.⁹⁶

The British were successful in suppressing the Pazhassi rebellion by 1805. But incidents of gang robberies continued in Malabar. In 1819, Collector Vaughan reported to Graeme, the Special Commissioner, 'gangs of robbers are making inroads into South Malabar and after committing robberies and cruelties of most barbarous nature they fled into the territories of Cochin where the Company servants could not follow them'.⁹⁷ The Collector recommended restoring the *kolkar* to their former posts as a measure to reduce the incidents of gang robberies and related cruelties. He emphasized the services of the *kolkar*, as local militia, in quelling the rebellions and raids of gang robbers and bandits in South Malabar and Wyanad during the first two decades of British.

The *kolkar* and the Pazhassi Rebellion (1800-05)

In 1800, Pazhassi Raja again raised the standard of revolt. After the defeat of Tipu Sulthan in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, Wyanad was ceded to the British. But, Pazhassi Raja who claimed the district strongly resisted all attempts of the Company to take possession of the region.⁹⁸ He raised a large body of force including the *nair* and *mappila* units. Many of the disbanded soldiers of Tipu Sulthan were also absorbed to his force. To meet the challenges of Pazhassi and his supporters, the Company also decided to seek the possibilities of native forces. In 1800 Watson was deputed to raise a force of 500 *kolkar* and gradually its number was increased and reached up to 3000 within five years. A major part of this force

⁹⁶ Letter from Collector to the Governor dated 8th July 1803, MCF 2314, pp. 26-29, RAK

⁹⁷ Letter from Collector to Commissioner dated 15th September 1819, MCF Vol. 2365, pp. 53-60, RAK.

⁹⁸ Innes and Evans, *Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 75.

was deployed in the northern division, with an intention to help the British in quelling the disturbances there. In a place like Wyanad, forest clad hills and mountains, the services of the *kolkar* were remarkable in collecting information about the movements of the rebels, their hiding places, sources of assistance, strategies of operations and for contacting with the natives. The climate of this hilly district caused serious illness and weak physique of both the *sepoys* from other parts of India and the European officers who commanded them. Bad weather, lack of provisions and medical aid terribly affected their efficiency.⁹⁹ W. J Wilson also described about the sufferings of the troops in Wyanad during the Pazhassi rebellion.¹⁰⁰ More than 200 troopers of Wyanad were in the medical list in 1805.¹⁰¹ The *kolkar* showed their loyalty to the masters by dedicated service during such a period of trouble.

The method of guerilla warfare and surprising attacks upon by the rebels created troubles to the troops in Wyanad. Though the colonial troops were stationed in strategic places of the province with advanced war equipment, strategies, and technologies, in many occasions, they were helpless in front of the rebels and incurred serious losses in terms of men and arms.¹⁰² No such loss happened on the side of the *kolkar*. The combined activities of the *sepoys* and *kolkar* were effectively used against the rebel parties in Wyanad. One such joint effort under J. Wilson near the Cantonment at Kuttuparamba was succeeded in driving away a rebel party into the jungles who ambushed on the house of a *nair* near Kottayam *cutchery* the previous day.¹⁰³ When Major Drummond and his men

⁹⁹ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 546.

¹⁰⁰ W. J Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² In 1797, a rebel force under Kaiteri Ambu attacked a detachment of 80 men of Captain Lawrence's battalion at Manantawadi and killed many members. Some others were seriously wounded. Another attack was made upon the havildar's party at Pazhassi and all except one man was killed. See William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 517. Another reverse was in March 1797, a detachment of 1, 100 men were surprisingly attacked and cut into pieces. In addition to the loss of life, the detachment lost its guns, baggage, ammunition and cattle. See Innes and Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁰³ Letter from Wilson to the Collector dated 16th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2229, p. 219, RAK.

were surrounded by the rebels in his fort, the government sent a reinforcement of 500 men, out of which 200 were *kolkar* and 300 *sepoys* from Kozhikode.

Trained *kolkar* parties stationed at strategically important places of Wyanad to act against the enemies. Reserved *kolkar* were also kept at Kottayam to send wherever their presence needed.¹⁰⁴ When the rebel activities in the northern division were again serious in 1804 Baber asked for additional company of *kolkar* to Tellichery. As per the request, the Collector ordered to the Commander-in-Chief of Malabar and Canara to provide the service of the *kolkar* and it was done with immediate effect.¹⁰⁵

Further, the government knows well the consequences of deploying troops for civil administration. In this situation a native police force was the most suitable remedy and it was worked out by Watson in a creative way. His troop was employed in Kurumbranad and adjoining places where the rebellion seriously affected. To strengthen the hands of Watson in northern division, the Collector gave him the charge of revenue collection also. This extended his authority over the entire establishments of the division like a sub collector. The transfer of revenue rights to Watson was less objectionable to the Board of Revenue as there was no need of any additional establishments or extra expense. Watson's corps along with the force of Colonel Montresor marched through the affected areas and succeeded in the submission of the majority of the inhabitants. The joint effort of Watson and Montresor helped much to restore Kurumbranad from the rebels and laid the foundation of permanent tranquility.¹⁰⁶ Before the entry of Watson and Montresor to Kurumbranad, the rebel party was all powerful. Edachana Kungan and Yeman Nair were present in person and the British troops were forced to quit the place, with surviving revenue officers.¹⁰⁷ Under these circumstances the inhabitants dared not to disown the directions of the rebel leaders as it would endanger their life and their family. In 1804, the Sub collector of North Malabar

¹⁰⁴ Letter from T. H Baber to Collector dated 23rd August 1804, MCF, Vol. 2164, RAK.

¹⁰⁵ Letter from the Officer Commanding to Collector dated 9th November 1804, MCF Vol. 2166, p. 29. RAK.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

informed the Principal Collector that after the surrender of Kallyad Munnaman, brother of the rebel chief Kallyad Nambiar, many more rebels were returning to their homes.¹⁰⁸ He recommended detaching half of the *kolkar* stationed from Irikkoor to Kallyad for the protection of such people from the wrath of the rebel raja and his supporters. It would also complete a chain of outposts from east to west and secure the traders of Coorg from robbery.¹⁰⁹ When protection was ensured with the entry of Montresor and Watson's *kolkar* both the inhabitants and the revenue servants of the region were submitted to the government. They were entirely submissive to Captain Watson's orders and exercised no authority independent of his immediate superintendence and vigilant control. After the departure of Montresor from Kurumbranad, Captain Watson, through a series of rigorous activities, completely evicted the rebel parties from the region. The force of *sepoys* and *kolkar* was continuing there under the supervision of Watson even after reestablishing tranquility. The Collector suspected that if Captain Watson's *kolkar* now stationed in Kurumbranad were withdrawn, the district would in a few days be again overrun by the rebels.¹¹⁰ This report of Collector Rickards is a testimony for the role played by *kolkar* in suppressing the rebels and re-establishing the authority of the Company governance. The *kolkar* actively worked as an agent of the state under the direct control of the European officers.

The role of police *kolkar* of Watson in re-establishing peace and order in the province was increasing day by day. In 1800 Watson was directed to set up a trained corps of 500. By the middle of 1803, direction was given to increase its strength to 1200. But only 800 were recruited by June 1803. Rickards¹¹¹ informed the Governor of Madras the urgency to increasing the number of Watson's corps. Otherwise Wyanad will again plunge into the hands of the rebels.¹¹² He shared the opinion of Colonel Montresor to increase the number of *kolkar* from 1200 to 1800

¹⁰⁸ Letter dated 10th March 1804, MCF Vol. 2383, RAK, pp. 261-5

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ MCF, Vol. 2313, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

¹¹¹ Major Macleod resigned his office on March 11th 1803 and Mr. Rickards succeeded him as the Principal Collector of Malabar.

¹¹² Letter dated 8th July 1803, *op. cit.*, MCF Vol. 2314, p. 26.

to the complete withdrawal of the regulars from the district. Montresor also suggested ensuring the service of able officers for the command of the force. At that time, stationing of troops in the province for an indefinite period was not possible for the Company. The presence of the military force would adversely affect the attempt of the government to bring back tranquility. The military officers recommended increasing the strength of the local forces to replace the troops.

In southern division of the province, the vigilance of the Sub Collector and *kolkar* detachment stationed there completely re-established tranquility as it ever was at any past period of the Company's administration.¹¹³ The Collector was confident in the service of the *kolkar* and hoped that the favourable state of the southern division would not be affected even if withdrawal of the troops from the division was effected. In the region between Cotta River and Beypore, the rebels were all powerful, but were completely suppressed by the deployment of a major part of Watson's *kolkar* force.

Along with the military operations against the Rebels of the Northern Division, the Company administrators sought the assistance of the native inhabitants for the capture of the rebel leaders and establishment of peace. Besides the *kolkar* and other native servants, they deputed men of reputation and recognition among the inhabitants to collect information about the movements of the rebel leaders. By adopting this strategy, the government expected the support of an influential section of the society and through them the loyalty of the natives.¹¹⁴ The government tried to infuse into the inhabitants of the areas of rebellion that they were anxious about the security of life and property of the people. In May 1805, Lieutenant Colonel A. MacLeod, Commanding Officer of Malabar and Canara issued a proclamation through which he informed the inhabitants of Wyanad that an adequate number of troops were stationed in the

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹¹⁴ Locally reputed persons/princes like Panjara Narayanan, Edathara Nambiar, Erambala Chandu, Chengaroth Nambiar, Thondur Chathu, Arayalkizhil Ahmed and many others with their men supported the Company during the rebellion. Panjara Narayanan wrote letters to Captain Osborne informing about the secret camps of Pazhassi Raja and his supporters like Emen Nair, Edachenna Kungan, Komappan, Othenan etc. For details see Joseph Scaria (ed.), *Pazhassi Rekhakal* (Mal.), D C Books, Kottayam, 1994, p. xliii.

district for the specific purpose of protecting the peace loving people and for the apprehension of persons who disturb the government and people.¹¹⁵ The proclamation also warned the people of trial and punishment by the military court without any further process if anybody supported the rebels or refused to give any information about the rebels available to the nearest Officer Commanding the troops.¹¹⁶ Gifts and rewards were offered to the people for informing about the rebels or for commendable service in the apprehension or killing of the rebellious people.¹¹⁷ In June 1805, rewards were offered for the capture or information about the following rebel leaders.¹¹⁸

Sl. No	Name of the Leader	Rewards in <i>pagoda</i> ¹¹⁹
1	Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja	3, 000
2	Veera Varma Raja of the same family	1, 000
3	Ravi Varma raja of the same family	1, 000
4	Paloor Eman	1, 000
5	Paloor Rayarappan	300
6	Edachanna Kungan	1, 000
7	Edachanna Othenan	300
8	Edachanna Komappan	300
9	Edachenna Amu	300
10	Karverryallay Kannan	300
11	Yogyamoola Machan	300
12	Itty Combetta Kelappan Nambiar	833

The peculiar nature of the rebellions in Malabar was the reason why the government searched for more indigenous assistance for its suppression. They realized that regular troops tied to their transport wagons were of no use in

¹¹⁵ Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, op. cit., pp. 366-67

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Logan, *Malabar Manual*, op. cit., pp. 544-45.

¹¹⁸ Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar*, op. cit., pp. 367-68.

¹¹⁹ Star *pagoda* was the coin commonly used in Malabar during that time. 42 *panam* (*fanam*) was equal to 1 star *pagoda*.

Malabar. Here the rebel bands were moving in small units through forests and hills and following the method of guerilla warfare.¹²⁰ The *kolkar* equally mobile and with an equal knowledge of the people, their language and the geography of the region, hunted down the small groups of the followers of Pazhassi Raja with indefatigable enthusiasm. The vigilance of the *kolkar* helped to clear the low country and drove them back into the forests of Wyanad.

Several orders, proclamations and circulars were issued by the Company government to prevent any help from the people to Pazhassi Raja and other rebel leaders of Malabar. The *kolkar* had the duty to ensure the implementation of such orders and proclamations. In 1801 a proclamation was issued with the aim of disarming the people of Valluvanad to prevent the spread of the rebellion in the region. The proclamation demanded all the people of Valluvanad, including the *nair* and *Mappila* people, to surrender their arms such as muskets and swords to the government within two weeks.¹²¹ It was also directed to surrender the arms in front of the *pravarthikkar* of respective *hoblies*. The houses of those who retained the arms would be searched by the government servants and all the arms seized and forfeited to the government. Naturally, such searches in the village level were the duty of the *pravarthikkar* or village officer. The *kolkar* were the chief instrument for the Village officers to conduct such searches. They had a close watch on all persons of the villages concerned and so it was easy to get information about the law breakers.

T. H Baber and the End of Pazhassi Rebellion

The early phase revolts against the English were terminated by the death of Pazhassi Raja on 30th November 1805. Many of his followers were either killed or exiled to places like Prince of Wales, an island north of Australia.¹²² The chief

¹²⁰ Innes and Evans, *Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹²¹ Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Related to British Affairs in Malabar, op. cit.*, pp. 342-43.

¹²² K K N Kurup, *Modern Kerala, op. cit.*, p. 66.

architect behind the final operations against the Raja and his men was Thomas Harvey Baber, a young and energetic British officer. In early 1804, Baber came as Sub-collector of Tellichery.¹²³ It was to T. H Baber and the Police *kolkar* organized by Captain Watson in 1800, that the chief credit of stamping out the rebellion was due.¹²⁴ The army under Captain Clapham also had a key role in the operation. Baber initiated a policy of holding local people responsible for the maintenance of peace. When Baber took the charge of Wyanad, he conducted a tour throughout the district to enable him to form a judgment of the real disposition of the community, and how far they can be relied upon. On this tour Baber realized that many of the inhabitants were in favour of the Company, but not dared to openly support for the fear of Raja and his men. But many land lords and ordinary people were still supporting the Raja and his rebellious activities. Joseph Skaria listed names of more than 40 rebel chiefs who supported Pazhassi Raja in his rebellion against the British.¹²⁵ These chiefs and their followers conducted isolated operations against the Company's forces and men. Baber had doubts about the credibility of some *kolkar* stationed at Manantana. Most of them were raised by Captain Osborne, the Commander in Chief of the Provinces of Malabar and Canara and Captain Watson.¹²⁶ As the Commanding officer had the sole control over this *kolkar*, Watson could not command them and they made nexus with the rebels and hence T. H Baber recommended disbanding and sending them home immediately. In a letter, Baber stated that 'there was a combination of *sheristadars*, *parbutties* (*pravarthikkar*), *kolkar*- police and revenue, merchants and inhabitants all leagued against the British.¹²⁷ Baber warned through a letter to the Collector that care should be taken to prevent the agents from enlisting into the force. The warning

¹²³ T. P. Sankarankutty Nair, *A Tragic Decade in Kerala History*, Kerala Historical Society, Thiruvananthapuram, 1977, p. 17.

¹²⁴ Innes and Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹²⁵ Joseph Scaria, *Pazhassi Rekhakal*, *op. cit.*, pp. xlii-xliii.

¹²⁶ Letter from Baber to Principal Collector dated 27th October 1804, MCF, Vol. 2275, pp. 127-131, RAK.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

was after the arrest of eight *kolkar* and a *subedar* on suspicion of communicating with the rebels.¹²⁸ Baber decided to send out from their estates and from the district, those who were suspected as supporters of the rebels. By this step Baber intended two things. First was to cut off all assistance given by these people to the Raja and his men. The second was to give a warning to the people, how the supporters of the rebels would be treated.

Immediately after taking charge as the Sub-Collector of North Malabar, Baber chalked out plans to suppress the rebellions of the region. For achieving his aims, he utilised the service of the *kolkar* in an effective manner. In February 1804, he was busily engaged with the *kolkar* in suppressing an extensive rising in the jungly portions of Chirakkal under the Kalliyad Nambiar and the followers of Pazhassi Raja.¹²⁹ The secret service of the *kolkar* helped him to find that the *mappila* people of Irikkur, Kallayi and Venkat were supplying the rebels with arms and ammunitions in exchange of pepper. The *kolkar* with the support of the regular troops under Colonel Montresor dispersed the rebels. To block all assistance to the rebels from the natives, Baber introduced a policy to hold the people residing in the locality responsible for giving information about the rebels. They were also prevented from providing food and shelter to the rebels. It had good effects because of the vigilance of the *kolkar*. Many rebels were taken or killed by the people. Further, with the support of the *kolkar* Baber effectuated a complete disarmament of the rebel areas of Chirakkal and a lot of arms like muskets, knives and swords were confiscated. The policy employed by Baber in the lower country to disperse the rebels was implemented by Colonel Macleod in Wyanad and had positive results.

During the initial months of his operations, the *kolkar* and the people of Chirakkal in concert arrested three important rebel leaders and eight of their

¹²⁸ Letter from Northern Sub Collector to Principal Collector dated 26th March 1804, MCF Vol. 2383, pp. 348-351.

¹²⁹ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 543.

followers. In September 1805, a band of *kolkar*, after an all night march through the forest without considering the heavy rain and attack of the leeches, reached sixty yards near the camp of Pazhassi Raja. But the obstacles in the forest delayed their reach in the tents and it helped the escape of the rebels.¹³⁰ The *kolkar* party captured many arms, jewelry and money from the camp. The troops and the *kolkar* constantly moved through the forest, encounters had taken place and casualties occurred on both sides. Thalakkal Chandu, the *kurichia* leader was captured in one of these encounters. The show down of the operation of Baber and his team against the Raja was on November 30th 1805.¹³¹ The Raja was killed on that day in an encounter with the troops and *kolkar* under the direction of Baber. The incident was thus described by Wilson, 'the disturbances in Wyanad and Cotiote (Kottayam) were at last terminated by the death of the Pychy Raja, who was surprised and killed on the 30th November 1805 by a party of the 1st battalion 4th regiment under Captain Clapham, supported by 100 armed peons (*kolkar*) under the direction of T. H Baber, the Sub Collector who had accompanied the detachment.'¹³² Wilson in his description stressed on the service of the army in killing Pazhassi Raja. But the British administrators and historians explained much about the diplomatic involvement of Babar in the operation. Baber received gratitude of the government for his services and a sum of 2, 500 pagodas as reward. The peace of the district had not been disturbed very seriously since then except in consequence of the *Mappila* outrages.

Observations of the European Officers

During the period of Pazhassi resistances, all officers and administrators who served in Malabar had no difference of opinion about the positive impact of the service of the *kolkar* regiment. Watson's *kolkar* deployed in South Malabar

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

¹³¹ The detailed picture about the moves done by Baber along with selected number of troops and *kolkar* was explained by him in his letter to the Principal Collector of Malabar dated 31st December 1805. See William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, pp. 547-54.

¹³² W. J Wilson, *History of the Madras Army*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-49.

during the period of 1800-02 to operate against the *mappila* agitators were mostly *nair* members from most affluent families. This highly mobile group of irregulars under a man like Watson, who had acquired intimate knowledge of the people and the country by his long experience of Malabar, was able to defeat *mappila* insurgents in a very few years in South Malabar.¹³³ The service of the *kolkar* in South Malabar helped the Company to achieve the aim of reinstating the high caste Hindu *janmi* chiefs to their landed estates. Restoration of Hindu landlords to their old position was one of the most important aims of the company for which they were trying from the commencement of its rule in Malabar. By considering the services of these native agents for the maintenance of British rule, most of the officers and administrators had made positive comments on the *kolkar*.

Captain Watson, the chief architect of the *kolkar* force had great respect towards them and their service. Many of his letters to the higher authorities testify his attitude towards these native servants of the Company. He always argued for better pay and allowances to the *kolkar*. The Board of Revenue, quoting the remarks of Military Auditor, directed the Collector of Malabar to control the expenses incurred by the *kolkar*.¹³⁴ But Watson justified it and submitted his remarks upon the observations made by the Auditor General regarding the expenses incurred in connection with the police corps of Malabar. He argued that circumstances in Malabar were different from other parts of the Presidency and the present method of equipping the *kolkar* was calculated to keep up the efficiency of such a useful body of men.¹³⁵

Robert Rickards, the late Principal Collector of Malabar in his report dated 20th February 1804 highlighted the importance of the *kolkar* in establishing peace in the district.¹³⁶ He opposed the appearance of large force in the rebel districts. He had no faith in mere marching of the troops to subdue the inhabitants in the

¹³³ Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis, op. cit.*, p. 112.

¹³⁴ Letter dated 4th March 1804, MCF 2383, pp. 245-48, RAK

¹³⁵ Letter dated 18th April 1804, *Ibid.*, pp. 425-33, RAK

¹³⁶ MCF Vol. 2558, RAK.

affected areas. On the contrary, the troops should remain stationary in the rebel districts. The civil authority would take steps to establish peace and the troops would extend support to them if required. The civil authority must use the *kolkar* for the submission of the rebels. Rickards recommended to the government to consider the substitution of the regular troops with the *kolkar* by placing them under 'good management'.¹³⁷ According to Rickards, *kolkar* were the cheapest troops available for employment and found the most serviceable and active in prosecuting combinations against the state and pursuing small parties of fugitive bandits. Rickards, in this report appreciated the service and efficiency of the Northern *kolkar* and recommended to place them under the orders of the commanding officer of the Province.

Wilson, the Sub Collector of Calicut in a letter stressed the cooperation and cordial service of the revenue servants with the military officers and troops serving in the district for the preservation of peace.¹³⁸ According to his direction the native servants gave prompt intelligence, particularly to Captain Watson and other officers commanding the troops or irregulars in the district, and whatever other aids they could afford to expedite their successful operations in suppressing disturbances.¹³⁹ He appreciated the service of the police *kolkar* to the civil authority in their attempts to the preservation of peace. As it was a time of shortage of food grains, Wilson gave special attention to ensure the supply of rice to the police *kolkar*.

Macleod, the first Principal Collector of Malabar also had good impression about the service of *kolkar*. When Watson prepared and submitted a new pay scale for the *kolkar*, the Collector recommended and forwarded it to the Board of Revenue without any reconsideration. Macleod directly witnessed the service of the *kolkar*, when the whole province was rose in revolt against the revenue and monetary reforms introduced by him. Rickards, the successor of Macleod also had good opinion about the *kolkar*. It was during his time that the number of *kolkar*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, Para 26, pp. 39-40.

¹³⁸ Dairy of Principal Collector Thomas Warden, 1804, MCF, Vol. 2385, pp. 17-20, RAK.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

increased up to 3000. He convinced Robert Clive, the Governor, the need for increasing the number of *kolkar* under Watson in Wyanad; otherwise, the district would plunge into the hands of the rebels.¹⁴⁰

Warden, who succeeded Rickards as Principal Collector and continued in that post till 1816, also praised the service of the *kolkar* in many occasions. It was during his time the new and uniformed pay scale was introduced for the *kolkar*. During his period (1804-16) the service of the *kolkar* were greatly helped in maintaining law and order in the district. Due to the end of the rebellions and insurrections of Malabar, Warden limited the number of *kolkar* into 2000. According to him, the service of Watson's Corps was highly advantageous to the British to acquire the permanency of authority over the southern taluks of the districts.¹⁴¹ Watson had brought his Corps, with a short period of time, to a state of efficiency which called forth the employment of its services not as a body of police peons, but as military men to act in concert with regular troops. William Thackeray, in a report to the Board of Revenue, emphasized the qualities like courage and fidelity of the *nair* people, by whom the *kolkar* corps was chiefly composed.¹⁴² The bravery, fidelity, and patience showed by the *kolkar* police under a most harassing and ungrateful service in their native land against their own countrymen was appreciated by many other administrators and officers of British Malabar.

¹⁴⁰ MCF 2314, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-29.

¹⁴¹ Letter to the President and members of Board of Revenue dated 10th July 1804, para 6, RAK.

¹⁴² Extract from the Report of Thackeray dated 8th September 1807, MCF, Vol. 2559, p. 7, RAK.

Chapter 4

Recruitment, Service and Payment

Introduction

The English East India Company started its rule in India from Bengal and all reforms taken by them had emanated from Bengal and subsequently implemented in other occupied territories as well. Among them, the police administration of British India was the innovation of Lord Cornwallis.¹ It was during his tenure as governor general, a regulation for the police administration of Bengal was implemented.² This regulation made police under the exclusive charge of the government and prohibited the *zamindar* and land lords from maintaining police force or similar establishments. While implementing the new regulation Cornwallis completely ignored the role of the native institutions and establishments for the administration of justice. British top level officers like collectors and magistrates blamed the Indian *zamindar* class and native institutions for the lawlessness and high rate of crimes in Bengal. None of these officers were so broad-minded to make a comparison of the revenue administration introduced by the Company in its territories and the consequent lawlessness. The principle of 'civilizing mission' chalked out this type of thinking in the minds of European officers.³ The implementation of the new system of police administration aroused an attitude of non-cooperation among the landed gentry. Large scale discharge of *zamindari* police and low level policemen increased the volume of crime and endangered the

¹ M. B Chande, *The Police in India*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1997, p. 69.

² Regulation No. XXII of 1793 titled, 'Regulation for the Police of Collectorships of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa'. By this regulation the Darogah system was accepted by the Company.

³ Civilizing mission usually conjures up the idea of European colonialism. In the nineteenth and twentieth century era of imperialism, the civilizing mission was an ever-shifting set of ideas and practices that was used to justify and legitimize the establishment and continuation of overseas colonies. For the British Raj in India, the civilizing mission meant like bringing the benefits of British culture to the sub continent in the form of free trade and capitalism, law, order and good government. For details see Carey A. Watt, *The Relevance and Complexity of Civilizing Mission 1800-2010*, in Michael Mann and Carey A. Watt (ed.), *Civilizing Mission in Colonial and Post Colonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development*, Anthem Press, London, 2011, pp. 1-34.

situation of public order in the British occupied areas.⁴ Hence, the successors of Cornwallis were not adamant to implement the same policy in other British provinces like Madras. Generally, the role of the police in any state was to protect the life and property of the people. But the police force of British India gave priority to the protection of the British rule. Thus, the organization, recruitment, deployment and payment of the police force were based on these aims. Recruitment to police force in Malabar also was not an exception to this.

The Malabar District in the Madras Presidency

Malabar was entirely different from all other districts of Madras province. K. M Panikkar opines that Malabar forms a single geographical and ethnical unit preserving in many ways a uniformity of customs and social organization which mark it off as a separate entity in India.⁵ The ecological and social characteristics of Malabar differ fundamentally from other districts of Madras Presidency. The geographical peculiarities and climate of the land caused for the evolution of its own system of agriculture. Human settlements in the districts were also different from other parts of Madras. Unlike in other districts of South India, people in Malabar villages were living in scattered areas. In a letter by C. Pelly, the member in the Board of Revenue to J. D Bourdillon, Secretary to government, informed that 'the village system does not exist in Malabar as in other parts of India, the people do not congregate generally in villages, but are scattered and reside on their farms and in their gardens'.⁶ Hence, the system evolved by the British, for the administration of justice, revenue and police, could not be implemented in its pure form. The limited size of Malabar in geographical terms had limited its scope for action. The geographical limitations had its effect on the economic, social, religious and political structure of the district. The geographical barriers like hills, mountains

⁴ M. B Chande, *The Police in India, op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁵ K. M Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, D. B Taraporevala Sons & Co., Bombay, 1929, p. 1.

⁶ *Correspondence Relating to the Revisions Proposed in the Village Revenue Establishments of the Madras Presidency*, Part I, Gants Brothers, Madras, 1867, p. 950.

and rivers restricted the power of the rulers of Malabar into relatively small areas. But the intensity of his power was high within this limited area.⁷ It was this limited size and relative isolation helped to preserve the pre-colonial structures of Malabar and well suited to small units of power. Spencer, Smee and Walker in the concluding paragraph of their report to the Madras government noted that they reached at the conclusion from the 'isolated politics of a provincial administration'.⁸ As a consequence, the rulers had a free hand in political and economic matters and it marked the fundamental difference between the political units of Malabar and other parts of India. Unlike in other parts of India, the soil of Malabar was not so alluvial or fertile. Thus, the resource of both the rulers and the inhabitants was limited. Limited fertility of the land made the people hardworking. Further, reaction of Malabar to the invasion of foreign forces was also in different from other districts. The defense of the *nair* militia against Hyder Ali and Tipu Sulthan had no equalizer in South India. The communal polarization witnessed in Malabar on the eve of Company rule was unknown to other parts of Madras presidency. It was in this context that the Company administrators chalked out plans to rule the district. It was quite natural that the political, religious and economic factors were reflected in the recruitment of natives by the Company for its various departments.

Recruitment of the *kolkar* Force

The first decade of the nineteenth century witnessed many reforms in the administrative structure of Malabar. Most of the reforms were introduced with the aim of curbing the power and influence of the anti-British elements in the district. The European officers, troops and the Indian *sepoys* were not enough to meet the situation. As the newly created Watson's police corps was a success, the Company decided to enhance its strength and agents were deputed to get recruits for the force. But enlisting the locals to the police force was not an easy task. At that time

⁷ Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar 1790-1805*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁸ J. Spencer, J. Smee and A. Walker, *A Report on the Administration of Malabar*, *op. cit.*, para. 179.

a major section of the inhabitants had soft corner towards the rebels and they secretly gave food, shelter and other assistance to rebels. Some others feared that the support to the foreign government may endanger their life and property. It was at this circumstances that the government decided to depute locally reputed persons who were supporting the interests of the Company, for recruiting men to the government service including police force.⁹ Northern division faced acute shortage of recruits. In July 1803, the Principal Collector informed the Sub collector of Northern Division to direct all *parbutti* officers (*pravarthikkar*) and other native officers of the division, not to obstruct the agents deputed by the government for the recruitment of the natives.¹⁰ During the first phase of the Pazhassi rebellion itself, the Commissioners sought the help of local chiefs for recruiting men to help the British troops. Kutaly Nair of Payyurmala recruited a force from his region and served as its *mooppan* or head. Swaminath (*shamnauth* in records) Pattar helped the Company to recruit a huge crowd from the regions of *samoothiri*.¹¹

Another strategy used by the British to meet the shortage was to appoint the local chiefs or lords to recruit and maintain armed men under their command and function as per the direction of the Company officers. The Company paid monthly remuneration to the Chief and the armed force maintained by him.¹² This system was advantageous to the Company in many ways. It reduced the expense for the defense of Malabar. The Company expected that recruitment by the local chiefs and princes to the armed force would be more effective than the recruitment by the Company officials. Most of the men under the local chiefs were hereditary followers of their local masters for a long period. Thus, the Company

⁹ Letter dated 26th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, *op. cit.*, p. 123, RAK.

¹⁰ The government deputed seven persons to recruit 700 men for native service from Chirakkal. The agents who deputed for the recruitment were (1) Eramballa Chandoo, (2) Kottaka Kelloo, (3) Paneentetta Koren, (4) Manjee Chandan, (5) Walachetore Koren, (6) Wengy Rarepen, (7) Warrady Komen.

¹¹ Dr. K K N Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal* (Mal.), 2nd ed., Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 1988, p. 47.

¹² Letter from Principal Collector to Commanding Officer dated 28th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, *op. cit.*, p. 133. In this letter Collector Rickards enquired from Col. Montresor, the Commanding Officer of Malabar and Canara, about the non availability of the previous records of payments made to Tandoor Chandoo of Wyanad and certain armed men entertained under him.

expected more integrity and dedication from this team than the armed men working directly under the control of the European officers. The loyalty towards their local masters will indirectly contribute to the promotion of the interests of the Company in Malabar. The influence of the chiefs and princes over the inhabitants of concerned areas and the acquaintance with every nook and corner of the region would have an electric effect in quelling the rebellion and to bring back peace and order.¹³ Correct and speedy information and quick actions were possible through this system. The newly recruited men under the local chiefs and other respectable natives also had given training like the Police *kolkar* of Watson and so they were more disciplined than the previous native troops.¹⁴ The service of the native chiefs and other respectable persons of Malabar were always welcomed by the Company. In 1793, native *diwan* chiefs were appointed to help the supervisors and superintendents.¹⁵ In the judicial department local *darogah* or native judges were appointed subordinate to the provincial courts of the superintendents. Robert Rickards suggested for the employment of respectable natives of Malabar, most of them were in the service of past administrators, in preference to foreign Brahmins. It will be a source of conciliation and attachment.¹⁶

The *kolkaran* as a revenue staff was appointed by local chiefs who were deputed by the British for the collection of revenue. They worked as the agents of their masters in matters of communication, intelligence, revenue collection and protection.¹⁷ In the village level, there were *pravarthikkar* or village officers, *menon* or accountants and *kolkar* or peons for the purpose of collecting revenue. The

¹³ The influence of the local leaders upon the inhabitants was experienced by the Company during and after the attack on Panamaram Fort in 1802 by Edachanna Kungan Nair and his men. It was a one sided attack and the British could not defend it. After the incident Kungan Nair issued a proclamation to the inhabitants to meet him on a certain day at a temple near Manandavadi. About 5000 men were responded to his call and met there. For details see W. J. Wilson, *History of the Madras Army, op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁴ The 'Malabar militia' an irregular force and undisciplined, serving under the native chiefs, was disbanded in June 1801.

¹⁵ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

¹⁶ Report of Robert Rickards dated 20th February 1804, para. 11, p. 8, MCF Vol. 2558, RAK

¹⁷ Joseph Skariah (ed.), *Talasseri Rekhakal* (Mal.), DC Books, Kottayam, 1996, pp. 12, 30-32, 411-12

pravarthikkar later became the *adhikari*. The *kolkar* travelled through all parts of the villages to collect dues and deliver demand notices.¹⁸ As an agent of their masters, the *kolkaran* was omnipresent in villages. The village headmen depended *kolkaran* to get latest information about his village. Unlike the *pravarthikkar* and *menon*, the *kolkaran* was familiar with every places and persons of the village. Though the *pravarthikkar* was the head of the village and *menon*, the officer in charge of accounts, the service of *kolkaran* was inevitable for both of them to complete their duties. When the administration of Malabar was handed over to the Company in 1792, steps were taken to systematize every branches of government. By the closing years of eighteenth century the experiment of revenue collection under the supervision of the native chief and *raja* people proved a failure. The duty was directly taken by the government in major parts of the Province. Consequently, village administration became more systematic and the *pravathikkar-menon-kolkaran* trio became an inevitable and inter-dependent system in villages.

The network of *kolkar* in the villages and their role in collection of, not only the revenue of concerned area but information about the pulses of the people was soon identified by the government. No other native servants in the company service had such a close contact with the inhabitants and knowledge about the socio-political and economic condition of the region. Realization of this fact prompted the Company to direct Watson to recruit and train a troop from among the *kolkar*. Most of the *kolkar* were members of reputed families and proved their loyalty to the British. What they needed to facilitate revenue collection and prevent the rebellious activities and gang robberies was right for possessing arms and training in the use of it. The training under Watson was enough to transform them into an able local force to assist the British troops in all its activities in Malabar. By the beginning of the nineteenth century *kolkar* became an inevitable part of the British native servants in the departments of revenue and law and order.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Pay and Allowances

The salary and allowances for a post under any government decide the attraction of the post. As mentioned earlier, the changed political situation in Malabar led to unemployment among the people. The end of the power and prestige of the local feudatories forced them to disband their forces, palace servants, revenue servants and other important officers. Many others lost the patronage of the *raja* and chiefs. The commercial regulations of the Company were not favourable to the native merchants and many of them quit the job. These newly unemployed categories of inhabitants were the source of recruits to the Company service. Most of them were ready to work at low salary. Further, the employment under the British was a factor of prestige than its monetary benefits. Designations like *sheristadar*, *tahsildar*, *mukhyasta*, *pravarthikkar*, and *menon* were enough for many men of the reputed families of Malabar. The *kolkaran* was a servant in the lowest rank among the native servants. There was no uniform salary for them. Due to the peculiar nature of the duties of *kolkar* their payments were made both from the revenue and police charges.¹⁹ Pearson in a report remarked that out of the 330 *kolkar* employed in the Central Division, only 191 were paid from the revenue charges.²⁰ Captain Watson through a letter informed to Rickards, the new Collector, about the proposal for the salary and allowances of the *kolkar* during the time of Macleod, previous Collector.²¹ The letter was Watson's response to the enquiries made by Principal Collector about the pay and allowances of the police *kolkar* under him. In 1803, Rickards directed the sub collectors to divide each *taluk* into *parbuttiships* or villages under *parbutti* and appoint one *menon* and three *kolkar* to assist him. No fixed pay was suggested by the Collector, but there was a general direction that the total expense of revenue collection in the villages should not exceed five per cent of the *jumma*.²² In Polanad *taluk* it was fixed as fifty gold *fanam* to the *parbutti*, twenty five to the *menon* and 8 to *Kolkars*. When Watson formed his 500 *kolkar* before the coming of Macleod as the Principal

¹⁹ Dairies of the Sub Collector Central Division 1804, MCF Vol. 2615, p. 43, RAK

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Letter dated 1st July 1803, MCF 2229, pp. 3-7, RAK.

²² MCF Vol. 2313, pp. 7-9, RAK.

Collector of Malabar, their pay was 12 *veeray fanam* per month. The *kolkar* at that time was stationed at the *mappila* districts. The government supplied rice to the *kolkar* at cheaper rates to the whole year. When Macleod took the charge of the district, he decided to extend the service of the *kolkar* to the whole of Southern and Northern divisions and he recommended to the government to increase their pay and allow *batta* in extraordinary occasions. The pay and allowances proposed by Watson were recommended by Macleod and sent to the government for final approval. He recommended for eight companies of police *kolkar* in the following pattern.²³

Proposed Number	Designation	Pay in <i>VeerayFanam</i>
1	<i>Subedar</i>	75
1	<i>Jamedar</i>	60
2	<i>Havildar</i>	30
2	<i>Naiques</i>	23
48	Privates/ <i>kolkar</i> @ ½ <i>fanam/day</i>	15
Total		203

The statistics given in the table shows that all officers above the *kolkar* had monthly pay, but to the *kolkar*, pay was proposed per day. It reveals that all *kolkar* were not permanent staff under the Company. They were recruited and paid for the days they actually worked. This was to reduce the expense of the government. This system had been practiced previously by the British at Thalasseri. Besides the regulars, the British recruited many *nair* and *thiyyar* as fighters on demand and gave them arms but no pay or allowances. They received special festival allowances on occasions of *onam* and *vishu*, two important festivals of the Hindus of Malabar.²⁴ It was introduced to meet the emergency situations without incurring a regular military expenditure.

For the government, police *kolkar* were needed only when there were problems of law and order. So a minimum number was maintained as permanent force and the remaining were recruited regionally when needed. The strength of

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁴ K K N Kurup, *History of the Tellicherry Factory 1683-1794*, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

the *kolkar* varied according to the needs of the situation. In certain situations, some *kolkar* had no duty to perform. A statement of 1817 reveals that out of 909 *kolkar* in Malabar, 145 had no employment.²⁵ Some of them were under suspension. Further there were instances of unauthorized absence and escape by the *kolkar* when the work was perilous. According to the proposal of Watson the total expense for 8 Companies of *kolkar* and related establishment is given in the table.²⁶

Proposed Number for 8 Companies	Designation	Pay in VeerayFanam
8	<i>subedar</i>	600
8	<i>jamedar</i>	480
16	<i>havildar</i>	480
16	<i>naiques</i>	368
384	Privates/ <i>kolkar</i> @ ½ <i>fanam</i> /day or 15/month	5760
3	Drums @23 <i>fanams</i>	69
3	Fifes @ 23 <i>fanams</i>	69
1	Doctor	75
1	English Writer	175
Total		8075
@12 ¼ in Star <i>Pagodas</i>	59	@14. 75 Coimbatore rate Star <i>Pagodas</i>
		546

Captain Watson, though in charge of the police *kolkar*, allowed the pay and *batta* of a Major from the paymaster's office.²⁷ The men in his force had not sanctioned the increased pay proposed, but had provided a *seir* of rice per day in the event of their being sent away from the Southern districts of Malabar.²⁸

²⁵ Letter dated 4th June 1817, MCF Vol. 2284, pp. 140-41, RAK.

²⁶ MCF Vol. 2229, *op. cit.*, p. 6, RAK.

²⁷ Though Watson was the head of a police force and received the salary of a Major, he was considered as a civil servant. When the military authority complained about the insubordination of Watson, the Principal Collector communicated to the government that the police force was under the control of the Collector and Watson was considered as a civil servant ever since his appointment. See MCF Vol. 2324, pp. 211-28, RAK

²⁸ MCF 2228, *op. cit.*

Though designation was same, many duties were done by the *kolkar*. Rate of pay depended upon the job assigned to a *kolkaran*. The geography and risk factor in the area of work were also considered for fixing pay. Availability of recruits was also a factor for fixing the rate. In some occasions *kolkar* were recruited locally to cope with the situation.²⁹ They were not a part of the regular *kolkar*. In such occasions pay was fixed by the authorities according to the urgency of the enlistment. Pay varied according to the *taluks* and even in the same *taluk* there were different pay rates. In 1803, the pay proposed for *kolkar* peons of the Sub Collector's *cutchery* in Cochin was 1. 18 star *pagoda* and in the Judicial and Police establishment it was 1. 6 star *pagoda*.³⁰ In the same year the pay fixed for 33 *kolkar* of the Polanad division of North Malabar was 8 gold *fanams* per month.³¹ Canolly in a statement submitted to the Special Commission in 1852 mentioned about the different pay rates existed in Malabar in the years between 1841 and 1851.³²

As concerned to the revenue *kolkar*, there were village level appointments at first under the supervision of *pravarthikkar* and later under the *adhikari*. In the case of revenue *kolkar* also, pay rate was different in different *taluk* units. The pay rate for the *kolkar* in the *taluk* divisions of North Malabar during the period of Macleod shows this difference. In the *taluks* units of Pynad, Pyoormalla, Kutyadi and Koormanad, the pay of *kolkar* was one star *pagoda* and six *fanams* per month. While in the *taluk* of Tamracheri (Thamarasserri) and Polway it was only one star *pagoda*.³³ In Polanad, the pay of the *kolkar* was eight *fanam* per month. The appointment order of the *pravarthikkar* of Polanad division included details like the

²⁹ In a letter dated 28th March 1804, Captain Watson requested for at least 130 additional *kolkar* to cope with the rebels who were dispersed into small parties and committed several acts of hostility against the native servants and the well disposed persons. For details see MCF Vol. 2383, pp. 358-59, RAK.

³⁰ MCF Vol. 8684, p. 107, RAK.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

³² There were 11 rates of pay from 2 to 7 rupees for police and revenue *kolkar* that existed in Malabar during these years. See for details the table dated 21st April 1852, enclosed in the MCF Vol. 7336, *op. cit.*

³³ MCF Vol. 2229, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

names and pay for the *menon* and *kolkar*. Later the different pay rates in these taluk units were made uniform in conformity with the order of the Collector.³⁴ The *kolkar* were appointed in the *cutcheri* of the Principal Collector, Sub Collectors and various districts with the designation of peons.³⁵ They did all duties in their offices including travelling to courts and villages as messengers and agents of their supervising officers and the government. In the *cutcheri* also there was no uniformity of pay.

After 1858, the duties and functions of the government were greatly expanded and there was corresponding increase in the duties of the *kolkar*. For every department, villages were the basic units. The village officers were responsible to collect and provide information needed for the departments concerned. The *adhikari* had to do many works with the departments of police, court, income tax, births and deaths, health and sanitation, railway, agriculture, etc. The *adhikari* mainly depended *kolkar* to collect great number of information from villages. The service of the *kolkar* was appreciated by the European officers in many of their letters and reports. The need for increasing their pay was also recommended. In 1860, the average pay of the *kolkar* was two and half rupees. In 1861, Grant, the Collector of Malabar recommended to increase the pay of *kolkar* from rupees two and half to 5.³⁶ The proposal of the Collector was approved and recommended to the government by Pelly, the member in the Board of Revenue, who was appointed as Commission to recommend the revision of village establishments in the Presidency of Madras.

The government decided to meet the expense for the village establishments from the income from the villages itself. For this, an Act was passed in 1864 providing for the collection of an additional tax from the village tax payers.³⁷ The

³⁴ Order dated 8th June 1803, see *Ibid.*, p. 210.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

³⁶ Letter from Collector Grant to Pelly, dated 25th July 1861, para 11.

³⁷ Village Tax Act- Act No. IV of 1864.

money collected through this Act was specially used for the payment of salaries to the five categories of village servants.³⁸ Henceforth the Collectors, while demanding better pay for the *kolkar* and other village servants, began to quote the income, expenditure and balance sheet of village fund.

In the 1870s, the government of Madras was seriously thinking about the strengthening of village establishments and increasing the salaries of village servants.³⁹ J. H. Garstin, the second member in the Board of Revenue was appointed to submit proposal for the revision of the village establishment. In his report, Garstin praised Malabar as the district where the village establishments were working in the most efficient manner.⁴⁰ But even in Malabar, he says, the village servants especially the *kolkar* were not well paid. The district officers recommended him to increase the pay of *adhikari* and *menon* to 12 rupees each and of *kolkar* from rupees five to eight. Garstin agreed with the proposal of the district authorities and submitted it to the government. But it was not implemented immediately.

By the close of the first decade of the twentieth century, the pay of *kolkar* in all *taluk* divisions of Malabar except in Wynad was five rupees per month. In Wynad they were paid each a hill allowance of one rupee in addition to their salary of five rupees.⁴¹ In 1912 an order was issued by the government to increase the number of *kolkar* in Wynad *taluk*.⁴² In the same year order was issued to increase the pay of *kolkar* in Cochin *taluk*.⁴³ In 1926, the Board of Revenue had sanctioned the increased pay for the village staffs of Malabar. As per that the pay

³⁸ *Supplement to the Malabar Government Gazette*, (here after MGG), 31st December 1864.

³⁹ J. H. Garstin, *Report on the Revision of the Revenue Establishment in the Madras Presidency*, Government Press, Madras, 1883, para 5, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, para 11, p. 3.

⁴¹ Letter from C. A. Innes, the acting Collector of Malabar, dated 16th September 1912.

⁴² G. O N. 886 dated 25th March 1912, Revenue Department, R. Dis 5 20/05/12, Bundle No. 112, Serial No. 4, RAK.

⁴³ G. O No. 3445 dated 15th November 1912, Revenue Department, R. Dis 18/12 dated 21/12/12, Bundle No. 117, Serial No. 13, RAK.

of *kolkar* was raised to nine rupees and eight *annas*. The pay of *adhipari* officials also was raised to thirteen rupees and that of the *menon* and assistant *menon*, to fourteen rupees.⁴⁴ The British administrators were much concerned about the service of the *kolkar* and so they always took care in their pay and allowances.

Caste Representation in the Recruitment of *Kolkar*

Religion and caste were important factors considered by the British in its recruitment and employment of the natives all throughout India. The deep rooted religious differences and caste system prevalent in India was the base of the 'divide and rule' policy of the British. In Malabar also they exploited the existing situation of religious tensions developed after the Mysorean conquest. The land reforms introduced by the Mysore Sulthans made most of the *mappila* cultivators of Malabar as proprietors of land and tax was directly collected from them. On the other side the upper caste Hindus like *namboothiri* and *nair* communities were deprived of their privileges and proprietorship on agricultural lands. The loss of power and property forced them to take arms against the new government. After the third Anglo-Mysore war, certain rigorous measures of Tipu Sulthan to subdue the *nair* chiefs worsened the situation. Many of them surrendered. Those local chieftains and *raja* people, refused to surrender were continued their resistance with their *nair* militia. The situation was favourable to the East India Company, when they were preparing to eliminate the threat of Tipu Sulthan from South India.

In 1790, Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General of British India, sent instructions to the Governor of Bombay to encourage the *nair* chiefs of Malabar to throw off their dependence on Tipu Sulthan and to engage on the part of the Company.⁴⁵ It was 'on condition that if the *nair* men will submit to be directed by the British in carrying on the war against Tipu, they will do their utmost to render to the *nair* men in future entirely independent of him.'⁴⁶ After the conclusion of

⁴⁴ B. P No. 46 para 2 of 3/8/1926, R. Dis 10158/30 dtd 07/08/1931, Bundle No. 348, Serial No. 17, RAK.

⁴⁵ Report of Spencer, Smee and Walker dated 28th June 1801, *op. cit.*, para 26, p. 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

peace the Company would retain them upon reasonable terms under their protection. According to these instructions the Chief and factors of Tellichery concluded treaty with the *raja* of Chirakkal and Kadathanad as they agreed to be an ally of the Company in its war against Tipu. In a military operation during the third Anglo-Mysore war, the troops under Major Dow at Tellicherry were assisted by 1500 Kottayam *nair* men and 1300 of Chirakkal troops.⁴⁷ The loyalty showed by the *nair* men in Company's war against Tipu reflected in all their future recruitments for the administration of the district. When the Joint Commissioners were appointed for the administration of the province and settlement with the local rulers, they mainly depended on the sources received from the local Hindu chiefs and princes. When the Commissioners attempted to reinstate the Hindu landlords in their old positions, there was natural resistance from the Muslim population. They feared that their control over the land and privilege of direct payment of tax to the government would be lost as per the new settlements. Other interests of certain *mappila* chiefs also contributed for the resistance.⁴⁸ The enmity of the Muslim chiefs and peasants towards the British, the Hindu land lords and princes led to continuous rebellions and outbreaks in the province. The activities of the *mappila* protesters like gang robbery, killing of Hindu lords and chiefs, confiscation of their property, and attempt on the life of British officers forced the British to keep them away from Company service.⁴⁹ But, as an experiment, the company appointed certain *mappila* chiefs like Manjeri Attan Gurukkal and Unni Mutta as agents of revenue collection with police powers. But they also proved to be disloyal to the Company soon. The *mappila* resistance in the southern *taluk* divisions was so severe that the British officers could not complete their survey.

⁴⁷ N. Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power in Malabar 1664-1799*, CHUGH Publications, Allahabad, 1979, p. 218.

⁴⁸ There were also cases of individual *Mappila* tenants like Unni Mutta and Attan Gurukkal, whose opposition to the reinstating of Hindu and consequently British rule was based upon more ambitious considerations than the control of small plots or the payment of *pattam* obligations to their *janmi* landlords. See for details, Stephen F. Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-91.

⁴⁹ After the death of Pazhassi Raja, it was the *mappila* people who led the forces opposing the British rule in Malabar until the twentieth century. One exception was the uprising of Kochi in 1809. For details see Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends*, Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi, 1992, p. 108.

In all throughout the history of the British rule in Malabar, they preferred the Hindus to the *Mappila* people. The British administrators had positive impression about different castes of Hindu religion. Many of them spent a lot of pages in their writings to describe the qualities of *namboothiri*, *nair* and *thiyyar* of Malabar. John W Wye, in a report stated that the *nair* people of Malabar were hereditary military nobility, who always proceeded, whether on business or pleasure, with arms in their hands.⁵⁰ He continued that in the Southern division of Malabar, the *namboothiri*, *nair* and *Thiyyar* were the best and quietest subjects and he had never found any difficulty in managing them. They were obedient and pay the dues to the government without trouble. He had negative opinion about the *mappila* people of South Malabar. Similar opinions about the Hindu castes were shared by many other Europeans and it reflected in the recruitment of the British native civil servants, including the *kolkar*.

When the Wyanad rebellion was challenging the administrative machinery of the Company, Thomas Warden, the Collector, proposed to recruit the *kurichyar* and *kurumbar* to the *kolkar* force.⁵¹ Warden suggested appointing 150 members from these tribal castes to the *kolkar* force and the Governor of Fort St. George sanctioned it. The Collector made this proposal to the Board because of the situation of Wyanad. A major section of the *kurichyar* and *kurumbar* were supporting the rebels in their operations against the British. In order to check it, the government wanted to get the loyalty and support from the members of those castes. Caste consideration was a priority in the recruitment of all posts.⁵² The following table with special reference to the castes of recruits to the posts of revenue and police *kolkar* and other revenue servants is a clear evidence for the priority for Hindus in Company's recruitments.⁵³

⁵⁰ John W. Wye, *A Report on the Southern Division of Malabar dated 10th February 1801*, Collectorate Press, Calicut, 1907, p. 6.

⁵¹ MCF 2331, pp. 234-35, RAK

⁵² In 1803, there were 11 *hoobli* units in Polanad division of North Wyanad. All the 11 *pravarthikkar* of these *hobli* units were *nair* men. See MCF Vol. 8684, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

⁵³ Correspondence with the Special Commissioner Strange for March and April 1852, Vol. I, MCF Vol. 7336, RAK.

Sl. No	Taluks/Divisions	Total Number of Revenue and Police <i>kolkar</i>	Hindus	Muslims
1	Caway	28	24	4
2	Cherikal	29	23	6
3	Cannanore	17	15	2
4	Cotiote	42	32	10
5	Tellicherry	25	20	5
6	Cartinaad	31	30	1
7	Coorminaad	42	41	1
8	Calicut	32	29	3
9	Calicut Town	21	12	9
10	Ernaad	58	33	25
11	Shernaad	35	26	9
12	Betutnaad	35	30	5
13	Kootnaad	24	19	5
14	Chowghaut	26	23	3
15	Nedinganaad	37	35	2
16	Walluvannad	47	36	11
17	Palghaut	38	32	6
18	Temalpooram	33	27	6
19	Wynaad	121	108	13
20	Cochin	33	31	2
Total		754	626	128

The statistics given in the table was prepared by Collector H. V Conolly in 1852 to submit before the Special Commissioner T. L Strange. Here the Collector did not mention the police *kolkar* and revenue *kolkar* separately. It led to assume that there was no clear cut distinction in their duties. Revenue collection was the most important task of the government and *kolkar* whether police or revenue involved in this duty. Maintenance of law and order was essential for the collection of revenue for that purpose they did police duties. From the beginning of its formation itself the *kolkar* were doing the duties of revenue, police, and services for the communication and information gathering at the grass root level.

The following statistics showing the caste wise distribution of population in these *Taluks* reveals the discrimination by the British administrators in the

recruitment.⁵⁴ Out of the fifteen lakhs of total population in the district, Muslims comprised 27 per cent. When we consider the representation of Muslims in the post of *kolkar* other than the village establishments it come only 16 per cent. In *taluk* units like Kadathanad, Kurumbranad, Nedinganad and Cochin more than ninety per cent of the *kolkar* were Hindus.⁵⁵ In the British revenue administrative divisions, as in the present day also, village was the smallest unit. In Malabar, three categories of native servants were recruited and employed in the village level- *adhikari* or village officer, *menon* or accountant and *kolkaran* or belted peon. The *adhikari* was the sole representative of the government in the villages.

Sl. No	Name of Taluks	Total Population in Malabar	Hindus	Muslims
1	Caway	87, 599	72, 661	14, 938
2	Cherikal & Cannanore	76, 905	57, 847	19, 058
3	Cotiote & Tellicherry	96, 812	71, 350	25, 462
4	Cartinaad	86, 076	60, 451	25, 625
5	Coorminaad	1, 02, 790	80, 108	22, 682
6	Calicut	1, 10, 388	88, 344	22, 044
7	Ernaad	91, 017	48, 949	42, 068
8	Shernaad	98, 596	49, 954	48, 642
9	Betutnaad	99, 548	52, 650	46, 898
10	Kootnaad	70, 211	52, 426	17, 785
11	Chowghaut	1, 03, 272	64, 494	38, 778
12	Nedinganaad	1, 17, 468	1, 06, 070	11, 398
13	Valluvannad	94, 807	57, 783	37, 024
14	Palghaut	1, 32, 068	1, 20, 361	11, 707
15	Temalpooram	95, 319	86, 834	8, 485
16	Wynaad	41, 216	38, 893	2, 323
17	Cochin	10, 817	3, 037	7, 780
Total		15, 14, 909	11, 12, 212	4, 02, 697

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Kadathanad 97%, Kurumbranad 98%, Nedinganad 95%, Cochin 94%, *ibid.*

In the selection of *adhipari* officials, the British officers were more particular while comparing to the *kolkar*. Out of the 432 *adhipari* chiefs in the report of Canolly, only 51 are from *mappila* community. Out of this 51 *adhipari*, 14 were in Ernad and 11 in Vettethunad. The resistance by the *mappila* chiefs and their followers was a threat for the British to collect revenue from these regions. As a remedy, the Company government appointed more village officers from the *mappila* community. In the appointments of *menon* also there was grave disparity. Out of the 428 *menon* staff, there was only one member from the *mappila* community.

In respect to the recruitment of *kolkar* also there was wide gap in the number of Hindus and Muslims. In 1852 there were 428 villages and a total number of 867 *kolkar* served in these villages. Out of this 867 *Kolkar* 789 were Hindus and the number of *Mappila Kolkar* was 78.⁵⁶ In that time no *Mappila kolkar* were working in the villages of Wyanad, Cochin, Tenmalappuram and Kurumbranad *taluks*.⁵⁷ Out of the 78 *mappila kolkar*, 10 were in Ernad *Taluk* and 18 in Vettathunad. There was only nominal representation to the *mappila* people in the villages of other *taluk* divisions. In some British records of the nineteenth century *mappila* and Muslims were described as separate castes.⁵⁸ They considered the orthodox Muslims of Malabar proper as *Mappila* people. Those Muslims who served under the Mysore Sulthans as military men and revenue servants and later absorbed by the Company were entered in the records as *mussalman*. The statistics in a correspondence of H. V Conolly to T. L Strange prepared on 11th May 1852 listed the number of *mappila* and *mussalman* separately.⁵⁹ According to this record following is the total population and caste wise distribution of native servants in Malabar.

⁵⁶ MCF Vol. 7336, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ MCF Vol. 7337, p. 93.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Total population of the District was	15, 14, 909
Number of Hindus	11, 12, 212
Number of <i>mappila</i> people	4, 02, 697
Number of public appointments in the higher grades	330
Number held by Hindus.	261
<i>mappila</i> . ⁶⁰	6
<i>mussalman</i> , and others	63
Number of <i>adhikari</i>, <i>menon</i>, village peons and police <i>kolkar</i>	1721
Number held by Hindus	1581
Number held by <i>mappila</i> ⁶¹	126
<i>mussalman</i> , and others	14
The number of <i>taluk</i>, Sea Custom and other peons	1226
Number held by Hindus.	965
Number held by <i>mappila</i> people	89
<i>mussalman</i> and others	172

Why the *mappila* people were kept away from the British service was a question widely discussed by scholars. The untiring effort of the *mappila* community as a whole with a very few exceptions, to preserve the privileges conferred upon them at the time of the Mysore Sulthans made them enemies of the Company. The British spent a major share of their energy and resources to defend the challenge from the *Mappila* community. The *mappila* outbreaks were a recurring event throughout the history of British Malabar.⁶² The antagonistic attitude of the Company officers towards the *mappila* men increased the density of the enmity. Some British officials like Major Dow, member of the Joint Commission struggled against the anti-*mappila* tendency in official policy and introduced some

⁶⁰ Out of the 6 *mappila* men 3 held the posts up to the rank of tehsildar and sheristadar, 2 *peshkar* and one *gumastah*.

⁶¹ Out of 126 *mappila* men, 50 were *adhikari* staff, 1 *menon* and 75 peons or *kolkar*.

⁶² After the end of Pazhassi revolt a stage of the resistance came to an end. From the fourth decade of the nineteenth century onwards a series of *mappila* struggles occurred in different parts of Malabar, especially in South Malabar. Major outbreaks among them were at Pandallur in 1836, Pallippuram in 1841, Cherur in 1843, Angadippuram and Manjeri in 1849, Mattannur in 1851, Kulathur in 1851 and 1873, Melattur in 1880, Thrikkalayur, Malappuram and Kishmuri in 1884, Pandikkad in 1894, Manjeri in 1896 and 1898, and Chembrasserri in 1896. For details about its genesis and growth see William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, pp. 557-598, Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-120, Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-124.

conciliatory measures during the initial years of the British rule.⁶³ But it had no continuity. Most of the British administrators gave preference to upper caste Hindus as local government officials. Thomas Munro during his tour through the district for the revision of the judicial system recommended appointing *naduvazhi* and *desavazhi* people as heads of villages and *menon* as local revenue official.⁶⁴ This became the established policy of the British in future and it caused for great disparity in the number of Hindus and Muslims in the native service of British Malabar.

Thomas Munro recommended appointing *mappila* men as *adhikari* in predominantly *mappila* areas. But this policy was not strictly followed by the British. When the *mappila* outbreaks and attacks towards upper caste Hindu families and their properties increased by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Hindus of the region lodged a complaint to H. V Conolly, to take steps to prevent such happenings. They complained to the Collector that there were so many *mappila* officials in the *taluk* divisions of Ernad, Shernad and Valluvanad. When the Collector investigated into it, he realized that their number was disproportionately few.⁶⁵ Though the population of Hindus and Muslims of these three *Taluks* were evenly divided, great discrepancy existed in the number officials. Out of the eighty one *adhikari* officials in these three *Taluk* units, only twenty were from *mappila* community. None of the *Menons* or village accountants were Muslims. Out of the 142 *kolkar* only twenty were *mappila*.

Nature of Service of the *kolkar*

The *kolkar* were the lowest level staffs among the native civil servants of British Malabar. Even before the British period the *kolkaran* was part of the Malabar society. When the British assumed power they absorbed many of the existing systems suitable to them with necessary changes. Without changing the

⁶³ Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends*, op. cit., p. 104.

⁶⁴ Stephen F. Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, op. cit., p. 109.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

designation, they deputed *kolkaran* for many duties. The staff, held by this group of servants from the ancient times, gave him the title *kolkaran*. At that time land was the most important item of property and all authority of the rulers and chiefs depend upon control over land and its income. The *kolkaran* was the ear and eye of their masters in the villages. Under the British, instead of *kol* or staff, they held knives, muskets, belt and uniform as symbol of their designation and authority and they did multifarious duties. But among the inhabitants of Malabar their designation remained unchanged for many years. But in the British records different terms were used to denote this group of servants. When new departments and establishments were introduced under the British, *kolkar* spread to these places with or without change of designation. Though the *kolkar* were the lowest in the rank among the native civil servants many among them were men from high families with ability to read and write. Hence, the British deputed them to do other duties. In the revenue departments, *kolkar* performed even the duty of *menon*.⁶⁶ When the treasury department was established, new designations like *sheroffs*⁶⁷ and *gollas*⁶⁸ were introduced. It was the *kolkaran* serving in different *cutchery* deployed to these posts. When the government decided to prepare new account of the pepper cultivation and the share of the state in a more accurate way, inspectors were deputed to directly visit the plantations and assess actual cultivation. The district authorities requested the Collector for separate *kolkar* to each *hobilly* to accompany the inspectors.⁶⁹ The purpose of this requisition was not only to guard the inspectors but to guide them from one place to another as the *kolkar* were very familiar with their villages. The *kolkar* were appointed along with

⁶⁶ Out of the 761 *kolkar* of 1852, 56 were doing the duties of *menon*. See MCF Vol. 7336, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ Treasury staff to attend the receipts and issues of coins, postage labels and stamps, and one of them should keep the detailed statement of coins received and issued and prepare a rough statement of the entries to be made in the concerned ledgers. For details see '*Standing orders of the Board of Revenue: Land Revenue Settlement and miscellaneous*, Vol. IV, Government Publications, Madras, 1931, p. 913.

⁶⁸ Gollas were to watch the treasury during office hours, convey cash to other places and assist the cash keeper in receiving bags of coins from the cash chest and in putting them back. See *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Revenue Department, Letter dated 10th November 1803, MCF Vol. 2233, pp. 80-81, RAK.

menon in stations to collect frontier and town duties.⁷⁰ An analysis of the situations of appointment of *kolkar* proves that, they were doing such duties which need certain power of enforcement. The role of the *kolkar* in the villages under the British government forced the people to see them as agent of the state and so they looked this group of servants with a little bit of fear. *Kolkar* were appointed for duties in villages, *taluk* and district *cutcheri* and their duties varied according to the places where they deputed. Pearson, the Sub Collector of Central Division in his report to the Principal Collector described the nature of the duties of the *kolkar* by saying that, 'the numerous duties which fall to the lot of the *cutchery kolkar* are too well known to you to be here particularized.'⁷¹

Military Character of the *kolkar*

During the period of rebellions of the first decade of the nineteenth century, there was difference of opinions among the European officers about the nature and status of the *kolkar*. In 1804, there was an issue between Baber, the acting Sub Collector of Northern Division and Captain Osborne, the Officer Commanding of the second battalion of the police corps, about the authority over the police *kolkar*.⁷² The issue was that, one of the *kolkar* named Krishnan stationed for duty at Kannur was punished by Baber for misbehaviour. The officer commandant complained to the Collector and to the Sub Collector.⁷³ On the issue, the Collector warned the Sub Collector, not to interfere in the affairs of the police *kolkar*.⁷⁴ The Collector clarified the fact that both the Northern and Southern divisions of Malabar police were upon military footing and the direction of their service, by the orders of the government,⁷⁵ was entirely transferred to the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁷¹ Dairies of the Sub Collector, Central Division 1804, MCF Vol. 2615, p. 42, RAK.

⁷² Dairy of Principal Collector dated 9th May 1804, MCF Vol. 2384, pp. 11-19, RAK.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19

⁷⁵ In 1804, the government transferred the police corps of Malabar to the charge of the Officer Commanding of Malabar and the Collector was directed to ask the Officer Commanding for *kolkar* as occasion may arise. MCF 2383, pp. 441-42, RAK

immediate control and authority of the Commanding officer of the Province. The collectors in the Province, Principal, Subordinate or their assistants had no right to punish the police *kolkar* without informing the circumstances to the Officer Commanding the corps. The Officer Commanding guarantees the good conduct of his men. This testifies the military nature of the *kolkar*.

When the issue of the control of *kolkar* became a bone of contention between the civil and military authorities of Malabar, the government of Fort St. George decided to transfer the *kolkar* from Officer Commanding to the Collector.⁷⁶ The Collector was directed to supply as many police *kolkar* at any time required by the Commanding Officer for the aid of the military service. This decision of the Fort St. George government kept some control over the police force upon the Commanding officer of the Province. Instruction was given to him for occasional inspection of the Corps and report at least in every six months with respect to its discipline, clothing and equipment to the Governor in Council.⁷⁷ Again the question was raised in 1806, by Lieutenant Colonel Hill, the Officer Commanding of Wyanad. He put the question, whether the status of the *kolkar* was military or civil and who was to control them, the Officer Commanding or the Collector.⁷⁸ The duties undertaken by the *kolkar* in Wyanad was the reason for this doubt. This force was created and trained by Watson as a police force and was working under the control of Collector and sub Collectors of the concerned divisions. When the service of the *kolkar* was essential for the operations of the military force in north Malabar, many of them were deputed to serve under the commanding officers. But the members of the Corps were reluctant to obey the orders of the military officers. It was at this situation that Hill raised the question, 'whether the *kolkar* in Wyanad were to be considered as military and under his command or merely as the public servants of the Collector.'⁷⁹ Hill's opinion was that *kolkar* when acting as a police force, they were employed on military duties under the command of the senior military officer

⁷⁶ Letter dated 19th January 1805, MCF Vol. 2240, p. 77, RAK.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Letter from Babur to the Principal Collector dated 8th January 1806, MCF Vol. 2172, pp. 62-65, RAK.

⁷⁹ MCF Vol. 2172, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

present with the detachment where they serve. While doing military duties, they should be considered like other regular troops.

T H Baber opposed the idea of controlling the *kolkar* by the military officers. He reminded the Collector, the intention behind raising the *kolkar* force. The duties of this police force were to 'apprehend or destroy rebels, thieves or any description of the violation of the peace.'⁸⁰ Police is essential to the support of the civil government and its control to be vested in the local civil agents. According to him *kolkar* should not be placed under both civil and military officers. A divided authority will produce serious evils. The existing orders of the government were agreeing the authority of the civil officers of the *kolkar*.

The importance of the service of the *kolkar* in suppressing the rebels and maintaining peace and order in the district was exposed through the arguments of Baber and Hill on the status of the *kolkar*. They served the Company both as an agent and a guide. Both these services were essential for the civil and military authorities. Both of them wanted the full control over this native force for the complete utilization of their service. When the British faced lack of the troops in North Malabar many important duties were assigned to the *kolkar*. The Commercial Resident in a letter was requested to supply *kolkar* for escorting the transport of pepper from Iricoor.⁸¹ The *kolkar* were effective for this type of duties as they were familiar with the routes and had knowledge about the dangers on the roads. It helped to reduce the loss of goods and other casualties.

The *kolkar* as Town Police

When Watson's police corps began to serve the Company from 1800 onwards, the administrators of Malabar soon recognized its importance and there was demand for increasing the strength of the force. In 1803, Principal Collector Rickards deputed W. Wilson to enlist more natives to the Corps.⁸² By the last three

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁸¹ MCF 2383, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁸² Letter from Principal Collector to Northern Sub Collector dated 13th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

years it was proved that this force was a good instrument for defending the rebels and groups of dacoits. From the experience of this there was demand for raising such forces for the protection of the towns. To protect the town from the raids by the rebels and gang of robbery special native police force like the *kolkar* was established in Kozhikode.⁸³ Special regulation was issued by the Principal Collector for raising fund for the expense of the town police.⁸⁴ This system had been introduced in Bengal ten years back and continued till 1797.⁸⁵ Later town police of same style was recommended for Thalasseri also. The police force selected from among the inhabitants of Thalasseri was placed under the Officer Commanding the garrison who would receive Colonel Montresor's instructions.⁸⁶ This armed police force was trained and functioned like the *kolkar* police of Watson. In many occasions Watson's police *kolkar* were deputed to train the newly recruited irregulars and other town police teams.⁸⁷

The *kolkar* as Jail Guards

Guarding jails was another duty of the *kolkar* in Malabar. When a systematic judicial administration was introduced by the British, punishment and

⁸³ Letter from Principal Collector to Centre Sub-collector dated 15th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, pp. 86-88, RAK.

⁸⁴ The regulation directed to collect accurate information about the buildings of the concerned towns and levy special tax towards the expense of the police force. It was also directed to collect 2.5% of the estimated value of ware houses and shops for a year and 1% per year for dwelling houses with an estimated value which equals or exceeds 200 *veerayan fanam*.

⁸⁵ In Bengal the *zamindari* Police system was abolished in 1793 and Darogah system established (regulation XXII of 1793). According to this regulation police of the region was placed under the exclusive charge of the officers appointed by the government. Each district was divided into police jurisdictions under a *darogah* and all the native village watchmen were declared subject to the orders of the *darogah*. To meet the expense of the new police establishment, the government imposed new tax upon the merchants, traders and shopkeepers residing in cities, towns and bazaars (Regulation XXIII of 1793). In 1797, this Police Tax was abolished and stamp duty was introduced to compensate it (Regulation VI of 1797). For details see the *Appendices to the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company of 1832*.

⁸⁶ Letter from Principal Collector to Sub collector Centre Division dated 19th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁸⁷ Letter from Principal Collector to Watson dated 20th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, *op. cit.*, p. 106, RAK.

imprisonment was inevitable. As it was a period of rebellions, robberies and other activities of law breaking, the number of convicted persons increased tremendously and almost all jails were filled with prisoners.⁸⁸ There were continuous events of encounters between the officers and prisoners and among the prisoners themselves. As the jails were not so well built or well fortified, there were instances of the escapes of prisoners. In order to prevent such happenings and guard the jails, *kolkar* were employed as jail guards.⁸⁹ Most of the *kolkar* guarding the Jails were local people and so they had a fair knowledge about the inmates. If there would be a case of law breaking or escape from the jail, the *kolkar* could easily and immediately report it.

The *kolkar* as Body Guards

The collection of tax was a great challenge to the government during the period. The servants in the field of revenue collection were major target of the rebels. The rebels understood that the day to day affairs of the Company government were running with the support of the native servants. In order to create terror in the minds of the revenue servants, the rebels frequently attacked their houses, family members and made losses to their property. The *kolkar* were deputed as body guards to the revenue servants in Malabar. They accompanied the officers like Magistrates, *sheristadar* and *parbutti* regularly.⁹⁰ In many instances the life of such officers were rescued by the timely intervention of the *kolkar*.⁹¹ Pearson Sub Collector in charge of Northern division through a letter informed the Collector

⁸⁸ When the Kuttippuram Jail was filled with prisoners, the Sub Collector of Central Division sent some prisoners to the Fort at Kuttiady with direction to depute some members of the Watson's Police *kolkar* for guarding them. See Dairies of the Sub Collector, Central Division 1804, MCF Vol. 2615, p. 51.

⁸⁹ Letter from the Magistrate of Angadippuram to the Commanding Officer of Angadippuram dated 24th August 1804, MCF Vol. 2164, p. 124, RAK.

⁹⁰ Letter dated 22th March 1804, MCF Vol. 2160, p. 143, RAK.

⁹¹ One such incident took place at Kutali in March 1804. The house of Padinjarel Unny, the *sheristadar* of Payyurmalla and Kuttiady was burnt to the ground by the rebels. Two members of his family were murdered and seven others were severely wounded. There was a huge loss of property to the *sheristadar's* family. The life of the *sheristadar* was saved by the protection rendered by the *kolkar* team. For details see MCF Vol. 2160, pp. 143-44.

that the *kolkar* under his control were doing duties like 'attending the principal inhabitants of the different *taluk* units of the division and *cutcheri* on every petty occurrence tending in the smallest degree to disturb the tranquility of the country.⁹² Most of such inhabitants were once supporters of the rebels and the protection of them was the duty of the government. Otherwise, there was chance for their return to the rebel camp due to the threat and persuasions by the occasional visit of the rebel leaders who now withdrew to the forest by the able guard of the police *kolkar*. He requested for 203 more *kolkar* for his division to provide 33 for *taluk cutcheri* and 170 to accompany the *parbutti*.⁹³ Baber, in a letter to the Collector, informed that a force of 50 *kolkar* was deputed to guard the life of two chiefs, Narayana Pattar and the family of late Sundara Chattoo.⁹⁴ In South Malabar, the *mappila* protesters interrupted the tax collection. By the end of 1804, when the strength of the rebels in Wyanad and other parts of Northern division was under control, the Company administrators attempted to collect the arrears of revenue for the last few years. *Kolkar* withdrew from the rebel areas were deployed in other regions for helping revenue collection. In November 1804, the *sheristadar* of Ernad complained to the Sub Collector of South Malabar that a *mappila* leader of Oorakam hills refused to pay the revenue arrear to the Company and requested for the service of police *kolkar*. The Sub Collector sent two companies of police *kolkar* for the help of the *sheristadar*.⁹⁵

The *kolkar* in Survey Establishments

When the administration of British India was transferred from the British East India Company to the British Crown in 1858, strong measures were taken towards the survey of land and fixation of land tax on the basis of that survey. Malabar was an important region under the British where discontent on the cause

⁹² Letter dated 31st July 1804, MCF 2615, RAK, pp. 43-44.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Letter dated 1st November 1803, MCF Vol. 2233, pp. 6-7, RAK.

⁹⁵ Letter dated 7th November 1804, MCF Vol. 2166, p. 14, RAK.

of land relation was important. Preceding three decades witnessed many anti-colonial struggles and its root cause was abuses in the fixation and collection of land revenue. So the government gave extreme priority to the land survey in Malabar. When the survey establishments started to function in Malabar *kolkar* were widely recruited for the office. In 1860, there were 191 employees in the survey establishment of Wyanad. Out of this 191, the strength of *kolkar* was 124.⁹⁶ The strength of the *kolkar* indicates the importance of their service in the land survey and assessment. Survey and settlement in Malabar was a long process and the *kolkar* were an inevitable part of it till the end.

Risks and Rewards to the *kolkar*

The duties of the *kolkar* during the period of rebellions were precarious. There were many instances of loss of life and mutilation. They were ready to do the duties assigned to them without considering the risk underlying. The Company administrators gave utmost care in selecting them from among the warrior class of Malabar. It was under this belief, the British selected majority of the *kolkar* from among the *nair* men. The description about the heroism of the *nair* suicidal squads of Valluvanad Raja in the *Mamankam* festival and the heroic defense of the *nair* militia of North Malabar against the forces of Mysore Sulthans prompted the Company to prefer the *nair* men in their recruitment. The *thiyyar*, another caste of Malabar renowned for their valour and courage, were also considered. The team of 'Hundred *kolkar*', (appendix No. 1) specially selected and trained for the final campaign against Pazhassi Raja under T H Baber, included some Muslims who were disbanded from the Mysore troops.⁹⁷ The *kolkar*, without considering their life, served the Company at a time of rebellions and insurrections.

When the Wyanad rebellion was at its zenith, the government used the *kolkar* as spies and agents for collecting information. There were instances of

⁹⁶ *The Malabar Government Gazette*, March 16, 1869, pp. 72-73.

⁹⁷ Statement of advances made and arrear due to the Wyanad establishment of *kolkar*, MCF Vol. 8685, pp. 159-60, RAK.

murder during such situations. In 1802, a *kolkaran* was sent to the house of a *kurichya* inhabitant of Wyanad, pretending to have come for getting some paddy. But his mission was to ensure the presence of Edachenna Kungan, one of the leading rebel leaders of Wyanad in that house. Kungan directly came out from the house and killed the belted peon or *kolkaran*.⁹⁸ During the years from 1800 to 1803, troops employed in Malabar were mostly from Bombay. The climate of Malabar, especially the fever-stricken places of Wyanad was very unpopular with the Bombay troops. Due to the distance from their homes and families and lack of provisions for their periodical relief, the battalions become weak and inefficient. To solve the crisis, the Bombay troops were gradually replaced by Madras troops. More than this, the strength of Watson's *kolkar* was increased to a body of 1, 200 men. Again, it was decided to increase their number into 3000.⁹⁹ When the number of troops in Malabar was reduced gradually, there was a proportionate increase in the number of *kolkar*. The *kolkar* served in Wyanad without considering the threat of fever and bad climate. In many occasions the higher authorities of the British government appreciated the role of the *kolkar* in the apprehension or killing of rebels and suppressing the insurrections.

In 1804, the joint efforts of the *kolkar* and the natives of Chirakkal helped to arrest three rebel leaders out of the twelve, to whose apprehension, government declared rewards.¹⁰⁰ During the time of the campaign of Baber against Pazhassi Raja, the *kolkar* did dedicated and dangerous works for the Company. They marched all night through the mountainous regions of Wyanad without considering the heavy rain and leeches. In one such march, the *kolkar* police identified the hiding place of Pazhassi and his men in the jungle.¹⁰¹ But firing upon the *kolkar*, the *Raja* and his followers escaped. Many *kolkar* were seriously wounded in the

⁹⁸ William Logan, *Malabar manual, op. cit.*, p. 539.

⁹⁹ Letter of Thomas Warden dated 15th September 1805 quoted in his report on Police Establishment of Malabar dated 30th July 1808, MCF Vol. 2331, pp. 228-31.

¹⁰⁰ William Logan, *Malabar manual, op. cit.*, p. 545.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

encounters with the rebels.¹⁰² Wounded *kolkar* were paid by the government for treatment.¹⁰³ The protection of the health and life of the *kolkar* was essential for the British at that time. Special attention was given by the government for building barracks and sheds for the *kolkar* in Northern division at the time of the Pazhassi rebellion. Besides, the members of the *kolkar* force many native chiefs from the communities of *nair*, *thiyyar* and *mappila* were specially recruited for the purpose of intelligence gathering, informing the motion and hiding camps of the rebels, apprehension and killing of the rebels and for the supply of food and other materials to the Company servants. Their protection also was taken up by the government and payments were given to them at the time of accidents.¹⁰⁴ Wyanad was a grave to every native corps stationed there due to the peculiar climate and geography of the region. Because of the difficulty to give relief to the detachments, the Commander-in-Chief submitted a request to the Board of Revenue to substitute the troops by the detachment of *kolkar* Corps 'who are more equal to content with the effects of the climate'.¹⁰⁵

In order to recognize the willingness of the *kolkar* to do any duties assigned to them without considering the risk of it the British government rewarded them in many occasions.¹⁰⁶ It was an act of inspiring them to serve the government with more vigor and enthusiasm. The peculiar political condition of Malabar forced the Collectors to recognize the native servants like *kolkar* by rewarding them. The services of the *kolkar* were so important to them to suppress rebellions, prevent gang robberies, conduct raids for rebels, thieves, and for arms.

¹⁰² MCF Vol. 2383, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-73.

¹⁰³ The Principal Collector Thomas Warden in a report to the President and members of the Board of Revenue dated 4th January 1805 added a list of different items of expenditure incurred by him for the previous year. A major item of expenditure in this list was compensation, rewards and payments to the native servants and volunteers who helped the Company during the period of Pazhassi rebellion in Northern Division. For details see MCF Vol. 2230, pp. 7-17, RAK.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Extract from the minutes of the commander-in-Chief dated 4th November 1806, MCF Vol. 2245, pp. 66-67, RAK.

¹⁰⁶ In 1804, a guard named Komapen was seriously wounded in the apprehension of a rebel named Kadanchery Chandoo and the government paid for the curing of his wounds. See *ibid.*

In many instances, notorious rebels were killed or apprehended by the adventurous intervention of the *kolkar*.¹⁰⁷ The Governor of Madras in a letter to the Collector expressed his satisfaction in the success of the activities of the Police Corps of the Province and directed the Collector to reward the *kolkar* engaged in the enterprise against Paliad Nambiar.¹⁰⁸ In 1803, Principal Collector Rickards asked Captain Watson to reward to the officers and *kolkar* for their dedication and caution shown for the seizure of rebel chieftains including Ellatoora Kunhi Moideen, Mundanjerry Imbichoony and Unny Koya.¹⁰⁹ Captain Watson was directed by the Collector to pay one month salary for the officers and privates participated in the expedition. In the same year, Collector Rickards through another letter informed Captain Watson to award 3000 *fanam* to the *kolkar* for their gallant in the attack and killing of Warikaat Unery, the man who had wounded and robbed Captain Moncrift in 1798.¹¹⁰

Each *kolkar* selected by the British continued in service as long as his health was fit to do the duties or till the government pleased with him. They were not eligible for pension or any other benefits after the end of their service. The heirs of them were considered for appointment to the post. But there were occasions of sanctioning pension to the relatives of the deceased *kolkar*. In 1816, pension was sanctioned to Kodancherry Kunjoo, brother of a *kolkaran* named Kodancherry Parangodan who was killed in 1815. In the order of sanctioning pension to his brother, it was directed to give half of his pension to wife of the deceased *kolkaran*, who had no means of livelihood.¹¹¹ She had been excommunicated from her family as her husband was member of a low caste.

¹⁰⁷ In 1803, the Principal Collector of Malabar rewarded 20 rupees to *kolkar* for the apprehension of a rebel of North Malabar, Kydery Curchy. Though this action of the Collector was sanctioned by the Board of Revenue, he was warned against repeating such expenses. MCF Vol. 2233, pp. 75-76, RAK.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.

¹⁰⁹ Letter dated 29th July 1803, MCF Vol. 2314, pp. 138-39, RAK.

¹¹⁰ Letter Dated 4th June 1803, MCF Vol. 2313, pp. 15-17, RAK.

¹¹¹ Letter dated 27th July 1816, MCF Vol. 8722, pp. 226-27, RAK.

The first decade of the nineteenth century was the formation period of the *kolkar* as a regular and organized wing of native servants under the English East India Company. In the course of time its functions and duties were varied and diversified. But the basic principles about the recruitment, pay and allowances, nature of service etc. were laid during that period. It was during this period that the strength of the *kolkar* was raised from 500 to 3000 and again reduced to 2000 when the rebel activities of the province were almost subsided by 1806. The strength of the *kolkar* was decided by the needs of the situation. The pay of the *kolkar* was not uniform at the beginning. Their pay was lower in Southern Division while comparing to the north. It was decided by the availability of recruits and the importance of the service they rendered and the aspect of risk involved in their duties. But after many discussions and correspondences there implemented uniform pay for the *kolkar* in all parts of Malabar. Uniform system of pay and allowances to the *kolkar* was implemented in January 1805 with the approval of the Board of Revenue.¹¹² Getting recruits to the *kolkar* force was a great problem to the British at the time of its formation. Low pay, risk of duty and sympathy towards the rebels were the reason for the difficulty. Hence, the Government recruited many locals on temporary basis as agents, information gatherers, and guard to persons and properties and for apprehension of rebels. They were treated as the native servants like the *kolkar* and paid and rewarded for their services. When the troops were withdrawn from Northern Division due to the problem of health and diseases, the complete charge of the security of the division was in the hands of the *kolkar* under European officers.

¹¹² MCF 233, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

Chapter 5

Under the East India Company

Introduction

The *kolkar* force was not a stagnant and non transformative force in Malabar. It came into force through different historical transformations and it continued under the colonial state in the nineteenth century. An imperative transformation to the *kolkar* force took place under the East India Company in Malabar and its beginning is discussed in the previous chapters. A better understanding of the change occurred in the village administration of Malabar after 1800 would help us to understand the role played by the *kolkar* staff in bringing the colonial administration into the heart of the villages. It is in this backdrop, this chapter endeavours to discuss the state intervention in the *kolkar* regiment during the reign of the East India Company in Malabar.

The death of Tipu Sulthan was a great relief to the government of Fort St. George. Now they had time to concentrate on regional issues, revision and reorganization of the administrative machinery. The defeat and death of Tipu Sulthan in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore war practically fixed the boundaries of Madras Presidency.¹ The death of Pazhassi Raja in 1805 brought an atmosphere of relief to the East India Company in Malabar. All important rebel leaders of the district were killed, imprisoned or exiled. The peace of the district had not been very seriously disturbed since 1805 until the *mappila* outbreaks which started in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. There was the *kurichya* revolt of 1812, but it was soon suppressed and did not disturb the government so seriously. Troops were brought from the coast and from Mysore for the relief of the *kolkar* detachments at Mananthavadi and Sulthan Bathery, who were placed in a state of siege by the

¹ Vincent A Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Oxford University Press, London, reprint 1961, p. 622.

tribal insurgents.² The revolts of the ministers of Travancore and Cochin of 1809 also invited the intervention of the Malabar forces for a short period.

When Malabar was transferred to the Madras Presidency in 1800, the long prevailing political instability was a barrier to introduce any reform for the establishment of law and order.³ The Cornwallis system, first introduced in Bengal in 1793, was introduced to Madras in 1802. Regulation XXXV of 1802 provided for the establishment of a police force. But in Malabar the establishment of a police force under Watson was already done and some *kolkar* had become trained police men. At the beginning, the Collector was the magistrate and superintendent of police and the *tahsildar* staff received in the first instance all criminal complaints.⁴ But the political instability forced the government to wait till 1806 for the strict implementation of the Cornwallis system. It was in that year the powers of magistrate were transferred from the Collector to the district (*zilla*) judge. The police establishments were placed under the judge and criminal complaints were forwarded to him. The *darogah* was replaced by the *tahsildar* in respect of police duties, and which were placed under the direct control of the judge. In Malabar, this reform brought two masters to the *kolkar*. As they were the servants responsible for both the revenue and police duties, the Collector, claimed their service for revenue duties and the magistrate for judicial duties. This system continued till 1816.

Though the situation was not favourable for any radical reforms, the new government initiated a two-fold operation in the district. One was to suppress the rebellions and disturbances with a strong hand. The other was to introduce reforms to make the revenue and judicial administration more effective and thereby

² In April 1812, the *kurichyar* and *kurumbar* of the east of Wyanad rose in revolt against the Company owing to the exaction of the government land revenue in money. The tribal people were unable to find a market for their produce and forced to sell their produce at cheaper prices to pay their revenue. As a protest they attacked the police with bows and arrows and some *kolkar* were wounded. Finally the *kolkar* police under the Subedar and *jamedar* were retreated. See William Logan, *Malabar Manual, op. cit.*, p. 555.

³ T. K Ravindran, *Cornwallis System in Malabar*, The Parasparasahayi Cooperative Printing and Publishing Works Ltd., Calicut, 1969, p. iii.

⁴ H. R Pate, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tinnevelly*, Vol. I, Government Press Madras, 1917, p. 334.

acquire the support of the natives and enhance their confidence. There was an attempt to fix reasonable rent after the assessment of land. But hasty measures of district collectors like Macleod invited the wrath of the people. The government at Fort St. George seriously observed the developments of Malabar and corrective measures were recommended. The attitude of the people of Malabar at the time of anti-colonial rebellion cautioned the colonial administrators that the government could not bring a feeling of protection among the people. They understood well that there should be immediate measures to raise a feeling among the people that the new government was powerful enough to devastate the law breakers and protect their life and property. Another deliberate effort from the side of the British was the attempt to ensure the participation of the native people of different strata of society in the administration of revenue and judiciary. As a result of this measure, many natives were recruited as *munsiff*, *gumastah*, village headmen, accountants and peons according to their education and social status. The village administration was an important area focused by the British for getting the support of the people. As the *kolkar* were closely associated with the revenue and village administration, its organization and development contributed for their transformation.

Changed Village Administration

The efficiency of the village establishment is a matter of supreme importance to any state. Attempts were started by the Company government from the beginning of the nineteenth century to reform the village administration and thereby remove the existing hazards in revenue collection. Village was the lowest of the three tier administrative set up of the British. The District establishment was at the top and the *taluk* in the middle. Among these three levels of government, village was the least organized under the Bombay government. No basic changes were brought by the Commissioners in the village administration system introduced during the Mysore period. The officers of Hyder Ali in introduced the *tara* system in Malabar. *Tara* was a principal village consisted of small adjacent

villages together yield revenue of 200 pagodas.⁵ A *parbutti* (*pravarthikkar*) or village officer and a *menon* or accountant was appointed to each *tara*. Districts were formed by adding 40 to 80 *tara* units. A *tahsildar* and two *sheristadar* were appointed to each district.⁶ The Mysore rulers avoided the traditional *desavazhi* and *naduvazhi* class from the village and district offices. But the fixed and hereditary village system was an essential feature of Mysore administration. Instead of the *desavazhi*, the Mysore government appointed leading men of villages as *mukyasthan*, or heads of villages. The Commissioners under the Bombay government followed this system at the village level by reinstating the native *raja* and *Nair* chiefs, their proprietary rights over land. Due to serious resistances from the people of Malabar the system could not run successfully.

When Malabar became part of the Madras Presidency in 1800, serious attempts were made for regularizing the system. The regulations and reforms brought in revenue and judicial administration had good results and the collection of revenues increasing from year to year.⁷ The Madras Regulation XXVI of 1802⁸ entrusted the district Collectors to keep public registers of land, according to the forms prescribed by the Board of Revenue, for the purpose of registering the landed property paying revenue to government within their respective districts and should enter all transfer of lands from one proprietor to another.⁹ *The Madras Karnams Regulation* provided for the establishment of accountants in villages and defined the duties of the office.¹⁰ The *karnam* or village accountant was an already existing office in South Indian villages and the British, through this regulation, provided for the continuance of this office on an efficient establishment for the purpose of facilitating the decisions of suits in the courts of judicature. It was also

⁵ Col. Munro's Report on Malabar dated 4th January 1817 (hereafter Munro's Report), para 22, MCF 2561, p. 27, RAK.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Fifth Report of 1812, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁸ A Regulation for governing the registration of landed estates paying revenue to the government in the British territories subject to the Presidency of Fort St. George dated 18th July 1802.

⁹ *The Government of Madras Local Department: The Madras Code*, (hereafter *The Madras Code*) Vol. I, Government Press, Madras, 1940, p. 11.

¹⁰ Madras Regulation XXIX of 1802.

intended to prevent the diminution of the fixed revenue of the government and protect individuals from injustice by providing authentic accounts and information.¹¹ According to this regulation the *karnam* should keep registers of lands in their concerned villages specifying boundaries and landmarks, types namely, arable, cultivated and uncultivated, pasture, occupied for houses, gardens, rivers, tanks, springs or wells, jungles, hills or mountains etc. With the aim of maintaining peace in the villages the regulation entrusted the *karnam* to keep a register of strangers passing through the village as reported to him by the village watcher. It should always be open to the inspection of the officers of police.

When the regulations of Fort St. George were passed, it was intended to the Presidency as a whole. But many regulations, especially regulations about village, revenue and judicial administration, could not be implemented in Malabar in its concrete form as the district was entirely different from other districts of the province in terms of cultivation, structure of villages, village staffs, administration of police and justice etc. Hence such regulations and reforms were implemented in Malabar by considering these variations. An important change in the Malabar villages was the absence of many village staffs. The Village Headmen and *karnam* were common to all districts in the Presidency.¹² Besides them, the only category of village staff existed in Malabar villages was the *kolkar*. All duties and responsibilities of the headmen and *karnam* were accomplished with the help of the *kolkar*.

The mukhyastan

For the convenience of revenue administration British Malabar was divided into 10 *taluk* divisions. The *taluk* was again divided into *amsam* and *desam*. The *amsam* was a village and *desam*, sub-unit of villages. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were 736 *amsam* and 2222 *desam divisions* in Malabar.¹³

¹¹ *The Madras Code, op cit.*, p. 13

¹² In Tanjore, there were no village headmen and the duties of that office were discharged by village senate or *gramaprarthikam*. For details see F. R Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore*, Vol. I, Government Press, Madras, 1906, pp. 193-94.

¹³ M. Gangadharan, *The Malabar Rebellion, op. cit.*, p. 13.

By the end of the century, as per the progress in land survey and settlements, the number of *amsam* units was limited to 429. In pre-British Malabar *desam* was a military division under *desavazhi* who was responsible to provide fixed number of *nair men* to the war field on demand of the *naduvazhi*. By the introduction of the British system of village administration, the importance of the old units of government like *tara* and *desam* disappeared. The *amsam* or village became the basic unit of revenue administration.¹⁴

Village headmen were known by different names in different parts of South India.¹⁵ In Malabar, during the British period, they were known as *adhikari*. The term *adhikari* was used for village headmen only after 1816. Before that the *mukhyasthan* were the heads of villages and *parbutti* or *pravarthikkar* were in charge of revenue collection. The *mukhyasthan* were not regularly attended in the revenue collection duties of the *parbutti*. But he attended in the matter whenever there was a difficulty in realizing the dues. When the British introduced courts of judicature, the *mukhyasthan* had to attend all sales of distrained properties and certify all summonses for witnesses not present.¹⁶ Though *mukhyasthan* was at the pleasure of the government, qualified sons usually succeeded his father. The *Mukhyasthan* was not eligible for remuneration or any other allowances for their service. The only benefit for their position was to delay the payment of their rent till the end of the season. More than this benefit, the factors which attracted the landholders to the post of *mukhyasthan* was the honour attached to it in the Malabar society and its hereditary nature. There were no village servants or peons under the direct control of the *mukhyasthan*. As the inhabitants were happy to obey the orders of their headmen, there was no need of any servants under them.

¹⁴ For getting a general picture about the village administration of Malabar at the beginning of the British period, see Munro's Report, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ They were known in names such as Monigar, Potail, Naidu, Reddy, Peddacaupoo, Nautamcar etc.

¹⁶ Munro's Report, *op. cit.*, para. 25.

The *pravarthikkar* and *kolkar*

The *parbutti* unit staffs were the real officer in charge of the day to day functions of the villages. The *parbutti* charge was divided not on the basis of area, but the amount of rent to be collected. It caused for great variations in the size of the divisions. Many villages were so vast that the *pravarthikkar* could not personally inspect the area under his control. In 1803, certain regulations were introduced for the division of *taluk* into *parbutti* or village. The division of Polanad *taluk* in the Northern Division into *parbutti* was taken as a model for division of other districts and sent it to the concerned offices. The principle for the division of *taluk* into *Parbutti* or *amsam* was that each *amsam* had a *jamma* of 2400 star *pagoda* or as near to this amount.¹⁷ The Principal Collector in his letter to the heads of divisions directed that the total expense for the collection of revenue should not exceed 5 per cent of the *jamma*.¹⁸ The table given below shows the division of Polanad *taluk* into *parbutti* and the names of *parbutti* to each division.¹⁹

Sl. No	Name of <i>parbutti</i> (<i>amsam</i>)	Number of <i>tara</i>	<i>jamma of parbutti</i>			Name of <i>parbuttikkar</i>
			Star <i>Pagodas</i>	<i>Fanam</i>	Cash	
1	Kusba Calicut	3	2243	36	68	Teke Edatta Teyen Nayr
2	Ellatoor	2	2333	10	57	Kytholly Uku Pannikar
3	Beypoor	3	2349	3.	57	Colicote Nayr
4	Punnegara	2	2073	8.	11.	Vikresha <i>Menon</i>
5	Edacat	8	2481	18	26	Carambolly Rama Curpoo
6	Kilaloor	13	2111	39	34	Eddavanda Ukandan Nayr
7	Chellanoor	10	2096	57	46	Anyan Coorpu
8	Malavun	5	2444	1	6	Mallakuttil Ittapoo Coorpu
9	Walanaad	5	2250	22	74	Chemelchery Parote Cheryoma Coorpu
10	Paravan	7	2370	23	63	Palakoonatha Unichatu Nayr
11	Sakara	6	2495	31	6	Kylady Ittoo Uny Raman Nayr
Total		64	25250	3	8	

¹⁷ Letter dated 3rd June 1803, MCF Vol. 2313, RAK.

¹⁸ *Jamma* means annual rent to be collected.

¹⁹ MCF Vol. 2313, p. 31.

The adjacent *tara* units with a total *jamma* of 2400 *star pagoda* were combined together as a *parbutti* unit or a village. For each division a *menon* and three *kolkar* were allowed to assist the *parbutti*. The names of the *menon* and *kolkar* were included in the appointment order of the *parbutti* (appendix no. 2).²⁰ The *parbutti* was responsible for the collection of the fixed *jamma* within the prescribed time limit. Generally *pravarthikkar* were members of the wealthy class of the society and most of them were from upper castes.

The *menon* or *karnam*

The term *menon* was derived from the Malayalam word *menavan* which means one who supervise the revenue collection and keeping records. The term *menon* was used in Malabar for accountant of village, *taluk* and districts. Accountant was an essential component of ancient Indian villages. He was an important person in the village as majority of the inhabitants were unlettered and the British depended them for keeping revenue accounts and records. Henry Maine in one of his Oxford Lectures said, 'in certain places the British, by mistake, thought that the village accountants were the proprietors of land and made settlement with them'.²¹ Really, the accountants were servants of the village community as well as one of its component members. In Malabar, while making the collection, *menon* should be present with the *parbutti*. It was the charge of the *menon* to write daily account specifying the coins paid by each *kudiyar* or cultivator and a receipt should immediately be given to him with the signature of the *parbutti* and the *menon*. The accounts were to be submitted to the district *cutchery* every month. The *menon* was responsible for errors in accounts.

The Mysore government, while making the survey of agricultural lands of Malabar, employed a vast number of village accountants substitute for *karnam*.²² It

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²¹ Henry Sumner Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, John Murray, London, 1871, p. 125.

²² Munro's Report, *op. cit.*, para 39.

was because of the non availability of hereditary accountants in the region as most of them were from *nair* community and they were either escaped from their villages or were reluctant to work under new masters. It was the hard work of these servants that brought out the first record of land assessment and revenue and on the basis of that record; the British developed their revenue reforms. The work of the accountants under Tipu's officers lessened the works of the succeeding *menon* staffs of Malabar.

When the government began attempts to regularize the affairs of lands in the Madras Presidency priority was given to fixation of the quantity of produces from the lands of each proprietor and assessment of rent upon it. The British had certain assumptions about the existing land revenue administration all throughout the Asian countries while introducing their reforms. They detailed it through various regulations. They assumed that from the earliest to the beginning of the nineteenth century there was no fixed public land revenue assessment and according to the Asiatic governments the assessment of land revenue was fluctuated without any fixed principles for the determination of the amount.²³ Under the pre-British Indian rulers, whether Hindu or Muslim, there was no security to the *zamindar* or other proprietors of land for the continuance of a moderate land tax. Frequent enquiries were conducted by the ruling powers for the augmentation of the assessment of land revenue. Such enquiries were conducted by local officers deputed by the rulers and there was no uniform criterion for the fixation of land revenue.²⁴ These arguments were in favour of introducing the Cornwallis system in the presidency of Madras. In 1793, the permanent or *zamindari* settlement was introduced in Bengal and gradually it was expanded to other presidencies of north and central India. By the dawn of the nineteenth century, the system was introduced in Madras also. By this system the government of Fort St. George intended to provide conditional security to

²³ Preamble to Regulation XXV of 1802, see Richard Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort St. George in Force at the End of 1847*, J & H Cox for East India Company, 1848, p. 93.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

ownership of land to the Zamindars and fixation of land revenue permanently. The new system necessitated the appointment of an accountant who should be acceptable both to the landlords and the government. He was, as expected by the government, the source of correct information about the condition of cultivation and collection of villages.

The Regulation XXV and *karnam*

Regulation XXV of 1802 was the first step in Madras to sanction permanent proprietary rights to the landlords upon their land. All the early settlements were tentative arrangements which found practicable by the settlement officers.²⁵ But all these arrangements were similar to the *zamindari* settlements and one man was made answerable to the revenue of each village or estate. Soon the revenue officers of Madras Presidency realized that the *zamindari* Settlement was not suitable to this region as no *zamindar*, in the sense of Bengal, were seen in the Presidency except in northern *sirkar*. Without considering the objections of the revenue officers of the region, the Company government decided to proceed with the same settlement in Madras. A special commission was appointed in 1801 to supervise the settlement. Following that Regulation XXV was passed in 1802.

The Regulation was intended to declare the proprietary rights of lands to be vested in individual persons under a permanent assessment of land revenue in the Madras Presidency.²⁶ It was by this regulation the post of *karnam* or accountant became an established one in the 'land lord' type villages of Madras Presidency.²⁷ The regulation provided for the fixed assessment of lands liable to pay revenue to the government and its proprietorship can transfer to the heirs and lawful

²⁵ Baden Powell, *Land Systems in British India*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁶ Richard Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort St. George in Force at the End of 1847*, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Baden Powell broadly divided the Indian villages into two types as landlord villages and non-landlord villages. For details, see Powell's *Land Systems in British India*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-45.

successors.²⁸ It also provided to issue deeds of permanent proprietorship by the government to the *zamindar* and other owners of land. The direct intervention of the government in the revenue matters of land and fixation of rent on a permanent basis necessitated the keeping of detailed accounts under the Collectors for ready reference. Consequently, provision was included in the Regulation for the appointment of *karnam* as accountants in villages and other *cutcheri* units.

The Regulation empowered the *zamindar* chiefs to appoint *karnam* in various villages under their respective *zamindari*. The *zamindar* had to support the regular and established number of *Karnam* staff in the villages to perform their duties.²⁹ Though the *zamindar* heads were the appointing authority, they had no right to remove *karnam* except by the sentence of a court of judicature. When a *zamindar*, his under-farmers, tenants or cultivators had a complaint against a *karnam* for the breach of his duties, the *zamindar* could file a suit against that *karnam* in the district court and bring him for trial and punishment. The Regulation provided for the punishment of a *zamindar*, if he deprives any *karnam* from his villages without a legal process. The Regulation had defined the procedure for the succession of the post of *karnam* after the end of service of the existing *Karnam* either by death, retirement or punishment. The *zamindar* had to give priority to the members from the family of the previous *karnam*, eligible to perform the duties. If no eligible members are available from the family of previous *karnam*, the *Zamindar* could appoint another person proper to the post. The posting of new *karnam* was to be immediately reported to the Collector.³⁰ Between 1802 and 1806, the system prescribed by the Regulation was implemented in areas as far as possible.

Regulation XXIX and Office of *Karnam*

Regulation XXIX of 1802 was exclusively for establishment of the office of *karnam* and defining the duties of the office in the Province of Madras. As the

²⁸ Section II of Regulation XXV.

²⁹ Section XI of Regulation XXV.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

revenue share payable by the proprietors was fixed permanently and courts were established to settle disputes, several offices functioned till that time were found unwanted and decided to abolish, except the office of *karnam*.³¹ The British government identified that the office of *karnam* was of great importance to protect the rights and property of the people, especially in landlord villages. The regulation was intended to continue the office of *karnam* in an efficient manner. The service of *karnam* was essential to facilitate the decisions of the courts of judicature, to prevent the diminution of the fixed revenue of the government, to protect the individuals from injustice by enabling the public officers of government and the courts by procuring and providing authentic information. The Regulation directed to establish an office of *karnam* in every village with annual revenue of 400 *pagoda* and its revenue share to the government was permanently fixed. Sanction was accorded by the Regulation for continuing the *karnam* who were already in the service.³²

Duties of *karnam*

The Regulation XXIX of 1802 clearly defined the duties of *Karnams*. As this Regulation was applicable to the permanently settled villages, it was applicable to the land under the control of the *raja* and chiefs of Malabar and thereby to the *menon*. The *menon* of Malabar was the post equaling to the *karnam* in other districts of Madras. Hence, the duties of *karnam* defined in the Regulation were applicable to the *menon* of Malabar.

The karnam had to keep registers which provide complete information about the lands in each village. The boundaries and landmarks of the village was be specified in the records. Other information like, whether the land arable or not, cultivated and uncultivated, pasture lands, resident areas, gardens, rivers, ponds, wasteland, hills, jungle or rocks also must be collected and recorded.³³ The

³¹ Richard Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort St. George in Force at the End of 1847*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

³² Regulation XXIX Section IV.

³³ *Ibid.*, Section XI, Clause I.

registers had to specify the lands exempted from the payment of revenue, the reason for it and the name of the holders of such lands. The *karnam* was to be present at the time of estimation of crop and at the measuring of grains. He had to keep records about the gross produce of the village, whether paying revenue to government or not and about the sharing of produce between the proprietors and cultivators.³⁴ Separate registers were kept for the lands from which rent was collected in money. Separate register describing the details about garden lands and their rates and amount of division of the produce was also required. Another important duty of the *karnam* was to produce any of the records under his custody to the Collector or the courts when required.³⁵ The duties and responsibilities of *karnam* defined by the regulations proved that the British government, by avoiding all other traditional offices in the villages, made him as the most reliable representative of the state at the village level. Though the village headman was the titular head of village, *menon* staffs were answerable to all questions about the revenue matters of concerned villages. In South Indian villages, *karnam* or *menon* were looked upon as the financial and ministerial assistant of the village headman.³⁶

The Regulation II of 1806

The Regulation II of 1806 was to establish Courts of Adalat in various districts of Madras Presidency where permanent settlement of land revenue was not introduced.³⁷ It also defined the powers and prescribed the duties of the judicial and revenue authorities of those districts.³⁸ By this Regulation, the implementation of Cornwallis system was almost complete in the presidency of

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Clause VI.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Section XII.

³⁶ John Matthai, *Village Government British India*, T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., Adelphi Terrace, 1915, p. 18.

³⁷ Regulation II of 1806 dated 14th February 1806.

³⁸ Richard Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort St. George in Force at the End of 1847*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

Madras.³⁹ The distinctive feature of the Cornwallis system was separation of the revenue and judicial functions of the district Collector.⁴⁰ The duties of magistrate and superintendent of police were transferred from the Collector to the judge. Under the system existed previously, judicial functions of the Collector were not performed in a regular and satisfactory way. The District Collectors always gave priority to achieve the target of revenue collection because it was seriously monitored by the Board of Revenue and failure in that matter caused the displeasure of his superiors and even the suspension or dismissal from service. By the Regulation II of 1806 the judicial powers granted to the Board of Revenue and district Collectors were formally cancelled and their authority was limited to the superintendence and collection of revenue.⁴¹ By this regulation the separation of Judicial and revenue powers was complete in both the landholder and non-landholder villages.

This regulation brought some changes in the nature of the office of *karnam*. All *karnam* staffs in non-landholder villages were put under the immediate control of the Collectors. The subordinate officers of the Collectors had full power to ask the presence of *karnam* whenever their services were wanted.⁴² The *karnam* staffs were liable to dismissal from office by the Board of Revenue for incapacity, disobedience or neglect of the orders of the district Collectors. The district Collectors could suspend *karnam* until orders were received from the Board of Revenue.⁴³

The Cornwallis System and *kolkaran*

The system of administration introduced by Cornwallis in Bengal was the first great reforms of the Company in India. He wanted solution to the problem of

³⁹ It was initiated by Regulation II of 1802.

⁴⁰ T. K Ravindran, *Cornwallis System in Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Regulation II of 1806, Preamble.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Section VII, clause II.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Clause III.

ruined finances of the Company due to corruption and mismanagement. He also wanted effective machinery for imposing peace and dispensing justice.⁴⁴ For this, he wanted to shift from the policy adopted by Robert Clive and Hastings and to work through the native system of administration. Consequently he effected revenue settlements with the landlords as they were the hereditary rent collectors in most parts of India. Another reform of Cornwallis was the complete separation of judicial administration from the revenue department. Gradually the Cornwallis system was extended to other parts of India including Madras presidency. It was an attempt on the part of the British administrators without considering the regional variations in the administration of justice and revenue.

The administration of the Madras Presidency till 1816 was carried out under the Cornwallis system. It was practically started in 1802. Though it was implemented in Madras in 1802, it could not be made strictly applicable to Malabar until 1806. Besides the separation of revenue and judicial powers of the district Collectors the new reform introduced a regular system of appeals from the lower courts to the higher courts and entrusted magisterial duties to the judge. When the Cornwallis system introduced separation of judicial functions from revenue officers, the functions of the government expanded and two separate departments of revenue and magisterial were formed. Though they were separate and independent departments in many respects they were interdependent. Major shares of the suits filed in the courts were related to the revenue affairs and the courts had to depend on the revenue authorities to get reliable information to settle the disputes. In Malabar, *menon* was the custodian of revenue records in the villages. The duties of the *menon* staffs were summarized in the previous paragraphs prove that a single person could not perform all those duties effectively. In Malabar *menon* were greatly helped by the *kolkar* for performing their duties. On many occasions the *kolkar* performed the duties of *menon*. The

⁴⁴ T. H Beaglehole, *Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras 1792-1818*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1966, p. 2.

peculiar features of Malabar villages increased the task of *menon* and *pravarthikkar*. The villages were divided on the basis of the amount of revenue to be collected and not on the basis of area. Hence, in Malabar villages, *pravarthikkar* and *menon* had to travel a long distance for assessment and collection of revenue and for procuring other information. In many occasions *pravarthikkar* and *menon* depended *kolkar* to collect information. As the representatives of the state, *kolkar* were the most familiar face to the native inhabitants. When the revenue and magisterial functions were performed under the district Collectors, all servants of the district were under his control. Now the magisterial duties were under the judges and the servants also were divided accordingly. When the functions of the courts expanded, the duties of the *kolkar* also increased. They were deputed to attend the court duties like delivering of summonses, court decrees, submit revenue records to courts, report of requirements from the courts to the revenue offices etc. The *kolkar* were deputed for revenue and police duties.

The administration of revenue, law, judiciary and police under the Cornwallis system increased the volume of responsibilities of the *kolkar* of Malabar. As they were the only low level staff in the villages, *taluks* and district *cutcheri*, *kolkar* had to attend for different types of duties. The two regulations of 1802, defining the appointment and responsibilities of *karnam*,⁴⁵ and that provided for keeping the registers of land in the District offices under the Collector⁴⁶ increased the burden of the *kolkar*. The assessment of the rent payable by the cultivators of Malabar was not an easy task. The types of land and varieties of crops cultivated in Malabar were different from other districts of the Presidency. Garden lands in Malabar were assessed according to the actual number of productive trees at the time of assessment.⁴⁷ The assessment of crops in the garden lands, which were mostly hills and valleys, fixing their rent, keeping records about the names of

⁴⁵ Regulation XXIX of 1802, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ Regulation XXVI of 1802, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Report of Thomas Warden dated 20th April 1815, para 20.

owners, type of ownership etc. were great task to the village level workers. Though the Collector was the custodian of the records of land as per the regulation, the details had to provide from the village servants. The *parbutti* and the *menon* had to depend mostly on the information given by the *kolkar*. Each village was consisted of many *tara* or *desam*. There were many portions of *parambu* or garden lands and fields which were assessed to the public revenue.⁴⁸ At the time of rent collection the *kolkar* had to travel throughout the villages for collection, supply of arrear notices, and for any other information required by the *parbutti* or *menon*. The *kolkaran* acted as an agent of the village headmen. As the village was the miniature of the British government, the *kolkaran* was the agent of the colonial state.

The most important duty of the *kolkar* was revenue collection. A letter from Watson, who was in charge of the revenue collection of the Northern Division submitted tables of the number of revenue servants, existed in the division during the period of Macleod and later.⁴⁹ It stated that previously there were 83 *kolkar* for revenue collection in the different *taluk* divisions of Malabar. By the revision of establishment, the number of *kolkar* was reduced to 38. A head *cutchery* was established and ten peons were appointed there. As a result of this reduction in many villages, the number of *kolkar* was not enough to the need of the region. It increased the burden of the existing *kolkar* staff. Brown in a letter asked the Collector to provide two additional *kolkar* to Anjarakandi with a monthly pay of rupees 4½ for the effective collection of revenue from the area.⁵⁰ The peons in the *taluk* and district *cutchery* were also *kolkar*, but they had additional duties. Thomas Warden in a letter to the Sub collector of Centre Division directed to recruit *kurichyar* and *kurumbar*, the tribal people of Wyanad, as district *kolkar*.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, para 39.

⁴⁹ Letter dated 16th July 1803, MCF 2229, RAK.

⁵⁰ Letter dated 10th February 1804, MCF 2336, RAK.

⁵¹ Letter dated 29th May 1805, MCF 2321, p. 157, RAK.

Rickards, who was the Collector of Malabar, introduced regular system for the collection of revenue, keeping accounts and transferring of the accounts to the head *cutchery*.⁵² The *menon* in every division had to collect the revenue fixed for the year. He had to accompany the *pravarthikkar* while making the collection and prepare a daily account specifying the coins paid by each *kudiyan* or the tenant. A receipt with the signature of the *pravarthikkar* and *menon* was to be provided to the cultivator. They were responsible to submit the account particulars to the district *cutchery* within the prescribed period. The *menon* was responsible for errors in report.⁵³ The *menon* was also responsible to produce before the Collector the daily accounts of collection, demand collection and balance to be collected and receipt for payment to the establishments. The daily accounts of collection after submitted to the district *cutchery* by the village servants required to be carefully examined by the *sheristadar*, who on finding them correct affixed his official signature and gave a copy to the *menon*.

In Malabar, the deliveries of village accounts to the district *cutchery* and from the *cutchery* to the villages were done by the *kolkar*. In the Sub-Collectors *cutchery* ten posts of peons were sanctioned by Rickards in 1803.⁵⁴ These peons also were selected from among the *kolkar* who lost employment by the reorganization of the revenue establishment in that year. The duties of the *cutchery* peons were almost the same of the village *kolkar* except in the matter of rent collection. The number of district peons were regulated by extends of the district on the proportion of one peon for each *hoobly*.⁵⁵ The *kolkar* and peons were recruited from among the native inhabitants familiar with the region and people in order to facilitate their functions and speedy accomplishment of their duties.

⁵² MCF Vol. 2313, pp. 32-37, RAK.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ The *hoobly* was a revenue division by grouping two or more villages.

Role of *kolkar* in the Assessment of Revenue

In 1803, Collector Rickards initiated the process of assessment of land revenue in Malabar. It was a critical time in Malabar, especially in northern parts of the district. Anti-British rebellions were active in Kottayam and Wyanad. At that time Rickards came to the assessment with the local rulers and chief proprietors of Malabar.⁵⁶ The assessment in Malabar was not an easy task to the British. The district was entirely different from other districts of the Madras presidency in respect of the nature of the ownership of land, payment of rent and even in the structure of villages. Malabar villages were a mixture of garden lands and paddy lands. People were scattered in the villages. Though the Mysore rulers introduced direct settlements with the cultivators, the British at first tried to return to the *zamindari* type settlements with the rulers and chieftains. In practice the land system existed in Malabar was neither the *zamindari* as defined by Cornwallis nor *ryotwari* as described by Thomas Munro. But it was closer to *ryotwari* after the conquest of Mysorean rulers.⁵⁷

Rickards' plan for establishing principles of assessment was the aftermath of the insurrections of 1803, followed by the ill-advised revenue reforms of Major Macleod. Macleod, by using the *parbutti* staffs or village officers, completed the survey of the land within 40 days.⁵⁸ The *kolkar* had an important role in the completion of this survey. Lack of time induced the *parbutti* staffs to depend upon the accounts of the *kolkar* and *menon*. Rickards' plan was with a view to remedy the grave inequalities of his predecessor's assessment and to introduce some principles as a base to the new assessments. Rickards, after discussion with the chieftains and *mukhyastan* officers prepared a plan and recommended it to the Board of Revenue in 1804. This was sanctioned by the Board of Revenue and

⁵⁶ In Malabar, the British administrators at first, concluded settlements with the local rulers and chieftains as in the *zamindari* or landlord villages.

⁵⁷ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 682.

⁵⁸ C. A Innes and F. B Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

implemented in Malabar by his successor Thomas Warden through a proclamation of 21st July 1805.⁵⁹ The proclamation declared that the new system was based on a liberal consideration of the relative rights of the government, proprietor and cultivator. In order to rectify the errors and inequalities in the existing system of revenue a uniform method of division of produce, both garden and rice land was introduced. According to the plan, on rice or wet lands, the quantity of seed used for cultivation deducted from the gross produce. Exactly, the same quantity deducted for expense of cultivation. Then one-third of what remains was allotted to the cultivator as *kolu-labham* or plough profit. The remaining part was the *pattam* or rent and divided in the proportion of six-tenths to the government and four-tenth to the *jenmakkar* or proprietor.⁶⁰ On *parambu* lands the gross produce of the trees (coconut, areca-nut and jack fruit) was to be divided in three equal shares between the cultivator, the *jenmakkar* and the government.⁶¹ On dry grain lands half of the *jenmakkar's varam* was fixed as the share of government. The share of the government on pepper cultivation was not fixed by this proclamation. It was expected that the proprietors will submit a true and faithful account of the rent of their estates at the Sub Collector's *cutcheri*. The statement thus obtained is known in Malabar as *janmipymaish* of 981 M E (1805-06).⁶² Under the *samoothiri* of Kozhikode, more than one hundred chief landlords of Malabar expressed their willingness to accept the principles of *janmipymaish*.⁶³

A rigid scrutiny was declared by the government on the submitted accounts and true result of it would be submitted to the Board of Revenue. After the sanction of the Board, the Collector would grant sealed and signed *patta* or assess notes to the *jenmakkar* and other inhabitants specifying the annual share of revenue to the government. William Logan opines that by preparing the

⁵⁹ Vide Appendix XV, William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. II, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India Provincial Series; Madras*, Vol. II, Government Press, Calcutta, 1908, p. 343.

⁶² William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 688.

⁶³ C. A Innes and F. B Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 329

janmipymaish, Thomas Warden intended two things; first, to obtain the name of every field in the country to serve as a basis for an actual survey and second, to obtain an exact numerical account of the taxable trees so as to regulate the garden assessments.⁶⁴

In the preparation of the *janmipymaish*, the government offered the service of the native revenue servants to the landholders of Malabar. It was to help the landholders to acquire correct information about the area of their land, types of cultivation, name of tenants, number of garden trees etc. Majority of the proprietors of agricultural lands in Malabar were local *raja* landlords and *namboothiri-brahmana* people. The *brahmana* people engaged in priestly works and had no interest in agriculture.⁶⁵ They had no accurate picture about the land under their proprietorship. In most cases they were satisfied with the amount paid by their tenants. When the Commissioners appointed the *raja* chiefs and chieftains for the collection of taxes, they depended servants like *pravarthikkar* and *kolkar* and did not interfere directly in the affairs. That was an important reason for their failure in achieving their target. When the British government decided to introduce a uniform system of revenue collection from rice and garden lands, both the government and the landholders wanted clear accounts about lands under each proprietor, their variety and types of crops cultivated. The *pravarthikkar*, *menon* and *kolkar* had helped the landholders to prepare their statements. Many tenants cultivated land under a proprietor. The pieces of lands under the custody of each tenant, the type of grains harvested by him, the level of fertility of the land, the number of trees in garden lands, the age of trees, the market price of different grains etc. were needed for declaring the amount of revenue to be paid to the government annually by the *jenmakkar*. The collector warned in his proclamation that a rigid scrutiny would be conducted on the voluntary accounts submitted by

⁶⁴ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Malabar, Canara and Mysore*, Vol. II, Higgin Botham and Company, Madras 1870, p. 60.

the proprietors.⁶⁶ The *menon* and *kolkar* provided accurate accounts about the villages to the proprietors as they were answerable to the government, if any discrepancy was found.

Thomas Warden while preparing the *janmipymaish*, arranged through his four Sub Collectors, the actual produce of different qualities of soil in different places with a view to obtain data for the classification of soil in every *taluk*.⁶⁷ Sub Collectors collected the information from the villages and *kolkar* were the most important source for this. They gave detailed pictures about the villages and its produce to the *menon* and *parbutti* and then transferred the accounts to the sub collector's *cutcheri*. After collecting all necessary documents about the land of Malabar and its produces Warden proceeded to the task of surveying the wet lands. It was started with the assistance of the surveyors sent by the Collector of Coimbatore. The service of the *kolkar* of Malabar also utilised for the survey. It was started in 1806 and completed in 1810. As the anti-colonial resistances and insurrections of Northern Division were suppressed, that region also was put under the survey. The accounts prepared after the survey of 1806-10 was known as *alavu pymaish* or *hinduvi pymaish*. William Logan opines that it was the most reliable of all the *pymaish* accounts prepared yet (1884), but in certain respect they were very defective. But no attempt was made to make use of this survey. Warden underlined the assistance of the native servants for the preparation of this account. In a letter to the Board of Revenue dated 16th June 1813, Warden regretted that this account was laid aside and the revenues of the province had been continued to be collected in the Commissioner's *jamma* of 1801.⁶⁸ Hence, the complaints and inequalities of the assessment and collection of revenue continued in Malabar and it was pointed out by Thomas Munro in his report of 1817.

⁶⁶ Proclamation of Thomas Warden dated 21st July 1805.

⁶⁷ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 688.

⁶⁸ C. A. Innes and F. B. Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

Police *kolkar* under the Cornwallis System

As elsewhere in India, indigenous system of police in Malabar was based on land tenure. In *zamindari* areas, landlords were responsible to apprehend the 'robbers and peace breakers' and to restore the stolen property or its value.⁶⁹ The *zamindar* sub-divided their large holdings among their subordinate land holders and thus the police duty also was sub-divided. Cattle, agricultural products and tools for the promotion of production and preservation of products were the most important property to be protected by the state at that time. All inhabitants of the villages were voluntarily responsible for the protection of these properties. Hence, policing was the duty of the villagers as a whole. This village responsibility was enforced through the headmen, who were assisted by some village watchmen.⁷⁰ When Cornwallis introduced the new system at Bengal in 1793, police duties were taken away from the landholders. He separated the police and revenue duties. When Cornwallis system was introduced in Madras Presidency some constrains were faced by the British. In many districts of the Presidency, the village servants called *taliyari* had been performing the duties of police. As already mentioned the case of Malabar was entirely different. The revenue was not rented out in Malabar, but collected by the native servants under the Company and paid monthly.⁷¹ One of the tenants respectable for his character and property was selected as *parbutti*.⁷² The *menon* and *kolkaran* assisted him.

The only field servants of Malabar villages were the *kolkar*. They were the revenue collectors and village watchmen at the same time. When the Cornwallis system implemented in Malabar the *kolkar* were distinguished as revenue *kolkar* and police *kolkar*. In a report Thomas Warden, the Principal Collector of Malabar,

⁶⁹ The colonial administration saw the resistances of the *mappila* people and dissatisfied landlords as robbery and disturbances in the view of the state.

⁷⁰ *Report of the Indian Police Commission 1902-03 (Frazer Report)*, Government Central Printing Office, Shimla, 1913, p. 1.

⁷¹ Wye's Report, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*

stated that in 1804, there were 3000 police *kolkar* in Malabar and it was reduced to 2000 by 1806.⁷³ After the end of Pazhassi revolt, the major duty of the police *kolkar* was to assist the collection of revenue, apprehension of robbers, guarding jails, customs houses and escorting superior officers. In Ancharakandy plantation under the control of M. Brown, *kolkar* were deputed to guard the 'slaves'.⁷⁴ They were also used as personal attendants of the European officers.⁷⁵ In the troublesome areas the revenue *kolkar* were assisted by the police *kolkar*. There was no clear distinction between the revenue and police *kolkar* during this period. The difference was that the *kolkar* on revenue duties were paid from revenue charges and those in police duties were paid from police charges. It is evident from the diary of Warden, the principal Collector of Malabar.⁷⁶ But in many other records their numbers were mentioned separately. In 1804, the Sub Collector of Southern Division asked for an additional number of 12 *kolkar* peons for the judicial department to guard the jail at Cherpulasseri, where the numbers of inmates were increasing day by day.⁷⁷ The heads of police *kolkar* were instructed to assist the civil authorities, as per their requisition, to maintain peace.

The *darogah* in Malabar maintained a fixed number of armed men under them. The *darogah* system could not bring peace in Madras. There were many abuses in their selection and supervision. After the Vellore Mutiny, in 1806, Lord William Bentinck appointed a committee of police in Madras. It pointed out many abuses in the existing police system. In 1813, a special committee of its own was appointed by the Court of Directors to study and report about the judiciary and police administration in British India. On the basis of its suggestions, the Court of

⁷³ Report dated 30th July 1808, MCF Vol. 2331, pp 219-263, RAK.

⁷⁴ It is seen that the share holders of the company practiced slavery in their plantations extensively for labour. Letter from Brown to the Zilla Magistrate of Northern Division dated 21st December 1811, MCF 2569A, pp. 13-15, RAK.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ MCF Vol. 2385, pp. 1-3, RAK.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

Directors issued orders. They condemned the *darogah* system and strongly insisted for the maintenance of village police.⁷⁸

Changes after 1816

The year 1816 witnessed some important changes in the administration of revenue and judicial administration in Madras Presidency. Traces of shift from the Cornwallis system were visible in certain regulations passed in the year. It was the result of the proposals of Thomas Munro. He was appointed as special commissioner for the revision of the Madras judicial system in 1814. He proposed some important regulations. In respect to the village administration he proposed to restore the management of the village police to the heads of villages and to constitute village Panchayats.⁷⁹ On the basis of his proposals, regulations were passed. They re-defined the powers and responsibilities of the district Collectors, Magistrates and village headmen and restructured the courts and reformed the existing police establishment. Re-defining of the powers and responsibilities of village headmen, and the changes in police system brought many changes in the nature of the duties of the *kolkar* in Malabar. Increase in the volume of the duties of *kolkar* made them a group of servants always present among the inhabitants of Malabar villages.

Regulation I of 1816 was an attempt of the government to regularize the traditional police system in Tanjore district. It was intended to regularize the collection and assessment of the tax collected from the district for the maintenance of the *kaval* police (*kaval swatantram*) system of the region. Till 1814, the government tried to maintain the existing system of village police in Tanjore in a modified form. But due to continuing mischief and exactions of the *Kavalkar*, the system was abolished and the district was shared in the general judicial and police

⁷⁸ Frazer Report, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷⁹ T. H Beagle Hole, *Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras 1792-1818*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

reforms which were carried out throughout the Presidency.⁸⁰ The regulation stopped the *kaval* system in the province of Tanjore and directed to establish a more efficient system of police in the province.⁸¹ The conventional tax collected from the province for the purpose of policing was declared a legal tax and it was to use for the expense of the new police system to be established in the province. The rate of tax was clearly fixed. It was decided to extend the collection of this tax to areas of the province, where currently it did not exist. The rate of tax for cultivating lands and buildings was fixed. The dwelling houses of agricultural labourers were exempted from police tax.⁸² The tax payers had to pay the police tax at the time of the payment of land rent. The collector of land revenue was responsible to the collection of police tax.

This regulation was an indicator of the future plans of the government towards the policing in the presidency. The policy in relation to village policing reflected in this regulation had its impact in Malabar. The district authorities, without provoking the inhabitants, regularized a traditional system of payment towards their own protection. In the previous system, the *kaval swatantram* was not collected strictly and it did not exist in all parts of Tanjore. But now it became a uniform tax applicable to almost all land holders and owners of buildings in Tanjore. The owners of tiled houses had to pay two *fanam* and thatched houses one *fanam* per year. This regulation was a step towards transforming the old system of village policing into a regular establishment under the direct control of the government. When this system was extended to other parts of the Presidency, it became the basic unit of the police organization of British government. In Malabar, the *kolkar* became the counterparts to the *taliyari* of other districts. After 1858, when the administration of British India was transferred from the East India

⁸⁰ F. R Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

⁸¹ Regulation I of 1816, Section I.

⁸² Regulation I of 1816, Section V, Clause II.

Company to the British government, many changes were introduced in the police organization. But the village police system remained almost the same.

The Regulation IV of 1816

The Regulation IV of 1816 indirectly contributed to the transformation of the role of the *kolkar* in Malabar villages. It was a regulation passed on 17th of May 1816 for declaring the heads of villages to be *munsiff* in their respective villages, to hear and decide civil suits for sum of money or personal property to a limited amount.⁸³ It was intended to lessen the business of the *zilla* courts and to diminish the expense of court procedures in small suits. In most cases plaintiffs, defendants and witnesses had to stay away from their homes for many days to attend in the courts procedures. To avoid these inconveniences, village headmen were empowered to take decisions in the cases defined in this Regulation. The Regulation provided for summoning the defendant to appear before the village *munsiff* immediately or within two days from the delivery of the summons.⁸⁴ The duty of delivering the verbal summons to the concerned party was of the village servants usually employed in carrying messages.⁸⁵ This provision in the regulation made the *kolkar* in Malabar responsible to discharge the summonses. Along with the *kolkar*, the plaintiff or his *vakeel* also had to accompany to point out the defendant and to explain to him the demand against him.⁸⁶ In the same manner, the *kolkaran* had to go and visit the witnesses and intimate him to report before the village *munsiff* in due date. The new responsibility raised the importance of *kolkar* in the villages of Malabar. If the defendant neglected or refused to appear before the *adhibari* within the time limit, the *kolkaran* called upon to make oath to the service of the summons. After that the *adhibari* took decisions on the basis of

⁸³ Richard Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort St. George in Force at the End of 1847*, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

⁸⁴ Section XII, Clause I, Regulation IV of 1816.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, clause II.

⁸⁶ H. Smith, *Regulations IV, V and XI of 1816, for the Guidance of Village Moonsiffs and Village Punchayats in the Trial and Decision of Civil Suits and of Heads of Villages in their Police Duties* (Malayalam Translation), Fort St. George Gazette Press, Madras, 1857. pp. 15-16.

the vouchers and evidences produced by the plaintiff. The verbal summonses to the witnesses were also distributed by the *kolkar*. This regulation increased the work load of the *kolkar*. In the process of settling a single case by the village *munsiff*, the *kolkaran* had to travel more than one time to meet the defendants, witnesses and *vakeel*. If a person residing in any other villages and whose presence was necessary for the decision of a case, the *kolkaran* had to travel up to the office of the *adhikari* of that village for serving the notice. It was the duty of the *kolkar* of that village to serve it to the concerned person. In such cases more than a day was needed to fulfill the task. When the parties concerned were not ready to pay the fines decided by *munsiff*, the next step was attaching his property. It caused additional works to the *kolkar*. The auction of the attached property was done in the presence of the district *kolkar* or peons deputed by the district *munsiff*.⁸⁷ At the end of every month, all fines levied by the village *munsiff* were to be sent to the district *munsiff*. This duty was discharged by the village *kolkar*.

The *kolkar* and the Village *panchayath* of 1816

The Madras government introduced a new institution called village *panchayath* for the adjudication of civil cases for sums of money or personal property without limitation as to amount or value.⁸⁸ The village *munsiff* was empowered to summon village *panchayath* for the trial and taking decisions on a case, if both parties of the suit were agreed to settle the matter under a village *panchayath* without appeal.⁸⁹ It was also intended to diminish the expense of civil cases and utilize the service of intelligent and principal persons of the villages for the discharge of court duties. In pre-British Malabar village heads called *desavazhi* were assisted by local chiefs called *pramani* in the discharge of police and judicial duties. There were one to six *pramani* men in a village.⁹⁰ The regulation was also

⁸⁷ Section XXX, Regulation IV of 1816.

⁸⁸ Regulation V of 1816.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, section II, clause II

⁹⁰ Munro's Report, *op. cit.*, para 10.

with the aim of providing certain respectability to these local magnates whose powers and privileges were lost by the new policy of the British. The regulation directed the village *munsiff* to constitute the village *panchayath* by including the most respectable inhabitants of the village. They were called upon to serve in rotation whenever their number is sufficient for the purpose. The landlords and chiefs of villages had enough wealth to live and they were in search of special privileges under the new government. The village *panchayath* was an institution to accommodate such principal persons. These measures, as the government expected, would create a royal group in the villages loyal to the British.⁹¹

The constitution of the village *panchayath* increased the duties of the *kolkar*. The delivery of notice to the concerned persons on their appointment as member in the panchayat by village *munsiff* was an important task. Unlike in the village *munsiff* courts, many members acted as judges in the village *panchayath* system. The only servant in Malabar villages to perform the duty of attendants was the *kolkaran*. Besides the revenue and police duties they had to do the court duties also. Regulation VII of 1816 provided for the district *panchayath* for the adjudication of justice in certain cases. In the district courts also process servers were generally *kolkar*, but their designation in the records was *kolkar* peons. When the duties of the *kolkar* were increasing by these new reforms, their influence in the society also began to increase. The ordinary inhabitants of the villages of Malabar looked the *kolkar* with fear as they were the reporters of village affairs to the government.

The Regulation XI of 1816

The *darogah* system of policing introduced by Cornwallis could not bring social order and tranquility in British India. Most *darogah* misused their position to increase their wealth and power. The armed men under the *darogah* were, in many instances, breakers of peace. The magisterial power also was misused. They were

⁹¹ The colonial state wanted to count these people as natural leaders of the village.

beyond the sight and control of the magistrates and surrounded with various temptations to betray their trust.⁹² The remuneration to *darogah* was not enough to attract respectable persons to that position. In 1814 itself the Court of Directors condemned the *darogah* system as radically defective and inadequate and directed to re-establish the village police system. The *darogah* system was a failure because it did not adapt the customs of the Indian society as concerned to the maintenance of internal security. The feeble operation of a few *darogah* with their peons in an extensive country without local influence and connection with the people could not bring results.⁹³ Strengthening of village police system was considered by the Court of Directors as a solution to the existing abuses of the police system. Village police was in a neglected condition at that time. The Court of Directors expected that the village police would get the accord of the inhabitants. Their cooperation might help to improve the condition of law and order in British India. Anticipating this reform the number of *darogah* establishment and police corps were reduced. The Court of Directors also wanted to transfer the duties of magistrate and control of the police from the *zilla* judge to the Collector. Thomas Munro and Stratton were appointed as Commissioners with direction to recommend how to implement the new system in the Madras Presidency. On the basis of their recommendation Regulation XI was passed in 1816.

The Regulation XI was passed by the Governor in Council on the 13th of September 1816 for the establishment of a general system of police throughout the Madras Presidency. It was intended to establish a system of police based chiefly upon the ancient customs and usages of the country and to define the powers and authorities of different officers entrusted with the duties of police.⁹⁴ The Regulation abolished the present police *darogah* and *tanadar*. At the district level the control of the police was given to the Collector. Below him the assistant

⁹² Frazer Report, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Section I, Regulation XI of 1816.

collectors, *tahsildar* and *kotwal* also were defined as controlling authorities of police in their concerned areas.⁹⁵

In villages, heads of villages were defined as ex-officio heads of police in their respective villages. The regulation clearly defined the duties and responsibilities of the headmen in respect to the police and the prevention of crimes. He was to be aided by the *karnam*, *taliyari* and other village watchers in discharging his duties. This provision of the regulation made the *menon* and *kolkar* of Malabar responsible to help the Village officer or *adhikari* in the preservation of peace in villages.⁹⁶ The heads of villages were authorized to apprehend all persons who committed any crimes which might cause for the damage of public property or breach of peace. He should send the persons committed such crimes along with the accusers and the witnesses to the police officers of the district. In emergency situation the entire inhabitants of villages were obliged to assist the headmen for securing offenders. Thus, the regulation made the villagers as a whole in preserving peace. There was provision in the regulation for cooperation among the headmen and peoples in the neighboring villages for the apprehension of criminals, when the machinery of a single village was not enough for the situation. The *kolkar* were the village servants of Malabar who worked as the right hand of the village officers in performing their police duties. They travelled through the vast areas of the villages to collect information about the thieves and criminals, to take them in front of the *adhikari*, and accompany them while transferring to the district police officers.⁹⁷ In cases of trivial nature like use of abusive languages and inconsiderable physical attacks and affray, the village officers were empowered to detain them in village chaultry for a time not more than twelve hours.⁹⁸ In such cases the *kolkar* had to guard the jails. The *kolkar* had to report to the *adhikari* and *menon* all information

⁹⁵ Section III.

⁹⁶ After 1816 *parbuttiship* was absent in Malabar and all records mentioned only about *desadhikari* chiefs or *adhikari* as heads of villages.

⁹⁷ Section XXI, Regulation XI of 1816.

⁹⁸ Section X.

they obtained from the village in connection with the peace and good order of the village and obey all the orders of the heads of villages.⁹⁹

The village officers were responsible to report to the district police officer, the cases settled by him in the villages with simple punishments. The statement of such cases were prepared by *menon* and transferred to the district by *kolkar*. The village officer had to conduct searches for stolen properties concealed in any parts of the village under his charge. He had to enquire about the sale of commodities suspected to be stolen and the seller who could not give a reasonable reply. Such persons were to be handed over to the district police officer. The key role in this searches and enquiries were played by the *kolkar*. The village heads were to take charge of stray cattle in his jurisdiction. He had to conduct enquiry about murder cases in his villages and report it to the district police for further action. It was the duty of police *kolkar* to report to the *menon* about suspicious persons residing in or passing through the villages. As per the provisions of this Regulation, *kolkar* were obliged to do the duties of village police.¹⁰⁰ The Section XVI of the Regulation directed to the appointment of village watchers. If there were no existing office of village watchers in any villages of the Presidency, village watchers should be appointed by the magistrate from the castes best qualified for the police duties. It was this provision which made the *kolkar* as village police in Malabar. They were described in the records as police *kolkar*. This regulation made the post of watchers hereditary. Selection to the post of village watcher was done by the *adhipari* and it was authorized by the magistrate. They were entitled for remuneration in the form of money, grain or land.

The Regulation XI of 1816 raised the role of *kolkar* in the day to day affairs of village life in Malabar. Till that time *kolkar*, to the villagers, were representatives of the government for the collection of revenue and servers of court notices and other government notifications. Now he became the part of a regular police

⁹⁹ Section XXIII.

¹⁰⁰ Section XV, Regulation XI of 1816.

establishment with well defined duties and responsibilities. The people of villages looked *kolkar* as an agent of the state with powers to report all movements in the villages. The government, by this and many other regulations of 1816, strengthened the structure of villages, the basic unit of British administration. Separate regulations were adopted to define the powers and responsibilities of village officers, accountants and other servants of villages. It was an attempt of the British to assimilate the customary institutions of India suitable to the protection of their interests.

When the British implemented their new village system in Malabar, the *kolkar* became the executive assistants of the headmen. Before that, the name *kolkaran* was a synonym to the persons employed under the *naduvazhi* and other local chiefs to work as their attendants. The various regulations of the nineteenth century made the *kolkar* an important section among the native servants who had important role in the maintenance of the colonial rule in Malabar. Mere tax collectors of the villages now become the crucial agency by whom the village headmen collected authentic information and transferred those needed to the higher authority. The *kolkar* of Malabar, unlike their counterparts in other districts of Madras Presidency, were mostly recruited from the upper castes of Malabar. It gave them great respectability among the inhabitants. When they had received certain police authorities by the new regulation their power also increased and they became representatives of the government in villages. As per regulations the *adhikari* was the head of Malabar village and he used the *kolkar* as executive assistants.

The Regulation XII of 1816 empowered the District Collector to constitute Village *panchayath* office through the village *munsiff* for taking decision on disputes regarding boundaries of land, occupying, cultivating and irrigating land.¹⁰¹ When such *panchayath* were constituted in the villages of Malabar, the *kolkar* had

¹⁰¹ Richard Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort St. George in Force at the End of 1847*, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

important role in collecting the actual state of affairs and report it to the members of the *panchayath*. They took decision on the basis of the data thus collected and by the questioning of both the plaintiff and the defendant.

Various regulations passed in 1816 radically changed the nature of the administration of revenue police and judiciary in the Madras Presidency. In Malabar, it took more time to implement these changes. The peculiar structure of the Malabar villages and its strange economic and social order led to delay in implementing these changes. The complications of Malabar were described by Colonel Munro and H. S Graeme in their reports. The restructuring of the village, *taluk* and district offices led to changes in the duties and responsibilities of its officials. The *kolkar* previously employed in *taluk* and district offices were now called as peons in records. But they were *kolkar* to the village people. Through the abolition of the offices of police *darogah* and *jamedar*, the government expected the reduction of the expense of administration of justice, law and order. Now the revenue officers became the controlling authorities of police force. When the control of police force was transferred to the district collectors, *tahsildar* and other revenue officers, it was convenient to use the police force for revenue collection and related duties. In 1816, a letter from Madras directed the Collector of Malabar to use both police and revenue establishments without distinction in police and revenue duties.¹⁰² It led to employ *kolkar* of Malabar to both police and revenue duties reciprocally. Thus the distinction between the police *kolkar* and revenue *kolkar* was disappeared. The new reforms resulted in the reduction of the number of *kolkar* in Malabar. Along with increased work load, these reforms increased the powers and influences of the *kolkar* and as the agent of state they began to play important role. The British administrators anticipated the possible undue influences of the police *kolkar* when employing them permanently in a fixed station far away from the supervision of the revenue officers. Thus, direction was given to the Collector for regularly relieve the *kolkar* employed as guards in the passes and

¹⁰² Letter dated 29th October 1816, MCF Vol. 2283, RAK.

jungles.¹⁰³ The government was always bothered to use the *kolkar* for the benefit of the colonial state.

Police *kolkar* under the New System

Introduction of the new system brought many difficulties to the district authorities in Malabar. Many *tanadar*, *jamedar* and *kolkar* were thrown out of employment. The following table shows the distribution of police *kolkar* stationed in different places of Malabar as guards of jails, district and *taluk cutcheri* and for prevention of smuggling tobacco at the time of the introduction of the new system on 1st November 1816.¹⁰⁴

S. No	Description	Number of <i>kolkar</i>	Rate of Pay/month		
			<i>Pagodas</i>	<i>Fanam</i>	<i>Cash</i>
1	<i>kolkar</i> stationed in jails of Northern Division including Wyanad and the <i>Cutcheri</i> offices of Northern Division	311	1	22	40
2	Stationed in the jails of Southern Division	95	1	20	56
3	Stationed in the tobacco establishment and <i>cutcheri</i>	102	1	19	22
4	Stationed in Southern Division <i>taluk</i>	222	1	6	34
5	Stationed at Wyanad, Cartinad, Cochin and Southern <i>taluk</i> divisions	34	1	0	0
6	<i>kolkar</i> without employment	145	1	19	22
Total		764	-	-	-

Besides the guard *kolkar*, there were ordinary police *kolkar*, armed *kolkar* and *kolkar* for night petrol in towns like Kozhikode. In 1816, before the introduction of new system, in Southern Division alone there were 123 ordinary police *kolkar*, 205 armed *kolkar* and 25 *kolkar* for night watch.¹⁰⁵ In North Malabar, 745 native servants were worked in the police establishment before November 1816. Out of this, 707 were armed *kolkar* and remaining 38 *kotwal*, *darogah* and their writers.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ MCF Vol. 2285, p. 141, RAK.

¹⁰⁵ MCF Vol. 2283, pp. 55-62, RAK.

After the transfer of magisterial power to the district Collector, district revenue officers were also police officers. There were 1095 native servants in revenue establishments. Out of which 683 were *kolkar* doing the duties of peons in *taluk* and *hoobli* offices and tobacco establishments and remaining were *sheristadar*, *gumastah*, *parbutti* and *menon*. Besides, there were 549 armed *kolkar*. The number of *kotwal*, *ameen* and their writers came 47.¹⁰⁶

Under the new system there were no *tanadar* and *jamedar*. The office of *ameen* replaced them. In a letter from the District Collector dated February 1817, it was reported that 25 *tanadar*, 4 *jamedar* and 161 police *kolkar* were thrown out of employment by the introduction of new system. But the Collector was reluctant to dismiss them from service and reported that it was inconsiderable to deprive the means of living to these old faithful servants of government.¹⁰⁷ He proposed to maintain them as extra *ameen* and *kolkar* at all events until the introduction of the *munsiff* system, which would make room for the transfer of some of the *kolkar* as *munsiff* peons. Thomas Warden, the Collector proposed to Thomas Munro, the Commissioner to vest the *parbutti* with the power of village *munsiff* and to increase the number of them considerably in proportion to the new demands. It might give opportunity to reduce the number of police *kolkar* by transferring them to the *munsiff* department. It would take some time to the appointment of the *munsiff* and permission would be given to retain them till that time. The regulations of 1816 necessitated the reorganization of the villages with immediate effect.

Reorganization of Villages: Proposals of Munro

In 1817, Thomas Munro, one of the members of the Commission for reorganizing establishment of the Presidency, visited Malabar and wrote a valuable report on the district. He stayed in Malabar nearly one month and read all available

¹⁰⁶ MCF Vol. 2286, p. 313, RAK

¹⁰⁷ Letter dated 6th February 1817, MCF Vol. 2284, pp. 63-66, RAK.

documents about Malabar and collected verbal information also.¹⁰⁸ None of the records referred by Munro entered into the details of village administration and hence his report was an abstract of the information collected from the *nair* and other natives of Malabar. Thomas Munro was against the policy of imposing foreign institutions upon a conquered territory. In 1805, Munro wrote to the Board of Revenue that 'when a country fall under the dominion of a foreign power it is usually found to be wisest plan to leave it in possession of its own laws and customs, and to attempt rather to restructure than to abolish them and substitute others in their room.'¹⁰⁹ In Malabar, he proposed complete reorganization of the village establishment. The British had not brought any change in the village system introduced by the Mysore rulers and it was run almost entirely by the district establishment under the *tahsildar*. The British government rested entirely upon military power and there is no native government in India which depended exclusively upon it.¹¹⁰ A strong village establishment is essential to have a strong hold upon the people, to act upon them and to develop confidence upon them. A regular village establishment is more important to a foreign government than to a native one. The British were inexperienced and ignorant about the people and situations of the newly conquered territories. Thus, it was imperative to seek the help of the regular village establishments to administer the internal affairs of the country. For the control of villages and thereby the country as a whole Munro proposed to create a body of village headmen supporting the British dominion.

This reasoning was more applicable to Malabar than to any other districts of Madras Presidency. He proposed that a regular village establishment should be introduced with increased allowances to the servants to get more respectability to them. Beaglehole wrote that 'Munro believed in Indian tradition and supported a form of administration near to the native population, easily intelligible to the ryot'.

¹⁰⁸ Munro's Report, *op. cit.*, Para 2.

¹⁰⁹ C. f., T. H Beaglehole, *Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras 1792-1818*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹¹⁰ Munro's Report, *op. cit.*, Para 28.

In Malabar, he proposed to appoint the old *desavazhi* as the village headmen and make the post hereditary. Their pay was to be fixed as 1¼ per cent of the total rent of the region. The office of *karnam* or *menon* was to be filled by those men who were acting as *parbutti* and *sheristadar*.¹¹¹ Their pay proposed by Munro was two per cent of the total rent.

About the appointment of *kolkar* also, Munro had suggested a clear plan. He recommended appointing a *kolkar* for every territory yielding average revenue of 1000 *pagoda*. If one division or village is not yielding 1000 *Pagodas*, divisions or villages can be clubbed together for the appointment of *kolkar*. It appeared that the number of *kolkar* fixed by Munro for Malabar villages were insufficient. But he justified his decision by describing about the peculiar nature of Malabar villages. Comparing to the villages of other provinces of Madras, cultivating lands and houses of the land owners were guarded by his own servants and subordinates. According to Munro, the villages were separated by hills and jungles, it was easy to identify a stranger in the village easily and so the threat of robbery was less in Malabar. Hence, the *kolkar* had no burden to guard the crops or continuously watch the villages. Another task of the revenue *kolkar* was to collect the revenue and make repeated demands from defaulters. But in Malabar, according to Munro, the rent was fixed and moderate. The ryots regularly paid the rent in time and generally there was no additional burden to the *kolkar*. It was because the superior position of *namboothiri* and *nair* castes in Hindu religion and the long existence of military tenure created an extraordinary degree of subordination among the different castes.¹¹² Thus, the people were ready to obey the orders of high caste village headmen without any hesitation. Many other works of the villages were performed by the inhabitants voluntarily. For the appointment of *kolkar* preference should be given to those *kolkar* who served under the *parbutti* or *sheristadar*. The *kolkar* should perform all the village duties under the order of the village head and

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, para 30.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, para 34.

the *Menon*. The office of the *kolkar* should be hereditary and pay equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of the total revenue, either in land or money. It is practicable to appoint *kolkar* who were natives of the villages.

According to the proposal of Munro the total expense for the collection of revenue was fixed as ten per cent. For the collection of an amount of *pagoda* 5, 00, 000/, total expense was 20, 000 *pagoda*. It was to be distributed in the following manner among the village servants.

Heads of villages or <i>adhikari</i> @ $1\frac{1}{4}$ %	6250/-
<i>karnam</i> or <i>menon</i> @ 2 %	10000/-
<i>kolkar</i> @ $\frac{3}{4}$ %	3750/-
Total expense @ 4%	20, 000/-

Munro's proposal to appoint local raja people, *desavazhi*, *naduvazhi* and members of the *nair* families as village heads, *menon* and *kolkar* was objected by some British officials. It was because they suspected that, when the old ruling class regains their power and position, they may suppress the people and it may cause for creating hatred towards the British rule. They also suspected that the new position would induce them to organize the inhabitants against the government. But Munro opposed their argument by saying that the members of the royal family already under the service of the Company were not creating any problem. Most of them were very poor and wished to live in peace. They were unable to mobilize the people as the new generation had no respect towards them. Munro again argued that the best way to regain the attachment of the people and the royal class was by confidence and good treatment, not by fear and suspicion. His idea was to reinstate the real and nominal authority, united together under the ancient chiefs of villages. In villages where major parts of land were owned by *mappila* people, Munro proposed to appoint *mappila* chiefs of the village as headmen.

Munro's proposals for the reorganization of the revenue establishments of Malabar were the first all-comprehensive one. It was the result of a detailed

analysis of the functioning of the revenue establishments from village to district. But the time he spent in Malabar was not enough for a direct analysis of events. He mainly depended upon the *namboothiri* and *nair* chiefs of Malabar to prepare his report. So the interests of the elite Hindus were projected in the report. Though many of his conclusions about Malabar villages were true, the number of *kolkar* recommended to villages was not enough to address the new situation.

Graeme's Report and Consequent Reforms

After receiving the report of Thomas Munro, the Board of Revenue proposed to depute one of the members of the Board to Malabar for carrying out the suggestions in the report. But instead of that, in 1818 the government appointed Graeme, a judge of the Southern Court of Circuit, as commission to introduce the new system of police and magistracy and to introduce what improvement might be introduced into the revenue administration of the district.¹¹³ In 1822, Graeme submitted his report to the government. At that time, Thomas Munro commented on the report that the most comprehensive report ever received of any province under this government.¹¹⁴ Graeme during his stay in Malabar studied the existing system of administration in detail and prepared his report in a reasonable way. Before submitting his final report in 1822, Graeme submitted interim reports to the Board of Revenue about the affairs of Malabar. Many of his proposals were accepted by the government and implemented soon. In most cases he agreed with the proposals of Munro.

The reforms concerned to the villages introduced by Graeme were important. Previously, Munro in his report pointed out the defects of the village system of Malabar. Instead of the villages of Mysore rulers, the Company introduced the *hoobly* system by enlarging the area of villages and reducing the

¹¹³ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 690.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

number of *parbutti*. Munro wrote that it was not a village system at all.¹¹⁵ As a result, Graeme reorganized the existing village system in 1822. At that time there were more than two thousand small revenue units called *desam* in Malabar. These small *desam* were grouped into 429 *amsam*, which later became the basic administrative and revenue unit of the British in India. Each *amsam* was placed under a headman called *adhikari*, later became the village officer. By this reform, Graeme did not change the structure of the village but enlarged its area. As much of the old *desavazhi* were appointed as *adhikari*. To assist the *Adhikari*, an accountant called *menon* and an executive assistant called *kolkaran* were appointed to each *amsam*. Later the number of *amsam* increased to 736 which include 2, 222 *desam*.¹¹⁶ The functions of *adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkaran* were defined and redefined by government orders and regulations from time to time.

As concerned to the village establishment, Munro proposed one *kolkar* for an area yielding average revenue of pagodas 1000. But Graeme suggested not considering the revenue to be collected for fixing the number of *kolkar*. The appointment of *kolkar* depends entirely upon the necessity of their services, connected with the extent of their range and the number of villages placed under their superintendence. The state of the country and the habit of the inhabitants also was considered.¹¹⁷ The pay of village servants was to be regulated by a regular pay scale. He recommended minimum pay for *adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkar*. To *Kolkar* he recommended two rupees a month. Instead of one *kolkar* for one *menon* proposed by Munro, Graeme suggested two to three *kolkar* under a *menon* considering the peculiarities of the area. When the new system was introduced in Malabar, armed police *kolkar* were employed under the direct control of the Collector. They were designated by Graeme as armed peons. When the police and revenue duties were clubbed together, *kolkar* of villages, peons and police peons of

¹¹⁵ C. A Innes & F. B Evans, *Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 368.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Report of Graeme to the President Board of Revenue dated 16th June 1821, para 12, MCF 4908, RAK.

taluks and districts did similar duties and among the people they were identified as *kolkar*. In certain records also their names used interchangeably.

Monopoly Trade and the *kolkar*

When the British East India Company acquired political authority over the territories of India it began to dictate trade rules favourable to the Company. As a part of that policy the trade of certain items in India was made the monopoly of the Company. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British government in Malabar made the trade of commodities like salt, tobacco and timber, monopoly of the British. It was a great set back to the producers and traders of these products. Many people in Malabar engaged in occupation related to the production and distribution of these products. They became unemployed and lost means of their livelihood. The British government started measures to effectively implement the monopoly trade of the declared items. Separate establishments for salt, tobacco and sea customs were established to prevent the unauthorized movement of these items through Malabar. In these three departments the key role to prevent the illegal transport of commodities was effectively done by the *kolkar*. Without the service of *kolkar* the government could not have implemented the monopoly trade in Malabar. As already mentioned, the peculiar geography of Malabar with hills, mountains, forests, rivers, and scattered nature of dwelling houses was obstacles to the British officials to check the illegal movement of goods. Hence they employed *kolkar* for the prevention of such practices. Armed *kolkar* were posted in certain areas of serious threats of smuggling. After the end of the organized rebellions against the Company, armed *kolkar* were stationed in places where gang robberies and smuggling of goods were taking place.

The appendix to the report of Munro proves the importance of *kolkar* in Malabar. In almost all departments *kolkar* were served as peons, agents or guards. In the sea customs department, thirty nine *kolkar* served as guards in the coastline and river mouths. Duties like guard the ports, customs houses and escort to the

collections were also done by them. Another twenty two served as peons and attenders in the same department. In the sea customs department, *kolkar* were very vigilant to prevent smuggling. They were under the control of the Managers of sea custom stations. But they conducted raids directly and seized goods and articles from sea coasts and at river mouths. In 1814, two *kolkar* named Kolkaran Krishnan Nair and Kolkaran Chandoo raided and seized goods from the ports of Koilandy and Kannur respectively.¹¹⁸ There were ten customs stations in Malabar and among them Thalasserry, Kozhikode and Kochi were the principal stations. The average income from these ports for three years from 1814- 1816 was as follows.¹¹⁹

Thalasserry	20, 658 (in <i>star pagoda</i>)
Kozhikode	14, 083
Kochi	10, 014

Babington, the Customs Collector, in his letter explained that the reason for lower collection in Kozhikode was because of lack of staff and troublesome nature of the people. He proposed to increase the strength and pay of the customs staff including the *kolkar* in order to increase the collection. To prevent smuggling and illicit trafficking, better pay to the staff was suggested. When the Collector of Sea Customs asked the managers to submit statements of additional staff required for the due realization of revenue and prevention of illicit traffic in the different ports, all managers demanded to increase the number of *kolkar*. The Collector through his direct examination ascertained the reason for such recommendation.¹²⁰ In some areas, a *kolkaran* at that time had to guard more than twenty miles of coastline. In

¹¹⁸ Letter from Calicut Customs Collector's Office dated 16th August 1814, MCF Vol. 2484, RAK.

¹¹⁹ Letter from John Babington to President, Board of Trade, dated 26th February 1817, MCF 2484, RAK.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

order to strengthen the customs stations and increase the collection Babington proposed the following increase in the number of *kolkar* in the department.¹²¹

Sl. No	Name of Customs Stations	Number of existing <i>Kolkar/Peons</i>	Pay			Number of proposed <i>Kolkar/Peons</i>	Pay		
			Pg.	Fn.	Cs.		Pg.	Fn.	Cs.
1	Cochin	7	10	-	-	9	12	38	45
2	Chavakkad	6	8	25	57	8	11	19	23
3	Ponnani	7	10	-	-	9	12	38	45
4	Tanur	7	10	-	-	7	10	-	-
5	Calicut	10	14	12	69	15	21	19	23
6	Quilandy	5	7	6	34	5	7	6	34
7	Badagara	7	10	-	-	9	12	38	45
8	Mahe	4	5	32	11	4	5	32	11
9	Tellicherry	9	12	38	46	11	15	32	12
10	Cannanore	8	11	19	23	9	12	38	46
Total		70				86			

The people saw the *kolkar* as the agents of the government throughout the coastlines, ports, river mouths and even in the towns and *bazaar* near the sea coasts. In Thalasserry, three *kolkar* named Poodokooder Raman Kolkaran, Kolkaran Raman and Bapen Kolkaran seized items like beads, Surat looking glass, boiled and unboiled rice smuggled by the inhabitants. Fish oil was seized by Kolkaran Achaco at Kochi.¹²² They became villains in the minds of the people. The messages and information given by these native servants to the station managers were final words and actions will come in accordance with. There were instances of public manhandling of the *kolkar* which show the attitude of the people towards them. The Sea Customs Collector in a letter to the District Magistrate explained an assault on a *kolkar* while passing through a *bazaar* at Badagara. Three persons along with some merchants of the *bazaar* seized the *kolkaran* and carried him to a nearby house and kicked on his face so as to lose his teeth.¹²³ These types of attempts were frequent to deter the servants of the sea custom departments from performing their duties.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-13.

¹²² Babington to President of Trade dated 10th March 1817, MCF 2484, p. 225, RAK.

¹²³ Letter dater 14th April 1818, MCF 2506, pp. 101-06, RAK.

Salt was another item, its production and distribution was controlled by the government. For the monitoring of this separate establishment was maintained. There was a *gumastah* or clerk and assistant for salt in the *huzzur catchery*. Many salt stations were functioned under *peshkar* in different parts of the Province. There were clerks and *kolkar* in these stations to monitor salt transactions. In 1817, twenty seven *kolkar* were employed in the salt department for preventing illegal traffic of salt.¹²⁴ Later it was raised to thirty. The following table explains the structure of the salt department of Malabar in 1821.¹²⁵

Sl. No	Salt Stations	Number of <i>peshkar</i>	Number of <i>gumastah</i>	Number of <i>kolkar</i>
1	Kozhikode	1	1	3
2	Manoor & Karuvanturuty	1	1	3
3	Koottanad	1	1	3
4	Chavakkad	1	1	3
5	Talakatooor, Elatoor & Pynad	1	1	3
6	Vadakara	1	1	3
7	Thalasseri	1	1	3
8	Andaloor	1	1	3
9	Kannur	1	1	3
10	Kauvai	1	1	3

Thirty *kolkar* served in different stations under the salt department. The salary of *peshkar* and clerks varied from station to station. The salary of a *kolkaran* in all stations was two rupees. Though their salary was low, their service was utilised its maximum for the prevention of illegal traffic of salt.

Tobacco department was another one which the government had keen interest.¹²⁶In the tobacco department, out of 133 *kolkar* peons 102 served exclusively for apprehension of smugglers. The *kolkar* were deployed in the places

¹²⁴ MCF 2561, RAK.

¹²⁵ Report of Graeme to the President Board of Revenue dated 16th June 1821, (hereafter Graeme's Report), MCF 4908, RAK.

¹²⁶ Tobacco monopoly was introduced in 1806.

through which tobacco smuggling was carried on and they effectively served for the Company to prevent it. Tobacco trade was much profitable both to the Company and the native traders of Malabar. In Malabar, tobacco products were an important source of income to the people also. The consumption of tobacco products was very high in Malabar. A major share of tobacco consumed in Malabar came from outside. Hence, the Company gave utmost care to the control of tobacco production and distribution. Comparing to salt and sea custom department there were more servants in the tobacco department. Tobacco establishment at Ponnani was the largest one and six *kolkar* were employed there. Two *kolkar* each were employed in Palakkad and Coimbatore. At the boundary of Coimbatore, ninety armed *kolkar* were employed for the seizure of smuggled tobacco with a monthly pay of five rupees.¹²⁷ The existing mode of supply of tobacco in Malabar had created trouble to the income of the state. The government depots could not supply good quality tobacco to the purchasers. There was scarcity for tobacco. The producers did not get a fair price for their products. They were forced to sell the products to government contractors at the dictated terms. The situation created by the government through its monopoly policy caused for the growth of groups of smugglers in Malabar. Graeme reported that this group of smugglers became formidable to the peace of the country. The system opened opportunities for fraud among public servants and involved the Collector and Magistrate department in numerous investigations.¹²⁸ The *kolkar* also were a group of servants towards whom the aversion of the people turned. It was because of the nature of their duty and the abuses related to their service. The *kolkar* were employed in the Land Custom Department too. Twenty six *kolkar* under a *havildar* served in the *huzzur cutchery*. Another twenty four were served in different stations of land custom.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Graeme's Report, *op. cit.*

¹²⁸ H S Graeme, *Report of the Revenue Administration of Malabar dated 14th January 1822*, Malabar District Press, Calicut, 1898, para 1324, p. 257.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

The changes in the structure of administration in Malabar had great impact on the duties and responsibilities of *kolkar*. Their service was extended to almost all departments of government. The proposals of Thomas Munro and Graeme were the basis for the administrative changes in Malabar after 1816. After that *kolkar* became an inevitable part of the administrative machinery. Though they had no key position in the colonial bureaucracy or moderate salary for their work, their service was recognized by the Company. When the administrative machinery of the Company was expanding day by day, the responsibilities of the *kolkar* also were increasing. While fixing the number of *kolkar* for villages Munro's principle was the rent to be yielded and that of Graeme was the geographical features and the habit of the inhabitants. Munro stood for a nominal increase of pay to the *kolkar*. But it was not enough to the works they had done. In the village establishment, the number of *adhikari* and *menon* fixed by Munro was 250 each and that of *kolkar* was 750. They had to do all the additional duties arise by the new regulations, including the duties of village police. In the next few decades the revenue of Malabar increased much. But there was no proportionate increase in the number of village servants. A report on Malabar in 1841 says that a land revenue of rupees 16, 22, 803 was collected from 1, 60, 000 individuals.¹³⁰ Many of the tax payers paid the tax directly to the government. It was not a relief to the *kolkar* as they had to contact the tax payers for many other purposes. The inferior disproportion of *kolkar* to the population was growing from year to year and continued till the end of Company rule.

The low salary of the *kolkar* persuaded them to engage in unlawful activities to get money and this increased the hardships of the inhabitants. Monopoly of production and distribution of selected items gave new opportunities for the *kolkar* to exploit the inhabitants. The abuses exposed by Graeme about of tobacco trade were equally applicable to monopoly trade of all items. When timber

¹³⁰ Sullivan, *Report on the Province of Malabar and Canara dated 29th January 1841*, Collectorate Press, Calicut, 1910, p. 5.

trade was made the monopoly of the government, the people experienced difficulty in procuring timber for building houses, boats, ships and centers of worship. When the new system was introduced in 1816, the supervision upon the *kolkar* serving in remote areas was not so effective. Consequently, many of their illegal dealings were left unnoticed by superior officers. Their low salary persuaded them for unauthorized exactions. Changes in the nature of the duties of the *kolkar* also resulted in the change of the attitude of the native inhabitants towards them.

Munro System in Action

The reforms of 1816 brought two important changes in the Madras Presidency which marked the shift from the Cornwallis system to the Munro system. The first and most important one was the transfer of police and magisterial power to the District Collector. The second one was conferring *munsiff* power on the village headmen. Both these reforms had its impact in Malabar. In Malabar it took more than five years to implement these reforms. But as in other parts of Madras, in Malabar also much confusion emerged while and after implementing this reform. By the Regulation XI of 1816, the police establishment which transferred to the Collectors as magistrates was not to be considered as distinct from revenue establishment.¹³¹ But the expected result of the transfer of this authority to the Collector was not attained till 1821. In effect, the police administration was in a deplorable condition in many parts of the Presidency including Malabar. Increase in unlawful activities of the people necessitated the involvement of police and courts. Many of such activities were due to the policies of the government. Comparing to the needs of the time, there was deficiency of police *kolkar* in Malabar. Now the *kolkar* under the Collector had to be deputed for revenue, police and magisterial duties. In 1821, the Assistant Collector of Kochi, asked for more *kolkar* to the district for guarding jails, preventing the increased

¹³¹ C. R Baynes, *The Criminal Law of the Madras Presidency as Contained in the Existing Regulations and Acts*, Pharoah & Company, Madras, 1848, p. 64.

cases of robbery and to serve summonses.¹³² After explaining the shortage of the existing police establishment in Kochi he requested for fifty per cent increase in the number of *kolkar*. The reason for this problem was not the shortage in the number of *kolkar* alone, but defects in the union of police and revenue establishment. In 1821, Graeme in his report to the Board of Revenue remarked the urgent need of increasing the strength of police establishment in Malabar.¹³³ He opined that the tahsildar staffs of the districts were not so efficient to do their police duties like the *darogah*. The *peshkar* in the district assisted the *tahsildar* for police duties. But their assistance was restricted by the court as they were mainly recruited for revenue duties. After the transfer, there was a shortage of 83 staff members in the district establishment and most of them were of higher rank.

The Presidency government identified the crisis aroused in the provinces after the introduction of the new system. The governor underlined in an order, the need of effective union of police and revenue departments for the efficiency of both departments.¹³⁴ The government observed that many of the collector's servants were busy with police duties and the *tahsildar* had no control upon them. It led to the ignorance of the Collector what was going on in his district and the people subject to the oppression of the police officers. Instead of keeping peace or protect the welfare of the people, the police created situations promoting disorder and violence.¹³⁵ Hence, the government directed to properly supervise the police by their superior officers. The government also underlined that the *adhikari* in the villages, *tahsildar* in the districts and *sheristadar* in the Collector's *cutchery* were to control the police. To give greater efficiency to the police, a regulation was passed in 1821. It gave powers to the *ameen* beyond the towns in which they are

¹³² Letter dated 21st April 1821, MCF Vol. 4907, pp. 71-81, RAK.

¹³³ Graeme's Report, MCF Vol. 4908, *op. cit.*

¹³⁴ John Maskell (Compiled), *The Circular Orders of the Board of Revenue from 1820-1850*, Madras, 1851, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

appointed.¹³⁶ They were subjected to the authority of *tahsildar*. The *adhikari* was authorized to punish petty thefts not exceeding one rupee.¹³⁷ But the circulars and orders in connection with the police were not properly implemented. The new system gave police power to almost all revenue servants.

The Village Police

The police system introduced in India by the British was a modified form of the traditional Indian policing. In pre-British India landholders or *zamindar* of villages were in charge of law and order. He subdivided the duties among his subordinate tenure holders. They maintained their own forces for the functions of police. The maintenance of peace was the responsibility of the entire village. It was enforced by the village headman who was assisted by one or two village watchmen.¹³⁸ These village watchmen were the real executive police of the country. When times of necessity the entire male members of their family, the other village servants, and in some other cases the whole village community assisted in police duties. His duties were to watch the village during night, observe the strangers who passed through the village, protect the agriculture land and harvest, acquire a knowledge about the criminal characters of the village and report about all doubtful events in the village. When thefts occurred in a village, it was the duty of the village watchman to find out the thief. Otherwise he had to compensate to the party who lost property. When a watchman alone could not compensate, the entire village should do it. In the joint landholding villages of north India, the police responsibilities were divided among the entire landholders of the village. They performed their duty with the help of their servants.¹³⁹ For greater protection than the village watchmen were able to afford, the entire villagers gave

¹³⁶ Regulation IV of 1821.

¹³⁷ Section VI of Regulation IV of 1821.

¹³⁸ Frazer Report, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹³⁹ John Mathai, *Village Government British India*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

special payments to leaders of plundering tribes to keep them away from gang robberies.

The village police was the most useful auxiliary force to the general police constabulary of the British in India. The village watchmen of ancient India played important role in the prevention and detection of crimes and maintenance of the internal peace of villages. The *kaval* system existed in South India had begun to deteriorate by the close of the eighteenth century. The security which the villagers enjoyed from the service of the *kavalkar* was more than counterbalanced by the blackmail they had to pay.¹⁴⁰ It was an object of concern to the British from the very beginning of the nineteenth century. In the early period of the British rule they continued the existing system with certain modifications. The fees to the watchman duty was made uniform and collected by the revenue servants of the Company and paid to the village watchers. But the illegal practices of the village watcher continued in many parts of the Presidency and hence the government decided to introduce a uniform system of policing in Madras. In 1814, it was decided to abolish the village watch system in its existing form. At the same time the government recognized the importance of village police in a modified form. In 1815, Lord Hastings had described village police as the foundation of all possible police in the country and declared that upon their renovation, improvement and stability laid the ultimate success of all measures of the government for the benefit of the country in the prevention, detection and punishment of crimes.¹⁴¹

The Regulation XI of 1816 marked the beginning of a general police system for the Madras Presidency. It provided for the establishment of village police system under the control of village headmen. The system of village guard in Malabar was not similar to other parts of the Presidency. Generally speaking the system of police in the villages of India before the British period consisted of village watchmen and private guards maintained by the landlords and other chiefs.

¹⁴⁰ F. R Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore Vol. I, op. cit.*, p. 207.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

Locality chiefs in charge of *padikaval* or watchmanship within their respective localities had existed during the time of the Chola rulers.¹⁴² Their areas were ranging from one village to several *nadu regions*. For discharging the duties of watchmen, they levied a tax which was also called *padikaval* from the inhabitants. Such chiefs in the outside region the central area of the Chola territory were acted like independent rulers and they ruled the region by their own police and troops. When the British came to South India, servants like *taliyari* served as village watchmen. Separate watchmen were deputed for watching stray cattle to protect harvest.¹⁴³

By the Regulation XI of 1816, *taliyari* became part of regular police establishment. There were no *taliyari* or separate cattle watchers in Malabar. At the time of the beginning of British rule in Malabar the law and order situation was in a poor condition. The discontented *mappila people* organized armed protest against the Company and its supporters. At first the government used army to suppress the protests. But soon they realized the importance of police force for the maintenance of peace. For this they were in search of the local elements to absorb to their system. On the close of the eighteenth century, the British organized the *nair sibandi* corps under their chieftains to suppress the *mappila* protesters. After the fourth Anglo-Mysore war, the Company government concentrated on law and order issue and a more regular police force was established in each of the Collectorate. The *kolkar* began to be absorbed into the Company police force. In 1800, the police detachment of the Collectorate of Angadippuram consisted of 277 *kolkar* besides the other superior officers.¹⁴⁴ The detachments of *sibandi* corps also stationed at different parts in the division. But the *sibandi* corps did not bring the expected results due to lack of discipline and irregular nature. Thus, in 1801, this force was disbanded and Watson raised a force of 500 armed police *kolkar*. Their

¹⁴² Y. Subbarayalu, *South India Under the Cholas*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹⁴³ F. R Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore Vol. I*, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

¹⁴⁴ C. A Innes and F. B. Evans, *Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

chief duty was to assist for the collection of revenue. It was the time of Pazhassi rebellion and revenue collection was a great challenge to the government. The strength of the new force was increased from time to time and was ably utilised for the suppression of Pazhassi resistance. This force was disbanded by 1810 and from that time to 1816 the *darogah* system continued. In 1816, new regulations were issued and village police system in revised form was implemented in Malabar villages. After that, police duties in villages were done by the *kolkar* under the supervision of *adhikari*. The limited criminal and civil authorities of the *adhikari* staff were performed with the assistance of *kolkar* and *menon*. As per the Regulations of 1816, the *adhikari* combined police duties with revenue duties. The Company government had its own justification for this reform. It was assumed that *adhikari* in the villages had a thorough knowledge about villages under their charge. Besides, being members of prestigious families, *adhikari* had great influence and commanding power over the village communities. Economic benefit was another factor considered by the government for introducing this reform. There was no regular police quartered in the villages. The village officers had to approach the nearest station of regular police for handling cases beyond their limit. Generally, police stations were far away from the villages. For example the police station of Vatanamkurussi village of Valluvanad *taluk* in Malabar was four miles away from the village.¹⁴⁵ The *kolkar* were deputed to intimate such cases to the nearest police station. The monthly report of cases settled by the *adhikari* with the help of *kolkar* was also submitted by them to the heads of police station.

The revenue and police duties were clubbed through Regulation XI of 1816 with a view to reduce the expense of the government for both. The government expected to reduce the strength of servants for police and revenue duties as there was no distinction in the performance of duties.¹⁴⁶ While the government was proceeding with the decision of recruiting old *desavazhi* and *naduvazhi* as village

¹⁴⁵ Gilbert Slater (ed.), *Some South Indian Villages*, Oxford University Press, 1918, p. 200.

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Fort St. George to the Collector of Malabar dated 29th October 1816, MCF Vol. 2283, RAK.

munsiff and *menon*, most of them declined to accept the office. Graeme in a letter to the Collector opined that it was because of the lack of awareness about the regulations.¹⁴⁷ Many of them feared that like the *mukhyasta*, they had to supply articles for detachments and travellers. Some others were disinterested because of the high rate of tax and they could not enable the villagers to pay it with the punctuality required by the officers of the government.

The *taluk* and Town Police

The police reforms and regulations of 1816 under the Munro system did not bring the establishment of police constables. The police duties in villages, *taluk* and towns were performed by revenue peons.¹⁴⁸ In Malabar, the *kolkar* were the revenue peons in villages, *taluk* units and towns. The police peons in *taluk* units were under the *tahsildar* and in towns police duties were performed by the *ameen*.¹⁴⁹ The entire police establishment was placed under the control of district collector and his assistants. In Malabar, it took more than one year for the implementation of Regulations of 1816. The transfer of police control to the Magistrate was implemented by October 1817. As per Munro's proposal it was decided to prefer the *naduvazhi* and *desavazhi* for the posts of *adhikari* in the villages. Graeme also proposed to give preference to the old *naduvazhi* and *desavazhi* for selection to the post of headmen and *menon*.¹⁵⁰ But many of them were reluctant to accept the post of *adhikari* and village *munsiff* due to the risk involved in it. In June 1817, there were 904 *kolkar* who were doing police duties. Out of this 492 were guards in *taluk* police.¹⁵¹ Others were doing the duties like guarding jails and smuggling guards. By the end of 1817, the changes in the revenue and police establishments by the new regulations began to reflect in Malabar. Thereby some changes took place in the distribution of servants in *hussur*,

¹⁴⁷ MCF Vol. 2364, pp. 65-66, RAK.

¹⁴⁸ C. A Innes and F. B. Evans, *Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 390.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Report to the Board of Revenue dated 16th June 1821, para 14, MCF volume 4908, RAK

¹⁵¹ MCF Vol. 2285, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

taluk and village establishments. Graeme in a report to the President and members of the Board of Revenue, Madras in 1821 enclosed a comparative statement of the revenue and police establishment of Malabar as on October 1817 and May 1821. The difference in the number of police and revenue peons or *kolkar* in the three levels shown by Graeme is given in the below table.¹⁵²

Establishments	Designation	Before Transfer as on 31 October 1817			After the transfer as on 31 May 1921		
		Revenue	Police	Total	Revenue	Police	Total
Hussur	<i>kolkar/Peons</i>	48	-	48	40	23	63
District	<i>kolkar/Peons</i>	145	657	802	226	477	703
	<i>ameen's Peons/kolkar</i>	-	-	-	-	36	36
	<i>Darogahs</i>		11	11	-	-	-
Village	<i>parbutty/adhikari</i>	165		165	162	-	162
	<i>menon</i>	187	-	187	186	-	186
	<i>kolkar</i>	541	-	541	562	-	562
Total		1086	668	1754	1176	536	1712

The changes proposed by Munro and the modifications upon it on the basis of the report of Graeme were implemented by the government with the expectation of improving the condition of policing of the Presidency and thereby defend the criticism against the government. The proposal of Graeme reduced the government expense for villages up to 2000 rupees. As concerned to the *taluk* establishments Graeme proposed to give preference to natives for the post of *tahsildar*. Most frequently they were land holders, more familiar with the land tenures, the habits and customs of inhabitants and so more fit to the duties of police officers. But as concerned to the efficiency of the police and revenue, the new changes were not up to the expectations. When the police and revenue duties were combined in same persons, there was neglect in the performance of both. As the duty of revenue collection was of prime importance, more negligence was to police duties. There was shortage of police *kolkar* in many parts of Malabar after the implementation of Regulation XI of 1816. T. H Baber, the 3rd Judge of the

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

Principal Court of Thalasserry in a letter described about the shortage of the police *kolkar* in the Northern division.¹⁵³ It adversely affected the prevention of smuggling of tobacco from Mysore through Wyanad. The limited execution power of the heads of police in villages and towns by the regulations of 1816 forced the police *kolkar* to take the thieves and offenders in front of the magistrate at a far distant place. In order to avoid this time consuming and risky job what the heads of police did was to conceal frequently the knowledge of offences committed in their areas and as a result the offenders escaped from punishment.¹⁵⁴ The recording of evidences of petty offences and thefts was duty of great labour and it also caused for the concealing of offences. Thus, the government through Regulation IV of 1821 enhanced the limit of the jurisdiction of cases to be tried and punished by subordinate police officers. It also directed to the officers in charge of police to perform revenue duties also.

It was a paradox that after the reforms of 1816, the officers of Malabar were wailing about the shortage of police *kolkar* while enquiring about the issue of law and order, smuggling, guarding jails etc., and complaints that they were deputed for revenue duties, and the same officers defended their failures in revenue duties by pointing out the transfer of *kolkar* and other officers of revenue department for police duties. Vaughan, the Principal Collector of Malabar, wrote a letter to Fort St. George as an explanation to the enquiry about the huge revenue arrear to be collected from different parts of the province of Malabar.¹⁵⁵ In the letter Vaughan stated that it was because of the merge of the duty of police and revenue to the charge of *sheristadar* and his staff. In many situations the *sheristadar* was directed to inquire about robbery smuggling etc., and reports were to be submitted in time. In such situations the revenue staffs kept away the revenue duties and doing police duties. He expressed the desire to separate the

¹⁵³ Attached with letter from Secretary to Government, Judicial Department, Fort St. George to the Magistrate of Malabar dated 25th November 1817, MCF Vol. 2286, RAK.

¹⁵⁴ Preamble to Regulation IV of 1821.

¹⁵⁵ Letter dated 13th February 1818, MCF Vol. 2350, RAK.

police duties from the *sheristadar* as the merger increased the work load of the revenue staff.

Lack of experience and training brought many abuses in respect of the police duties under the *sheristadar* and village heads. Such abuses raised criticisms against the existing police administration and the government seriously thought about a change in the existing system in the light of the *mappila* outbreaks started in the thirties of the century.

The *mappila* Resistances and *kolkar* Police

Till the implementation of Madras Police Act of 1859, most of the police duties in villages and *taluk* units of Malabar were done by the *kolkar*. The police *kolkar* under the village heads, *tahsildar* and *ameen* played a key role in suppressing the *mappila* uprisings in the first half of the nineteenth century. After the Kurichya revolt of Wyanad in 1812, there was no danger to the general peace of the district till the outbreaks of the *Mappila* people. In 1852, T. L Strange was appointed as Special Commissioner to report on the question of recurring *mappila* outbreaks in Malabar and he submitted the report in September 1852. The first such incident took place in 1836 at Pandalur in Ernad *taluk*. One *mappila* named Kallingal Kunholan murdered one Chakku Panikkar of *kanisan* caste and wounded three others.¹⁵⁶ The rebel *mappila* escaped to Valluvanad, the nearby *taluk*, where he was pursued and killed by the police *kolkar* under the *tahsildar*. T. L Strange in his report gave detailed description about 31 such outbreaks and protests till August 1852 and the role of the police force of Malabar in suppressing them.¹⁵⁷ In those entire outbreaks one or a group of *Mappila* fighters killed or wounded Hindu landlords, their peons, native servants of the Company like *adhikari*, *kolkar* peons or any supporters of the Company and land lords. In almost all cases the rebels were either killed or deported. In major outbreaks, the district authorities used the

¹⁵⁶ Report of T. L Strange dated 25th September 1852, para 3, MCF Vol. 7341, RAK.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

service of military force. Many of these outbreaks were isolated and suppressed by *tahsildar* of concerned *taluk* with their police peons or police *kolkar* along with village *kolkar* and armed villagers. The police *kolkar* of *taluk* administration under the superintendence of *tahsildar* was an important instrument for the suppression of these revolts. In October 1855, Collet, the Joint Magistrate in a letter to T Clark, the Magistrate of Malabar underlined the need for proper training to the police *kolkar* of *taluk* divisions.¹⁵⁸ The police *kolkar* were using flint muskets without proper training to use it. He suggested to give them proper training and incorporate to the newly created Malabar Police Corps. At that time there were 222 police *kolkar* in different *taluk* units of South Malabar.¹⁵⁹ In many cases the police *kolkar* also lost their lives. A notable fact about these outbreaks was that the number of assailants died in the encounters was far greater than the number of victims.¹⁶⁰ When one or two upper caste Hindus murdered in an outbreak, the entire participants were killed by government force. Along with *kolkar* peons, the *sepoys* and villagers also participated in quelling the protesters.

T. L Strange in his report proposed many administrative measures to prevent the recurring of *mappila* outbreaks. In his observation Strange found out that the weakness of the existing police system was an important reason for failure in defending the outbreaks. So he recommended for the establishment of a trained police force to check the *mappila* outbreaks and to create confidence among the Hindus and executive officers of the government.¹⁶¹ The inefficiency of the police force always necessitated the interference of the military to suppress outbreaks. The presence of military would increase the fear of the inhabitants and strengthen the protests. Hence, he proposed a trained police force of 200 with a monthly expense of rupees 1140. He also proposed to meet the amount from the fines

¹⁵⁸ MCF Vol. 7374, p. 34, RAK.

¹⁵⁹ Ernad 53, Valluvanad 41, Nedunganad 35, Bettatunad 31, Shernad 31, and Calicut 31, *ibid*.

¹⁶⁰ M. Gangadharan, *The Malabar Rebellion, op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁶¹ Report of T. L Strange dated 25th September 1852, *op. cit.*, Para 64.

imposed upon *mappila* communities.¹⁶² A police force of 31 native officers and 150 men under the command of two military officers sanctioned for Malabar in 1854.¹⁶³ The complaints about the police force increased day by day due to the failure in the system as a whole.

Many proposals in the report of T. L Strange were accepted by the government and laws and acts were passed accordingly. The Acts XXIII and XXIV were passed in 1854. The first Act was intended to fine on the entire *mappila* people of the localities disturbed. Strange in his report proposed to use the amount collected as fine to meet the expense of the new police force which was established in 1854. The Act XXIV of 1854 was to prevent the possession of war knives by local people. It empowered the District Magistrate of Malabar to conduct search by his police force to any place where the *ayudha kathi* or war knife suspected to be kept. The persons who were found to keep such weapons could be punished with a fine not more than fifty rupees or imprisonment for six months or both.¹⁶⁴ Canolly and his assistants conducted searches for weapons all throughout the district and captured many weapons. The target of the government through this Act was the disarming the *mappila* community in Malabar especially in the southern region. Hence, it can be assumed that the *kolkar* would be the chief instruments for the searches. They were also served as the chief informants. The Collector and *kolkar*, both revenue and police, were villains in the minds of the people, especially among the *Mappila* people, through the raids and the consequent legal procedures.

The period from 1816 to 1859 was important as concerned to the transformation of the *kolkar*. By this time, the *kolkar* had become the most important force for the Company to maintain law and order and to collect revenue. Many government officers analyzed the performance of the *kolkar* in village, *taluk*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ C. A. Innes and F. B. Evans, *Malabar, op, cit.*, p. 390.

¹⁶⁴ *Madras Code*, Second Edition, Government Press, Madras, 1888, p. 127.

and district levels. When the reform was adopted in 1816, Thomas Munro and H. S Graeme supported the system to end the existing abuses towards the revenue and police service. The government was very much concerned about revenue collection and there was time limit and quota for revenue collection and hence the *kolkar* and their masters always gave more importance to that duty and the police duty was always neglected to some extent. In 1823, immediately after the submission of the Report of Graeme, the entire village and *taluk* staff members were busy with the new survey and assessment. The *kolkar* were not available even to escort the prisoners. The officers in charge of the police *kolkar* were not so efficient. In *taluk* units the *tahsildar* was the head of the police and they were not adequately efficient to perform the police duties whatever political influence they had. The men in police force sanctioned in 1854 were not sufficient to meet the situation of Malabar and the abuses of the Munro system in the administration of police and revenue continued.

Though the *kolkar* and other village servants contributed much for the collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order, they were often vicious towards the natives. It created an aversion against them in the minds of the people. Ill-treatment towards the poor inhabitants of villages and submission of false deposition to higher officials were not rare. One such incident was reported from the Wyanad *taluk* in 1834. The natural death of a woman was reported as a murder and false convict and witnesses were produced before the court and they were sentenced by the court. A complaint was received by the Collector after the judgment and an enquiry was conducted by the *tahsildar*. It was proved that the first *gumastah*, the *daffedar* and three *kolkar* were involved in the intrigue.¹⁶⁵ All of them were dismissed from service and the imprisoned innocents were released from prison. There were many instances of assaulting the *kolkar* peons in different departments like, police, and abkari.¹⁶⁶ The *kolkar* in sea customs, salt, abkari and

¹⁶⁵ Onward letter in the Magisterial Department dated 30th April 1834, MCF Vol. 5023, RAK

¹⁶⁶ Letter from the Superintendent of Police, Cannanore to Civil magistrate on Circuit dated 9th January 1834, MCF Vol. 5009, RAK.

tobacco departments were appointed with comparatively high salary than in police and revenue. This was because of the importance of these departments in harnessing revenue due to the Company and the risk involved in the job. The supervision and vigilance of the *kolkar* always created troubles to the natives who engaged in the traffic of goods which was supervised by these departments. J Babington, the Collector of Sea Customs in a report to the President and members of the Board of Trade reiterated the importance of *kolkar* in preventing smuggling through the ports of Malabar. He recommended an increase in the strength and salary of *kolkar* in these ports.¹⁶⁷

Misuse of power on the part of *kolkar* naturally invited the wrath of the people. There were instances of open protests by the local people against the *kolkar*. Along with a letter to the Collector of Malabar, Babington enclosed a petition from the Manager of the port of Vada-kara describing the assault upon a *kolkar* by some *mappila* men of Vada-kara town and requested for strong action.¹⁶⁸ Lack of professionalism and absence of proper supervision resulted in the abuses in the duties of the *kolkar* and many instances of protest against them by the natives. Munro while proposing his plan for the merger of magistracy, police and revenue, expected improvement in the law and order situation of Malabar. Though it made the Collector all powerful, the expected result was not materialized. The ignorant, illiterate and ill-trained servants were the most important reason for this failure. It was emphasized by Strange in his report and the British government began to think of a reform in the police organization for maintenance of law and order in a better way.

The murder of Canolly, the collector of Malabar on 12th September 1855, once again proved the inefficiency of the police force.¹⁶⁹ The assassination was carried out by four *mappila* prisoners who had escaped from jail on 4th August and

¹⁶⁷ Report dated 26th February 1817, MCF 2484, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁸ Report dated 14th April 1818, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ For details about the murder of Canolly, see William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, pp. 576-79.

nearly six weeks they had roamed over the district. The police could not fish out them before the completion of their plan. The murder of the Collector of Malabar opened serious discussion about the reform of police which was a major concern of the British government immediately after the submission of the T. L Strange report. It led to the organization of a permanent police establishment in the modern line through the Act XXIV of 1859. The Torture Commission Report of 1855 also contributed to the passing of this Act.¹⁷⁰ The introduction of this Act and subsequent changes in the structure of revenue, police and judicial departments brought about many changes in the role of *kolkar* in future Malabar.

¹⁷⁰ The Madras Torture Commission Report of 1855 was the first government backed study of the police torture in British India. The reforms it suggested reflected in the restructuring of the colonial police in India. For a review about the Torture Commission Report and its influence on future police reforms, see Anuj Bhawania, "Very Wicked Children": "Indian Torture" and the Madras Torture Commission Report of 1855 in *Sur- International Journal on Human Rights*, Number 10, June 2009, New York, pp. 7-28.

Chapter 6

An Agent of the State

Introduction

The revenue, judicial and police administration based on the Munro system which started in 1816 was widely criticized during the fifth and sixth decades of the nineteenth century. The growing discontent among the peasants, inefficiency of the police force, recurring *mappila* uprisings, and deteriorating situation of law and order were the reasons which put Munro system at stake. The murder of Collector Canolly in 1855 at his residence was shocking to the British. The prestige of the Company government had been much shaken in the district. The repressive activities of Canolly towards the *mappila* people of Malabar had created widespread enmity against him. The enactment of the Mappila Outrageous Act and the consequent raids for arms and the banishment of Saiyid Fazal Thangal to Saudi Arabia, decision for imposing fines upon the entire *mappila* inhabitants of concerned villages for the outbreaks were highly provoking to the *mappila* community. Four of the murderers of Canolly escaped from the working party of prisoners from the jail at Kozhikode. The jail guards and police could not prevent their escape or identify their plans and hiding places after the escape. The failure of the intelligence and police mechanism of the district was an added cause to the rethinking about the existing system of police and revenue administration. There was no consensus of opinion among the administrators of the district on the solution for the crisis. T. L. Strange, the Special Commission, proposed the establishment of a special police force for quelling the disturbances of Malabar. Canolly was in favour of this opinion, but proposed to use this force as an auxiliary to the troops. The Collector had faith only in troops. When the outbreaks of Malabar were enduring, in 1857, a great revolt broke out in North India and its reverberations influenced Malabar too.

1857 and After

The anti-colonial resistance of 1857 was a major challenge faced by the English East India Company in India. It was the first major challenge faced by the British East India Company in India. The entire machinery of the government was concentrated in North India for the suppression of the revolt. It was started by the discontented sepoys of Meerut on 10th May 1857 and gradually it became a great movement. The declaration of Bahadur Shah II as the Emperor of India gave a national character to the revolt. Delhi, Meerut, Kanpur, Satara, Lucknow and Bareilly were the important centers of the revolt. Though the revolt was not directly affected South India, there were many indirect impacts. The government of Madras was very much vigilant to preserve the presidency unaffected by the revolt. Many precautionary measures were taken by the government. The government was very much particular to prevent the spread of news in the presidency about the incidents of North India. The outbreak of the mutiny was followed by scarcity of food.¹ Much money and man power was used by the Company to defend their power in India during the period of the revolt. Consequently the government was in financial crisis.

Within a period of less than one year the resistance of 1857 was suppressed by the British government. During the period of the revolt, there was widespread agitation in England against the continuation of the exploitative and profit oriented rule of the British East India Company in India.² The inefficiency of the government of Britain in controlling the Company in India was also criticized. Consequently, the British parliament passed the Government of India Act in 1858 by which the control and administration of India was taken over by the Crown from the East India Company. The 'Queen's Proclamation' read at the Allahabad Durbar on 1st November 1858 officially informed the changes to the Indians. The declaration ensured equality of justice, no discrimination in matters of employment and

¹ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, *op. cit.*, p. 579.

² M. B Chande, *The Police In India*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

administration on the basis of religion or caste. Though, the reform brought no radical changes in the general nature of British administration, it had certain remarkable outcome in the administration of revenue, police and judiciary.

After the revolt of 1857, the British administrators of India were vigilant to suppress any outbreaks in any territories under their control. To prevent the *mappila* rebellions in Malabar, the Mappila Outrages Act was again introduced in 1859. It empowered the district Magistrate to detain suspected *Mappilas*, and to impose fines upon the entire *Mappila* people of an *amsam*, in which the perpetrator or perpetrators belonged.³ In 1869, the Mappila Outrages Act Continuance Act was passed to handle the lawbreakers.

The Madras District Police Act 1859

The administrative policy of the government in the Madras Presidency underwent an important change in the year 1859. In that year the Madras District Police Act was passed. The Act of September 1859⁴ was the first major reform after the administrative changes of 1858, intended to reorganize the police force of British India. It entirely separated the police from the revenue establishments and placed under the command of an Inspector General. This reform necessitated a thorough reorganization of the revenue, magisterial and police establishments throughout the Presidency. The preamble of the Act underlined its aim as to make the police force throughout the Presidency of Madras a more efficient instrument at the disposal of the Magistrate⁵ for the prevention and detection of crime and to reorganize the police force and to improve the condition of the village police.⁶ The Act defined the hierarchical structure of the police force, their duties and responsibilities. The Act was initially intended to the Madras district alone. The Section 55 of the Act provided to extend to any other districts of the presidency by

³ *The Unrepealed Central Acts Vol. I 1834-1871*, Manager, Government of India Reforms Office, Delhi, 1938, pp. 194-97.

⁴ 'An Act for the Better Regulation of Police within the Territories Subject to the Presidency of Fort St. George'. Act XXIV of 1859. For details see *ibid.*, pp. 197-205.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

a notification published in the official gazette. The structure of the police force defined in this Act was taken as a model for the future police reforms of British India. The developments taken place in the criminal administration of the Province of Sindh and Punjab, the police reforms introduced in Bombay Presidency by Governor Clerk also influenced the police reforms of future British India.⁷ The net result of these reforms was that police became a distinct department under the direct supervision of the government and its members from the top to bottom were dissociated from their judicial functions. The Act of 1859 envisaged the revival of village police under the direct supervision of the district police authorities and the disbandment or reduction of all para-military forces. The extension and implementation of the police reforms introduced great changes in the duties and functions of the *kolkar* of Malabar. The Madras District Police Act of 1859 and the consequent reforms, periodically introduced by the British government caused for the transformation of the *kolkar* into mere peons of the villages with limited police functions.

The Torture Commission, in its report of 1855 exposed many abuses of the police system of Madras Presidency. The Commission recommended the separation of police and revenue functions and the placement of police establishments under independent European officers.⁸ Their recommendations reflected in the future police reforms of the British government. The Police Act of 1859 provided many clauses to make the police a professional force. One of the most important reasons for the abuses against the police force was its unwanted interferences in the matters of civil society. Sections 22 to 43 of this Act stood for strict code of conduct for police persons in situations of interference with inhabitants and punishments for bad habits.⁹

After implementing the new Act, there effected thorough reorganization of the revenue department. Separate establishments were combined and all servants

⁷ M. B Chande, *The Police In India, op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁸ No Author, *History of Police Organisation in India and Indian Village Police*, University of Calcutta, 1913, p. 15.

⁹ These sections were repealed by Act XVII of 1862.

not necessary for the revenue and magisterial duties were removed from the new revenue establishment.¹⁰ Due to the financial crisis, the government after the revolt of 1857 stood for revision of taxes under the Board of Revenue. Part of this, small *taluk* divisions were merged and it increased the work load of the *tahsildar*. Because of the superintendence of police was entrusted with a separate officer, the *tahsildar* could ably administer the revenue matters with the assistance of his subordinate officers.

Changes Effected in Malabar

The Police Reform Act of 1859 gradually implemented in all districts of Madras province. Steps were taken by the district authorities to bring necessary changes in the system. In South Malabar, the new system was implemented by May 1860 and extended to North Malabar.¹¹ Previously, in Malabar district, *kolkar* were doing the duties of Police controlled by *tahsildar* and *adhikari* officers. There were no strict rules for recruitment, service, retirement or punitive actions. Different pay rates were existed for same job. These *kolkar* were indiscriminately deputed to different departments according to the needs of the time. There was no code of conduct to the *kolkar*. The government realized that many of their activities alienated the natives.

After 1859, recruitment to the police force was started in Malabar in accordance with the rules of the new reform. Advertisements and notifications were issued by the collector and assistant collectors of sub districts. A notification of the Superintendent of Police, Palakkad dated 28th January 1861 shows that getting recruits to the police was not easy for the government.¹² The notification was to induce the people to apply early for getting appointment in the police

¹⁰ Anonymous author, *Correspondence Relating to the Revision Proposed in the Village Revenue Establishments of the Madras Presidency*, Part. I, Gantz Brothers, Madras, 1857, p. I.

¹¹ *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency (hereafter RAMP) During the Year 1860-61*, Fort St. George Gazette Press, Madras, 1861, p. 4.

¹² MGG, 2nd February 1861, pp. 57-58.

force.¹³ The notice also informed that the number of men, of all grades, needed for South Malabar was 1150 and more than 700 men had already joined. It particularly informed the *taluk Kolkar* that they would not have employment in that post after the implementation of the new police system. It is evident from the notification that, the introduction of the new police system was an important stage in the transformation of the *Kolkars* in Malabar. There were no more police *Kolkars* in the *taluks* after the reform. The recruitment to the police force in Malabar was not an easy task to the government. Youths of Malabar were reluctant to join in the new force. The Superintendent again notified about the recruitment in the gazette with family background and physical qualifications and the salary offered to the post of constables.¹⁴ In the villages, the *adhikari* officers were to issue qualification certificates to the applicants. It was the duty of the *kolkar* to make necessary enquiries about the candidate before issuing such certificates. In the villages, *kolkar* continued their service as revenue servants with limited police duties. The new system directed the *adhikari* to intimate any criminal activities in his region to the nearest station houses at the earliest hours.¹⁵ Gang robbery, highway robbery and other crimes were to be intimated to all nearest station houses within an hour. The *kolkar* of the villages were the messengers of the *adhikari* to report such cases in the nearest station houses. They had to report it to the magistrate also. Previously they had to submit both revenue and criminal reports to the *taluk cutcheri*. Now their duties increased as they had to report the revenue and criminal reports to the *taluk* station and report about crimes at the station houses. The *adhikari* had to prepare the list of all suspected persons residing in their *amsam* and report it to the nearest police stations.¹⁶ The village officers were required to inform the absence of any of these persons in the village without sufficient reasons. They must

¹³ See Appendix No, 3 of the thesis.

¹⁴ Notice dated 1st November 1861, MGG, 16th November 1861, p. 668.

¹⁵ Police Notification of Superintendent of Police, North Malabar dated 26th March 1861, MGG, 20th April 1861, p. 196.

¹⁶ Notice to village officers from P. Grant, the Magistrate of Malabar dated 6th January 1862, MGG, 18th January 1862, p. 803.

cooperate with the police in the detection of crime. In case of accidental death or suicide the village officer had to inform it to the police station and secure the presence of the police officer before holding the inquest.¹⁷ All these duties and responsibilities of the village heads were implemented through the *kolkar*. They acted as the agents of the *Adhikari in the village*. The implementation of the new police system was completed in the district by January 1861.¹⁸

In 1860, the government of Madras ordered to divide Malabar into 268 Village Police Circles with an average of 23.6 square miles and an average population of 6191.¹⁹ It was also directed to appoint a Village Inspector on a pay of fifty rupees and two to four *kavalkkar* with a pay of 2½ rupees per month. It was an arrangement proposed by Robinson, the Inspector General of Police. This proposal was sanctioned by the government in May 1860. But the orders as regards to the partition of village *amsam* establishments were not implemented till 1866. At that time there were 432 *amsam* in Malabar with an average area of 14 square miles and an average population of 3700. Out of these 432 *amsam*, 16 were in Wyanad with an average area of 72½ square miles. The division of *amsam* in Wyanad was based on the number of population and the area of cultivation. Major parts of these *amsam* were uninhabited and uncultivated. Due to many other factors, proposal of the government for the reorganization of the *amsam* into police circles was not implemented immediately.

In 1859, Charles Pelly, member of the Board of Revenue, was authorized to undertake the revision of the village revenue establishments in the districts of the Madras Presidency.²⁰ After consulting with district collectors,²¹ Pelly shared his observations on Malabar villages with the Revenue Secretary. Pelly's correspondences with the government and the collectors of Malabar give a clear

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ MGG, 9th February 1861, p. 73.

¹⁹ Government order dated 30th May 1860.

²⁰ Revenue Department, G. O No. 1187, 3rd September 1859.

²¹ Grant and Ballard.

picture about the villages of Malabar at that time. Unlike in other villages of India the people were not congregated in villages and were scattered and living in their farms or gardens. In each *amsam* there were three or four peons or *kolkar*. The general pattern of the establishment in every *amsam* was an *adhikari* or village officer, a *menon* or accountant and two or three *kolkar* or peons. The monthly pay of an *adhikari* was 5¼ rupees per month and of *menon* six rupees per month and of *kolkar* rupees 2 ½ per month.²² The village establishments of Malabar were all paid in money and there were no *inam*. The cost of the village establishment of Malabar was about 84000 rupees. A ten per cent cess was collected from the tenants towards the expense of village establishments which was a practice from the time of Tipu Sultan. But it was not collected from Wyanad and three other *taluk* divisions. Pelly suggested extending the collection of the village cess to these *taluk* units also.

During that period 876 *kolkar* served in all the 432 *amsam*. The number of *adhikari* staff was 432 and *menon* 428.²³ The government had the opinion that as the police duties were completely relieved from the revenue servants it was essential to reduce the number of villages and village servants including the *kolkar*.²⁴ But the Collector was not in favour of reducing the number of village servants as it adversely affects the assessment and collection of revenue.²⁵ The local knowledge of *menon* and *kolkaran* were utilizing for the collection. The size of an *amsam* of Malabar was a challenge to the *adhikari*. They had to travel up to eight miles for demanding the dues. Naturally the *kolkar* were deputed for such demands. When the new police reform was introduced in Malabar, the *adhikari* had civil and criminal powers to exercise. Petty cases were referred to him by the new system. Previously such duties were done by them in an arbitrary way which

²² Collector Grant to Board of Revenue dated 14th April 1859.

²³ Anonymous author, *Correspondence Relating to the Revision Proposed in the Village Revenue Establishments of the Madras Presidency*, Part. I, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

²⁴ Proceedings No. 917, Madras Government, 23rd April 1861.

²⁵ Collector to Pelly, dated 25th July 1861, para 3.

would not bring any trouble to them.²⁶ The new system brought strict rules and regulations for the conduct of such cases and to report it in the police station and *taluk cutcheri*.

Grant, Collector of Malabar in his report underlined the role of *kolkar* in the day to day affairs of the villages and why they were inevitable to the *adhikari*. Without the aid of *kolkar*, the *adhikari* could not collect the taxes regularly and there was the danger of an irregularity increasing at a rapid pace.²⁷ The *kolkar* were the key instruments to the *adhikari* to travel miles of distance to all directions of the villages and to collect the dues and arrears. When the income tax system was introduced in 1860, it was the duty of *adhikari* to collect the amount of income tax from the concerned villages as per the list supplied by the District Collector. Grant argued that the *adhikari* would fail to collect it without the help of the *kolkar*. Considering the work load of the *kolkar*, Grant proposed to double their pay by increasing from rupees 2½ to rupees 5.

G. A Ballard, who succeeded Grant as the Collector of Malabar, shared the opinion of his predecessor about the village establishments. In 1866, Ballard in a letter explained the increased works of the *kolkar* due to increase of population, extension of the area of cultivation and increase in the revenue. By that time the practice of taking accounts of births and deaths was started. It was the duty of the village *adhikari* to take the details of births and deaths in his *amsam* and to submit monthly returns. *Kolkar* were used to take these accounts also. Besides, the *kolkar* were actively engaged in the survey works. Collection of income tax, started in 1860, again increased the work load of village servants. At that time the Collector planned to start a systematic postal system in the district by using the service of village servants. Though some duties were simplified and made ease, other duties were imposed upon the *kolkar*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, para 10.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, para 11.

Considering the reports of the Collectors of Malabar Pelly opined that it was inexpedient to reduce the number of *kolkar* in Malabar.²⁸In Malabar, the watching of villages at night was done by the people themselves. Cultivating lands and other products were done by the low class people for their masters. There was no need of a separate group of servants for village watch. So *amsam kolkar* were engaged chiefly in collecting revenue, taking messages and attending any orders they receive from the *adhikari*. They had to convey information of any kind that it may be necessary to send to the police stations.

Even after the introduction of the police reforms, the *adhikari* had much work of police nature as he had before. Now he will not have the duty of apprehending criminals, but to give every aid to the police in the detection of crime and identifying the criminals. As the village Magistrate, he had to dispense all petty assaults and breaks. So it is clear that the village peons were not relieved to such an extent of police duties as to make that relief a ground for the reduction of their number. Preparation of the land revenue register, introduction of new taxes like income tax and the unsettled state of minds of men in Malabar about the ongoing reforms were considered by the district administrators to object the recommendation of the Fort St. George government.

After the police reforms, several police stations were established in Malabar. There was one police station for an average of two to three *amsam* according to the nature of the locality. A Constable from the Stations used to go his rounds and visit every *amsam* daily and receive reports from the *adhikari* about reports of police matters in the *amsam*.²⁹ The *amsam* servants of Malabar were acting as a connecting link between the official police and the inhabitants. In 1866, the Collector of Malabar recommended that there was no need of a separate

²⁸ Pelly to the Secretary to Government, Revenue dated 16th November 1861.

²⁹ Anonymous author, *Correspondence Relating to the Revision Proposed in the Village Revenue Establishments of the Madras Presidency*, Part. I, *op. cit.*, p. 964.

village police force for Malabar.³⁰ Ballard proposed to use the fund for village police to use for the improvement of *amsam* agency. He proposed to double the existing 16 *amsam* of Wyanad as they had an average area of 72 square miles and in other areas it was 14 miles. Considering the proposals of the Malabar Collector, W. Robinson, the Inspector General of Police, informed the government that he had no objection to keep the number of *amsam* in the lower areas of Malabar intact and double the number of *amsam* in the hilly area.³¹ When these changes were to be introduced, the total number of *amsam* in the district would be 448. The Inspector General also proposed that there was no need of a separate police establishment for the Malabar villages as matters were going well in Malabar. The *kolkar* under the *adhikari* provided best service to the official police force and so the continuance of the system was suitable to the district. Finally the Board of Revenue agreed the recommendations of the district Collectors to reorganize the *amsam* establishment and increase of the salary of the *Kolkars*. The pay of 4 rupees and 5 rupees to the *kolkar* was agreed by the Board on the basis of the immensity of their work. The report of the Police Commission of 1860-61 also guided them to take such a decision.

The Police Act of 1861

Until 1861 there was no uniform police system in India. Different Presidencies and districts followed different systems. With the aim of a uniform police code for entire British India, a Police Commission was appointed in August 1860. The Commission was appointed with aim of establishing a best system of police with minimum cost. The Commission after a detailed study submitted its report with certain recommendations about the police establishment to be established. Among them, the proposal about village police is relevant here. The Commission recommended not to dispense with the village watchman system as it was an ancient institution of India. Considering the existing conditions of interior

³⁰ No. 6463, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue dated 10th September 1866.

³¹ No. 6758, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue dated 20th September 1866.

India, the Commission realized the importance of a reliable village agency to report all occurrences of public consequences in the remote villages to the police force. The village watchman as proposed by the Commission should be an official to be amenable to systems and reliable for duty on behalf of the police.³² The *kolkaran* of Malabar was aptly reliable to the British as their agent in the villages. According to the recommendation of the Commission, the Police Act of 1861 didn't bring any changes in the duties and functions of hereditary or village police officers. The Act prevented even the enrollment of hereditary or village policemen to the organized police force without consent of the district Collector.³³

Police Force After 1861

The Police Act of 1861 did not bring any changes in the general structure of the police force in Madras Presidency. It continued with the Police Act of 1859. The elaborate command structure worked out in the Act of 1861 was accepted to Madras Presidency also. But indirectly the Act contributed to continue the village police system existing in different parts of Madras. So in Malabar, the role of the *kolkar* in villages continued intact. The provisions in the Act of 1861 about village watch was an added reason for the approval to the District Collectors' proposals for keeping the *kolkar* with the same strength and increased salary in Malabar.

The maintenance of village police in its traditional form was essential to the government due to many reasons. When the new police system was introduced in the districts of Madras Presidency in the 1860s, many obstacles were faced by the government. Reluctance of the native inhabitants was the first problem. Indiscipline, bad habits and involvement in criminal activities were some other. The Inspector General after his visit of thirteen districts in the Presidency reported that the prospect for the future of the police force was not satisfactory.³⁴ In 1863-64, not less than seventeen per cent of the force was either deserted or resigned in the

³² M. B Chande, *The Police In India, op. cit.*, p. 79.

³³ Section 21 of the Police Act of 1861.

³⁴ *RAMP 1863-64*, United Scottish Press, Madras, 1864, p. 13.

district of Coimbatore. Another sixteen per cent was dismissed for offences and inefficiency. In Salem district resignation and dismissal resulted in the loss of twenty one per cent of the total force. In South Arcot, it was amounted to twenty per cent.³⁵ The condition of other districts was almost the same. In the previous year (1862-63), the sanctioned strength of the police force in Malabar was 1494; 933 for South Malabar and 561 for North Malabar.³⁶ The existing strength for the year was 1354; 814 in South Malabar and 540 in North Malabar. The statistics given in the administration report for the year was embarrassing to the newly established police department. Out of the 1354 policemen, 339 were dismissed for various reasons and 223 deserted or resigned the job.³⁷ The number of dismissal and desertion was more in South Malabar. Hence, in Malabar, recruitment to the police force was a great challenge to the government. The Gazette notifications were repeatedly issued to get recruits for police force. The lesser strength of the regular police force prompted the authorities to depend more upon the village police. A major section of the population at that time was living in villages. Many crimes like gang robbery, cattle theft, stealing and destruction of harvests, and assaulting women were occurring in villages. The recording and reporting of such crimes to the nearest station houses was possible only through the village police. By strengthening the village police, the government intended to overcome the shortage of regular police force. The maintenance cost of village police was very less comparing to the regular police force. Thus, like in other districts, the increased importance of the village police after 1860 made the *kolkar* of Malabar an agency integral to the maintenance of law and order. The peculiar nature of Malabar villages forced the government to depend more on the village agencies of Malabar for detection of crimes. Though the regular police system was established in the district, the *kolkar* were used for serving in other departments like sea customs, tobacco and salt. In 1860, there was an incident of escape of jail inmates after

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Appendix No. III A, *RAMP* 1862-63, United Scottish Press, Madras, 1863, p. xiii.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. III B, p. xiv.

attacking the *kolkar* guards.³⁸ From these it is evident that the *kolkar* had an important role in the day to day affairs of Malabar. Considering their importance, Grant and Ballard, the Collectors of Malabar recommended for doubling their pay without recommending same increase to *adhikari* and *menon*.

The importance of village police system during the period is evident from the proportion of police and population in rural and town areas of the Presidency. In 1865, there was one policeman for 1212 persons in rural areas. In towns, it was one for every 536 persons.³⁹ The total rural population of that year was 23, 201, 200. In towns it was 1, 005, 209.⁴⁰ In Malabar, the total area was 6261 square miles and population was 16, 68, 628. Total force to be raised for the district was 1, 685 with a proportion of one policeman to 996 persons.⁴¹ In the first year itself after implementing the Act, 1279 men were raised to the force. When all other districts of Madras were facing constrains for getting recruits, Malabar made such an advance by incorporating the military guards disbanded by the Malabar Police Corps.⁴² There was no increase in the strength of police in proportion to the increase in population. In 1895, thirty-five years after the new police system was established, the proportion of police to population in the Presidency was same.⁴³ It is evident from the accounts that how the law and order situation of the rural areas was managed. In 1864, the government passed Act IV to enable the government to levy a land cess not exceeding one *anna* per rupee in lieu of village service fees.⁴⁴ The amount collected under this head was to be used for the payment for the village servants employed on the village and police duties. It was another positive factor to the government. The expense for policing the villages will meet from this fund. Unlike in other districts of Madras, there was no separate village police in Malabar and so it was recommended to provide increased pay to the *kolkar* by

³⁸ MGG, June 16th 1860, p. 153.

³⁹ RAMP 1865-66, United Scottish Press, Madras, 1866, p. 13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ RAMP 1860-61, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴³ RAMP, 1896-97, Government Press, Madras, 1897, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Baden Powell, *The Land Systems in British India*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

using this fund as they were doing the police duties in the villages. All these show that the government could manage villages in Malabar only with the service of the *kolkar* staff.

The *kolkaran* as Village Police

Various orders and circulars of the police department defined the functions of the village police in the Presidency. It was considered as the most useful auxiliary of the general police. As there was no separate village police in Malabar, the *kolkar* were obliged to obey those regulations and do the prescribed duties of village police. In other districts there were separate village police called *taliyari*. The appointment, dismissal and punishment of the *kolkar* rested with the Collector or Magistrate. All cases of their misconduct or inefficiency were reported to the Collector. Generally they were under the disposal of the village magistrate or the *adhikari*. As per the general rule, the village police had to devote entire time to police duties.⁴⁵ But in Malabar the *kolkar* had many other duties to perform. The night patrol and observation of every part of the area by the *kolkar* was not required in Malabar. It was done by the servants arranged by the cultivators and other chiefs of Malabar. But they had to observe the strangers and suspicious characters in the villages and report it to the nearest station house through the *adhikari*. There was to be a register in every village to record the details of strangers and suspected characters passing through the village. When the occurrence of a crime was noticed by the *kolkar*, he had to report it immediately to the head of the village. The village *chavadi* were the legal places for the confinement of persons sentenced by *adhikari* for the crimes under their power. It was the duty of the *kolkar* to guard those village jails. The *kolkar* of every village had to communicate with their counterparts in the nearby villages and exchange intelligence.⁴⁶ The village police had to accompany and guard the remittance to the *taluk* treasury. In Malabar both duties were done by the *kolkar*. The police orders clearly stated that the village police could not depute for domestic duties. When all

⁴⁵ Anonymous author, *Orders of the Madras Police: Corrected up to September 1890*, Scottish Press, Madras, 1890, p. 50.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

those rules and regulations existed about village police of Madras Presidency, the system of Malabar continued without remarkable changes.

Even after the introduction of the new Police Act, the *kolkar* in the villages of Malabar were doing the works of police, though they are under the revenue department. The police administration reports of Madras Presidency made many positive comments about Malabar in respect of low rate of crimes, ratio of crimes registered and criminals detected and the ratio of detected and convicted criminals. In the year 1869-70 South Malabar headed first with reference to the ratio of registered cases detected and the number of persons convicted in each district. Here the percentage of detected cases was 51.1 and the number of persons convicted to every hundred offences was 109.⁴⁷ In this matter, North Malabar ranked 6th among the 23 districts. The condition of law and order situation of Malabar was highly appreciated by the authority.⁴⁸

The *kolkar* had an important role in getting such an appreciation to the Malabar police in matters of law and order. In other districts of the Madras Presidency, most of the cases were coming from villages. In Malabar, the vigilance and dedication of the *kolkar* helped much to the maintenance of law and order in villages. The identification of criminals and the reporting of criminal activities were properly done by the *adhikari* staffs of the district. It was made possible by the work of the *kolkar*.

Survey Establishment

The *kolkar* did provided commendable service to the colonial government in getting the whole land surveyed in the most scientific way. In Wyanad, separate establishment was formed under a manager for surveying land. Many *kolkar* were deputed to the new department. At Wyanad, a team of 191 members from manager to peon was set up. Out of this 125 were *kolkar* and they were with

⁴⁷ Police Administration Report, Madras 1869-70, p. 23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

different pay rates. The following table shows the distribution of *kolkar* in the survey establishment of Wyanad as on February 1860.⁴⁹

Designation	Number	Rate of Pay (Rs)	Total/month (Rs)
Head <i>kolkar</i>	6	7 ½	45
Head <i>kolkar</i>	5	7	35
Station marker (<i>kolkar</i>)	1	7 ½	7 ½
<i>kolkaran</i>	6	6 ½	39
<i>kolkaran</i>	103	6	618
<i>kolkaran</i>	4	4	16
Total	125		760 ½

Though the survey process of Wyanad was started in 1860 itself, it was completed only in 1899. As the table shows, *kolkar* were instrumental in the completion of the process. In other *taluk* also *kolkar* were employed in the survey department. After the formation of separate police force for Malabar, many *kolkar* worked as *taluk* peons were excess. It was at that time the survey department accommodated many *kolkar* in Wyanad. The risk of the job in the hilly regions of Wyanad and the pay received by them in the previous posts was considered to fix their pay in the survey department.

Unlike in other districts of the Presidency, the geographical structure and peculiar land relations made the process more complicated. The survey of the district was completed *taluk* wise. The survey of Palakkad was taken up in 1888. But the government rejected the survey report as it was full of mistakes and frauds. At the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century the government had reached a decision to stop the practice of fixing revenue after counting the trees in the garden lands and instead grouping of lands into different blocks by considering quality of the soil. When the government was seriously discussing about the procedure for the collection of revenue from the garden lands of Malabar, there was a ruling of the High Court in 1888 that the Malabar practice of dealing with the occupant instead of the *janmi* was wrong and the latter was the only land holder

⁴⁹ MGG, March 16th 1860, pp. 73-74.

for collection purposes.⁵⁰ It was the aftermath of the appeal of the landlords of Malabar. By this time the landlords of the district began to organize to protect their rights over land. The court order was followed by a mass registration of the landlords. The survey process of the Malabar was completed by 1905. The resurvey or revision survey of these *taluk* divisions were conducted in the 1920s and 30s. The following table gives a summary picture about the survey and resurvey of Malabar.⁵¹

Sl. No	Name of <i>Taluks</i>	No. of Villages	Area in S. Miles	Year of Completion of Original Survey	Year of Re-survey/Revision Survey
1	Wynad	58	821	1899	1922
2	Palghat	138	518	1889	-
3	Calicut	188	287	1896	1930
4	Kurumbranad	341	417	1893	1933
5	Valluvanad	317	832	1892	1924(Attappadi was completed in 1933)
6	Chirakkal	272	677	1896	1930
7	Kottayam	227	282	1895	1933
8	Ernad	94	660	1896	1927
9	Ponnani	121	426	1893	1929
10	Cochin	1	1. 75	1891	1915

In 1930, A. R MacEwan was appointed as Special Settlement Officer and he submitted his report without much modification of the previous one.

The settlements and resettlements of Malabar after 1900 brought some changes in the works of the *kolkar* in respect of their village duties. Now the landlords were made responsible for the payment of land revenue to their land. When the landlords went on with court procedures to retain their rights over land, the burden of payment of rent also came on their shoulders. In an editorial article

⁵⁰ R. Dis. No. 12- A of 1930, A. R MacEwan, *Report on the Resettlement of Malabar*, March 1930, para 40, p. 42, RAK.

⁵¹ R. Dis. 6336/35/ dtd. 5/7/1935, Bundle No. 417, Sl. No. 10, RAK

of *Janmi*, the journal of landlord's association, the concerns of the landlords about the new reforms were underlined. They complained about the high rate of tax. They were criticizing the system of land under the tenant and burden of tax to the landlord.⁵² The landlords were responsible to pay the dues of revenue and the notices and warrants were dispatching to them and not to the actual cultivators. The new system gave a little bit relief to the *kolkar* in matters of delivering notices etc. But the increase in the population and the corresponding increase in the area of agricultural land in the district prevented them from enjoying the relief in their duties. In 1930, the cropped area of the 8 *taluk* divisions of Malabar was 92, 000 acres.⁵³ It includes 27, 000 acres of paddy land and 12, 000 acres of garden land.⁵⁴ The increase in the volume of agricultural land increased the burden of *kolkar*. When the land lords became responsible for the payment of revenue arrears, the role of the *kolkar* in the matter was not so much important as before. By the beginning of the twentieth century the *janmi* of Malabar under the banner of *janmisabha* started efforts to reform themselves. The *janmisabha* prompted their members to attain modern education. The association conducted annual examination called *karyasthanpareeksha* for the managers of the land owned by landlords.⁵⁵ In this examination managers had to pass three papers related to the new forms of tenancy (*kudiyaymareethikal*), system of accounting (*kanakkuvekkunnareethikal*), and records and laws (*rikkradukalumniyamangalum*). The landlords gave preference to appoint those persons who qualified the *karyasthanpareeksha* for the appointment of their managers. When the landlords began to understand the things well and acted according to the law, the work of the revenue department including the village servants reduced a lot.

⁵² *Janmi*, 1908, Vol. 4, Issue 1, p. 4.

⁵³ Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Calicut, Ernad, Walluvanad, Ponnani, Palakkad.

⁵⁴ A. R MacEwen, *Report on the Resettlement of Malabar*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Advisory address of A C Manavikraman Raja, the Secretary of the Kerala Janmi Sabha, to those who passed the 'KaryasthanPareeksha' in 1911. For details see *Janmi* monthly, 1086 Edavam (1911), pp. 41-51.

The *kolkar* as Process Servers

In 1863, an act was passed to make better provision for the service of process.⁵⁶ This Act was intended to relieve the regular police from the heavy load of work entailed on them by had to serve warrants in case of breach of contracts.⁵⁷ The inconvenience to the police by this extraneous duty was more felt in Wyanad as there were many cases of escape of labourers from the coffee plantations by violating the contracts with the owners. Now it was provided to appoint separate peons for the service of process by charging a fee of one rupee from the complainant before issuing the process. The fee thus collected was intended to use for remunerating the peons. In Malabar, the *kolkar* were used for serving such processes. The duty of serving the warrants of criminal cases is vested with the general constabulary. But in villages, when the police officer deputed to serve the processes, the *kolkar* had to accompany him and assist him to identify the residence and other details of the person.⁵⁸ It was the duty of *adhikari* to ensure the attendance of the *kolkar* in all such duties.

The volume of litigation in Malabar was very high comparing to other districts of Madras Presidency. Innes and Evans opined that general prosperity of the district, absence of famines and the complexity of the land tenures were the reason for the increased rate of litigations in Malabar.⁵⁹ The number of courts also was very high in Malabar. In 1931, thirty superior civil courts were functioning in Malabar besides the village courts. Next to Malabar was the district of Tanjore with twenty civil courts.⁶⁰ The increased number of courts and cases increased the burden of the *kolkar* in villages. The number of processes to be distributed was increasing from year to year. In *fasli* year 1328 (1918-19) 18, 797 processes were

⁵⁶ Act III of 1863.

⁵⁷ RAMP 1862-63, United Scottish Press, Madras, 1863, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Anonymous author, *Orders of the Madras Police: Corrected up to September 1890, op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Innes and Evans, *Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 385.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

issued by the village agencies in the district.⁶¹ The Board of Revenue had the opinion that a special paid agency for the service of processes was not necessary in Malabar. Besides the processes of superior courts, the *kolkar* had to attend the duties in the village courts also.

The Madras Village Court Act of 1888, also known as Act I of 1889, brought some changes in the structure of village courts.⁶² It clearly defined the duties of the *kolkar* as court servants. The Act provided that it shall be the duty of the village servants to carry messages to carry summonses, notices and orders issued under this Act and to act under the orders of the village *munsiff* in seizing, selling and delivering movable properties attached under this Act.⁶³ Besides, he had to do the duties of attachment and sale of properties in connection with the court procedures.

Introduction of the Income Tax

After the revolt of 1857, the Imperial government of India was in financial stringency due to great disparity in income and expenditure. While the expenditure of the government was growing year by year, there was no corresponding increase in the income of the government. In 1856, the year before the Mutiny, the income of the government was rupees 33, 37, 80, 260. After four years, in 1860, the income of the government was 37, 76, 26, 000. The expenditure increased from 33, 97, 41, 880 in 1856-57 to 46, 51, 91, 870 in 1860.⁶⁴ As a solution to the decrease of income, the government of British India resorted to additional taxes. The decision to introduce income tax was implemented according to this resolution. When the Imperial government of India decided to introduce income tax, the provincial governments took steps to convince the matter to the people. As a result of that,

⁶¹ R. Dis. files 1920, Bundle No. 241, Sl. No. 9, RAK.

⁶² The Act received the assent of the Governor on 1st December 1888 and of the Governor-General on 30th January 1889. For details, see *Village Officers' Manual*, Vol. I, Government Press, Madras, 1893, pp. 99-113.

⁶³ Section 11 of Madras Village Court Act 1888, *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁶⁴ MGG, September 1st 1860, pp. 231-32.

measures were taken in Malabar from 1860 to propagate the plan of this new tax and the way of its collection. According to the new tax system, every individual whose annual income was between rupees 200 and 500 had to pay two per cent of his income as income tax. Those who had an income of more than rupees 500 the rate of tax was four per cent.⁶⁵ The Collectors and his subordinates were employed to carry out the Income Tax Act. According to the system introduced a general notice would be issued to those who were expected to be liable to the new tax. Then they were asked to prepare their income and profit and submit it to the revenue authority, generally the *tahsildar*. After cross verification of accounts, the final list of tax payers was to be prepared by the collector and transfer it to the *adhikari* officers. The tax was to be collected by the *Adhikari* staff in four quarterly installments, according to the list provided by the Collector.⁶⁶

In 1860, when the income tax was introduced, the government announced that it will discontinue after five years. But the word was not kept and the collection of income tax continued with periodic modifications. In 1866, the limit of income tax was raised to 500 and upwards.⁶⁷ It was the duty of the village officers to bring to the notice of the *tahsildar* staffs of all divisions and persons including firms and joint families having income of rupees 500 and above and to provide all information available with them to the assessing officers to determine their precise income and tax.⁶⁸ It was the duty of village officers to inform the matter of assessment to the concerned individuals of his village and collect the amount in time observing the formalities for the collection of land revenue. The collection of income tax in Malabar was more difficult than in many districts of Madras. A major share of the tax was paid by the traders whose income varied from year to year. They mainly traded the commodities like pepper, coconut products, tea, coffee etc., and their income varied in accordance with the variation in the climate of

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ MGG, 13th October 1860, p. 296.

⁶⁷ Act II of 1866.

⁶⁸ Board Proceedings No. 871, dated 10th April 1866, para 21.

Malabar and the fluctuations in the prices of the commodities in European markets.⁶⁹ Thus, there were variations in the original and final demands. Another problem was that in every year there was variation in the number of assesseees and the amount of assessment. Thus, it was an unending task to the income tax officers to consider appeals from the tax payers and examine the genuineness of their claims and take decision. It was the duty of the village heads to give immediate and correct information to the income tax assessing officers about the claims of the individuals from their villages. The *kolkar* had to collect such information from interior parts of the villages.

Railway Duties

It was the duty of village headmen to look after the railway lines passing through the villages. The village watchers were to be specially instructed to see that railway accommodation gates are kept closed and to inform if it is not closed. In Malabar, the *kolkar* were instructed to report to railway authorities through the village heads, any damages to the railway fences and to bring to justice all persons breaching such fences.⁷⁰ The village servants were obliged to help the railway authorities to find out and prosecute the owners of the cattle trespassed to railway lines.

Miscellaneous Duties

After 1860, as a part of the expansion of the government activities many new departments and establishments were set up in Malabar. For all such wings of government, the basic unit was village and the *adhikari* had duties related to that wing. Increase of duties to *adhikari* meant increase of duties to the *kolkar*. At the time of the beginning of postal department, the collection and distribution of letters in villages were also done by the *kolkar*. But later village postmen were appointed in every village and direction was given to village officers to use the

⁶⁹ Innes and Evans, *Malabar, op. cit.*, p. 380.

⁷⁰ Village Order No. 28 with reference to G. O No. 1575, Judicial dated 5th December 1872.

service of postal department for correspondences and relieve the village servants from postal duties.⁷¹ After that the duty of the village headmen was only to monitor the works of village postmen. The Abkari Act of 1886 directed the village officers to assist the Abkari officers in implementing the Act. Any breach of the provisions of the Act which come to the notice of the village headmen should immediately report to the *abkari* officers.⁷² The *kolkar* had to travel through the villages to collect information about the illicit trafficking of liquor, spirit, toddy and foreign liquor. The Public Work Departments provided ferry boats at the expense of government. The management of the boat service and protection of boats were the duty of village officers.⁷³ It was also directed that the village officer to appoint a village servant or other individual for the protection of boats. In Malabar, generally the *kolkar* were in charge of such boats. The Treasure Trove Act of 1878 made the village officer responsible for reporting the notice of any treasure with a value of more than ten rupees to the *tahsildar*. The Arms Act of 1878 brought restriction to the use of arms by the people. License system was introduced for the use of fire arms. It was the duty of the village heads to collect reports about the character of the individuals who applied for licenses. The *kolkar* were often deputed to collect information about such individuals. The village heads were in charge of precautions and prevention measures to epidemics like cholera, small-pox, chicken pox, measles etc. When there was outbreak of such epidemics village officers were to submit report about the developments in all days and supervise the vaccination process. The *kolkar*, as the field staff of villages, had a lot of works during such times. The *kolkar* and other specially recruited individuals were appointed in boarder areas to check the entry of affected persons to the district. When a vaccinator came to the village, it was the duty of the village officer to bring all unvaccinated children and adults to him that they might be vaccinated.

⁷¹ Village Order No. 45 with reference to Board Proceedings No. 2491 dated 29th August 1879.

⁷² Section 37 of Act I, 1886.

⁷³ Board Proceedings No. 101 dated 2nd February 1888.

Registration of births and deaths were started by the government to maintain the health and wellness of the people. Registration of deaths with reason for deaths was started in 1865.⁷⁴ It was started to take precautionary measures to prevent the spread of epidemics. The registration of births also was started in 1868.⁷⁵ A new form was incorporated in the village accounts to be prepared by *menon* after careful examination of the data collected from villages. Generally, the *kolkar* were deputed to collect information about births and deaths in the villages. The statistics about vaccinations were also taken by the *kolkar*.

Changes in the Twentieth Century

The dawn of the twentieth century witnessed many changes in the political history of British India and it had more or less its impact in Malabar. The national movement became strong and it spread to all parts of British India. The repressive measures of the British viceroys forced some leaders of the Indian National Congress to resort on extremism. The Partition of Bengal in 1905 and the agitation against it with the novel weapons of *swadeshi*, boycott and national education opened a new era in the history of Indian National Movement. Revolutionary activities were also active in different parts of India and abroad for the liberation of India. Many revolutionary leaders of South India involved in such activities. It was reported that revolver practices were held in some villages of Pondicherry and around to kill notorious European officers.⁷⁶ The First World War and Home Rule agitation made the second decade of the twentieth century troublesome to the British. Since the Gandhian era of the national movement, South India became very active in the national politics. The administrative machinery in the Presidency from the top to bottom was instructed to be more vigilant to identify and prevent every movement against the government.

⁷⁴ Board Standing Circular No. XXXVII dated 17th June 1865.

⁷⁵ Board Proceedings No. 1583 dated 5th March 1868.

⁷⁶ *Sedition Committee 1918 Report*, Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, p. 164.

Though Malabar had no direct active involvement in these national developments in the initial period, the condition of the district was also turbulent. By the beginning of the century, the land revenue settlement of the district was almost over. The land lords became more organized and became a pressure group in the district. The *Janmisabha*, the organization of the landlords under the leadership of K C Manavikraman Raja was an added impetus to the land lords for the exploitation of their tenants. The volume of court procedures against the poor peasants increased much. The tax payers had been given the facility to pay their land tax through money orders.⁷⁷ Due to many reasons, the number of crimes like gang robberies increased in the district. Lack of employment and poverty forced many young people to commit criminal activities for their livelihood. Hatred towards the landlords and the stock of food grains in their storehouses often made them the target of the robbers. The reports of the British officials in the second decade of the century underlined the increased number of robberies in Malabar, especially in South Malabar.⁷⁸ The First World War, the Mappila Struggle of 1921 and the political activities under Indian National Congress and the Communist-Socialist groups were challenges faced by the government from Malabar during the century.

As concerned to the village establishments of Malabar, the beginning of the century witnessed the decline of the status and respectability of the *adhikari*. At the time of the beginning of the land settlements in the district, most of the *adhikari* chiefs were members of well-to-do *tarawad* units and commanded respect and influence in their respective *amsam*. After the settlement, the *amsam* units were divided and new *adhikari* staffs were appointed there and most of them were

⁷⁷ Supplement to MGG, Friday December 1st 1905, pp. 149-54.

⁷⁸ Report of R. H Hitchcock, Superintendent of Police, South Malabar dated 30th March 1915. This report was included in the supporting documents for G. O No. 2080 to 2084 relating to the punishment for those who involved in the *Mappila* outbreak of February-March 1915 in the Kalikavu-Karuvarakund region of Ernad and Valluvanad Taluk divisions. See G. O No. 2080-84, 'Confidential' Files, Government of Madras, Judicial Department, pp. 63-71, RAK

half educated and fighting *ananthiravar*.⁷⁹ They were fighting against their *karanavar* for the partition of *tarawad* or for maintenance. Most of them were paupers and living by misappropriating the revenue collection. They had no land of their own. The property tendered by them was not the property of their own. The village heads without their own property could not live with a low salary of five or six rupees per month. Naturally they misused their position of the village revenue collector and village *munsiff*. Deterioration of the social status abuses in their services made the village courts unpopular among the people. The *adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkar* became growingly unpopular in Malabar during the ensuing years of the century. After the new settlement, the number of *kolkar* was also increased by considering the size of the *amsam*, amount to be collected, extend of fugitive cultivation, and criminality of the inhabitants.⁸⁰ Consideration of criminality for deciding the strength of *kolkar* proves the nature of their service in the villages. They were instruments of the government to collect the revenue and maintain law and order in the villages. It is clear that two or three *kolkar* could not control the people of an *amsam* by their physical force or the arms with them. But it was because of the power vested with them and the *adhikari* that created fear in the minds of the people and so they surrendered before those local agents of the colonial government.

The First World War

The British government found the First World War as a serious threat to the British Empire. Thus, request of the government for wealth and people came to the village including instructions to guard the village from enemies. India contributed in many ways to the war efforts of Britain and her allies during the War. India was a large repository of recruits to the army. A huge amount was collected as 'War Fund' from India. The people from the princely states and British Indian territories

⁷⁹ Tellicherry Sub-Collector's Records, Bundle No. 145, Serial No. 23, p. 14, RAK.

⁸⁰ Board of Revenue (Land Revenue) Proceedings No. 290 dated 17th December 1902, in Revenue Files Unfolded, Bundle No. 4. Sl. No. 27, p. 216, RAK.

positively responded to the collection of money and heavy propaganda for it was launched by the government.⁸¹ At the same time, many challenges were also faced by the government from India. A major section of British Indian army was in the war front. The protection of the boarder itself was a great challenge to the army. The maintenance of internal peace was kept fully under the charge of police force. The police force was not enough to meet the needs of the time.⁸² Over work load and low salary made the police force oppressive. The police force was not looked upon as a friend of the peaceful citizen but his potential oppressor.

The commencement of the First World War made the condition of Malabar more pathetic. Many people, especially the *mappila* community of the district suffered their employment and business. The timber merchants of Malabar also faced severe crisis due to the War. The export of timber declined and those who lost their job in the timber industry returned to their villages, but they could not get accommodated in the agricultural sector. Several Malayali people of Malabar, working in different parts of British India and abroad, also returned to their home due to war. Hitchcock, the Superintendent of Police in South Malabar wrote that most of these people were *mappila* men with bad characters.⁸³ During the War period *mappila* outbreaks occurred in many parts of South Malabar. In most places there was a net increase in the reported crimes mainly due to the condition brought about by the great increase in the price of food, clothing and in the general cost of living. In some districts the increase in crime was because of the lack of enough members in the police force.⁸⁴ Due to the financial crisis of the government, many police stations stopped its functioning in Malabar.⁸⁵ In many

⁸¹ For details about the condition of India and her contribution to the War efforts of Britain, see L. F Rushbrook Williams *India in the Years 1917-1918*, Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1919. It is a report prepared for presentation in the British Parliament.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁸³ *G. O No. 2080-84, 'Confidential' files, op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁸⁴ L. F Rushbrook, *India in the Years 1917-1918, op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁸⁵ The police stations established in 1897 at Kalikavu, Karuvarakundu and Vellayur were thus abolished.

places, police beats in villages were also suspended. The village heads were directed to investigate into criminal activities and to report in the nearest police stations. It increased the burden of the *adhi kari*, *menon* and *kolkar* of the villages. Many police stations were far away from the villages and the passing of information to the stations was a huge task to the village *kolkar*. Due to this reason there was continuous demand from the district officials for increasing the number of *kolkar* in the villages. Between the years of 1910-14, many villages in different *taluk* offices of Malabar were reorganized and the number of *kolkar* was enhanced. Though there was financial crisis, the collection of maximum revenue and the maintenance of peace were essential to the government at that time. But the enhancement of the number of the village servants was not up to the need of the time. In 1917, proposal was submitted from Malabar to the Madras government for sanctioning additional *kolkar* for police duties in selected villages. The following proposal submitted along with the proposal for additional *kolkar* is a clear example for the work load of the *kolkar* of some villages in Ernad *taluk*.⁸⁶

Sl. No	Name of <i>amsam</i> /village	No. of <i>desam</i>	Area in acres	Population	No. of <i>kolkar</i> at present	Distance to the Police Station/ Miles	Name of Police Station
1	Amarambalam	1	18804	5956	3	6	Nilambur
2	Cheruvayur	3	3147	3405	3	5	Kondotty
3	Karumarakad	3	2875	3500	2	6	Kondotty
4	Olavattur	2	3687	2407	2	6	Kondotty
5	Parappanangadi	1	888	5770	2	4	Tirurangadi
6	Nannambra	3	2295	4388	3	5	Tirurangadi
7	Valakolam	1	2216	3598	3	6	Tirurangadi
8	Klari	2	1765	3189	2	10	Malappuram
9	Kottakkal	2	2625	7071	3	8	Malappuram
10	Chengottur	6	3028	2724	3	5	Malappuram
11	Pandalur	1	5182	2971	2	5	Manjeri
12	Payyanad	2	5119	3214	2	6	Manjeri

⁸⁶ R. Dis 9/M-17 dated 04/01/1917, Bundle No. 4, RAK.

In this proposal additional *kolkar* were requested for thirty villages in different *taluk divisions* including those in North Malabar. The vastness of the *amsam* units of Wyanad *taluk* made the works of village servants prodigious. Besides, the recent introduction of police reallocation scheme in Wyanad also increased the burden of village staff. The Puthadi *amsam* in Wyanad *taluk* was comprised of 6000 acres and extended twenty miles from east to west.⁸⁷ The above proposals were not sanctioned by the government due to financial crisis. The proposed grouping of villages in Malabar was also a reason for the denial of the proposal. The police duties of village *kolkar* continued to be a great task.

The reduction of the police stations increased the burden of *adhikari* in matters of police administration. The extent of the *amsam* and the distance from *amsam* to the nearest police stations badly affected the police administrations in the villages. There was chance for hiding of crimes without reporting and secret settlements by the servants within the villages. Reporting of every crime in the nearby police station with the limited strength of staff was impossible for an *adhikari* who resided in a corner of the village. It often leads to abuse of power by village heads. In many instances the village staff became instruments of oppression. The discontent of the people towards the *adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkar* became visible with the Malabar Struggle of 1921.

The Village Bench Courts and Panchayath Courts

The Madras Village Courts Act of 1889 provided for the establishment of Village Bench Courts in the Madras presidency. These Bench Courts were not established in Malabar District till the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century. The functioning of the Village Munsiff courts was not satisfactory in the district as most of the people were not willing to resort to village courts. The incompetence of the village *munsiff*, the want of confidence in their integrity, and the existence of factions in the villages were some reasons for the

⁸⁷ G. O. No. 886 of Judicial Department, Govt. of Madras dated 25 March 1912, Page. 3, RAK.

failure of those courts.⁸⁸ The social respectability of the village heads was another reason for the deterioration of the village courts. The *tahsildar* of Palghat in a letter gives an example for the close relation of respectability of the *munsiff* and number of cases resorted to him for settlement. While the *adhikari* of Muthalamada *amsam*, a 'respectable' person named Gopalan Nair, handled 500 to 600 petty cases a year, the *adhikari* of Vadavannur, a nearby *amsam*, had scarcely any case to settle. The latter *adhikari* was a pauper and he had not a house of his own.⁸⁹ In some villages, the post of village officer was hereditary and in many instances the person taking charge of *adhikari* was either illiterate or ignorant about the law and procedures and they themselves induce the party to go to the District *munsiff's* Court for remedy.⁹⁰ In some other cases, the self-interests of the *munsiff* denied justice to the deserved parties. In most cases the *adhikari* was representative from the land owning class and their pro-landlord interests influenced their judgments. The landlords of Malabar were more organized and they used pressure upon the *munsiff* to decide the suits in favour of them. They used to influence the *munsiff*, *menon* and *kolkaran* for getting favourable judgments. Besides *the adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkaran* also had leniency towards the land owning class. By establishing the Village Bench Courts, an important advantage foreseen by the British was the possibility to avoid the incompetent village heads as the presidents of the bench courts. There was option to nominate a more competent person as president of the court from among the group of villages and trial and discussion among the members of the court may help to ensure unbiased decision to the clients. Another positive factor expected by the government was the speedy disposal of petty civil litigations and it would give much relief to the District *Munsiff* Courts which were overloaded with work.

In 1914, after prolonged discussions twelve Village Bench Courts were established in different *taluk* divisions of the district by clubbing about forty-eight

⁸⁸ Tellicherry Sub-Collector's Records, Bundle No. 145, Serial No. 23, p. 3, RAK.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

amsam.⁹¹ Two to six villages were clubbed for constituting the bench courts. These courts were established with the condition that no additional financial liabilities to be incurred by the government except that of furniture and office. In a proposal submitted from North Malabar to the establishment of Bench Courts it was stated that the *kolkaran* of the concerned *amsam* would render his service to the court during the days of its sittings. Processes of the courts would be served by the *adhikari* through his *kolkaran*. The president of the court was empowered to serve summonses to the concerned *amsam adhikari* and they would serve it through their *kolkaran*. The clerical works were to be done by the *menon* of the concerned or nearby *amsam*.⁹² No additional establishment was required for the establishment of the Village Bench courts according to this proposal. The Madras Village Court Act of 1888 was amended by the Madras Village Courts (Amendment Act) of 1919. After that the Village Bench Courts ceased to exist and Village Panchayat Courts were formed in the district. Though certain changes were recommended in the structure and functions of the court, the duties of the *kolkar* continued as before.

The establishment of bench courts caused for the decline of the status of the *adhikari* chiefs in Malabar. Till that time, the village heads held power as the village *munsiff*. This position was an important reason for their reputation among the inhabitants. Many village officers played the role of intermediaries for settling issues among clients without any court procedures. People, either by respect or by fear, obeyed the decisions of the village heads.

The Struggle of 1921

The Struggle of 1921 was an important event in the history of Malabar. It was a great challenge to the British and to the landlords from the side of the *mappila* peasants of Malabar. The government used all its machinery to suppress the revolt. It took about a year to end the menace completely. During and immediately after the Struggle, the village servants were very much alert to collect

⁹¹ G. O. No. 1456 dated 1st July 1914, Judicial Department, Government of Madras.

⁹² D. R File, Public 1917, Bundle No. 196, Sl. No. 9, File No. 1440 dated 16/9/17, RAK.

and report information to the government. The *adhipari* sent reports about the movements of the rebels and other developments in villages. It was a great source of information to the government.⁹³ The rebels looked the village servants as their enemies and in many places they were manhandled or their houses and properties were taken away or destroyed. In the Muduvallur *amsam* of Ernad *taluk*, houses of two *kolkar* were raided by the rebels and all the movable properties were taken away.⁹⁴ In the first instance, the mother of *kolkaran* Gopalan Nair submitted compensation petition to the construction supervisor of the government along with the list of valuables lost to the family. The submission of *kolkaran* Gopalan Nair was enclosed with the petition. Another staff, *kolkaran* Kizhake Madathil Krishnan was also a petitioner in front of the government. He gave another request to the government in which he explained the reason for his escape from the *amsam* at the time of the Mappila Struggle. Report of killing of men and checking of the vehicle of the accountant of the Nilambur Raja and enmassing of armed *mappila people* forced him to escape from the village.⁹⁵ In Urangattiri *amsam* of Ernad *taluk*, the house of an *adhipari* named Karipath Kesavan Namboothiri was raided and all movable properties were taken away by the *mappila* people. The *adhipari* and his family escaped to Edavanna, a nearby village before the attack. He had lost about 121 items from his house for a cost of rupees 3587.⁹⁶ In the same *amsam* the house of a *kolkaran* named Moolakadavath Charukutty Nair was burnt by the rebels and properties including his gun were taken away. He had a loss of properties worth 1182 rupees.⁹⁷

When the struggle became strong, the government decided to handle the anti-state rebellion with an iron hand. In 1922, the Martial Law Ordinance was replaced by the Malabar (Restoration of Order) Ordinance. This ordinance retained

⁹³ Statement of the *adhipari* of Peruvayal dated 18-10-1921, Andaman Colonisation Files (hereafter ACF), Bundle No. 1, Serial No. 117, RAK.

⁹⁴ ACF, Bundle No. 1, Serial No. 376 and 377.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Serial No. 473.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Serial No. 474.

the special criminal courts established for dealing with the cases arising out of the struggle and civil authorities were empowered to make regulations for maintaining order.⁹⁸ The operations against the *mappila* fighters continued vigorously. In August 1922, the Malabar (Completion of Trials) Ordinance was passed and it also provided to continue the functioning of the special courts. At that time a large number of *mappila* prisoners were awaiting trial and it was impossible to complete the trials within the period of the Ordinance. The Malabar (Completion of Trials) Act was passed in 1922.⁹⁹ The *kolkar* of Malabar had additional duties of serving the summonses and other notices in connection with the Malabar Struggle.

Immediately after the end of the struggle, reconstruction and rehabilitation works were started by the government. Thousands of people applied to the government for compensation for the loss of their properties during the period of the revolt. The duty of investigating and reporting the genuineness of the complaint was also the duty of the village servants.

The Post Struggle Events

In Malabar, the period after 1920 was vigorous with political activities. When the national movement under Gandhiji took a new turn with his own political weapons, Malabar also responded positively. The growth of socialist and revolutionary movements also had its impact in Malabar. The vigilance of the government machinery was very essential in every nook and corners of the country to maintain the colonial authority in the country. The clubbing of villages and reorganization of village establishments in Malabar adversely affected the law and order situation of Malabar. The *kolkar* could not conduct their police duties in the villages properly due to many other works. The clubbing of villages caused for the loss of position to many village officers and *menon*. The clubbing and abolition of villages were introduced by the government as part of retrenchment due to the

⁹⁸ RAMP- 1921-22, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. xii.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

financial crisis after the First World War. But when the authorities realized that it was detrimental to their interests they revoked it. The Madras Village Officers' Restoration Act was passed in 1926. It was published in the *Fort St. George Gazette* on 6th July 1926 and became a law. According to the Act, all villages amalgamated or grouped after 1920 as part retrenchment were to be re-divided or regrouped into original units and the offices abolished on account of such grouping or amalgamation were to be revived¹⁰⁰ Besides, the Act provided for the restoration of villages which were abolished without grouping or amalgamation as part of policy of retrenchment since 1920.

After 1921 peasant movements and Socialist-Communist movements began to grow along with the national movement. The anti-colonial struggles in other parts of India had its response in Malabar. It was after 1920, that the local self-government institutions also had active role in the day to day affairs of villages. The Council Act of 1919 provided for more participation of the Indians in the provincial legislatures. Representation of the Indians in the legislative assemblies and local bodies and their power to control or question the arbitrary measures of the government and its officers was acted as a check upon the government departments including the villages. The local self-government institutions had a supervisory role over the village servants. Though the village servants were under the direct control of the government, they could not neglect the interests of the local bodies. Due to the establishment of many new departments under the government, many functions of the village servants were transferred to them. The duties of the village heads were restricted to revenue duties and reporting of crimes and observing the law-breakers in villages. During the closing years of the colonial rule the village servants especially the village officers followed a favourable attitude towards the national movement. Many associations of village officers were set up in different parts of the Presidency. In 1938, the government directed the

¹⁰⁰ G. O Press No. 1231, Revenue dated 30th July 1926. in R. Dis 2296/26 dated 24/12/1926, Bundle No. 292, Sl. No. 10. RAK

district collectors to observe the activities of the associations of village officers and warned them against the violation of guidelines prescribed for government servants against participation in meetings of organizations.¹⁰¹ It was directed that the village officers' associations could not discuss or pass resolutions on matters other than the general interest of their members as village officers. According to this decision of the government, the Collector of Malabar asked the details about the existing village officers' associations from all *taluk* divisions. Many village officers' associations functioned in Malabar with different names. Generally the president and treasurer of those organizations were *adhikari* and *menon* acted as secretary.¹⁰² Many village servants of Malabar were involved in political activities including in the Indian National Congress.¹⁰³ When the National Movement took a new turn in the 1940s, they expected a transfer of power and wanted to keep their power and position safe under the new government. The *kolkar* also played the same double role when there arose chances of transfer of power into the hands of the Indian people.

The cruelties of the village servants continued even after their bitter experiences during the Struggle of 1921. They created terror in the minds of the villagers. There were scores of instances showing outrageous behaviour of the village officials. Such instances often reached in the courts. One such incident has been portrayed thus:

'A *munsiff* was compelled to impose a fine of rupees 100/- upon an *adhikari* for his alleged inhuman behaviour towards a villager who failed to remit land tax in time. The *adhikari* and his men unscrupulously snatched two milking cows and buffaloes the villager possessed. As a sad sequence of the incident, the calves of the cows died of starvation, inviting agony to the tenant. A complaint was lodged against the

¹⁰¹ R. Dis 1189/38 dated 14/03/1938, Tellichery Sub-Collector's Records I, Sl. No. 75, RAK

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Interview with K. Subrahmanian, retired *sheristadar*, Angadippuram, dated 19/07/2018.

adhibari and he was heavily fined. The *munsiff* observed that the *adhibari* showed willful cruelty in separating the cows and calves'.¹⁰⁴

Similar events were usual at the time of collecting taxes. The *adhibari* and his men attempted to create a domain of his own in the village. Often they cut down and took away bunches of tender coconuts from the holdings of tenants to press them for arrear payment. The Great Depression of 1930s affected the entire world, forced the governments to increase taxes. In Malabar, the government increased taxes and it increased the burden of peasants. The decline in the prices of agricultural products doubled their hardships. Most of the peasants could not pay the tax dues. Naturally villages were in unrest during the inter-war period. All newspapers in Malayalam criticized the government and few among them suggested a people's struggle like the Bardoli Movement of 1929 against the government.¹⁰⁵

The increase in taxes, hardships of the peasants and cruelties of the village servants made the condition of Malabar turbulent. Many peasant organizations were set up and strengthened during this period. The Socialist and Communist organizations became popular in Malabar as they stood with the ordinary people against the cruelties of state agents and the landlords in the village.

¹⁰⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 15th August 1936, NNPR, Tamil Nadu State Archives (hereafter TSA).

¹⁰⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th December 1931, NNPR, TSA.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The colonial raj under the British in India was a collaborative exercise of colonial forces and native servants. Assimilation of local elements into the administrative system was a significant feature of colonialism all over the world. The system took a distinct form in Malabar due to its unique geography and past experiences of colonial administration in India. The *kolkar* system evolved out of these experiences and distinct character of Malabar during the period of British imperialism.

The aim of the English in Malabar was to establish a government which would prevent internal dissensions among the chiefs and among the people to secure all advantages to the Company. As elsewhere in India, pre-colonial Malabar also was governed by long established customs, conventions and laws to which people were highly attached and fundamental changes to it was dangerous to the colonial rulers. Thus, the British decided to form a section of native servants to administer Malabar in order to bring 'continuity' in their bureaucratic system. It was more visible at the village and *taluk* levels. The revenue, police and judicial administration were the early developed branches of government under the British. Revenue collection was the most important aim of the colonial government and to achieve its maximum, these three branches worked together. Gradually, steps were taken by the colonial administrators to separate these departments to increase efficiency. In the lower units of administration, especially in the villages, there were no remarkable changes. The *kolkar* served in the villages and *taluk* divisions of Malabar as an important group of agents throughout the colonial period. The people in the villages began to feel the presence of new government through these *kolkar*, *menon* and *adhikari*.

Elements of transformation were visible at the time of the formation of *kolkar* system itself. When the second phase of the Pazhassi rebellion was started,

the Watson's police *kolkar*, recruited to assist revenue collection of South Malabar, was deputed to North Malabar and their duty in the new region was military in nature. The revenue and police *kolkar* worked in cooperation with the regular troops for the suppression of anti-colonial disturbances in the district.

The advent of British rule in Malabar and the consequent changes in district administration were result of the trial and error methods. The discontentment of the people in the district and continuous protests against the administrative measures forced the government to give utmost care in matters of revenue collection, judicial administration and protection of life and property. Close watch on the people was essential to the smooth functioning of the colonial government. The British government realized that the best way for effective watch upon the people is to depute the local 'collaborators' as agents of the state. In Malabar, different factors like religion, caste, economic status and traditions had been considered by the government for the selection of such agents. The members of the families of landlords, chiefs and wealthy people were preferred by the British in the recruitment of such servants. Most of the leaders of the anti-government rebellions and revolts of Malabar were members of these classes. It was a deliberate effort of the colonial government to recruit the civil servants from the same class to prevent the flow of the people to the opposite side. The colonial raj had misunderstood that the wealthy feudal classes were enjoying control upon the people with the assistance of customary practices, caste and feudal relationships.

The socio-political and geographical conditions of Malabar forced the British to decide the nature of service of the *kolkar* in the early phase itself. Malabar was different in many respects from other districts of the Madras Presidency. In most of the districts there were many village servants like *taliyari*, *vetti*, *notagar* and *neergunti*. But in the villages of Malabar the only field servant was the *kolkaran*. Hence, multiple types of duties were entrusted with *kolkar* which varied from time to time. The geography as well as climate of Wyanad and north Malabar necessitated their military service during the time of Pazhassi resistance against

colonial rule. Due to the peculiar condition of Wyanad, the Company reduced the number of their troops in the region and it was compensated by deploying the *kolkar*, for, the British learned from the experience of Malabar that *kolkar* were a reliable group to implement their secret and strategic plans. The *kolkar* rendered valuable services to the Company in their movement against the rebels and acted as the secret network of the colonial government in the affected areas. Their chief duties were, information collection about the movements of protesters, identify the supporters of the protesters, spot out the sources of men and money to them and to act as messengers. Even though the revenue collection and police duties in a condition of turmoil were very risky, the *kolkar* dared to do it throughout the British period. Because of the risk involved in the service of the *kolkar*, the government sanctioned special rewards and incentives to them many times. The service of *kolkar* were respected and highlighted by various administrators at different times. Despite their service were pleasing to the colonial government as an agent of the state, the misuse of power by the *kolkar*, to a great extent, contributed to raise anti-colonial feeling among the people.

As the *kolkar* and other newly installed colonial officers in the villages became the agents of imperial authority and raised to a magnified status of the imperial staff, they turned into new elite in the village spaces. These elite became unavoidable necessity in the relationship between the colonial government and the people. Moreover, as they had police and judicial powers, they increased their authority upon the masses in the villages. The result was transformation of the villages in Malabar, which were under the clutches of landlordism based upon caste distinction and ownership of landed property. In short, a new class of modern elite began to appear in the village spaces which challenged the authority of the existing feudal classes in multiple ways.

In pre-colonial Malabar, *kolkar* were attendants and field assistants of the native landlords and chieftains. Their duties were collection of revenue, carrying messages to and from, collecting information about various issues of rural areas.

They were sincere and dedicated in their services and always loyal to their masters. Reputed families of a particular *tara* or *nadu* provided such servants one after another to the *raja* and chiefs. Such families became prominent in the society as they were the agents of the rulers. Their service was not for a fixed salary. The income from the assigned land was their remuneration. Before the period of Mysore rule, most *kolkar* were recruited from the *nair* families of Malabar. The advent of the Mysoreans brought some Muslims to the forefront. This class did not get due recognition from the British and it caused for many upheavals in Malabar against the British rule.

Learning from the experiences in matters of internal peace and security in its early years, the Company had formed a local police-cum military force under Captain Watson. Lack of discipline and proper training made the locally recruited *sibandi* Corps and *nair* corps unpopular. Hence, they expected good results from a strictly trained and properly supervised native force. The Watson's Corps ably assisted the colonial government in the collection of revenue, maintenance of law and order and in the war against the native rebels.

The key administrative unit of post 1800 British India was the district which was managed by the collector. Their main duties were keeping peace and order, supervise the businesses in the courts, collect revenue and submit periodical reports on the conditions of the district. They had to depend upon their subordinate staff members, who were mostly Indian, for carrying out the aforementioned tasks. As at the lowest level, village headmen controlled and reported affairs in the villages. Hence, the report from a district comprised of accounts from hundreds of villages. The village accounts of Malabar were mainly information collected by the *kolkar*.

The absorption of the *kolkar* into colonial service was a gradual process. The circumstances of Malabar influenced the British in formulating method of recruitment, nature of training and service and their remuneration. During the first

two decades of British rule in Malabar, the most important challenges faced by them were the revolts of Pazhassi Raja, the adventures of the *mappila* chiefs of South Malabar and the rebelliousness of the *kurichiyar* of Wyanad. They experienced great difficulties in collection of revenue and maintenance of internal peace. Furthermore, geographical features of the region and the economic constraints of the Company prevented them from large scale deployment of troops in the district. Thus, they mostly relied upon the local 'collaborators' to meet the situation. At that time, *kolkar* were the most important group of 'collaborators' at the grass root level. Their number reached up to five thousand during the second phase of the Pazhassi revolt. British officials like Watson transformed them into a disciplined force.

Restoration of the pre-Mysorean land relations in Malabar was an important aim of the English East India Company in the beginning. To achieve this, the government had to suppress resistances of the *mappila* people in Malabar, especially in South Malabar. In order to subdue the *mappila* rebels, the Company recruited more *nair* people as *kolkar* during that time. While recruiting the *nair* men to the *kolkar* force, the Company expected dedication beyond the limit of loyalty to the government. They believed that the communal element would act as an added enthusiasm to fight against the protesting groups. This surreptitious objective of the colonial government worked all throughout its rule in Malabar. They always preferred servants other than the *mappila* people. It was one of the reasons for the growing rivalry between the Hindus and *mappila* people of Malabar. Their recruitment method created an impression among the *mappila* community and the lower caste people that the upper caste communities of Malabar were in alliance with the British and they were also to be eliminated. It was very much evident at the time of the *mappila* revolts of nineteenth century and in the rebellion of 1921. In the struggle of 1921 in which many *adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkar* people were manhandled and their properties were robbed. In the minds of the local rebels, like the European officers, they also were the instruments

of suppression. The village and *taluk* servants were the representatives of the colonial government. It was natural that the resentment against the foreign government turned towards their native servants. Thus, it could be seen that not only the state and the landlords, but *menon* and *kolkar*, as collaborators with oppressors, were also the target of *mappila* fighters.

Many factors contributed to the upper caste dominance in the appointment of *kolkar*. The British preferred the upper caste people in Malabar in all appointments. They were indebted to reward for the dedicated service of the *nair* people of Malabar to the Company in their operations against Haider Ali and Tipu Sulthan. The communal polarization that took place in Malabar immediately after the ascendancy of the British also influenced their appointment strategy. The British wanted the wholehearted support of a class who were superior in terms of wealth and social status. The rigidity of the caste practices in Malabar also influenced the recruitment policy of the British. Untouchability and unapproachability prevented them from recruiting the lower castes as servants. As the upper castes had uncontrolled access to anywhere any time, it was possible to carry out their duties without any difficulties. The principle of continuity also influenced their policy. The British wanted to maintain the feeling of continuity in the minds of the people of Malabar. It was a period of turmoil in Malabar and a vast section of the people turned against the Company government. They thought that a sudden change in the basic structure would endanger the situation. At the same time, though not completely successful, they wanted to reinstate the pre-Mysorean system by undoing the reforms of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sulthan. It was because of this, they thought that in the long run the collusion with the upper castes of Malabar would be beneficial to them. The nominal representation of the *mappila* people in the village and *taluk* services was to minimize the resistance from the community in regions like South Malabar.

Another reason for the recruitment of natives to the grass root level service was to neutralise the discontentment of the people. They wanted to create a

feeling that the British were not directly interfering in the affairs of the natives. During the period of the Pazhassi revolt, when the Company brought troops from outside, they experienced varied difficulties. In the last stage of the rebellion almost all troops were withdrawn from the region and controlled by using the *kolkar* force.

Monetary benefit also influenced the recruitment of natives. Remuneration to the *kolkar* was very meager compared to the service rendered by them. For many years there was no regular payment system for the *kolkar*. Their pay depended upon the risk of their job and the generosity of the superior officers. In almost all departments *kolkar* had to work from dawn to dusk and in some departments like customs they had to serve in nights also. In the sea customs department, they had to patrol a long distance daily to watch the sea coasts and river mouths. No other servants had to do such tedious works under the colonial government. But comparing to the works done by them their pay was very low and it continued throughout the British period. It led to malpractices by this group of servants and there by worked as an added cause for mobilizing the mass against the British.

The peculiar nature and structure of the Malabar villages necessitated increased role of the *kolkar*. In matters of social organization and customs, Malabar was entirely different from other parts of India. Caste relations of the Hindu religion determined the structure of society. The peculiar geography and climate of the region decided the system of agriculture. Scattered pattern of agricultural lands and settlements made the duties of village servants more difficult. Comparing to the villages of other districts of Madras, the size of villages in Malabar was too large. The vastness of villages compelled the village heads to depend more upon *kolkar* for the day to day administration of villages. In other parts of Madras Presidency, different categories of village servants were employed for various functions. But in Malabar, *kolkar* did all duties except those of *adhikari* and *menon*.

In Malabar, most functions of the colonial judicial institutions were carried out by the *kolkar*. From 1816 onwards *kolkar* became the part and parcel of the judicial administration. In the villages and *taluk* units, *kolkar* worked as office and field assistants. They served summonses to clients and witnesses. When the village bench courts were established, their duties again increased as they had to inform about the court sittings and other procedures to all members of the bench court. There were instances which show misuse of their position as court servants.

The service of *kolkar* as police was very much essential to the government till the end of the Company rule. This force in villages and *taluk* divisions were actively involved in the suppression of *mappila* resistances of the 1830s and 1840s. The *taluk kolkar* along with the *tahsildar* and the district police officers raided the houses and hiding places of the protesting groups and killed many of them. As an agent of the state they fought against their own countrymen. Naturally, the native people who fought against the British government looked the *kolkar* as their enemies. After 1860, the British police system was more professionalized and the police functions of the *kolkar* were limited to the villages. When *adhikari* became the heads of police in villages, *kolkar*, his executive assistants became more powerful. As per the police regulations village heads or *kolkar* were prevented from entering to a house without warrant. Searches were to be made by constables on the presence of or on the requisition of the heads of villages with the due written authority of the officer in charge of the police stations. But in many occasions *kolkar* and *adhikari* entered into and made searches in the houses of suspected persons. It was a reason why the village servants became villains in the minds of the people.

Though the *kolkar* were low-graded and low paid servants under the British, their financial position was rather enviable. Almost all *kolkar* during the British rule were financially sound and owners of large tracts of land. Besides the income from land, they gathered money from many other illegitimate sources.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was steady decline in the social status of the *adhikari* officers of Malabar. Decline in the status of *adhikari* reflected equally or more severely upon the *kolkar*. Reforms in the revenue administration, changes in the *tarawad* or joint family system and movement of the youths of the *nair* families for share in the family property were the major factors which influenced the position of the village heads. The settlements of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century resulted in the division of many *amsam* of Malabar into two or more. The increase in the number of *amsam* produced many new *adhikari* staff. Most of the newly appointed *adhikari* men were newly educated or under-educated youths of the reputed families of the concerned *amsam*. They were discontented with the existing family conditions and autocracy of the *karanavar* of the *tarawad*. They were in conflict with their uncles and many of them engaged in legal battles. Unlike the earlier *adhikari* officers the newly recruited persons had no property for security. Many of them were paupers and badly needed money for the court expenses. They selected *kolkar* who were cooperating with them. This new group of village heads indulged in many corrupt practices in villages to meet their fiscal needs. These greedy activities of *adhikari* officers were enforced in villages through the *kolkar*. The *adhikari* of the earlier period were satisfied with the nominal amount of remuneration sanctioned by the government as they preferred status rather than remuneration. The new *adhikari* had no personal property and so they solely depended on the income collected through their offices. Most of them misappropriated the revenue collection. These developments made the village servants unpopular among the people. It was more reflected during the period of the Malabar rebellion of 1921. The *adhikari*, *menon* and *kolkar* of Malabar acted as the sycophants of the British. Their cruelties transgressed all boundaries of human behaviour and the British seemed to be amiable compared to the native oppressors.

As a colonial power, Britain wanted to squeeze the resources of Malabar at its maximum as it was their policy in every parts of India. The first prerequisite for the smooth extraction of the resources of an alien society is to make it disciplined. So, always as elsewhere in India, in Malabar the formation of a disciplined society was the primary objective of the British. The British preconceived that by establishing a disciplined society, dangers could be neutralized or reduced to its maximum. They kept in mind that as the police force was being established in Malabar could identify the disturbing or useless people and to avoid inconveniences to the major section of the population. The attempt of the government to maintain discipline by using military was not a success in the district. Thus, they thought in terms of creating a police force in Malabar. Police was a body devised in England in the nineteenth century, for safeguarding the society. The Irish experience prompted Britain to create a police force by recruiting maximum native inhabitants. It was started in 1800 by the formation of Watson's Corps. Periodical transformations took place in the structure of the police force in Malabar. Its functions and responsibilities also underwent stages of transformation. In Malabar the transformation of the *kolkar* was closely associated with the evolution of the institution of police. At the beginning, the police and judicial establishments were set up exclusively for the fulfillment of local needs. But gradually these institutions became more nationalized and uniformed and thereby more professionalized. There was a reverse relation between the professionalization of the institutions of police and judiciary and the exclusion of the *kolkar*. At the last stage of the British rule, *kolkar* became a grass root level village servants with limited police and revenue duties under the supervision and control of the *adhikari*.

How far the term agent is appropriate to the *kolkar* is an objective of this study. An agent is a person who works for or represents a person or group. The *kolkar* who served under the British worked for and represented the colonial government. They did military duties at a time when the colonial government was

in a critical situation. In addition to that a major part of the work of court affairs of the British, especially in village and *taluk* levels, were carried out by *kolkar*. When the income tax system was introduced by the government, it became the duty of the *adhikari* to collect the tax from the persons listed by the Collector. It was *kolkar* who played key role in the collection of income tax from Malabar villages. The borders of the district were guarded by the *kolkar* to prevent smuggling, and other violations of tax rules. *Kolkar* were appointed on borders, check posts and coastal regions to prevent the spread of epidemics by checking the entry of infected persons into the district. The customs and excise departments also utilised the service of *kolkar*. When regular police force was established throughout the Madras Presidency, the police duties of the *kolkar* were restricted to the village areas. Though they became a subordinate group to the permanent police force, their police functions were significant due to the peculiar nature of Malabar villages. Being the largest group of native servants in the colonial government and usually visible to the villagers every day, the people of Malabar looked them as the representatives of the oppressive government. The privilege of a government servant was often misused by them for personal gains and it made a bad impression among the people. The illegal activities of these *kolkar* caused turning the anger of the people against the government. There is a proverb in Malabar that '*crab with kolkaran's job*' indicating the discomfort that the people felt from the new elite in villages.

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Appendix I

1	Maweton Kadooghan	51 Chagaren
2	Chegonterap Koonghan Nambiar	52 Nambaroo
3	Seelyodan Kanen	53 Nambaroo
4	Koorithen Raran	54	Kaluenkolaven Rarapen
5	Slady Ramer	55	Marakateri Paky Mapila
6	Wiawary Koonghan	56	Kooren Pakroo Maroo
7	Koolyweetil Koodooghan	57	Cheenanneedan Cunhy Poker
8	Edaiven Choondoo	58	Edavera Assen
9	Wenghalawen Kanaren	59	Weteyot Cooty ()
10	Kutanpoorawen Kanaren	60 Cooty
11	Manjan Kandapen	61Mayen Cooty
12	Melepatoo Crisnen	62 Moideen
13	Kaladoo Ramen Nair	63	Walion Soopy
14	Chakoondy Changoo	64	Packroo Soopy
15	AdyodyRamanoo	65	Moonay Athen
16	Chereel Chapen	66	Tanavatha Chadaen
17	Chereel Raman Nair	67	Koonil Maideen
18	Koomoonda Rarapen	68	Patany Authoola
19	Erawatoo Wapoo	69	Patany Emoo
20	Kampooratha Keloo	70	Patany Shekoo Amed
21	Kowelery Kanapen	71	Tatathe Kalanden
22	Koomoonda Ramen	72	Kolakaren Taroo-way
23	Koonumel Keloo	73	Kanady Pockra
24	Koonumel Ukaden	74	Panookaran Moideen
25	Puthiawee-til Chapen Nair	75	Churian Moideen
26	Kotoowail Pachen Nair	76	Pakootty Moideen
27	Walankotoo Imbichy Kooty	77	Mangalery Moideen
28	Maramheetatoo Ukaden	78	Mastano Cunhy Amed
29	Kalpana Chandoo Nair	79	Sayakandy Maimy
30	Kanatha Ukapen	80	Tandeel Cooty Amed
31	Moochiloden Kanara Koorpa	81	Coyassen Taroo-way
32	Waerien Nai-roo	82	Payery Chadean
33	Chalapporoorama Oneeran	83	Theken Kristnen
34	Kotholy Cunhy Kooty	84	Maran Anathen
35	Chandookandeel Imbichen	85	Bawary Kakaroo
36	Kachyloden Choy	86	Maran Eromen
37	Taypathaponatil Unyery	87	Kaylatoo Cunhy Uny
38	Changoopalenkandy Choy	88	Chereel Uny-parawen
39	Wecootoor Rarachen	89	Araedatha Nambiar

40	Areekara Kanaran	90	Sanien Chapen
41	Weloothakandeel Ramen	91	Sanien Cunhy Cutty
42	Panantodeel Chandoo	92	Maim Chapen
43	Poothoocherry Cunhamon	93	Koorachel Koongan
44	Kealen Koonghen	94	Koorachel Kelapen
45	Rawally Keloo	95	Koorachel Ramen
46	Rewanad Komen	96	Tandeel Rapen
47	... Momty	97	Tandaroo Chepen
48	Kandacherry Chakapen	98	Kaden Ramen
49	Kiaten Komapen	99	Kaden Keloo
50 Chatoo	100	Payeri Koran Nambiar

Names of Hundred *kolkar* appointed in Wynad for suppressing the Pazhassi Revolt

(Source: MCF 8685, pp. 159-60, Regional Archives Kozhikode)

Appendix II

Calicut

8th June 1903

To

The Parbuttees of Polnaad-

You are appointed Parbutty of and you are to collect the Public Revenue of that Division agreeable to the order you may from time to time receive from the Head Cutchery at Calicut-

Your pay is fixed at 50 viray fanams per month, a menon is allowed you at 25 fanams per month, and three Kolkars at 18 fanams per month each-

All these allowances are to be paid monthly from the Head Cutchery at Calicut and no expenses are to be incurred in your Division without express sanction from hence-

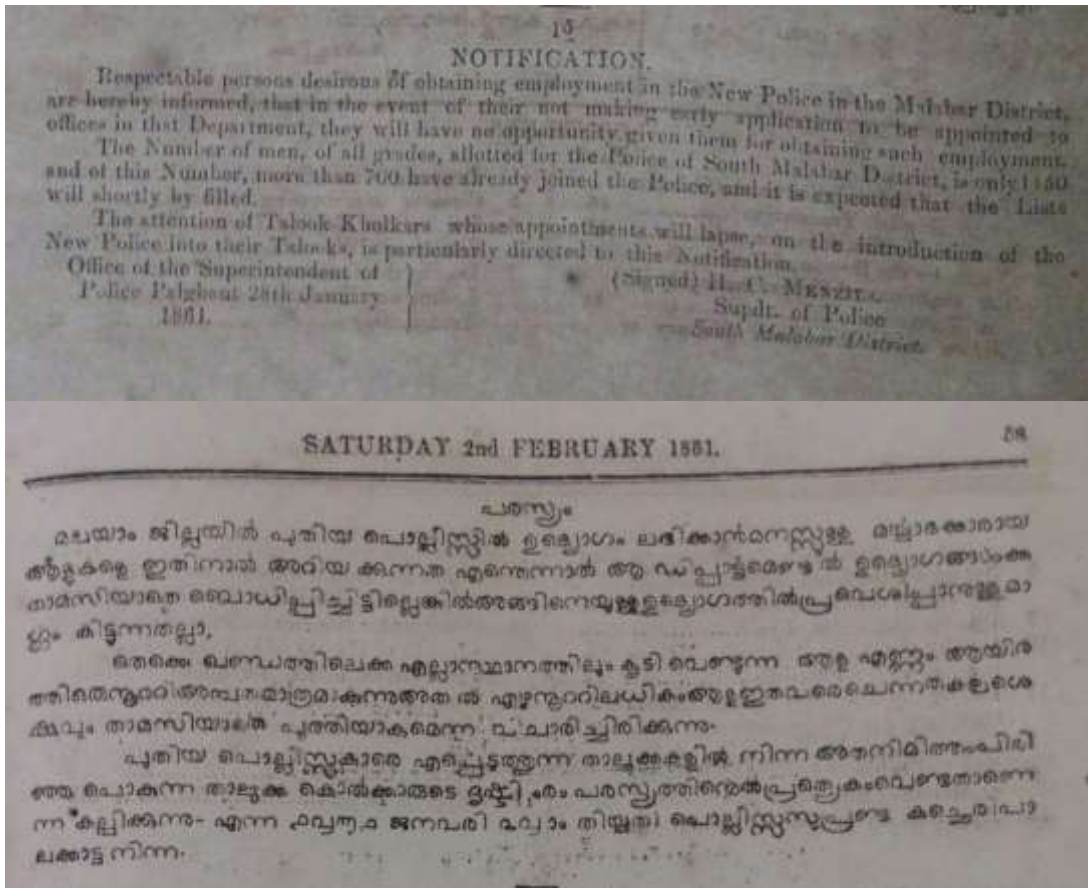
Manon's Name

Kolkar's Names

Appointment order format to a Parbutty in Polanad district of northern division

(Source: MCF Vol. 2313, P. 32, 1803, Regional Archives Kozhikode)

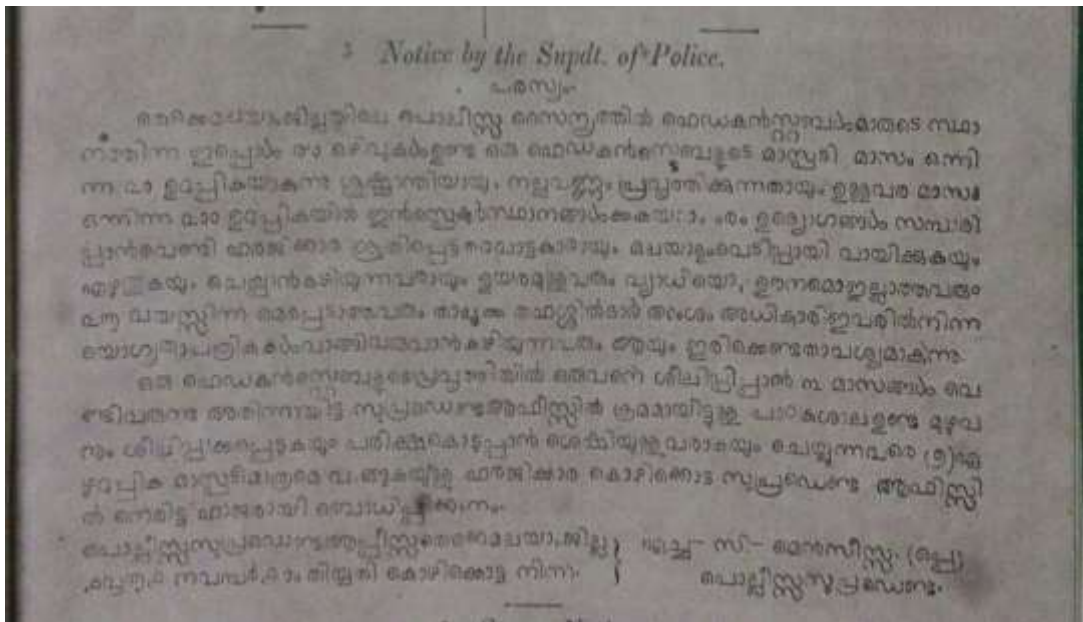
Appendix III



Advertisement for getting candidates for new police force

(Source: Malabar Government Gazette, 2nd February 1861)

Appendix IV



Notification of the formation of new police force in Malabar

(Source: Malabar District Gazette dated 16th November 1861, p. 668)

Appendix V

Sl. No.	Names of Taluks	Number of Villages	Area in Square Miles	Year of completion of Original Survey	Year of Re-survey or Revision survey
1	Wynad	58	821	1899	1922
2	Palghat	138	518	1889	
3	Calicut	188	287	1896	1930
4	Kurumbranad	341	417	1893	1933
5	Walluvanad	317	832	1892	1924(Attappadi was completed in 1933)
6	Chirakkal	272	677	1896	1930
7	Kottayam	227	282	1895	1933
8	Ernad	94	660	1896	1927
9	Ponnani	121	426	1893	1929
10	Cochin	1	1.75	1891	1915

Names of Taluks, Number of Villages and its Area in the District of Malabar

(Source: Bundle No. 417, Sl. No. 10, RAK- R. Dis. 6336/35 dtd. 5/7/1935)

(In this file-R. Dis 6336/35 there is a Board Proceedings No. 44, Press, dtd. 30/4/1935- this table is taken from that proceedings)

Appendix VI

Sl. No	Name of Districts	Number of Taluks	Number of Villages
1	Ganjam	10	1100
2	Vizagapatnam	3	269
3	East Godavari	10	2689
4	West Godavari	7	351
5	Kistna	6	405
6	Guntur	9	759
7	Nellore	10	531
8	Kurnool	9	695
9	Bellary	9	873
10	Anantapur	9	751
11	Cuddapah	8	756
12	Chingleput	7	1485
13	Madras	1	29
14	Chittoor	5	469
15	North Arcot	11	1678
16	South Arcot	8	2215
17	Salem	11	1456
18	Coimbatore	10	1033
19	Trichinopoly	7	720
20	Tanjore	11	1440
21	Madura	8	691
22	Ramnad	8	155
23	Tinnevely	10	581
24	The Nilgiris	3	54
25	Malabar	10	1757
26	South Kanara	6	799

Names of Districts, Taluks and Villages in the Madras Presidency as on 30th April 1935

(Source: Bundle No. 417, Sl. No. 10, R. Dis. 6336/35 dtd 5/7/35- taken from the appendix of B. P No. 44, Press, dtd. 30th April 1935)

Appendix VII

Sl. No	Name of Taluk	Total Staff- Including <i>Adhikari</i> , <i>Menon</i> and <i>Kolkaran</i>	Expense per month	
			Rs	<i>Annas</i>
1	Chirakkal	349	3941	8
2	Kottayam	218	2463	-
3	Wynad	118	1363	8
4	Kurumbranand	429	4907	8
5	Calicut	273	3138	-
6	Ernad	390	4475	-
6	Walluvanad	492	5618	-
7	Palakkad	486	5492	8
8	Ponnani	545	6145	8
9	Cochin	5	56	8

Village staff and their expense per month Taluk wise in Malabar, 1931

(Source: Bundle No. 348, Serial No. 17, RAK- R. Dis 10158/30 dtd. 07/08/31)