

**CRAFTING A COMMUNITY BY MODERNISING
CASTE OCCUPATION: RISE AND FALL OF
FISHERIES SCHOOLS IN MALABAR
DISTRICT (1918-1956)**

*Thesis
Submitted to the University of Calicut
for the award of the Degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**Crafting a Community by Modernising Caste Occupation: Rise and Fall of Fisheries Schools in Malabar District (1918-1956)**” is the result of bonafide research carried out by **Joshiba P P.**, at the Department of History, University of Calicut, under my supervision and submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in History**, and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, or other similar titles.

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I also certify that the adjudicators have not suggested any changes or corrections in the scientific content, results and interpretations of the thesis.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Crafting a Community by Modernising Caste Occupation: Rise and Fall of Fisheries Schools in Malabar District (1918-1956)**” is a bonafide record of research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Asokan Mundon, Professor (Retd.), Department of History, University of Calicut, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, or any other similar title or recognition. The contents of the thesis are undergone plagiarism check using iThenticate software at C.H.M.K. Library, University of Calicut, and the similarity index found within the permissible limit. I also declare that this thesis is free from AI-generated content.

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Dedicated to the memory of

*Ahammed Koya P.P. and Sainabi K,
my beloved parents, whose curiosity and
passion for learning inspired me.*

Crafting a Community by Modernizing Caste Occupation: Rise and Fall of Fisheries Schools in Malabar District (1918-56)

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ABSTRACT

Colonial modernity, a complex process of cultural, economic, and political transformation in colonized societies under European rule, often involved the violent imposition of Western modernity, disrupting traditional cultures and ways of life. Malabar society's exposure to modernity and British governance contributed significantly to this intellectual evolution.

The lower strata of Malabar society were initially excluded from the benefits of colonial modernity due to their religious beliefs and strong adherence to tradition. However, social reformers and colonial interventions encouraged them to seek education as a means to escape servitude and suffering. Colonial education and socio-religious reforms challenged traditional institutions. English-educated individuals, facing societal challenges, led reforms to modernize society.

The present study is organized into four main chapters, excluding the introductory and concluding sections. This research focuses on the modernization of the fisheries sector in the coastal regions of Malabar and South Canara during the colonial period. It examines how these changes impacted fishing communities, including social and economic effects. The study also investigates the role of the British colonial government in modernizing the fishing industry through the introduction of vocational education, specifically by establishing specialized schools for fishermen. The primary objective is to enhance our understanding of fisheries education during the colonial era.

Sir F A Nicolson initiated a transformative movement in the fisheries sector by establishing cooperative societies to uplift fisherfolk communities along the West Coast. New scientific technologies were brought into the fish curing yard and experiment station. He also established fish curing yards in the coastal belts. The

schemes introduced by the British government to uplift fishermen and introduce new technology into fishing were ultimately exploited by intermediaries.

Colonial policies, including taxes on fishing equipment and a salt monopoly, disrupted the livelihoods of Malabar's fishing communities. The revocation of fishing rights in 1935 further threatened their existence. The fisherfolk agreed to a licensing system to protect their profession from encroachment. This decision, though forced, was crucial in safeguarding their resources.

Keywords: History & Geography, Social sciences, Coastal studies, Community

ജാതി തൊഴിലിനെ ആധുനിക വത്കരിച്ച് ഒരു കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റി രൂപപ്പെടുത്തൽ: മലബാർ ജില്ലയിലെ ഫിഷറീസ് സ്കൂളുകളുടെ ഉയർച്ചയും താഴ്ചയും (1918-1956)

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സാരാംശം

കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികത, യൂറോപ്യൻ ഭരണത്തിൻ കീഴിലുള്ള കോളനിവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട സമൂഹങ്ങളിൽ സാംസ്കാരികവും സാമ്പത്തികവും രാഷ്ട്രീയവുമായ പരിവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഒരു സങ്കീർണ്ണ പ്രക്രിയയാണ്. ഇത് പലപ്പോഴും പാശ്ചാത്യ ആധുനികതയുടെ അക്രമാസക്തമായ അടിച്ചേൽപ്പിക്കലിന് കാരണമായി, പരമ്പരാഗത സംസ്കാരങ്ങളെയും ജീവിതരീതികളെയും തടസ്സപ്പെടുത്തി. ആധുനികതയിലേക്കും ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് ഭരണത്തിലേക്കുമുള്ള മലബാർ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ സമ്പർക്കം ഈ ബൗദ്ധിക പരിണാമത്തിന് കാര്യമായ സംഭാവന നൽകി.

മലബാർ സമൂഹത്തിലെ താഴെത്തട്ടിലുള്ളവർ അവരുടെ മതവിശ്വാസങ്ങളും ശക്തമായ പാരമ്പര്യനിയമങ്ങളും കാരണം കൊളോണിയൽ ആധുനികതയുടെ നേട്ടങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് തുടക്കത്തിൽ ഒഴിവാക്കപ്പെട്ടു. എന്നിരുന്നാലും, സാമൂഹിക പരിഷ്കർത്താക്കളും കൊളോണിയൽ ഇടപെടലുകളും അടിമത്തത്തിൽ നിന്നും കഷ്ടപ്പാടുകളിൽ നിന്നും രക്ഷ നേടാനുള്ള ഒരു മാർഗ്ഗമെന്ന നിലയിൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നേടാൻ അവരെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിച്ചു. കൊളോണിയൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും സാമൂഹിക-മതപരമായ പരിഷ്കാരങ്ങളും പരമ്പരാഗത സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളെ ചോദ്യം ചെയ്തു. ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നേടിയ വ്യക്തികൾ, സാമൂഹിക വെല്ലുവിളികൾ നേരിട്ടുകൊണ്ട്, സമൂഹത്തെ നവീകരിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള പരിഷ്കാരങ്ങൾക്ക് നേതൃത്വം നൽകി.

ഈ പഠനം ആമുഖവും ഉപസംഹാരവും ഒഴികെയുള്ള നാല് പ്രധാന അധ്യായങ്ങളായി ക്രമീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. കൊളോണിയൽ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ മലബാർ, ദക്ഷിണ കാനറ തീരദേശങ്ങളിലെ മത്സ്യബന്ധന മേഖലയുടെ നവീകരണത്തിലാണ് ഈ ഗവേഷണം ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുന്നത്. ഈ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ മത്സ്യത്തൊഴിലാളി സമൂഹങ്ങളെ എങ്ങനെ ബാധിച്ചു, സാമൂഹികവും സാമ്പത്തികവുമായ പ്രത്യാഘാതങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ ഇത് പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു.

തൊഴിലധിഷ്ഠിത വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നടപ്പാക്കുന്നതിലൂടെ, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് മത്സ്യത്തൊഴിലാളികൾക്കായി പ്രത്യേക സ്കൂളുകൾ സ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നതിലൂടെ, മത്സ്യബന്ധന വ്യവസായത്തെ നവീകരിക്കുന്നതിൽ ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് കൊളോണിയൽ ഗവൺമെന്റിന്റെ പങ്ക് ഈ പഠനം അന്വേഷിക്കുന്നു. കൊളോണിയൽ കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ മത്സ്യബന്ധന വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള നമ്മുടെ ധാരണ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുക എന്നതാണ് പ്രാഥമിക ലക്ഷ്യം.

സർ എഫ് എ നിക്കോൾസൺ പശ്ചിമ തീരദേശത്തെ മത്സ്യത്തൊഴിലാളി സമൂഹങ്ങളെ ഉയർത്താൻ സഹകരണ സംഘങ്ങൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ച് മത്സ്യബന്ധന മേഖലയിൽ ഒരു പരിവർത്തന പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന് തുടക്കമിട്ടു. പുതിയ ശാസ്ത്രീയ സാങ്കേതികവിദ്യകൾ മത്സ്യം ഉണക്കുന്ന യാർഡുകളിലും പരീക്ഷണ കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിലും കൊണ്ടുവന്നു. തീരദേശ മേഖലകളിൽ അദ്ദേഹം മത്സ്യം ഉണക്കുന്ന യാർഡുകളും സ്ഥാപിച്ചു. മത്സ്യത്തൊഴിലാളികളെ ഉയർത്താനും മത്സ്യബന്ധനത്തിൽ പുതിയ സാങ്കേതികവിദ്യകൾ അവതരിപ്പിക്കാനും ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് സർക്കാർ കൊണ്ടുവന്ന പദ്ധതികൾ ആത്യന്തികമായി ഇടനിലക്കാർ ചൂഷണം ചെയ്തു.

കൊളോണിയൽ നയങ്ങൾ, മത്സ്യബന്ധന ഉപകരണങ്ങൾക്കുള്ള നികുതിയും ഉപ്പിന്റെ കുത്തകാവകാശവും ഉൾപ്പെടെ, മലബാറിലെ മത്സ്യത്തൊഴിലാളി സമൂഹങ്ങളുടെ ഉപജീവനമാർഗ്ഗം തടസ്സപ്പെടുത്തി. 1935-ലെ മത്സ്യബന്ധന അവകാശങ്ങൾ റദ്ദാക്കിയത് അവരുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിന് കൂടുതൽ ഭീഷണിയായി. തൊഴിൽ അതിക്രമണത്തിൽ നിന്ന് സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന് മത്സ്യത്തൊഴിലാളികൾ ലൈസൻസ് സമ്പ്രദായം അംഗീകരിച്ചു. ഈ തീരുമാനം നിർബന്ധമായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും അവരുടെ വിഭവങ്ങൾ സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിൽ നിർണായകമായിരുന്നു.

സൂചകപദങ്ങൾ: ചരിത്രം, ജ്യോഗ്രഫി, സാമൂഹ്യശാസ്ത്രം, തീരദേശപഠനങ്ങൾ, കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റി

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJSSL	:	Araya Jana Social Service League
BP	:	Board of Revenue Proceedings
DD	:	Development Department
DIC	:	Director of Industries and commerce
DEO	:	District Education Officer
DPI	:	Director of Public Instruction
ED	:	Education Department
EPHD	:	Education of Public Health Department
FTI	:	Fisheries Training Institute
HED	:	Home (education) Department
LE	:	Law Education
LSG	:	Local Self Government
MGB	:	Mini Gastric Bypass
MER	:	Madras Elementary Rules
MS	:	Miscellaneous
NSS	:	Nair Service Society
PRDS	:	Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha
RAK	:	Regional Archives Kozhikode
RCS	:	Registrar of co-operative societies
RD	:	Revenue Department
SJPS	:	Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sabha

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Modernization is the process of transitioning from traditional to more contemporary systems. It involves adopting new technologies and practices to improve efficiency and quality of life. Modernization can impact communities by introducing new opportunities and challenges. The colonial government applied the modernization in fishing community. The colonial government modernized the fishing community by replacing traditional equipment with modern tools. This transition incorporated scientific advancements, leading to innovative fishing methods, which helped the fishing community. A community is a social group defined by shared characteristics, interests, or goals. Members interact within a specific geographic location or virtual space, fostering social interaction, a sense of belonging, collective action, and shared resources. An example of such a community is the fishing community found in the coastal belt of Malabar. Communities can be complex and dynamic, but understanding their characteristics, elements, and benefits can help build stronger, more resilient, and supportive social networks. Crafting a community refers to the intentional process of building, nurturing, and sustaining a group of people who share common interests, values, or goals. By crafting a community, individuals can come together to achieve common goals, share knowledge and resources, and support one another in a meaningful and fulfilling way. Communities provide a platform for individuals to collaborate, share resources, and support one another in pursuit of shared goals. This fosters meaningful connections and personal growth.

The caste system, a hierarchical structure rooted in ancient India, divides people based on birth and social status. It has profoundly influenced Indian society's social, economic, and cultural aspects. The isolation imposed by the caste system necessitated separate schools for marginalized communities, including fishermen. Given their specialized profession, distinct from other communities, fisher children require specialized instruction. Elementary education for these children should be tailored to the unique demands of their fishing village lifestyle. Fishing communities

often reside in isolated hamlets, distinct from other residential areas. Their unique profession, centered around fishing, necessitates a segregated lifestyle. These communities frequently lack access to basic amenities like schools, contributing to a cycle of poverty and social marginalization. Their struggles with substance abuse and financial instability have led to a loss of self-respect and limited opportunities for self-improvement.

During colonial rule, the Malabar fisherfolk faced significant social and economic hardship. Improving their lives was a major concern for the government. Ideally, the government should have focused on creating better living conditions and providing opportunities for improved fishing practices.

The colonial administration attempted to address these issues. They promoted cooperative societies among the fisherfolk and offered vocational training specific to their profession. Uplifting such a community proved to be a complex challenge for the administrators. This study examines government initiatives aimed at improving the lives of fisherfolk, focusing on their implementation, public perception, initial challenges, and ultimate outcomes.

1.1. Background of the Study

Marginalization is a multifaceted process that systematically relegates certain groups to the periphery of society. This complex phenomenon arises from the accumulation of social, economic, cultural, and political disadvantages. These disadvantages engender feelings of insecurity, uncertainty and serve to reinforce hierarchical power structures.¹ Marginalized individuals face a double burden within modern economic and social systems. First, they require opportunities to develop the skills essential for functioning in contemporary society. These skills are indispensable in today's world, and their absence poses significant challenges. Modern governments are expected to address these issues to ensure long-term sustainability. Colonialism introduced capitalism and technology to colonized regions, necessitating adaptation and skill acquisition among the workforce.

¹ Debal, K., Singharoy, 'Marginalisation and the Marginalised: Reflections on the Relational-Cumulative Dynamics' in Debal K. Singharoy (ed.), *Surviving against odds the Marginalised in a Globalizing World*, New Delhi, 2010, pp.48–50.

However, the fundamental question remains: How can we make these skills accessible, particularly to those who are already marginalized?

To fully understand this situation, I will examine four key areas: workforce, skill acquisition, worker welfare, and historical context. I will identify the workers involved, explore how they acquired necessary skills, investigate their physical well-being, and analyze the social, economic, and political landscape of the period. This study will delve into these key areas, laying the foundation for further exploration.

The investigation into the first question reveals that the disadvantaged group consisted of fishermen from Malabar. These fishermen occupied the lowest rung of the then-prevailing caste-based social hierarchy, placing them among the marginalized castes. They were undeniably underprivileged, lacking the social and cultural capital necessary to pursue modern education and acquire the skills for a prosperous life in contemporary society.

Turning to the second question, the identified solution was to equip them with skills relevant to their profession through specialized training. To address this issue, the colonial administration established specialized schools focused on imparting vocational skills. Additionally, to improve their living conditions, the government introduced a cooperative movement among these fishermen, marking the inception of fishermen's cooperatives in Malabar. While colonialism initiated certain modernization efforts, it is evident that many aspects of the indigenous caste-based social system persisted, deeply ingrained in its value system.

Section I

1.2 Education in India

Education has been deeply ingrained in Indian society since ancient times. Vedic thinkers emphasized its importance, laying the foundation for India's rich educational heritage. While the system underwent significant transformations during the medieval period, it was particularly reshaped by colonial rule, leading to drastic changes in the educational landscape.

1.2.1 Education in Colonial India

Education is a devolved subject. For administrative purposes, educational institutions are categorized into two classes: those recognized by the education departments and those not recognized, which consequently do not undergo inspection by government agencies.² School education is typically divided into two categories: general and special education. General education encompasses primary and secondary schools.³ Primary schools are further categorized into lower primary and upper primary schools. This distinction is based solely on the number of grades offered. Lower primary schools typically comprise three or four grades, while upper primary schools include one or two grades.⁴

The British aimed to institutionalize and formalize education in India, bringing the colonized population into a structured educational system. This process started as soon as British rule was established.⁵ Historians consider Charles Grant the pioneer of modern education in India. In 1792, he proposed the introduction of a Western-style education system, advocating for a curriculum that would equip Indians with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the modern world.⁶ The Indian Statutory Commission's report indicated a significant deterioration in the state of Indian education at the dawn of the 19th century, prompting calls for educational reform.⁷ Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education in 1835 ushered in English education in India. It also led to a more organized and extensive spread of general education across the nation.⁸

² *Royal Commission on Agriculture in India Report*, Bombay: The Government Central Press, 1928, p.62.

³ *Madras Educational Rules*, 5th Edition, Madras: the Superintendent, Government Press 1906, p.2.

⁴ J.L. Kachroo, and Vijay Kachroo, *Society in India for paper II Sociology*, New Delhi: Book hove, 1997, p.237.

⁵ Dharmapal, *The Beautiful Tree: The Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth Century*, Goa: Other Indian Press, 1983, p.10.

⁶ Chandra S.S., Rawat V.S., and Singh R.P., *Indian Education Development, Problems, Issues and Trends*, Meerut: R. Lall Book Depot, 2003, p 65.

⁷ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Volume I, London: Majesty's Stationary Office, Edinburgh, 1930, p.379.

⁸ Moore, R., *Sir Charles Wood's educational policy 1853-66*, United Kingdom: Manchester, 1966, p.108.

The Indian Rebellion of 1857, while primarily a political event, indirectly influenced the trajectory of education in India by highlighting the need for a more educated Indian populace.⁹ However, the colonial interests, centered on political, economic, and administrative needs, were inseparable from the objectives of colonial education and modernity.¹⁰ The late 19th century witnessed a paradigm shift in Indian education, as the colonial government's focus on English-medium education aimed to create a class of Western-educated Indians to serve the needs of the colonial administration and economy.¹¹ The British government sought to achieve two goals through its educational policy: the dissemination of colonial ideology and the fulfillment of administrative requirements.¹²

The Royal Commission's 1908 decentralization plan envisioned a reformed education system where local bodies would be solely responsible for primary schools, while rural boards, sub-district boards, and Panchayats would oversee other educational functions. Sub-district boards would be granted autonomy to set curricula within specific guidelines. Local bodies would retain their own inspection staff.¹³ These findings accurately reflect the significant paradigm shift in Indian education during the British colonial era.

1.2.2 Madras Presidency and Malabar District: - The Madras Presidency, one of the three major presidencies¹⁴ of British India, encompassed a vast territory in southern India. It included the regions of Tamil Nadu¹⁵, Tulu Nadu,¹⁶ and the

⁹ M.S. Sundaram, 'A Century of British education in India 1857-1957', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol107, No.5035,1959, p.497.

¹⁰ C. S. Venkiteswaran, and V. Sivadasan, *An Evaluation of the Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, p.23.

¹¹ Syed, Nurullah, and J. P. Naik, *History of Education in India during the British Period*, Bombay: Mac Millan,1943, pp. xii-xiii.

¹² K.N. Panikkar, 'The Intellectual History of Colonial India: Some Historical and Conceptual Questions' in S. Bhattacharya, and R. P. Thaper, (ed.), *Situating Indian History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press 1986, pp.403-33.

¹³ H. Sharp, *Progress of Education in India 1907-12*, Vol I, 7th Quinquennial Review, Calcutta: Government Press 1914, p.10.

¹⁴ The other Presidencies were Bombay and Calcutta.

¹⁵ Tamil Nadu was primarily a Tamil-speaking area. In Tamil Nadu, Pudukottai was under the rule of Thondaimans of Pudukottai.

¹⁶ A region on the southwestern coast of India. The land of Tulu-speaking people spreads over to parts of present-day Karnataka and Kerala.

Malabar District¹⁷ of Kerala. Additionally, the Aminidivi and Laccadive Islands were administrative appendages of the Presidency, connected to the districts of South Canara and Malabar. Geographically, the Madras Presidency extended from latitude 8°41' to 20°8' and longitude 74°91' to 85°15'.¹⁸ It was divided into 26 districts, with 18 taluks and 2222 villages by the early 19th century.¹⁹ The western coast division of the Presidency comprised the districts of Malabar and South Canara.²⁰ Notably, the five autonomous states of Travancore, Cochin, Pudukottai, Banganapalle, and Sandur were under the political authority of the Madras Presidency.²¹ Malabar, a region steeped in history, occupies a picturesque coastal strip along India's southern coast, nestled between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea²². Its rich historical legacy extends back over 2,000 years, with its early history documented in Megasthenes' Indica, later referenced by Pliny.²³

As a district of the Madras Presidency, Malabar covered an area of 5,794 square miles²⁴ and was one of the most densely populated regions within the Presidency, with an average population density of 481 inhabitants per square mile²⁵. Situated between 10°15' and 12°20' North latitude and 75°10' and 76°50' East longitude, the district stretches along the Arabian Sea coast for approximately 150 miles. It shares borders with South Kanara District to the north, Coorg and Mysore States to the east, and the princely states of Travancore and Cochin to the south.²⁶

¹⁷ In the Malabar Coast, Travancore and Cochin were excluded. Travancore was a princely state. Cochin was also under a ruler who was not so popular as that of Travancore.

¹⁸ *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency 1921-1922*, Madras: Government Press, 1922, p.10.

¹⁹ Benjamin Swaird Ward, & Peter Eyre Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers Department, 1995, p.1.

²⁰ J. Chartres Molony, *Census of India Madras, 1911*, Vol. XII Part I, Madras: The Superintendent, Government Press, 1912, p.30.

²¹ D. Brandis, *Suggestions regarding forest administration in the Madras Presidency*, Madras: The Superintendent, Government Press, 1883. p 341.

²² K. B. Iyer, *The shadow play in Malabar*, Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute, Vol. XI Part I, Trichur: The Kerala Sahitya Academy, 1971. p.3.

²³ Herbert Wigram, *A Commentary on Malabar Law and Custom*, Madras: Scottish Press, Popham house, Graves, Cookson and Co., 1882, p. viii.

²⁴ *Census of Madras Presidency 1871*, Vol. I, Madras: Government Press, 1874, p. 346.

²⁵ C.A. Innes, & F. B. Evans, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Vol.1&2, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers, 1997, p.92.

²⁶ *Census Handbook 1951*, Malabar District, Madras: Government Press, 1953, p.1.

1.3 Concerns about Literacy Rates in Madras Elementary Schools

A significant concern regarding literacy rates was the inadequate duration of students' enrollment in Madras's elementary schools, which prevented them from mastering fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. Moreover, the persistence of these skills post-education was uncertain. The city relaxed enrollment criteria by eliminating the requirement for transfer certificates. Concurrently, primary schools were rebranded as elementary schools.²⁷ These institutions provide foundational education in the local language for all students.

There were concerns that students in elementary schools in Madras were not staying in school long enough to learn how to read and write. Additionally, the number of students who forgot these skills after learning them was unknown. These schools also relaxed enrollment requirements by not requiring transfer certificates.²⁸ In a separate change, Madras renamed their primary schools to elementary schools.²⁹ These elementary schools provided basic education in the local language to all students.

A comparative analysis of the elementary school curriculum in Madras between the years 1902 and 1907 is presented below.³⁰

Old Curricula(compulsory)	New Curricula (compulsory)
(1) Reading (2) Writing (3) Arithmetic	(1) Vernacular: -reading, composition, writing, and spelling (2) Space and number of works (3) General knowledge, drawing, recitation, and physical exercise.
Optional	
Kindergarten occupations, Object lessons, second language, drawing, needlework (for girls), geography, singing, hygiene, elementary sanitary science, history of India, agriculture, and mensuration.	English, geography, civics and Indian history, nature study, and elementary science.

²⁷ *Growth of Education in the Madras Presidency since 1920*, Ootacamund: Government press, 1921, pp.5-6.

²⁸ *Madras Educational Rules*, 5th Edition, Superintendent, Govt. press Madras, 1906, p 5.

²⁹ H. W. Orange, *Progress of Education in India 1902-07*, Vol I, Calcutta: Government press, 1909, p.98.

³⁰ *Progress of Education in India 1902-07*, p.114.

1.3.1 Missionary Education Fills the Gap in Madras Presidency Education (Early 1900s)

In Madras, where little has yet been done by the government to promote the education of the masses of the people, we can only remark with satisfaction on the educational efforts of Christian missionaries.³¹ The Missionary Educational Council of Southern India maintained the schools under the supervision of approved committees and correspondents.³² Prior to recent government-allocated recurring rural grants, German missionary influence in India had been substantial, particularly at the onset of World War I. Within the Madras Presidency, there was one college for every 477 students. Additionally, 31,000 pupils attended schools that were either fully or partially controlled by German missionaries. Missionary education primarily benefited disadvantaged groups. The Roman Catholic Missionaries also established schools among the fishing communities.³³ Missionary schools offered educational opportunities to groups who typically had limited access, including those traditionally labelled as ‘backward classes’ and fishing communities.

1.3.2 Education in Malabar

While Malabar became part of the British administration in the late 18th century, the exposure to Western education lagged significantly behind the princely states of Kochi and Travancore. These neighbouring regions enjoyed a much earlier exposure to Western education, with the rulers and Christian missionaries playing a pivotal role in introducing educational institutions in Travancore. The first Western educational institution formed in Malabar was the primary school at Kallai constituted by Basel Evangelical Mission in 1848. The early missionary schools were mostly residential schools where poor and lower-caste Indians, children of

³¹ *Educational Papers: A Supplement to the South India Missionary Conference report*, Madras: Addison & Co., 1880, p.27.

³² H. Sharp, *Progress of Education in India 1912-17*, Vol. I, 7th Quinquennial Review, Calcutta: Government Press, 1918, p.10.

³³ Ramachandran V.K., ‘Kerala’s Developmental Achievements in Indian development’, in (eds.), Dreze, Jean, and Amartya Sen, *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*, Wider studies in development Economics Oxford: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1997, p.50.

mixed races, and children of poor European soldiers lived and studied together.³⁴ Christian missionaries have been instrumental in the advancement of modern education in the state since its inception.³⁵ Christian missionaries blazed the trail for the introduction and diffusion of Western learning.³⁶ The primary activities of these early missionaries were centered around proselytization, which was pursued with great zeal in certain regions of the western coastal strip of India.³⁷ However, 19th-century Indian intellectuals had different educational ideas than colonial rulers.³⁸

1.3.3 The Madras Elementary Act and District Educational Councils

The Madras Elementary Act passed in October 1920, constituted a district educational council in each district. This council was an independent ad hoc body, not a statutory committee of any existing local body. Each council consisted of a few ex-officio and nominated members, but the majority of its members were elected by the local authorities within the district. Its principal functions were: -

- (a) To prepare schemes for the extension of elementary education;
- (b) to elicit and direct the cooperation of all agencies, whether public or private, in the opening of new schools;
- (c) to regulate the recognition of elementary schools and to disburse grants-in-aid.³⁹

The recognition of elementary schools was vested in the special Assistant agent and in the district collector Malabar, respectively who were in granting

³⁴ W. Reeve, *Letter dated 13 February 1818*, Annual Report of the London Missionary Society, London, 1822, p.161.

³⁵ Varghese, P.V., 'Kerala Managers Association in Retrospect' *Kerala Educational Review*, Vol. XIII, 1975, pp.186-189.

³⁶ P. Janardhana Panicker, *A Short History of Kerala*, Trivandrum: Deepa Publication, 1970, p. 212.

³⁷ Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, p.50.

³⁸ Bhagwan Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India 1920-47*, New Delhi: sage publications 1992, p.29.

³⁹ *Progress of Education in India 1917-22*, p.42.

recognition be guided as far as possible by the rules issued under section 41 (2) of the Madras Elementary Education Act 1920.⁴⁰

The Madras Legislative Council was established in 1921 under the Government of India Act 1919. The Council's term was three years. It consisted of 132 members, of whom 34 were appointed by the Governor and the rest were elected. The educational principle was introduced by the education department in the general system of elementary education that prevailed in the country.⁴¹ By 1921, education became totally a state responsibility.⁴² Between 1921 and 1922, the percentage of scholars to the total population of school-going age (15% of the total population) across British India was 32.2% for males and 7.6% for females.⁴³ English was the predominant language of instruction in Madras schools under the Madras Presidency.⁴⁴

The Madras Educational Rules mandate that a class with more than 35 students be divided into sections, with each section having a maximum of 35 students. Rule 81 specifically requires an additional teacher for a 1st standard exceeding 35 students, necessitating a split into two sections. In general, the aim was to have a teacher for every grade or section whenever possible.⁴⁵

1.3.4 Malabar District Educational Council: Composition and Election of President

The Education Constitution of the District Educational Council in Malabar stipulates that under section 5(7) of the Act, the government-appointed members should not exceed one-fourth of the total, excluding ex-officio members. The District Educational Council in Malabar comprises three ex-officio members: the Collector, the president of the District Board, and an Inspector of Schools. The

⁴⁰ *Madras Educational Rules 1920*, Madras: The Superintendent, Government Press, 1921, p.4.

⁴¹ *Royal Commission on Agriculture in India Report*, p.513.

⁴² Jandhyala, B.G. Tilak, 'Centre-State Relations in Financing Education in India', *Comparative Education Reviews*, Vol.33, No.4, November 1989, pp.450-80.

⁴³ *Royal Commission on Agriculture in India Report*, p.513.

⁴⁴ G.O NO.1337 dated 30/3/1946 D D, R A K.

⁴⁵ G.O NO.1421 dated /8/1924, D D, R A K.

elected members, totalling 23, were to be chosen by various local bodies and agencies as follows: one from the District Board, fourteen from Taluk Boards (two each), five from Municipal Councils (one each), one from Malabar Mission, one from the Roman Catholic Mission, and one from the Syrian Christians. The five nominated members include one Inspectress of schools, two representatives from the Muslim community, one from the Depressed classes, and an Assistant Inspectress. In addition, a woman was to be appointed by the Government, bringing the total membership to 31.⁴⁶ Given Malabar's higher literacy rate compared to other districts, the council was granted the privilege of electing its President. Under section 5(1) of the Act, the Government authorized the council to elect its President from among its members, subject to final approval.⁴⁷

1.5 Labour Schools

Missionaries in South India strongly advocated for expanding the education system to reach the lower classes, also known as Panchammas. This large group, constituting roughly one-sixth of the population, existed outside the rigid caste system. Many government officials supported this initiative. Mr. D. Duncan, Director of Public Instruction in Madras Presidency has played a crucial role in guiding this important educational initiative.⁴⁸

During the colonial era, labour schools were established to uplift the marginalized communities. By providing educational opportunities, the government aimed to improve their social status. The majority of students enrolled in these schools were from the Scheduled Caste. Many such schools were founded in rural areas of Malabar. A report was submitted by the Malabar Collector outlining the equipment supplied to the Labour schools, which were established for the benefit of depressed classes in the regions of Nanminda, Feroke, and Vengara.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ G.O NO. 354 dated 12/3/1921 L E, R A K.

⁴⁷ G.O NO. 354.

⁴⁸ William. I. Chamberlain, *Education in India*, New York: The Macmillan Columbia University Press, Co., 1899, p.105.

⁴⁹ G O NO.1500 dated 31/8/1936, D D, R A K.

1.6 Vocational education

As a part of economic policy, the colonial government became aware of the urgency to increase job opportunities for the Indian people. For this, they tried to integrate scientific knowledge along with traditional knowledge and create a new kind of knowledge. Recognizing the economic benefits, they undertook the task of educating people about the system. The government understood that education was the best way to propagate this kind of knowledge. As a part of this vocational education was introduced. Along with education traditional job training was also given. The idea of such a system was contained in the Woods Despatch. The dispatch emphasizes three key areas: the importance of vocational instruction, requiring the establishment of vocational colleges and schools of Industry; and the urgency of spreading female education.⁵⁰

The Hunter Commission in 1882 intervened to assess and reform the Indian educational system, particularly elementary education and the implementation of Wood's Despatch of 1854, addressing its flaws. The Commission highlighted the excessive emphasis on theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical skills, urging the government to prioritize vocational training. The Government Resolution on Educational Policy of March 11, 1904, marked a turning point in the history of vocational education in India, introducing a new policy.⁵¹ In schools designed for the children of workers in specialized fields, such as fishing, students in Dacca learned not only the basics (reading, writing, and arithmetic) but also practical skills like boat repair and net making.⁵²

Vocational education was introduced in elementary education as a part of the Industrial Commission Report. The Industrial Commission identified the lack of education, poor living conditions, and the prevalence of preventable diseases as the main factors contributing to low worker productivity. While they strongly supported universal primary education to address these issues, they believed the responsibility

⁵⁰ Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, pp.171-172.

⁵¹ Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, pp.171-172.

⁵² Indian Education in 1913-14, p.212.

for providing it fell on the government and local authorities, not private employers. The commission advocated for such education as a state and local responsibility.⁵³ In 1920, the Madras Presidency decided to implement a compulsory elementary education act. As a part of this, the Madras Elementary Act was passed. However, the government was unable to bring people from backward communities into this system. To attract these communities into schools, the government decided to implement an education system that appealed to them.

As part of their vocational education programmes, the girls acquired skills in knitting, spinning, needlework, and other crafts.⁵⁴ These programmes also provided an opportunity for lower-caste children to receive an education. Encouraged by this, parents became more interested in sending their children to school, leading to the establishment of numerous vocational schools. The overall goal was to promote a more systematic and widespread dissemination of general education across the nation.⁵⁵

The 1916-18 Industrial Commission report debated whether education for fishermen should prioritize literacy through general elementary education or vocational training for specific job skills. Ultimately, the Commission advocated a balanced approach that prioritized general education before specialized training, recognizing its greater effectiveness when combined with a solid foundation of basic knowledge.⁵⁶

1.7 Muslim Education

From 1871 onwards, the government implemented policies to increase Muslim enrolment in schools. This included the establishment of special schools staffed by Muslim teachers and inspectors, along with reduced fees. Furthermore, universities offered scholarships and programmes in Arabic and Persian languages. However, a report from 1882 revealed that most non-Muslim students were still limited to

⁵³ Holland T.H., *Indian Industrial Commission 1916-18*, Calcutta: Government Press, 1918, p. 3.

⁵⁴ V. Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, vol II, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers department, 1999, pp. 447-475.

⁵⁵ R. Moore, p.108.

⁵⁶ *Report of Industrial Commission*, p.182.

elementary education.⁵⁷ The achievement of girls' education faced significant challenges due to social factors such as the Purdah system in some communities and the prevalence of early marriage.⁵⁸

Till the early 20th century Muslim children attended religious schools, not government schools with Western education. The British authorities saw widespread illiteracy among Mappila⁵⁹ as a risk factor for rebellions. Education, they believed, could be used as a tool for control and stability. Despite attempts to bridge the gap by training religious teachers and establishing new schools, the Mappila community's preference for religious education hindered progress in adopting Western-style education. Between 1912 and 1917, a reorganization reclassified several institutions formerly categorized as Maktabas and Pathshalas, but actually providing primary vernacular instruction, as primary schools.⁶⁰ A 1913 government circular on Muslim education highlighted a disparity: while Muslim students performed well in primary schools, their participation in higher education remained low.⁶¹

Later the situation changed, during the first Kerala Muslim Conference held in Tellicherry on 22nd August 1931, the chairman lamented the lack of educational opportunities for Muslims, pointing out the absence of even a single Muslim high school despite a population of ten lakh Muslims in the district.⁶² Gathering for their second annual conference in Calicut on 12th May 1933, the Kerala Muslim Conference renewed their demands for Muslim representation in government. This time, they specifically called for allocating ten seats out of the twenty-nine reserved for Muslims in the Madras Legislative Assembly to be designated for Malabar Mappila.⁶³ In a memorandum, the Secretary of the Reception Committee for the

⁵⁷ William. I. Chamberlain, *Education in India*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899, p.63.

⁵⁸ H. Sharp, *Progress of Education in India 1912-17*, p.26.

⁵⁹ Mappila is a specific term used to denote the Muslims of Malabar, and it carries historical and cultural significance.

⁶⁰ *Progress of Education in India 1912-17*, p.103.

⁶¹ *Indian Education in 1913-14*, Department of Education, Calcutta: Government Press, 1915, p.24.

⁶² Mathrubumi, 23rd August 1931.

⁶³ *Mathrubumi*, 14th May 1933.

Third Session of the Kerala Muslim Conference in Tellicherry requested that all students at the Malappuram Secondary School for Mappila be fully exempted from fees.⁶⁴

1.8 Origin of the Cooperative Movement

In the 1850s, the East India Company's annexation policies led to the decline of traditional industries. This pushed many people back to rural areas, creating fertile ground for a cooperative movement to take root and provide local self-employment opportunities.⁶⁵

Driven by poor working conditions and low wages, weavers and cottage industry workers around the globe formed the earliest cooperative movements. Notably, local weavers in Fenwick, Scotland established the Fenwick Weavers' Society, considered the first recorded cooperative. Following suit, 28 cotton mill artisans in Rochdale, England, formed the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society in 1844. This pioneering organization, now recognized as the founders of the Cooperative Movement, established the first cooperative consumer store, marking the birth of the modern cooperative consumer movement.⁶⁶

The concept of cooperative societies arose as a response to a specific need. Farmers in Poona and Ahmednagar were burdened by unfair loan rates from moneylenders. To counter this, they joined forces, creating a system that better served their interests. This movement eventually gained legal backing through the enactment of the Deccan Agriculture Relief Act (1879), the Land Improvement Loan Act (1883), and the Agriculturists Loan Act (1884).⁶⁷ Inspired by the European cooperative model, particularly those in Germany, Mr. Fredric Nicholson advocated for establishing cooperative credit societies in India.

⁶⁴ D. O. No. 3314 B I /37 3rd February 1937, Education and Public Health Department, R A K.

⁶⁵ Rohini Vilhekar and Shivaji Walke, 'The Journey of Cooperatives in India amidst Challenges: Way Forward', *Cooperative Perspective*, 2023, Pune.pp.54-63.

⁶⁶ Dharma Kumar, (ed.), *Cambridge Economic History*, Vol. II, 1751- 1970, New Delhi: Orient Longman in association with Cambridge University Press, 1982.

⁶⁷ Naik K. N., 'The cooperative movement in the Bombay Province', unpublished Ph. D thesis, University of Mumbai, 1951.

He envisioned them as a shield against predatory lenders for struggling farmers. This vision became a reality with the Co-operative Credit Societies Act of 1904, which provided a formal structure for the cooperative movement.⁶⁸ Farmer protests against unfair loans in the late 1890s led to the formation of the first cooperatives in India. A government committee then recommended a law allowing for the creation of more cooperatives, which was passed in 1904. This law boosted the cooperative movement, and soon after, India's first urban cooperative credit society was established.⁶⁹ In 1905, a village named Kanaginahal in Karnataka witnessed the birth of India's first cooperative credit society. Founded by a local farmer, Shri Siddanagowda Sanna Ramanagaowda Patil, this society aimed to help farmers by providing financial aid for their agricultural needs. Established under the Cooperative Credit Societies Act of 1904, it started small with 20 members and a capital of Rs. 2,000.

The Cooperative Societies Act of 1912 built upon the earlier legislation, offered a more robust legal framework. This momentum continued with the influence of the Maclagen Committee on Cooperation in 1914. The Government of India Act of 1919 was another significant milestone, paving the way for the Multi-Unit Cooperative Societies Act of 1942.

1.8.1 Kerala's cooperative movement boasts a rich pre-statehood history-

Each region had its own unique legal framework governing cooperative societies: Travancore (Act V of 1112 M.E.), Cochin (Act XXVI of 1113 M.E.), and Malabar (Madras Act of 1932). Travancore took the initiative in 1914 by establishing the Trivandrum Central Co-operative Bank (subsequently renamed the Kerala State Co-operative Bank) and a Central Bank to provide support to primary credit societies. Acknowledging the need for long-term loans, the Land Mortgage Bank was founded in 1932.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Naik K. N.,

⁶⁹ Rohini Vilhekar and Mr. Shivaji Walke, pp.54-63.

⁷⁰ <https://cooperation:kerala.gov.in>.

Cochin followed suit with its Cooperative Societies Act in 1913. The first registered society (Advanced Co-operative Society) focused on credit and operated with unlimited liability. The Cochin Central Co-operative Bank (established 1918) offered long-term loans within the Cochin region, following the British model.⁷¹

Malabar, governed by the Madras Act, saw producer and consumer cooperatives with strong capital. The Malabar Co-operative Central Bank (registered in 1917 in Calicut) played a key role in financing cooperatives there. Post-unification, a series of acts brought uniformity. The Travancore-Cochin Act came into effect in 1952 after the merger of those regions. Finally, with Kerala's formation in 1956, the Kerala Co-operative Societies Act of 1969 established a single legal framework for the entire state.⁷²

Section II

Review of literature

There is a rich history of research on fisherfolk and fisheries. Past studies, in both English and Malayalam, have explored this topic from various angles. No one has done original research using historical sources on this specific topic before. However, there is some relevant research on modern education that we can build on. The government hasn't paid enough attention to how fishermen in Malabar were educated. This lack of understanding makes it hard for them to improve their social and economic standing. We need a deep dive into their lives, traditions, and how they were dealing with modern changes in their culture. Their social struggles also deserve more scrutiny, especially ways to help them fully participate in Kerala's economy. The lack of understanding of the social world of the fisheries community is a significant gap in current research, which this study aims to address.

The literature used for this study covers vast areas like education in colonial Kerala in general, technical education in particular, the emergence of cooperative movement in colonial Kerala, emergence of fishing industry and economy in

⁷¹ <https://cooperation:kerala.gov.in>.

⁷² <https://cooperation:kerala.gov.in>.

colonial Kerala, socioeconomic life of fisherfolk in Kerala during colonialism, especially that of Malabar fisherfolk, socio-religious reform movements in colonial Kerala, especially Malabar, and the impact of technical education and cooperative movements on the fisherfolk.

A variety of sources exist on Kerala's fishing industry and economy, offering valuable insights into the lives of the state's fisherfolk. An understanding of these studies, which delve into various facets of these sectors, is expected to establish a strong foundation for the present study.

1.9. The Socio-Economic Conditions of Fisherfolk in Kerala

An attempt is made in this study to understand the impact of technical education and cooperative movement on the fisherfolk in the context of their socio-economic conditions. Hence all the works that deal with the socio-economic life of the fisherfolk are highly important for the study. Several works are available on the socio-economic conditions of the fisherfolk in Kerala during colonialism.

1.9.1 International works

Internationally, researchers have conducted a wealth of studies on the socio-economic conditions of fisherfolk. These studies delve into a wide range of issues, with some focusing specifically on the hardships and exploitation faced by fishing communities. Others investigate the impact of development programmes on these communities. Notably, both studies specific to Kerala and broader international analyses consistently highlight the universality of socio-economic challenges confronting fisherfolk globally. Hence, all such works are helpful in forming a general opinion about the socio-economic conditions of the fisherfolk in Kerala during colonialism.

A study by Younis A. S., and G. Donaldson ⁷³ showed that in 1977, the fishing industry directly employed 3.08 lakh people who relied on catching fish in both oceans and freshwater. This industry is not just about jobs; it also brings in

⁷³ Younis, A. Sfeir, and G. Donaldson, 'Fishery Sector Policy', The World Bank., Washington December 1982.

money for the country through exports. Because of this, developing a healthy fishery is important for both feeding people and growing the economy. A strong fishing industry is valuable for any nation, and if we take steps to avoid overfishing, it can continue to be a major contributor to a healthy economy.

Librero et.al.,⁷⁴ conducted a study on the socioeconomic conditions of small-scale fishermen and fish farmers in the Philippines. They discovered that while fishing households earned more than rice farming households, their income fell short of the national average. Their total consumption expenditure was approximately double that of rice farmers, yet they fared slightly worse than coconut farmers in terms of income.

The study revealed significant disparities in income levels and other indicators of well-being among fishermen both within and across different locations. These differences were primarily attributed to variations in the types of fish caught, the quantity of catch, and the prevailing fish prices. The study also delved into the impact of credit on small-scale fisheries in the Philippines. By comparing borrowers and non-borrowers based on qualitative data, they evaluated the effects of the credit programme using various indicators.

One notable outcome of the credit programme was a significant increase in boat ownership. Some fishermen even acquired multiple boats, while others were able to motorize their existing vessels, expanding their fishing horizons. Additionally, the number and quality of fishing gear improved, demonstrating the programme's success in technological advancement.

Ahmed & Hossain⁷⁵ investigated the social and economic well-being of coastal fishermen in Bangladesh's Bagerhat district. The four-month study, conducted from April to July 1998, involved surveys of 60 randomly chosen fishermen. Questionnaires, interviews, and group discussions revealed a very

⁷⁴ Librero, A. R., R. F. Catalla, and R. M. Fabro, Socioeconomic Conditions of Small-Scale Fishermen and Fish Farmers in the Philippines. in: Panayotou, T (ed.), Small-scale fisheries in Asia: socioeconomic analysis and policy. Ottawa, Ont., IDRC, 1985.

⁷⁵ Ahmed, N., and M. Hossain, A study on socio-economic aspects of coastal fishermen of Bangladesh. Progress. Agric., 1999, pp.151–155.

concerning situation. Most fishermen struggled to afford three meals a day, and their homes, health, and sanitation were all in poor condition. Basic infrastructure – transportation, markets, cold storage, and even electricity was lacking. The study concludes by highlighting the urgent need to improve the lives of these fisherfolk through better loan options, support programmes, training, and technical help.

An intensive study of the Malabar Coast's fishing activities during the 1860s and the fish trade relations between Cochin, Travancore, and Malabar was conducted by Francis Day.⁷⁶ The study revealed that changes in the fisheries sector had no significant impact on the living conditions of the fishermen community. They remained victims of various types of exploitation, and their lives were characterized by servitude, poverty, and misery.

A critical gap exists in our understanding of fisherfolk due to the limited or non-existent research conducted in certain communities. Hence the available works on such communities are highly important, especially when it gives a picture of the social organization of such communities. Arne Martin Klausen's⁷⁷ study offers a detailed analysis of an Indo-Norwegian fishing project's impact on two Kerala fishing communities: the Latin Catholics and the Arayas. Klausen highlights the significant pre-existing social and economic differences between the communities. The Latin Catholics possessed better education, land ownership, and connections beyond the village, allowing them to benefit more readily from the project's new fishing techniques. In contrast, the Arayas lacked the capital, connections, and political leverage to fully participate, and the project didn't provide sufficient support to overcome these disadvantages.

1.9.2 Indigenous Works

John Kurien's⁷⁸ study is an in-depth analysis of the fisheries sector in Kerala. The book is based on primary data, such as government reports, statistical surveys,

⁷⁶ Francis Day, *The Fishes of Malabar*, London: Publisher World Public Library Association, 1865.

⁷⁷ Arne Martin Klausen, *Kerala Fishermen, and the Indo-Norwegian Pilot project*, Prio Monographs, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway, 1968.

⁷⁸ John Kurien, 'Towards an Understanding of the Fish Economy of Kerala State', *Centre for Development Studies Working Paper No.68*, Trivandrum, 1978.

and academic papers. The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides an overview of the fisheries sector in Kerala, including its history, geography, and ecology. The second section investigates the patterns of fish production and distribution during the post-mechanization era, spanning the years 1963 to 1976. The third part discusses the implications of these trends for fisheries development in Kerala. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the fisheries sector in Kerala. It provides a comprehensive overview of the sector, as well as insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the industry.

1.10 Exploitation of Fisherfolk

Panikkar and Sathiadas⁷⁹ Discusses the fish marketing system in Kerala; analyses the price structure's high inelasticity due to inadequate infrastructure and the plight of fishermen forced to sell fish at minimal prices during periods of abundant catch. The involvement of numerous middlemen in the marketing chain also negatively impacts the interests of both fishermen and consumers.

Panikkar's⁸⁰ researched the debt problems faced by rural fishermen in Vizhinjam, Kerala. He discovered that these fishermen often borrowed money from various sources, including fish traders and professional lenders, who charged high interest rates. Additionally, boat owners sometimes lent money to fishermen, but this often involved a contract requiring the fishermen to work exclusively for the boat owner until the debt was paid off. Panikkar found that many fishermen struggled to repay their loans due to household expenses. Surprisingly, he also observed that wealthier fishermen tended to have higher levels of debt compared to those with lower incomes. Based on his findings, Panikkar recommended the creation of rural banks and cooperative societies to provide alternative lending options. He also suggested regulating the activities of moneylenders and limiting interest rates to prevent excessive debt burdens on fishermen.

⁷⁹ Sathiadas R, Panikkar and K. K. P., Socio-economic status of Marine fishermen along Madras coast, Marine fisheries information service, 1989, pp.1-6.

⁸⁰ Panikkar K. K. P., 'Coastal rural indebtedness-a case study', Marine Fisheries Information Service, *Technical and Extension Series*, 18, 1980, pp.8-12.

John Kurien's⁸¹ article analyzed the causes of poverty among fishermen in Kerala. He found that two main factors contributed to poverty: inequality in asset holdings and exploitation by middlemen. Fishermen often found it difficult to repay loans from middlemen, even when they used their savings. Kurien also noted that traditional forms of lending, such as wage advances, pledging ration cards, gold ornaments, and fishing nets, were common in fishing villages. John Kurien's research has focused on the economic, social, and ecological dynamics of the fishing sector in Kerala. His article starts by examining the reasons behind the overfishing of Kerala's coastal waters since the mid-1960s. He then investigates how fishermen, both as a group and individually, have reacted to this shortage of resources. Kurien ends by asserting that the traditional fishing community suffers the most from the environmental harm caused by large commercial fishing boats. His article begins by discussing the factors that have led to the overexploitation of coastal waters in Kerala since the mid-1960s.

Jose Murickan's⁸² article analyses the relationship between the credit sphere, the labour sphere, and the marketing sphere in the fishing industry. The first type of relationship is financial ties between crew labourers and equipment owners. The crew labourers who borrow money from the equipment owners have to work for them until the loan is repaid. This type of relationship can impede the mobility of labour, as the crew labourers are tied to the equipment owners. The second type of relationship exists when commission agents require fishermen to sell their catch only through them. This type of relationship can lead to the exploitation of fishermen by commission agents and money lenders, as the fishermen have no choice but to sell their catch at a lower price.

⁸¹ Kurien, John, Socio-Economic Conditions of Traditional Fishermen, CMFRI Bulletin, 30, 1981, pp.35-53.

⁸² Jose Murickan, S.C., 'Interlinkages of Credit, Labour and Marketing Relations in Traditional Fishing: The case of Purakkad' in Srivastara U. K., and M. Dharma Reddy (ed.), Fisheries Development in India: Some Aspects of Policy Management, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi 1983, pp.175-205.

Suba Rao. N's⁸³ study points out that the government allocates very limited financial resources to the fisheries sector, both overall and for specific programmes. Despite proposals for various schemes in each five-year plan, these initiatives often go unfinished within the designated time frame. This study highlights the traditional mindset of many fishermen. Due to illiteracy and a conservative outlook, they were hesitant to adopt new practices or technologies, hindering progress in the industry.

James, P. S. R.,⁸⁴ analysed the 4-decade transformation of India's marine fisheries, including the rise of mechanized crafts, modern vessels (trawlers, purse seiners, gill nets), large trawlers on the northeast coast, and their impact on traditional fishermen. He discussed government support through five-year plans, the need for stronger training programmes for the workforce, the socio-economic consequences of this growth, potential solutions, and the importance of an integrated approach encompassing scientific, technological, administrative, and social aspects for sustainable management of capture, processing, and utilization of marine resources.

The study by Tripathy and Patnaik⁸⁵ reveals the harsh socio-economic realities of fisherwomen in Krushnaprasad Block, Puri District. These women, who constitute over half the population (52%) but have low literacy rates (only 20%), are exploited by moneylenders and fish traders who take advantage of their circumstances. Forced to sell their catch at low prices due to lack of infrastructure and transportation options, the fisherwomen struggled to make a living. Their vulnerability extends to health risks like diarrhea, dysentery, and cholera, often leading to tragic deaths of women and children due to limited healthcare and malnutrition. The study underscores the urgent need to address these challenges faced by the fisherwomen community.

⁸³ Subba Rao N., *Economics of Fisheries*, New Delhi: Daya Publishing house, 1986, p.151.

⁸⁴ James P. S. R., 'Growth profile of marine fisheries in India' *CMFRI -Bulletin* 58, 1987, Kochi, pp. 10-27.

⁸⁵ S.N. Tripathy, and Patnaik Pradeep, 'Socio-economic Profile of Fisherwomen Community of Krushnaprasad Block (Orissa)', in S.N. Tripathy, (ed.), *Unorganized Women Labour in India*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1996.

According to Alexander G Merlijin⁸⁶, middlemen act as essential partners for boat owners. They fill the critical role of providing loans without formal interest, becoming the main source of outside funding. However, there's an unwritten rule - boat owners must sell their catches solely to the middleman they owe money to. In addition to financing, middlemen also equip trawlers with vital supplies like cool boxes, fish baskets, prawn tanks, and ice. Interestingly, he contends that this arrangement between middlemen and trawling fishermen is not exploitative, but rather a mutually advantageous social contract.

R. Narayana Kumar,⁸⁷ analysed the socio-economic conditions of marine fishermen and their attitude towards development schemes. The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has been continuously monitoring the socio-economic conditions of traditional fishermen and conducting several studies along the coastal belt to assess their existing socio-economic status and to evaluate the socio-economic impact of innovations on them. The socio-economic parameters such as family size, age structure, educational and occupational patterns, customs, beliefs, and the standard of living of coastal fishermen households have been analysed. The socio-economic impact evaluation studies have discussed the changes that have been brought about by the mechanization of the fishing industry in terms of income and employment generation, and investment in fishing equipment. Recommendations to improve the socio-economic conditions of marine fishermen based on the studies have been proposed.

Sathiadas⁸⁸ examines the structural changes that have taken place in the Indian fisheries sector over the years. He notes that there has been a shift from traditional fishing methods to more mechanized and capital-intensive methods. This has led to an increase in fishing effort, but a decrease in catch per unit of effort. This

⁸⁶ Alexander G. Merlijin, 'The Role of Middlemen in Small-scale Fisheries: A case study of Sarawak', Malaysia, *Development and Change*, Vol.20, No.4, October 1989, pp.683-700.

⁸⁷ Narayanakumar R., Panikkar, K.K.P., Sehara, D.B.S. And Sathiadhas, R., 'Socio-economic analysis of marine fishermen in India'. in Pillai, V.N. and Menon, N.G. (ed.), *Marine Fisheries Research and Management*, CMFRI, Cochin,2000, pp.895-906.

⁸⁸ Sathiadas R., 'Exploitation, employment earnings and marketing aspect of marine fisheries in Indian Economy', *Symposium on Advances and Priorities in Fisheries Technology*, Kochi,11-13 Feb,1998.

has disproportionately affected traditional fishermen, who are often unable to afford the expensive new fishing gear. He argues that there is no scope to increase fishing efforts in the deep waters. He therefore calls for a shift to ‘cooperative fishing’ instead of competitive fishing. This would involve community participation or involvement in fishery management and would help to make fishing more sustainable.

Soumyendra Kishore Datta, and Ruma Kundu⁸⁹ examined how fisherfolk contribute to the growth of inland fisheries. They highlighted the urgent need to improve their social and economic well-being. The study identified factors like low income, lack of education, poverty, large families, inadequate sanitation, and limited knowledge of fishing techniques as reasons behind the fisherfolk’s struggles. These were linked to social factors like caste and gender as well. The government has taken steps through laws and programmes to give the fishing communities more power and improve their social and economic standing. studied the role of fisherfolk in inland fishery development.

Paul Valiakandathil⁹⁰ studied that found that limitations in fishing equipment force most fishermen (around 90%) into seasonal work. This results in significant underemployment for a large part of the year within fishing communities. The underemployment creates a debt cycle, as fishermen rely on moneylenders who charge exorbitant interest rates (36% to 120%). Rebuilding lives under these circumstances becomes a major national challenge. A potential solution, as suggested by Valiakandathil, could be a combination of well-designed educational programmes and financially supportive initiatives to break this cycle.

Dhanuraj’s⁹¹ study explored the challenges faced by Kerala’s fisherfolk. He identified two critical issues. Firstly, the dominance of middlemen who exploit fishermen by dictating low prices for their catch, significantly lower than market

⁸⁹ Soumyendra Kishore Datta, and Ruma Kundu, ‘Socio-Economic Appraisal of Culture-Based Fishermen: Case Study in West Bengal’, *Journal of Social Sciences*, 2007 15(3):255-262.

⁹⁰ Paul Valiakandathil, S.J., ‘Poonthura – A Case Study of Socio-Economic Conditions of Fishermen in Kerala’, *CMFRI Bulletin*, 30, 1981, pp.56-59.

⁹¹ Dhanuraj D., ‘Traditional fishermen folk in Kerala and their livelihood issues’, CCS (Centre for civil society), Research Internship Papers, New Delhi, 2004.

value. Secondly, the lack of adequate safety equipment puts the lives of fishermen at risk.

1.11 Fisherfolk, Fisheries Sector, and Fishing Industry Outside Kerala

Works on fisherfolk, fisheries, and the fishing industry outside are helpful for my study because they provide insights into their counterparts in Kerala by allowing for comparisons between them. Many of such works delve deep into the socio-economic conditions of the fisherfolk community. Some others deal with the cooperative sector among the fisherfolk, technology, and development in the fishing industry, and the structural changes that have taken place in the fisheries sector over the years.

International Works

The history and development of consumer cooperatives form the subjects of numerous scholarly works, including those by Carr-Saunders and colleagues.⁹² The work of George Davidovic⁹³ dealt with the same problem also contributes. This review aims to identify existing research on cooperatives in various sectors and highlight gaps in knowledge, particularly concerning India's cooperative movement. It seems most available literature on Indian cooperatives is official in nature, with limited independent scholarly work.

Anwar Iqbal Qureshi⁹⁴ published a book arguing that economic development should be the core focus of India's cooperative movement. Many studies after India's independence recognized the limitations of colonial-era cooperatives. These studies envisioned cooperatives as a crucial tool to achieve social and economic equality, fulfilling the people's desire for a better life. These studies generally agreed on the importance of expanding and diversifying

⁹² A. M., Carr-Saunders, P. Sargent Florence, Robert Peers; in consultation with Colin Clark, et al., 'Consumers co-operation in Great Britain: an examination of the British co-operative movement' London, 1938.

⁹³ George Davidovic, *Reformulation of the Co-operative Principles*, Ottawa: Cooperative Union of Canada, 1966.

⁹⁴ Qureshi, I. A., *The Future of the Cooperative Movement in India*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1947.

cooperatives, as outlined in India's Five-Year Plans. They believed a strong cooperative movement could address pressing issues like rising prices and shortages. However, these studies often gave only superficial attention to the principles of cooperation. They didn't critically examine the gap between theory and practice that already existed and might continue. They focused on broad ideas rather than practical experiences, participation by the people, or analyzing the movement as a grassroots initiative.

Cooperatives, as envisioned by Goyal⁹⁵ and Dube⁹⁶, are a tool for achieving economic justice. Both economists, though writing in different contexts, converge on a common idea: cooperatives can eradicate poverty and lessen the wealth disparity between rich and poor. By curbing hoarding, profiteering, and artificial shortages, cooperatives ensure a fair marketplace for everyone. They serve as a targeted strategy to uplift the most vulnerable populations, particularly the poorest in rural areas, by bringing them into the fold of economic and social progress

Catanach I. J.,⁹⁷ in his work, delves into the Bombay Presidency's cooperative movement using unpublished local records. He finds that a key feature of the movement was constant tension between government officials and non-officials, particularly regarding democratic principles within the cooperatives. Catanach argues that Indian peasants, especially those in Bombay, didn't actively seek out the cooperative system. Instead, it was imposed upon them by British authorities who believed it would benefit them. He sees the movement as an attempt by the British to recreate an idealized version of India's past village communities.

Cyan Chand⁹⁸ argues that cooperatives can only effectively address rural poverty if they encompass a range of interconnected activities. This includes providing access to rural credit, marketing channels, and support for small-scale industries. He emphasizes the importance of improved farming practices, dairy

⁹⁵ Goyal S.K., *Co-Operative Farming in India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966, p.38.

⁹⁶ Dube S.C., *India's Changing Villages*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1979, p.29.

⁹⁷ Catanach I. J., *Rural Credit in Western India, 1875-1930: Rural Credit and the Cooperative Movement in the Bombay Presidency*, U S A: University of California Press, 1970.

⁹⁸ Cyan Chand, *Socialist Transformation of Indian Economy*, New Delhi: Prasger Publishers, 1979, p.288.

production and distribution, animal husbandry, and processing facilities. Crucially, Chand highlights the need for dedicated and committed leadership to guide these initiatives. This leadership should ensure all these elements work together seamlessly to create a positive impact on the entire rural economy.

There are limited studies on cooperative movements among fisherfolk in Kerala so it is very difficult to understand the topic. Most of the parts of my study on this topic depend on archival data. D V Bal and K Virabhadra Rao's⁹⁹ article says that Cooperative institutions can play a significant role in the socio-economic development of fishermen. Bal and Rao explain the structure and functioning of cooperatives among fishermen. An important lacuna in the working of the fishery societies generally is the absence of credit facilities for consumption purposes. Private parties continue to meet this crucial need of fishermen-members and consequently compel them to sell their catch outside the co-operative fold and to that extent weaken the whole of the co-operative marketing link. By providing consumption needs, traders secure control over future catches from the concerned members, effectively acquiring a monopolistic position in the buyers' market. To discourage their role more effectively, the cooperative fisheries societies should be able to provide the consumption requirements of their members adequately. Indeed, this will release the fishermen from the trader's grip, enhance the societies' business turnover, and increase the members' bargaining capacity.

Bhatnagar¹⁰⁰ saw cooperation as a way to create a system of production that benefits everyone. In this system, everyone would have a fair share of the profits. He also believed it should empower rural communities by providing the infrastructure They need to improve their quality of life. Essentially, cooperation is about people coming together voluntarily to work on projects that benefit everyone involved, leading to shared economic growth.

⁹⁹ D.V. Bal, and K. Virabhadra Rao, *Marine Fisheries*, New Delhi: Tata Me Graw - Hill Publishing Company Ltd., 1984, pp.447-454.

¹⁰⁰ Bhatnagar, K.P., *Co-Operation in India and Abroad*, Kanpur: Kishore Publishing House, 1980, p.42.

Ranga Raos, ¹⁰¹ argues that traditional fishermen are the most vulnerable group in the current fishing industry and face multiple disadvantages. He proposes large-scale cooperative organizations as a potential solution to address these problems in the fisheries sector.

Sathiadhas et.al.,¹⁰² conducted a study along the Madras Coast to compare the socio-economic conditions of fishermen in two villages using mechanized and non-mechanized fishing crafts. Their study found that the traditional fishermen had less access to credit than the mechanized fishermen. They also found that commercial banks and cooperative societies played an insignificant role in providing credit to traditional fishermen. The study recommended the formation of village-level cooperatives to provide credit to traditional fishermen, not only for acquiring means of production but also for fish marketing and the supply of fishing equipment at reasonable prices. All fishery developmental programmes are formulated to increase production and raise the economic status of people involved in this sector. However, the successful implementation of such programmes depends on the socioeconomic condition of the target group. For the planning and management of fisheries, greater attention needs to be given to the social and economic aspects.

Hough Eleanor M ¹⁰³ argued that cooperatives redistribute wealth more equitably compared to traditional businesses. This means that profits generated by the cooperative are shared among its members, rather than going solely to a small group of owners or shareholders. By putting more money in the hands of the underprivileged population, who tend to spend a higher proportion of their income, cooperatives stimulate economic activity.

In Rabindra Prasad¹⁰⁴ view, the cooperative movement was a grassroots initiative driven by the people. He envisioned it as a space for open participation and contribution of skills, with the government acting as a watchful observer rather than a controlling force.

¹⁰¹ Ranga Rao V., *Fisheries Development: A New Perspective, Agriculture Situation in India*, New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1987, p.126.

¹⁰² Sathiardhas R., and Panikkar, 'Socio-Economic Status of Marine Fishermen along Madras Coast', *Marine Fishing Information Service*, No.96, June 1989, pp.1-6.

¹⁰³ Hough Eleanor M., *The Co-Operative Movement in India*, Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.268.

¹⁰⁴ Rabindra Prasad, *Co-Operation and Rural Development*, Hyderabad: Osmania University, 1978.

Abalkin¹⁰⁵ argues that cooperative principles should take root at the local level. This is where people see the clearest connection between their individual efforts and the success of the group. Here, everyone has a real say in how things are done, which improves quality and efficiency. Cooperatives shouldn't just be seen as a quick fix for the current economic problems. They are a vital part of a completely revamped system, one that can drive the country forward.

Arunachala Jaya's¹⁰⁶ study on women's involvement in cooperatives highlighted how these organizations provided small loans to underprivileged women for income-generating self-employment projects. Jaya's research further suggested that these microcredit programmes played a positive role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by tackling poverty, hunger, and health issues that often hinder women's progress. To further empower women in today's society, the author recommended programmes focused on skills development, leadership training, and entrepreneurship, along with continued access to adequate credit.

S Maria John¹⁰⁷ investigated the economic effects of fishing cooperatives in Kanyakumari District. Their research suggests that these cooperatives should collaborate with policymakers to establish initiatives that promote the social and economic well-being of all fishermen, not just members.

The study by 'Mishra'¹⁰⁸ explores fisheries cooperatives in India. This study emphasizes that these cooperatives can shield fishermen from exploitation and elevate their socioeconomic status. To achieve a well-organized network of fisheries cooperatives throughout the country, the study recommends maintaining multi-functional primary cooperatives.

¹⁰⁵ Abalkin L., The Co-operative Potential, The Tamil Nadu Journal of Co-Operation, Vol.81: (4): 205, 1989.

¹⁰⁶ Arunachala Jaya, 'Women and their Role in Development of Cooperatives', *Cooperative Perspective*, 26(2):1991, pp.564-566.

¹⁰⁷ S Maria John., 'A Study on Economic Impact of Fishermen co-operative in Kanyakumari District', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Madurai Kamaraj University Madurai, 1994.

¹⁰⁸ Misra, B.K., 'Fisheries Co-operatives in India', *Co-operative Dialogue*, Vol: 7, No: 2, May-August, 1997, p.281.

Vankade P. G.,¹⁰⁹ examined various programmes offered by the Devgad Fishermen Co-operative Society to the local community. The study explored how government subsidies and loans help fishermen's cooperatives improve the lives of their members. Focusing on socioeconomic development as the key issue, based his research entirely on firsthand information.

A study by Pandey et.al.,¹¹⁰ The study highlights the success of fisheries societies in Maharashtra, particularly those in the Thane district, which outperform their counterparts in other parts of India through significant profit generation. The analysis employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative parameters. Quantitative factors included sales turnover compared to investment, debt-to-equity ratio, and reserve fund size. Qualitative aspects encompassed audit classifications, elections, dividend distribution, membership numbers, women's participation, and expenditures on welfare activities. The study underscores the crucial role played by fisheries cooperatives in Thane, Maharashtra, in empowering fisherfolk to manage resources effectively and achieve significant socio-economic improvement.

1.12 Studies on Various Caste and Community Groups in Kerala

To understand the emergence and functioning of socio-religious movements in Kerala during the colonial period, it is necessary to understand the caste and community groups in Kerala, as most of these movements were centered around various caste, community, and religious groups. Apart from this specific need, the works on the Muslim community in Kerala are used for a different purpose. Many of the studies on Muslims in Kerala deal with, at least remarks on, Mappila fisherfolk in Kerala. Since there are limited works on the Mappila fisherfolk, works on Muslims in Kerala in general can be considered for its remarks on Malabar fisherfolk.

¹⁰⁹ Vhankade, P. G., 'Critical assessment of Devgad Fishermen Cooperative Society', *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 1 (1), 2011, pp.101-108.

¹¹⁰ Pandey S. K., Arpita Sharma, and Shyam S. Salim, 'Performance of fisheries cooperatives in India- an evaluation of primary societies in Thane District of Maharashtra', *Journal of fisheries Economics and development*, V XI No.2, 2012, pp.224-234.

1.12.1 Studies on Caste and Communities in Kerala in General

Edgar Thurston's, extensive ethnographic research on the culture and customs of various caste and tribal groups in South India during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries helps gather basic information about them and understand them from different dimensions. In his work, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, which was published in seven volumes between 1909 and 1913, Thurston provides a comprehensive account of the various castes, tribes, and ethnic groups in the southern region of India. He has documented the social organization, customs, traditions, religious practices, occupations, and physical characteristics of various castes and tribes.

1.13. Colonial modernity

Sanal Mohan¹¹¹ explores the history of oppression among slave caste populations in colonial Kerala. By examining Protestant missionary sources, the author sheds light on the lives, struggles, and experiences of the Pulaya and Paraya communities. He argues that the dialogue with missionaries played a crucial role in 'humanizing' these slave castes and provided them with new avenues for self-fashioning. Mohan challenges the notion that the abolition of slavery led to the rise of free labour, asserting that the modern world was built on the backs of labouring slaves. His work offers a compelling and critical perspective on the interconnectedness of caste, slavery, and modernity in India.

Asokan Mundon's¹¹² thesis delves into the intricate interplay of colonialism, modernity, and social transformation in Malabar during the British colonial era. By examining three pivotal social movements that emerged in response to Western influences, it seeks to illuminate the ways local communities both accommodated and challenged these forces. Through a nuanced analysis, the thesis contributes to the broader discourse on postcolonialism by exploring how Malabar experienced a

¹¹¹ Sanal Mohan P., *Modernity of slavery: Struggle against caste inequality in colonial Kerala*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015.

¹¹² Asokan Mundon, 'Renaissance and social change in Malabar - A study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam, and Atma Vidya Sangham' unpublished Ph. D thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2003.

unique form of modernity characterized by economic restructuring, social upheaval, and the rise of a new middle class. Ultimately, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the complex processes of social and cultural change in a colonial context.

1.13.1 Studies on Muslim Communities in Kerala

As mentioned earlier, works on education among Muslims in Kerala can be used to gather information regarding the education of Malabar Mappila fisherfolk. U. Mohammed's¹¹³ paints a picture of educational empowerment among Kerala Muslims through a socio-historical lens. He focuses on how British policies impacted Muslim education, the role community organizations played in educating the community, and the empowerment of Muslim women through education. The book also explores people's responses to community problems, the impact of official policies, and socio-psychological factors affecting education in disadvantaged sections. Another work in the same category is the Ph. D. thesis by Abdul Razak P. P.,¹¹⁴ This work covers the phase of popular Islam in Malabar, colonial governmentality and the making of a community, reform movement and efforts for a separate identity, print and the imagined community of Mappilas, Khilafath, and pan-Islamism as symbols of solidarity, representation of the Malabar rebellion and its aftermath. This work also has remarked on Pu-Islam and Muslim fisherfolks.

Mappila Fisherfolk in Kerala

Since Mappila fisherfolk constitute a major chunk of the Malabar fisherfolk, studies done on them are also important. P.R.G. Mathur¹¹⁵ delves into the social and economic organization of the Mappila community in Tanur, a North Kerala fishing village. Mathur unveils the Mappilas' diverse occupations, encompassing fishing, boat building, and trade. However, his study also sheds light on their struggles. The

¹¹³ U. Mohammed, *Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: A Socio-historical Perspective*, Kerala, Calicut: Other books, 2007.

¹¹⁴ P. P. Abdul Razak, 'Colonialism and Community Formation in Malabar: A Study of Muslims of Malabar', unpublished Ph. D thesis, University of Calicut, 2007.

¹¹⁵ P.R.G. Mathur, *The Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala: A Study in Inter-Relationship between Habitat, Technology, Economy, Society and Culture*, Trivandrum: Kerala Historical Society, 1977.

increasing mechanization of the industry displaces traditional fishermen and depletes fish stocks. While mechanization does lead to higher fish production and improved living standards for some, it comes at a cost. Mathur's work serves as a prime example of research that goes beyond mere caste or religious categorization. His anthropological approach highlights the unique social structure and deep connection to the sea that define the Mappila fisherfolk. It concentrates on the social and economic life of the Mappila community, as revealed through his anthropological lens, without venturing into education or the wider context of other fisherfolk.

1.14 Social Life of Fisherfolk

Culture and Custom of Fisherfolk in Kerala

Some works help us to understand the social life and social organization of the fishermen community. The work of Kurien¹¹⁶, the Kadakkodi, a traditional community institution found among Hindu fishermen in North Kerala, India, sheds light on their social life and organization. This "sea court" addressed challenges fishermen faced, including access to fishing grounds, resource conservation, and resolving conflicts. Kurien highlights how the Kadakkodi functioned as a platform for open discussions among all fishermen and village elders, leading to decisions enforced through social pressure.

1.15 Studies on Education during Colonialism

Robin Jeffrey¹¹⁷ highlights a key distinction between literacy and education within the British education system. Designed for long-term societal change, the system prioritized fostering critical thinking skills and knowledge acquisition, not just basic reading and writing. This emphasis on broader education is what sets English education apart. Jeffrey argues that the relative importance of education versus literacy depends on perspective.

¹¹⁶ John Kurien, 'Social and cultural dimensions into food and livelihood security issues of marine fisheries: A case study of Kerala state, India', *Centre for Development Studies*, 2000.

¹¹⁷ Robin Jeffrey, *Politics, Women and Well Being: How Kerala Became a Model*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.55.

Despite limited research, studies exploring pre-colonial education in India reveal a rich tradition that some argue was surprisingly advanced and scientific. This challenges the prevailing view of a less developed educational system before colonial rule.

Dharam Pal's¹¹⁸ research, drawing upon a survey commissioned by Madras Governor Thomas Munro in 1822, sheds light on a long-forgotten aspect of Indian society: its widespread network of indigenous schools. This survey not only documented the vast number of traditional schools and institutions of higher learning but also delved into the details of their curriculum and teaching methods. Dharampal's meticulous scholarship, reflected in his acclaimed works, has been instrumental in challenging the Eurocentric view of Indian history. By meticulously analyzing British East India Company records over a decade, he unearthed groundbreaking evidence that compels a re-evaluation of India's past. His work, particularly the use of British reports, reveals a surprisingly high level of education in 18th century India. Schools across Bengal, Madras, and Punjab boasted a rich curriculum, with a remarkable 30% of children aged 6-15 attending daily. This educational system even extended to lower castes and, in specific regions like Kerala, even included Muslim girls.

B.S. Goel's¹¹⁹ work explores the historical development and impact of educational policies and initiatives enacted during British rule in India. Their research draws upon a rich tapestry of sources, including government documents, educational periodicals of the era, and firsthand accounts. This work serves as a valuable resource for scholars and students interested in the history of Indian education.

¹¹⁸ Dharampal, *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*, Goa: Other Indian Press 1983.

¹¹⁹ Bhim Sain Goel, *Development of Education in British India, 1905-1929*, U S A: the University of Michigan, Press, 1969.

Joseph W. Elder¹²⁰ in his work says that in the case of India's education system, Colonel Macaulay had a plan in his mind that he tried to implement during the colonial period. He aimed at creating employees for the British administration who were Indian by birth but English in taste. Under the colonial arrangement, the colonial power controls its colonies' educational culture, through the school systems. The colonial power tries to incorporate its domestic curriculum into the colonies' educational framework.

Kamalamma¹²¹ studies the evolution of primary education in Kerala, the role of private agencies, state activity, and the problems of primary education. However, the study does not provide a complete picture of the missionary role in education in Kerala. The thesis begins by tracing the history of primary education in Kerala from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century. It then examines the role of private agencies, such as Christian missionaries, in the development of primary education. The thesis also discusses the state's role in primary education and the problems that the state has faced in providing quality education to all children.

Jessy Thomas's¹²² study focusing on the socio-economic factors impacting educational attainment within the marginalized community of Kerala's marine fishermen yielded interesting results. While education was found to offer limited social mobility and alternative employment opportunities to a certain extent, even illiterate parents expressed a strong desire for their children's education. However, this desire is often hampered by low household income. The situation appears more complex in Kerala's northern districts. In the northern districts of Kerala, despite having higher parental income, a lack of education and a cultural preference for boys to follow in their fathers' footsteps acted as deterrents to pursuing higher education.

¹²⁰ Joseph W. Elder, 'The Decolonization of Educational Culture: The Case of India', Vol.15, No.3, *The Comparative & Education Society Conference*, San Diego, California, 1971, pp.288-295.

¹²¹ Kamalamma, 'History and Problems of Primary Education in Kerala', unpublished thesis, Kerala University, 1968.

¹²² Jessy Thomas, 'Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Educational Standards in a Marginalized Community; A case study on Marine Fisherfolk of Kerala', M. Phil Dissertation, New Delhi: Jawaharlal University, 1989.

Muralidar Dash¹²³ argues that education is an essential quality that makes a person truly human. It is vital for both personal growth and the improvement of a country's social and economic well-being. Education is seen as a powerful tool that enlightens people and removes them from ignorance. It requires dedication and effort. Additionally, a society's economic prosperity is a reflection of the importance placed on education.

'Deepak Kumar'¹²⁴ speaks about the changes that colonialism brought in the production of knowledge. Under the East India Company, the state became the producer and distributor of knowledge. The Company's education policies became more interventionist, neglecting vernacular schools and popular education. Christian missionaries took a major role in spreading education. Education became popular with new content and methods from the early 19th century onward.

Many studies on the education system of colonial Kerala investigate the triangular relationship among education, state, and missionary Christianity. As compared to the status of the marginalized, such studies say, in the education system of pre-colonial Kerala, the education system in colonial Kerala was inclusive in the context of the marginalized like lower castes and women. Several works have been done on this topic and most of them, in a more or less similar manner, highlight the role of colonial administration and the Protestant Christian missionaries in educating the indigenous downtrodden social groups.

Most of the available studies on the pre-colonial education system in India criticise it for its exclusionary nature. Such studies criticise it in the context of the marginalised like lower castes and women. Keerthana Santhosh¹²⁵ says that the condition of women was pathetic in the realm of education, particularly in the precolonial period. According to her, education was confined to a few, such as Brahmins, and was denied to both the lower castes and all women. The gender disparity was clearly, visible in medieval Kerala.

¹²³ Muralidar Dash, *Educational Psychology*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep publication, 2002.

¹²⁴ Deepak Kumar, *Education in British India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2022.

¹²⁵ Keerthana Santhosh, 'Pre-Colonial Education in Kerala, with Special Reference to Women', *International Journal of Research Culture Society*, issue 08, 2017.

There is a lot of research done on education in India during colonial times, covering both traditional and colonial systems, across the country and in Kerala. However, there was not enough study on vocational training during that period. Existing research on education in general can still be useful to see how marginalized groups, like fisherfolk in Malabar, and Kerala, fared in terms of education. There is also a lack of research on education before colonial rule compared to the colonial era.

Mathew E.T.,¹²⁶ challenges the prevailing notion that educational progress in Kerala stemmed solely from the progressive policies of native princes. Instead, his work emphasizes the significant contributions of Christian missionaries and social reform movements in driving this educational transformation.

It is a generally agreed fact that the British Protestant Christian missionaries in Travancore in the colonial period significantly contributed to the literacy movement and primary education in Kerala. The progressive policies of Travancore princes also have significantly contributed towards this. Without rejecting both viewpoints, i.e., the role of both Christian missionaries and the Travancore state, P. K. Michael Tharakan¹²⁷ makes a different observation. His study tries to relate the development of education in Travancore with the commercialization of the agricultural economy.

The works of Dick Kooiman¹²⁸ also, gives a different picture. He neither rejects nor overemphasizes the Christian factor. Rather than a state-sponsored system, the colonial educational system was meant to impart colonial values to the indigenous pupils. Education is aimed at making modern individuals possess modern values. The British educational system was based on Western liberal capitalist values. The content of education was linked to the new political, administrative, and economic demands.

¹²⁶ Mathew E. T., 'Growth of Literacy Rate in Kerala: State Intervention, Missionary Initiatives and Social Movements', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.34, No.39, 1999, pp2812-2820.

¹²⁷ Michael Tharakan P. K., 'Socio-Economic Factors in Educational Development: Case of Nineteenth-Century Travancore', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.19, No.45,1984, pp.1913-1928.

¹²⁸ Dick Kooiman, 'The Gospel of Coffee: Mission, Education, and Employment in 19th Century Travancore', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.35, 1984, pp.1535-1544.

‘Burton Cleetus’¹²⁹ says that missionary intervention in women’s education helped them to shape an individual perception of sanity, morality, and hygiene, leading to the reconfiguration of social and community relationships. Another study of his in this regard is Hepsi Gladstone¹³⁰ examines the impact of the educational activities of the missionaries on various aspects of life. She says that education enhanced women’s social status and economic position.

However, there are certain studies that, while agreeing that colonial education was inclusive, criticize it for other reasons. Twincy Varghese criticizes colonial education for its patriarchal zeal. She says that colonial education created a colonial patriarchy and subjected the women under its influence. Education should be freed from the colonial motive of providing employment and should focus on making women better human beings, the study says. Divya Kannan tries to examine the idea of work that is produced and reproduced in the education of the poor. The demand for education is accompanied by the demand for employment for a better living. However, not all students were able to achieve this goal. Though the education system and curriculum try to treat all pupils equally, they also attempt to reproduce existing societal inequalities.

Studies say that there was a drastic difference between the governments of Travancore and Cochin regarding the promotion of education among its people. C Achutha Menon¹³¹ says that before the administration of Col. Munro, the Government of Cochin was not interested in educating the people. The state left its subjects to make their own arrangements for the education of their children.

Ruble Raj¹³² says that, unlike the case of the Travancore kings, The Cochin rulers were not very interested in educating the people of the region. He highlights the point that private agencies also, later, came forward to start schools. Gopinathan

¹²⁹ Burton Cleetus, ‘Beyond Dolls and Handkerchiefs Christian Missionary Intervention and Women’s Education in Travancore’, Arshad Alam (ed.), in *Religion and education in India 1870–1950*, London, 2023.

¹³⁰ Hepsi Gladston, *History of Education of Women in Kerala 1819–1947*, Trivandrum, 2006.

¹³¹ Achyuta Menon C., *The Cochin State Manual, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers*, Ernakulam: Cochin Government press, 1911.

¹³² Ruble Raj, ‘Politics of educational management: A case study of the Christian minority in Kerala’, Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University, 2003.

Nair¹³³ also says that the growth and spread of Western education were slower in Malabar compared to the other two regions.

1.16. Vocational Education

Human capital theory, as proposed by Schultz¹³⁴ and ‘Becker¹³⁵ emphasizes the importance of skills and knowledge for both individual and societal well-being, providing a strong foundation for Vocational Education training programmes. However, it’s crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this theory. Vocational Education training programmes should strive to be accessible and contribute to broader educational goals, not solely focusing on economic benefits. At its core, human capital theory views an individual’s skillset and knowledge as an investment, akin to financial capital. Just as investing in machinery enhances its productivity, investing in education and training increases a person’s ability to be productive in the workforce. It’s important to recognize, however, that human capital theory has its critics. Some argue that it prioritizes economic benefits at the expense of the broader social and personal value of education and training.

Harvey Kantor’s¹³⁶ article examines the rise of vocational education in early 20th Century, America. Despite differing views on specific programmes and goals, reformers united in their aim to boost economic efficiency without challenging the existing social order. The article explores the reasons behind this widespread support, arguing that it shifted the focus of education, towards job training, social integration, and skill development.

¹³³ Gopinathan Nair, P R., ‘Universalisation of Primary Education in Kerala’, in P.R. Panchamukhi (ed.), *Studies in Educational Reforms in India*, Vol II, Himalaya Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989.

¹³⁴ Schultz T W, ‘Education and economic growth’ in N B Henry (ed) *Social forces influencing American education*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1961.

¹³⁵ Becker G. S., *Human Capital: atheoretical and Empirical Analysis with special reference to education*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1964.

¹³⁶ Harvey Kantor, ‘Work, Education, and Vocational Reform: The Ideological Origins of Vocational Education 1890-1920’, *American Journal of Education*, Vol.94, no.4, 1986.

Aron Benavot's ¹³⁷ article takes a global look at vocational education in secondary schools, examining both its history and recent trends. It starts by tracing the roots of vocational training programmes in Europe and beyond. Then, it focuses on student enrollment patterns between 1950 and 1975, highlighting a surprising finding: a decrease in the proportion of students choosing vocational education across most countries. The article goes on to explore various reasons behind this global trend, considering both national differences and changes over time. Finally, it proposes that recent theories about the interconnectedness of education systems around the world might offer the best explanation for this shift away from vocational programmes in secondary education.

Reddy¹³⁸ examined vocational programmes in Andhra Pradesh high schools. He investigated the curriculum, infrastructure, and pass rates. While the pass rate hovered around 50%, the study revealed significant challenges: a high dropout rate (nearly 50% between grades 6 and 10), limited programme reach (vocational training only offered in grades 8-10), decreasing time allocation for vocational subjects, and a lack of resources (qualified teachers, adequate facilities, proper curriculum materials, funding, and product disposal guidelines).

Examining vocational education in Tamil Nadu's higher secondary schools, a study by 'Soundaravalli'¹³⁹ revealed several key findings. First, there was a complete absence of aptitude tests for admission into vocational courses. Second, vocational schools boasted an impressive pass rate, exceeding 90%. Interestingly, external practical examinations for vocational subjects were also non-existent. The study further identified a lack of cooperation from factories and industries, hindering vocational education's growth. Despite its aim of reducing unemployment and easing the burden on colleges, 37% of vocational students still opted for higher

¹³⁷ Aron Benavot, 'The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education', *Sociology of Education*, Vol.56 no.2, 1983, pp 63-76.

¹³⁸ V. R. Reddy, et.al., 'A Study of Existing Vocationalisation of School Education in Andhra Pradesh- A Report', SCERT, Andhra Pradesh. 1984.

¹³⁹ S. Soundaravalli, 'A critical study of the functioning of the vocational education streams in higher secondary schools in Tamil Nadu', in M B Buch (ed.), *Fourth Survey of Research in Education*, New Delhi: NCERT, 1984.

education. On a positive note, the study found favorable attitudes toward vocational education from teachers, parents, and the students themselves.

1.17 Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on the various problems faced by the Malabar fisherfolk during colonialism. Already facing social marginalization due to caste and limited resource ownership, their livelihood became more and more precarious. The study examines the effectiveness of two initiatives introduced by the British government aimed at improving their lives: the introduction of cooperative societies and vocational training schools. It explores how these programmes functioned and whether they achieved their goal of social and economic upliftment of the fisherfolk.

This study aims to address a significant knowledge gap in understanding the lives of fishermen in colonial Malabar and South Canara. While some colonial initiatives targeted poverty alleviation among fishermen, the effectiveness of these schemes, the impact of technological advancements, and the overall socio-economic and educational conditions of this community remain under-studied.

Additionally, this research aims to examine how the emergence of intermediaries in the fishing sector has impacted traditional practices such as production methods, cooperative societies, fish processing facilities, and marketing strategies. However, the most important aspect of this study lies in its exploration of vocational and fisheries education in colonial Malabar.

1.18 Objectives

This study aims to analyze the fisheries elementary education system implemented by the British in Malabar, highlighting its significant features.

1. Analysing the role of various commissions and policies implemented by the colonial government, including the introduction of vocational education.
2. Trace the history of specialised educational institutions like the Fisheries Training Institute and Fisheries Schools in Malabar.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of education.
4. Understanding the unique customs and social hierarchy within these communities.
5. Examining the contrasting views of Govindan and Chandran Vydier:
6. Examining the historical development and activities of fishermen's cooperatives, particularly in the fisheries sector, and their impact on the communities.

1.19 Methodology

The study follows an interdisciplinary method, primarily utilizing archival records from colonial Malabar. These documents, encompassing social, political, educational, cultural, and economic aspects of life, have undergone rigorous analysis to ensure the reliability of the data used in this research.

To assess the accessibility of education for disadvantaged groups in colonial Malabar, this study draws on a diverse range of primary sources. Labor Department files shed light on the education of depressed classes. Public Instruction Reports from the late 19th century provide valuable insights within a specific timeframe. Additionally, newspapers, periodicals, and weeklies published by the Malabar intelligentsia offer valuable perspectives for a comprehensive analysis. Finally, the inclusion of contemporary maps, charts, and photographs enhances the visual representation of historical facts.

The development department files offer a rich resource for understanding education in colonial Malabar. These records go beyond just education, providing details on initiatives like fish curing yards, cooperative societies, and experimental stations related to the fishing industry. Annual reports document the number of teachers and schools across different financial years. Additionally, the files contain valuable primary sources like registers, minutes, letters, and official communication. These materials also include suggestions made by higher officials and data on

relevant economic factors, providing a comprehensive picture of the educational landscape.

This study is primarily historical, and analytical. The researcher collected data from both primary and secondary sources. The study relied heavily on the unique collection of primary materials held by the Regional Archives Kozhikode and National Archives Tamil Nadu. The study has been made on the discussion of primary sources such as documents, Administrative Reports, and Statistical abstracts of various Commissions like the Indian Education Commission, Indian Universities Commission, Royal Commission of Agriculture, Indian Industrial Commission, Report of the Committee on Fisheries in Madras, Commission of Inquiry, Report on Public Instruction Madras, Memorandum, Official Letters, Madras Revenue Administration report, Progress of Education in India(Quinquennial), Fisheries Bulletins, Report committee on co-operation in India, Census Reports, Madras educational rules, Board of Revenue Proceedings, files in the Development, education, Education of Public Health, Home (education), Law Education, Local Self Government, public, judicial and Districts Gazetteers at various offices, Manuals, the Native News Paper Reports.

Primary sources encompassed reports on educational progress over time, findings from various education commissions and committees, and insightful Quinquennial Reviews on the Progress of Education in India. Furthermore, to explore the contributions of non-official organizations, the research delved into books, doctoral theses, and relevant academic journals.

1.20 Hypothesis

The study launched from a set of core assumptions that stemmed from preliminary research to explore this further, a pilot study was conducted using archival materials, field research, and existing data. Based on the findings of this pilot study, three hypotheses have been developed.

1. The colonial government's approach to managing fisheries hasn't significantly improved the difficult lives of the fishing communities.

2. The involvement of cooperatives in various sectors, particularly fisheries, hasn't demonstrably improved the well-being of fishing communities.
3. Colonial intervention and its efforts to develop modern education for fisherfolk failed to register significant change.

1.21 Significance of the study

While numerous studies have shed light on the evolution of Indian education during British rule, particularly the progress at various stages like primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, and the major educational policies implemented throughout the period, the education of fisherfolk remains a relatively unexplored area. Though these studies occasionally touch upon advancements for disadvantaged groups, a comprehensive understanding of fisherfolk education is lacking. Past research on Western-style education in Malabar hasn't looked at the whole picture. This study aims to fill that gap by offering a more complete understanding of how fisheries elementary education was introduced during colonial times.

1.22 Limitations

The research on fisherfolk has focused mainly on technology and economics, neglecting social issues and almost entirely overlooking education. The lack of data is a major hurdle for this study. Additionally, there's almost no written history about fisherfolk. They seem to have been excluded from society, just like their villages are on the edges of populated areas. This absence of historical records makes in-depth study very difficult. The educational problems being studied here also contribute to the difficulty, as fisherfolk are less likely to be involved in academic research. The cultural diversity of Malabar, with its varying caste names for fishing communities, has hindered studies on educational disparities among these groups. Finally, the research is hampered by the fact that colonial records do not provide separate censuses for each fisherfolk community.

1.23 Chapterisation

The present study covers six chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. The chapterisation of the study is as follows: -

Chapter 1, The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section includes the South Indian fishing communities and their portrayal in literature, The Transformation of Malabar Through Trade and Conquest, Education in India, Muslim education, Vocation education, labour schools, and the origin of the cooperative movement, The second section covers the review of literature, Statement of the Problem, Objectives, methodology, Hypothesis, Significance of the study, limitations, and chapterisation.

Chapter 2, *Fishing Community: Caste, Society and Social Reform in Malabar* tries to locate the Malabar fishing community in the social system of the early 20th Century and discusses the impact of colonial modernity on them focusing on educational reforms. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section 'Locating Malabar Fishing Community within the Social System of 20th Century' also tries to discuss the socio-economic conditions of the community in the then existing hierarchical social system focusing on the impact the said social system had on them. The second section, 'Socio-Religious Reforms and the Malabar Fishing Community', also attempts to discuss the impact of socio-religious reform movements and colonial modernity on them by analyzing the role of V Govindan, Chandran Vaidyar, etc among the fishing community. The chapter discusses the role of various fishing welfare organizations and other religious groups and their activities among fishing communities, and caste discrimination and caste hierarchy in fisheries schools.

Chapter 3, *Modernization of Livelihoods and Colonial Fisheries Programmes in Malabar* discusses the operation of the fishing industry and economy in Malabar, as well as the origin and functioning of cooperative societies among the Malabar fisherfolk. In detail, it discusses the historic evolution of the fishing and fishing industry, fishing as an important economy, and the fishing industry in India focusing on the fishing industry in Malabar, its areas of industrial

activities, industrial centers, and industrial research. The discussion on the cooperative movement in the fisheries sector explores its early stages, tracing the establishment of fishermen's cooperatives in the 19th century and the subsequent role of the Madras Government in promoting cooperative development in Malabar. It also discusses the marketing, cooperation, and fishing industry in Malabar, its later developments, the socio-economic conditions of fishermen in Malabar, and the need for cooperative societies. It also conducts a general survey of cooperative societies in the fisheries sector of Malabar. Finally, it evaluates the functioning of cooperative societies in Malabar among the fisherfolk.

Chapter 4, *Vocational Education and Fisheries Training Institute* discusses the different types of vocational education introduced in different places of Malabar during the colonial period, and the fisheries training institutes and the fisheries schools in the elementary education zone. The fisheries schools in Malabar are established based on the Royal Commission Report prepared by the British Government and the Fisheries Committee Report prepared by the Madras presidency. Fisheries training institutes were established based on those reports. The courses, curriculum, and functions of fisheries training institutes are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5, *Elementary Fisheries Education in Malabar and South Canara Under Colonial Rule* intends to discuss fisheries schools, their functions, and features. Fisheries schools started after 1919. Indigenous schools were started following the Non-cooperation Movement and students started dropping out of the educational institutions that existed at that time. These institutions were forced to be shut down due to the mass dropout. The government had to find a solution to this. Consequently, the government initiated vocational education programmes alongside traditional occupations, leading to the establishment of fisheries schools.

Chapter 6, *Conclusion* This chapter served as the culmination of the entire research report. It provides a comprehensive summary of the key findings, arguments, methodologies, and recommendations presented in the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER 2

FISHING COMMUNITY: CASTE SOCIETY AND SOCIAL REFORM IN MALABAR

2.1 Introduction

The fishing community of Malabar is a disadvantaged group in Kerala. Understanding the socio-economic condition of any marginalized group in the colonial period requires deep research focusing on the various factors that kept them underprivileged within the larger Kerala society. An attempt is made here to understand the Malabar fishing community through their social practices in relation to the sea and the rest of the society living around them. They constitute a heterogeneous community in terms of different categorizations based on caste, class, religion, etc. Given the prevalence of casteism and caste-related social hierarchies in colonial Kerala, the marginalized communities were particularly vulnerable to a range of disadvantages, including economic deprivation, limited educational opportunities, and social discrimination. However, significant changes have occurred in their life due to the influence of a variety of factors. The role of socio-religious reform movements, both by negating and imbibing the values of colonial modernity, both in Kerala society in general and among the community members in particular deserves special mention in this regard. The most important of them was the role played by colonial education.

Chapter Design

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section *Locating Malabar Fishing Community in the Social System of 20th Century* tries to locate the community in the social system of early 20th Century Malabar. It discusses the socio-economic conditions of the community in the then existing hierarchical social system focusing on the impact the said social system had on them. The second section, *Socio-Religious Reforms and the Malabar Fishing Community* discusses the impact of colonial modernity on them focusing on educational reform.

The concept of ‘modernity’ is complex and ever-changing. Its meaning varies widely across different cultures and time periods. While it originated in Western Europe as a term associated with a new social order, it has since become a global aspiration. The desire to be modern is deeply ingrained in many societies, often contrasted with traditional values.¹ The chapter attempts to do so by analyzing the role of V Govindan, Koodakkal Chandran Vydier, etc among the fishing community. It also discusses the role of various fishing welfare organizations and other religious groups and their activities among fishing communities, caste discrimination, and caste hierarchy in fisheries schools.

Section I

Locating the Malabar Fishing Community within the Social System of 20th Century

This section tries to locate fisherfolks of Malabar in the social system of 20th Century and covers a general profile of fisherfolks in Malabar, their socio-economic backwardness, and their interaction with the then caste-based hierarchical social system.

2.2 Social Change and Transformation in 20th Century Kerala

The social system of 20th Century Kerala, including the states of Travancore, Kochi, and Malabar, had some unique characteristics, despite having some differences. A caste-based hierarchical social structure was one of the major features of the social system that existed at that time. Namboodiri Brahmins were at the top of the caste hierarchy and they were priestly class as anywhere in India. All others were placed under them according to their respective caste status concerning the Brahmins.

Unlike the case of other parts of India, there were no Kshatriyas and Vaishyas in Kerala, who were considered the rulers and trading class respectively. Nambiars and Nairs were considered high-caste groups, ranking just below

¹ Satish Deshpande, *Contemporary India: A Sociological View*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003, pp 25-27.

Brahmins in the absence of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. In Kerala, Nairs traditionally served as a warrior class. Trade and commerce in the past in Kerala were done by merchants from outside like the Jews and the Arabs. The sea routes played a crucial role in ancient India's maritime trade.² From the 10th Century there were active trade and diplomatic relations between China and the coastal regions of India, especially the Malabar, Coromandel as also Orissa, and Bengal.³

Below the caste groups like Nairs and Nambiar stood some caste groups who were considered lower castes. They constituted Ezhavas, Thiyyas, Fisherfolks, Pulayas, Cherumas, and several other similar castes. Among them, castes like Pulayas and Cherumas were the lowest and they were treated like slaves in the past. The Fisherfolks were also considered low-ranking but were above the Pulayas, Parayas, and Cherumas. Though they were grouped among the untouchables they were distinctly different from Pulayar and others who were at the bottom of the social ladder.⁴ Caste groups like Thiyyas and Ezhavas enjoyed higher positions than fisherfolks and Pulayas. The Ezhavas, a leading force in the struggle for social emancipation, equality, and economic betterment, successfully navigated the challenges of a rigid caste system.⁵

The people owed allegiance to their caste first rather than to the society as a whole. They also endorsed that the traditional features of the caste system are endogamy, hierarchy, restrictions on communal relations between castes, restriction on the choice of occupation, civil and religious disabilities, the privilege of a certain group, and untouchability.⁶ Untouchability was known in every part of India but unapproachability was something unknown. In 1923 the Kakinada Congress constituted the Kerala Untouchability Committee to carry on work for the removal

² Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the origins to AD 1300*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2002, p.556.

³ V. Suryanarayan, 'Reflections on Indian Communities in the Littoral States of Indian Ocean' in E. K. G. Nambiar, V. Suryanarayan, (ed.), *Lectures on Maritime studies, Maritime Traditions of India*, University of Calicut, 2005, p.37.

⁴ Abraham Vijayan, *Caste, Class and Agrarian Relations in Kerala*, New Delhi: Reliance publishing house, 1998, p.33

⁵ Saradmoni K, *Emergence of a slave caste*, New Delhi: People's publishing house, 1980, p.130.

⁶ Suviraj Jaiswal, 'Caste Ideology and Context', *Social Scientist*. Vol. 25, Nos. 5-6, May-Jun, 1997, pp.3-12.

of untouchability.⁷ These castes were systematically listed in the 1931 Census of India.⁸

2.3 The Marginalization of Fisherfolk in 20th Century Kerala

Fisherfolks in 20th Century Kerala were a heterogeneous community due to their dependency on different types of water sources, and distribution into various caste groups, religions, and geographical areas. There were marine and riverine fisherfolks. The majority of them belong to marine fisherfolks and were engaged in fishing in the sea and backwaters in Kerala. The rest of them constitute riverine fisherfolks who were engaged in fishing activities in the river. They were scattered into the coastal areas and the river banks of the three territorial units of Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar. Also, they belonged to different caste groups and religions.

Fisherfolk had been revered for their skills and contributions, but they found themselves marginalized and relegated to a lower social status. This sidelining had excluded them from opportunities and perpetuated a system of discrimination. The marginalization they faced restricted their social mobility and limited their access to education, resources, and political participation.

The caste system in early 20th century Kerala forced the fisherfolk community to the bottom of the social ladder, marginalizing them as the downtrodden. They were treated very badly. Below them were only the group of people who were termed Depressed Class and they faced many social and economic hardships under British rule in Travancore and Cochin.

The educational backwardness of fisherfolks has to be understood in such a context. An improvement in the socio-economic status of any community is possible with easy access and proper utilization of educational reforms. However, the situation in the coastal area reveals that the fishing community had been kept away from this educational development. This inaccessibility to the educational process had been instrumental in leading them to abysmal poverty and the bottom

⁷ Mahadev Desai, *The Epic of Travancore*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Karyalaya, 1937, pp.4-11.

⁸ Harold R. Issacs, *Indian Ex-Untouchables*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965, p.36.

end of the social structure. Hence minor communities like the fishing community were neglected of the luxury of getting the socio-religious refinement that the upper caste enjoyed. This was the situation of the fishing communities in the early decades of the twentieth century. Muslim fisherfolk, particularly Pu-Islam(*poosalan*), dominate North Kerala. Central and South Kerala see a mix of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities. Marginalized like the Adivasis, Kerala's fishermen have seen little gain from the state's development.⁹

2.4 Fisherfolks in Malabar

Fisherfolks in Malabar also, like fisherfolks in entire Kerala, constitute a heterogeneous community due to the type of water bodies they were engaged in for fishing, and their distribution into different caste and religious groups. Among Malabar fisherfolks also there are marine and riverine fisherfolks. They consisted of different caste groups like Mukkuvar, Arayar, Pu Islam, and Mogaya. Apart from this, they mainly belonged to three religions, i.e., Hindu, Christian, and Islam. However, the majority of the fisherfolks in Malabar belonged either to Hinduism or Islam. It is noteworthy that intermarriage between different fisherfolk communities was not a common practice.

The Malabar Coast, a region along the southwestern coast of India, has a rich history of diverse communities and unique social systems. These communities, often separated by geography and cultural differences, developed their own self-governance structures to maintain order and harmony within their respective regions. The Mukkuva community has a hierarchical social structure. They have assemblies of elders called Kadavans or Kadakkodis, led by presidents called Arayans or *Karnavans*. These leaders settle disputes related to caste etiquette and also serve as a divorce court. Their positions are hereditary, conferred by Rajas with specific insignia. Arayans were entitled to certain privileges, such as the heads of

⁹ T.T. Sreekumar, and Govindan Parayil, 'Interrogating Development: New Social Movements, Democracy and Indigenous People's Struggle in Kerala' in Joseph Tharamangalam (ed.), Kerala: The Paradoxes of Public Action and Development, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006, pp.227-28.

captured porpoises and gifts during women's life events. Their consent is required for marriages.¹⁰

The Mukkuvans also have oracles or seers called Ayittans or Attans. When an Arayan dies, these oracles select his successor and also choose priests called Manakkans or Banakkans from among the younger Kadavan families to perform religious rituals.¹¹ The Mukkuva caste has a tradition of punishing minor offenses by requiring the culprit to offer oil for lighting a lamp before the caste demon.

The Mukkuva community, for instance, utilized the Kadakkodi, a traditional court system.¹² This system played a crucial role in maintaining social order, regulating sustainable fishing practices, and preserving their religious traditions.¹³ Similar systems existed for other communities, such as the caste Panchayath for the Mogayas.¹⁴ The caste council, known by various names such as Kadakkodi, Raivamkuduka, and Karayogam, served as a governing body. The Araya, Mogaya, Mogaveera, and even the Pudu-Islam fisherfolk exemplify this concept¹⁵ who all had their own councils (Kadakkodi or caste Panchayath) to manage internal affairs related to their professions and communities.

The Kadakkodi, a cornerstone of coastal Malabar, served as a court, regulator, and guardian of tradition, ensuring social harmony, environmental preservation, and sustainable fishing practices. However, these systems came with significant drawbacks. Individual autonomy was severely restricted, as people's actions were entirely dictated by the court's rulings. The caste councils wielded immense power, and their orders demanded absolute obedience. Defiance inevitably

¹⁰ Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. V, Madras: Government Press, 1909, p.108.

¹¹ Edgar Thurston, pp.108-109.

¹² Ramachandran C., *Teaching not to F(in)ish?: A Constructivist Perspective on Reinventing a Responsible Marine Fisheries Extension System*, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi: Niseema Publications, 2004, pp.83-102.

¹³ K.M. Udayabhanu, 'The Dheevaras of Kerala: A Historical Perspective', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Department of History, Vol. XIV, 1987, Parts 1-4, Trivandrum: University of Kerala, pp.197-202.

¹⁴ K.S. Singh, 'People of India Kerala', *Anthropological Survey of India*, XXVII Part One and Two part two New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., 1992, p.974.

¹⁵ P. R. G., Mathur, p.196.

led to social ostracism from the community. This immense pressure to conform stifled innovation and noticeably hindered the overall development of the fishing community. While its influence has waned due to evolving socio-economic conditions and modern governance systems, its historical significance as a vital institution for these coastal communities remains undeniable.

There were also caste-based servants called *Manukkan* who assisted these leaders. They practice a unique form of religion, worshipping Bhadra-Kali at a temple and holding ceremonies with animal sacrifice and fruit offerings. The way property is inherited changes based on the region.¹⁶In the northern areas, possessions traditionally pass down through the female line (matrilineal). In contrast, southern regions follow a patrilineal system, where inheritances go to the sons.

The Mukkuvans are a community of fisherfolk along the Malabar coast. In the extreme south of the district, they are known as Arayas. The Mukkuvans are sea fishers. Fishing is their primary occupation, but they also work as boatmen, carriers, and coconut cultivators. Mukkuvans in North Malabar are divided into four exogamous *illams*: *Ponnillam*, *Chembillam*, *Karillam*, and *Kachillam*. This makes them Nalillakkar, or people of four *illams*. South Malabar Mukkuvans and Arayas have only the last three *illams*, so they are called Munnillakkar, or people of three *illams*. The *illam* system and social hierarchy were important in coastal communities.¹⁷ They influenced marriage, social status, and relationships between different communities. Tellicherry had two leaders called Arayanmar, who come from the *Kachillam* and *Ponnillam* sections.

Additionally, this caste also had a section called Kavuthiyans, considered as the lowest strata historically.¹⁸ These *Kavuthiyans* also referred to as “*Panimagans*”,¹⁹ fulfilled barbering duties. Ranked highest among the three

¹⁶ P. R. G. Mathur, pp.106-107.

¹⁷ C. A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, vol. I, II, Reprint, Trivandrum: Kerala Gazetteer Department, 1997, p.126.

¹⁸ Mathew. P.T., *We Dare the Waters: The World and World view of the Mukkuvar*, Department of Christian Studies, University of Madras: Chennai. 2001, pp. 57-58.

¹⁹ C. A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, pp.126-27.

divisions, the *Nallillakar* demand respect from the *Munnillakar* and *Kavuthiyans*. The *Kavuthiyans*, like other barber castes, have special functions to perform in connection with the removal of ceremonial pollution; and it is interesting to note that seawater is used in the ritual sprinklings for this purpose.²⁰ The prohibition of marriages between these groups reinforced the rigid social order. *Kavuthiyans*, similar to other barber castes, uniquely employed seawater in their rituals to purify ceremonial impurity.

Pu Islam constitutes Muslim fisherfolk in Malabar who were converted to Islam from among Mukkuvan fisherfolk. Among the Mukkuva fisherfolk of Malabar, conversion to Islam was common.²¹ There were different reasons for their conversion. One of the reasons was the efforts of Zamorin to convert local Hindu fisherfolk to Islam to strengthen his relationship with Arab traders. No allowance was made for conversions to Islam.²² Administrative action for the development of the fishing industry in Kerala started with the Zamorin of Calicut and for that, he even encouraged the kind of conversion mentioned above to strengthen the trade with Arabs. It was reported that he gave orders to bring up one or more of the male members of every family of fisherfolk (Mukkuvans) in his dominion.²³ K. V. Krishna Ayyar suggested that the Zamorin, needing sailors for his fleet, may have implemented a rule. This rule mandated that every fisherfolk family raise one son as a Muslim. This practice was believed to be the reason behind the growth of the Pudu Islam community.²⁴

In the case of fisherfolk of the Kerala coast, mass conversion of a village or a clan often took place because kinship bonds were so powerful. *Poosalan* or Puisseam (Pudu Islam) means new converts who according to the 1891 census “were mostly converts from the Mukkuvan or fishermen caste”, and this process Thurston reported

²⁰ C. A. Innes, p.127.

²¹ Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Asian educational services New Delhi, Madras: Government Press, 1989, p.390.

²² M.W.M. Yeatts, *Census of India 1931*, Vol XIV, Madras part, Madras: Government Press, 1932, p.346.

²³ C. A. Innes, *Modern District Gazetteers- Malabar and Angengo*, Madras, 1915, p.190.

²⁴ Victor D'souza 'status groups among the Moplahs on the southwest Coast of India', in Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.) *Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India*, Delhi, 1978, p. 46.

was still going on in 1909. The conversion of fishermen on the royal decree of Zamorians resulted in the emergence of a group of Pudu-Islam which was later corrupted to *Poosalans*, and at present the *Poosalans*²⁵ are the community of Muslim fishermen.²⁶

Pu-Islam were *Kadappurattakar* (dwellers of the beach) for other Mappilas, while for themselves *Angadikkar* (people of the town). They were divided into two endogenous groups based on their traditional occupation. These two groups were *Valakkar* (fishermen who use the net) and *Bepukar* (the hook-and-line fishermen) and they used to reside in separate quarters on the same beach²⁷

The relationship between these groups was hierarchical. In addition to these groups, there were more groups among them. Within, the Pu-Islam community, a social hierarchy existed. The *Bepukar*, considered superior due to their claimed descent from high-caste Hindus, practiced fishing with hooks and lines. In contrast, the *Valakkar*, who used nets for fishing, occupied a lower position. Additionally, the Pu-Islam settlements included other specialized groups: *Kabarukilakkunnavar* (gravediggers), *Alakkukar* (washermen), and *Ossans* (barbers). These service castes had traditional roles - the *Kabarukilakkunnavar*, for generations, prepared graves for a fee. Interestingly, a hierarchical system governed food-sharing practices. While both *Valakkar* and *Bepukar* accepted food from the *Kabarukilakkunnavar*, they wouldn't intermarry. Similarly, the *Valakkar* and *Bepukar* would not share food with the *Alakkukar* and *Ossan*, who, in turn, accepted food from them. Among these service castes, the *Ossans* held the lowest position.²⁸

The Mogayas are a sub-group within the Mukkuvar community, predominantly residing in 15 villages spanning from Puthiyangadi in North Malabar to Kannur. Scattered across the region, their strongholds include Puthiyangadi,

²⁵ The Pusalans were also, like the majority of the Kerala Muslims, followers of the Shafi school of the Sunni sect. They were patrilineal and polygamous and used to keep three or four wives simultaneously.

²⁶ S.M. Mohammed Koya, 'Genesis of Mappilas', *Indian History Congress Proceedings*, 1978.

²⁷ Kunhali V., 'Muslim communities in Kerala to 1798', unpublished Ph. D thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, 1986, p.166.

²⁸ Kunhali V, pp.166-67.

Korappuzha, Kappad, Peralasseri, Melur, Peringathur, Mahe, Muzhappilangad, Pokkad, Chombal, Edakkad, Nileswaram, Kadamkode, Kunjathur, and Trikaripur.²⁹ They were typically found settled along river shores. In British official records, they are known by different names such as Mogaya, Mokayar, Mukhayar, Mugaya, Mogyer, etc. It is important to note that the Tulu-speaking Mukavar or Mogear³⁰ caste was distinct and unrelated to this community. According to Buchanan, the mogear, a caste of Tuluva origin, are fishermen. They bear a resemblance to the Malayali Mukuvas, but strict social barriers exist between the two groups, preventing any communication. The Mogear traditionally worked as boatmen, fishermen, porters, and palanquin bearers.³¹

The number of members in this community was very small. Mogaya community was a small community numbering about 8000 who lived mostly on the seaside or near the banks of rivers. They were scattered all over Malabar and their habitations were invariably confined to sea-boards and river banks, which cannot be characterized as bearing any civilizing influence contributing to their moral, material, and political progress.³²

Traditionally, Mogayas are fishermen by profession and heredity. However, they hold a distinct social position compared to other fishing communities like Arayans or Mukkuvans. Tradition and customs prevent them from sharing meals (inter-dining) or marrying each other (intermarriages).³³ The system of inheritance was matrilineal. *Tarawad* held immense significance in the social and cultural life of the Mogayas. This ancestral home, overseen by the *Karanavar*, served as the foundation of their community. Self-sufficient and functioning as a social hub, the *Tarawad* played host to important family gatherings. Notably, marriages were often

²⁹ K.S. Singh, p. 959.

³⁰ Mogear community is included in the list of scheduled castes vide Appx VIII at f 115 of the white paper sub-division for orders.

³¹ Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1999, p.530.

³² Memorandum No.B.5254/29 dated 15th October 1929 from the Koodakkal Chandran Vydier and 294 others through the Labor commissioner Madras to the Excellency-in-Council Fort St. George, Madras, D D, R A K.

³³ G O NO.857 dated 16/4/1930, D D, R A K.

arranged within the *Tarawad* walls, symbolized by the traditional exchange of betel leaves.³⁴

The Mogaya community was structured into four distinct *Kulam*: *Chathanthukulam*, *Karumbanathukulam*, *Padithanattukulam*, and *Cheruvadiam or Thayanattukulam*. While the community as a whole adheres to endogamy, meaning marriages took place within the Mogaya community, the individual *Kulam* followed exogamy, where marriages occur outside their respective *Kulam*.³⁵

2.5 Socio-Economic Backwardness of Fishermen Community in Malabar

In Malabar also, as in any other part of Kerala, fisherfolks constituted one of the most deprived communities in the early decades of 20th century Kerala. The caste-determined hierarchical social system played a crucial role in making their social position low and social condition vulnerable. Rigid caste structures in the pre-modern era severely limited the opportunities available to the region's fisherfolk. Their social and economic standing lagged behind in nearly every aspect, from housing and livelihood options to education, employment rights, and even basic freedoms like movement and the rights of women.

The traditional concepts were dependence on the sea for income and their belief in *Kadamma's* providence led the fishing community to live in the present. Daily earnings, from fishing covered their needs for food, clothing, and enjoyment, leaving no perceived need to save. This lifestyle, however, faced a critical obstacle during the monsoon. The rough seas halted fishing, and with no alternative income or stored food, the community struggled greatly in the monsoon's aftermath. This vulnerability during the lean season presented a significant challenge to their economic stability.

The fisherfolk of the colonial period were compelled to prioritize survival. They ventured out to sea daily to secure their livelihood, without any consideration for future security. This cyclical existence, alternating between periods of prosperity

³⁴ Sreedharan A. M., 'Mukayar Vamshiyatha, Samskaram, Athijivanam', Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, Calicut University, Calicut, 2000, pp. 23-26.

³⁵ K. S. Singh, p 960.

and hardship, precluded the concept of future progress. Relying solely on practical knowledge, they were unfamiliar with the notion of formal education. Their lives, a precarious balance between plenty and want, were yet to be transformed by the idea of progress.

2.5. 1 The Role of Rituals in Malabar Society

In Sangam age the Neythal, a coastal region, was inhabited by the Aravans and Parathavars, skilled fisherfolk. An annual festival, *Vilavan Vilavu*, honoured *Kaman*, the god of love. Men and women danced together, seeking blessings for marriages and protection. While *Kamman* was the chief deity, *Kadalon*, the ocean deity, was also revered. Fishermen honoured *Kadalon* with shark backbones. The cult was predominantly feminine, with prayers and offerings for good fortune. The alignment of stars was believed to indicate auspicious days for life events. Over time, these customs became institutionalized, losing their original meaning.³⁶

The early societies were heavily influenced by supernatural beliefs and myths. Despite modern advancements, these superstitions and traditions had a significant impact on the lives of Malabar's people. Malabar folklore abounds with tales of fearsome demons and monsters. One such creature, appearing like the infamous Jack o'lantern, particularly terrifies local fishermen.³⁷ These social customs north of the Korapuzha River, which divides north and south Malabar, restrict women's movement. They are traditionally prohibited from crossing the river and residing in the southern region, though their social standing remains unaffected.³⁸

It is also possible that the reasons behind both the folklore and the social restrictions are a complex mix of factors. The fear of the unknown at sea could have been intertwined with cultural beliefs about demons and monsters. The social restrictions on women's movement across the Korapuzha River could be linked to

³⁶ Genevieve Lemetcinier, *Religion, and Ideology in Kerala*, Bombay: D K Agencies, 1984, pp.31-32.

³⁷ T. K. Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and its folk*, Madras: G A Natesan and Company, 1900, pp.54-57.

³⁸ T. K. Gopal Panikkar, p.69.

patriarchal norms and the desire to maintain social order within specific communities. Perhaps women in the north Malabar held different social roles or had more freedoms, leading to a desire to keep them within their established social boundaries. However, even they are increasingly disregarding these outdated customs, despite facing opposition from traditional groups.³⁹ It was believed that this discriminatory practice originated in ancient feuds between the rulers of north and south Malabar.

The caste system, with its rigid hierarchy and discriminatory practices, influenced the social customs, traditions, and economic structure of the time. This system contributed significantly to the socio-economic backwardness of the fisherfolk. Their physical and mental challenges were largely due to the oppressive social norms, economic hardships, and other factors that had limited their opportunities for generations.⁴⁰ The Mogaya communities, burdened by oppressive social laws, customs, and restrictions, faced significant obstacles to their moral and material progress. The landed classes, who held a higher social position, often exploited these communities, showing little concern for their well-being.⁴¹

The Hindu social scale places the fishing community in a contradictory position. While they hold a middle social status, their economic reality is far lower. This disparity is highlighted in the representation they give to the government,⁴² which details both their social standing and challenging economic circumstances. The fishing community in Malabar remained among the most backward due to a persistent lack of resources for moral and material advancement. This gap in facilities perpetuates ignorance and superstition within the community.

The Mogaya community was categorized as a backward class by the colonial administration. Though the primary occupation of the Mogear in South Canara is river fishing, they were categorized as a Scheduled Caste. The Malayalam-speaking

³⁹ T. K. Gopal Panikkar, p.70.

⁴⁰ G O NO.2029 dated 19/11/1920 R (spl) D, R A K.

⁴¹ G O NO.2029.

⁴² File No.319/20 the Memorandum dated 25th April 1920 from Chandran Vydier&131 persons to the Governor in Council Fort St. George through Labour commissioner, Madras, R(Special), D, R A K.

Mogaya belong to the Mukkuva Community and were classified as belonging to a backward caste group. Memorialists argued that like Mogears of South Canara, the Mogaya of Malabar were to be treated as 'Depressed classes' for purposes of recruitment to the public service.⁴³

The concept of pollution was attached to them and they were treated as untouchable castes. These castes were systematically listed in the 1931 Census of India. These untouchable Castes were officially defined as 'Depressed Castes' in 1932.⁴⁴ The Commissioner of Labour reported that 'Mogayas' is a group of fishermen and they had no claim to be included under 'Depressed Classes.'⁴⁵

The educational backwardness of the Mogaya community is highlighted by the fact that only five percent achieved literacy in their mother tongue. This situation was further exacerbated by the lack of widespread English literacy, with only a handful of individuals possessing a workable level of proficiency. The Mogaya community's limited education, social, and economic disadvantages restricted them to the occupations assigned by the caste system. This system limited their opportunities in various fields like agriculture, trade, and professions. Agriculture, general trade and industry, public services, liberal professions, etc. all remained avenues that were inaccessible to the members of the Mogaya community.⁴⁶

Despite compulsory and other systems of education, not less than 97 percent of them were still illiterate, in consequence of which, they have not been able to enjoy any of the benefits conferred on the fishermen community by the paternal government. As regards education, there were only two individuals who received a high school education.⁴⁷

The high cost of secondary education stood as an impassable barrier to their efforts for education. Many youths aspired to get educated but they were not able to

⁴³ G O NO.989 dated 27/11/1933, Public Department, R A K.

⁴⁴ Harold R. Issacs, p.36.

⁴⁵ G O NO.989.

⁴⁶ G O NO.2029.

⁴⁷ Letter No. D. Dis. No.319 C/20, from the Director of Fisheries dated 22nd September 1920 to the Secretary to the government of Madras, R S D, R A K.

study after elementary education because of poverty. They demanded scholarships for students from the fishermen's community.⁴⁸ However, many individuals in the community were well-educated in the vernacular and some of them were practicing as physicians.⁴⁹ Though in a few places like Korapuzha and Madapalli, the members of this community enjoyed the great benefit of free elementary education through the fishery schools established by the government.

The vast majority of Mogaya pursued their traditional and ancestral occupations of fishing and boat service, both of which, however, represent precarious means of livelihood in the altered socio-economic conditions of the present day.⁵⁰ Apart from fishing, many of them were engaged in fishing and carrying goods and passengers in the boat. Since the opening of the railway on the coast, they had very little to do in carrying goods and passengers on the backwaters. While all communities engage in fishing in the sea, the Mogaya community primarily focuses on river fishing. These people were very hardworking.⁵¹

A petition submitted by the Mogaya community lays bare the harsh realities of their traditional professions. Not only did these occupations fail to offer any economic security, but they also caused significant hardships, as the memorial itself details. The petition further reveals that despite their relatively small number of around 5,000 in the 1920's, the Mogaya community forms a vital economic unit within the district. They are geographically dispersed, residing in settlements along the coastline, rivers, and backwaters.⁵²

The fisherfolk's poverty was exacerbated by a combination of factors: illiteracy, lack of awareness, and a reliance on alcohol. These vulnerabilities made them susceptible to exploitation by moneylenders, who charged exorbitant interest rates. Landlessness was another significant challenge, as most fisherfolk lived on land owned by higher-caste individuals, leaving them vulnerable to eviction.

⁴⁸ G O NO.2029.

⁴⁹ Letter No. D. Dis. No.319 C/20.

⁵⁰ File No.319/20.

⁵¹ Letter No. D. Dis. No.319 C/20.

⁵² Letter No. D. Dis. No.319 C/20.

Samuel Meter's analysis highlights the marginalized existence of these fisherfolk. Their limited access to education, coupled with their reliance on traditional fishing methods, confined them to a cycle of poverty and dependence. The social discrimination they faced, particularly when interacting with the dominant caste, further compounded their challenges.⁵³ Their coastal lifestyle, while providing a livelihood, also restricted their mobility and opportunities for social and economic advancement.⁵⁴

The colonial administration supported various marginalized communities in different ways. However, the Mogaya community did not get the adequate support that they deserved from the government. Unhappily in their hard and unequal struggle for existence, the Mogaya had not yet had the benefit of the special help and encouragement that the government benignly extends to backward and depressed classes of the population. There were no special schools maintained in the interests of the community, nor were scholarships set apart for them as is done in the case of so many other less backward communities.⁵⁵

Developmental activities like the introduction of railways affected Mogaya's livelihood. In one of their petitions to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Government of Madras, they mention one such instance. The petitioners⁵⁶ contended that they had lost a good part of their livelihood through the extension of the railway north of Calicut. The men fishing in the Korapuzha were not able to take *vallams* on long-distance trips.⁵⁷

2.6 Occupational Challenges of Malabar Fisherfolks in the Early 20th Century

In addition to the socio-economic backwardness that they had already been experiencing, they had faced different kinds of occupational challenges.

⁵³ Samuel Meter, *Njan kanda Keralam*, (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Basha Institute, 2010, p.148.

⁵⁴ G O NO.2029.

⁵⁵ G O NO.989.

⁵⁶ Endorsement No.9361-VI/39-2, Memorandum from the Thattante Valappil Kunhiraman, Thiruvangur, Korapuzha, South Malabar dated 7th May 1939, to the Hon'ble the Minister Agriculture and Rural Development, government of Madras, D D, R A K.

⁵⁷ G O NO.989.

Occupational challenges here mean the challenges they faced while engaging in fishing and related activities. Such occupational challenges constitute exploitation by money lenders, difficulties in securing auctioning rights, and increasing the price of salt, among others.

One of the most important problems fishermen faced in relation to their occupation was exploitation by the moneylenders. After lending money to the poor fisherfolks, the money lenders charged high interest from them. It was difficult for these poor people to pay the money back and this made their life similar to slaves. They were likely enslaved by the moneylenders. There were government schemes for the weaker sections to save them from indebtedness at that time. One such scheme was for the relief of agricultural indebtedness. The fisherfolks also required such schemes that ameliorate their financial burdens.

Fisherfolk as a class were more in the grip of moneylenders than agriculturists. They had to lead the lives of slaves to these fisherfolk as they were never able to get out of their clutches. No doubt the conditions of fishermen were different from those of agriculturists. One chief difference is that they had no immovable property that they could offer as security for loans. But in this respect, their condition does not greatly differ from that of agriculturists who are tenants at will under non-cultivating landlords.⁵⁸

One of the biggest challenges faced by the fishermen was the auctioning of fishing rights. This practice essentially shut them out from their traditional fishing grounds on the river. They conveyed their concerns in a memorandum to P.T. Rajan⁵⁹, the then Chief Minister of Madras Presidency. The memorandum highlighted the hardship caused to the fishing communities residing along the Korapuzha River due to the auctioning system. They argued that these auctions placed the entire community at the mercy of wealthy capitalists, as poor fisherfolk simply couldn't compete financially. This lack of money resulted in them losing

⁵⁸ G O NO.989.

⁵⁹ "Sri Ponnambala Thiaga Rajan served as the Chief Minister of Madras Presidency from April 4, 1936, to August 24, 1936. He was also the final President of the Justice Party".
www.absoluteastronomy.com

their age-old right to fish in the river. The government's response, however, was disheartening. They offered no solution and declared the issue unresolvable.⁶⁰

The right of fishing was enjoyed by the fisherman community there from time immemorial. There was no reason to curtail this right suddenly. The government was determined to not allow free fishing there. The fishing in the Korapuzha River might be controlled by the issue of a license on payment of a small fee of Rs. 3 per net. The proposal was not accepted given the opinion of the collector of Malabar that the proposed system would not secure adequate revenue for the government. It was suggested that in order to present a monopoly system of licensing the right of fishing might be tried without entailing any loss in present revenue to the government.⁶¹

The Mogaya community, traditionally boatmen and river fishers in north Malabar, were adversely affected by the extension of the railway north of Calicut around 1906. This led to the decline of boat traffic, forcing them to rely primarily on river fishing and, in some localities, sea fishing for their livelihood. There was a large number of members of this community living on the banks of the Korapuzha River 7 miles north of Calicut whose occupation was fishing for prawns in the Korapuzha River. In 1935 the Revenue Department without any reason stopped the right of free fishing and the fishing rights began to be auctioned. The people of the community begged to stop this system of auctioning fishing rights and save the community from other economic ruin, starvation, and enslavement.⁶²

The question of introducing a system of licenses for fishing rights in Korapuzha was examined in detail in consultation with the Director of Fisheries and the Collector of Malabar. Representing the fishermen who had immemorial rights to fish freely in the river, the Mogaya community submitted a brief representation. The Revenue Department brought the fishery to auction and they were being exploited by rich men under the system, while the system of free license for stake net fishing

⁶⁰ G.O NO.426 dated 6/3/1941 D D, R A K.

⁶¹ G.O NO.426.

⁶² G.O NO.426.

was in force in the case of Balipatanam and certain other rivers in the Malabar district.⁶³ They requested or free fishing and free licenses for fishing in the river.

In 1936 P T Rajan visited Calicut and some of the grievances of the community were heard.⁶⁴ One of the most important grievances that the community suffered at the hands of the British government was the high price of salt in the government fish curing yards. Salt was issued to the fish curers at about 10 annas per month when the fish curing yards were under the administration of the excise department. This was raised to Rs. 1-4-0⁶⁵ per month when the yards were transferred to the control of the Fisheries Department. Salt prices skyrocketed, hurting fishing families. Because of the high price, many couldn't afford salt which made it very hard for the fishing community to make a living. This was a terrible handicap to the fish curing industry especially as the price of cured fish had fallen considerably and the market for this was very dull. The reply sent by the Development Department to the memorandum submitted to P T Rajan said that "the question was already under the consideration of the government."⁶⁶

2.7 Caste Hierarchy among Fisherfolks in Malabar

Caste hierarchy was common among fishing communities. One of the examples of this was that pupils of the Kavuthiyan (Barbar community) from among fisherfolks were not allowed to sit on benches in school. An incident in this regard happened at Palappatty Fisheries School. The headmaster of Palapatty School, K Krishnan did not allow the Barber (Kavuthiyan) students to sit with other students. Kavuthiyans were the lowest section of people among the fisherfolk community. Historically, the Naviyan or Kavuthiyan sections of the Veluttedans and Mukkuvans

⁶³ Memorandum No.9361-VI/39-1 dated 29/3/1939.

⁶⁴ Madras Legislative Assembly Question No.1150, dated 27th November 1977, from P. Madhavan, D D, R A K.

⁶⁵ One Rupee-4 Anna-0 Pie.

⁶⁶ Copy of letter from The President Araya Jana Social Service League.

were subject to discriminatory practices, placing them in a marginalized position within their respective castes.⁶⁷

The parents of Kavuthiyan fisherfolk came to know about this issue, and this led them to be unwilling to send their children to school. On 1st November 1927, the fishermen of Palapatty submitted a petition to the Assistant Director (Coast) against K. Krishnan, the Headmaster of the Palapatty Fisheries School, making the following allegations against him: 1) he was ill-treating the children sent to the school, and 2) he was creating factions among the fishermen of Palapatty.3) He had forbidden the Mullas to continue teaching the Quran to the schoolchildren at the Palapatty school. An investigation by the fisheries inspector revealed evidence supporting the accusations against Krishnan. Consequently, the Assistant Director (Coast) transferred him to the Tanur Fisheries School as an assistant and appointed a new headmaster for the Palapatty Fisheries School.⁶⁸ This incident at Palapatty Fisheries School, where the headmaster discriminated against Kavuthiyan students, was a stark example of the systemic oppression and marginalization that these communities have endured.

2.8 The Relationship between Fisherfolks and Other Marginalised

As a marginalized group, fisherfolk had complex relationships with other marginalized communities. This analysis examines two key aspects of their interactions with other backward sections of society. Firstly, fisherfolk sometimes discriminated against other lower-caste groups, such as the Pulaya. This internalized marginalization could lead to social hierarchies and exclusion within the broader marginalized community. Secondly, fisherfolk were often discriminated against by other lower-caste groups, such as the Thiyyas. This external marginalization could further exacerbate their socio-economic challenges and limit their opportunities for social mobility. The following examples illustrate these complex interplays of social hierarchies and discrimination.

⁶⁷ Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes in Southern India*, Vol.3, Madras: Government Press, 1909, p.266.

⁶⁸ G O NO.1590 dated 24/9/1929, D D, R A K.

The practice of untouchability was prevalent even among some of the fishing communities. An example in this regard is their discrimination against the Pulayas students in Kavvayi Fisheries School. Pupils of the Pulaya community had not been given admission to Kavvayi Fisheries School. A major reason for this was that the fisheries temple was situated next to the school. The school is situated about 25 feet to the west of the temple which is exclusively a fishermen's temple and lower caste people have no access to it.⁶⁹ They thought that Pulaya pupils would go to their temple and make it impure. Swami Ananda Theerth⁷⁰ voiced his protest against this.

Fishermen had a very strong objection to Pulaya children being admitted to the fisheries school. The Inspector of Fisheries in Calicut endeavored to persuade the fishermen's leaders to allow the admission of Pulaya children to the school. However, the leaders reportedly opposed this decision due to the proximity of the temple. As a solution to this difficulty, the Inspector of Fisheries suggested shifting the school 100 yards away from the temple. Even to this, they were not agreeable and, it was reported, went to the extent of being obliged to withdraw their children from the school.⁷¹

Given the circumstances, the government approved the Director of Fisheries' recommendation to maintain the primary focus of the Kavvayi Fisheries Elementary School on educating the children of fishermen. The headmaster reportedly indicated that the proximity of the fishermen's temple to the school made it impractical to admit Harijan students immediately. There was concern that Harijan students might inadvertently enter the temple grounds.⁷²

⁶⁹ G O NO.1131 dated 2/7/1931, L E, R A K.

⁷⁰ The early name of Swami Ananda Theerthan was Ananda Shenoy. Born on January 2nd, 1905, in a Gowda Saraswat Brahmin (Konkani) family of Tellicherry, he later embraced an ascetic life and received the name Ananda Theerthan. His uncompromising crusade against the inhuman practice of untouchability left an important mark in Kerala's social reform movement. He faced stiff opposition from vested interests but remained undeterred. "He also played a great role in preaching the teachings of Narayana Guru in North Malabar. Furthermore, he started a school near Subramanya Swamy Temple, Payyannur, known as Sree Narayana Vidhyalaya, which empowered the Dalit community through education", www.baadalsg.inflibnet.ac.in.

⁷¹ Letter No. 1073-c/32 dated 8th July from the Director of Fisheries (coast) dated 8th July 1932 to the Secretary to the government of Madras, D D, R A K.

⁷² Letter No. 1073-c/32.

However, this action by the fisherfolk was met with resistance from Dalit communities. On June 1st, 1932, Swami Sivanandan of Payyanur attempted to enroll some Pulaya boys in the school. Swami Ananda Theerth sought admission for the Pulaya boys in the government fisheries school, Kavvayi.⁷³ When the fishermen noticed them from a distance, they reacted with alarm and forced the Pulaya boys to back.⁷⁴

The government issued an amendment to the rules issued under the Elementary Education Act that the building used for the school shall be accessible to pupils of all castes and communities.⁷⁵ The Assistant Director (Coast) reported that the situation of the Kavayi fisheries school violates the orders referred to because it is so close to a fishermen's temple that it is not accessible to pupils of the Pulaya caste. The school is situated about 25 feet to the west of the temple which is exclusively a fishermen's temple and lower caste people have no access to it.⁷⁶

Meantime, on 5th July the fishermen in response to the orders of the government agreed on their own accord to admit Harijan children by the western gate of the school, as the eastern entrance faced their temple, and this arrangement was reported and was approved at a conference by Swami Anand Thirth who was present.⁷⁷

However, the Director of Fisheries on his arrival on the 9th, declined to agree to the admission of Harijan children by the western gate and the other fisher children by the eastern gate as such differential treatment within a school could not be countenanced. If the school was to be retained in the fishermen's quarters, the school was to give the same treatment to all classes.⁷⁸

⁷³ G O NO.992 dated 25/7/1932, D D, R A K.

⁷⁴ Letter No. 1073-c/32.

⁷⁵ G O NO.1131. dated 2/7/1931, L E, R A K.

⁷⁶ G O NO.1131.

⁷⁷ D F. No. 1575-C/38 dated 30th of July 1938 from Director of Fisheries to the secretary to the government of Madras, D D, R A K.

⁷⁸ D F. No.1575-C/38.

On this, the fishermen requested time till that evening for consultation and after consultation agreed to admit the Harijan children by the main eastern entrance, but begged that no adult Harijan should be permitted to come for any purposes to the school and if any ignorant parent did so, there might be redoubtable. ⁷⁹The main entrance facing the temple on the eastern side was to be permanently closed and a door was substituted for a window on the western side of the building. This was to be made the only entrance for all classes.

This was agreed to by all including Swami Anand Thirth and the shifting of the entrance to the west was carried out immediately. The fisheries school was accessible to all classes without any kind of reservation and the fishermen had bound themselves not to object or create any kind of trouble in the future. ⁸⁰

Admitting the Dalit children, fisherfolks issued the following statement: *“The undersigned, comprising property owners of the Kavvayi fisheries school building and local fishermen, hereby affirm their support for the admission of students from Scheduled Castes to the Kavvayi school. To facilitate this, the undersigned agree to the following:*

1. *Closure of the existing eastern gate of the school compound.*
2. *Construction of a new gate on the northwest side of the school compound.*
3. *Relocation of the doors from the eastern side of the building to the western side.*

These modifications will be completed within a two-day timeframe. The undersigned guarantee unhindered access for Harijans students through the new western gate, utilizing the adjacent footpath. Furthermore, the undersigned assume full responsibility for any potential disruptions to peace that may arise from the entry of Harijans students.” ⁸¹

⁷⁹ D F. No.1575-C/38.

⁸⁰ D F. No.1575-C/38.

⁸¹ G O NO.992.

All these incidents make it clear that fisherfolks in Malabar, reflecting the then prevalent social values, discriminated against those who were considered lower than them in social position. Even though they were the victims of the caste system, it did not prepare them to be critical of it. This means that they were trying to address their own socio-economic backwardness without being critical of the caste system. That is why they fought against caste-related practices on the one hand and practiced caste on the other, simultaneously. However, it cannot be forgotten that there were efforts to fight the caste system and all its discriminatory practices on the part of fisherfolks along with all others who were also suffering from the caste system under the leadership of social reformers like V Govindan and Chandran Vaidyar who were supporting the cause of all marginalized.

2.8.1 Caste Discrimination against Fisherfolks by Other Lower Castes: - Fisherfolk faced significant discrimination from higher castes within the rigid caste hierarchy of the early 20th Century. They were marginalized not only by the upper castes but also by lower castes such as the Thiyyas. This social stigma even impacted the functioning of fisheries schools, as exemplified by the incident at Pallippuram Fisheries School.

The Assistant Director of Fisheries (Coast) reported that several aided schools were engaged in open rivalry with the Pallippuram Fisheries School, culminating in an assault on the Headmaster in January 1943. This incident instilled fear among the local fisherfolk towards the Thiyyas, leading to reluctance among school-children to attend classes. The assault on the headmaster and the subsequent fear within the fisherfolk community underscore the severe consequences of caste-based discrimination, even within marginalized communities.⁸²

Section II

Socio-Religious Reforms and the Malabar Fishing Community

This section analyzes the specific impact of socio-religious movements, such as the Renaissance and reform movements, on the socio-economic and cultural

⁸² G O NO.13 dated 3/1/1944, D D, R A K.

conditions of the Malabar fishing community. To this end, the chapter examines the role of key figures like Valiya Veetil Govindan and Koodakkal Chandran Vydier etc., within the fishing community. Beyond the impact of socio-religious movements, this section also explores the activities of fishing welfare organizations and religious groups among these communities.

2.9 Socio-Religious Reforms, Colonial Modernity, and the Marginalisation in Kerala

Colonial modernity, a complex process of cultural, economic, and political transformation in colonized societies under European rule, often involved the violent imposition of Western modernity, disrupting traditional cultures and ways of life. Understanding this process is crucial for comprehending the enduring legacies of colonialism and its ongoing impact on contemporary societies.

European colonialism profoundly shaped Indian society, constructing the “other” and implementing a new education system. This catalysed an intellectual awakening and a surge in literary activity across the subcontinent. An analysis of the founders’ ideas and worldviews reveals their modern orientation, despite drawing upon traditional knowledge. Malabar society’s exposure to modernity and British governance contributed significantly to this intellectual evolution.⁸³

In the Indian colonial context, modernity was not a monolithic concept but rather a multifaceted one, varying across different social groups. This becomes evident when examining the diverse ways in which various caste groups negotiated modernity. Upper and middle castes, especially within social reform and regeneration movements, found traditional cultural resources to be invaluable assets. Conversely, lower castes largely relied on modern elements to navigate the contemporary cultural landscape.⁸⁴

The robust support for indigenous initiatives evinced a preference for rational thought over unquestioning belief, formal education over religious

⁸³ Asokan Mundon.

⁸⁴ Asokan Mundon.

indoctrination, and streamlined customs over elaborate rituals. In the history of social transition of modern Kerala, many leaders played vital roles. Mahatma Ayyankali, Chattambi Swamikal, Sree Narayana Guru, Vakkom Abdul Khader Maulavi, Mannath Padmanabhan Changanassery Parameshwara Pillai the list is long in the annals of Kerala of social transformation.⁸⁵

Colonial modernity and socio-religious reform movements helped the marginalized to secure a space in the 20th Century socio-political system of Kerala. Colonial modernity and the reforms it brought in the realms and fields of social change, education, politics, administration etc., were capable of transforming the feudal social system and making it a reformed one. Socio-religious reform movements gradually changed society, impacting the social and religious life of Kerala. National movements also had an important role to play in this regard. Colonial modernity, socio-religious reform movements, and national movements cannot be separated from each other since all of them were mutually reinforcing. A point to be noted here is that all these changes that occurred in Kerala constituted more or less a development parallel to the changes that occurred at the national level.

Socio-religious reforms and awakening at the national level have had an impact on different regions of the country including Kerala. Such developments at a national level could make changes in the feudal structure of Indian societies. Indian society in the 19th century was inextricably bound by the oppressive forces of religious superstition and social backwardness.⁸⁶ The growing nationalist sentiments, coupled with the emergence of new economic forces, the spread of education, the impact of modern Western ideas and culture, and increased awareness of the world, galvanized a resolve to reform India's backwardness. The tension

⁸⁵ Sankarankutty Nair, T.P., 'Arattupuzha Velayudha Panickker Torch Bearer of Dalit Freedom Kerala Calling', Vol.34, No.6, April 2014, p.44.

⁸⁶ Bipan Chandra, Mridula & Adithya Mukerjee, *India's struggle for independence 1857-1947*, New Delhi: Penguin Random House, 1988, p.83.

between the entrenched religious institutions and the evolving social-economic context precipitated the emergence of diverse religious reform movements.⁸⁷

One of the most important beneficiaries of colonial modernity and the socio-religious reforms was the marginalized in Kerala. Though all the sections of society, irrespective of class, caste, and religion have benefitted from it, the case of the marginalized deserves special mention here. The marginalized in Kerala, especially the lower castes, were able to secure multiple benefits from it. One of the most important benefits is education. Some of them were even able to get an English education. However, it cannot be forgotten that as compared to the higher castes they were able to get only some benefits.⁸⁸

The impact of colonial modernity and the colonial educational system was significantly influenced in the socio-religious reform movements of that period. In the twilight of the 19th century and the dawn of the 20th century, Kerala witnessed the emergence of various progressive forces leading reform movements. The significant impact of these movements was evident in their efforts to promote education and transform society.⁸⁹ In the wake of socio-economic transformation, the heterodox religious ideologies themselves underwent major changes and were reconstructed more or less in idioms of pre-existing tradition.⁹⁰ The first multidimensional attack against the traditional institutions came not only from the socio-religious leaders who were hailed as the prophets of the Renaissance but also from the people who held administrative positions in the colonial and princely state administration. The official necessities and the problems faced by the English-educated people to cope with the traditional society necessitated the need for such reforms.

⁸⁷ A.R. Desai, *Social background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: University Publications, 1981, p.281.

⁸⁸ Asokan Mundon.

⁸⁹ C.S. Venkiteswaran & V Sivadasan, 'An Evaluation of the Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in Kerala', *Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, p.24.

⁹⁰ Rajan Gurukkal, and M. R. and Raghava Varier, 'Cultural History of Kerala,' Vol. I Trivandrum, 1991, p. 25.

Renaissance as a movement started during the first half of the 19th century in South Travancore with the revolutionary socialism of Ayya Vaikunda Swamikal, and Arattupuzha Velayudha Pannikar. Ayya Vaikunda Swami was the first social reformer in Kerala, who raised the slogan: ‘One caste, one religion, one God, one language, one world, for humanity’.⁹¹ To champion the cause of the avarnas and address the shortcomings of the state administration, he founded Samatva Samajam in 1836. He died in martyrdom before his death. They fought against the rigid caste system. The physical atmosphere at that time made the renaissance possible.

Early 20th century Kerala witnessed a surge of social movements driven by caste and religious identity. Despite being influenced by modern colonial ideas, these movements lacked a completely modern character. They primarily aimed to uplift specific castes or communities, neglecting a more comprehensive societal transformation.

These social movements weren’t entirely divorced from traditional values. They blended modern and traditional ideas, creating a unique reform approach. Many movements were rooted in specific castes, religions, or communities, with a primary goal of improving the socioeconomic standing of their own people. Notably, these movements often advocated for community upliftment while still maintaining their connection to traditional practices.⁹² The major reason for this was the caste system that was prevalent during that time. The rigid division of society based on the caste system had become the traditional feature of social life.⁹³ The intellectual milieu created by the reformers favoured the emergence of civil liberty and social justice, particularly among the weaker and lower sections of society, who had been denied education before the colonial period.

As far as Kerala society is concerned, in the early stages, the leaders were particular in eradicating the evils associated with the castes in which they were born.

⁹¹ Rajan Gurukkal, and M. R. Raghava Varier, ‘History of Kerala’, Hyderabad, 2018, p.251.

⁹² K. N. Ganesh, ‘*The Process of State Formation in Travancore*’, Studies in History, Vol.6, New Delhi, 1990, p.78.

⁹³ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, New Delhi: Sterling Publications, 1979, p.46.

Towards the end of the 19th century, it became a full-fledged movement under the leadership of Sri Narayana Guru.⁹⁴ For example, Sree Narayana Guru was concerned with the eradication of evils in the Ezhava community whereas Chattampi Swamikal was concerned with the reformation of the Nair community. He boldly questioned the Brahmins' scriptural hegemony, becoming the first intellectual to do so.⁹⁵

The transition from tradition to modernity in contemporary Kerala is a gradual process. Despite advancements, traditional values remain deeply ingrained and collaborative across various aspects of life. As Lloyd Rudolph observed, modernity has been assimilated into Indian society rather than replacing traditional practices.⁹⁶

2.10 Socio-Religious Reforms among Upper Castes

Though the reform movements among upper castes did not have any direct impact on the life of the lower castes, they played an important role in reforming the social system of late 19th and early 20th century Kerala. In this sense, the upper caste socio-religious reform movements had implications for the social-religious life of the lower castes in Kerala. Namboodiris and Nairs were upper caste groups in Kerala who underwent reforms in the context that they were losing their traditional hegemony in society. Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha was an organization formed in 1907 to reform the Namboodiri Brahmins in Kerala. V T Bhattathirippad was one of the major social reformers among them. Chattampi Swamikal was the spiritual leader and a social reformer from among the Nair community. Mannath Padmanabhan was another major social reformer who became instrumental in forming the N S S aiming at reforming and uplifting Nairs. This organization was formed in 1914.

⁹⁴ Vallikkav Mohandas, *Dr. V. V. Velukutty Arayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Bhasha, 2010, p.185.

⁹⁵ Chattampi Swamikal, 'Vedadhikara Nirupanam' in Maheswaran Nair, (ed.), *Chattampi Swamika: Jeevithavum Krithikalum*, Trivandrum: Dooma Books 1995, p.504.

⁹⁶ V. Vilanilam, Antony Palackal, & Sunny Luke, 'Introduction to Kerala Studies', Vol. I, International Institute for Scientific and Academic collaboration, I N C, U S A: New Jersey 2012, p.203.

In the initial period, Namboodiris were reluctant to receive modern English education. However, in a later period, they were forced to adapt to the changes in order to survive in the changed social system. They came to know that if they could not change themselves, they would face a setback in their social mobility and journey ahead. The same was the case of Nairs also. The changes occurred not only in the case of their approach towards modern education but also in the case of many of their socio-religious practices and customs. They abandoned many of their customs, practices, and values which they felt obsolete.

Apart from this many of the upper-caste social reformers supported the cause of lower castes. They openly and directly supported the lower castes in their struggle to gain and protect their rights. One of the best examples of this is the support of certain upper-caste social reformers for the temple entry and Vaikom Satyagraha. As part of Vaikom Satyagraha, certain upper caste leaders led a march towards Vaikom supporting the cause of the lower castes under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan. This march is known as *Savarna Jatha*,

2.11. Socio-Religious Reforms among Lower Castes

The movements and efforts of lower castes cannot be solely attributed to social reforms. They aimed to reform themselves and fight the injustices perpetuated by the upper caste. This was different from the upper caste social reform movements, which aimed to reform themselves without challenging the existing social hierarchy. Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, Poykayil Kumara Guru Devan, Velukkutty Arayan, Pandit K P Karuppan, Chandran Vaidyar, V Govindan, etc. were some of the most important social reformers from among the lower castes. The emergence of the lower caste social movements and organizations in the late 19th, and early 20th centuries was a direct response to the forces of modernity. SNDP Yogam, SJPS, PRDS, and Valan Sabha, etc. are some of the organizations formed under the leadership of lower caste social reformers and spiritual figures.

Among all the social reformers in Kerala, both from lower castes and upper castes, the name of Sree Narayana Guru deserves special mention. He is one of the most noted and influential social reformers in Kerala and has been hailed as the

father of the 'Modern Kerala Renaissance'.⁹⁷ 'One Caste, One Religion, One God for all Men' was a famous slogan coined by him. He was one of the pioneers of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam established in 1903. He was from the Ezhava community and he was both a spiritual leader and a social reformer for them in early 20th century Kerala. Though he did not want to limit the functioning and influence of his movement to the Ezhava community alone, like most other movements at that time, its functioning was mainly limited to community members. However, its influence surpassed all castes and communities across Kerala. His intention and consideration for all the people was very clear from the above-mentioned slogan.⁹⁸

From a sociological perspective, Guru established temples as a tool for social mobility among the underprivileged.⁹⁹ He championed a system of thought intended to improve the lives of Ezhava people. He challenged Brahmin supremacy, pushing for the easing of caste restrictions. Kumaranasan, an eminent poet, and Dr. Palpu were also two other noted figures and social reformers from Ezhavas. SNDP Yogam had a decisive role to play in reforming and uplifting Ezhavas in early 20th-century Kerala.¹⁰⁰

Swami Vagbhadananda, born as Vayaleri Kunhikkannan Gurukkal in 1885 in Kuthuparamba of Kannur District to Thiyya parents, was a Hindu religious leader and a social reformer. He established Atma Vidya Sangham, a group of intellectuals and professionals who sought changes in the then Kerala, and his activities and movements stood for all instead of Thiyyas alone.

Ayyankali, born a Pulaya at Venganoor of Thiruvananthapuram, was one of the most prominent social reformers from Dalits in the early part of the 20th century. He established SJPS in 1907 aimed at the welfare of the weaker sections. Its door was open to all weaker sections irrespective of their caste and religious background.

⁹⁷ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Trivandrum: Sahitya Pravartha Co-operative Society, National Book Stall 1967, p.313.

⁹⁸ Rajendran G., *The Ezhava Community and Kerala Politics*, Trivandrum: Kerala Academy of Political Science, 1974, p.54.

⁹⁹ *Aruvippuram Pratishta Sathapathi Smaranika*, (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1988, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Rajendran G., p.54.

Though it was open to all, almost all the members were from Pulayas since he also belonged to that community. He did a lot for the upliftment of the community. He is the one who is considered to have declared the first agricultural struggle in Kerala in 1913-14 on behalf of the Pulaya agricultural labourers engaged in paddy cultivation. It was for asserting the rights of Pulaya children to education.¹⁰¹ In 1904, he established a school in his village, Venganur, for Pulaya children, only to have it destroyed by caste Hindus.¹⁰² However, in 1910, Dewan P Rajagopalachari and the English Director of the Education Department, Mitchel, issued orders allowing Dalit admission to schools.¹⁰³

Sree Kumara Guru Devan or Poykayil Appachan was also a Dalit leader from Kerala at that time. Born in 1879, he was a revolutionary Dalit leader hailing from Eraviperur near Thiruvalla in Pathanamthitta district, to Parava's parents. He was also, like Sree Narayana Guru, a social reformer and spiritual reformer. He established a spiritual movement or religion called *Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha* (PRDS) in 1909.¹⁰⁴ Like other social reformers and spiritual leaders, he also did not want to limit his activities to Parayas or Sambavas. However, since he belonged to the Paraya community, his movement naturally remained confined to that community, even though its influence was far-reaching and extended beyond the boundaries of the community.

Born in Pampady, Kottayam in 1887, Pampady John Joseph was the son of Pampady John, a Christian convert from the Pulaya caste. A Dalit activist, he devoted his life to fighting social evils and liberating the untouchables from the dehumanizing practices of untouchability. He established the Cheramar Mahajan Sabha on January 14, 1921, in response to the discriminatory practices of caste Hindus and their converts.¹⁰⁵ His activities were mainly concentrated in central

¹⁰¹ T. H. P., Chentharassery, *Ayyankali* Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House, 2013, p.73.

¹⁰² G.O.No.2247, dated 19/11/1909, Education Department, State Archives, Tamil Nadu.

¹⁰³ T. H. P., Chentharassery, pp.58-59.

¹⁰⁴ Sanal Mohan, 'Religion, social space, and identity: The Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha and the making of cultural boundaries in 20th c Kerala', *South Asia Journal of South Asian Studies* 28(1), 2005, pp.35-63.

¹⁰⁵ Patankar, Bharat and Gail Omvedt, 'The Dalit Liberation Movement in Colonial Period', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.XIV, Nos.7 and 8 February 1979.

Travancore especially Changanaserry and Kottayam since a major chunk of the community was concentrated in this region. However, he did not try to confine his activities to Pulaya Christians only.¹⁰⁶

The socio-religious reform movements made changes in the lives of the fisherfolk from Travancore, Kochi, and Malabar states. More about them will be discussed in the two of the following sections. One section deals with the case of fisherfolk in Travancore and Cochin, and the other section deals with the case of fisherfolk in Malabar.

The low castes were prohibited from using temple roads and were required to halt on the paths leading to them, even before reaching the designated pollution distance.¹⁰⁷ In response to the Vaikom settlement, the government granted Harijans access to the roads near the temples at Kannankulangara, Tiruvarpu, and Ambalapuzha.¹⁰⁸ Following the initial campaign, Mannath Padmanabhan Pillai vigorously advocated for temple entry and the abolition of untouchability.¹⁰⁹ The government announced in May 1936 that all public facilities funded by general public funds, such as roads, tanks, wells, *chathrams*, and others, would be accessible to all people, irrespective of their caste.¹¹⁰ The Madras Legislative Council was the first to introduce the “Removal of Civil Disabilities Act” and the “Malabar Temple Entry Act” in 1938, paving the way for all Hindus to access Hindu temples.

2.12. Socio-Religious Reforms in Minority Religions

Like all other caste groups and communities, minority religious groups also changed under the influence of colonial modernity.¹¹¹ However, the socio-religious reforms that took place among Christians and Muslims in Kerala during colonialism were different from each other. The nature and extent of change differed between the

¹⁰⁶ Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.43.

¹⁰⁷ P. K. K. Menon, *The history of the freedom movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, Regional Records Survey Committee, Kerala state, Trivandrum, 2001, p.142.

¹⁰⁸ P. K. K. Menon, p.357.

¹⁰⁹ P. K. K. Menon, p.357.

¹¹⁰ Mahadev Desai, p.23.

¹¹¹ Houtart F., and Lemercinier G., ‘Socio-religious reform movements in Kerala: A reaction to the capitalist mode of production,’ *Social Scientist*, 6, doi:10.2307/3516673, 1978, pp.25-43.

communities. Christian communities were more receptive to reforms compared to Muslims. The Muslim community was not that open to changes, especially in receiving modern and English education.

Christians in Kerala were at the forefront of receiving modern education, especially acquiring the English language, as compared to all other communities. It has already been mentioned in the previous sections that high caste Hindus, especially Namboodiri Brahmins, who were not open towards modern education and the English language in the initial period, welcomed it in a later period. The Christians were able to enjoy the fruits of modernity by adapting themselves to certain kinds of changes that modernity brought in. The Church established educational institutions and other charitable organizations with and without the help of European Christian missionaries. Many of them received higher education and secured government jobs.¹¹²

Muslims also were not so receptive to modern education and the English language. They placed English against Arabic and the latter for them bore a religious significance. Another important point is that, unlike the case of Christians, there were a lot of Muslims who were more socially and economically backward than Christians. Illiteracy and poverty were rampant among Muslims. The community's reluctance towards modernity has to be understood in this context. However, some of the social reformers from the community contributed towards educating the members of the community. They stood for the educational progress of the community. Apart from educational advancement, they were to the all-over development of the community. They did a lot for the socio-economic upliftment of the community.

The education of Muslims in the Madras Presidency was initially neglected under British rule. However, the government later took steps to improve the situation, such as providing special grants to schools for Mappilas and appointing dedicated inspectors for Muslim schools. Despite these efforts, a 1902-1907 report found that Muslims continued to underperform in education due to several factors,

¹¹² Houtart F., and Lemercinier G., pp.25-43.

including poverty, lack of interest, and differing educational goals. To address these challenges, the government implemented several initiatives, such as fee waivers and scholarships for Muslim students. In addition, the government promoted vocational education, which was particularly relevant to the Pu-Islam community, a group of converted Muslims who were traditionally involved in fishing. These measures helped to improve the educational attainment of Muslims in the Madras Presidency.

During the first Kerala Muslim Conference held in Tellicherry on 22nd August 1931, the chairman lamented the lack of educational opportunities for Muslims, pointing out the absence of even a single Muslim high school despite a population of ten lakh Muslims in the district.¹¹³ Gathering for their second annual conference in Calicut on 12th May 1933, the Kerala Muslim Conference renewed their demands for Muslim representation in government. This time, they specifically called for allocating ten seats out of the twenty-nine reserved for Muslims in the Madras Legislative Assembly to be designated for Malabar Mappilas.¹¹⁴ The Secretary, Reception Committee, Kerala Muslim Conference (3rd session),¹¹⁵ Tellicherry, in his letter has requested that all students attending the Malappuram secondary school for Mappilas may be totally exempted from the payment of fees.¹¹⁶

Colonial modernity and socio-religious reform movements influenced the Syrian Christian Churches in treating Dalits and other lower castes also.¹¹⁷ Though Christianity claims to be casteless, Syrian Christians in Kerala are considered a forward caste group in society and by the government. The traditional Syrian Christian community in Kerala was not free from caste prejudices and they had maintained a hierarchical relationship with all other caste and religious groups which was almost typical of the caste system. Lower caste groups were treated by them as untouchables. Later the Syrian Christians were forced to change their attitude towards Dalits, though the latter were not treated equally by the former. Many of the Dalits were converted to Christianity by the Syrian Christians following

¹¹³ Mathrubumi, dated 23rd August 1931.

¹¹⁴ Mathrubumi, dated 14th May 1933.

¹¹⁵ Led by Mr. Hussain Imam Saheb and Secretary Haji Abdul Sathal Haji Essak Sait M L A.

¹¹⁶ D. O. No 3314 B I/37 3rd February 1937, Education and Public Health Department, R A K.

¹¹⁷ Houtart and Lemercinier, G., pp.25-43.

the British Protestant Christian missionaries' effort to convert Dalits to Christianity. Some of the social reformers from the community were willing to educate Dalit children in their schools, though did not do anything to remove the caste hierarchy prevalent in the Church.

One of the most important points to be noted regarding the religious minorities in colonial Kerala in the context of this study is that the fisherfolk who belonged to minority religious groups were very poor and had suffered from a lot of socio-economic problems. More about them will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.13 Social Reforms and the Fisherfolk Community

Socio-religious reform movements had been active among the fisherfolk in Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar states in the first half of the 20th century during colonialism. The names of Dr. Velukkutty Arayan, Pandit K P Karuppan, Chandran Vaidyar, and V Govindan, among others, deserve special mention in this context.

2.13.1 Velukkutty Arayan

Velukkutty Arayan was born in 1891 in Alappad, Karunagappally, in the Kollam district of Kerala. He was a multi-talented person engaged in multiple fields¹¹⁸ and contributed a lot to the progress and upliftment of the community. His areas of activism spread across various fields like social reforms based on the eradication of caste discrimination, economic empowerment of the community, educational empowerment, medical service, journalism, art and literature, science, and scientific research. Being a journalist, he started several publications under his editorship.¹¹⁹ By using the opportunities related to all these fields, he did a lot for the fishing community.

¹¹⁸ He was a medical doctor who was exposed to Ayurveda, Allopathy and Homoeopathy. Apart from working as a social reformer, political activist, and a journalist, he was a writer and has contributed to various fields through his writings. He was a novelist, short story writer, playwright, and also a translator. He was a brilliant literary critic. He has written about fisherfolks, fisheries and coastal belts. Apart from that, he has written on language, literature, and science which are still relevant. He was a polyglot who was able to deal with Malayalam, Sanskrit, English, Tamil, Kannada, Hindi, and Bangala.

¹¹⁹ *Araya Sthreejana Masika*, one of the first woman magazines in Malayalam, *Film Fan*, one of the first film magazines in Malayalam, *Fisheries Magazine*, *Dharmaposhini*, *Samadhanam*,

In the initial period, he concentrated his activities mainly among the community members in his area and Travancore. He thought that education could socially uplift a marginalized community and thus formed *Vijnana Sandayini*, a library, in his village in 1908 at the age of 16. This marked the beginning of his social activism. Later he formed Araya Science Society for the educational and employment development of Arayas. In 1916 he established *Arayan Vamsha Paripalini Yogam* which was centered around Cheriyaazhikkal to organize a fishing community. It was modelled as Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam.¹²⁰ In response to the growing economic inequality between fish merchants and fishermen in Travancore, he created fishermen's associations to help alleviate poverty and debt. All-Kerala Araya Caste Association in 1919 and a Navika Thozhilali Union (Boat Workers' Union) in 1931.¹²¹ To mark his protest against caste discrimination, he used the name of his caste *Arayan* as a suffix to his name and founded a magazine also with the same name in 1917 from Cheriyaazheekkal. In 1919 it was upgraded to Arayan newspaper.

His activities in the community were not limited to social activism. He sought scientific ways also to support their cause and ensure their welfare. He has written extensively towards that end. He published articles on fish preservation techniques in scientific ways in his newspaper *Arayan*. Different articles about organizations of fishing communities, their duties and importance, etc. were published in the newspaper at different points of time.¹²² He wanted his newspaper *Arayan* to propagate his ideas of forming fisheries schools in a fishing village. His other contribution in this regard is the land reclamation scheme, which he introduced in the 1950s, in which coastal land was to be reclaimed for coastal areas' protection. He started land reclamation schemes to face coastal encroachment but they didn't get recognition from the government. But later, when Tsunami came, land reclamation schemes were taken into consideration by the government.

Kalakeralam, Theeradsham, Rajyabhimani, Chiri etc. were published under his editorship. Among them, *Fisheries Magazine* was published both in English and Malayalam.

¹²⁰ Vallikkav Mohandas, p.9.

¹²¹ Indian Express, Dated 15th October, 1989.

¹²² Vallikkav Mohandas, p.61.

Through his literary criticism also he raised his voice for the community. He vehemently criticized *Chemmeen*, a critically acclaimed novel by Thakazhi Shivashankara Pillai, a prominent literary figure in Kerala, pointing out the novel's unrealistic portrayal of the fisherfolks by highlighting superstitious elements prevailed among them.¹²³

He spread his activities across Kerala in a later period. Before the idea of a united Kerala came into being he travelled across Kerala to organize various segments of fisherfolks from various parts of Kerala by founding *Samastha Keraleeya Araya Mahajana Yogam* (All-Kerala Araya Caste Association) in 1919. His major aim was to form the collective of a fishing community that had different categories of people. He wanted to unite them. But even by forming *Araya Mahajana Yogam*, he was not able to unite them.

He played a pivotal role in organizing the inaugural Fisheries Conference in 1949. This conference aimed to develop sustainable plans and programmes to improve the lives of coastal communities and fisherfolk. In 1956 April 'Theera Desa Maha Yogam' was organized under Velukkutty Arayan's leadership. To bring all the fishing communities of Kerala under one banner, he named his community 'Dheevera' and he worked throughout his life to invite fishing communities all over Kerala.

The activities he was engaged in cannot be considered limited only to fisherfolk. He extended his activities to other marginalized and in that sense, he was

¹²³ Set in the coastal village of Neerkunnam, the novel revolves around a fisherfolk family. Karuthamma, the eldest daughter, develops a romantic interest in Pareekutty, a childhood friend from the Muslim community. Chembankunj, financially indebted to Pareekutty, refuses to repay the debt. Karuthamma's family opposes her marriage to Pareekutty, leading to her forced marriage to Palani. After her marriage, Pareekutty visits Karuthamma twice: once to bring news of her mother's passing, and again to meet secretly on the coast, ultimately resulting in their tragic deaths. Arayan women who fail to maintain chastity are said to have their husbands killed by Kadalamma, according to legend. Velukkutti Arayan criticizes this portrayal, pointing out that the Araya community actually worships Bhagavathi, and the concept of Kadalamma as a vengeful deity is not part of their religious beliefs. Thakazhi also critiques the notion that education among fisherfolk is a panacea for societal improvement. The fact that Chembankunj, who is literate, and Chakki, who is illiterate, speak the same language suggests that education has not significantly altered the community's cultural norms. Moreover, Thakazhi depicts Chembankunj, who refuses to give Pareekutty fish without upfront payment, as a representative of the entire fishing caste (Vallikkav Mohandas, pp.173-178.).

not only the representative of fisherfolks, but also of all the marginalized. He supported the cause of all the marginalized. Thus, he was unanimously elected as the general secretary of *Avarna Hindu Mahasabha*, an organisation of lower-caste Hindus formed under the auspices of SNDP in 1924. His support to Vaikom Satyagraha can also be considered as an example in this regard.

His political activity had a far-reaching impact on the society of that time all over Travancore. *Thiruvithamkoor Rashtreeya Mahasabha*, which is considered the first political organization in Kerala, was formed under his leadership in 1938. He organized fisherfolks from coastal belts and factory workers from certain areas of Travancore. As part of his political journalism, he raised his voice through his newspaper a number of times against the autocratic rule of Dewan in Travancore. His editorials aimed at strong criticism against the government. Following this, his newspaper was captured two times and a heavy fine was imposed. His *Arayan Press* was one of the first presses in Kerala.

He supported Vaikom Satyagraha and was the head of the publicity committee to mobilize support for the Satyagraha. He, through his writings in *Deshabhimani* and *Arayan*, advocated for the rights of Arayas and lower castes for the temple entry. He raised his voice in this regard for the first time in 1918 along with T K Madhavan. He stood for the democratization of the whole society and worked for the upliftment of all the marginalized. He was the founder of some of the pioneering trade unions in Kerala like Thiruvithamkoor Navika Thozhilali Sangham, Thiruvithamkoor Mathsya Thozhilali Union, Coir Workers Union, Thiruvithamkoor Mineral Workers' Union.

2.13.2 Pandit Karuppan

Pandit Karuppan is one of the noted social reformers in Kerala and the most prominent of all the social reformers among fisherfolks. He was born in 1885 in Cheranallor, Kochi into a vala fisherfolk family. Apart from being a social reformer, he was an eminent writer. As a social reformer, his most important contribution was to the eradication of caste discrimination and untouchability, and the socio-economic upliftment of the marginalised, particularly fisherfolks. As a result of his service to

the Vala community of fisherfolks, he was made the representative of the Vala community in political forums. He was also nominated to Cochin's first legislative assembly. His service to the oppressed people was impressive and it helped him to make his entry as a member of the legislative council of Cochin State.

Karuppan was instrumental in forming the collective of Vala community members called *Sabha* at the local level. Most of the Sabhas of Valans were established with the help of Pandit Karuppan. The Kalyanidayini Sabha, Anapuzha in Kodungallur, was the first Sabha organized by Pandit Karuppan. There were other Sabhas of the Vala communities and the Sabhas like Jnanodayam Sabha in Eda Kochi, Sudharma Sooryodaya Sabha in Thevara, Prabodha Chandodayam Sabha in North Paravoor, Sanmarga Pradeepa Sabha in Kumbalam, Araya Vamsodharani Sabha in Engendiyoor, etc., were later changed into the organization of Dheevera Samudayam.¹²⁴ Primary schools were erected at Cherayi by Paishkarabhi Vardhini Vardini Sabha and later the government took over and converted it into an elementary school.

One of his most important contributions to the community was his effort to uplift them through education. He wrote a Memorandum to Sri Moolam Thirunnal who was Maharaja of Travancore to allow fee concession for students of the fishing community in Travancore. As a result, the fees were reduced to half for students from the fishing community.¹²⁵ He has even personally helped those from the community who are interested in schooling and studies.¹²⁶ One such person who received his help was Kochunni.¹²⁷

Apart from focusing on the general education of the community, he was interested in starting fisheries school for them. Under the leadership of Pandit Karuppan, a project was submitted to the government to start fisheries schools in

¹²⁴ Gopinath Panangad, *Pandit Karuppan Mattangalude Margadarshi*, (Mal), Kodungallur, 2009, p.16.

¹²⁵ Gopinath Panangad, p.35.

¹²⁶ Pooyapilli Thankappn, *Pandit Karuppan viplavam kavithayilum samoohika rangathum*, (Mal), Kottayam: Sahithya Pravatha Cooperative Society Ltd.,2016, p.57.

¹²⁷ Kochunni was the first person from the Vala community from Travancore to pass the school final exam.

Cochin. The government appointed the first-degree holder from the fishing community in Cochin, P Krishnan as the head of this project.¹²⁸ They started fisheries elementary schools and included English and fisheries subjects in the syllabus. They also established a fish curing yard under Diwan and appointed a fisheries inspector under them. V Govindan helped and gave the necessary advice for this project. They also made necessary arrangements for students from Cochin to study at the fisheries training institute of Kozhikode.¹²⁹ Fisheries schools in Kochi started in 1932 and they were in Ida Kochi, Valarpadam, Njarakkal, Chennamangalam, and Eriyad. Eight teachers who completed training from fisheries training schools were appointed as teachers in their schools. Later three schools were upgraded to upper primary and later to high school.¹³⁰

A point that has to be noted here is that he did not limit his activities to his community members alone. He was actively working for the upliftment of all other marginalized. He worked not only for his community but also for the people of other depressed communities. He mainly worked for the Pulaya community. He established Kochi Pulayar Maha Sabha in 1913 with the help of other Pulaya leaders, especially Krishnadi Asan, as he wanted the emancipation of other communities too. He wanted to attain it through his works.

Karuppan was a poet, and Jathi Kummi is his famous revolutionary poem. In this poem, he raises his voice against the caste system and condemnation of the evils of untouchability.¹³¹ When Sri Narayana Guru, Kumaranasan, and Ayyankali raised their voice against false traditions in Travancore, Karuppan raised his voice against false traditions in Kochi.

2.14 Social Services and Reforms among Fisherfolks in Malabar

The fishing community was unable to achieve the lowest minimum standard of living. An improvement in the socioeconomic status of any community is possible

¹²⁸ Pooyapilli Thankappan, p.44.

¹²⁹ K. K. Velayudhan, *Pandit Karuppan Ormakaliloode*, (Mal), Kottayam: Granthakartha, 1983, p.86.

¹³⁰ K. K. Velayudhan, pp.87-88.

¹³¹ Gopinath Panangad, p.17.

with easy access and proper utilization of educational reforms. The educational development in the coastal area had not reached the fishing community. As a result, they suffered from poverty and social deprivation, a condition that characterized their circumstances in the early decades of the 20th century.

They were exploited both by colonial powers and local elites. It was against this backdrop that it has already been seen that fisherfolks in Malabar were suffering from a lot of socio-economic problems at the beginning of the 20th century. The emancipatory and reformatory programmes were envisaged among the fishing communities of Malabar. To improve the socio-economic status of the downtrodden fishermen community it was highly imperative to uplift the knowledge acquisition setup and to provide free access to education. Education was an important tool used by the protagonists of reformatory practices. Early, decades of the twentieth century saw the establishment of many vocational training centers and schools in Kerala. There were also attempts on the part of the Malabar district Government and some people like V Govindan to launch educational institutions to facilitate the fishing community with modern education. It was at this time fishing as an industry began to take shape. The social reforms occurred among them and social services done by the people like Valiya Veettil Govindan and Koodakkal Chandran Vaidyar have to be understood in this context.

2.14.1 Role of Valiya Veettil Govindan

During the early twentieth century under British rule, the fishermen's community of Malabar suffered a lot. There were no plans for the developmental affairs of the community, especially in the field of education. A prominent figure from the Malabar fisherfolk community, V Govindan played a significant role in uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the poor and marginalized fisherfolks. His contributions, particularly in the field of education, were highly appreciable. He further empowered them through technical and vocational training, enabling them to achieve progress and social mobility.

The preliminary efforts for the welfare of the fishermen community began in 1904 with the efforts of Sir F A Nicholson, a retired Indian Civil Servant. He was

appointed by the Madras Government to study the possibilities in the fishing industry. In 1907, based on his studies he founded the Madras Fisheries Bureau. Sir. F A Nicholson's efforts were not just for the progress of the fisheries industry but also for the socio-economic welfare of the labourers of the fishing community. This made him to appoint Valiyaveetil Govindhan, the then personal assistant of the superintendent of the Madras Museum as his own assistant.

Valiya Veetil Govindan was born and brought up in the Araya community of Malabar, and he knew all the limitations of this community. He was the first person from the educationally and economically disadvantaged fishing community to earn a degree. Recognizing the illiteracy and disadvantages faced by the fishing community, V Govindan championed the implementation of fisheries education. He aimed to uplift the community by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their lives. It was at this time fishing as an industry began to take shape. In 1909, he acted as superintendent of pearl and chank fisheries while the regular superintendent was on leave.

V Govindan being himself from the fishing community and possessing knowledge and interest in fisheries sciences along with intelligence, impressed the fisheries department enough to be deputed for higher studies. During 1912-1913 he visited foreign countries like Germany and Norway to learn more about the fishing industry. He also assisted in starting the Cannanore Experiment station and conducted research on the commercial aspects of fishery work. In 1920, his designation was changed to Assistant Director of Fisheries (Coast). This role focuses on activities related to fish after it is caught, such as curing, processing into oil and fertilizer, and marketing. It also involves working with fishermen to improve their socio-economic conditions and education. V. Govindan assumes responsibility for the experimental fish-curing yard at Tanur, cooperative societies, educational, temperance, and other social and economic initiatives, fish oil and guano operations including supplying fish oil to the Board of Munitions, fish-curing yards, and inshore fishing experiments at Madras.

He convinced Sir F A Nicholson that the problems faced by the fishermen going to sea were even more important to deal with than the progress in the fishing industry. He proposed that it is necessary to free the fishermen's community from illiteracy, debt, and alcoholism to progress in their socio-economic status for which the need for education had to be given the foremost preference. V Govindan had also worked for alcohol prohibition. His message was that alcohol is poison. Also, he was of the opinion that it destroys the physical and mental health of people and brings poverty to families. To spread this idea, he implemented different Temperance societies on the western coast. Many programmes were organised to make the public understand the harmful use of alcohol.

V Govindan's contributions were also very remarkable to lead this society into bright prospects.¹³² Taking up the proposal put forward by him, the Madras Government ordered to start of eight Fisheries Schools in the coastal belt of Malabar. During this time, he travelled along the Malabar coastal area as a proponent of education going to the masses to spread the message of the need to be educated to bring about progress in their living standards. He could convince local people interested in education to organize themselves and deputed representatives from within the community as honorary managers. He was successful in acquiring land and could establish schools for the fishing community on the coast of Malabar.

There were also attempts on the part of the Malabar district Government and people like V Govindan to launch educational institutions to facilitate the fishing community with economic status for which the need for education had to be given the foremost preference. At his instigation, night schools were founded in the locales inhabited by fishermen. It was later known as adult education and informal education.

¹³² K.K. Ramesan, 'Mathrubhoomikkum Manava Purogathikkum Vendi Matsyameghalayil Ninnun Uyaranna Velli Nakshathrangal', in P. Kesavan Nair, (ed.), *Matsyafed Jubilee Souvenir*, Kochi, (Mal) pp.56-60.

V Govindan died on 8th April 1931. Social reformer and poet K P Karuppan wrote a *Vilapakavayam* for Govindan.¹³³ A committee was formed in remembrance of Govindan. As part of this, a souvenir was published. Later Valiya Veettil Govindan Memorial Committee was registered as Lal Bahadur Valiya Veettil Govindan *smaraka samajam*. This *samajam* worked for the development of the fisherfolk community by giving endowment prizes to brilliant students. The committee also provided professional courses and prize money for Arts and science students. Fisheries Higher Secondary School in Kaipamangalam was renamed V Govindan Monument Fisheries Higher Secondary School.¹³⁴

2.14.2 Role of Koodakkal Chandran Vydier

Koodakkal Chandran Vydier was a prominent figure from the fisherfolks in Malabar. He has played significant roles in the socio-economic upliftment of the poor and the marginalized fisherfolks, especially in the Mogaya community in north Malabar. He advocated the fisheries schools in the fisherfolk community. He submitted various petitions to the colonial government for the welfare of this community. His contributions to the community in the field of education and other welfare projects were highly appreciable. He also supported them with technical and vocational education that enabled them to achieve progress and social mobility.

Chandran Vydier was born in Chombala in the Malabar district. He belonged to the Mogaya fishing community. He realized the backward conditions of his community and tried to make it better. When he understood that one of the major reasons for the backward condition of his community was illiteracy, he requested the higher authorities to start schools in the coastal areas for children from the fishing community. At this time, he was a member and president of the Madapally Fisheries Cooperative Society. The Fisheries Cooperative Society started in 1917. He was a member of this cooperative society from 1917-1937 and he was the president till 1930.¹³⁵ He understood the importance of people in his society and he worked for

¹³³ *Rao bahadur V. V. Govindan, Oru Laghu Jeevacharithram*, Kaipamangalam Smaraka Samaj, Trissur: Royal Kalamuri, 2010, (Mal), p.7.

¹³⁴ *Rao Bahadur V V Govindan Oru Laghu Jeevacharithram*, p.11.

¹³⁵ G O NO.165 dated 4/2/1936, D D, R A K.

the betterment of his community. He understood that wages were important for the development of his society, and this could be only attained through education. He also found alcohol addiction among the people of this society and he tried to persuade people to stop consuming alcohol. He made the people understand that government jobs can only be attained through education and this they can have a permanent wage.

As the development of society can only be attained through permanent jobs for people, he demanded scheduled caste reservations for his community. He submitted several memorandums to the British government to attain this. He also gave a memorandum to recruit people from the Mogaya community into government departments such as salt, excise, etc. After several attempts, the British government gave a reply to their memorandum.

2.14.3 Role of Community Associations

For the development of the fishing community, many Sabhas and Samajams were formed within different communities in different areas. These organizations worked for the development of their community. Recognizing the problems in society and religion, they formed groups to raise public awareness. Their goal was to gradually eliminate these issues through a growing sense of social responsibility.¹³⁶ Their needs were voiced in Sabhas and their demands were taken to higher authorities by the Sabhas', for example, Sri. Kurumba Bhagavathi Araya Samajam and Mahila Samajam of Adakathabail in Kasaragode.¹³⁷ The fishermen of Muvajana Samaj, Bekal, and Kottikulam have petitioned to take over the board school by the fisheries department.¹³⁸

The Temperance Society at Mangalore and its branches identified work sites for constructing village halls in Malpe and Kaup and these sites had been granted by the collector of south Kanara. Nearly Rs. 3000 have been collected by the fisher folk

¹³⁶ S.P. Sen, (ed.), *Social and Religious Reform Movement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1979, p.347.

¹³⁷ G O NO.3171 dated 14/6/1949, D D, R A K.

¹³⁸ G O NO.893 dated 1/4/1938, D D, R A K.

themselves for the construction of the buildings.¹³⁹ The fisherfolk at Kizhur in south Kanara constructed a building in which their meetings were held and the fisheries elementary school functioned. In Madras, support was offered to both a local temperance group in Nadukuppam to improve their operations and the Araya Young Men's Association of Rayapuram for their reading room initiative.¹⁴⁰

The Araya Seva Samithi is a social organization for the Araya caste, the dominant fishing community in Puthenthura village, South Kerala. It functions similarly to a church in nearby Christian villages, resolving disputes, overseeing marriages, and organizing social events. Membership is mandatory for all Araya households.¹⁴¹

Araya Jana Social Service League was formed for the welfare of the fishing community. This organization worked against the discrimination faced by the fisherfolk community. V Govindan was a secretary of the Araya Jana Social Service League in Cannanore. The Social Service League raised its voice for the fisherfolks and stood for them. It has made several demands before the government for the community. Araya Jana Social League had made several efforts to protect the existing fisheries schools and recommended establishing new schools as well.

The resolution from the community requested the government to fill a vacancy on the Fisheries Training Institute selection committee with someone from their group.¹⁴² They specifically suggested A Achuthan, a well-respected and educated member of the Araya fishermen community.¹⁴³ The Assistant Director of Fisheries confirmed Mr. Achuthan's qualifications, noting his employment at

¹³⁹ *Fisheries Bulletin vol. XIII*, p.6.

¹⁴⁰ *Fisheries Bulletin vol. XIII*, p.6.

¹⁴¹ Leela Gulati, 'Fishing, Technology, and Women', Part I, Working paper no.155, *Centre for Development Studies*, Trivandrum, 1983, pp.93-94.

¹⁴² He forwarded a resolution passed in the committee meeting of the League held at Calicut on 24th June 1928 (G O NO.1374 dated 17/8/1928, D D, R A K) to appoint a member of the Araya community (fishermen of Malabar) for the vacancy in the Fisheries Training Institute selection committee. To request that you will be as good as to obtain the sanction of the government for the appointment of A V Achuthan, as a member of the selection committee appointed (G O NO.1014 dated 15/7/1926, D D, R A K) in the vacancy caused by the demise of Mr. Ry. Rao sahib P.V Gopalan (G O NO.1374).

¹⁴³ G O NO.1014.

Messrs. Pierce Leslie and company and his lack of involvement in any factions within the community. Because he fit the suggested profile, Mr. Achuthan was appointed to the committee.¹⁴⁴

Other Religious Sabhas

The organization of the Muslim community was involved in ameliorating the existing condition of the Muslim fisherfolk. The reformation movement was started by the leaders like Sana Ullah Makti Thangal, Chalilakath Kunhammad Haji, Hamadani Shaikh, Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi, and the organization like Himayathu Islam Sabha, Maunathul Islam Sabha, etc. apart from these periodicals and dailies like salah al Ikhwan, Rafeequal Islam, Swadeshahimani, Al-Muslim, etc also helped the reformation of Muslim community. These reforms focused primarily on the customs and beliefs of Muslims, their secular and religious education, the religion-based cultural development of Muslims, their economic progress, and addressing the challenges faced by Muslims in Malabar due to the rebellion and changing political landscape.¹⁴⁵

The Mannathul Islam Sabha at Ponnani started under the auspices of the Jarathingal Thangal and the Mahadoom Thangal. It was the well-known theological college of Ponnani, where religious instruction is given gratuitously to converts and renders material assistance to those under instruction.¹⁴⁶ Two colleges were opened for the education of new converts, one for boys and the other for girls.¹⁴⁷ The majority of the people who converted to Islam were from the coastal area. They were known as Pu-Islam. Arbitration through these branch associations has helped resolve many domestic disputes, such as divorce and partition cases.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ G O NO.1374.

¹⁴⁵ N.V. Kabeer, 'Kerala Muslimugal, Prastanangal, Sangadangal', (Mal.) Kerala Muslims, movement and organs, Farooke College Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1995, p.97.

¹⁴⁶ J. Charteres Molony, *Census of India-1911*, Vol. XII, part I, Madras: Government Press, 1912, p.54.

¹⁴⁷ Edward Thurston, *Caste and tribes of South India*, Vol. IV, Madras: Government Press 1909, p.482.

¹⁴⁸ Edward Thurston, p.482.

Primary education institutions were opened in many places, and with the waves of the Aligarh movement reaching Kerala, a new enthusiasm was seen in the functioning of the educational sector. As a result, in 1925 Manarul Islam Sabha (the light of Islam) was formed on the ground in front of the Makham of Cheruseethi Thangal. The first endeavor in this direction was the establishment of a primary education school for girls.¹⁴⁹

Many different organizations worked for the empowerment of the fishing community. One of the major organizations that worked for the fishing community was Manarul Islam Sabha. Children of the fishing community who studied in schools under this organization were given midday meals. The Sabha provides meals and materials to the pupils 200 pupils who benefitted from the Sabha are fisher folk. But Sabha was hard hit by financial difficulties owing to multifarious expenditures. As for the fishermen folk, they were gloomy under acute stress and they were not in a position for education.¹⁵⁰ The Budget for this was asked from the British Government.

The Manuaral Islam Sabha Badagara in Malabar district was granted Rs. 1952-8-0 (Rupees one thousand nine hundred and fifty-two and annas 8 only) for the expenditure towards providing midday meals to 142 fisher children in schools managed by it. The meals were provided at the rate of one anna per head per day for all 220 working days in a school year during the academic year 1946-47.¹⁵¹ It also sanctioned the supply of a free mid-day meal to the children attending the fisheries schools on the east-west coast, St. Peter's Church School, Chalil, and St. Xavier's ensure Tuticorin for all the working days in a school year in 1946-47.¹⁵²

A Christian school in Thayil, Cannanore, run by the St. Peter Higher Elementary School management, provided education to the local Christian fishing (Kollakar) community's children. This institution imparted free primary education to

¹⁴⁹ T. V. Abdurhiman Kutty, *Mashhroor Mullakoya Thangal and History of Vadakara*, Vadakara, 2016, p.125.

¹⁵⁰ G.O NO.1963 dated 16/5/1946 D D, R A K.

¹⁵¹ G.O NO.1963.

¹⁵² G.O NO.1963.

all irrespective of caste and fees are charged at the rate of 8 *annas*, 14 *annas*, Rs,1-4-0, and Rs.1-8-0 respectively for classes from V to VIII. Adi Dravida is exempt from fees and fisher children are charged a half fee only.¹⁵³ The school management, recognizing the financial constraints of these families, has been supplying students with clothes and books to encourage enrollment.

To further support these students, the school manager petitioned the government for a grant to provide free mid-day meals. The petition specifically requested the government to sanction free meals at a cost of nine pies per child per day for the 82 children from the fisher community attending the school, commencing on 15th December 1946, and continuing until the conclusion of the academic year.¹⁵⁴ The government sanctioned the supply of free mid-day meals to the fisher children attending these schools.¹⁵⁵

2.15 Various Demands of Mogaya Community

To address their multifaceted problems, the Mogaya community submitted several memorandums to the Government.

The demands made by the community through various memorandums can be classified as follows: -

The Memorial Submitted by the Mogaya Community

The memorialists pleaded for the establishment of special schools for Mogaya children in major community centers and the reservation of scholarships for deserving and impoverished Mogaya pupils. Additionally, they requested that similar to other minority groups, qualified Mogaya individuals be exempted from exam requirements for certain government jobs like fisheries, salt, customs, and police, and be granted suitable positions based on their merits.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ G O NO.2544 dated 13/10/1939, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁴ Letter No.9216.H5/46 dated 12th December 1946 from the Director of Industries & Commerce to the Additional Secretary to Government, Development Department, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁵ G O NO.386 dated 03/03/1947, E & P H, R A K.

¹⁵⁶ G O NO.2029.

Some of the demands related to education were as follows: -¹⁵⁷

1. Five special scholarships should be awarded for the benefit of five poor students in their community.
2. Schools should be opened in all school-less centers for the exclusive benefit of their community.
3. Madapally Fisheries Higher Elementary School should be converted into a high school.

Further, while scholarships were lavishly conferred upon the other depressed classes for education, the memorialist community was sadly overlooked, as in the history of their community, only a single scholarship had been given to a student for two years.¹⁵⁸

Demand for Fish Curing Yard

Related to their profession, they had repeatedly demanded fish curing yards from the government. In response to repeated prayers from several memorialists who reside in the Kurumbranad Taluk, the authorities sanctioned the establishment of a fish curing yard in Muthangal Amsom, Madapalli desam, but for reasons which are unknown to the Memorialists, the Fisheries Department did not open the yard.¹⁵⁹

Demand for Housing Facilities

Memorialists also demanded to take steps, as is being done on behalf of *Panchamas*¹⁶⁰ in Tanjore and elsewhere, to provide poor and deserving Mogaya with house sites in localities suited for the pursuit of their callings, so as to save them from the woes and hardships they may have to endure from the landed classes.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ G O NO.857.

¹⁵⁸ G O NO.857.

¹⁵⁹ G O NO.2029.

¹⁶⁰ Panchama, literally meaning “fifth one,” can refer to a specific community in southern India or a broader category encompassing several low-caste groups. This broader category is also sometimes called Harijan.

¹⁶¹ G O NO.2029.

Demands Related to Job and Profession

Some of the demands in this regard from the memorandum are as follows: -¹⁶²

Those members of the community, who have had the good fortune to equip themselves with some English education may be exempted from the examination rules and appointed to posts in the revenue, registration, police, postal, salt, excise, fisheries, co-operative, judicial and other departments of the government.

Members who are already in the service may, in consideration of the backward condition of the community, be given promotions.

A member of their community be nominated either to any of the taluk Boards or the Malabar District Board and in future councils, constituted according to the new bill, if nominations are abolished, special seats may be reserved for their community.

A representative from the community should be appointed to the committee responsible for selecting candidates for the fisheries training institute, in Calicut.

Members of the community should be appointed to honorary positions as magistrates and awarded other honorary titles.

Demand for Temperance Hall

They request the government to establish a Jnanodaya temperance hall, similar to the one in Mangalore, in a central location within a Mogaya-majority community in Malabar, this facility would serve the social needs of the Mogaya community.¹⁶³

2.15.1 Memorandum Submitted by Chandran Vaidyar

The following are some of the demands made by Chandran Vaidyar through his Memorandum: -

¹⁶² G O NO.857.

¹⁶³ G O NO.857.

Demand for a Governmental Study on Material Status and Condition of the Community

Chandran Vaidyar, in his petition, requested the government to conduct a special investigation into the social and economic conditions of his community. He believed this inquiry was necessary to identify additional measures that the government could take to improve the lives of his people.¹⁶⁴

Demand Related to the Representation in Public Bodies

The petitioners argued that official statistics clearly show that, unlike other communities in the district, theirs has no representation in local governing bodies. They felt excluded from public institutions that benefit both the general public and individual communities.¹⁶⁵

The petitioners were aware of a new bill before the Madras Legislative Council that would eliminate appointments to local governing bodies. They requested that if this bill passes, at least one seat on the Malabar District Board and one seat on each of the new local boards in Malabar be reserved for their community.¹⁶⁶

Another Memorandum of Representations by K. Chadran Vaidyar, leader of the deputation, dated 26th August 1933 on behalf of the Mogaya in Malabar.¹⁶⁷ The Mogaya, though fishermen, are a distinct community from Mukkuvas, numbering only about 7,000. They have memorialized the government from time to time regarding their grievances. As a very backward community suffering from great disabilities, they have been unable to make social, educational, and political progress.

¹⁶⁴ File No.319/20 Memorandum from K Chandran Vydier and 131 others, dated 25th April 1920 to the Labour Commissioner, Madras, R(Special) D, R A K.

¹⁶⁵ File No.319/20.

¹⁶⁶ Memorandum No.B.5254/29 dated 15th October 1929 from the Koodakkal Chandran Vydier and 294 others through the Labor commissioner Madras to the Excellency-in-Council Fort St. George, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁶⁷ G O NO.989.

The government should extend special help to this helpless community. Qualified individuals from the community should be appointed to government positions. Special investigations should be undertaken to ameliorate their social, political, and economic circumstances.¹⁶⁸

Demands Related to Education

Some of the major demands of the community focused on education. Such demands they made were related to admission to schools, scholarships, financial assistance to the students, and the establishment of new schools including night schools and fisheries schools, among others. Though in a few places like Korapuzha and Madapalli, the Mogaya community members had enjoyed the benefit of free elementary education through the fishery schools established by the government, very few members of the community had completed the high school course. The high cost of secondary education stood as an impassable barrier. The educationally backward Mappila community was given free high school education by the government. They requested that the same concession be extended to them. The representatives of the Mogaya community in Malabar made several requests in their address to the minister.¹⁶⁹

Demands to Address Issues Related to Auctioning Rights

It has already been mentioned that The Revenue Department in 1935 decided to stop free fishing and to start auctioning leading to the forceful retreat of the poor fisherfolk from fishing due to the lack of money.

The fisher folk living on the banks of the Korapuzha River had been enjoying free fishing for several decades. The introduction of a system of licensing the fishing rights in the Korapuzha River in the Malabar district in the place of sale of fishing by auction. The auctioning of the fishing rights in this river was ordered by the collector of Malabar for the first time in 1935. On a representation made by the

¹⁶⁸ Memorandum No.21672/33 from K Chandran Vydiar dated 26th August 1933, to the A Y G Campbell, Revenue member, the government of Madras, R A K.

¹⁶⁹ U O NO.163 IV/36 dated 8th July 1936 from Representative of Mokaya community in Malabar to the honorable minister P. T. Rajan, R A K.

Araya Jana Social League, it was suggested that to prevent monopoly the system of licensing the right of fishing might be tried without entailing any loss. The department investigated the possibility of allowing these fishermen to fish in this river through a system of licenses.¹⁷⁰

The fishermen residing at Korapuzha submitted a memorial to the government on 7th May 1939 praying for the introduction of the system of license in the Korapuzha river for stake net fishing in lieu of the sale of the right of fishing in auction by the Revenue Department.¹⁷¹ The government accepted the recommendation of the Board of Revenue that the system of licenses for fishing with stake nets in the Korapuzha River, Malabar district, be continued in the future.¹⁷² The new rules for fishing with stake nets in the river, Korapuzha, under a system of licenses were brought into force from 1st April 1941. 119 licenses of Rs.4/- each were issued and a sum of Rupees 476/- was realized as license fees.

2.15.2 Government Response to the Demands of Mogaya

The response of the Government to the requests and the demands made by the Mogaya fishermen were dealt with seriation in the Director's letter. They are as follows: -

The claim that the Mappila community gets free high school education from the government is not accurate. This benefit likely refers to a request made by the Kerala Muslim Conference; this was not a specific programme for the Mappila community.¹⁷³

- a. Special schools and scholarships: There were already two village schools at Madapally and Upoor.¹⁷⁴ Apart from this, the Director stated that more would be opened in due course.¹⁷⁵ As regards scholarships,¹⁷⁶ he stated that

¹⁷⁰ G.O NO.690 dated 10/5/1926 D D, R A K.

¹⁷¹ G O NO.426.

¹⁷² G O NO.772 dated 7/4/1942, D D, R A K.

¹⁷³ G.O NO.1882 dated 3/9/1936 Education Department, R A K.

¹⁷⁴ G O NO. 1561 dated 27/8/1920, (Mis), R(special) D, R A K.

¹⁷⁵ G O NO.1562 dated 27/8/1920, R(special) D, R A K.

the Fisheries Department would make the necessary recommendation for the grant of scholarships for fisher boys studying in higher elementary or secondary schools if the occasion arose.

- b. Exemption from examination rules and employment in public service: - Other fishing communities are not given exemption from examination rules. The Promotion should go by merit, subject to this condition due consideration will be paid to an adequate representation of the communities in the services.
- c. Appointment as Hon. Magistrates and members of local government Boards, a selection committee of the fisheries training institute: The government rejected their proposal to exempt their community members from the government service admission rules.
- d. The proposal suggests nominating four fishermen to local government boards, with one slot potentially reserved for a Mogaya fisherman. However, priority would be given to other fishing communities in this order: Araya, Moonillakkar, and Pudu Islam. A rotating system might ensure Mogaya representation eventually.¹⁷⁷ The community is not sufficiently numerous to justify representation on the selection committee of the fisheries training institute. Mogaya candidates however have always received special consideration.
- e. Provision of house sites: the matter was considered when the Director submitted detailed proposals.
- f. Opening of a village hall: The government did not consider that there was a necessity for the construction of a separate temperance hall. The Mogaya community was asked to use Madapalli school premises for holding meetings to discuss questions of social importance.

¹⁷⁶ F. A. Nicholson's letter No.183 dated 8th November 1918& G O NO. 406 dated 6/3/1919, D D, R A K.

¹⁷⁷ Endorsement No.D.Dis.2759-C/29 dated 31/1/1930, from The Director of Fisheries to the Secretary to Government, D D, R A K.

g. General inquiry about the material status and conditions of the Mogaya: The Director's view in this regard was that no further inquiry into the moral and material condition of the community was likely to be accepted.¹⁷⁸

The requests of the memorialists were considered. Their memorial was recorded as no immediate action was considered necessary. Given their reminder, it was for orders whether the memorialists should be informed that their request had been noted and that they received due consideration for orders.¹⁷⁹

Koodakkal Chandran Vydier and 394 other fishermen submitted a petition (memorial) to the government council on April 25th, 1920, through the Labour Commissioner in Madras. An investigation by the Fisheries Department confirmed the truth of the fishermen's claims,¹⁸⁰ and they were assured by the Director of Fisheries that both he and the Assistant Director for the Malabar Coast would consider their case.¹⁸¹ Although the government built a fish curing yard in Madapally and a handful of cooperatives in Malabar in response to the fishermen's memorial, these measures failed to significantly improve the community's overall well-being. While two schools were opened in Korapuzha and Madapally, the localities where some fishermen resided, there was no further effort to expand educational opportunities in other areas inhabited by the community.¹⁸²

The fishermen had almost no representation in government jobs, unlike other disadvantaged communities. The only exceptions were two positions. A member of their community was nominated to the Kurumbranad Taluk Board, and through his exertions, they were able to secure some benefits, which were an encouragement to their progress, but, with the amalgamation of the taluk boards of Calicut and Kurumbranad in 1925, he was deprived of his seat.¹⁸³ Memorialists approached the government for the re-nomination of a member of their community

¹⁷⁸ G O NO.2029.

¹⁷⁹ G O NO.2029.

¹⁸⁰ Memo No. D. Dis 840 dated 1st August 1920.

¹⁸¹ Memorandum No.B.5254/29.

¹⁸² Memorandum No.B.5254/29.

¹⁸³ Memorandum No.B.5254/29.

on the taluk board, and they were informed that their petition had been forwarded to the President of the Malabar District Board.

The secretary to the government, Public Department, made the following comments on the requests made by the memorialists.

1. Examination rules apply equally to all fishing communities. There is no basis for granting special privileges to the Mogaya.
2. Promotion should go by merit, subject to this condition due consideration will be paid to an adequate representation of the communities in the services;
3. The higher elementary school at Madapalli could serve as a community center.
4. The community is not sufficiently numerous to justify representation on the selection committee of the fisheries training institute. Mogaya candidates however have always received special consideration.
5. This is a matter for the Education Department The request may be granted.
6. The Madapalli Fisheries Higher Elementary School is sufficiently popular to justify its conversion into a high school.

The same conditions applied to the appointments. The memorialists were informed that the government was unable to grant their request that members of their community should be exempted from the rules governing admission to government service.¹⁸⁴

The fishermen's caste was included in the list of backward classes appended to the Madras Educational Rules and poor pupils belonging to the community needed to pay only half-fee. The government instituted special scholarships only for Muhammadans and depressed classes. They have consistently refused to earmark special scholarships for other communities mentioned in the list of backward

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum No.286-1 dated 10th March 1930, from the Chief Secretary to Government to Chandran Vydier and others, fishermen, Chombala, Malabar, P D, R A K.

classes. In the award of these scholarships' preference was given to Adi Dravidas, Adi Adhras, Muhammadans, Oriyas, and members of backward classes.¹⁸⁵

Though separate elementary schools were established for the depressed classes the policy of the government was that separate secondary schools for those classes should not be established but that pupils belong to the depressed classes. The proposal that the fisheries elementary school should be converted into a secondary school was not accepted. The government did not consider that there was a necessity for the construction of a separate temperance hall. The Mogaya community was asked to use Madapalli school premises for holding meetings to discuss questions of social importance. Nomination to the committee constituted for the selection of students in the fisheries in a fisheries training institute.¹⁸⁶

The government was unable to accede to the request opening of schools. The Director of Fisheries was requested to consider the suitability of the villages in which the Mogaya community lives in large numbers for opening schools. When proposals for new schools are submitted to the government. Raising the Madapalli fisheries higher elementary school into a high school. The government was unable to comply with the request orders issued separately on the requests relating to the exemption from examination rules and to the appointment of members of the community as honorary registration. The Director of Fisheries was requested to inform the petitioners of the orders.¹⁸⁷

2.16 Importance of Special Schools

Fisherfolk parents, concerned about their children facing unequal treatment in regular schools due to historical tensions with the Thiyyas, opted for special schools. Reports highlighted objections from these parents regarding the Kannankulam school, a government-aided institution. This resistance stemmed from the school administration's alleged history of differential treatment towards fisher children. Poverty further compounded the issue. Unlike regular schools, special

¹⁸⁵ G O NO.857.

¹⁸⁶ G O NO.857.

¹⁸⁷ G O NO.857.

fisheries schools offered not only financial support for learning materials like books and slates but also specialized fishery science education by qualified instructors.¹⁸⁸

A memorandum¹⁸⁹ was issued by the District Education Officer in connection with the objection of the Deputy Inspector of Schools at Badagara to the admission of certain fishermen children who left a neighbouring aided school and joined the fisheries school at Madapalli. In this instance, the District Education Officer held that fisher children should be permitted to join special schools intended for them if the parents particularly desire to get them educated in such schools.¹⁹⁰ The district Education Officer overruled the Deputy Inspector's objection to fisher children transferring from a regular school to a fisheries school. This decision reinforces the right of fisherfolk parents to choose the educational path they believe is best for their children.

2.17 Conclusion

The fisherfolk community in early 20th century Malabar endured severe marginalization due to the caste system and limited educational opportunities. This led to social and economic hardships, restricting their social mobility and perpetuating poverty. Despite these challenges, the fisherfolk community played a significant role in shaping colonial modernity, social reform, and industrialization processes. They actively participated in movements for social equality and justice, demanding reforms and advocating for their rights.

Individuals like Chandran Vydier, V. Govindan, emerged as leaders from within the community, addressing their specific concerns and needs. However, the community also faced internal constraints. A powerful traditional community court held sway over the Mukkuva community. While maintaining order, its strong interventions sometimes stifled the community's progress.

¹⁸⁸ G O NO.1752 dated 9/8/1943, D D, R A K.

¹⁸⁹ R C NO.84/40 dated 7/9/1940, D D, R A K.

¹⁹⁰ G O NO.1752.

CHAPTER III

MODERNIZATION OF LIVELIHOODS AND COLONIAL FISHERIES PROGRAMMES IN MALABAR

3.1 Introduction

The traditional economic system of Malabar underwent a major transformation under colonial rule. This shift happened gradually, and by the early 20th century, colonial institutions were actively seeking ways to solidify their grip on India's economy. The introduction of Western education played a key role in this transformation. It spurred the development of new industries in the region, and this, in turn, led to the emergence of a native middle class.

The colonial governing implemented various programmes promising mutual benefit for both the government and the fishers. These programmes included the introduction of modern fishing technologies and the establishment of cooperative societies. Envisioned as a comprehensive solution, these societies aimed to improve every aspect of the fishing community's life. From acquiring loans and infrastructure development to marketing catches and offering social programmes, these cooperatives strived to make fishing a more sustainable and prosperous livelihood.

Chapter Design

This chapter delves into various programmes implemented by the Colonial Fisheries Department. While initiated by the British government, these schemes aimed to achieve a dual purpose: improving the lives of fishermen and introducing modern fishing technologies. The chapter analyzes the cooperative movement established in Malabar, encompassing its structure and function. Additionally, it explores various aspects of the colonial fishing industry, including salt production, research and experimental stations, fish processing facilities, shark oil factories, and marketing initiatives. Finally, the chapter examines the socio-economic conditions

of fishing communities and attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the cooperative sector within the fisheries industry.

3.2 Historic Evolution of the Fishing and Fishing Industry

Fishing was one of the oldest and most natural vocations of humans. Most people living in the coastal areas go to the sea in search of food, since three-fourths of the earth's surface is covered by oceans. Prehistoric fisherfolk were the first to initiate research in fishery development. Paleolithic man was probably more vegetarian than carnivorous originally. They took to hunting and fishing when they began to make tools. Neanderthal (*Homo neanderthalensis*) man hunted for food. Their drawing of fish still survives. Their fishing implements include spears, gorges, etc. The Neolithic man, the lake dwellers of Switzerland, etc., were acquainted with harpoons, hooks¹, nets, boats, and navigation in the Stone Age evolution of fishing. In Europe, fish farming was first practiced by the Romans. The fish which are caught in the British seas may be divided into two classes: bottom fish and floating fish.²

According to some authorities, the Stone Age population of India was more found in the coastal belts than in the interior. Fish is mentioned only once in Rigveda, the net is mentioned in the Atharvaveda, and the hook in the Yajurveda. The early importance of fishing among the Dravidians can be seen in districts of south India.³ An ancient Malayalam treatise '*Valavisu Puranam*' contains several references to the prevalent fishing techniques.⁴

Fishing provides a livelihood for a significant number of people, both directly involved in fish capture and associated industries. It also serves as a means to cultivate skills for overseas trade and maritime prowess, a tradition dating back to ancient times. The principle of free sea usage by all individuals was established in the Roman Empire at the onset of the 2nd century, although it wasn't formally

¹ Cholmondeley Pennell, H., *Fishing*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1889, p.3.

² Spencer Walpole, *The British fish trade*, Vol. I, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1884, p.12.

³ G O NO.790 dated 1/5/1929, D D, R A K.

⁴ T.K. Velu Pillai, *Travancore State Manual*, Vol III, Government of Travancore, 1940, p.433.

codified until the 6th century.⁵ Cities like Tyre, Sidon, Athens, Carthage, Venice, Holland, England, and Japan have historical associations with fishing.⁶

The fishing industry is vital to the economies of Norway, Japan, and Newfoundland. However, Norway takes a unique approach. Unlike other countries that focus on adopting entirely new methods, Norway prioritizes refining and improving its existing fishing techniques. This strategy is fuelled by extensive research and programmes that help fishers leverage the full potential of new inventions. The Norwegian Department of Fisheries, under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Fisheries, plays a key role in ensuring the continued success of this vital industry.⁷

India boasts a long-standing fishing tradition dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization. These ancient people were skilled fisherfolk who employed a variety of techniques, including nets, hooks, and traps. Fishing continued to be a vital economic activity throughout the medieval period and into the Mughal era. Today, India's fishing industry has undergone substantial transformation. Due to their rich resources, coastal zones have been heavily exploited for centuries.

Historically, the primary fishing techniques included poisoning (now banned), spearing, shooting, angling, and netting. Fishing with projectiles, like arrows, was a common practice among ancient cultures, including India. In contemporary times, this method was primarily used for whale hunting. Early fishing involved manually hurled harpoons, sometimes aided by bows. Modern commercial fishing commonly utilizes methods such as handlining, longlining, and night fishing.⁸ Netting has been the most widely used fishing method since ancient times. There are five primary types of nets:

1. Drift nets: These nets are carried by wind and current. They are nearly invisible underwater and are commonly used for fishing.

⁵ Persey Thomas Fenn, *Origin of the Right of Fishery in Territorial waters*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926, p.3.

⁶ G O NO.790.

⁷ *Madras Fisheries Bulletin* vol XIV p.4.

⁸ G O NO.790.

2. Gill nets: These nets are anchored in place and catch fish by their gills. Trammel nets are a variation of this type.
3. Seine nets: These nets are pulled through the water to encircle and capture fish. They have a central bag-like part and two outstretched wings.
4. Trawl nets: These nets are also pulled through the water, but they are designed to catch bottom-dwelling fish. There are two main types: beam trawls, which use a wooden bar to keep the net open, and otter trawls, which use metal plates.
5. Pound nets: Nearshore areas often feature pound nets, which are a series of nets, anchored to the bottom at right angles to the coastline.⁹

Indians utilize a variety of traditional boats for fishing. These include the catamaran, canoe, and specific regional vessels like the Ratnagiri boat from the Tuticorin coast and the Masula boats from the East coast.

3.3 Fishing Industry

Sir F A Nicholson, credited with establishing the fisheries department in the Madras presidency in 1899, advocated for the development of this sector while serving on the Board of Revenue. The rich variety of fish found off the Madras presidency's coasts, with fishing villages boasting between 150 and 250 distinct species, underscores the potential of this industry.

There were numerous industries connected with the preservation of fish and the manufacture of by-products fish curing, fish canning, fish refrigeration, and the manufacture of oil, manure, and fish meal are the most important industries. The allied industries connected with fisheries were the manufacture of fishing craft and gear, the industries connected with the preservation transport, and marketing of fish, and the manufacture of the by-products.¹⁰ A very important branch of the fishing industry is concerned with the conversion of fish of little importance as fresh fish

⁹ G O NO.857.

¹⁰ G O NO.790.

into oil and fish meal. This is the cheapest source of oil known in the world. Fish oil is largely employed in tanning, candle and soap making, and the manufacture of margarine and artificial butter, paints, varnishes, and linoleums.¹¹

The process of refining crude oil is commercially profitable. Additionally, there was an experimental venture in Tanur to produce Turkey red oil. Fish oil is another product with market value. India exports a large portion of its fish oil to Japan and Germany, which then converted it into a variety of manufactured goods. These products are subsequently imported back to India for diverse applications such as steel hardening, jute processing, leather production, antibacterial soaps, lubrication, paints, greases, and even food and medicine.

A company in Mangalore produced Sardinol as a replacement for cod liver oil. While sardine liver oil was the initial product extracted, it was actually a starting point for a vast array of valuable resources. Beyond human consumption, sardines and their byproducts contribute significantly to the economy. These include products like oil, fertilizer, animal feed, pearls, coral, sponges, chemicals (iodine, potash), lime, mother-of-pearl, and even luxury items like ambergris and unique leathers (such as shark skin). Additionally, the industry provides medicinal products like insulin and supports recreational activities like sport fishing.¹²

In some instances, unskilled labourers (coolies) were employed to carry out tasks that were part of the training curriculum for pupil teachers. These tasks involved processing yarn, which was either destined for the urgent production of nets at the Fisheries Training Institute or for providing pre-made yarn to the elementary school for net making. Pupil teachers, although taught these skills, were unable to handle this workload due to the demands of their other studies. Therefore, the school could not produce yarn or nets on a commercial scale using student labour.¹³

¹¹ G O NO.790.

¹² G O NO.790.

¹³ G O NO.1288 dated 3/9/1925, D.D, R A K.

3.4 Areas of Industrial Activities and Industrial Stations

For centuries, coastal communities relied on salt production as a primary economic activity, harvesting it from the sea or processing saline deposits. This traditional practice was significantly impacted by the government's imposition of a salt tax in the year 1924.¹⁴

Ever since the introduction of the fish curing yard in the locality, the fisher folk who were engaged in curing and drying fish had been getting their supply of salt from the government at the rate of 10 annas per mound up to the end of March of the 1924 year. But since the commencement of April 1924, the value of salt doubled and it was sold to the memorialists at Rs.1-4-0 as per mound. This enhanced rate adversely affected the fisher community of the locality.¹⁵

The Governor of the Madras Presidency, having been unable to resolve the grievances of the ticket holders, directed the Director of Fisheries to inform them. Accordingly, the Director of Fisheries has conveyed the following to the ticket holders of the fish curing yards at Cannanore and Madayi¹⁶ in the north Malabar district: The government was unable to reduce the issue price of salt, which had been fixed at Rs. 1-4-0 per maund, in order to minimize the losses incurred by the group in the operation of the yards. The salt tax was a direct assault on the livelihoods of millions of Indians, particularly those in coastal areas and rural areas. When negotiations with the British failed to yield results, Mahatma Gandhi initiated the historic Salt March. The march was a powerful act of civil disobedience, aimed at breaking the salt monopoly and challenging the British Raj.¹⁷

A small fish liver oil production facility, intended for medical use, was maintained by the government in Calicut.¹⁸ An outdated system plagued the shark

¹⁴ G O NO.1032 dated 28/5/1924, D D, R A K.

¹⁵ Petition No. D.1379/II, dated 22nd April 1924, 198 From Ticket-holding fish curers of Cannanore submitted a petition to the Governor-in-Council of Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁶ Petition No. D.1529/ II, dated 12th May 1924, 38 From Ticket-holding fish curers of Madayi submitted a petition to the Governor-in-Council of Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁷ Ishita Banerjee-Dube, *A History of Modern India*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2019, p.330.

¹⁸ Francis Day, *The Fishes of Malabar*; London: World Public Library Association, 1865, p.25.

liver oil factory in Calicut. Instead of efficient machinery, gravity carried the oil to a separate building for bottling and packaging. The reliance on manual labour resulted in an excessive number of boys being employed. These young workers toiled for a meager four annas, seemingly working at a slow pace for an unspecified number of hours. The inefficiency extended beyond labour, with no apparent consideration given to optimizing the workflow or equipment.¹⁹

A directive aimed at restoring profitability to the fish liver oil factory was issued. The order demanded swift action to address shortcomings and boost oil production. The staff overseeing the fish curing yard were warned of potential dismissal for neglecting their duties in this crucial area.²⁰

To guarantee a consistent supply of shark liver, several initiatives were necessary to incentivize deep-sea fishing among local fishermen, including subsidizing larger hooks, introducing larger, seaworthy vessels, and training Laccadive islanders in hook and line fishing techniques. To traditional harpoon fishing methods and potentially increase overall shark catches.²¹

Fisherfolk had a growing concern about the mounting pile of shark fins, once a lucrative export. Recognizing a potential solution, the factory's chemist experimented with transforming these fins into gelatine and glue, products in high demand. The importance of this new venture was clear to everyone involved. Production began in Azhikal, Kannur, and the factory workers fully grasped the potential benefits of this innovative process.²²

Fishermen in the coastal regions of Tellicherry, Madai, and Cannanore were encountering significant obstacles that were impacting their livelihoods. Primarily, they were facing difficulties in shipping cured fish to Colombo via Dhanuskodi due to unspecified shipping issues. Moreover, a shortage of kerosene was hindering their nighttime fishing operations, which were essential for their catch and subsequent

¹⁹ O.M NO.327 E/43-1 dated 6/1/1943, D. D, R A K.

²⁰ O.M NO.327 E/43-1.

²¹ Letter No.3640/F1/42 dated 4th March 1943, from the Director of Industries and Commerce to the Secretary to Government, D D, R A K.

²² G O NO.360 dated 20/3/1943, MS, D D, R A K.

processing. To address safety and working conditions, fisherwomen in Tellicherry, who play a crucial role in the shark liver industry, requested improved lighting in their work areas and homes.

To address the fishermen's issues, proposed included creating a comprehensive list of their needs, streamlining kerosene distribution through yard officers, establishing cooperative societies for fair supply access, and implementing kerosene rationing where cooperatives are impractical, thereby enabling the government to support fishermen and sustain the fishing industry. By implementing these solutions, the government could effectively address the fishermen's obstacles and contribute to the sustained prosperity of the fishing industry.²³

3.5 Fish Curing Yards

For centuries, fish curing has remained a vital industry, largely unaffected by modern methods of food preservation. In the Madras Presidency, it was the most important sector of the fishing industry. As soon as they were caught, fish were rinsed thoroughly in clean seawater to get rid of any slime or dirt. Then, they were brought to special curing yards where cleanliness and the quality of the fish were top priorities. Fish curing comprises pressing, sun drying, salting, smoking, pickling, and the use of various other preservatives. Fish canning consists of preserving fish and fishery products in hermetically sealed and sterilized containers chiefly tins.

Work Schedule and Recordkeeping- Workers typically followed a set schedule of 7 AM to 11 AM and 2 PM to 6 PM, but these hours could be adjusted depending on how busy the yards were.²⁴ To ensure everything runs smoothly and is properly documented, the yard maintains detailed records. These include 1) A list of registered fish curers, 2) Tickets for entering the yard, 3) Daily logs of operations and cured fish removed, 4) A stock and cash register, 5) Daily and weekly reports on curing activities, 6) Monthly summaries of curing operations from different areas, 7) An annual report on curing operations, 8) Records of spending on yard maintenance.

²³ Letter No.3640/F1/42.

²⁴ Edgar Thurston, *The sea fisheries of Malabar and South Canara*, Bulletin Vol-III, No.2, Madras Government Museum, Madras: Government Press 1900, p.116.

Fish-curing operations in the Madras Presidency 1897-98²⁵

Place	Number of yards
Chicacole	34
Cocanada	5
Masulipatam	5
Nellore	9
Chingleput	7
Cudalore	3
Nagapatam	10
Tinnevelly	12
Calicut	43

Salt and Contraband Salt (Madras Salt Act 1889): - Salt is stated to be sodium Chloride (Na Cl), which occurs as rock salt in large deposits in various geological strata, in solution in sea-water and brine springs, and small quantities, in all running water.²⁶

The Madras Salt Act (Uppu Act) 1889 defines contraband salt as salt, saline substances, or salt-earth produced without a license, saltpetre (Potassium Nitrate) manufactured illegally, or any salt product obtained or dealt with in violation of current laws, government orders/licenses, or established rules. However, mere excavation or collection of salt-earth was excluded, unless it occurred within a designated area where the government declared it contraband through notification, and seawater was also not considered contraband salt.²⁷

3.5.1 Untaxed Salt and the Fish Curing Trade - People in some areas often used “salt earth,” which is naturally occurring salt and not taxed, to preserve fish for their own consumption. Even though it is illegal to use it this way, there was no law

²⁵ Edgar Thurston, *The sea fisheries of Malabar and South Canara*, p.109.

²⁶ Edgar Thurston, p.96.

²⁷ Edgar Thurston p.97.

stopping them from selling any leftover fish they have cured.²⁸ In the past, before a salt tax existed (pre-1881), the government allowed poor fishermen, especially fisherwomen, to collect naturally formed salt from the salty earth near the sea (Kaipad lands). This salt was used to preserve fish, which helped the fishing industry and protected these families from starvation. The government later established fish curing yards and provided low-quality salt.²⁹

3.5.2 Cannanore Fish Curing Yard - The Cannanore fish curing yard faced challenges due to limited space. There are 64 ticket holders, with a majority (54) being Mukkuvas and the remainder (10) Mappilas. In April 1920,³⁰ they petitioned for an expansion westward by acquiring a 50-foot strip of land. This request was approved by the government, and the ticket holders agreed to cover the cost (Rs. 1728) through a levy of 3 annas 4 pies per mound on the salt they receive. The lack of space forced them to remove partially dried fish from the yard, causing inconvenience to the public by spreading them on roadsides. Additionally, existing curing sheds were in poor condition, with sand floors soaked in brine and inadequate ventilation due to thatched walls. To address these issues, authorities ordered the replacement of these sheds with proper structures featuring cemented floors. Recognizing the financial constraints of many ticket holders, they applied for loans to facilitate these upgrades.³¹

For every *maund* of salt from 1924, April was only 10 Annas from 1918 and before that period. The petitioners submitted that they consisted mostly of women who reside on the seashore with a large number of children, subsisting mainly on fish trade carried on by purchasing fish from Mappilas who catch fish from the coast and dry them with salt, and since, fish cannot be had in large quantities in town parts they were obliged to pay very high prices to Mappilas and this they were compelled

²⁸ Francis Day, *The Fishes of India being a natural history of the fishes known to inhabit the seas and fresh waters of India, Burma, and Ceylon*, Vol. II, London: B Quaritch, 1878, p. xvi.

²⁹ G O No. 937 dated 14/5/1924, D D, R A K.

³⁰ Letter No. D. Dis No.1334/20.

³¹ G O NO.1050 dated 15/6/1921, D D, R A K.

to do because they had no opportunities for any other kind of trade and they did not know any other business.³²

The fishermen's wives in Cannanore pleaded with the government to lower the price of salt. In the past, they were allowed to make salt for free from seawater to cure fish. However, later they were forced to buy it from the government at an increased price of Rs. 1-4-0 per maund, which they claimed was unaffordable. This price hike threatened their livelihood. Additionally, complying with a government order to expand the fish curing yards and build a well required them to secure a loan of over Rs. 2,000 from the government, which they had already repaid. They fear further financial strain due to the high salt cost. Consequently, they were desperately requesting the government to reduce the price of salt back to 10 annas per maund.³³

3.5.3 Petition for Fish Curing Yard in Kizhur-

Kizhur village in Kasaragod Taluk, South Kanara District, petitioned the government in March 1919 to establish a fish curing yard.³⁴ The petition requested the government to approve the hiring of a supervisor (first-grade Duffadar) and an assistant (first-grade Peon) to manage the yard.³⁵

The opening of the fish curing yard in Kizhur village faced a delay of over two years due to a combination of factors. The local fishermen, burdened by debt and a poor fishing season, struggled to build the necessary permanent sheds (pucca sheds). Additionally, the government, already incurring losses from selling salt at a low price, hesitated to open new yards. This delay was further extended due to the unrest in Malabar during the Mappila rebellion.³⁶

However, there were signs of progress in April 1923. The Kizhur fishermen managed to overcome their financial difficulties and made arrangements to construct the sheds. This positive development, along with the recommendation of an

³² G O NO. 937.

³³ G O NO. 937.

³⁴ G O NO. 532 dated 8/8/1899, R D, R A K.

³⁵ G.O NO. 961 dated 29/4/1919, R D, R A K.

³⁶ G.O NO. 1250 dated 9/7/1924, D D, R A K.

Assistant Director of Fisheries to open the yard at Kaipamangalam, Adakathabail, and Uppala, brought renewed hope for the project.³⁷

3.5.4 Closure of Kodumbi curing yard and its impact - The Kodumbi curing yard was ordered to be temporarily closed as a measure of retrenchment from 1st October 1931. This decision came as a very sad blow not only to the following ticket holders but their dependents and a large number of labourers engaged in the industry.³⁸ With the economic depression pushing many to the brink of starvation, the department's decision to close the fish curing yard deals a severe blow to hundreds of poor people. This facility provided not just curing jobs, but also work as labourers, merchants, and even more curing opportunities. Without this yard, these already struggling individuals would be left without employment or any way to make a living. The immediate cause of this decision was said to be the poor demand for salt in the above fish curing yard for the last 2 years.

There were 2 officers in the yard; a petty officer and a peon. The annual repairs to the fencing and the building were done by the department. The undermentioned ticket holders held themselves responsible for the annual repairs and they were prepared to conduct the annual repairs at their cost for one or 2 years till the temporary economic depression passes away. The ticket holders also undertook to bring down fish from distant places even in the catches of fish in the neighbourhood that happened to be meager and cure those in the yard and thus do their best to increase the demand for the salt in the yard.³⁹

The curers of the Kodumbi fish curing yard submitted a petition to the Director of Fisheries requesting that the yard which has been temporarily closed as a measure of retrenchment be reopened.⁴⁰ In reply to their petition to the Director of Fisheries, the fish curers of the Kodumbi fish curing yard were asked to make a deposit against any loss in the working of the yard that may accrue to the

³⁷ G.O NO.199 dated 10/4/1922, Finance (Special) R D, R A K.

³⁸ G O.NO.1732 dated 5/12/1931, D D, R A K.

³⁹ G O.NO.1732.

⁴⁰ In response to their petition to the Director of Fisheries, the fish curers of the Kodumbi fish curing yard were instructed to make a deposit to cover any potential losses incurred by the government during the yard's operation.

government. A review of the yard's income and expenditure revealed inconsistent performance. While it earned a profit of Rs. 53 (including minor repairs) between April 1939 and January 1940, it incurred a loss of Rs. 27 (including minor repairs) for the period ending December 1940. In response to the petition, the Director of Fisheries asked the curers to deposit a sum of money as security against any potential. By prioritizing short-term profit over the long-term well-being of fishing communities, the colonial government inflicted hardship on fishers and jeopardized the future sustainability of the fishing industry.

3.5.5 Challenges and a Proposed Solution for Ponnani's Fish Curing Industry- The market witnessed a disturbing rise in the availability of unwholesome fish food. This concerning trend coincided with a significant shift in the fish curing industry. Traditionally, fishing communities themselves dominated the business of curing and selling cured fish. However, capitalist fish merchants had largely taken over this sector, leading to a decline in the economic well-being of the actual fishers.

The government fish curing yard in Ponnani faced its own set of problems. The department struggled to turn a profit due to the minimal difference between the cost and selling price of fish curing salt. This necessitated selling large quantities of salt just to cover staffing and maintenance costs for the yard's buildings and fence.⁴¹

The yard's location, far from the beach where fishing boats landed their catches, resulted in high transportation costs for fish-enters. This discouraged them from using the government facility. The situation further worsened with the availability of cheap Bombay salt⁴² in the village. Private curers had taken advantage of this by setting up curing sheds near the landing places, offering a much more cost-effective alternative. As a result, the operations at the government yard steadily declined, further contributing to the rise of unhealthy fish food.

To address these issues, the curers proposed relocating the government yard closer to the beach. This solution leveraged an existing windblown area near the landing site, which the Public Works Department had already approved for transfer

⁴¹ G O NO.403 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.

⁴² G O NO.403.

to the fish department.⁴³The government sanctioned the relocation, and the associated costs recovered from the curers through a levy.

3.6 Industrial Research

A number of Industrial Research Centres were instituted by the government in different parts of Malabar surveys of various industrial research stations and their functioning. The following research stations are given below.

3.6.1 Experiment Station, Cannanore: - In 1908 an experimental station was opened⁴⁴ at Enrur with a view inter alia to experiment in salting, curing, and preservation of fish. Enrur was, however, found not very well suited for the work and so the experiments were transferred to Cannanore which was found to offer better facilities. A station was opened at Cannanore under the sanction.⁴⁵ Fish curing comprised pressing, sun drying, salting, smoking, pickling, and the use of various other preservatives. Fish canning consisted of preserving fish and fishery products in hermetically sealed and sterilized containers chiefly tins.⁴⁶

3.6.2 Experiment Station, Tanur: - In 1911 Tanur was the largest fishing Centre on the West Coast and large quantities of cheap fish were readily available there. Hence, the experimental station was shifted to Tanur, as most advantageously situated for supplies of fish. The Tanur experimental station exists for the conducting of practical experiments with a view to the further development of existing fishing industries and the establishment of new ones. Its greatest success had been the demonstration of the extraction of fish oil, guano, and fish meal. Edible fish liver oil is manufactured on a commercial scale at the Kerala Soap Institute in Calicut. The Tanur station also experimented with the semi- drying prawns, fish preservation, storage of prawns and fish thus preserved, and preservation of boats, catamarans, tackles, and nets.⁴⁷ Tanur experiment station was instituted in 1911 to experiment

⁴³ Letter No.584-F/28 from the Director of Fisheries dated 20th June 1928 to the Chief Engineer, D D, R A K.

⁴⁴ G O NO.1215 dated 4/5/1909, R D, R A K.

⁴⁵ G O NO.2267 dated 17/8/1908, R D, R A K.

⁴⁶ G O NO.790.

⁴⁷ G.O NO.1699 dated 15/9/1941, D D, R A K.

with the improved methods of curing, smoking, and otherwise preserving fish and with the manufacture of oil, guano, and other by-products.

The Tanur Experiment Station finally achieved profitability in 1922-23, according to a letter from the Director of Fisheries (B. Sundara Raj).⁴⁸ The net profit for that year was Rs. 5782, with Rs. 1882 remaining for staff bonuses after deducting a capital investment fee. Auditors recommended implementing a commercial accounting system at the station.⁴⁹ Following successful experiments in manufacturing crude fish oil and guano, the production processes were made public knowledge. The Tanur Experiment Station transitioned away from large-scale production, leaving commercial manufacturing to private enterprises.

Biochemical research in improved methods of manufacturing fish manure: - In 1937, Dr. Gravely concluded that the station's commercial experiments had yielded significant results, but further progress required a new approach. He championed the importance of biochemical research to develop improved methods for fish manure production.

The following investigations are carried on by the Research Assistant: - Oil storage in the malic acid as a preservative, fish storage after fumigation, prawn pickling, fish pickling in brine, and net preservation.⁵⁰

Fish meal production and innovations - The experimental work of Sir F A Nicholson up to 1921 led him to conclude that the manufacture of fish meals as a concentrated protein food for farm stock was not possible in this country. Since then, however, as a result of a series of experiments conducted at the Tanur station, it has been possible, and other substitutes for fish manure in the market tend to be available for agriculturists. Apart from the question of developing the commercial manufacture of fish meal, there were several details in the school such as the reduction of the high oil content of the Tanur meal. The process of powdering done

⁴⁸ Reference No.1798-c/23-3 dated 19th February 1924, D D, R A K.

⁴⁹ G O NO.2037 dated 28/11/1924, D D, R A K.

⁵⁰ G.O NO.1699.

by mortar and pestle is slow and expensive, and the substitution of mechanical grinding in order to cheapen the cost of the product was examined.

Experiments with prawn drying technology - The prawn fishing off the east and west coasts were very valuable, but as they coincide with the southwest monsoon, the drying of the salted prawns had always been a problem, and prawns worth several lakhs of rupees were lost every year. Sir F A Nicholson devised an artificial drier that did not work satisfactorily until 1928.

Innovations in prawn preservation and fish storage- After a series of experiments from 1933 to 1939, prawns had been successfully bottled in Kilner jars⁵¹ at Tanur, the colour, and condition of the prawns were good. For short fishes like sardine and mackerel, the maximum period of storage was ascertained to be 12 months although further observations regarding the condition of the fish on exposure to air after storage were necessary.⁵²

Fumigation experiments for long-term fish preservation - Fumigation with carbon-b-sulphate for the long storage of grain has been tried at Tanur. It had been found to prevent putrefaction due to bacteria, moulds, and 'pink eye' but not to arrest rusting caused by the oxidation of fat in salted and sundried fish.

Dry Ice for Fish Refrigeration and Transportation of Fish - Given the inquiries received regarding the use of dry ice for the refrigeration of fresh fish, some experiments were carried out at Tanur. Preliminary freezing experiments have been carried out and these go to show that the frozen fish was in excellent condition the next day after freezing in the ice box overnight.⁵³

Experiments with glazed pots - The curers on the East Coast were too poor to afford the cemented vats and curing sheds adopted on the West Coast. The quantity

⁵¹ A brand name for a type of glass container with a wide opening at the top and a fitted lid that is usually sealed and is used for preserving fruit, etc. The jar with its lid one then placed in a hot water bath and the water is boiled for 7 minutes. The jar is taken out sealed with rubber packing and then the prawns are processed under pressure for 15 minutes. On cooling the Jar is taken out and it is ready for sale.

⁵² G.O NO.1699.

⁵³ G.O NO.1699.

of fish cured was also limited. The only method of sanitary cure possible for this is the substitution of glazed impervious earthenware pots for the highly unsanitary ordinary mud pots. Every alternate week the jar was filled with used brine collected from the Tanur North fish curing yard and in intermediate weeks it was kept empty. The jar was still in excellent condition without any sign of cracking of the glaze. It is still under observation to see how long the jar will continue to be in good condition.

Ascu experiment - The preservation of craft and tackle representing the entire capital investment of the fisher industry was a vital problem. The methods of preservation by the 'Ascu' process had been tried at Tanur in one or two logs of the catamaran.

Seaweed manure - The occurrence of a large quantity of seaweed during the southwest monsoon along parts of the east coast opens up the possibility of starting industries for the extraction of iodine and the manufacture of kelp⁵⁴, and conversion of the seaweed into the manure. The ingredients of this manure are seaweed in one part, fish refuse in one and a half parts, and shellfish in two parts.

Semi-dried prawns - The semi-dried method of curing prawns was devised by Frederick Nicholson in the early days at Tanur. The semi-dried prawns in ordinary storage were not kept for more than 4 to 6 weeks and even within this period. Their fresh pink colour gradually faded, the flesh dried to a harder consistency through evaporation and the appearance became marred by salt excrescence on the surface. The efficacy of carbon dioxide gas was designed and fitted up for demonstration at Tanur. Prawns semi-fried, keep for a whole year in saleable condition if stored in sealed kerosene tins filled with Co₂.

Expansion of semi-dried prawn production in Malabar - The government accepted the proposal of the Director of semi-dried prawns from the Collair and Pulicat lakes and to utilize the staff sanctioned for that scheme (except one foreman) for intensifying the manufacture of semi-dried prawns at Madai, Tanur, and

⁵⁴ A large, brown plant that grows in the sea.

Kadapuram in Malabar district.⁵⁵ The scheme was under the supervision of the Superintendent of Fisheries Technological Station, Kozhikode. The headquarters of the Biochemist and the foreman will be at Tanur.⁵⁶

By 1928, the fisheries committee concluded that basic research at the Tanur station had reached a dead end. They recommended hiring a biochemist and fisheries engineer to revitalize the station's efforts. However, progress was slow. While a biochemist was finally appointed in 1935, they lacked a proper laboratory to conduct research.

Tanur Station Declared Exempt from Maternity Benefits Act: - During an inspection in 1935, the Coimbatore Factories Inspector noted that the Tanur station would not qualify for maternity benefits under the Madras Maternity Benefit Act of 1934. The Act only applied to factories that were not "seasonal" as defined by both the Act and the Factories Act. The Inspector pointed out that the Tanur station's operations were limited to specific seasons and depended on factors like fishing seasons and fish availability. Data showed the station's activities (fish curing and guano production) did not exceed 60 days in any year between 1931 and 1934. Based on this, the government declared Tanur a "seasonal factory" exempting it from the Act's maternity benefit provisions under the power granted by the Factories Act.⁵⁷

In 1937, the station faced a potential closure due to concerns about its usefulness. Rao Bahadur M.C. Rajan, the Interim Minister for development, questioned its value. Even the acting Director of Fisheries, Dr. Gravely, acknowledged diminishing returns from commercial experiments. However, Dr. Gravely argued against closure, highlighting the station's potential for future biochemical research and fish manure production. He cited a scheme approved by the I.C.A.R. (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) that was unfortunately delayed due to the war. The permanent Director of Fisheries, Dr. Sundararaj, also opposed

⁵⁵ G O NO.4201 dated 4/10/1952, D D, R A K.

⁵⁶ G O NO.4201.

⁵⁷ G O NO.1802 dated 20/12/1935, D D, R A K.

closure.⁵⁸ In 1937 Research Assistant, Tanur suggested the transfer of the station to Calicut. Dr. Gravely supported the suggestion. In 1939 the government ordered the transfer of the station to Westhill.⁵⁹

3.6.3 Experiment Station, Chaliyam- The cannery was started in a small rented building in Calicut in 1912. It moved to a bigger building in Chaliyam in 1915. However, this new location had several problems. It was far from the railway station and could only be reached by boat, which was risky during floods. Additionally, there was no proper housing for students and no one to teach them the theory behind canning. This lack of theoretical knowledge made the practical experience useless, especially in an industry like canning where understanding things like bacteria and physics is crucial. Overall, the Chaliyam cannery was a poor example of the government's attempt to launch a new industry. Additionally, there was no proper student housing or qualified instructors for theoretical knowledge. This was crucial for an industry like canning, where understanding science (bacteriology, physics) was essential. Lastly, the Chaliyam cannery, in its current state, is a poor example of the government's attempt to establish a new industry.⁶⁰

H L Prager was a special officer of Chaliyam Cannery. He oversaw various tasks at the cannery, ⁶¹including Managing production and selling of canned fish products. Experimenting with new food preservation methods like vacuum drying and refrigeration. Tested different fish currying techniques. Conducting experiments on raising prawns in saltwater ponds near the cannery.⁶² He also played a key role in organizing and streamlining the cannery's business operations.⁶³

Through experimentation, the cannery achieved several successes. Boneless sardines and mackerel in oil were introduced, demonstrating innovative processing techniques. Additionally, improved recipes for pastes were adopted, further refining

⁵⁸ G.O NO.1699.

⁵⁹ G.O NO.1699.

⁶⁰ G O NO.1897 dated 11/10/1921, D D, R A K.

⁶¹ Copy of letter Reference No.31-7. G R/19-2 dated 17th June 1919, D D, R A K.

⁶² G O NO.2067, dated 10/11/1919, R (S) D, R A K.

⁶³ G O NO.142 dated 26/1/1925, (Mis), D D, R A K.

their product line. Experiments with vinegar also proved successful. Experiments have also been made in the cannery of mullets and soles.⁶⁴

3.6.4 Research Station, West Hill: - West Hill station's plankton research suffers due to a lack of dedicated boats. Unreliable past canoe and dependence on borrowing from nearby institutes restrict collections to 3 days a week.⁶⁵ The lack of a dedicated boat at West Hill station significantly hampered plankton research. While a small outrigger canoe was previously used, its frequent unreliability and condemnation forced the station to rely on borrowing a canoe from the Fisheries Training Institute (FTI). However, this was only possible on days when student-teachers were not using the boat for fishing. Additionally, the need for pre-sunrise plankton collection, coupled with the inconvenience of traveling two miles to Vellayil (FTI's location), further limited collections to just three days a week. This reliance on a shared resource significantly restricted research compared to other stations like Krusadai, which likely benefited from more consistent boat access.

The Fish Technological Station had been waiting for over two years for additional staff and equipment. While the station could handle basic research on fish products, more advanced work was impossible due to a lack of crucial equipment and personnel. This situation was particularly frustrating considering the recent arrival of a highly qualified fish preservation officer, whose advanced training in the U.S. remains unutilized. To avoid wasting this valuable resource, a previously proposed expansion plan (Part II scheme for 1950-51) was to be implemented without delay.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Madras Legislative Council Question No.1129, dated 22nd September 1920, From C Gopala Menon, D D, R A K.

⁶⁵ The lack of a dedicated boat at West Hill station significantly hampered plankton research. While a small outrigger canoe was previously used, its frequent unreliability and condemnation forced the station to rely on borrowing a canoe from the Fisheries Training Institute (FTI). However, this was only possible on days when student-teachers weren't using the boat for fishing. Additionally, the need for pre-sunrise plankton collection, coupled with the inconvenience of traveling two miles to Vellayil (FTI's location), further limited collections to just three days a week. This reliance on shared resources significantly restricted research compared to other stations like Krusadai, which likely benefited from more consistent boat access. (G O NO.127 dated 27/1/1933 D D, R A K).

⁶⁶ G O NO.1468 dated 12/4/1950, D D, R A K.

3.7 A Historical Analysis of the Early Cooperative Movement

The cooperative movement was a global phenomenon that has underpinned human civilization since its inception. Mutual dependence and assistance among people have formed the foundation of societal existence. The cooperative movement is fundamental to social life and the advancement of humanity. Evidence of formal cooperatives can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as India, China, Egypt, and Babylonia.

The 1800s saw the rise of a global movement challenging the harsh realities of factory life. This ‘cooperative movement’ was a reaction to the harsh competition and unfair treatment that came with the Industrial Revolution. People from all walks of life came together to create an alternative to the new, self-centered system of capitalism. This period also saw a rise in socialist ideas, with thinkers like Robert Owen and Karl Marx criticizing capitalism for hurting both workers’ rights and their sense of self. They envisioned a new way of living that valued individual worth and overall happiness, not just profit.

3.7.1 Germany’s Response to Economic Hardship in the Mid-19th Century: - Germany led the way in creating a new kind of lending system in the mid-1800s. This was a time of deep economic troubles in Germany, with many poor farmers and craftspeople struggling with debt and frequent famines. Money lending was harsh, with very high interest rates. Many lenders were Jewish communities involved in both trade and finance. This left farmers and workers with few choices but to borrow from these lenders at unfair rates. This unfair situation had helped spark the cooperative movement in Germany. This new system aimed to provide a fairer alternative for people who needed loans.

Originating in Europe, particularly through the cooperative credit system devised by German reformer Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen⁶⁷ In 1849, the cooperative movement gained momentum. Though Raiffeisen’s initial efforts saw little progress, his unwavering dedication and enthusiasm ultimately triumphed over

⁶⁷ Raiffeisen, a form of cooperative bank established by Frederic William Raiffeisen (1818-88). among the German agrarian population.

public apathy and misconceptions. By 1912, Germany alone had witnessed a surge in Raiffeisen societies, exceeding 16,000.⁶⁸

Fishermen, particularly those in Texel⁶⁹ who initiated cooperative models in the 1870s, have demonstrated the value of collective action in addressing industry challenges. Recognizing shared interests, these groups have formed to support their members. Norway offers another example with its informal fishing associations concentrated in coastal regions. These organizations primarily serve local fishermen, with a notable contribution being the publication of “Norsk Fiskeritidende,” a monthly industry journal.⁷⁰

3.7.2 *Beginning of Cooperative Movements in India*

While the modern cooperative movement emerged in 18th century England, India has a long history of cooperative principles. Even before the 1904 Cooperative Credit Societies Act, the concept of working together existed. This is evident in the traditional joint farming systems and the emphasis on mutuality. References to cooperation can be found as far back as the Vedic Age in texts like the Rig Veda, Laws of Manu, and Arthashastra. The Rig Veda, for instance, promotes unity and working together for better outcomes. Similar ideas are echoed in other Vedas and Upanishads. Kautilya’s Arthashastra even outlines consequences for those who avoid cooperative endeavors.⁷¹

India has a rich history of cooperation, even before official laws existed. Villages often worked together to build shared resources, like water tanks or forests (Devarai or Vanarai). Similar practices included pooling resources like food grains after harvest to help those in need until the next harvest (common), or small, regular

⁶⁸ Maclagan E.D., *Report committee on co-operation in India 1915*, Simla: Government Press, 1915, p.3.

⁶⁹ In Dutch fishing communities on the island of Texel.

⁷⁰ Rob Van Ginkel, ‘Cooperating Competitors: Texel Fishermen and Their Organizations (c.1870-1930)’ *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 2, The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research 1996, pp.51-65.

⁷¹ Mrinal Kanti Purkait, ‘Glimpses of the History of Co-Operative Movement in Orissa (1936-76)’ unpublished thesis, Utkal University, 1999.

contributions in cash to create a lending pool for group members (like Chit Funds, 'kuries',⁷² or 'Bhishies',⁷³ in different regions).

Concerned about the poverty and debt plaguing Indian farmers in the early 20th century, colonial officials pinpointed their dependence on high-interest moneylenders as a major cause. Inspired by the flourishing credit cooperative movement in Europe, they saw a potential solution. Consequently, India embarked on forming its own cooperatives to liberate farmers from the clutches of debt and moneylender control. Sir F A Nicholson played a pivotal role in establishing the cooperative movement in India. In response to the growth of cooperative societies, the government established the Edward Law Committee (including Mr. Nicholson) to explore legal frameworks. Based on their recommendations, the Cooperative Societies Bill was passed on March 25th, 1904. Initially focused on credit societies, it led to the establishment of over 5,300 societies with 300,000 members by 1911.

3.7.3 Madras Government's Initiative in Malabar

The Madras Government was the first to recognize the potential of cooperative movements in India. In 1892, the government under Lord Wenlock assigned Mr. Sir. F A Nicholson to study agricultural and other land banks in Europe and suggest ways to introduce similar movements in India. In 1895 and 1897, Mr. Nicholson prepared a comprehensive report on the systems prevalent in Europe, which remains a valuable source of information on European practices.⁷⁴ This report, along with other standard works on cooperation, provides a fairly complete understanding of the subject. The pioneering cooperative societies established by district officers in parts of Punjab, the United Provinces, and Bengal were a direct result of the public awareness of the ideas presented in these works.

The cooperative movement in the fisheries sector was a project initiated by Sir. F A Nicholson for the welfare of fishermen. Considering this demand, the cooperative societies started in 1917. Sir. F A Nicholson believed that

⁷² Travancore.

⁷³ Kholhapur.

⁷⁴ *Report committee on co-operation in India 1915*, p.2.

socioeconomic support was essential for fishermen to overcome debt before they could adopt improved fishing and selling methods. This work, which includes education, temperance, and cooperatives, has made significant progress on the West Coast. Industrial committees support transferring fisheries, arguing that this sector is interconnected with industrial development and cooperative credit.⁷⁵

The Royal Commission of the Agricultural Report of 1918 emphasized the importance of schools and cooperative societies for the welfare of fishermen. Under Sir F A Nicholson's Scheme of education for fisherfolks, the teachers in elementary schools should be conversant with an eagerness in cooperation, its methods, and benefits and be ready to assume the very necessary post of secretary and accountant in a cooperative credit society.⁷⁶ In a good many villages, the teachers of fishery schools were helping in cooperative work and other schemes of social amelioration. The indirect benefits of education exceeded expectations. Thrift, cooperation, progressive ideas, the realization of their rights and privileges, and the desire to elevate and educate themselves produced an upheaval among at least the young generation of fishermen on the West Coast.

The economic slavery of the fishing classes and the lack of industrial fishermen were important drawbacks, as they precluded the moneyed classes from entering the trade. The ignorance, illiteracy, and superstition of the fishing classes, were other drawbacks of the fishing community. The domestic economy of individual fishermen wanted mortgageable assets. But the middlemen extract fish at such low prices that they were compensated more by such contracts than by any payment of interest in money lent.⁷⁷ Fisher folks were considered one of the most backward sections of society. Information on the socio-economic framework of the

⁷⁵ T.H. Holland, *Indian Industrial Commission 1916-18*, Calcutta, Government Printing Press, 1918, p.157.

⁷⁶ G.O NO. 1049 dated 23/7/1923, D D, R A K.

⁷⁷ G O NO.790.

fishing community forms an effective base for the planning and development of this economically backward sector.⁷⁸

Traditionally, fishermen relied on money lenders for loans, forcing them to sell their catch at the lender's price. To break this cycle of indebtedness, colonial authorities introduced cooperative societies. These societies provided fishermen with loans, eliminating the need for exploitative moneylenders. This newfound freedom allowed fishermen to manage their catch and profits independently.

Fishermen began to form community-based groups and cooperatives to improve their fish sales. These cooperative efforts were a significant step in the overall development of the rural economy. Such organizations helped uplift the economic status of impoverished fishermen. Concurrently, a new trend emerged across many regions: the formation of caste-based associations or societies aimed at improving the overall conditions of their respective castes. This development fostered a strong sense of caste identity and a desire for social advancement.

These cooperative societies had diverse names. Some were identified by caste affiliation, such as the Araya Jana and Mugaya societies. Others were named after their geographical location, like the Palapatty Fishermen Cooperative Society, and Kaipamangalam societies. Despite this variety, the majority of these cooperatives were controlled by specific castes. For instance, in areas with a significant Mughaya population, the local cooperative was primarily managed by members of that caste.

While fishing is primarily an individual pursuit, the process of selling the catch necessitates significant community interaction. Strengthened by traditional kinship ties and shared socioeconomic challenges, the fishing community exhibits a strong social fabric. These factors create a conducive environment for the formation of fishing cooperatives.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Sathiadhas R, *Production and Marketing Management of Marine Fisheries in India*, Delhi: Daya Publishing House, 1991, p.149.

⁷⁹ G O NO.790.

Cooperative societies were established in the coastal belt for the upliftment of fisherfolk during the colonial period. One of the major aims of the cooperative societies was the improvement of socially and economically backward fisher folk communities. The fishermen's co-operative societies aimed at the socio-economic development of fisher folk through different fishery-related activities.⁸⁰ Members were given loans for buying fishing vessels and other things. The loan can be later paid off through installments. Their cooperative societies were a blessing to the community during that period.

There was a fixed membership fee for the members of the societies. The president of the cooperative societies was selected from the members. The majority of the members were illiterate. So, the government appointed a secretary in such cooperative societies, so that they can inform the people about the function and guidelines of the societies. The president was selected through an election. There were times when factions happened because of arguments about presidentship. There were incidents when their arguments led to the liquidation of these societies. The government servants were made office bearers of the society. For example, the ex-officio secretary was either a petty curing yard officer or a teacher at a fisheries school. At times, they were given a fixed amount of honorarium for their work. Cooperative inspectors were appointed to ensure the smooth functioning of cooperative societies. They examined the societies and gave reports to the higher authorities. The inspection and supervision of the Co-operative Societies functioning in the fisheries sector were vested with the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

Due to the sufficient staffing of the fisheries department in Malabar and South Kanara, the government determined that the department should oversee the fishermen's cooperative societies in these regions. This decision was based on the department's capacity to effectively manage and control the work of inspectors supervising these cooperatives.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Cooperative Act of 1860.

⁸¹ G O NO.1678 dated 20/4/1931, D D, R A K.

For the promotion of the fisheries sector, a large number of fisheries societies functioned under the Societies Act of 1860. In 1932 there were 69 fishermen's co-operative societies on the west coast (south Kanara 23 and Malabar 46) with government-sanctioned special staff for their supervision consisting of one co-operative sub-registrar and four Junior Inspectors. This special staff was working under the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Calicut.⁸²

3.8 China Net Fishermen of Fort Cochin: Efforts Towards a Cooperative Society: -An Assistant Director of Fisheries went to Fort Cochin and had discussions on the subject of organizing a cooperative society for the fishermen working the China nets there, with the Revenue divisional officer, and Chairman of the local Municipal council.⁸³ In Fort Cochin, there were 58 China nets. These nets were on a five-year lease basis; the lease was given by the collector of Malabar, subject to approval by the Board of Revenue. The Collector retained the authority to cancel the lease with a mere 24-hour notice, prohibiting subletting.

The vast majority of China nets in Cochin were not owned by the fishermen who operated them. Instead, they were owned by outsiders. There were no instances of fishermen collectively owning a net. Some individuals owned multiple nets and hired groups of four to five fishermen to work each one.⁸⁴

In certain areas in Fort Cochin, the catches were good and in some other areas, they were comparatively poor. The stretch of the backwater between the municipal office and the revenue divisional officer's bungalow was considered to be the best area. The main object of the proposed society was to own nets and hire them as members. When the nets were given on a hire basis, the workers were to pay a definite sum every day to a cooperative society. All the catches went to the members working the nets. This gave them an incentive to work hard and produce more. With

⁸² G O NO.4404 dated 26/8/1948, D D, R A K.

⁸³ Letter No.6352-c/49 dated 18th January 1950 from the Assistant Director of Fisheries Calicut to the Collector of Malabar, D D, R A K.

⁸⁴ Letter No.6352-c/49.

a population of approximately 30,000 in Fort Cochin, boosting the fish supply was considered beneficial for the overall food availability.⁸⁵

The fishermen who operated China nets lacked formal education and were unable to independently manage a cooperative. To ensure its success, it was essential to include supportive individuals as members. By forming a cooperative, these fishermen significantly increased their earnings compared to previous methods. A key role of the cooperative was to encourage savings during prosperous fishing seasons. Known for their tendency to spend impulsively, the fishermen often squandered their income during good times and faced hardship when catches were low. To enhance efficiency and productivity, the cooperative aimed to introduce modern fishing techniques and replace traditional methods.⁸⁶

China net fishing in the Fort Cochin backwaters is operated under a leasing system. These leases are issued by the Malabar Collector with the Board of Revenue's approval. According to the Assistant Director of Fisheries in Kozhikode, nearly all China nets in Fort Cochin are owned by individuals who are not the fishermen operating them. There are no nets collectively owned by the fishermen, and some owners possess multiple nets. By forming a cooperative, fishermen working with China nets could significantly increase their income. One of the cooperative's goals was to encourage substantial savings among its members during prosperous fishing seasons.⁸⁷

3.9 Marketing, Cooperation, and Fishing Industry in Malabar: Later Developments

A meeting of the fish subcommittee on 12th December 1944, discussed forming cooperative societies for fish marketing. The proposal included employing demobilized soldiers⁸⁸ and providing government-owned Roma boats⁸⁹ to these cooperatives. The Director of Industry and Commerce was tasked with developing

⁸⁵ Letter No.6352-c/49.

⁸⁶ G O NO.3420 dated 7/8/1952, D D, R A K.

⁸⁷ G O NO.3420.

⁸⁸ who participated in the Second World War.

⁸⁹ "One of Italy's largest and most modern battleships."

this plan. It was noted that a significant portion of the fish and seafood trade was controlled by wealthy and powerful merchants. When discussing refrigerated van provisions for transporting fish to inland markets with the South Indian Railway, it was suggested that the merchants form cooperatives to streamline fish shipments. This would involve combining smaller orders into larger consignments for each destination. However, the merchants present unanimously rejected this proposal.⁹⁰

The existing fishermen's cooperatives were primarily composed of impoverished fishermen or small-scale middlemen who were not directly involved in fishing. Given these circumstances, it was unrealistic to expect rapid progress in fish marketing through these cooperatives. After careful consideration, it was concluded that the time was not suitable for establishing a dedicated marketing cooperative. However, it was agreed that existing fishermen's societies should be provided with resources to enhance their joint sales and overall business operations. This served as a foundation for developing cooperative marketing in the future, with the ultimate goal of replacing the dominant merchant role with these cooperatives.⁹¹

The government abandoned the plan to establish cooperative societies with demobilized soldiers for fish marketing. To achieve higher prices for fresh fish, they needed to be sold in nearby towns or transported by rail to distant markets. This required preserving the fish. The government planned to construct a cold storage and ice-making facility in Mangalore within a year. Once operational, cooperative societies could jointly sell fresh fish. Ajanur and Nileswar in the South Kanara district were chosen as pilot societies to prepare for this initiative. At the fisheries subcommittee meeting on 12th December 1949, the idea of creating cooperative societies with demobilized soldiers for fish marketing and providing government loans to these societies was revisited.⁹²

Selling dried fish was significantly simpler than selling fresh fish due to the latter's perishability. Fresh fish were typically auctioned on the shoreline

⁹⁰ Letter No.7174-H5/45 dated 20/2/1948, Director of Industries, Madras, D D, R A K.

⁹¹ G O NO.4404.

⁹² G O NO.4404.

immediately upon arrival by fishing boats. Individual traders purchase the fish in bulk and then sell them in smaller quantities to consumers. Dried fish, on the other hand, could be sold directly to consumers in fishing villages or in larger quantities to merchants. Exporting dried fish to Ceylon offered the potential for higher profits. To lay the groundwork for cooperative fish sales, two societies in Ajanur and Nileswar were chosen for focused development.⁹³

The government proposed to assign a clerk to each of two selected fishermen's cooperatives, Ajanur and Nileswar, to facilitate joint fish sales. The government contributed a monthly subsidy of Rs. 30 per clerk, totalling Rs. 720 annually for both societies. Importantly, this subsidy was intended to support, not replace, the societies' own financial contributions. Both cooperatives had prior experience in joint sales, demonstrating their potential for successful implementation. The Governor approved the subsidy, officially initiating the pilot project aimed at preparing these societies for expanded fish marketing. Ajanur and Nileswar were chosen due to their existing infrastructure for fish processing and their previous sales records.

3.10. Socio-Economic Challenges and Cooperative Solutions for Malabar

Fishermen Monsoon season was a period of financial hardship for fishermen. To survive, they often borrowed money from middlemen. In exchange for these loans, the fishermen were forced to sell their catch to the middlemen at extremely low prices. The middlemen justified these low rates by claiming that the fishermen were spared interest payments on their loans. Moreover, the middlemen's customers pressured the fishermen to sell at even lower prices, threatening to boycott the fishermen's catch entirely if they refused. This power imbalance often led to heated disputes and even the spoilage of fish as fishermen felt trapped and unable to challenge the middlemen's dominance.

A group of 24 fishermen from Edakazhiyur, led by Kkandu, petitioned the government to establish a fishing cooperative in their area due to alleged ill-treatment by fish processing plant owners. The government formed a committee to

⁹³ G O NO.4404.

investigate the feasibility of this new cooperative, considering existing cooperatives and the government's financial capacity. The committee reviewed reports from relevant inspectors and determined if a government loan was viable.⁹⁴

The two primary applicants for the proposed fishing cooperative are heavily indebted to fish market merchants, limiting their independence and posing a significant risk to the cooperative's success. The proposed loan structure, where assets remain under individual ownership, contradicts cooperative principles. To create a truly cooperative model, the applicants sold their assets to the cooperative and became equal members. However, the financial situation and the applicants' debt make replicating the success of the Blangad cooperative unlikely in Edakazhiyur.

The intention was to utilize the loan that may be obtained by the cooperative society as a whole for the liquidation of their own debts to the merchants while keeping the boats as their property.⁹⁵ This instance highlights how individual aspirations for power can be masked by collective goals, leading to personal enrichment.

The fishermen had to suffer a lot from moneylenders. The oppression was getting intolerable day by day as the fishing season was getting better. They have to sell one boatload of fish for Rupees three or so. The only remedy for this was to take them under government protection. It was observed that at least the signatories to the petition forwarded to the government possess assets that could be made available to the Bank as security border boats and nets.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ G O NO.1794 dated 17/12/1931, D D, R A K.

⁹⁵ It was evident that the two primary signatories were heavily indebted to local fish market merchants. Their crew members were also partially indebted to these merchants. Due to this indebtedness, the proprietors felt compelled to work for the merchants, allegedly against their will. Their intention seemed to be misaligned with cooperative principles. They planned to use the society's loan to settle personal debts, rather than for the collective benefit. Additionally, they aimed to transfer their boats and nets to the society as collateral for the government loan, while retaining ownership. A more cooperative approach would have involved selling their assets to the society at fair value and becoming equal members. However, given the current circumstances, a traditional cooperative model may not have been feasible in this specific context. (G O NO.1794).

⁹⁶ G O NO.1794.

Although these schemes were initiated by the British government with the intention of uplifting fishermen and introducing new technology into fishing, the intermediaries turned out to be the primary beneficiaries. These intermediaries bought fish from the fishermen at cheap rates and sold it at significantly higher prices, withholding the profits from the fishermen. Many instances support this claim. For instance, if the fishermen refused to sell their fish at lower rates, the intermediaries would ensure that no one else bought the fish. Consequently, in such situations when no other buyers were available, the fish would end up rotting. Thus, the only viable option for the fishermen was to sell their fish to the intermediaries at the rates dictated by them.

3.11. Cooperative Societies in the Fisheries Sector of Malabar: A General Survey

3.11.1 Azhikode Fishermen Cooperative Society- The Azhikode Fishermen's Cooperative Society, faced challenges due to members' illiteracy and requested government approval for two measures during their 25th October 1945, meeting. Firstly, they sought permission to appoint the petty yard officer as the cooperative's secretary to provide guidance and improve the society's management. Secondly, they proposed a one-pie cess on salt sold to ticketed holders to generate funds for the cooperative's betterment. Both requests were aimed at enhancing the society's functioning and benefiting its members. The Assistant Director of Fisheries reported that this arrangement improved the society's overall condition and benefited its members.⁹⁷

The society later decided to increase this fee to two pies per unit of salt. The Director of Fisheries endorsed this proposal, recognizing the positive impact this system has had on the society's members' savings. The Governor approved the increase, and the extra money collected was to be used to pay off fishermen's debts to the cooperative or saved in their personal accounts.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ G O NO.1313 dated 29/3/1946, D D, R A K.

⁹⁸ G O NO.3497 dated 28/7/1951, (Mis), D D, R A K.

3.11.2 *Madapally Mogers Cooperative Society and Fish Curing Yard*- The Madapalli Moger's Cooperative Society (Reg. No. 2262) in Muttungalamsom, Kurumbranad Taluk, of the Malabar district was registered on 4th June 1917 and started functioning on 6th August 1917. It was started for the welfare of the fishermen's community and was under the direct supervision of the Fisheries Department. The government permitted the petty yard officer, Madapally fish curing yard, to collect from the ticket holders of the yard, who were also members of the Madapally fishermen's co-operative society, a cess at the rate of one pie for every seer of salt issued to them towards their dues to the society.⁹⁹

Factional Disputes in Society: - A serious disagreement between Chandran, the society's president, and a clerk member led to the society's¹⁰⁰ dissolution. Allegations of nepotism in loan disbursement and internal divisions fueled the conflict. The attempts made by the Assistant Director of Fisheries Calicut, and the Deputy Registrar of co-operative Societies, Calicut to settle matters amicably, proved futile.¹⁰¹

Despite intervention by government officials to reconcile the opposing factions, their efforts were unsuccessful. While accusations of financial impropriety were leveled, investigations ultimately determined that the cooperative society's downfall was primarily caused by internal strife rather than financial mismanagement. With the removal of Chandran Vydier from the position of President, the conflict came to an end, and subsequently, the government reinstated the registration.

⁹⁹ G O NO. 1312 dated 29/3/1946, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁰ His attempts to benefit himself financially at the expense of society and the tendency of some members who owe large amounts to the society to help him in the matter were the main reasons for factions among the members of the society. On 16th November 1930, he misused his position by retaining a heavy cash balance and by taking Benami loans despite the repeated instructions of this department and the fisheries department in whose charge this society was placed. In 1930 he was replaced by a man belonging to the rival party, the leader of the rival party is the clerk of the society. He was removed from the Presidentship but yet he continued to be a member of the society till 1st December 1934.

¹⁰¹ Letter No.7518/35 dated 7th November 1935, from the Joint Registrar, co-operative societies, Madras to the secretary Madapally Mogers co-operative society, Malabar. D D, R A K.

The Madapalli Fishermen's Cooperative Society requested an increase in the salt cess from 1 pie to 3 pies per seer. This increase was justified based on the reduction in salt prices, which had improved the financial situation of the members. The society's request was approved by the government in 1951, allowing the petty yard officer of the Madapalli fish curing yard to collect the increased cess from members who were also ticket holders of the yard.¹⁰²

3.11.3 Cannanore Fisheries Society During the colonial period, women's status significantly improved. Progressive fisherwomen in Cannanore, Kerala, India, played a pivotal role in founding the region's first women-led fisheries cooperative society. These women were integral to the economic well-being of their fishing households. The members of the Cannanore Fisheries Cooperative Society were women. Once the fish was caught and landed by men, almost everything else, such as marketing fresh fish, preserving fish by curing, and other methods of keeping accounts and calculating profits, etc. were done by women.¹⁰³ Most of them were illiterate. The Inspector of Cooperative Societies reported that they were illiterate and unable to conduct the business of the society and therefore, the help and guidance of the Sub Inspector was essential for the proper working of the Society.¹⁰⁴ The women organizers were entitled to travel allowance under Madras Travelling Allowance Rules as for an officer of Grade VI.¹⁰⁵

The Sub Inspector, of Cannanore fish curing yard, was permitted to collect from the ticket holders of the yard their dues to the society at the rate of one pie per

¹⁰² G O NO.4068 dated 12/9/1951, D D, R A K.

¹⁰³ G.O NO. 1096.

¹⁰⁴ G.O NO. 2393 dated 23/9/1938, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁵ For Journeys made within five miles, i.e., within the Calicut town, she can draw only the actual fare by railway or other public conveyance under Rule 57 of the Madras Travelling Allowance rules. As there are no such public conveyances within Calicut town, she cannot claim anything for her journey within the town (G.O NO.2848 dated 14/11/1938 D D, R A K). The honorary women organizer of Malabar has represented that there are 2 women's societies in Calicut town which require to be visited constantly, that there was scope for more and that therefore she should give a conveyance allowance of Rupees 15 per month to maintain a jutka (It was stated that a Jutka, horse vehicle, in Calicut was very expensive at that time). The Deputy Registrar reported that Rupees 7/8 per month should allow to enable her to meet the Jutka fare for visiting the societies and organizing more societies (G O No. 2848).

seer of salt issued to them.¹⁰⁶ Apart from this collection of cess from multiple locations was also made.¹⁰⁷ In 1946 permission to levy a cess was also issued.¹⁰⁸

3.11.4 Tellichery Fish Curers Cooperative Society- The Assistant Director of Fisheries (Coast) reported that the Tellicherry Fish Curers' Cooperative Society requested government approval to implement a cess collection system. The society proposed that the Sub-Inspector of the Tellicherry Fish Curing Yard, who also served as the society's secretary, collect a one-pie cess per seer of salt from society members holding tickets.¹⁰⁹ The collected funds would be deposited into members' accounts. The report noted that this cess collection system had been successful in other areas.¹¹⁰

3.11.5 Blangad Society - The government provided loans of Rs. 1500 each to two newly formed fishing cooperatives, Palapatty and Balangad Societies. Established in 1927, the Balangad Society started its operations in March of the same year.¹¹¹ This loan helped these West Coast societies acquire essential equipment like boats, nets, and other fishing gear.

The Blangad Araya Jana Co-operative Society was the only non-credit society of this kind on the West Coast. The main idea then was to get the members freed from the clutches of moneylenders and other traders thereby improving their

¹⁰⁶ G O NO.2814 dated 19/7/1950, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁷ The society also had to collect a fee of one pie per seer of salt issued to its members from the yard, to be applied towards their dues to the society. The government permitted the collection of dues to co-operative societies as a cess from the yard. (Memorandum NO.2109-I/38-4, dated 8/9/1938, D D, R A K.) This practice was implemented by other societies, such as the Kasargod and Madapalli co-operative societies, and subsequently extended to Quilandy and Meladi (G O NO.1744 dated 29/7/1940, D D, R A K).

¹⁰⁸ In 1946, permission was granted to levy a cess of one pie per seer of salt issued to the ticket holders of the Kozhikode fish curing yard who were also members of the fishermen's co-operative society. Consequently, the members felt that they should save more by increasing the rate of cess. In a general body meeting in January 1950, they passed a resolution requesting permission to increase the rate of cess from one pie to two pies per seer of salt issued. (G O NO.3497 dated 28/7/1951, D D, R A K.).

¹⁰⁹ G.O NO.403 dated 1/2/1942, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁰ G O NO. 1678 dated 25/4/1946, D D, R A K.

¹¹¹ At its general body meeting held on 14th October 1932, C Kesavan, Assistant teacher at Blangad Fisheries School, was admitted as a member by the Blangad Araya Jana Co-operative Society and he was subsequently elected as secretary of the society (G O NO.1567 dated 6/12/1932, D D, R A K.).

economic condition. The fishermen had to sell fish to them and they were paid only after one to two months. They were sometimes not given the full payment.

3.11.6 Palapatty Fishermen Cooperative Society- The majority of fish curers lived in poverty and relied solely on the fishing industry for their livelihood. To make ends meet, they are forced to borrow money from local wealthy individuals at exorbitant interest rates ranging from 24 to 36 percent. Labour was abundant and inexpensive, with daily wages for male and female workers being a mere 3 and 2 annas respectively.¹¹² Cooperative Society placed on record its extreme regret in not having paid anything towards the government loan, owing to the poverty of fish. The government sanctioned the extension of repayment many times.¹¹³

The society experienced a significant shortage of members willing to participate in fishing operations. On any given day, a mere eight individuals volunteered to work on the society's boats. As a result, non-members had to be recruited daily to complete the crew. Furthermore, the members who did participate demonstrated a notable lack of commitment to the society's well-being. They exhibited a careless attitude toward their duties and expressed a desire to distance themselves from the society's activities.¹¹⁴ This attitude, along with the lack of serviceable nets and the deteriorating condition of the three boats, was causing significant depreciation.

The government observed that the failure of the society is ascribed mainly to indifference and lack of cooperation among its members; and that this state of affairs had been prescribed for a long time. The boats and nets owned by the society were used for joint fishing and were the joint property of the society. The balance of sale

¹¹² V. Govindan, Fishery statistics and information West and East coasts, M F Bulletin No.9, Madras: Government Press 1916, p.60.

¹¹³ The government sanctioned an extension of time for one more year from 1st April 1932 for the repayment of the loan, as the society would not be able to discharge the government loan before 31st March 1932 owing to the extreme poverty of fish and the general famine conditions prevailing in the locality (G O NO.408 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K). In the circumstances reported the government granted a further extension of time up to 31st March 1933 to the Palapatty Fishermen Cooperative Society (G O NO.408).

¹¹⁴ G O NO.606 dated 23/5/1933, D D, R A K.

proceeds of the fish caught after paying a minimum living wage to the boatmen was divided equally between the society and the crew.

The Special Cooperative Inspector convened a general body meeting of the Palapatty Fishermen Cooperative Society on 15th May 1933. At this meeting, the society resolved to comply with government orders and proceeded to sell its boats and nets to liquidate its government debt.

Mr. Kutil Sankaran of Blangad agreed to purchase the boats for a sum of Rupees 300. He requested a flexible payment plan, offering to pay either in installments or a lump sum within a year. The nets and other articles belonging to the society were sold by the Inspector of fisheries, Chowghat in the auction on 18th December 1933 for Rupees forty-two, four Anna and Zero pie.¹¹⁵ The society's failure to properly maintain its own boat is a clear demonstration of the lack of oversight and competence among its authorities.

3.11.7 Kizhur Araya Jana Cooperative Society- The Kizhur Araya Jana Cooperative Society owned the building housing the Kizhur fisheries school. To accommodate approximately 40 additional students, the society secretary secured approval for an extension at a general body meeting held on 7th December 1937. The construction was financed through a government loan of Rs. 700 secured by a mortgage on the extended portion of the building. This proposal recommended approving another loan of Rs. 700 for the society to further expand the school building.¹¹⁶

However, this practice was discontinued as aligning it with the government's borrowing rate was deemed unnecessary. The government's provisional loans fund was 3.25% per annum. Previously, the government charged a higher rate (7.5%) to agriculturists, cooperative societies, and individuals.¹¹⁷ However, this practice was discontinued as aligning it with the government's borrowing rate was deemed unnecessary.

¹¹⁵ G O NO.985 dated 16/8/1933, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁶ G O NO.1271 dated 17/5/1938, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁷ G O NO.305 dated 26/2/1936, D D, R A K.

An audit of the Kizhur Fishermen's Cooperative Society for 1937-1938 revealed issues, as reported by the Assistant Director (coast) and the auditor from Kasargod. To address these problems, the special cooperative inspector proposed appointing the headmaster of the Kizhur school as an agent for collecting dues from members.

Following this suggestion, the Assistant Director sought approval under Section 43 of the Madras Cooperative Societies Act, 1932, from the Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies in Mangalore. The Registrar confirmed agreement with the Assistant Director's recommendation.¹¹⁸

3.11.8 Kaipamangalam Fishermen Cooperative Society -The fishermen's association in Kaipamangalam elected K.V. Velayudan, a teacher at the local fisheries school, as their secretary. The government official in charge of fisheries recommended allowing Velayudan to hold both positions as long as it did not interfere with his teaching duties. The government granted permission for K.V. Velayudan, a teacher at Kaipamangalam Fisheries Higher Elementary School, to hold the position of secretary for the Fishermen's Cooperative Society there. He also received a small annual payment, not more than Rs. 100, for his work with society. Importantly, this additional responsibility should not interfere with his primary teaching duties at the school.¹¹⁹

3.11.9 Chentrapuri Araya Jana Society elected K.K. Velayudhan and K.R. Kesavan, teachers at the Kaipamangalam Fisheries School, as president and secretary, respectively. These positions are voluntary (honorary). The official overseeing cooperatives recommends approval, as most society members were illiterate and struggled to manage it themselves. The inspector argued that in some cases, government employees like teachers were necessary to ensure a society's success, even its survival. The Director of Fisheries approves K.K. Velayudhan and K.R.

¹¹⁸ G O NO.1316 dated 19/5/1939, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁹ G O NO.1049.

Kesavan, teachers at the Kaipamangalam Fisheries School, to become honorary president and secretary of the Chetrapuri Araya Jana Society.¹²⁰

3.11.10 Pudiappa Fish Curers Society -The fisherfolk and fish processors of Pudiappa face a constant struggle with poverty, especially during the lean season. To make ends meet, they were forced to borrow money from Mappila fish merchants. While these loans came without interest, they came with a hefty catch: the fishermen were obligated to sell their catches at a significantly discounted price (10-20% below market value). This system created a vicious cycle of debt, as the only way to escape owing money to one merchant was to borrow from another. This exploitative system ensured that the fisherfolk and processors never received fair value for their labour. Furthermore, the fishermen who worked on the boats were compensated with a share of the catch, while those working on land processing the fish received meager wages. Men were paid 3-5 annas, women 2-3 annas, and boys only 2 annas.¹²¹

The Pudiappa Fish Curers' Society held a meeting on October 10, 1945. The society discussed adjusting membership fees based on individual income. They believed the Petty Yard Officer's knowledge of fishing catches and past collections would be valuable in setting appropriate fees.¹²² To assist the officer with his duties without hindering his official work, the society proposed hiring an assistant for a monthly salary of Rs. 3. This decision stemmed from past difficulties collecting membership dues. Expressing their confidence in the officer's judgment and honesty, the society unanimously requested the government, through the Sub-Assistant Director, to officially appoint him as president for a one-year term.

C.P. Raman, K. Koppan, Pilakandy Kumaran, M. Kalladi, and M. Chekkan were elected Panchayatdars. The meeting decided to penalize members with unpaid

¹²⁰ G O NO.1678.

¹²¹ V. Govindan, Bulletin No.9, p.57.

¹²² G O NO.1692 dated 22/7/1940, D D, R A K.

dues and authorized the president to employ a literate assistant for Rs. 3 monthly to manage paperwork and fee collection.¹²³

In August 1941, the government approved the appointment of the Petty Yard Officer of the Pudiappa Fisheries Curing Yard as president of the Pudiappa Fish Curers Society for a four-year term. The Assistant Director of Fisheries (Coast) reported that the sanction has expired. The society's general body meeting, held on October 10, 1945, passed a resolution requesting permission for the Petty Yard Officer to continue as president for another four years. Additionally, the society manages a ration shop.¹²⁴

3.11.11 Kadalundi Arayajana Society -The Arayajana Cooperative Society, a counterpart to the Kadalundi school, was founded and registered to benefit its members. Initially thriving, the society faced a setback in 1943. A critical shortage emerged: a complete absence of literate members capable of fulfilling the secretary's role. This illiteracy hindered the society's daily operations and formal correspondence.¹²⁵

To address the secretary shortage, the society requested the appointment of Mr. A.V. Appu, a teacher from the Kadalundi fisheries school. The Assistant Director of Fisheries confirmed the society's difficulties. The government approved Mr. Appu's temporary and unpaid appointment to assist the society as secretary.¹²⁶

The Mukkuva fisherfolk in this region were struggling financially. They were gradually being outcompeted by Mappilla merchants who had better equipment and more capital. This economic disparity was further amplified by the credit system, where Mappilla fish merchants (money lenders) provided loans to the Mukkuvus in exchange for their catches. This system traps the Mukkuvus in debt and hinders their

¹²³ G O NO.1692.

¹²⁴ G O NO.5070 dated 24/12/1945, D D, R A K.

¹²⁵ G O NO.2533 dated 8/10/1943, D D, R A K.

¹²⁶ G O NO.2533.

ability to improve their livelihoods. Additionally, they employ hired labour on a per-job basis.¹²⁷

3.11.12 Kasargod Cooperative Society - In an attempt to improve their situation, the Kasargod fishermen's cooperative society took action. During a meeting held on 19th April 1938, they decided to appoint the petty yard officer from the Adakathabail fish curing yard as their manager for a two-year term. However, a new challenge arose. Some society members faced lawsuits filed by their Mappila fish merchants. These legal proceedings required the manager's attendance in court and at lawyer's offices.¹²⁸

To address this issue, the society passed another resolution on 22nd February 1939. They requested permission from the government to allow the petty yard officer to serve as their ex-officio secretary. This shift replaced the manager position with a properly formed board of directors, with the petty yard officer acting as the ex-officio secretary. The proposal emphasized that the secretary would not necessarily need to attend court proceedings, allowing them to focus on their duties within the cooperative structure. In essence, the Kasargod fishermen's cooperative society sought to empower itself through better leadership and organization. The proposed changes aimed to address both their financial dependence on Mappilla merchants and the legal challenges faced by some members.¹²⁹

3.11.13 Vekkode Cooperative Society- The report details the registration of a new cooperative society in the village of Vekkode. While villagers, particularly the fisherfolk members, were enthusiastic about the initiative, the society faced challenges. These struggles stemmed from a lack of literate members, leading to frequent occurrences of shortcomings and deviations from the established rules (by-laws).¹³⁰

¹²⁷ G O NO.1505 dated 17/6/1938, D D, R A K.

¹²⁸ G O NO.1505.

¹²⁹ G O NO.1505.

¹³⁰ G O NO.399 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.

3.11.14 *Quilandy Araya Jana Cooperative Society* - The Quilandy Cooperative Society primarily served Mukkuva fishermen, with a few exceptions who are Mappilas. While the Mukkuvas were skilled in their trade, they generally lacked formal education and struggled with maintaining hygiene. Poverty was widespread among both fishermen and fish curers (who process the catch).¹³¹ Their entire livelihood depended on fishing, making times of scarce fish particularly difficult. Traditionally, the men go fishing while the women handle the curing process.

1935-1936 Annual Report: Quilandy Arayajana Cooperative Society¹³²

Receipts		Disbursements	
Share capital	10-18-0	Loans to members	436-10-0
Loan repayments	392-0-0	Dividend paid	25-10-0
Interest received	105-8-0	Central bank share	10-0-0
Entrance fee	1-0-0	Reserve fund invested	14-2-0
Postal savings bank account-withdrawn	50-0-0	Postal savings bank account-	40-0-0
		Court costs	9-2-0
		Suspense liability account	22-6-0
		Commission paid	5-0-0
		Books and court charges	2-13-0
		Excess interest repaid	0-10-0
Total	559-5-0	Total	566-0-0
Opening balance	30-10-0	Closing balance	23-15-0
Grant total	589-15-0	Grant total	589-15-0

The society collected dues from its members in a unique way. It levied a small charge (one pie per seer of salt) on the salt issued to members from the fish curing yard. This system of collecting dues through a “cess” from the yard has

¹³¹ V. Govindan, Bulletin No.9, p.56.

¹³² G O NO.1524 dated 3/9/1936, D D, R A K.

received government approval. Previously implemented in Kasargod and Madapalli cooperatives, this method was subsequently extended to Quilandy and Meladi.¹³³

The Quilandy Arayajana Cooperative Society was experiencing a positive transformation. In a meeting held on 4th December 1940, the society unanimously requested the government to extend the sub-inspector's term as their ex-officio secretary for another two years. This decision reflects the positive impact the sub-inspector's leadership has had on the society's well-being. The cooperative inspector's report emphasizes the society's continued need for the sub-inspector's guidance, as its success could falter without it. Recognizing this need, the government granted permission for the sub-inspector of fisheries at the Quilandy fish curing yard to continue serving as the society's ex-officio secretary for an additional two years.¹³⁴

3.11.15 Talikulam Fishermen Cooperative Society- To build fisheries schools, many cooperative societies had taken on substantial loans. The Talikulam Fishermen's Cooperative is a prime example, facing severe financial difficulties due to loans acquired for building their school. The Panchayat members, who were part-owners of the school building, had been unable to repay their loans to the cooperative because of their low income.¹³⁵

To alleviate this financial crisis, it was proposed that the cooperative sell half of the school building to the government. The funds generated from this sale would be used to repay the cooperative's bank loans and settle the outstanding debts of the Panchayat members. This financial relief would enable the cooperative to operate smoothly.¹³⁶

Both the Panchayat and the fisheries inspector support this plan, recognizing the urgent need to address the debt issue. They believed that resolving the debt problem would allow the Panchayat to focus on improving the cooperative's overall

¹³³ G O NO.1744.

¹³⁴ G O NO.316 dated 19/2/1941, D D, R A K.

¹³⁵ G O NO.481 dated 5/4/1932, D D, R A K.

¹³⁶ G O NO.481.

condition, especially given the unpredictable nature of the fishing industry. The inspector also agreed to support the Panchayat's request for a swift and fair sale of the building to the government.¹³⁷

3.11.16 Vadanappalli Arayajana Cooperative Society- The Vadanapalli Arayajana Cooperative Society held a meeting on 15th May 1945, to elect their new president. The society chose the petty yard officer from the Vadanapalli fish curing yard for the position. Additionally, the society decided to request government approval to allow the president to hold both positions concurrently ex officio.

A report submitted during the meeting highlighted concerns about the society's current state. It noted that a majority of the members were fishermen facing financial hardship and lacking formal education. Due to these limitations, the report recommended seeking external assistance for the society's proper management. The report further emphasized the need for a competent individual to manage the society's affairs and provide guidance to the office bearers.¹³⁸

3.11.17 Nattika Arayajana Cooperative Society - During a general meeting on 30th June 1938, the Arayajana Cooperative Society elected Mr. E.V. Kumaran, a teacher at the South Nattika School, as a member of the panchayat. However, government rules (specifically rule 12, subsidiary rule 2) typically prohibited government employees from holding positions in cooperative societies unless those societies were solely composed of government workers or a mix of government and local body employees. Recognizing this, the special cooperative inspector recommended granting E. V. Kumaran an exception and allowing him to serve as the society's secretary. Therefore, it was recommended that the government grant permission for E.V. Kumaran, a teacher at the South Nattika Fisheries School, to hold the secretary position in the Arayajana Cooperative Society, South Nattika. This permission would not interfere with his primary duties as a teacher.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ G O NO.481.

¹³⁸ G O NO. 348 dated 22/01/1946, D D, R A K.

¹³⁹ G O NO.873 dated 31/3/1938, D D, R A K.

3.11.18 Kuriyadi Fishermen Cooperative Society- In a meeting, the Kuriyadi Fishermen's Cooperative Society proposed to appoint the sub-inspector of the Badagara fish curing yard as their secretary. They also requested permission to collect a small tax (one pie per unit) on salt sold to society members. This method of collecting a tax had been successful in other cooperatives, allowing members to repay loans and build up savings. The proposal is supported by higher fisheries officials.¹⁴⁰

Financial mismanagement by the current leadership had pushed the Kottikulam fishermen's cooperative society to the brink. The small cooperative (49 members) was drowning in outstanding loans (over Rs. 2600), with a significant portion overdue. Even a loan from the central bank remains unpaid. To address this crisis, officials were taking an unconventional step: appointing the headmaster of a nearby fisheries school as the ex-officio president. The hope had been that this outsider could bring fresh leadership and improve the cooperative society's financial health.¹⁴¹

3.11.19 Kottikulam Fishermen Cooperative Society- Due to the malfunctioning of the Kottikulam Fishermen's Cooperative Society for a considerable time, the cooperative inspector recommended an inquiry under Section 38 of the Act. In response, the Deputy Registrar of Mangalore instructed the inspector to hold a general body meeting. The aim was to elect a more effective Panchayat (committee) to tackle the issue of recovering overdue loans. However, the inspector reported that despite his efforts, replacing the president and secretary proved impossible. He added that the society lacked qualified members to take on leadership roles. Faced with this situation, the Deputy Registrar asked the inspector to explore appointing an external agent. During a general body meeting held on 29th July 1940, convened by the inspector, the society itself proposed a solution. They

¹⁴⁰ G O NO.359 dated 23/01/1946, D D, R A K.

¹⁴¹ G O NO.317 dated 19/2/1941, D D, R A K.

requested permission from the government to appoint the headmaster of the nearby fisheries school at Bekal as their ex-officio president.¹⁴²

3.11.20 Bekal Fishermen Co-operative Society - During a meeting on October 19th, 1938, the Bekal Fishermen's Cooperative Society addressed two matters. First, they petitioned the government to allow the petty yard officer of the Bekal fish curing yard to serve as their ex-officio secretary or manager, a decision made by the general body. Second, the society elected a new Panchayath.¹⁴³

The government approved the Bekal Fishermen's Cooperative Society's request to appoint the petty yard officer of the Bekal fish curing yard as their ex-officio secretary. However, it is important to note that this is an unpaid position. This order did not authorize any compensation for the petty yard officer's additional role, and any future claims for payment would be rejected.¹⁴⁴

At the general body meeting held on 4th February 1946, the members of the Bekal Fishermen Co-operative Society resolved to request the government to accord sanction authorizing the petty yard officer, Bekal fish curing yard who is the ex-officio secretary of the society to collect cess at the rate of one pie per seer of salt issued to the ticket holders of the yard who were also the members of the society. The cess realized was credited to the account of the members with the society and adjusted towards their loan taken from the society or treated as their savings when they are not indebted to the society.¹⁴⁵

3.11.21 Government Restricts Yarn Distribution to Cooperative Members: - In a new directive, the government mandated that fishermen's cooperatives distribute yarn solely to their members. Non-member fishermen would need to acquire yarn through established trade channels. The government aligned with the Registrar of Cooperative Societies' position. They believed that fishermen seeking to enjoy the benefits of cooperatives should also share the responsibilities of

¹⁴² G O NO.317.

¹⁴³ G O NO.1191 dated 6/5/1939, D D, R A K.

¹⁴⁴ G O NO.1191.

¹⁴⁵ G O NO.1518 dated 12/4/1946, D D, R A K.

membership. Joining a cooperative was encouraged to achieve this balance. To increase participation, the government instructed all fisheries and cooperative department officers who interacted with fishermen to actively promote membership in cooperatives.¹⁴⁶

The proliferation of fish oil and guano factories along India's west coast could be traced back to innovations pioneered in Tanur. The traditional method of producing fertilizer from sardines involves sun-drying, which is wasteful. This process results in the loss of valuable fish oil and the inclusion of unwanted sand in the final product. Farmers ended up paying for inferior fertilizer contaminated with sand. A more efficient method involves boiling fresh sardines to extract fish oil. The remaining fish was then dried and ground into a high-quality, odourless fertilizer. This process offers a cleaner, more effective product without the drawbacks of the traditional method. Several factories adopted this improved technique.¹⁴⁷

The suggestion was to combine a fish cannery with an experimental fish curing yard and an oil and guano factory. This approach aimed to maximize efficiency by purchasing large quantities of incoming fish. The highest quality fish was directed to the cannery, the next best for curing or smoking, and the remaining fish was processed into oil and guano. However, concerns exist regarding the sanitation of guano production. It was recommended that a significant distance separated the cannery from any guano factory.¹⁴⁸

The director was tasked with investigating these concerns and considering them when selecting a suitable location for the facility. Additionally, it was hoped that improved factory management would allow for the wider adoption of the solderless canning process, potentially phasing out the traditional soldering method entirely.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ G O NO.1638 dated 24/4/1950, D D, R A K.

¹⁴⁷ *Papers From 1899*, Madras Fisheries Bureau, Bulletin No.1, Vol. I, Madras: The Superintendent, Government Press, 1915, pp-159-160.

¹⁴⁸ G O NO.1897.

¹⁴⁹ G O NO.1897.

3.11.22 *Cooperative Societies for Stake Net Fishermen* - Fishermen, both riverine and marine, had their own cooperative societies. Primarily composed of Mogaya community members, these societies relied on stake nets for fishing. To encourage the formation and joining of these cooperatives, a rule was implemented requiring all Stake Net license holders to be members.¹⁵⁰

In Malabar, cooperative societies were established for the benefit of stake net fishermen in areas with licensing systems. For instance, the Matool and Madai societies catered to fishermen in the Taliparamba and Balipatam rivers, while the Vengalam, Velloor, and Elathur societies served those in Korapuzha. Additionally, the Chetwayi fishermen had their own cooperative. Organizing these societies in licensing areas was relatively easy, as fishermen naturally congregated in these locations.¹⁵¹ These gatherings provided a platform to address their grievances and collectively find solutions to their problems.

3.11.23 *An Evaluation of the Functioning of Cooperative Societies*- Initially, the government offered incentives like boats, loans, and grants to encourage their formation. These cooperatives aimed to improve the social and economic well-being of fishing communities. Members paid fees and received loans for equipment, with repayment in installments. “The government’s initiative to link the organization of cooperatives to attractive incentives like the provision of mechanized boats, long-term loans, and grants was soon implemented.”¹⁵² The boats and nets purchased were utilized by the members for joint fishing. The resulting catches were sold and proceeds were divided in a particular proportion.¹⁵³ The society was able to repay the government loan in three installments from the years 1928-29 to 1930-31. The loan was repaid promptly because there were good catches at that time and the

¹⁵⁰ G O NO.1819 dated 2/9/1942, D D, R A K.

¹⁵¹ Letter No.18109 C2/50 dated 1st July 1952, from the Director of Fisheries, Madras to the Secretary to Government D D, Madras, R A K.

¹⁵² K. G. Kumar, ‘Organizing Fisherfolk Cooperatives in Kerala’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.23, No.12, 1988, pp.578-581.

¹⁵³ A maximum of 8 annas to each of the crew as living wage; and half of the balance to the society. The rest is divided among the crew into such terms as may be determined by the board of directors.

panchayat members knew that if they did not repay the loan in time, the government would auction the properties for the loan balance.¹⁵⁴

However, the system faced challenges. Factions arose due to disputes over leadership, sometimes leading to the collapse of cooperatives. Additionally, many members were illiterate, requiring government-appointed secretaries to explain procedures. These secretaries, often fishery school teachers or curing yard officers, received honorariums for their work. Regular inspections ensured the proper functioning of the cooperatives.

3.12 Conclusion

In 1917, Sir F.A. Nicholson embarked on a mission to uplift the lives of west coast fishermen through a cooperative movement. This initiative, coupled with educational efforts spearheaded by fishery schools, instilled a sense of empowerment in young fishermen. Embracing the values of thrift, cooperation, and progress, they embarked on a journey of social transformation. However, despite their noble intentions, these programmes failed to reach their intended beneficiaries. British policies failed to uplift fishing communities in India. These schemes often prioritized the British treasury over the well-being of fisherfolk. Profits ended up lining the pockets of middlemen, leaving fishers in dire straits. Unfortunately, this lack of support continued even after colonial rule. Successive governments haven't done enough to improve the lives of those who rely on fishing for their livelihood.

¹⁵⁴ G O NO.1159 dated 20/05/1940, D D, R A K.

CHAPTER IV

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND FISHERIES TRAINING INSTITUTE

4.1 Introduction

“Vocationalization of education”¹ was a crucial step in the evolution of modern education in India. The British colonial administration initiated the groundwork for establishing vocational education institutions, laying the foundation for this significant educational paradigm shift. The 20th century witnessed a surge in support for vocational education as India underwent rapid transformation under Western colonial influence.² Traditional Indian education systems were modernized, and the introduction of vocational education was a pivotal reform. As part of this broader movement, efforts were made to establish vocational institutions in the Malabar region of Kerala.

The British colonial government’s early initiatives in vocational education marked a significant milestone in the history of Indian education. This emphasis on practical skills and job-oriented training can be viewed as a progressive step that has had a lasting impact on India’s educational landscape. The British aimed to focus more on vocational training in India to create a pool of skilled workers. This workforce was crucial for maximizing the utilization of India's abundant natural resources. India possessed vast, largely untapped reserves of high-quality iron ore, coal, and limestone. Additionally, it had significant deposits of manganese ore, salt, saltpetre, and mica. Burma, a part of British India at the time, offered further resources like lead, silver, copper, zinc, wolfram, and petroleum. To effectively

¹ “Vocational education aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice by requiring students to participate in practical activities. This approach not only solidifies students' knowledge but also helps them develop critical thinking skills and intellectual abilities.”

² Harvey Kantor, ‘Work, education and vocational Reform: The ideological origin of vocation education 1890-1920’, *American Journal of Education*, Vol-94, no.4, University of Chicago, 1986, pp.401-426.

exploit this mineral wealth, the British believed they needed both investment capital and a skilled technical workforce.

Chapter Design

Focusing on British India's Malabar region, Chapter Four explores the development of vocational education. By the 1920s, Malabar, a district within the Madras Presidency, had become a center for skill-based training. The chapter exemplifies this with the establishment of several institutions: a vocational agricultural middle school in Thaliparamba, an industrial school in Calicut, and a coir school in Beypore. Furthermore, it delves into the implementation of part-time vocational classes across Malabar, detailing both the course offerings and the locations where they were held. Significantly, the chapter examines the establishment of a fisheries training institute, its unique characteristics, and its connection to Sir Frederick Nicholson's vision of bringing fisheries education to fishing communities.

4.2 Steiner's Influence on Vocational Education - Georg Michael Kerschen Steiner was a German educational theorist and pioneer in the field of vocational education. He advocated a pragmatic approach to elementary and secondary education, blending classical studies with manual labour.³ The first and most common perspective associated the rise in vocational education with technological changes generated by the Industrial Revolution.⁴ Vocational education is education that equips a person with such knowledge, skill, or capacity as directly helps him to take to some art or craft or industry as an occupation and means of livelihood. General education, imparted in the present system of education, helped very little to solve life's practical problems.⁵

³ <https://kids.britannica.com/Georg-Kerschensteiner/45175>.

⁴ Aaron Benavot, 'The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education', *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 56, No.2, *American Sociological Association*, 1983, pp.63-76.

⁵ B.N. Luniya, *Evolution of Indian culture from the earliest times to the present day*, Madhya Pradesh: university Indore, 1951, p.520.

4.2.1 *The Evolution of Vocational Education in British India:* - From Wood's Despatch to Modernization - Wood's Despatch of 1854 was the inaugural official document that resembled a national education policy. It delineated the East India Company's responsibilities in providing education across British India. Despatch stressed the establishment of technical schools and colleges along with traditional education in India. These technical schools and colleges were to impart vocational training to the talented youth, whom the company wanted to absorb into the other branches of the public service.⁶ One of the important recommendations given by Woods dispatch was to educate the common people and to make them vocationally efficient.

Vocational courses were introduced as a part of secondary education and first took place in India following the recommendation of the Hunter Commission of 1882. Even though the curriculum was assorted as per the commission, ultimately the change failed to gain popularity. Secondary education was vocationalized once again, following recommendations of the Hartog committee of 1929. The Abbot-Wood Report 1937 recommended that vocational education should be organized according to the needs of various vocational areas. There should be separate schools for general and vocational education, as the purpose of the two is different. It is also recommended to encourage girls' participation. The vocational school should be established near vocational centres, as far as possible. Thereafter, different committees and commissions have made different recommendations for the expansion of vocational education. Technical and industrial progress was also likely to create numerous openings for men with a good vernacular education.⁷

During the colonial period, two factors contributed to the influence of the responsible authorities towards an improvement in the provision of vocational education.⁸ By the 1920's vocational education movement had sparked a flurry of change designed to adapt the school to the needs of the workplace. The schools

⁶ *Educational Papers: A Supplement to the South India Missionary Conference Report*, Madras: Addison & Co., 1880, p.32.

⁷ *Indian Education Policy 1913*, Calcutta: The Superintendent, Government Press, 1915, p.13.

⁸ A. Abbott, 'The Development of Vocational Education in India', *The Royal Society of Arts*, Vol.87, 1939, pp.427-453.

added courses to teach specific vocational skills, extended vocational training to much larger numbers of students, and introduced new procedures to sort and select students for jobs and into educational tracks.⁹ Educators and social reformers turned to vocational education because it reflected their underlying belief that the reasons for dropping out such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunity were largely due to individual attributes, not the structure of the economy.¹⁰

4.2.2 Vocational Education as a British Strategy during Colonialism

Colonial empires implemented educational policies that shared some similarities, but there were also significant variations. These variations occurred between empires and even within the same empire across different colonies or historical periods. For instance, British educational policies in India differed throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. These evolving and diverse policies were shaped by economic, social, and ideological changes in both the colonizing countries and the colonies themselves.¹¹

The British implemented vocational education in their colonies with a complex agenda. While the primary goal was to develop a workforce skilled in resource extraction and economic management, there was a secondary motive at play.

4.2.3 Vocational Education as a British Response to Student Activism in Colonial India

Vocational education implemented as a new strategy by the British government in response to the Non-Cooperation Movement in colonial India, as they saw students neglecting their studies for political activities. This aimed to re-engage students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, by offering practical skills alongside traditional education. The movement itself, though not initially

⁹ Harvey Kantor, p.401.

¹⁰ W. Carson Ryan, *Vocational Guidance and the public school*, Bureau of Education, Bulletin no.24, 1919, Washington: Government Printing Office 1919, p.41.

¹¹ Aparna Basu, *Essays in the history of Indian education*, New Deli: Concept Publications 1982, pp.60-61.

targeting schools directly, ultimately led to calls for a boycott of government-run institutions and the establishment of independent “National” schools.¹² This resulted in a significant decline in government school enrollment, particularly at the higher education level.¹³ The British government, facing a drop in students, implemented vocational schools as a strategy to win back student enrollment.

4.2.4 Various Vocational Schools in Malabar

Agriculture Schools — Agriculture, a crucial sector in India, received particular focus with the establishment of specialized agricultural middle schools in some provinces. A higher elementary school for underprivileged boys (12-18 years old) in Tanur, run by the Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust, launched an agriculture education programme. There were three classes, viz V, VI, and VII standards. Inspired by successful programmes in Punjab, the school secured land, built a farm shed, and hired a graduate from the Taliparamba agricultural school to teach both theoretical and practical agriculture. Mirroring the Taliparamba curriculum, this initiative aimed to equip students with valuable agricultural skills suited to the local needs.¹⁴ This programme was aimed at providing underprivileged boys with practical skills that could be beneficial for their future.

Industrial schools - Industrial schools were also established as a part of vocational education. Industrial schools, like the one in Calicut, aimed to provide vocational training. They offered hostel facilities for students from outside the city.¹⁵ However, a policy limiting scholarships to a third of new admissions hurt enrollment. Experience showed that paying even small wages improved attendance and work ethic. Without financial incentives, students often leave before completing their training for immediate employment.¹⁶ The industrial schools faced problems with

¹² Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, and others, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, New Delhi: Penguin Random House, 1988, p.186.

¹³ J A Richey, *Progress of Education in India 1917-22*, Vol. I, 8th Quinquennial Review, Calcutta: Government Press, 1923, pp.2-3.

¹⁴ G O NO.817 dated 3/5/1928, D D, R A K.

¹⁵ G O NO.990 dated 16/7/1937, D D, R A K.

¹⁶ G O NO.971 dated 28/4/1937, D D, R A K.

students dropping out due to lack of financial support. Recognizing this, the government proposed amendments to the regulations:

Minimum Work Days: Schools would operate for at least 225 days per year (Article 9)

Attendance Requirement: Students needed an 80% attendance rate to qualify for exams or promotion (Article 15).

Teacher Retirement: Funding wouldn't be provided for teachers exceeding 55 years of age (Article 26).¹⁷ These changes aimed to address the issues impacting student commitment and school effectiveness.

Industrial schools of woodworking, metalworking, weaving, women's work, and miscellaneous under the Department of Commerce and special regulations for elementary schools under public management were opened. These schools were opened to boys and girls alike, except the girls' schools where the Inspectress considered the presence of boys, or boys of a certain age, undesirable.¹⁸

These government-run schools offered training in woodworking, metalworking, weaving, and various other practical skills for both boys and girls. However, the inspector overseeing girls' education felt boys shouldn't be in all these schools, particularly when the boys reached a certain age. As a result, girls' schools had some limitations on co-education.¹⁹

Soap manufacturing in The Kerala Soap Institute – Established in 1914²⁰ by the government, the Kerala Soap Institute in Calicut was a trailblazer in soap manufacturing. Its creation stemmed from the dedicated efforts of Sir Federick Nicholson. Interestingly, initial soap-making attempts occurred at the Tanur Fisheries Experimental Station earlier. The institute is particularly known for its fish oil soap, a valuable and affordable insecticide prized by planters and farmers. In

¹⁷ G O NO.2699 dated 11/6/1951, D D, R A K.

¹⁸ Madras Educational Rules 1920, p.13.

¹⁹ Madras Educational Rules 1920, p.13.

²⁰ M W M Yeatts, *Census of India 1931*, Vol. XIV, Madras part I, Calcutta: The Government Press, 1932, p.240.

addition to this special product, the institute also produces household and toilet soaps on a large scale, renowned throughout India for their purity and affordability. The institute goes beyond production, offering training programmes in soap making. Since 1927, they have equipped numerous young men with the skills to launch or manage their own soap factories across India and even Burma.²¹ The Kerala Soap Institute was a significant institution that not only revolutionized soap manufacturing in India but also empowered individuals and catered to the needs of farmers and everyday households.

Coir school - Established in 1938 under the Madras Department of Industries and Commerce during the first Congress Ministry, the Coir school in Beypore began with just 12 trainees. Initially attached to the Kerala Soap Institute in Calicut, the school moved to its Beypore location later that same year.²² It was decided to make coir spinning broad-based by training teachers in coir handicrafts through them.

The government sanctioned the deputation in 3 batches of nine higher elementary grade teachers for practical training of six months in the charka spinning of coir and other handicrafts at the Beypore coir school.²³ The government directed that out of the 12 students to be admitted every year, at least 6 hours be trained by elementary teachers from the schools situated in Malabar south-Canara, the teacher-students being taught the technique of producing superior yarn on the charka for a year. It was accordingly decided to make coir spinning broad-based by training teachers in coir handicrafts through them. Most of the students of the schools have been able, it is reported, to secure employment on completion of their course of training as teachers in coir handicrafts in elementary schools. A few of the ex-students are engaged in making and selling brushes, brooms, etc.

On completion of the first-year course, a certificate of training in coir handicrafts was given to successful candidates, and on completion of the second-year course, the successful candidates were awarded a 'pre-vocational course in coir

²¹ C. A. Innes & F B Evans, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p.xix.

²² A.Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers (Kozhikode)*, Vol. 9, Thiruvananthapuram: Government Press.1962, p.671.

²³ G.NO.1234 dated 25/6/1943, D D, R A K.

certificate. As regards other admissions, boys and girls of 17 years and above who had passed the VIII standard were admitted for training. Girl students were permitted to leave the school after the first-year course since they were physically unsuited for the weaving course in the second year but a few of them should be kept on for specialization in high-class spinning and production of finer of coir yarn.²⁴ The Coir School in Beypore played a crucial role in promoting coir handicrafts by training teachers and students. It offered valuable skills and employment opportunities in the coir industry.

4.2.5 Expanding Skills: Part-Time Vocational Programmes

Part-time vocational programmes were an excellent way to expand skills and knowledge without the time commitment of a full-time programme. They were perfect for people working adults who want to improve job prospects or change careers altogether. Vocational education offered a diverse range of courses to cater to the specific needs of different regions. These variations were driven by two key factors: 1) The availability of raw materials in different areas shaped the types of training available. 2) Courses were designed to equip students with skills relevant to the dominant occupations in their communities. part-time vocational programmes provide a flexible and adaptable approach to skills development, catering to the specific needs and job markets of different regions.

Woodwork Training

In an effort to benefit students in the secondary training classes attached to Government Brennen College, Tellicherry, the government implemented a scheme in 1923. This initiative involved opening a manual training class focused on woodwork. To lead this class, the government employed a qualified instructor holding first-class certificates for a one-year programme starting 1st July 1923.²⁵ The class officially opened its doors on 2nd July and quickly enrolled a substantial number of students. Records indicated a total of 237 participants, with 75 being

²⁴ G O NO.1815 dated 4/5/1946, D D, R A K.

²⁵ G O NO.270 dated 20/2/1923, L E, R A K.

students from the second training class and the remaining 162 pupils coming from Forms IV to VI of the high school.²⁶

As an example, a one-year experimental programme in manual training for woodwork was launched at the government training school in Cannanore. This initiative aimed to provide practical skills to approximately 169 students. The programme envisioned dividing them into batches of 20, each receiving two instruction sessions per week. The proposal included employing a dedicated manual training instructor for the duration of the programme, until 31st March 1926.²⁷ This was a one-year experiment offering practical woodworking skills to a large group of students at the Cannanore government training school.

Weaver's Schools, in different territories-

The retention of the manual training class in weaving and mat weaving was sanctioned in the government Training school, Palghat, for one year. Instruction is proposed to be given to about 136 students in batches of 14 at a time, each batch receiving 1½ day's instruction per week.²⁸ In the past, the government approved a scheme to introduce weaving as a vocational subject at Payyan's Middle School in Cannanore. This scheme, endorsed by Mr. Trumble, involved instructing 50 students. The proposal was to divide these students into 3 classes. Traditionally, the Government funded half or two-thirds of the costs associated with introducing vocational training in schools. The school management was only willing to cover one-third of the expense.

The government approved the opening of a weaving class at the Panthalayam Chalva (weaver's) school under the Kurumbranad. Board resolution no. 15 dated 27th September, 1922, documented this approval.²⁹ In the Government Training School, Palghat, officials sanctioned the continuation of a one-year manual training class in weaving and mat weaving. The proposal involved instructing roughly 136

²⁶ G O NO.1418 dated 4/9/1924, L E, R A K.

²⁷ G O NO.1594 dated 12/11/1923, L E, R A K.

²⁸ G O NO.250 dated 15/2/1923, L E, R A K.

²⁹ G O NO.1554 dated 5/11/1923, L E, R A K.

students in batches of 14.³⁰ Each batch would receive one and a half days' worth of instruction every week. The government prioritized equipping students with weaving and mat weaving skills through vocational training in schools.

New Training Programmes

In 1923, the government approved a scheme to introduce a variety of vocational training programmes at the Government Training School in Malappuram. These programmes included basketry, mat-making, coir work, rattan work, and bamboo work. To lead the instruction, an elementary-trained teacher with rattan work expertise was appointed as the instructor.³¹ Initially, the class enrolled 40 students. By the end of the first year, a total of 146 students had received instruction in cane work, mat weaving, and other crafts. The programme's popularity resulted in a significant increase in enrollment, bringing the class size to 234 students. Recognizing the programme's success, the government sanctioned its continuation in 1926, ensuring the continued availability of these valuable manual training classes in basketry, mat-making, coir, rattan, and bamboo work at the Government Training School in Malappuram.

Basket-Making Training

In a one-year experiment that began on 1st September 1923, the government Training School in Badagara implemented a pre-vocational class focused on basket-making, rattan, and bamboo work. Designed by Mr. C.R. Porrett, the programme aimed to train around 83 students in batches of 12. Each batch would receive approximately 3 hours of instruction.³² It's worth noting that Mr. Porrett also served as the Manual Training Instructor for Indian Schools and was stationed at the Teachers' College, Saidapet.

³⁰ G O NO.1580 dated 11/10/1924, L E, R A K.

³¹ G O NO.1875 dated 1/12/1924, L E, R A K.

³² G O NO.1594 dated 12/11/1923, L E, R A K.

Metalwork and Manual Training

In a previous initiative, the government implemented metalwork as a vocational subject at Government Victoria College in Palghat. The proposal outlined instruction for about 44 students from Forms IV and V, divided into classes of 12. Mr. Porrett, who examined the scheme, confirmed that a qualified mechanic was already on staff at the college and could teach the metalwork class.³³ This mechanic's existing duties included operating gas engines, charging batteries, maintaining gas, electrical, and water installations, and repairing and adjusting scientific instruments in the college and school labs. The additional time required for the mechanic to fulfill these new teaching responsibilities depended entirely on the number of students enrolled in the vocational course. For a single batch of 6 students, it was estimated that an extra two hours per day would be necessary. Additionally, the government approved the introduction of a separate Manual Training class focused on woodwork and mechanical drawing within the college's secondary department.³⁴

4.3 Fisheries Education and Fisheries Training Institutes in Colonial Malabar

F A Nicholson, a pivotal figure in the founding of the Madras Presidency's Fisheries Department, identified the critical need to uplift fish workers, a marginalized segment of society. Recognizing their isolation due to a lack of basic education, he took the initiative to establish fisheries schools and a Fisheries Training Institute, a progressive step towards improving their socioeconomic conditions.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture's report supported the establishment of fisheries schools in Malabar. The findings of the commission were as follows: "It was found that 68% of the population of Madras obtain their livelihood from the soil. Therefore, when the education department introduces changes to relate the education imparted in ordinary elementary schools to the life of the people, generally it means that the educational system is modified to the needs of an

³³ G O NO.411 dated 16/3/1923, L E, R A K.

³⁴ G O NO.1907 dated 6/12/1924, L E, R A K.

agricultural population”.³⁵ The fishing communities mostly live in hamlets apart from the residential quarters of other communities. This parochial isolation puts them out of reach of schools and other amenities of village life and in itself justifies the opening of separate schools for them. Further, the fishing community follows a highly specialized profession that has nothing in common with the professions followed by other communities. This justifies a special type of instruction. The elementary education of fisher children therefore should be intimately related to the life of a fishing village. It should be able to touch the chord of interest in the fishermen’s mentality. A need for educational reforms in the Madras Presidency to better serve the agricultural majority and address the specific needs of marginalized communities like fishing communities.

Through generations of experience, fisherfolk have amassed a deep understanding of the ocean, encompassing fish behaviour, weather patterns, and more. This traditional ecological knowledge was a valuable resource for managing fisheries and protecting the ocean, particularly when integrated with scientific knowledge. Fisheries schools and fish curing yards had played an important role in the transformation and evolution of the fisheries, which, were the major livelihood of Malabar coastal people. Blended with the traditional knowledge of fishing, the fisheries training institute intends to teach a scientific method of fishing and other jobs related to the fisheries. The curriculum included climate, net making, preservation of fish, etc. The fisherfolk would also be taught to construct boats. This new knowledge about fisheries which was different from traditional knowledge helped the fishermen of Malabar to continue their jobs easy and scientific way.

When the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut was founded, the idea was to bring fisherfolk students for training in that institute.³⁶ The efforts of the fisheries department to train a special type of teacher in the Fisheries Training Institute and to spread elementary knowledge in fishing villages through the instrumentality of these teachers had been reported to the Government in successive administrative

³⁵ *Royal Commission on Agriculture in India Report*, p.513.

³⁶ G O NO.406 dated 6/3/1919, R (special) D, R A K.

reports.³⁷ Fisheries elementary schools achieved success in introducing a vocational bias in their work, and the credit went to the training which the teachers in these schools receive in the fisheries training institute for obviously a teacher trained in an ordinary training school has no knowledge of the industry and was not able to interweave topics connected with the fishing industry with ordinary subjects of the elementary school curriculum. A thorough examination of the detailed syllabi designed for the guidance of fisheries elementary schools revealed that without specialized training, a teacher would find it exceedingly difficult to implement them effectively.

The fisheries school teachers were prepared for their work. They taught the following subjects during their training course (in addition to subjects taught in ordinary training schools) Fisheries techniques (the principles and practice of pisciculture, methods of fishing and handling, fish, fish curing, canning, refrigeration, preparation of fish oil, guano, fish meal, etc.), Marine zoology, Elements of Navigation, Carpentry with special reference to the building and maintenance of boats, principles of steam and internal combustion engines and elements of motor mechanics, and socio-economic (including elements of economics, banking, commercial account propaganda). The teaching of these subjects was not inspected by the educational department as this work was outside its scope. The work of the Fisheries Training Institute, as a training school for elementary school teachers, had been annually inspected by the officers of the education department since 1923.³⁸

4.4 Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut

A former leper asylum³⁹ served as a fishermen's training school. Although it stands on land belonging to the Zamorin, the municipality invested around a

³⁷ G O NO. 2142 dated 17/11/1921, D. D, R A K.

³⁸ *Report of the Committee on Fisheries in Madras* (RCFM), 1929. Madras: Addison & Com. Ltd., 1929, p. 228.

³⁹ The old leper asylum building which was being used as the Fisheries Training Institute stood in survey number 14 of Kalathilkunnu *Desam* Calicut taluk. The land which measures 36 cents is registered as unassessed in the settlement Register and is the *janmam* of the Zamorin of Calicut. In the year 1859, the Zamorin gave over the site to the government for the use of the Leper

thousand rupees in renovations before transferring it to the Fisheries Department. The Government Fisheries Training Institute was established in Calicut on July 14th, 1919.⁴⁰

The fisheries training institute forms an integral part of the scheme of fishermen's education initiated by Sir F A Nicholson in 1919 and the objects of the institute were to be dealt with only in connection with objects of the general scheme. Sir F A Nicholson, who had been engaged since 1907 in trying to improve the fishing industry of Madras presidency, found the social and educational backwardness of the fishing communities a great stumbling block to their industrial progress and economic uplift.⁴¹ Sir Nicholson saw education as the key to unlocking the fishing industry's potential. He founded the training institute to specifically address the educational and social needs of fishing communities, aiming to empower them and propel the industry forward.

The fisheries training institute was intended to provide teachers for schools from fishing villages and hamlets. The object of such schools was to give general training, not technical education. But it was desirable, that primary education in fishing villages should have an intimate connection with the hereditary occupation and economic interests of the villagers; consequently, teachers working in such village schools were to be given special training.⁴² The institute aimed to create well-rounded educators who could provide a general education while also acknowledging the unique context and needs of these fishing villages.

4.4.1 Vellayil Model School: -

The Vellayil Day School was initially a municipal school recognized as an elementary school by the inspector of schools. In 1919, this was taken over by the Department of Fisheries. The government sanctioned the proposal of the Director of Fisheries that the Vellayil day school should be recognized as a model school

Hospital on the condition that if the buildings should ever be diverted from their charitable intention the land should again be considered his private property.

⁴⁰ G O NO.310 dated.23/2/1921, D D, R A K.

⁴¹ G O NO. 2049.

⁴² G O NO. 303 dated 26/2/1925, D. D, R A K.

attached to the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, and be merged with it.⁴³ Since then, it has been utilized as a model school for fisheries training institutes. In 1920, the school came under the jurisdiction of the district educational council, after the Madras Educational Act.⁴⁴

The Vellayil day school which served as a model school had not been recognized as such, but only as an elementary school recognized by the district education council. The government also sanctioned the construction of buildings for the location of the model school connected to the Fisheries Training Institute, within the location of the Institute itself, to render it an efficient model school. According to the Law (Education), the recognition of schools was done by the Director of Fisheries.⁴⁵

The government sanctioned the proposal that the Vellayil Day School⁴⁶ should be recognized as a model school attached to the Fisheries Training Institute and be amalgamated with it.⁴⁷ The sanction of the government was to be obtained for the re-conversion of the model school into an ordinary elementary school to be designated as Vellayil fisheries school. The closure of the Fisheries training institute at Calicut ordered the conversion of the fisheries model school at Calicut⁴⁸ into an ordinary elementary school.⁴⁹

A good model school added greatly to the efficiency of any training school. There were two sections in the first standard of the Model school attached to the Fisheries Training Institute. Section B, which contained younger children, had more than 40 pupils, and there were many more pupils seeking admission.

⁴³ G O NO.1185 dated 17/6/1919, L E, R A K.

⁴⁴ G O NO. 1879 dated 14/11/1927, L E, R A K.

⁴⁵ G O NO. 1879.

⁴⁶ G O NO. 1879 dated 14/11/1927, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁴⁷ G O NO.1134.

⁴⁸ G O NO.1627 dated 12/7/1937, D D, R A K.

⁴⁹ G O NO.1982 dated 30/8/1937 D D, R A K.

4.4.2 Community Members' Involvement in Running the Institute

Traditionally, fisheries schools have struggled to find effective teachers. The core problem lies in the selection process. Many of the selected teachers came from non-fishing castes and lacked a deep dedication to social service. One major reason for this issue is the composition of the selection committee. Currently, the committee solely consists of directors, assistants, and the headmaster. To address this, including two or three leading fishermen in the committee would be highly beneficial.⁵⁰ To address this, the director proposed expanding the current selection committee, which solely consists of directors, assistants, and the headmaster, to include two or three prominent fishermen.⁵¹

The selection committee, established for a three-year term, would be reconstituted upon its expiration.⁵² The two or three leading members of the fishermen's community should be co-opted as members of the committee for the selection of students for the Fisheries Training Institute. A Selection Committee, comprising the Assistant Director (Coast), the Headmaster of the Institute, and four non-official representatives from the fishermen community, was established to oversee student admissions to the Institute.⁵³ Separate selection committees will convene in Calicut and Mangalore to evaluate students from the Malabar and South Kanara districts, respectively. For the Mangalore committee specifically, the District Educational Officer of South Kanara should be included as a member.

⁵⁰ Legislative Council question 779, From Rao Bhadhur P.V. Goplan, dated 26th March 1926, R A K.

⁵¹ G O NO.690 dated 10/5/1926, D D, R A K.

⁵² G O NO.1014 dated 15/7/1926, D D, R A K.

⁵³ (1) The headmaster fisheries training institute Calicut, (2) Khan while T M Moidoo sahib Bahadur Member of Legislative Council, representing the Muhammadan community, (3) Mr. Ry K. M Soma Marakala Malpe, representing the Mogear fishermen community, (4) M.A Ry Kottil Sankaran West Chowghat, representing the Moonilakkar fishermen community, (5) M.R Ry. A.V Achuthan Calicut, representing the Araya fishermen's community (Op Cit., G O NO. 690). The non-official members will hold office for a period of 3 years (G O NO.1625 dated 27/9/1928, D D, R A K.). On the death of Mr. P V Gopalan, Mr. Achuthan was appointed to the selection committee (G O NO.1374 dated 17/8/1928, (Mis), D D, R A K.) Assistant Director (Coast), V Govindan continued to be President of the committee (G O NO.1351 dated 6/8/1929, D D, R A K).

Committee members were notified in advance of meeting details by the Assistant Director of Coastal Fisheries. Non-official members traveling from distant locations received reimbursement for travel expenses. This included single, second-class train fares, road travel at a rate of six annas per mile, and a daily allowance of Rs. 4-8-0 while attending meetings. The Assistant Director (Coast) was authorized to approve travel expense claims. Appeals of committee decisions by the institute's Headmaster could be made to the Director of Fisheries.⁵⁴

4.4.3 Students Admitted to the Institute

Sir F.A. Nicholson emphasizes two key requirements for pupil teachers admitted to the Fisheries Training Institute training programme. Firstly, he argued against admitting “mere youths fresh from school,” preferring more experienced individuals.⁵⁵ Nicholson's reasoning is clear: “They must not be very young.” Secondly, he stressed the advantages of restricting admissions to applicants from fishing communities.⁵⁶

Due to widespread illiteracy within the fishing community, the Fisheries Training Institute faced a challenge: finding qualified teachers. While older individuals from outside the community could have been selected, Sir F A Nicholson argued this was a less desirable option. To address this issue, the F T I adopted a system similar to other elementary training schools, dividing students into two sections: a higher elementary grade (S S L C) and a lower grade (8th standard). This allowed the F T I to admit younger students, around 15-16 years old. Nicholson foresaw a limitation; these young teachers wouldn't have much influence on village elders for some time.⁵⁷

Open to all communities, fisheries training institutions in the early 20th century saw few applicants from the fisherfolk caste. This stemmed from the low number of students passing the 8th-grade exam within that community. Those who

⁵⁴ G O NO.1351.

⁵⁵ G O NO 2048 dated 27/5/1918, R D, R A K.

⁵⁶ G O NO 2049 dated 27/5/1918, R D, R A K.

⁵⁷ G O NO.420 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K.

did pass often pursued higher education in other fields, shrinking the pool of potential applicants. However, the situation began to shift, leading to a rise in fisherfolk applications and increased enrollment in these institutes.

Fisheries Training Institute admission during the period of 1919-1925 is given below: -⁵⁸

Year	Number of students admitted
1919	6
1920	16
1921	12
1922	12
1923	12
1924	13
1925	17
Total	139

By 1925, a significant change occurred. Of the 139 qualified applicants, 22 were selected for admission: 13 fisherfolk and 4 from other castes. The institute trained a small group of students, from 12 to 17 each year. There were more applicants, but these schools were for teachers in special fishing communities. The number of trained teachers was carefully controlled to avoid creating more unemployed people than there were jobs available. As the need for teachers grew, the institute expanded its facilities to train a slightly larger number of students.⁵⁹ The Fisheries Training Institute underwent a significant shift in its student intake policy after 1925. Admissions for lower elementary grades were discontinued. However, the six classes continued until November 1929.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ G.O NO. 690 dated 10/5/1926, D D, R A K.

⁵⁹ G.O NO. 690.

⁶⁰ G.O NO. 2050 dated 8/11/1930, D D, R A K.

4.5 Curriculum, Subjects, Examination, and Staff Pattern

Term, duration, and subjects - The ordinary Training school course, both elementary and secondary extends to two years. The course at the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut was of three years duration. This Institute was a school for special instruction and its curriculum includes among other subjects, Socio-Economics, Marine Zoology, Fisheries techniques, Navigation, Practical fishing work, Net making, and Woodwork relating to the fishing industry. In addition to the ordinary 3 classes in this Institute, batches of Tamil, Telugu, and Kanarese students were intended to be sent in different years to the special Fisheries Training Institute.⁶¹

The curriculum of the institute - (a) Ordinary subjects necessary for all teachers such as language methods of teaching, school organization, etc. (b) Special aspects of ordinary subjects which are of importance in a fishing life, e.g., geography was included. Practical meteorology; nature study chiefly consisted of the fauna and flora of the sea and sea-coast; the illustrations that the teachers used were chiefly drawn from the life of the fisherfolk. (c) Practical knowledge in the preserving and curing of fish by improved methods, manufacture of fish oil and guano, etc. (d) socioeconomic subjects which are of vital importance for all classes and especially of fisherfolk e.g., thrift, business methods, co-operation, sanitation, temperance, etc.⁶²

The scheme of work at the Fisheries Training Institute as outlined by Sir F.A Nicholson, contemplated giving pupil teachers of the 3rd year class, courses of lessons on co-operation, Temperance, sanitation, first aid, and other socio-economic subjects as well as in natural science and Fishery Techniques.⁶³ Sir F.A Nicholson proposed the opening of the Fisheries Training Institute, arguing that lectures on

⁶¹ G O NO.16 dated 3/1/1917, Home (Education), R A K.

⁶² G O NO.420.

⁶³ G.O NO.902 dated.23/5/1921, D D R A K.

special subjects not included in the curriculum of ordinary schools could elevate pupil teachers beyond mere schoolmasters.⁶⁴

Teacher training programmes for secondary grades began in 1925. Fisheries Training Institute was intended from the very beginning to train teachers of the Elementary and secondary grades. But an annually increasing number was being admitted every year. There was a class of eight secondary students in the Institute. They were taught all the subjects included in the curriculum for the secondary grade teacher's Examination. Therefore, this institute apart from technical aspects, occupies the status of a secondary training school.

Meteorology is an important subject taught at the Fisheries Training Institute. Meteorology deals with the atmosphere and its phenomena particularly of its variations of heat moisture of its winds, storms, etc. movements of rain thus fall under Meteorology.⁶⁵ "Climate change"⁶⁶ has been attracting growing attention for its immediate and potential impacts on the environment and human populations. Marine and coastal ecosystems are considered to be extremely vulnerable to climate change processes such as ocean warming and sea-level rise, which have a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of coastal fishing communities. This subject was taught in a thoroughly practical manner. The headmaster who was to handle the subject underwent training for a period. The meteorological chart was issued by the government meteorologist, Madras. The daily weather report (chart) was useful to the students of the institute who received elementary instruction in meteorology.⁶⁷

The Pupils of the Fisheries Training Institute were to be the future teachers of the elementary schools in fishing villages. These subjects were taught in ordinary training schools also. Pupil teachers of the elementary lower grade were taught

⁶⁴ G.O NO.902.

⁶⁵ G O NO.2048 dated 6/11/1919, D D, R A K.

⁶⁶ "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is, in addition to natural climate variability, observed over comparable time periods" quoted in "Venkatesh Salagrama, Climate Change and Fisheries: Perspectives from Small-scale Fishing Communities in India on Measures to Protect Life and Livelihood, International Collective in Support of Fish workers (ICSF), Chennai,2012".

⁶⁷ G. O NO. 629 dated 16/4/1921, D D, R A K.

something about seasons, clouds, and rain while those of the higher elementary grade received instruction on winds also. They were expected to teach the fisher boys in village schools the ordinary subject with special application to the condition and circumstances of the boys and the boys' immediate work in the future. As fisher boys went to the sea to catch fish knowledge of elementary meteorology (atmospheric phenomena about climate and weather) seemed to be useful to them.

The object of the institute was to train teachers for elementary schools for fisherfolk. In addition to the pedagogy, arrangements were made to familiarize the pupil teachers with technical work carried on in the fisheries stations at Tanur and Chaliyam. The work in this institute included not only teaching in the classroom but also supervision of practical work in the sea at Tanur.⁶⁸ A boat was purchased and a fishery instructor was appointed to instruct the pupils in fishing.⁶⁹ M.K. Choyi, a seasoned boat instructor, and Bastian Gabriel, an experienced fishing instructor, were appointed to the training institute pursuant to Article 51(1) of the Civil Service Regulations.⁷⁰ Their substantial experience in maritime affairs rendered them eminently qualified for these roles.⁷¹

Prioritizing Practical Carpentry Skills for Fishermen at Fisheries Training Institute: - While the current carpentry instructor is undeniably qualified in various manual training disciplines (including clay, table-making, box construction, paper modelling, and drawing), their focus went beyond what's directly beneficial for the student teachers. An ordinary carpenter wouldn't be able to handle such a broad curriculum.

Instead, the carpentry instruction emphasized skills directly applicable to a fisherman's trade, such as boat repairs (including masts, hulls, etc.). Hiring a local master carpenter was the most effective way to achieve this goal.⁷² On 1st March

⁶⁸ G O NO.363 dated 16/3/1927, D D, R A K.

⁶⁹ James Hornell, Madras Fishery Investigations 1921, Madras Fisheries Department, Bulletin No. XIV, Madras: Government Press, 1922, p.5.

⁷⁰ Exempted from Age limit prescribed in Article 51 of the Civil Service Regulations (C S R).

⁷¹ G O NO.792 dated 10/5/1921, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁷² G O NO.1509 dated 16/8/1921, (Mis), D D, R A K.

1927 carpentry classes for the pupil teachers of the Fisheries Training Institute were granted.

Two School Types: Training and Model: - The school consisted of two departments, a training school taking in 12 students per annum in a three-year course and a model or practicing school in the next street.⁷³ For the post of manual training teacher, Mr. N. S. Venugopalan a teacher in Coimbatore College, was appointed. He was a trained secondary-grade teacher in drawing and was qualified in Manual Training. He also holds an advanced first-class certificate (Government Technical Examination) in cabinet making. Mr. A.F. Gaston, formerly a Manual Training Instructor at the Government Higher Elementary Training School, Cannanore, has been appointed as a combined Drawing Master and Carpentry Instructor at the Institute.⁷⁴

There were at that time (1924-26)107 pupils in the school, and some of the classes had about 30 pupils each. The accommodation was therefore insufficient for the pupils attending the model school and for the pupil teachers who went there for observation. No model teaching was possible in such an environment. The Model School was utilized for the Carpentry class for the pupil teachers of the institute.⁷⁵ The government sanctioned the appointment of a combined Drill and Drawing Master at the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut.⁷⁶

Training course—The Government, under Fundamental Rule 9(6)(b) (i), authorized the deployment of a Junior Assistant from the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, to undergo a secondary-grade teacher training course at the Government Training School, Calicut. This eight-month training programme aligned with the Government's policy of including teacher training in schools, colleges, or other institutions as an approved course for Government servants.⁷⁷

Rao Saheb A Gopalan, the Assistant Surgeon attached to the Lunatic Asylum, Calicut, was paid honoraria for delivering lectures on Hygiene, First Aid, and

⁷³ G O NO.310.

⁷⁴ G O NO.1772 dated 7/10/1924, D D, R A K.

⁷⁵ G O NO.343 dated 8/3/1926, D D, R A K.

⁷⁶ G O NO.1127 dated 20/6/1924, D D, R A K.

⁷⁷ G O NO.777 dated 14/4/1924, D D, R A K.

Temperance to pupil teachers at the Fisheries Training Institute. To obtain government sanction under Article 72(d) of the Civil Service Regulations for the payment of fees to Rao Saheb for a 50-lecture course, each lasting one hour, was sought. These lectures, focused on specialized subjects outside the standard curriculum of normal schools, aimed to equip pupil teachers with additional skills to contribute to the moral, material, and social upliftment of fisherfolk.⁷⁸

In the scheme of studies originally laid down for the pupil-teachers of the Fisheries training institute, lessons on sanitation and first aid were included. Dr. V K Vydier, L M &S, who was connected with the Calicut branch of the St. John's Ambulance Association was willing to teach this subject at the Fisheries training institute without any remuneration. Since the proposed course equipped pupil teachers with highly valuable information and practical training, it proved beneficial for their future work among schoolchildren and within the wider village communities.⁷⁹

The scheme of work at the fisheries training institute Calicut included excursions to Tanur, Chaliyam, and other fishing villages. The purpose of these trips was to observe demonstrations of various processes carried out there. Sir F.A Nicholson suggested that travel allowances for pupil teachers on excursions.⁸⁰ The Director of Fisheries requested sanction from the government for the payment of Travelling Allowance⁸¹ to students selected to undergo a course of training. Field trips for pupil teachers were offered only to students in their fourth (final) class. However, the Accounts General department required specific government orders for paying travel allowances to both the pupil teachers and the hostel servant accompanying them on these trips. The government approved travel allowances for pupil teachers and accompanying staff on excursions.⁸²

The Fisheries Department's Calicut training programme welcomes students from Kanarese, Tamil, and Telugu districts, recognizing it is the sole institution of its kind in the Madras Presidency. However, due to language barriers, these students

⁷⁸ G O NO.902 dated 23/5/1921, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁷⁹ G O NO.790 dated 1/5/1929, D D, R A K.

⁸⁰ G O NO.406 dated 6/3/1919, R (spl), D D, R A K.

⁸¹ Article 1138 A, (C S R).

⁸² G O NO.1075 dated 10/6/1921, D D, R A K.

received their foundational literary training (2 years) at local schools in their respective districts. Following this, they travelled to Calicut to embark on a year of specialized fisheries training. The Fisheries Training Institute at Calicut imparted a full 3 years course of training to Malayali Pupils and a one-year supplementary course in fishing techniques to Kanarese pupils who had already undergone the ordinary two-year course of teacher's training.⁸³

To prepare fisheries school teachers for their work, they were taught the following subjects during their training course. (in addition to subjects taught in ordinary training schools) (1) fisheries technics (the principles and practice of pisciculture, methods of fishing and handling fish, fish curing, canning, refrigeration, preparation of fish oil, guano, fish meal, etc.), (2) Marine Zoology, (3) Elements of Navigation, (4) Carpentry with special reference to the building and maintenance of boats, (5) principles of steam and internal combustion engines and elements of motor mechanics, and (6) socio-economics (including elements of economics, banking, commercial account keeping, cooperation, rural sanitation, first aid, temperance propaganda). For elements of Navigation, a textbook suited to the syllabus was prepared and translated into Malayalam by the Headmaster.⁸⁴

Post-Training Service Commitment: - Upon successful completion of the three-year training programme, graduates were required to serve in Fisheries Department schools for a minimum of five years. Their starting salaries ranged from Rs. 12 to Rs. 40 per month, determined by their general educational qualifications.⁸⁵

Previously, the Research Assistant in Tanur and the Superintendent of the Chaliyam Cannery were jointly responsible for setting the Fishery Techniques exam.⁸⁶ However, with the Superintendent position abolished, the government has solely assigned this responsibility to the Research Assistant. This change was

⁸³ G O NO 303 dated 26/2/1925, D D, R A K.

⁸⁴ G O NO.420.

⁸⁵ G O NO 303 dated 26/2/1925, D D, R A K.

⁸⁶ G O NO. 487 dated 17/3/1928, (Mis), D D, R A K.

implemented in 1928 by the Secretary of the Board of Examiners at the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut to reflect the new organizational structure.⁸⁷

The Government sanctioned two peons for the Fisheries Training Institute.⁸⁸
 - (b) Technical training. (i) Staff - The technical training includes training in fishing, fishery industries, navigation, and socio-economic work without a science graduate who had some knowledge of fisheries, a technological instructor, and a navigation assistant, it was impossible to give adequate training to students in fisheries techniques. However, given the prevailing financial stringency. (ii) Equipment: - Except for three canoes and a supply of nets used locally there was at the time, the committee in Fisheries reported, no apparatus for technical teaching in the Fisheries Training Institute. The students were also permitted to practice fish curing in the model shed attached to the Calicut north curing yard in the absence of a curing yard shed in the Fisheries Training Institute itself.

Permanent Staff of a Fisheries Training Institute

Staff	Maximum Pay	Existing Pay	Number of Staff
Head Master	150	113	1
Assistant	100	95	1
Assistants	60	48x2=96	2
Drawing Master	50	37	1
Carpentry Instructor	35	32	1
Boat Instructor	35	32	1
Fishery Instructor	35	32	1
Peon	18	15	1
Total		452	
Temporary Kanarese Interpreter	20		

Out of the eight teachers, three were Christian, two were Mukkuvar, and the remaining three were from other Hindu communities.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ G O NO.1108 dated 7/7/1928, D D, R A K.

⁸⁸ G O NO. 1213 dated 6/8/1927, D D, R A K.

⁸⁹ G O NO.690 dated 10/5/1926, D D, R A K.

The work of the F T I as a training school for elementary school teachers was annually inspected by the officers of the education department since 1923. The following general remarks made by the inspecting officers were quoted from the annual inspection reports: -

- * The school is doing satisfactory work under the guidance of the headmaster who was taking great interest in the development of the school. (1923-24).
- * The general condition of the school is satisfactory. (1924-25)
- * The school is doing useful work. (1925-26)
- * The school is doing fairly good work (1926-27)
- * The school is no doubt doing fairly satisfactory work as far as circumstances permit. (1927-28)
- * The work of the training school is on the whole fair-The teachers are taking a fair interest in their work and the work is conducted on fairly up-to-date lines (1929-30).⁹⁰

4.6 Infrastructure of Fisheries Training Institute

The living conditions at the Fisheries Training School hostel in Calicut were appalling. Trainee teachers were lodged in a building designed for a small family it was crammed with over 30 trainee teachers.⁹¹ The hostel of the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, was compared to the Black Hole of Calcutta.⁹² These future educators could not be healthy role models for their students under these circumstances.⁹³ Subsequent, to a news report⁹⁴ highlighting overcrowding

⁹⁰ G O NO.420 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K.

⁹¹ Not only is there no proper ventilation or light in this building but there is immense discomfort owing to mosquitoes and fleas. most of the training students who are living in this hostel are seen to be always suffering from fatigue and Headache. At night they suffered not a little owing to want of convenience for study or sleep. Therefore, the school authorities were asked to pay attention to the removal of these inconveniences suffered by the students who live in a hostel.

⁹² "Scene of an incident on June 20, 1756, Richard Cavendish describes how British prisoners were held captive by the army of the Nawab of Bengal, for one night, in the 'black hole' of Fort William in Calcutta." quoted in www.bocaiago.jimdo.com.

⁹³ G.O NO.84 dated 20/1/1927, D D, R A K.

conditions within the hostel, an investigation was initiated. Following a health inspection, a decision was made to evacuate Kannada students from the premises.

There was a major problem with the current location of the Fisheries Training Institute hostel in Calicut. Situated a mile and a half away at the district medical officer's bungalow in West Hill, it was inconvenient for both supervision and student well-being. Therefore, both the Assistant Director and Headmaster proposed relocating the hostel to a building closer to the institute for the benefit of the students.⁹⁵ To address this and improve living arrangements, a house near the Fisheries Training Institute was secured for the student hostel. Residents of the hostel are responsible for the lighting charges.⁹⁶

The headmaster served as the ex-officio warden, an honorary position. Additionally, one of the Assistants was appointed as the Resident Warden, responsible for the day-to-day operations of the hostel and reporting to the headmaster. This Resident Warden position received a monthly allowance. The position also included free accommodation⁹⁷ within the hostel.⁹⁸ The government decided that the warden at the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut could live in the hostel for free, along with a monthly allowance of 15 rupees.⁹⁹ The hostel paid the Municipality a quarterly fee of Rupees 360 for waste collection services. This was in addition to a separate fee of Rupees 3 paid by the institute.¹⁰⁰

The government proposed to assign a clerk to each of two selected fishermen's cooperatives, Ajanur and Nileswar, to facilitate joint fish sales. One significant constraint in the functioning of the hostel is the persistent difficulty in retaining a permanent cook. As pupil teachers primarily rely on training stipends,

⁹⁴ Mitavadi, dated 15th November 1926, Calicut, R A K.

⁹⁵ G O NO.965 dated 5/7/1926, D D, R A K.

⁹⁶ G O NO.1288 dated 3/9/1925, D D, R A K.

⁹⁷ Under rule 45 (e) of the Fundamental Rules.

⁹⁸ G.O NO.1223 dated 8/8/1927, D D, R A K.

⁹⁹ G O NO.657 dated 5/5/1931, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁰ G O NO.1288.

they are unable to afford higher wages to secure stable cooking arrangements. The low remuneration has led to the departure of the hostel cook.¹⁰¹

Teachers trained in the ordinary training schools where pupil teachers are taught the principle of pedagogy and methods of instruction were considered not sufficiently competent to serve as such instruments because, in addition to the ordinary teacher's work for which they are trained in the ordinary training schools, they have to perform 3 functions for which they receive no training in such schools. Those 3 are (1) to adopt all subjects of the curriculum to suit the special environment of fisher children, (2) to carry on social reconstruction in the fishing village, and (3) to in calculating the scientific principles involved in fishery methods and practice.

4.6.1 Academic Infrastructure

The appliances and apparatus for manufacturing fish oil, and boats, the apparatus for teaching carpentry tools, apparatus for teaching Geography, physiology, Navigation, Science, and mathematics were available at the institute.¹⁰² Other teaching materials in fisheries training institutes included three lantern slides illustrating growth rings on fish scales and otoliths (ear bones) used for lectures delivered by instructors.¹⁰³

The Fisheries Training Institute lacked proper equipment for teaching fishery techniques. The fisheries committee recommended improvements, and some were made. These included a canning shed and utensils. Previously, students had to travel to different locations for practical training. The government sanctioned the purchase of 2 new canoes.¹⁰⁴ However, a shed for oil and guano manufacture was being built and a pond was being remodeled to allow for on-site instruction.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ G O NO.1533 dated 21/8/1920, R (spl) D, R A K.

¹⁰² G O NO.1041 dated 21/4/1938, D D, R A K.

¹⁰³ G O NO.211 dated 12/2/1936, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁴ G O NO.661 dated 2/6/1933, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁵ GO NO.2050 dated 8/11/1930, (Mis), D D, R A K.

A list of books required for the library was attached to the Fisheries Training Institute Calicut, to obtain the sanction of the Government for the local purchase. A fairly large number of Malayalam books was therefore been added to the list. The English books in the list were mostly for the use of the teachers from the prose, poetry, legendary stories Ithihasa, Purana stories, etc. (110 books). List of English from co-operation, adult education welfare, work, and allied subjects, pedagogy-science, etc.,¹⁰⁶ Most of them were about cooperation and social work.¹⁰⁷

The government sanctioned the purchase of a complete set of children's encyclopedias for use in the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut. To enhance the resources available, the training institute library added a set of children's encyclopedias. This consisted of 20 volumes and deals with a variety of topics from reality to science, art, and literature. It was finally illustrated and quite suitable for the purpose of reference and accurate information.¹⁰⁸

The Headmaster of the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, stated that towards the year 1928, a certain number of students of the Fisheries Training Institute requested him to allow them to start a school journal, a monthly or a quarterly publication. The Journal was run by the name of the pupils' Teachers Association and was responsible for the finances. Articles on fishery subjects designed to enlighten the public were also expected to be published. The Journal did not deal with political or religious questions. Under rule 18 of the government servant's conduct rules, the government permitted the Head Master Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, to take part in conducting a Journal along with the students of the institute.¹⁰⁹

4.7 Financial Support to the Pupil Teachers in the Institute

Traveling allowance was allowed in the following cases to train teachers.¹¹⁰ To help trainers get home after finishing the course, they were provided with a travel

¹⁰⁶ G O NO.1634 dated 20/09/1924 D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁷ G O NO. 341 dated 7/3/1923, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁸ G O NO.690 dated 11/1/1926, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁹ G O NO.1538 dated 13/09/1928, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁰ Given that Fisheries Training Institute graduates returned to their original government elementary schools as schoolmasters, claims arose regarding travel allowances for their return trips. In response, Sir F A Nicholson's scheme proposed granting enhanced benefits to student teachers who had completed training at the Institute.

allowance: This applied to trainers residing a certain distance from the training location.¹¹¹

Stipend-receiving students enrolled in educational institutions on the East Coast were reimbursed for travel expenses at rates specified in Articles 122-123 of the Madras Educational Rules.¹¹²

These men were government-appointed teachers in South Kanara district's fisheries elementary schools. They received their training at the government higher elementary training school in Mangalore and then held permanent teaching positions for 3-4 years. They were selected for further training at the Fisheries Training Institute regarding their experience as government school teachers, Kanarese teachers enrolled in the final year of the Fisheries Training Institute programme in Calicut received only the standard trainee stipend, the same amount given to new trainees with no prior teaching experience.

The government had already recognized similar training programmes in other departments (land revenue, salt, customs, forest, rail, police, and education) as official duties.¹¹³ They advocated for "transit pay," travel allowance, and inclusion of the training period in their service time. This proposal was approved, and these teachers received half pay instead of the standard stipend.¹¹⁴

In 1927-28 there were 12 stipendiary students in the second-year class in the Fisheries Training Institute at Calicut. These remained in that class till July 1928, because the school year for the Fisheries Training Institute began only in August. Therefore, from April to July 1928. There were 12 fisheries stipendiaries at Calicut in the second-year class and 4 at Mangalore, thus making 16 in all. In August the 12 second-year class students in the fisheries training institute were promoted to the 3rd year class. The new secondary class had only 8 stipendiary students. The Government sanctioned the grant of an additional stipend in the second-year class at

¹¹¹ G.O NO.1288 dated 3/9/1925, D D, R A K.

¹¹² G O NO.303 dated 26/2/1925, D D, R A K.

¹¹³ Subsidiary rule I to Fundamental Rule 9(b) (i).

¹¹⁴ G.O NO.714 dated 16/5/1927, D D, R A K.

the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut,¹¹⁵ for July 1928 only and increased the number of stipends to 60, years as a part II Scheme for 1930-31.¹¹⁶ Therefore, after July the total number of second-year stipendiaries was reduced to 12.

The rate of stipends was as follows: - for those who know English, i.e., those who have read up to III form, Rs. 12 with Rs. 14 for secondary school leaving certificate men; for those who have only passed the higher elementary or the fourth standard (old system), Rs. 10. In the third year, each class will receive an increase of Rs. 2. All students admitted for training will be on probation for 3 months. At the end of this period, candidates found unfit will be discharged, but they will not be required to refund the stipends received for those months.¹¹⁷

V Govindan and Sir F.A. Nicholson agreed to hire non-Malayalee teachers as trainees for the Fisheries Training Institute. These trainees would first complete a basic teaching course at a local school in their district. After that, they would spend their final year at the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut to specialize in fisheries education. To manage the financial aspect, the trainees' stipends would be initially given to the local schools and then transferred to the institute in Calicut for their final year. The students were nominally assigned to the institute, with their stipends being provisionally transferred to other training establishments.¹¹⁸ The government authorized the Director of Fisheries to depute whenever necessary teachers already in service to undergo a course of training in the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut. While inter-training the teachers were treated as on duty and allowed to draw only the stipends.¹¹⁹

4.8 Gender Concerns of Fisheries School

The Government informed in successive administration reports of the great popularity that the fisheries elementary schools enjoyed among the fisherfolk of the West Coast and the social awakening in the fishing community for which these

¹¹⁵ G O No.212 dated 4/2/1929, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹¹⁶ G O NO.361 dated 2/3/1929, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁷ G O NO 303.

¹¹⁸ G O NO.303.

¹¹⁹ G O NO.406 dated 6/3/1919, R (spl) D, R A K.

schools are primarily responsible. Therefore, the fact that in 1931-32, 1342 out of 4136 pupils attending the fisheries elementary schools were girls augurs well for the future. Although co-education of boys and girls presents no serious obstacle in the elementary schools, still in schools with a large number of girls it was advisable to have sufficient women teachers. Inspecting officers of the education department rightly urged teachers in fishing schools. Among the 37 elementary day schools run by this department, 15 schools had more than 40 girl pupils. Adopting, the principle enunciated in rule 6 issued under section 41 (2) of the Madras Elementary Education Act, 1920, that one teacher is required for 40 pupils, several women teachers were necessary for these 15 schools sooner or later. Women teachers were needed to give the female pupils not only instruction in such subjects as needlework, ordinary domestic economy, physical training, and handwork especially suitable for girls but also to give them the special knowledge that a fisherwoman requires.¹²⁰

The course of instruction in the Fisheries Training Institute was primarily designed to meet the needs of male teachers some features of the Fisheries Training Institute like practical fishing at sea, carpentry, boat repair, and navigation at seamen-ship were however suitable only for men. Most of these subjects such as fish curing and canning and other fishery industries, hygiene, cooperation, spinning, net making, etc., were eminently suitable and quite necessary for women teachers. Thus, it was possible to devise a completed course at Fisheries Training Institute for both women and men.¹²¹ The eight women teachers of Malabar including four women teachers already employed as teachers in fisheries schools all possessing ordinary higher elementary training certificates, were admitted to the fisheries training Institute in 1932.¹²²

In 1933, the eight women teachers were pursuing their training in the 3rd year class in the Fisheries Training Institute.¹²³ The government also sanctioned the

¹²⁰ Ref. No. 1060 -C/32 dated 28/7/1932, from the Director of Fisheries to the Secretary to the Government, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹²¹ G.O NO. 1096 dated 11/8/1932, D D, R A K.

¹²² G.O NO.1096.

¹²³ G.O NO.810 dated 4/7/1933, D D, R A K.

rental at Rs. 12/- per mensem of a building for housing the women teachers.¹²⁴ These women teachers did not undergo their 2 years of training with fisheries stipends and as such, they are, from the perspective of the Fisheries Training Institute was concerned only 1st year students.¹²⁵ But in consideration of their having already undergone 2 years of ordinary training on an analog with the position of Kanarese teachers, as a special case 3rd year rate of stipends was recommended and sanctioned by the government.¹²⁶

4.9 Demands for Inclusive Policies in Teaching Post Appointment

This section delves deep into the recruitment policies for fisheries school teachers under the Madras Fisheries subordinate service during the colonial period. Examining not only the mandatory qualifications, age limit, and probation period, but also how these regulations had impacted the quality of education and created challenges for teachers in colonial Madras.

4.9.1 Efforts to Bring in Teachers from the Community

Sir F A Nicholson insisted from the very beginning that Fisheries teachers should possess higher educational attainments than the average elementary school teacher. The grade of teachers required for the higher elementary schools in the secondary grade. But he also emphasized the necessity for recruiting teachers from among fishermen. It was only after 1924 that secondary grade pupil teachers began to seek admission to the Fisheries Training Institute. Their membership in the Fisheries Training Institute slowly increased until by 1929 nearly half of the students in the Fisheries Training Institute were of the secondary grade. If this natural process of replacing the elementary grade teachers with the secondary grade men had continued unhindered for a few years more, admission to the Fisheries Training Institute had been restricted to secondary grade men, and the original aim realized. But in 1929, the Government abolished the secondary classes in the Fisheries Training Institute for the reason that it was opened without their specific sanction.

¹²⁴ G O NO.3 dated 3/1/1933, D D, R A K.

¹²⁵ Letter No.1455-c/38-3 dated 21st February 1934, D D, R A K.

¹²⁶ G O NO.3.

On reconstruction, the government permitted the revival temporarily, of the secondary grade training classes that enabled the SSLC holders who were undergoing training there to obtain a secondary grade certificate.¹²⁷

4.9.2 Addressing Age Relaxation Issues in Teachers' Appointment

Many people who had completed courses at the fisheries training institute had petitioned the government for age relaxation, especially those from lower castes. A prime example is N K Karuppan, who belonged to the barber (Kavuthiyans) community, one of the lowest in the fishery caste hierarchy. Additionally, there were those from the lowest strata of society who performed bodily services, such as barbers.¹²⁸ He deserves special consideration and sympathy. After completing his course at the Institute, he worked as a temporary teacher in various fisheries schools.¹²⁹

However, he was ineligible for a permanent post due to age limitations. Numerous others who had completed courses from fisheries training institutes faced similar rejection. They appealed to the government for age relaxation, but their plea was denied. In light of these government orders¹³⁰, N K Karuppan's appointment was not considered a regular appointment that would entitle him to certain benefits or rights.

Another teacher, T V Govindan has put in a total non-continuance service of only 2 years one month, and 12 days out of a continuous period of 2 years 5 months, and 7 days in the registration department. He was not, therefore, deemed to have completed his probation as a clerk in the Registration department. T V Govindan was appointed as a fisheries teacher on 27th July 1931 he was then more than 25 years of age. But Rule 4 of the old General Rules for subordinate services then provided for the exemption of over-aged persons from the limit of 25 years at the time of their confirmation his appointment with transfer in order with effect from 1st

¹²⁷ G O NO.2050 dated 8/11/1930, D D, R A K.

¹²⁸ Mathew P T. *We Dare the Waters: The World and World view of the Mukkuvar*, Department of Christian Studies, University of Madras: Chennai. 2001, pp.57-58.

¹²⁹ G O NO.109 dated 18/1/1929, D D, R A K.

¹³⁰ G O NO.1271 dated 15/12/1931, P S D, R A K.

August 1931 this rule was amended and the provision for exemption of over-aged candidates was omitted.¹³¹ T V Govindan joined duty on 3rd August 1931. His appointment thus became subsequently illegal. He was memorialized for reconsideration that a strict application of Rule 4 of the old general rules or subordinate services as amended had thrown the teacher out of employment after 3 years of service.¹³² and thus caused him great hardship under Rule 12 of the civil services (classification, control, and appeal) rules and in modification, after this amendment.¹³³

4.10 Challenges Faced by the Institute: Communication Difficulties

Students from outside Malabar had been admitted from the Kanarese, Tamil, and Telugu districts as well. This decision was made because the institution was the only one of its kind in the Presidency. Due to the language barrier, students cannot receive literary training directly at the Calicut Fisheries Training Institute. To address this issue, a two-step process was implemented. First, students were sent to their respective district's ordinary training schools for a 24-month (four-term) literary programme. Upon successful completion of this programme, they were then eligible for entry into the Calicut Fisheries Training Institute.¹³⁴ The education imparted in this school, which is a school for training teachers for fishermen's schools, was purely academic in nature and was primarily useful for the fishing community.¹³⁵

When the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut was founded, the idea was to bring fishermen students for training from all parts of the country. However, during the organization of the institute, the headmaster apparently pointed out the impossibility of providing practical training in teaching to Tamil, Telugu, and

¹³¹ G O NO.793 dated 1/8/1931, P S D, R A K.

¹³² G O NO.274.

¹³³ G O NO.1150 dated 11/8/1934, D D, R A K.

¹³⁴ G O NO.303.

¹³⁵ G.O NO.939 dated 13/7/1922, D D, R A K.

Canarese pupil teachers in a model school where the pupils were purely Malayalee.¹³⁶

Instructors encountered a significant challenge: most students lacked the necessary English language proficiency to follow lessons. This deficiency was particularly evident among some higher-level elementary students. Since this language barrier was unforeseen, securing the services of an interpreter appears to be the only viable solution.¹³⁷

The significant linguistic differences between Malayalam and the Kanarese or Tulu dialects spoken by South Canara fishermen pose a significant challenge. This linguistic barrier hinders the ability of South Canara fishermen to effectively participate in training programmes at Calicut. Despite having a school in Calicut, this challenge persists.

The Director of Fisheries approved the appointment of a Tamil interpreter at the Fisheries Training Institute.¹³⁸ The approval granted for the appointment of the Tamil interpreter at the Fisheries Training Institute expired on 31st March 1936. The government authorized the retention of the post of Tamil Interpreter for an additional eleven months from the current sanction's expiry date. The salary for the position remained Rs. 30 per month.¹³⁹ The government sanctioned the retention of the post of Tamil Interpreter at the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, until the 30th of June 1936, or the date on which the Tamil interpreter undergoing training was retained, whichever occurred first.¹⁴⁰

4.10.1 Training Deficiencies of Pupil Teachers from Ordinary Schools

The teachers trained in the ordinary training schools where pupil teachers were taught the principle of pedagogy and methods of instruction were considered not sufficiently competent to serve as such instruction because, in addition to the

¹³⁶ G O NO.303.

¹³⁷ G O NO. 1559 dated 28/10/1926, D D, R A K.

¹³⁸ G O NO.1066 dated 28/7/1934, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹³⁹ G O NO.822 dated 22/5/1936, D D, R A K.

¹⁴⁰ G O NO.211 dated 12/2/1936, D D, R A K.

ordinary teacher's work for which they are trained in the ordinary training schools, they had to perform three functions for which they received no training in such schools. Those three functions were (1) to adopt all subjects of the curriculum to suit the special environment of fisher children, (2) to carry on social reconstruction in fishing villages, and (3) to calculate the scientific principles involved in fishery methods and practice.¹⁴¹

An essential condition for success, which Sir F.A. Nicholson also foresaw, was that the teachers trained at the FTI should work under proper supervision. The required degree of supervision by pedagogically qualified "special officers" has been lacking. The fishery school teachers were working under the inspectors of fisheries, whose primary concern was with fish curing yards.¹⁴²

The education in fisheries elementary schools is of a specialized character. The Fisheries Training Institute was started to provide a specially trained teacher for this purpose. Experience has shown that students below the SSLC grade did not benefit fully from the technological courses in the Fisheries Training Institute which involve knowledge of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and natural science.

4.10.2 Financial Difficulties

The Institute has been characterized as neither truly efficient nor economically sound the chief reason that led to the charge of economic unsoundness and want of efficiency was that the classes in the Fisheries Training Institute consisted 1929 of two sections each, a higher element and a secondary and the staff was only sufficient for three classes in all. If the staff had to be doubted for efficiency's sake the cost would be unduly high considering the small number of students in each section. This was an unavoidable evil till 1929 because we needed secondary grade teachers belonging to the fisher community, but the number of secondary grade applicants for admission was not enough to form a class. This difficulty did not exist later. In 1931 out of 59 applications received for five stipends available, 48 were higher elementary and 11 Secondary. Therefore, it was possible

¹⁴¹ G O NO.420.

¹⁴² G O NO.420.

to have a class of either secondary grade teachers alone or higher elementary grade teachers alone.¹⁴³

The Fisheries Training Institute faced economic difficulties due to the government's failure to implement Sir F A Nicholson's plan for establishing numerous elementary schools. This resulted in decreased demand for trained teachers, leading to small class sizes and inefficient resource utilization. The Institute's ideal teaching approach, student-centered learning, requires smaller class sizes for effective implementation. To address these issues, the government should adhere to Sir F.A. Nicholson's original plan, opening more elementary schools to increase demand for trained teachers and enable the Institute to provide quality education aligned with modern teaching principles. The economic unsoundness of the Fisheries Training Institute was not attributable to any flaw in the original scheme.¹⁴⁴ The report of the committee on fisheries states, though this programme was approved by the government without qualification, the rate of progress outlined was not adhered to. This has led to an undesirably low strength at the Fisheries Training Institute. The committee feels that this neglect should be remedied without undue delay.¹⁴⁵

4.10.4 Staffing Shortages and Equipment Deficiencies

The staff and the equipment of the Fisheries Training Institute had never been adequate or satisfactory, and this also militated against the complete success of the scheme. The Fisheries Training Institute had always suffered from this disadvantage. The institute has two sides to its work, (a) teacher training, and (b) teaching of special subjects. Both these sides have suffered for want of (1) suitable staff and (2) adequate plant and equipment, though much has been done to rectify the defects since 1929.

¹⁴³ G O NO.420.

¹⁴⁴ Ref No.1309-c/30 dated 22nd October 1931 from the Director of the Fisheries to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁴⁵ G O NO.420.

When the Fisheries Training Institute was opened, it was expected that there would be three classes corresponding to the three years of the course. After 1925, admission of students of lower elementary grade ceased, but at this time, secondary grade students had begun to be admitted, and therefore, the number of classes continued to be six. The Fisheries Training Institute teaching staff was only intended for a school with three classes. These six classes continued till November 1929. When the government ordered secondary classes to be closed, as secondary students wasted their time in classes intended for the VIII standard students, the government ordered the temporary reopening of the secondary section.¹⁴⁶

The admission of secondary men to the Fisheries Training Institute and their appointment at least as Headmasters of fishery schools are indispensable for the realization of the original aims with which the scheme of fisher education was started by the government.

4.10.5 Fisheries Training Institute Needs Upgraded Curriculum and Resources

The Director of Fisheries (Coast) identified a significant challenge facing the Fisheries Training Institute (FTI). Due to the recent admission of students who had completed their schooling, the courses in English and other subjects needed to be substantially more advanced than in the past. Regardless of whether the FTI was officially recognized as a regular secondary training school, the instruction had to meet the standards of such institutions as long as it continued to enrol students at this level.¹⁴⁷

A major obstacle for teachers in delivering these courses was the lack of suitable reference books. The English textbooks used for the highest-level class were comparable to those used in the intermediate programme at Madras University, highlighting the need for more advanced materials to effectively support the upgraded curriculum.

¹⁴⁶ G O NO.2050.

¹⁴⁷ G O NO.150 dated 25/1/1929, D D, R A K.

To address this issue, the FTI requested extra funds to buy the necessary books.¹⁴⁸ The government sanctioned this proposal, and the extra funds were allocated from unused funds due to lower-than-expected student enrolment.

4.10.6 Issues Related to Providing Short-Term Course Certificates

Students from outside Malabar were keen on acquiring knowledge related to fishing from the Fisheries Training Institute. Even such students had gained admission. Students from diverse regions, including Bihar, Assam, Cochin, and Travancore, enrolled in short-term courses at the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut. Their primary goal was to gain practical fishing skills, not to become teachers. Upon course completion, these students sought formal certification to validate their training. A standardized certificate format for short-term trainees did not exist. The institute's existing certificate books were designed for pupil teachers.¹⁴⁹ Government-sponsored trainees were exempt from fees, while private trainees paid a monthly fee of Rupees 5. The government approved the Director of Fisheries' proposal to issue free certificates to all short-term trainees in fisheries and allied subjects.

4.10.7 Institute Operations Hampered by Plague Crisis

On January 11th, 1928, the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut was notified of a plague¹⁵⁰ outbreak within its premises. This news caused significant fear among the students, leading to the suspension of classes from 11th January to 2nd January.

¹⁴⁸ Webster's International Dictionary, Fowler's Pocket Dictionary, the Concise Encyclopedia 6 Volume, Watson's Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Education, 4 Volume, the World Wide Atlas, 11th Edition, Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage, Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase Fable, Mc Morlie's English Idioms, Roget's Thesaurus of English words and phrases, CAmoos of literature 6 volumes, Mac Donald's History of Sanskrit literature, Bigelow's Mistakes in Writing English, Dunn's Library Manual for Indian Schools.

¹⁴⁹ G O NO.1565 dated 12/9/1936, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁰ The Plague is primarily a disease of rodents and their fleas, which can infect humans. Plague has been responsible for widespread pandemics with high mortality. It was known as the "Black Death" during the fourteenth century, causing an estimated 50 million deaths, approximately half of them in Asia and Africa and the other half in Europe, where a quarter of the population succumbed. From 1901 to 1911, India witnessed the devastating progress of the plague epidemic, resulting in a staggering mortality rate. Records indicate that approximately 6 ½ million people perished during this period. quoted in Census of India report 1921 vol I, J T Marten, Calcutta: Government Press, 1924. pp.11-12.

This resulted in a loss of two full weeks of instruction. In response to this situation, the Director of Fisheries has reported the incident to the government. The Director proposed a plan to recover the lost instructional time by cancelling the upcoming mid-term break (one week) and shortening the long vacation by one week (from six weeks to five weeks).¹⁵¹

4.11 Closure of Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut

The Director of Fisheries informed that the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut shut down. Additionally, the following positions at the institute were abolished.¹⁵² Citing a specific rule (Rule I of the Madras Reductions in the Cadres of Service Rules, 1934), the memo authorized the elimination of all staff positions at the institute due to its closure. This decision was not considered a layoff (retrenchment). Furthermore, the closure necessitated changes to the special rules governing the Madras fisheries subordinate service.

The fisheries training institute was closed in July 1937.¹⁵³ and the conversion of the Fisheries Model school at Calicut into an ordinary elementary school.¹⁵⁴ There were many articles transferred to the experimental station, Tanur, and some articles were transferred to the fisheries school, and unserviceable articles were sold in the auction.¹⁵⁵ Many articles were not suitable for elementary schools and therefore it is proposed to transfer them to Tuticorin pending the opening of a Fisheries Training Institute there.

There were many Pictures, Furniture, and Apparatuses for teaching, Geography, physiology, science, and mathematics. The hostel articles, Miscellaneous, carpentry tools, apparatus for manufacturing fish oil, boats, books-English, books -Tamil, Boats, etc.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ G O NO.425 dated 8/3/1928, D D, R A K.

¹⁵² Memorandum No.575-iv/14 dated 3/7/1937, D D, R A K.

¹⁵³ G O NO. 1627 dated 12/7/1937, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁴ Madras Legislative Assembly Question No.589, dated 28th March 1938, D D, Fort St. George, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁵ G O NO. 1982 dated 30/8/1937, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁶ G O NO.1041.

4.12 Importance of Fisheries Training Institutes

There were four reasons why the Fisheries Training Institute should be continued. It had been pointed out that the Fisheries elementary schools on the West Coast are very popular and that they had succeeded in arousing widespread interest in education quite unknown among fishermen before and still unknown on the East Coast. A perusal of the syllabus followed in the Fisheries elementary schools showed that knowledge of fisheries techniques, Marine Zoology, etc. is essential for teaching lessons included in the syllabuses. Therefore, if the work so successfully inaugurated amongst the West Coast fishermen in the course of the last decade is to be followed up and extended, there must be some special institution for training the teachers in these special subjects.¹⁵⁷

4.12.1 Trained Teachers' Contribution to Social Service in the Village

The teachers working in the fishing villages were expected to do social service work, making the school a community center. The time had passed when it was thought that for social service, all that was required was plenty of zeal. It was recognized worldwide that social service required as much careful training as any other work. In Europe and America, elaborate organizations for training social workers had been established. If reconstruction work in fishing villages was to be an integral part of teachers' programmes, the Fisheries Training Institute should have been continued, as it was the only institution where an attempt was made to train teachers for such extra-curricular activities.¹⁵⁸

Motivated by both the specific educational needs of fishing villages and his vision for a broader societal impact, Sir F.A. Nicholson advocated for a unique type of schools and schoolmasters. His vision extended beyond mere childhood education; he envisioned these schools as the focal point for village revitalization. He envisioned the schoolmaster as the driving force behind this transformation.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ G O NO.420 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁸ G O NO.420.

¹⁵⁹ G O NO.2049 dated 27/5/1918, R D, R A K.

The ideal schoolmaster envisioned here transcended the typical government employee. These individuals, respected for their knowledge and accomplishments (“attainments”), held significant influence within the village, not just by their official position. Nicholson proposed a multifaceted role: the schoolmaster could bolster an existing cooperative society or establish a new one, offer guidance on sanitation, and most importantly, become a trusted friend and role model for the villagers. Finally, as an agent of the government department, the schoolmaster served as a vital communication channel. Sir F.A. Nicholson emphasized the evolving role of the schoolmaster in the context of deep-sea fishing advancements and new industries like refrigeration. He argued that beyond basic education, schoolmasters should be equipped for a broader role as “village guides.”

The second aim of the scheme was that the fisheries schoolmaster should not be only an elementary school teacher but an influence for good in a fishing village. But success in this respect cannot be easily assessed as in the spread of education.¹⁶⁰ The results did not permit statistical analysis and comparison. But there was no doubt that a considerable degree of success has been attained in this direction. In a good many villages, the teachers of fishery schools were helping in cooperative work and other schemes of social amelioration. The indirect benefits of education have exceeded expectations. Thrift, cooperation, progressive ideas, the realization of their rights and privileges, and the desire to elevate and educate themselves have produced an upheaval among at least the young generation of fishermen on the West Coast.

There were many reasons for the requirement of secondary grade teachers in fisheries school. The schools run by the department include higher elementary schools, which though few at present, required secondary grade teachers according to educational Rules. The scheme of fisher education demanded secondary grade men (SSLC) at least as Headmasters of elementary schools for the social reconstruction work devolving on them.

4.12.2 The Role of Teacher Training in Fisheries Institutes: -

¹⁶⁰ G.O. NO.2142.

The institute was intended to train teachers required for elementary schools for fishermen.¹⁶¹ The educational activities of the Fisheries department on the West Coast through contributing to the increase of literacy among the fisherfolk were certainly capable of improvement.

The work of the Fisheries Training Institute as a training school for elementary school teachers was annually inspected by the officers of the Education Department since 1923. There were no signs of such an awakening on the East Coast through 110 schools run for the benefit of fisherfolk by other agencies. The difference shows the value of the contribution made by the Fisheries Training Institute and the whole scheme of special education toward the social reconstruction of the west coast fishing community.

Lastly, the Fisheries Training Institute, if revitalized and equipped appropriately, stands as the sole local institution capable of offering departmental training for fisheries service recruits, filling the void left by the absence of fisheries science programmes in Indian universities and colleges.¹⁶² By serving as a crucial source of teachers for future specialized fishery schools, providing advanced courses in specific techniques for fishermen, and fostering innovation in areas like fish preservation, the institute can significantly benefit the fishing community and fulfil the department's objective of enhancing fishermen's skills and methods.¹⁶³

Considering the number of fishermen on the West Coast and the necessity of a progressive increase in the number of fishery elementary schools, 400 teachers were needed eventually to teach pupils belonging to the fishermen classes. The usual rule that a teacher might handle a class of 40 pupils did not apply to fishery schools as the children were hereditarily backward in point of intelligence and understanding even assuming that 40 pupils might be handled by a teacher, the number of teachers required would be 300. The number of trained teachers annually turned out from the Fisheries Training Institute is about twelve. The suggestion to admit East Coast

¹⁶¹ G.O NO.690 dated 10/5/1926, D D, R A K.

¹⁶² G O NO.420.

¹⁶³ Report of the Committee (RCFM) p.228.

students into the Fisheries Training Institute, Calicut, is proof that its removal to the East Coast was never contemplated.¹⁶⁴

4.12.3 Fisheries Training: A Model for the Region: -

The successful work accomplished by these schools had attracted the attention of the neighbouring states of Cochin and Travancore, who had sent students for special training in the FTI, hoping to establish similar fisheries schools. The Cochin government had even wished to borrow some teachers trained in the FTI. From a purely pedagogical point of view, the fisheries elementary schools differed from ordinary elementary schools by giving a strong vocational bias to the whole curriculum.¹⁶⁵

4.12.4 Importance of Three Years Courses Offered by the Institute

While the three-year course at the training institute was necessary, there was ample scope for improvement in its actual operations. The three-year course was the most important, being meant for special studies such as socioeconomics, fishery technique, Zoology and botany, and special reference to marine forms, fishing methods, and navigation. Upon successful completion of the two-year training at the government training school, students proceed to the Fisheries Training Institute for specialized training.¹⁶⁶

4.12.5 Fisheries Technical Institute, Tuticurin

The closure of the fisheries training institute in Calicut left a critical gap in equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for fisheries schools. Once, this institute provided comprehensive training in fisheries science and technology, preparing educators to effectively guide students in this vital field. However, its closure further compounded the issue of limited accessibility. The Fisheries Technological Institute located in Tuticorin, while offering training

¹⁶⁴ G.O NO.343 dated 8/3/1926, D D, R A K.

¹⁶⁵ G O NO.420.

¹⁶⁶ G.O NO.690.

programmes, was primarily catered to secondary-grade teachers.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, the institute's use of English as the primary medium of instruction created another barrier. The teaching of fisheries science and technology in English hindered their ability to effectively transfer knowledge to their students. There were a good many higher elementary grade teachers in the fisheries schools who were required to teach in their mother tongue i.e., Malayalam or Kannada. In essence, the closure of the Calicut Institute coupled with the limitations of the Tuticorin programme resulted in a critical shortage of well-trained fisheries science and technology teachers in government fisheries schools.

4.12.6 Technical Training Section, Technical Fisheries School, Madapalli

There was a scarcity of trained teachers in South Canara and Malabar as the fisheries training institute of Calicut was shut down. The fisheries Training center in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu was established after the shutdown of fisheries training was given to higher elementary teachers. The elementary fisheries schools were converted into higher elementary fisheries schools and teachers who completed ordinary training taught here. They didn't have any knowledge of fisheries techniques. The Assistant Director of Fisheries, Kozhikode wanted to find a possible solution for this problem and wrote a letter to the Deputy Director of Fisheries. A training center was planned to open in Malabar and the outline, syllabus, and course were prepared and submitted to the secretary of the development department. There was financial stringency to open the fisheries training center, so the proposal was made in such a way as to not increase the financial burden. In the proposal course, syllabus, duration, and request to open a training section in the Madapally Technical School building were mentioned below.

The Duration of the course was to be from July to December and from January to June each year (2 courses) providing not less than 80 working days for each course. The course should contain a theoretical knowledge of fisheries science, Technology, and socio-economic and practical Training in fishing, boat management, navigation, and woodwork. Provision should also be made for

¹⁶⁷ G O NO.1473 dated 12/4/1950, D D, R A K.

attendance at lectures by the officers of the department on subjects in which they have specialized. Each batch should take a written examination at the end of the course and certificates should be awarded by the department (as in the case of the Coir Training Institute, Beypore). Candidates who have attended the theoretical and practical courses satisfactorily as shown by their records of work alone should be allowed to sit for the written examination.¹⁶⁸

Syllabus-Theory: - (1) Fisheries Science-elementary Biology, fishing biology, oceanography, Pisciculture

(2) Fisheries Technology: - fishing craft and gear, preservation of fish, fishery by-products, seamanship and navigation

(3) socio-economics, co-operation, Marketing

(4) Elocution

Practical--elementary Biology, fishing biology, oceanography, Pisciculture

Identification of different types of fishing crafts

Practical operation of representative types of fishing nets and lines

Practical lessons in distinguishing stale and fresh fish, preparation of meal and manure

Handling of a row boat and a sailing boat, chart reading.

Different types of fishermen's cooperative societies and maintenance of books and accounts.

Medium of instruction -

The medium of instruction was intended to be Malayalam. For the Kanarese teachers, an interpreter or an instructor in fishing technology with Kanarese as their mother tongue would be necessary

¹⁶⁸ Letter No.1897-F/49 dated 7th July 1949 from the Assistant Director Calicut to the Deputy Director (South), Madras, D D, R A K.

The staff consisted of one Learning and Teaching Assistant, one instructor each for Fisheries Technology, Fishing, and Woodwork, along with a Lower Division Clerk and an Attender.

It provided for acquiring a knowledge of fisheries science and Technology and allied subjects necessary for teachers in fisheries schools. This was sufficient for all higher elementary and secondary grades. The total strength of the class for one course did not exceed 40 students. Admission to the institute was restricted to trained teachers of the higher elementary or secondary grade who were qualified for appointment as teachers in their respective grades. Remaining positions were filled by teachers already appointed to the fisheries schools, who received stipends or allowances in accordance with applicable regulations. The medium of instruction was intended to be Malayalam. For the Kanarese teachers, an interpreter or an instructor in fisheries Technology with Kanarese as a mother tongue was necessary.¹⁶⁹ In addition to this, they requested to give the administrative duty to Head Master of Madapally School. The proposal also demanded a stipend for training teachers. The proposal later got approved and classes started in the 1950-51 academic year.

4.12.7 Transformation of Fisherfolks through Education

The establishment of the Fisheries Training Institute at Calicut of British Malabar paved a milestone in uplifting the livelihoods of the fishermen community in the coastal areas of Malabar. During the Colonial period, the establishment of the vocational education system in this institute marked the beginning of a new era in the fishermen's community of Malabar.¹⁷⁰ The establishment of fisheries elementary schools and vocational educational institutions attracted the educationally and socially backward fishermen community to come forward and gather knowledge not only in their traditional occupation but also to achieve additional skills related to

¹⁶⁹ Letter No.8133-H5/49 dated 30th September 1949, from the Director of Fisheries Madras to the Secretary to Government, D D, R A K.

¹⁷⁰ Joshiba P.P., Vocational Fishing Education in Colonial Malabar, South Indian History Congress proceedings, Vol.36, 2014.

their occupation, fishing. Such new and innovative know-how encouraged the traditional fishermen community to take up their trade with a new scientific perspective.

Many have criticized vocational education during the colonial period. With the goal of both economic gain and social control, British colonial vocational education sought to develop a workforce skilled in resource extraction (mines, plantations) and infrastructure projects. This was achieved by limiting access to broader academic education, but it can be said that the starting of fisheries vocational had helped strengthen fisheries jobs and bring in social transformation among fisheries people.

The fishermen's community was a socially and educationally backward category of people of Malabar. An age of reform started in the fisherfolk community with the establishment of vocational education. Through the establishment of training institutes and schools, people of the fishermen's community were able to get educated. Earlier they were kept away from education. With the coming of training institutes and schools, they not only got an education about fisheries but were exposed to different kinds of subjects and job opportunities. One of the major reasons for this social transformation and the establishment of an educational institution is the starting of vocational education in the fisheries industry during the colonial period.

4.13 Conclusion

The founding of the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut marked a turning point for the livelihoods of Malabar's coastal fishing communities. This colonial-era vocational institute ushered in a new era for these communities. Traditionally reliant on fishing and processing methods passed down through generations, the institute transformed them into a technologically advanced group. This was achieved through training and practical instruction.

The institute's curriculum stands out for its holistic approach to community development. It aimed not just to improve fishing techniques, but to empower

fishermen as a whole. This was achieved by integrating essential skills like carpentry and metalworking into the curriculum. This concept of combining skills was entirely novel for Kerala society at the time. The institute, along with other fisheries schools and vocational institutions, proved to be a powerful draw for the previously disadvantaged fishing communities. It provided them with the opportunity to not only learn advanced fishing techniques but also acquire additional, relevant skills, propelling them towards a brighter future.

The establishment of fisheries training institutes and vocational educational institutions attracted the educationally and socially backward fishermen community to come forward and gather knowledge not only in their traditional occupation but also to achieve additional skills related to their occupation and other occupations.

CHAPTER 5

ELEMENTARY FISHERIES EDUCATION IN MALABAR AND SOUTH CANARA UNDER COLONIAL RULE

5.1 Introduction

Recognizing the significant educational disparities faced by isolated fishing communities in India, Sir F.A. Nicholson advocated for the establishment of specialized schools within their villages. These schools aimed to provide a foundation in basic education while incorporating practical skills relevant to the fishing profession. The government's funding hinged on the schools adapting their curriculum and hiring qualified teachers. The programme witnessed remarkable momentum, with communities themselves taking the initiative by establishing temporary schools in the initial stages.

The Fisheries Department recognized the critical role of education in empowering fishing communities. They moved beyond solely regulating fishing activities by establishing a network of specialized elementary schools. These schools catered to the unique schedules of fisherfolk by offering both day and night classes. The curriculum went beyond basic literacy and numeracy, incorporating practical knowledge directly applicable to their way of life. This included valuable lessons in navigation, weather forecasting, marine biology, and even boat maintenance. By providing free education, the Fisheries Department not only promoted literacy but also nurtured a future generation of skilled and informed fishers. This investment in education empowered these communities to become more self-sufficient, and productive, and ensure the long-term sustainability of their livelihood.¹

Chapter Design

The fifth chapter explores Sir, F A Nicholson's proposed fisheries school curriculum and examines the establishment of fisheries day and night schools in

¹ G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D, R A K.

various locations. It analyses the role of conductresses in improving school attendance, investigates compulsory education zones, and assesses the emphasis on religious education in specific schools. Additionally, the chapter delves into the integration of fisheries schools in South Kanara and their subsequent transformation into middle schools.

Furthermore, it addresses the challenges faced by fisherfolk during natural disasters and the implementation of initiatives such as the Midday Meal Scheme in schools. The chapter examines the utilization of scholarships, vernacular magazines, and vocational training to enhance educational outcomes. It also explores the transition from fisheries schools to technical schools and the development of adult literacy programmes.

5.2 Sir. F A Nicholson on the Plight of India's Fishing Communities: - Sir. F A Nicholson rightly observed that the fisherfolk on the East and West coasts were generally at a very low stage of intellectual, social, and economic development. Their occupation was largely despised due to the nature of the materials and products they handled and the resulting condition of their homes and villages. As a class, they were very poor, deeply in debt, and in most places, so controlled or exploited by middlemen, curers, and moneylenders as to be almost serfs.² And like 'silly sheep', they cannot act independently. They are among the most ignorant groups in the presidency, generally having neither schools nor teachers. Their absence at sea day and night isolates them from the rest of the population and current affairs. They are improvident due to poverty, hopelessness, and hereditary customs based on the belief that the sea's bounty is consistent. Their intemperance stems from their occupation, ignorance, hereditary customs that perpetuate weaknesses and vices, and a lack of alternative activities or interests. As the Assistant Director says, the toddy shop is often 'the nearest sign of civilized life' and is frequently the venue for village meetings.³

² G O NO.1668 dated 15/10/1927, D D, R A K.

³ G O NO.1668.

Their situation was vastly different from agricultural villages with their diverse population, leadership, education, commerce, and established community structures, including cooperative efforts in irrigation, temples, and other shared interests. Fishing hamlets were typically composed of squalid huts, inhabited by uneducated people with no meaningful engagement beyond daily fishing and selling. Lacking guidance, education, and supportive leadership, they are exploited by those in power.⁴ This is why the fishing communities of the presidency have remained largely untouched by general education and the influence of village schools. As a result, it became necessary to create a new educational system specifically tailored to their needs and circumstances.

Sir. F A Nicholson's Proposal for Special Schools in the Madras Presidency- Sir. F A Nicholson, recognizing the unique circumstances of the Madras Presidency's fishing communities, proposed a special type of school to address the challenges they faced. These communities resided in isolated hamlets, detached from the mainstream population due to their distinct profession – fishing, which held no connection to agriculture or other industries. This occupational difference necessitated physical separation, often placing them in hamlets lacking basic sanitation and educational opportunities. Nicholson further observed social struggles within these communities, characterized by hereditary intemperance and unthrifty habits, resulting in debt, and a diminished sense of self-respect and independence.⁵ He argued that traditional education would not effectively address these issues. Therefore, Nicholson emphasized that the elementary education of fisher children should be directly connected to their life within the fishing village, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness.

These schools aimed to modernize traditional fishing practices. They taught fishermen not only business skills for trading their catches, but also practical abilities like net making, fish preservation, and boat building. Navigation and

⁴ G O NO.1668.

⁵ G O NO.420 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K.

weather prediction were also part of the curriculum. This new knowledge equipped fishermen to approach their work more scientifically.

With the primary goal of eradicating illiteracy within fishing communities, these schools offered a foundational education. The curriculum followed the general guidelines set by the Elementary Education Act, with the Taluk Board, which managed the schools, having limited authority for modifications subject to approval by the Director of the Educational Council.

Sir. F A Nicholson's scheme for fishery education gained government approval. He argued that education's focus should be on mental awakening, not industrial skill development.⁶ This unique partnership involved the Fisheries Department offering to subsidize half the operating costs of fishing village board schools. However, this financial support came with specific conditions to ensure the programme's effectiveness and cater to the communities' needs: a fishery-aligned curriculum, specialized teachers trained at the Calicut Fisheries Training Institute, and departmental oversight by fisheries officers.⁷

Through specialized schools accessible to fishing communities, Sir F.A. Nicholson's scheme empowered future generations by offering vocational training alongside traditional practices. This free and relevant education, combining basic subjects with practical fishery skills like navigation, aimed to promote self-sufficiency, productivity, and the long-term health of the fishing industry.

5.3 Empowering Fisherfolk Through Education

The Fisheries Department, under the leadership of the director, implemented a unique education system specifically for Malabar's fishing communities. V. Govindan, F. A Nicholson's Personnel assistant, played a crucial role. His deep understanding of the community's challenges was instrumental in its success. Driven by a desire to uplift these communities, the department opened special schools in

⁶ Sir F A Nicholson's letter No.565 dated 19th September 1916, Home (Education), Department, R A K.

⁷ G O NO.2048 dated 27/5/1918, R D, R A K.

fishing villages. These free schools offered a basic education with a practical, incorporating knowledge and skills directly relevant to the fishing profession.

The course of the study in the fisheries elementary school. All the compulsory subjects, as per rules made under the Elementary Education Act.

1. Three R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic)
2. Drawing, nature study, manual work, physical training.

Optional subjects not insisted on by the values made under the Education Act.

English, civics, Nature-Study, as applied to fishes were taught and included elements of Physics, Chemistry, Physical Geography relating to the sea, Meteorology, a study of the common objects of the sea with special emphasis on fish and other economic products suited to the age and intelligence of pupils. The pupils were made familiar with the kind of marketable fish etc., and given facts and figures concerning them, their importance, economic value, and the uses to which they are put. In other words, this part of the course was essentially a nature study, similar to what was taught in other schools, with a specific focus on the sea and fishing. Manual training included net making and carpentry to which shortly be added refining of salt, simple curing of fish (such as beheading, scaling, gutting, washing, salting, drying, etc, especially emphasised in the case of girls), barking and tanning of nets, preparation of fish manure, domestic gardening, knotting, and splicing, preparation of rigging and sails, the elements of signalling and the like. English was taught in some of the schools. Civics included lessons on cooperation, sanitation, temperance, and historical matters intended to help the pupils understand the main facts of existing social and political institutions and conditions.⁸

Hours of attendance: - The school hours in day schools were generally similar to those in traditional schools, with classes typically held between 10 AM and 1 PM

⁸ Ref. No.1599-c/27-2 dated 4th August 1927, from the Director of Fisheries Madras to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, D D, R A K.

and 2 PM and 4 PM. However, there were variations in the schedule due to specific circumstances or reasons.⁹

The time devoted to different subjects: - The essence of the scheme of elementary fishing education organised by Sir. F A Nicholson is that, apart from the periods especially devoted to the study of fishery techniques, every subject should be so correlated to life in fishing will be emphasised. For instance, in Arithmetic the problems were chiefly about bazaar and beach transactions as were likely to be familiar to fisher children, and also problems relating to accounts of cooperative societies or fishing syndicates in the case of higher classes particularly classes of girls. In drawing the subjects chosen were related to the life and occupations of people in fishing villages. Nature study, which was included in fisheries science, dealt principally with the fauna and flora of the sea and sea coast. In one sense, therefore, all the time which the children spent at school might have been said to have been devoted to the study of fisheries.¹⁰

Students educated in fisheries schools were not limited to careers within their caste. These schools were recognized by district councils as elementary schools and followed the curriculum prescribed by the Elementary Education Act. While the illustrations used in fisheries schools were related to the fishing industry, many students who have studied up to the fourth or fifth grade in these schools have transitioned successfully to ordinary schools for higher education. The core principles are the same, but the concrete examples used in fisheries schools help to engage students, reinforce concepts, and demonstrate the practical application of their studies. This approach not only prevents students from disassociating from their ancestral occupations but also provides them with valuable knowledge that can be directly applied to their future careers in fishing.¹¹

⁹ G O NO. 2048.

¹⁰ G O NO. 2048.

¹¹ G O NO. 2048.

Trial schools: Education Initiatives: - To expand educational opportunities, the government-sanctioned¹²the opening of four permanent day and night schools. The director of fisheries launched the permanent night and day schools with the allocated funds. ¹³ Responding to a strong desire for education among fishing villagers, the government-sanctioned ‘trial’ schools. These trials included both a day school and a night school established in Chaliyam.¹⁴ The school had two teachers with salaries of Rs. 15 and Rs. 12, respectively. Trial schools gauged local demand and allowed for adaptation to specific needs, while the fisheries school served as a concentrated experiment in specialized education.

The Chaliyam Day School maintained a high average attendance of over 80 students during its last inspection on 30th September 1921. This is particularly impressive considering the nature of an illiterate community.¹⁵ The government approved the construction of a permanent building for the rapidly growing Chaliyam School. With the area now mandating compulsory education, the school’s enrollment is expected to climb further.¹⁶

Another positive development is the government’s appointment of a conductress for the school. The inspector acknowledges her positive impact on attendance. He also reports that one of her associates has been teaching the Quran to students outside of school hours.¹⁷ The school played a significant role in bringing education to a community that previously lacked it.

Villagers took the initiative, starting some schools themselves and proving their need. Fisheries officials opened others based on fisherfolk requests. Locals were involved as managers, some providing valuable service. Most schools initially operated in temporary shelters.¹⁸ The schools at Kadalundi, Blangad, and

¹² G O NO.406 dated 6/3/1919, R (special), R A K.

¹³ G O NO.1185 dated 17/06/1919, R (special), R A K.

¹⁴ G O NO.407 dated 25/2/1920, R, (special) D, R A K.

¹⁵ G.O NO.210 dated 9/2/1922, D D, R A K.

¹⁶ G.O NO.225 dated 5/2/1927, D D, R A K.

¹⁷ G O NO.3648 dated 24/8/1944, D D, R A K.

¹⁸ Hornell James, *Madras Fishery Investigations 1921*, Madras Fisheries Department, Bulletin No. XIV, Madras: the Superintendent, Government Press, 1922, p.6.

Kottakadapuram in the Malabar district were ordered to be started on 17th March 1921,¹⁹ as temporary or ‘trial’ schools for 2 years. This community worked together with a fisheries department to overcome resource limitations and establish a foundation for education.

Located in the heart of the fishing village, the Blangad school operated in a temporary shed. The owner built a permanent, well-constructed pucca building specifically for the school. Additionally, the school offered some vocational training opportunities, though on a limited scale. These training sessions included skills like net making, fish curing, and stitching.²⁰ These courses aimed to equip students with practical skills that could improve their future livelihood.

The Kadalundi school is situated in the heart of the fishing villages the inhabitants of which are purely Pu-Islam²¹ fisherfolk and the pupils of the school are mostly their children. This school was established due to the lack of educational facilities for Pu-Islam children in this remote village. Because the students belong to a community with limited resources, their learning capacity may differ from the standard. To address this, teachers were limited to class sizes of no more than 20 children to ensure efficient instruction.²² The Kadalundi school specifically addressed the educational needs of a Muslim fishing community. While potential resistance to girls’ education existed within the community, the implementation of compulsory education in the region ensured that all children, regardless of gender, had access to schooling.²³

The Kadalundi school served the educational needs of the Muslim fishing community. It bridged the educational gap for underprivileged children by providing a supportive environment and potentially offering religious instruction alongside secular education. Providing education in a resource-constrained, conservative community presents a unique set of challenges, particularly for girls’ education. The

¹⁹ G O NO.355 dated 3/3/1921, D D, R A K.

²⁰ G O NO.826 dated 7/6/1923, D D, R A K.

²¹ Pudu Islam- Converted Islam (Mappila fisherfolk)

²² G O NO.826.

²³ G O NO.1605 dated 17/7/1937, D D, R A K.

Kadalundi school served a vital role by offering educational opportunities in this specific context.

Educational Opportunities for Fisherfolk on the West Coast: - In 1921, government efforts to expand education on the West Coast included approval for eight new elementary schools specifically serving fisherfolk communities. By year's end, the initiative had grown to encompass 10-day schools and 10-night schools. These schools provided educational opportunities for a total of 929 students, with 565 enrolled in the day schools and 364 in the night classes. Notably, seventeen of these schools represented new establishments that opened that very year.²⁴

From the end of 1922 to 1923, the initiative to improve education for fisherfolk communities thrived. The number of schools offering daytime classes doubled to 20, while evening classes grew to six. This expansion led to a significant increase in enrollment, with a total of 1761 students. It is worth noting that 471, or nearly a quarter, of these students were girls, highlighting a positive step forward in female education within these communities. Boys made up the remaining 1290 students. To support this growth, they employed 63 teachers, with 53 at the day schools and 10 at the evening classes.²⁵

From 1924 to 1925, the Department of Fisheries planned to build six new schools in remote villages. These villages, including Nattika, Mannalamkunnu, Parappanangadi, and Kasaragode, were slated to receive day schools, while Veliangode and Chombala were designated for night schools. This initiative aimed to provide a significant number of school-aged children from fishing communities in these areas with access to education.²⁶

5.4 Student-Teacher Ratios in Madras Fisheries Elementary Schools: - The Madras Elementary Education Act mandated a minimum of one regular teacher for every 40 pupils enrolled, although the ideal ratio was one teacher for every 30

²⁴ Hornell James, Bulletin No.XIV, p.6.

²⁵ G.O NO.761.

²⁶ G.O NO.761.

pupils.²⁷ As per rule 81 of the Madras educational rules which prescribed a maximum of 35 pupils for a single class for one teacher.²⁸ Under the Madras Fisheries subordinate service rules in force from 1929 to 1933, a trained teacher's certificate from the government fisheries training institute, Calicut was a necessary qualification appointment as a teacher in a fisheries school.²⁹ With fewer students, teachers could tailor their instruction and offer more individual attention to ensure all students grasped the concepts.

5.5 The Conductress System: A Colonial Legacy: - The Conductress system was a strategy implemented by the British government during the colonial period. It was introduced with the aim of improving children's attendance. Conductresses ensured regular student attendance through home visits and follow-up efforts. In the classroom, they supported teachers by managing attendance, student behaviour, and providing general supervision. Subsequently, this system was also adopted in fisheries schools.

Historically, only 70% of students attended rural schools regularly. During adverse weather conditions like floods or periods of illness, attendance rates declined further. Many students arrived one or two hours late. In rural areas, where access to clocks and a strong sense of time discipline was limited, tardiness was prevalent.

The significant fluctuations in student attendance were likely attributed to uninformed parents who did not prioritize regular school attendance. Even minor events, such as arguments with peers, local fairs, or community celebrations, could deter students from attending school. As young children often required adult assistance for transportation, and busy parents were unable to accompany them daily, inconsistent attendance became a significant problem. To address this issue, many elementary schools, particularly in rural areas, employed attendants, often

²⁷ G O NO.859 dated 13/6/1927, D D, R A K.

²⁸ G O NO.2023 dated 4/11/1924, D D, R A K.

²⁹ G O NO.2950 dated 1/6/ 1949, D D, R A K.

funded through miscellaneous budgets. These attendants were commonly referred to as “conductors” or “conductresses.”

Enquiries revealed that particularly in rural elementary schools and even in urban schools where this issue was less pronounced, District Boards and private agencies employed ‘conductors’ or ‘conductresses’ who were paid from contingencies. Their sole duty was to visit pupils’ homes, escort them to school, and ensure their regular attendance.³⁰ By implementing this system, fisheries schools aimed to improve student enrollment, reduce dropout rates, and create a supportive learning environment for children from fishing communities.

This village school faced a double threat: low student attendance and a lack of educational value placed by parents. While fishermen’s families lived close by, poverty and limited education created a barrier. The solution lies in the role of a “conductress” an attendance officer who bridges this gap. By working with families, the conductress can convince them of the importance of education and ensure children attend regularly. Without such intervention, the cycle of parental illiteracy perpetuates, hindering the school’s overall success.³¹

Local government-operated elementary schools implemented a gender-segregated attendant system. Only female attendants, known as “conductresses,” were assigned to girls’ schools, with specific guidelines outlining their responsibilities. This policy aimed to improve girls’ school attendance by having female attendants focus on bringing girls to school and ensuring their regular presence. The employment of male attendants (“conductors”) in these schools was strictly prohibited.³²

The headmaster of Velliangode School reported that the appointment of a conductress would significantly increase daily attendance across all classes.³³ The appointment of conductors or conductresses in three selected schools, as a remedy

³⁰ G O NO.807 dated 20/5/1936, D D, R A K.

³¹ G O NO.1429 dated 1/6/1939, D D, R A K.

³² G O NO.598 dated 25/4/1932, L E, R A K.

³³ G O NO.925 dated 23/4/1937, D D, R A K.

for a deplorable loss, its inefficiency and administrative difficulty caused by irregular attendance and fluctuations in strength, in fisheries schools in each of the sections viz Kumbla in the north section, Parappanangadi in the central section and Veliangode in the south section from 1st March 1936 was ordered by the government.³⁴

For schools struggling with severely irregular attendance and fluctuating student numbers, hiring conductors or conductresses (attendants) was the only effective solution to these problems. These attendants helped address the significant decline in efficiency and the administrative challenges caused by such attendance issues. Schools in the north section, particularly Palapatty, Mannalamkunnu, Puduponnani, Kaipamangalam, Veliangode, and Vekkode, have identified conductress services as crucial. Due to limited interest in education among some fisherfolk families, regular home visits were necessary to encourage student attendance. A conductress would significantly improve school enrollment and attendance in these areas.³⁵

The Governor of Madras authorized the retention of conductress positions in fourteen schools. Subsequently, conductresses were employed in nearly all schools. Since the implementation of these positions, a consistent increase in student enrollment, attendance rates, and notably, female student enrollment has been observed.³⁶ The Conductress was paid a monthly salary of Rupees 4.80. An additional bonus of one Rupee was awarded when the average monthly attendance ranged between 65% and 75% of the total student enrollment. A further bonus of eight annas was granted if the attendance rate reached 75% or higher.³⁷ A salary of 6 rupees was granted to the conductress when attendance rates surpassed 75%. However, this was contingent upon the condition that no separate peon would be employed in addition to the conductress. This decision was made in recognition of

³⁴ G.O NO.17 dated 5/1/1937, D D, R A K.

³⁵ G O.NO.544 dated 16/3/1942, D D, R A K.

³⁶ G.O NO.145 dated 18/1/1940, D D, R A K.

³⁷ G.O NO.1655 dated 28/3/1949, D D, R A K.

the need for a Conductress to visit the homes of students and escort them to school each morning.³⁸

Education and Opportunity for Palapatty's Fishermen- The village of Palapatty, with over 3,000 residents and 400 school-aged children, faced challenges in school enrollment. Despite a government-established fisheries school in 1927, the Inspector of Fisheries reported that parents remained hesitant to send their children without encouragement. To address this, he recommended retaining the "conductress" position in each school.³⁹ The conductress, likely responsible for student encouragement or attendance monitoring, had proven effective. The headmaster confirmed this, with student enrollment rising from 147 to 222 since the conductress' appointment. Notably, 173 of these students (102 boys and 71 girls) were Pu-Islam children, a very backward group.⁴⁰ A statement showing the strength of the classes and the average attendance from 1938 to June 1939⁴¹

It was evident that there had been a significant increase in both the number of girls attending the school and their attendance rates. However, the Inspector noted, "The Pu-Islam have yet to fully recognize the importance of educating their children". Without a conductress, student enrollment and daily attendance are likely to decline.⁴² In the 1940-41 academic year, Palapatty School had an enrollment of 144 boys and 82 girls, totalling 226 students. Of these, 170 students were Pu-Islam children. Due to the efforts of the conductress, daily attendance was reportedly regular, making her retention essential.⁴³

The local fishermen of Palapatty, with an existing enrollment of over 225 students, petitioned the Assistant Director to introduce a higher grade (Standard VI) in their school, effective on 1st June 1941. This request was motivated by the

³⁸ G O NO.2022 dated 15/8/1939, (Mis), D D, R A K.

³⁹ G O NO.2217 dated 11/9/1939, D D, R A K.

⁴⁰ G O NO.2392 dated 2/10/1939, D D, R A K.

⁴¹ See Appendix.

⁴² G O NO.2503 dated 13/11/1939, D D, R A K.

⁴³ G O NO.547 dated 20/3/1941, D D, R A K.

economic hardships caused by recent fishing shortages, which made it increasingly difficult for families to send their children to distant schools.⁴⁴

While the Director acknowledged the pressing need, he cited wartime budgetary constraints as the reason for delays in implementing similar proposals at other fisheries schools. Several other fishing communities had also requested the addition of higher grades but had to wait. The fishermen of Palapatty emphasized the dire consequences of not introducing Standard VI locally, stating that approximately 25 students would be forced to drop out of school.

Even though Palapatty had a significant population of fisherfolk, they were impoverished and had limited access to education. This newly established fisheries school offered a glimmer of hope for a better future for these disadvantaged Pu-Islam (Mappila fishing communities).⁴⁵ There were no nearby schools for older children, who were forced to travel long distances across canals to reach the Veliangode Board school.

A critical shortage of higher elementary schools in the area further compounded the issue. The nearest option was located over two miles away, separated by an unbridged river. Poverty and the significant distance made attending distant schools impractical for these students, particularly concerning meal arrangements.⁴⁶ Moreover, no other Mappila fisheries school offered education beyond the early grades. This made the Palapatty School a unique and vital institution. The permanent school, with classes up to the seventh grade and qualified teachers for both upper and lower grades, demonstrated the growing demand for education within the community. The introduction of the seventh standard in June 1943 marked a significant milestone in this progress.⁴⁷

The absence of an eighth grade (standard VIII) created a significant risk of dropout for current students after they completed seventh grade (standard VII). This

⁴⁴ G O NO.996 dated 30/5/1941, D D, R A K.

⁴⁵ G O NO.3443 dated 20/3/1943, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁴⁶ G O NO.3484 dated 1/4/1943, D D, R A K.

⁴⁷ G O NO.3484.

was particularly concerning because Palapatty served as the only Pu-Islam fisheries higher elementary school in the entire taluk, drawing students from nearby Pu-Islam fisheries schools in Veliangode and Mannalamkunnu. Therefore, opening standard VIII here was absolutely essential to ensure uninterrupted educational opportunities for these students. The headmaster emphasized the success of the newly established sixth grade, and expanding the school to include an eighth grade would meet the growing educational demands of the community.⁴⁸

This example demonstrates how community activism can influence educational policies. The constant intervention of fish workers compelled the government to establish higher standards in schools in those areas, highlighting the importance of local leadership and community engagement in shaping educational opportunities. In contrast, schools where local leaders did not submit petitions remained at the primary level, emphasizing the role of advocacy in securing educational resources.

5.6 Compulsory Education in Fisheries schools: - Educationally backward areas had been declared as compulsory education zones.⁴⁹ Vellayil, Kadalundi, and Parappanangadi were fishing villages designated as compulsory education zones. However, enforcing attendance presented a hurdle. The Vellayil Fisheries School was the only elementary school within a one-mile locality. There were 38 school-aged boys residing within these zones who hadn't been enrolled. The Elementary Education Act prevented legal action against their guardians until a suitable school was available within a one-mile radius of their homes. Fortunately, the Vellayil Fisheries School served as the only elementary school within this distance, offering an opportunity to enroll these boys.⁵⁰

The Commissioner of the Calicut Municipality permitted admissions into fisheries schools at all times of the year. The government permitted such admissions

⁴⁸ G O NO.1463 dated 31/3/1944, D D, R A K.

⁴⁹ Madras Legislative Assembly Question No.908, dated 25th September 1924, from Rao Bhadhur O.M. Narayana Namboothiripad, Law (education) Department, R A K.

⁵⁰ G O NO.1365 dated 10/06/1940, D D, R A K.

to the first standards.⁵¹ Admission to the first standard could be made at any time.⁵² However, admissions in elementary schools were governed by the instructions issued by the Director of public instruction.⁵³ The admission of pupils to elementary school was done only twice a year.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the statutory rule which forbade admission to any class in elementary schools at any part of the year was no longer in force. The admissions to classes higher than the first standard should be made only twice a year, once at the commencement of the school year and again after the Christmas, Pongal, or mid-term holidays.⁵⁵

Fisheries schools held their annual student promotions around mid-May, followed by a two-month admission period that ended in mid-July. This created a seasonal need for extra teachers only during those three months (May-July). However, since the student body completely changed each year, there was a need to constantly adjust staffing levels. This system was inefficient: the most needed teachers were laid off just as student enrollment increased, requiring new hires shortly after.⁵⁶ This is the perfect example of how to reduce costs and achieve economic gains as part of an economic policy, specifically through workforce optimization and strategic hiring practices.

Naduvattam Fisheries School - Fishermen in Marat Mukadi Village advocated for the establishment of a local fisheries school, citing the significant distance and challenging terrain separating the village from existing educational institutions. They argued that a local school would not only provide convenient access to education for their children but also allow them to assist their parents during fishing activities, fostering a deeper understanding of the fishing industry.⁵⁷

Founded in July 1922, the Naduvattam Fisheries School thrived with consistent support. The school underwent periodic expansions, with the latest

⁵¹ Memorandum No.34109-iv/39-2 dated 4/12/1939, D D, R A K.

⁵² G O NO.1903 dated 21/8/1939, E D, R A K.

⁵³ File No.C.No.12523-VI/40 E & R.C 1417/B-39 dated 18/4/1939, E D, R A K.

⁵⁴ G O NO.1883 dated 8/8/1938, E D, R A K.

⁵⁵ G O NO.1365.

⁵⁶ G.O NO.1356 dated 25/9/1934, D D, R A K.

⁵⁷ G O NO.2562 dated 19/10/1939, D D, R A K.

extension approved for operation until April 1935. Since September 1929, student enrollment had consistently exceeded 100. At that time, 120 students, predominantly boys, were being educated by four teachers across four grades. Notably, the school catered to the Pu-Islam community.⁵⁸

A significant change occurred on 1st May 1934, with the introduction of a fifth grade. Unfortunately, a concerning trend had developed: the school's traditionally strong female enrollment had weakened. As of 1st July 1939, the number of pupils had been 37 girls and 69 boys, with the girls' numbers notably lower than the boys'. To address this issue and a general decline in attendance, the school had reinstated the position of conductress, a role previously held until April 1941. A conductress was expected to improve attendance by fostering greater parental and guardian involvement.⁵⁹

Parappanangadi: - The Parappanangadi fisheries day school started on 1st July 1924. The school was situated in a village inhabited by fishermen converted to Islam of a very backward type.⁶⁰ Though the school enrollment saw a positive jump from 120 to 160 students in May 1937, it fell short. An official census revealed 17 boys and 40 girls of school age who remain out of school. The school served a predominantly disadvantaged Pu-Islam community, where cultural resistance, particularly to girls' education, significantly hindered educational progress. Enforced by local compulsory education laws, the urgent need to increase enrollment was exacerbated by these challenges. To address this, immediate interventions were required to improve school attendance and eradicate the underlying factors contributing to dropout rates.⁶¹

The headmaster of the school reported that the daily attendance of pupils in all classes could be increased to a considerable extent if a conductress was appointed in the school. He also reported that the houses of the local fisherfolk were not situated near the school. As such a conductress would be very useful for the

⁵⁸ G O NO.547.

⁵⁹ G O NO.547.

⁶⁰ G O NO.106 dated 20/1/1928, D D, R A K.

⁶¹ G.O NO.2249 dated 11/12/1936, D D, R A K.

improvement of the daily attendance in the various classes.⁶² As the school in Parappanangadi adhered to the Islamic calendar, it did not adhere to the traditional summer vacation. Instead, a vacation coinciding with the Islamic holy month of Ramadan was granted.⁶³

Land Acquisition Policy- During the British colonial period, land acquisition for government institutions, including schools, was often carried out strategically. A notable example is the Parappanangadi school. A local landowner, Kizhakkiniyakath Cheriya Muhammed Naha, offered to build the school⁶⁴ according to approved plans⁶⁵, seeking a fair rent. However, the government sanctioned the construction and land acquisition for a much lower cost.⁶⁶ Kizhakkiniyakath Cheriya Muhammed Naha objected to the land acquisition,⁶⁷ citing concerns about the impact on his family's privacy and valuable property.⁶⁸

Despite these objections, the colonial government proceeded with the acquisition, highlighting the power imbalance between the colonial authorities and local landowners. Later, the need for a well, urinal, and playground led to the acquisition of an adjacent 30-cent plot.⁶⁹ However, uncertainties surrounding the future of fishery schools temporarily halted further development.⁷⁰

Quran Classes Attract Students- The marginalized Pu-Islam community, residing in the coastal regions of Malabar, faced significant educational barriers. In the early 20th century, the establishment of fisheries schools marked a turning point,

⁶² G O NO.925 dated 23/4/1937, D D, R A K.

⁶³ G O NO.323 dated 4/2/1938, D D, R A K.

⁶⁴ G O NO.106.

⁶⁵ G O NO.1173 dated 11/7/1929, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁶⁶ G O NO.1454 dated 23/8/1929, D D, R A K.

⁶⁷ Under the provisions of section 4 (1) of the Land Acquisition Act I of 1894 as amended by the Land Acquisition Amendment Act XXXVIII of 1923; and hereby authorize the Revenue divisional officer, Calicut, his staff, and workmen to exercise the powers conferred by section 4 (2) of the Act and under section 3 same appoint the Revenue divisional officer, Calicut, to exercise the known of a collector under the Act. quoted in G.O1173.

⁶⁸ G O NO.1454 dated 23/8/1929, D D, R A K.

⁶⁹ G O NO.3041 dated 8/2/1938, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁷⁰ G O NO.4946 dated 18/11/1944, (Mis), D D, R A K.

providing the community with its first opportunity for formal education.⁷¹ However, the school faced a severe decline in student numbers, mainly because parents lacked education and preferred religious schooling. To tackle this issue, Mullah⁷² was recruited. His strong influence significantly boosted enrollment, with 38 new students joining, most of whom were Pu-Islam. Mullah expressed optimism about attracting more students in the future.⁷³

Furthermore, to compete with a rival Muslim school and cater to the community's desire for religious instruction, permission was granted for Quran classes before school hours. With a significant number of existing Pu-Islam pupils 36 the Mappila fisherfolks' stronger interest in religious education, this approach aimed to improve overall enrollment. The low numbers were attributed to the community's conservative nature and limited interest in secular education. Therefore, persistent efforts in promoting the value of education were deemed crucial for the school's survival.⁷⁴

The government recognized⁷⁵ a shortage of Mappila teachers in three fisheries schools located in Kumbla, Parapanangadi, and Veliangode, which were experiencing decreasing student turnout. A potential solution considered was hiring local religious leaders, Mullahs, to teach the Quran on a part-time basis. Although this could temporarily boost enrollment, there was a risk of renewed attendance problems when qualified teachers were hired. The Mullahs' local standing and possible resistance to change might deter students from attending classes taught by new educators.⁷⁶

Kumbla and Veliangode Schools- The Kumbla submitted a petition through the Deputy Inspector of Schools, Kanara Muhammadan Range, requesting the

⁷¹ Joshiba P.P., Pu-Islam education in elementary schools in Malabar: A History and Analysis, Ishal Paithrkam, Issue- 36, January 2024.

⁷² The most common application of the title mullah is to religious leaders, teachers in religious schools, those versed in canon law, and leaders of prayer in the mosques., quoted in <https://www.encyclopedia>.

⁷³ G.O NO. 1455 Dated 31/8/1928, D D, R A K.

⁷⁴ G O NO.2022.

⁷⁵ Memorandum No.931-11-/34-1 dated 7/4/1934, D D, R A K.

⁷⁶ G O NO.1428 dated 11/10/1934, D D, R A K.

appointment of a Quran teacher. They argued that the current single-teacher setup was insufficient and that the part-time village Mullah could only handle Quran instruction. Replacing a trained teacher with a Mullah would hinder teaching other subjects in the curriculum.⁷⁷ The Inspectors of Fisheries recommended the temporary appointment of a Mullah teacher for the schools in Kumbla and Veliangode. The proposed salary for this position is Rs. 10 per month.⁷⁸

The proposal to employ Mullah teachers sparked concerns about potentially displacing qualified educators. To address this, authorities categorized potential Quran teachers based on their F.T.I. qualifications. List A includes probationary F.T.I. graduates with certificates but awaiting permanent positions, while List B comprises those who completed the F.T.I. course but failed the certification exam. Despite the availability of 25 unemployed certified F.T.I. graduates and 12 more nearing completion, implementing the government's Quran teacher mandate (as outlined in the memorandum) could paradoxically lead to a shortage of qualified personnel.

Schools in Kumbla, Parappanangadi, and Veliangode urgently needed qualified Quran instructors. To address this immediate need, the government sanctioned the temporary employment of three part-time Mullah teachers until 31st March 1935. These teachers were stationed in each of the three fisheries schools at Kumbla, Parappanangadi, and Veliangode, with a salary of Rs. 6 per month. However, this was a temporary solution with a condition: these Mullah teachers must be replaced by available F.T.I. trained teachers before 31st March 1935.⁷⁹

Seasonal Factors Complicate Teacher Allocation Decision - The Finance Department suggested reducing a teacher's position at Mannalamkunnu School based on a three-year attendance analysis. However, the headmaster raised concerns about the difficulty of basing teacher allocation solely on average attendance. He highlighted the seasonal variations in attendance common to village schools. During fishing season, children often assisted their parents, leading to dips in attendance.

⁷⁷ G O NO.1428.

⁷⁸ G O NO.1428.

⁷⁹ G O NO.1428.

Similarly, monsoon rains could disrupt attendance patterns. The headmaster argued that fluctuating enrollment throughout the year should not necessitate constant staff adjustments.⁸⁰ In the beginning, most schools in fishing villages, like the one in Mannalamkunnu, faced similar challenges. Muslim fishermen, especially the Pu-Islam community, were less inclined towards education compared to Hindu fishermen.⁸¹ Their schools needed more time to improve. Mannalamkunnu was a remote coastal village with no other schools nearby. The nearest option was two miles away, a board school for Pu-Islam children. If it closed due to low performance, the village would lose its only educational opportunity.

The Pu-Islam community traditionally had a lower level of education, being a marginalized community. This, combined with the general challenges faced by fishing communities in education, made progress even harder. Regular attendance was a problem in many Muslim schools without a qualified Quran teacher. Mannalamkunnu lacked Mullah, affecting student performance and enrollment. They reported the importance of a conductress who visited homes daily to ensure student attendance, particularly for girls.⁸²

Quilandy Elementary School- The school was situated in the heart of a fishing village. At that time, neither day nor night schools existed in Quilandy or the Kollankal neighborhood. The coastal residents of the area were predominantly from the Pu Islam community. To address their educational needs, a government fisheries elementary school was established in 1924.⁸³ This significant step aimed to bridge the educational gap for their children. However, the nascent school, initially staffed with only one teacher, faced the risk of closure after a year. Recognizing its crucial role in the community, the school was fortunately granted an extension.

Quilandy Elementary School faced initial challenges in securing a suitable building. Renting a space for a minimal fee of three rupees, the school later encountered difficulties when the landlord demanded an exorbitant rent. Government intervention led to a negotiated compromise of five rupees.⁸⁴ As the

⁸⁰ G O NO.714 dated 31/5/1934, D D, R A K.

⁸¹ G.O NO.633 dated 17/3/1937, D D, R.A K.

⁸² G.O NO. 633.

⁸³ G.O 1314 dated 21/7/924, D D, R A K.

⁸⁴ G O NO.1033 dated 20/7/1925, D D, R A K.

student population grew, the school required additional space. Land was acquired from Kolakkal Kelu Panikker in 1927 to construct a permanent building.⁸⁵ However, the acquired land proved insufficient to accommodate the increasing number of students, hindering essential activities. The absence of a separate girls' urinal further compounded the problem.⁸⁶ To address this, a proposal was made to acquire additional land, including a small plot owned by a local tenant.⁸⁷ This purchase would have significantly expanded the school's grounds.⁸⁸

Additional higher elementary grade teachers were approved⁸⁹ for a one-year period starting 11th November 1950. These teachers would earn a per mensem salary of 25 rupees, 1 anna, and 45 pies. The need for this extra teacher arose due to the division of Standard II into two separate classes. The sanction⁹⁰ was accorded for the employment of additional higher elementary grade teachers of Rupees 25, 1 Anna and 45 pies per mensem for a period of one year from 11th November 1950. The teacher for the school was sanctioned in connection with the bifurcation of standard II.⁹¹ The average attendance figures for the month of July 1951 are presented below.

Class	Strength	Average attendance
I A	30	25
I B	30	24
II A	24	20
II B	24	20
III	40	33
IV	27	19
V	25	20
VI	22	16
TOTAL	222	177

⁸⁵ G O NO.1707 dated 21/10/1927, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁸⁶ G O NO.2743 dated 9/11/1939, D D, R A K.

⁸⁷ G O NO.2743.

⁸⁸ G O NO.800 dated 11/6/1932, D D, R A K.

⁸⁹ G O NO.4622 dated 17/11/1950, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁹⁰ G O NO.4622.

⁹¹ G O NO.3358 dated 4/8/1952, (Mis), D D, R A K.

Pudiappa school- The Pudiappa school, the opening of which was sanctioned⁹², had 93 pupils enrolled across its classes. Rules 4, section 41 (2) of the rules issued under the Madras Elementary Act, 1920, directs that there shall be at least one regular teacher for every 40 pupils on the rolls and that it was very desirable that there should be a teacher for every 30 pupils.⁹³ The government approved the permanent operation of the fisheries elementary school in Pudiappa, effective April 1, 1935, with the following permanent staff.⁹⁴

Pudiappa school
5 teachers (Higher Elementary Grade) Rs.23-2/2-45.
1 teacher (Lower Elementary Grade in Rs.24-1/2.
Special pay to the Head Master Rs.5 Per Mensem.

Owing to a lack of space, it was necessary to secure additional land for the construction of girls' toilets and a playground. A formal application was submitted to the director of Fisheries to acquire the neighboring property. In response to this, an inspector was dispatched to visit the site and subsequently submitted a proposal. The proposed building for Pudiappa School was designed to accommodate 210 students, encompassing the school's current enrollment.⁹⁵ The Inspector of Fisheries, Calicut, submitted the proposal for the acquisition of a site for Pudiappa school.⁹⁶

5.7 FISHERIES EDUCATION IN WEST COAST

A group of 20 leading members of the Mukkuva fisherfolk community in Kasaragod and South Kanara petitioned for the transfer of their hamlet's elementary day school, currently under the Kasaragod Taluk Board, to the Fisheries Department. The community argued that the current curriculum fails to address the specific needs of their livelihood, lacking essential subjects like net making, fishing techniques, and carpentry – skills vital for crafting fishing equipment such as oars, oar plates,

⁹² G O NO.433 dated 29/3/1927, (Mis), D D, R A K.

⁹³ G O NO.2154 dated 15/12/1927, D D, R A K.

⁹⁴ G O NO.536 dated 30/3/1935, D D, R A K.

⁹⁵ G O NO.1296 dated 20/10/1933, D D, R A K.

⁹⁶ G O NO.490 dated 25/3/1935, D D, R A K.

oarlocks, and rudders. They believed the Fisheries Department is better equipped to provide a comprehensive education for their children.⁹⁷

This request highlights a broader issue of educational inequality within fishing communities. While neighbouring villages like Kizhur offer vocational training, many fishing communities lack such opportunities. Despite a government policy to establish schools for fishermen's children in underserved areas, full implementation is yet to be achieved. The Mukkuva fisherfolk's petition comes as the Director of Fisheries proposes opening new fisheries schools along the west coast, including six in South Kanara district.⁹⁸

The fisheries department offered to financially support schools in fishing villages. This support would cover half the maintenance costs, but it came with conditions:

- (1) The school curriculum had to be adjusted to better suit the needs of fisher children.
- (2) Teachers trained at the Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut had to be hired.
- (3) Fishery officers had to be allowed to periodically inspect the schools. This programme aimed to improve the educational opportunities for children from fishing communities in Malabar and South Kanara by providing financial aid and ensuring the schools catered to their specific needs.⁹⁹

The D P I opposes the transfer of Taluk board schools to the Fisheries department due to the fact that fisher children already receive instruction in net making, fishery techniques, carpentry, and other subjects in addition to the traditional academic core of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The D P I contended that this overburdens students and hinders their acquisition of a general elementary education. Furthermore, the department was concerned that the financial burden of

⁹⁷ G O NO.202 dated 12/2/1927, D D, R A K.

⁹⁸ G O NO.202.

⁹⁹ G O NO.202.

vocational training would increase education costs for all, while unfairly limiting students' future prospects by confining them to their parents' occupations.¹⁰⁰

The D P I was staunchly opposed to the introduction of vocational education in elementary schools. Even if such a programme was implemented, the D P I maintains that these schools should continue to be governed by local boards to prevent the bureaucratic inefficiencies arising from multiple inspections by various government agencies.¹⁰¹

While the Fisheries Department had successfully established schools in coastal areas offering specialized curricula, the D P I asserted that converting existing elementary schools for this purpose was a fundamentally different issue with potentially significant long-term financial implications for the provincial government.

In alignment with this stance, the Honourable Minister for Education and the Honourable Finance Member jointly decided that the Fisheries Department should not participate in developing elementary education policies, including those for specialized groups, as these matters were the responsibility of dedicated departments. Accordingly, clear guidelines were established for the future education of fisher children. The government denied the Director of Fisheries' request to acquire the Kasargod Board Elementary School for the Fisheries Department.¹⁰² The Mukkuva fishermen of the village, recognizing the benefits for their children, petitioned the fisheries department to take over the local board school. This proposal received positive feedback, as the South Kanara District Board agreed to the transfer. This takeover allowed the implementation of a new fisheries curriculum, specifically designed to meet the needs of fisher children. By bringing the schools under the fisheries department's control and deploying qualified fisheries-trained

¹⁰⁰ G O NO.202.

¹⁰¹ G O NO.1668.

¹⁰² G O NO.1668.

teachers, these children received education directly relevant to their lives and future careers.¹⁰³

The Inspector of Fisheries, Mangalore, stated that the fisher-children of Adakathabail, Kanhangad, and Hosdrug would benefit if the Board schools situated in the respective localities were taken over by the fisheries department. In the first place, the fisher children will get the right type of education suitable to their needs if they are taught according to the new fisheries syllabus.¹⁰⁴

Targeting the Pu Islam fisher children of Kumbala in South Kanara, this school was established due to the community's apparent interest in education for their children.¹⁰⁵ To aid underprivileged students, the government sanctioned the purchase of books worth 45 rupees and 7 annas for the Kumbala school, where many children come from families that cannot afford school supplies.

While nearby schools benefited from a set system for allocating teachers, Kumbala Fisheries School is restricted to the bare minimum mandated by regulations. This limited number of teachers forces us to deny admission to students, hindering the school's ability to serve the community for the prosperity of schools for the fisher children, a more liberal policy should be adopted.¹⁰⁶

On August 19, 1949, local fisherfolk submitted a formal complaint to the Minister of Food and Fisheries, outlining their problems and seeking a solution. In para 7 (b) of that memorial they stated as follows: - Due to high living costs and low fish catches, our fishing community struggles to afford education for our children. This lack of education hinders our social mobility. Therefore, we request scholarships for our school children similar to those offered to Harijan children, and free books and slates for all 150, students in our Adakathabail Fisheries Higher Elementary School.

¹⁰³ G O NO.893.

¹⁰⁴ G O NO.1830 dated 29/7/1938, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁵ G.O NO.404 dated 24/3/1927, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁶ G.O NO.672 dated 3/4/1928, D D, R A K.

Despite being near Kasaragod with its high schools, poverty during the fishing season prevents any from our community from completing high school.¹⁰⁷

We request that you consider the following: -

- (a) All students at Adakathabail Fisheries Higher Elementary School should have been provided with books and slates free of cost;
- (b) high school students should be exempted from the payment of school fees, and
- (c) studying in high schools should be given scholarships.

The director of fisheries ordered to supply books, slates, and pencils free of cost to the fisher children studying in the Adakathabail fisheries school at an estimated cost of Rupees 275 nonrecurring funds.”¹⁰⁸ In a modification of the orders issued¹⁰⁹ the Governor of Madras authorizes the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Malabar and South Kanara to purchase locally and supply the slates required for all the fisheries schools under their control subject to a limit of higher elementary schools and 30 slates per school per year in the case of lower elementary schools.

Fishermen in Kasaragod requested the Fisheries Department to take control of the existing school managed by the District Board. This transfer allowed the schools to implement a new fisheries curriculum specifically designed to equip students with skills relevant to the fishing industry. The petitioners believed this specialized education would greatly benefit their children. For this new fisheries programme to be successful, the schools needed to be under the purview of the Fisheries Department. This would ensure that qualified fisheries instructors were appointed to deliver the specialized curriculum.¹¹⁰

The Inspector of Fisheries in Mangalore recommended that the government transfer schools in Adakathabail, Kanhangad, and Hosdrug from the District Board

¹⁰⁷ G O NO.1760 dated 1/5/1950, D D, R A K.

¹⁰⁸ G O NO.1760.

¹⁰⁹ G O NO.1239 dated 24/3/1952, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁰ G O NO.893.

to the Fisheries Department. This change allowed the schools to implement a new fisheries curriculum, providing a more relevant education for children in these fishing communities.¹¹¹

The District Health Officer of South Kanara identified a critical sanitation issue at the Adakathabail fisheries elementary school. With 149 students (80 boys and 69 girls), the then current situation was alarming. There was only one inadequate latrine with a mere 2 seats, falling far short of the Madras Educational Rules¹¹² requiring 7 toilets (3 for boys and 4 for girls). To address this public health concern, the fisheries school proposed a solution: constructing an extension to accommodate the mandated number of toilets and separate urinals for boys and girls. Recognizing the potential financial implications, the school expressed its willingness to contribute an additional Rupees 7, per mensem in rent.¹¹³

In a petition submitted on 19th August 1949, the fisherfolk community of Adakathabail appealed to the Minister of Food and Fisheries for assistance with their children's education. The community highlighted two primary challenges: the high cost of living coupled with low fish catches made it difficult to afford educational expenses, and a dearth of educational resources hampered their community's social advancement.

To address these issues, the petitioners sought scholarships for school-going children, similar to those provided to Harijan students. Additionally, they requested free books and slates for all students attending the Adakathabail Fisheries Higher Elementary School. The petition underscored the community's poverty and the seasonal nature of their fishing income. Despite the proximity of Kasaragod with its high school, the lack of financial resources prevented even a single student from obtaining the S.S.L.C., limiting their future opportunities.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ G O NO.1830.

¹¹² According to the Madras Educational Rules the Latrine with seven seats, 3 for boys and 4 for girls is required for the school.

¹¹³ G.O NO.1481 dated 9/4/1946, D D, R A K.

¹¹⁴ G.O NO.1760.

Bakel School -Historically, fishermen lacked access to higher education. To address this, the department opened elementary schools in most major fishing villages along the west coast. However, the Malpe school became a middle school in 1951. However, Poverty prevented families from sending children far away for high school, especially in Bakel and Kottikulam, where the nearest high schools were miles away and taught in Kanarese.¹¹⁵

The Fisheries Higher Elementary School in Bakel was established in 1938 to serve the educational needs of Bekal and Kottikulam, with around 400 students. It was upgraded from a regular elementary school in 1945.

Year	Strength of Pupils	No of teachers
1938	100	3
1945	306	8
1947	380	12
1951	395	15

Many students had been compelled to give up their studies after passing the VIII standard for want of means and facilities to continue their studies in high schools. Upon becoming a middle school, the institution opened its doors to all communities, potentially offering fee waivers to children from fishing families.

The government proposed converting the Bekal Fisheries Higher Elementary School into a middle school (grades 6-8) in 1951-52. This was the first step in a post-war development plan by the fisheries department to provide high school education (up to SSLC) for fishermen's children. The proposal aimed to address the sharp drop in enrollment after grade 7, as students sought admission to nearby high schools. Currently, 47 fishermen's children attend high school, with 31 in Kasaragod and 16 in Kanhangad. By offering free education, unlike most high schools with half fees, a full-fledged fisheries school would likely see a rise in enrollment, benefiting the children of the fishermen community.

¹¹⁵ G O NO.2366 dated 12/6/1950, D D, R A K.

In the 1950-51 school year, non-fisher girls were approved for a half-fee concession. However, due to delays in obtaining eligibility certificates from government authorities, these students initially paid full fees for 2 to 4 months.¹¹⁶

5.7.1 Fisheries Schools in North and South Malabar

Kavvayi school- The petition submitted by the fishermen of Kavvayi, Payyanur, had significantly benefited the education of local fisher children. The Fisheries Department had played a vital role in providing them with elementary education and fostering values of thrift and cooperation within the community.¹¹⁷ The Kavvayi school, established in 1921, is located about 2 miles from the Payyannur railway station. Nestled amidst the fishermen's colony, it stood just west of a temple belonging to their community. Initially, the school operated in a rented shed for a mere Rs. 2 per month. However, this temporary structure collapsed in May 1927.

Recognizing the need for a permanent school, Mr. V.V. Ambu and five other local residents spearheaded the construction of a masonry building. By the time the summer vacation ended in July 1927, the new building was ready, allowing the school to shift from the unsafe shed. Due to a reluctance to incur additional financial liabilities, the British government was unwilling to approve the hiring of more teachers in many schools. As a result, in some schools, a single teacher had to teach both the 4th and 5th grades. Kavvayi School was one such institution.

Despite these advancements, Kavvayi Fisheries Elementary School faced a resource constraint. A single teacher was responsible for managing four classes with a total of 42 students.¹¹⁸ This workload was excessive for one individual, and it was unrealistic to expect pupils of different standards to receive optimal educational

¹¹⁶ G.O NO.3778 dated 29/8/52, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹¹⁷ G O NO.1322 dated 4/10/1922, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹¹⁸ G O NO.131 dated 24/1/1928, D D, R A K.

benefits.¹¹⁹ The Government sanctioned an additional teacher for Kavvayi School to alleviate this issue.

Since the revision of the curriculum in the Fisheries Training Institute and the fisheries elementary schools, it had been arranged that the children of fisheries elementary schools be taken to the neighbouring fish curing yard once a week to demonstrate to them the method and practice of fish curing. This was a field trip that motivated them to progress in their studies and increased their interest in coming to school. The government sanctioned the payment of school incurred for the journey by third-class train fare to the pupils of Kavaayi school when they visit the nearest fish curing yard.¹²⁰

This initiative fostered a deeper understanding of the fisheries sector for the next generation. By witnessing firsthand the traditional practices of fish curing, students gain valuable knowledge and appreciation for this essential industry. The programme not only complemented classroom learning but also ignited a passion for fisheries and its role in our communities.¹²¹

The Kavaayi fisheries school only goes up to 3rd grade, leaving children with limited education options. Crossing the river to the Mappila school was difficult and unlikely to grant admission. The school's recent downgrade from having a 4th grade and two teachers added to the villagers' struggle. Facing poverty, failing fishing seasons, and potential displacement, they plead with the fisheries department to upgrade the school with higher classes and more teachers to prevent illiteracy in their community.¹²²

Fisheries schools were originally established with a specific purpose: to educate the children of fishermen. This decision reflected the social realities of the

¹¹⁹ G.O NO.859 dated 13/6/1927, D D, R A K.

¹²⁰ G.O NO.1095 dated 2/7/1928, D D, R A K.

¹²¹ G.O NO. 1095.

¹²² G O NO.397 dated 18/3/1932, D D, R A K.

time, where caste systems often dictated professions and educational opportunities. Enrollment was limited, creating a barrier for students from other castes.¹²³

Nevertheless, acknowledging the enduring problem of caste prejudice, the government undertook a significant step. An amendment was issued to the rules under the Elementary Education Act, mandating that school buildings be accessible to all pupils.¹²⁴ This transformative move marked a shift towards inclusivity, undermining the system that perpetuated social divisions. Through the amendment of the rules, the government elevated education to a fundamental right, eschewing the notion of a caste-based privilege. This diversification of the student body cultivated a learning environment that mirrored the evolving societal landscape.

The Puthenkadapuram School - The Puthenkadapuram night school was transformed into a day fisheries school. By 1930, the school's capacity of 84 students was insufficient to accommodate its 106 pupils.¹²⁵ A proposed extension, equal in size to the existing building, was met with the owner's agreement to include a latrine. To secure government approval, a rental commitment of twenty rupees per month to the owner, U.K. Thupran was necessary. Once the building extension and latrine were completed, the school was handed over.¹²⁶ Subsequently, the school's acquired land was transferred to government ownership.

In June 1935, the school enrolled 125 pupils. However, an inspection by the Assistant Director on October 10th of the same year recorded enrollment at 115.¹²⁷ The appointment of a Conductress subsequently contributed to increased enrollment and improved attendance.

A statement (Puthenkadapuram school) showing the average strength and attendance for 12 months before, and after, the appointment of the conductress is appended.

¹²³ G O NO.992.

¹²⁴ G O NO.1131.

¹²⁵ G O NO.1164 dated 6/6/1930, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹²⁶ G O NO.702 dated 11/5/1931, D D, R A K.

¹²⁷ G O NO.162 dated 4/2/1936, D D, R A K.

Number of Mappilla pupils before the employment of the conductress			Number of Mappilla pupils after the employment of the conductress	
standard	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
I	4	1	17	12
II	1	1	10	11
III	0	0	3	2
IV	1	0	3	0
V	1	0	1	2
Total	7	2	34	27

Since appointing a conductress, school attendance improved dramatically. The inspector in Chowghat reported a significant rise in Mappila students, from just 9 before to a whopping 61.¹²⁸

The school, with its thatched roof and masonry walls was completely burnt down in a fire accident on 15th May 1952 at 3 P.M. The damage caused to the building was estimated to cost about Rupees 1300. It was necessary to restore the building for conducting the school. The fire originated in a thatched house about 50 yards away to the north of the school building and was fanned by a northern wind, it quickly spread to a temple nearby and from there to the roof of the school building. The school was in session while the building caught fire. But all the pupils and teachers escaped without any injury as there was sufficient warning of the approaching fire. The staff and some villagers who gathered there took out as much of the furniture as possible and tried their best to put out the fire by using a small water pump.¹²⁹

The inspector of fisheries Chowghat investigated the cause of the fire and it was reported that it was purely an accident. Some dried leaves near the hearth of the private house caught fire first and it quickly spread to the other buildings. As no

¹²⁸ G O NO.1973 dated 21/8/1940, D D, R A K.

¹²⁹ G O NO.4026 dated 17/9/1952, (Mis), D D, R A K.

private buildings were available in the locality for housing the school as a temporary measure, the school was therefore closed for one month from 15th May 1952.¹³⁰

Proposal for Fisheries School in Kadappuram - On a representation made by the Araya Jana Social Service League, Calicut about the insufficiency of fisheries schools in the villages on the west coast, the Director of fisheries submitted proposals for the opening of the fisheries schools at Kadappuram in Malabar district.¹³¹ Kadapuram is one of the biggest fishing villages in the Ponnani Taluk. The population of this village is estimated to be about 2500 belonging to fisherfolk and there are 252 boys and 263 girls of school-going age. The director of fisheries reported that only a small proportion of fisher children result in the existing district board school in the locality on account of its location.

A pressing issue was the lack of education for about 336 school-aged children, including 236 from the fishing community. Recognizing this educational gap, the report advocates for a dedicated fisheries elementary school in Kadapuram. Local support was evident through Chinnakkal Kunhi Moideen Sahib's offer to construct and rent a suitable school building. The Education Department concurs with the necessity of new fisheries schools in Kadapuram, emphasizing the importance of education for fisher children.¹³² This department supported the Director's proposal and recommended allocating necessary funds in the 1940-41 budget estimate.¹³³

Petition for Upgrading Kottakadapuram Fisheries School - The petition reads as follows: *“Over two decades ago, our community benefited greatly from the Madras Fisheries Department's establishment of a fisheries school. Offering education up to Grade V, this school has been invaluable. However, our bright, hardworking, and eager children now yearn for a higher elementary education. Sadly, we have been informed that there are no plans to upgrade the Kottakadapuram Fisheries School. We firmly believe that a fisheries-focused*

¹³⁰ G O NO.4026.

¹³¹ Memorandum No. 4256-1/37 dated 3rd January 1938, D D, R A K.

¹³² Letter No. R. O. C 495-B/38 dated 19th February 1939, from the District Education Officer to the Director of Fisheries, D D, R A K.

¹³³ G O NO.2544 dated 13/10/1939, D D, R A K.

education is paramount for our community, and no other school can provide the specific knowledge and skills our children need to succeed."¹³⁴

*Very few students from Kottakadapuram Fisheries School continue their education at the nearest higher elementary school, located over 2.5 miles away. Lack of support prevents most students from attending. Additionally, during the monsoon, students faced dangerous conditions by having to wade through a flooded paddy field to reach school, leading to high absenteeism and low completion rates for Grade 8. The community expresses gratitude for the Madras Fisheries Department's establishment of a school providing education and meals to underprivileged fisher children.*¹³⁵ They requested the upgrade of the school to a higher elementary level, starting with Grade VI in May 1943 and subsequently adding Grades VII and VIII.¹³⁶

Kannankadavu School - A decline in attendance at Kannankadavu School, formerly a Hindu institution, was reported by the Assistant Director of Fisheries. This downturn was attributed to the withdrawal of support from a local Mullah, who had previously facilitated the enrollment of 51 Muslim students.¹³⁷ A subsequent inspection underscored the need to increase Muslim enrollment. Two potential solutions were proposed: hiring a Muslim teacher to provide religious instruction or converting the school into a Muslim institution with an entirely Muslim staff.

Parents reportedly prioritize Quranic education by the Mullah. The report indicates that Hindu parents were unlikely to remove their children from the school regardless of the chosen option. The primary obstacle was reconciling religious instruction with fisheries education. The Mullah's morning Quran classes clash with school hours. An optimal solution would involve the Mullah joining the fisheries school staff and becoming qualified to teach religion. However, the report highlights that parents currently prioritize Quranic education under the Mullah's guidance.

¹³⁴ Memo.No.11969-c/43-2, Petition dated 18th December 1942, from the fishermen of Kottakadapuram, B O, Engandiyoor, South Malabar to the Director of fisheries (Coast), D D, R A K.

¹³⁵ Memo. No.11969-c/43-2.

¹³⁶ G O NO.1465 dated 31/3/1944, D D, R A K.

¹³⁷ G O NO.1192 dated 7/5/1938, D D, R A K.

In light of the shifting composition of the student body, the need for a full-time conductress became apparent. The headmaster proposed appointing the Mullah's wife or mother to this role, believing it would contribute to increased enrollment. Although the government temporarily assigned a part-time conductress, the position ultimately required a full-time commitment. At the time, the school enrolled 92 students, including 32 girls. Given the increasing number of Pu-Islam students, which constituted 54 of the 93-student body, a full-time conductress became indispensable.¹³⁸

Fisheries School in Puduponnani - Puduponnani, the most important fishing village in British Malabar, relied heavily on fishing for its livelihood. Recognizing the nearly 2475 school-aged children (1314 boys and 1161 girls) from the Pu-Islam fisherfolk community, a petition signed by nearly 150 residents urged for a Fisheries School in the village.¹³⁹ Khan Sahib Attakoya Thangal and Padaria Kathu Nooruddin Sahib of Ponnani generously offered to construct and lease the necessary buildings for the school. The persistent efforts culminated in the successful opening of the Puduponnani Fisheries School on 1st June 1938.¹⁴⁰

Puduponnani fishing community depended on fish and coir work as most of the fishing populace belonged to Pudu-Islam, and the fisherfolk converted to Islam. They were of a very backward type,¹⁴¹ and their socio-economic condition was extremely deplorable as elsewhere in Malabar. The district's poor, particularly the fishing community, face a dire situation. Three factors contribute to their hardship. First, the prices of coconut and pepper, their main agricultural income, had not recovered from the depression a decade ago. Second, World War II caused the coir industry to collapse, eliminating another source of income. Third, rice prices have soared by 50%, a staple even for the poorest.¹⁴²

Unlike farmers who could rely on stored crops, the fishing community depended on daily catches, which dwindled during the monsoon season. They relied on middlemen who brought their fish, perpetuating a cycle of debt. Their inability to

¹³⁸ G O NO1520 dated 2/4/1946, D D, R A K.

¹³⁹ G.O NO.78 dated 23/01/36, D D, R A K.

¹⁴⁰ G.O NO.2045 dated 22/08/1938, D D, R A K.

¹⁴¹ G.O NO.1351.

¹⁴² G O NO.420 dated 26/2/1942, D D, R A K.

adapt to other occupations and lack of savings left them vulnerable, living day by day. This harsh reality inevitably shapes their outlook and character.¹⁴³

Impact of Devastating Cyclone - The Cyclone havoc took place on the 25th and 26th of May 1941. The condition of the people in general and the school children, in particular, was miserable, ghastly, and emaciated. Their condition was reported to be very pitiable. More than 100 of the 176 children in the school looked miserable and emaciated. At Pudu Ponnani about 156 houses were damaged during the cyclone. There were about 500 to 600 inmates left destitute by the cyclone havoc.¹⁴⁴ The Rama Krishna mission funded the worst affected area; they stopped their activities in October after the harvest. It secured the interest of the Government of Madras, the servants of India society, and who offered to contribute to the cost of feeding the starving people.

During Colonial rule, many great famines were happening all over India. Climate changes, unavailability of food items, the Britishers' unreasonable and unscientific tax, and the agricultural system, were the main reasons that led to the famine. Famines were a feature of the economic existence of the Indian people.¹⁴⁵ It badly affected the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, etc., During the early 19th Century it is estimated that around 51 million people died because of this famine. Around 17% of the total Indian population was wiped off because of the famine.¹⁴⁶

A May 1941 cyclone crippled the livelihoods of fishermen in the region. The fishing season failed for four months, causing immense hardship for these families who solely depend on fishing for income. While relief efforts were provided aid for rebuilding homes, they didn't address the ongoing food shortage. Many families were left underfed. They struggled to meet their basic needs.

Unfortunately, attempts to introduce alternative income sources like coir-making or paddy-pounding are hindered by two factors. Firstly, the fishermen lack

¹⁴³ G O NO.420.

¹⁴⁴ Letter No.2825 F-C/41-6.

¹⁴⁵ A R Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: University Publications, 1948, p.58.

¹⁴⁶ Thirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India (1857-1947)*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.48.

experience in these trades. Secondly, the market for such products is weak, making it difficult to earn a decent living.

The Malabar Collector convened a public meeting in Calicut to establish a district relief committee. Over 60 non-official members, with a strong presence from Ponnani, were elected. The committee met three times, with attendance declining from 33 to just eight by the final meeting. Their focus was primarily on setting broad relief policies, not addressing individual cases of hardship.¹⁴⁷

The relief efforts initiated by the Revenue Department to assist local residents in reconstructing their homes proved to be short-lived. By mid-October, these relief measures were discontinued, leaving the community once again vulnerable. In response to this setback, the attendance committee at Ponnani school convened a public meeting. A poignant decision was made to photograph the malnourished students and publish the image in both vernacular and English newspapers, aiming to garner further support and prevent the children from facing starvation.¹⁴⁸

The severe poverty and malnutrition afflicting children in the region had been revealed by a photograph apparently taken by T C Bros of Kunnamkulam, Cochin State, on September 16, 1941, at the behest of the school's attendance committee. K P Moidunni, the headmaster, served as the secretary of this committee, which was comprised of parents and was responsible for periodically visiting the school to monitor attendance and student progress. The photograph, captured by this committee, was published in *The Mail*.¹⁴⁹ Depicting 25 malnourished children, the image highlighted their gaunt figures and somber expressions, serving as a stark testament to their plight. The idea to share this photograph with the press had been suggested by K. Abdulla, a Muslim League worker from Tellicherry,¹⁵⁰ during an attendance committee meeting held on September 12, 1941.

¹⁴⁷ Letter No. D.O CC/572/41 dated 8th December 1941 from the Malabar collector to the Deputy Secretary to government development, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁴⁸ G O NO.420.

¹⁴⁹ *The Mail*, dated October 29th1941, Madras, R A K.

¹⁵⁰ Letter No.3394-F/41, dated 12th November 1941 from the Assistant Director of Fisheries (coast) Calicut to the Joint Director of Industries & Commerce, Madras, D D, R A K.

However, the public outcry triggered by these photographs from Puduponnani compelled the government to implement measures to alleviate the dire conditions of poverty. A particularly harrowing image, depicting children from this school¹⁵¹ with skeletal frames and skin afflicted by scabies, was published in the Madras Mail and other vernacular newspapers, causing significant embarrassment to the British government.¹⁵² The school, with an enrollment of 150 students, revealed that a staggering 95% of them were severely malnourished. The haunting nature of the photograph, likely exacerbated by acute starvation and underlying diseases such as hookworm, diarrhea, and dysentery, was further intensified by the presence of the headmaster in the image.

The photographs unequivocally indicated that the children at Pudu Ponnani School were in a dire state, primarily due to acute starvation. As noted in a relevant source, while starvation, partial or total, hit all the members of the household, it particularly affected the productive efficiency of active fishermen.¹⁵³

An analysis of the photograph's historical context reveals that the British authorities became acutely aware of the widespread poverty and malnutrition afflicting coastal communities upon viewing the image of the Puduponnani students. The photograph was widely circulated globally, drawing international criticism of British rule.¹⁵⁴ Malnutrition was identified as a significant problem, and the development of untapped marine fishery resources was seen as a potential solution.¹⁵⁵

In response to the heartbreaking photograph exposing the suffering of children in Puduponnani, various parties mobilized relief efforts.¹⁵⁶ The government of Madras, the Servants of India Society, and even an individual donor came forward

¹⁵¹ Photograph - see Appendix.

¹⁵² Letter No. D O. No.2825 F-C/41-6, dated 15.11.1941, from the Joint Director of Industries & Commerce to the Deputy Secretary to Government, Development Department, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁵³ Anita Abraham, 'Survival Strategies among Traditional Fishermen', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 20, No. 6, 1985, pp.247-252.

¹⁵⁴ Joshiba P. P., The Fishery schools and the alleviation of poverty: A colonial experience in Malabar, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, vol.79,2018-19, pp.421-429.

¹⁵⁵ Prabhakaran, 'The Socio-Economic Conditions of Marine Fishermen of Tirunelveli District', *Fisheries World*, Vol. VII, 1994, p.32.

¹⁵⁶ Letter No.3394-F/41.

to help. A relief center specifically for Puduponani was established, while the Servants of India Society provided midday meals to students in Puduponani and nearby schools for three months starting November 1941. The government also took swift action, reconstructing houses for affected fisherfolk, distributing food to the needy, initiating relief works like canal repairs, and offering loans and land revenue exemptions in deserving cases. Additionally, they sanctioned funds for free midday meals for children in the fisheries schools of Puduponani, Kadavanad, and Veliangode for three months.¹⁵⁷

The amount from the government was used to arrange to give midday meals to school children and milk kanji to children below five years of Puduponnani (one bag of rice to last 150 pupils for three days).¹⁵⁸ Kadavanad Fisheries schools (half bag of rice to last 75 pupils for three days), Keruvanchery Mappila Aided School (half bag of rice to last 50 pupils for three days). A baby welcome centre was also planned to be started. Most of the children were rickets and suffered from rickets scabies and worms. An office was opened in Ponnani town and formed of scouts from the local high school.¹⁵⁹

The other Fisheries schools in cyclone-stricken areas that appear to be in need of similar help by the provision of midday meals were Puthankadapuram, Kundazhiyoor, Kottakadapuram, Talikulam, Nattika, Kaipamangalam, and Vekkode. One significant factor contributing to the poverty of fishing communities is the impact of seasonal fluctuations, particularly during the monsoon season. Poor catches during this period, a recurring phenomenon, often lead to periods of economic hardship and even starvation for fisherfolk.¹⁶⁰ While chronic unemployment due to a lack of productive physical capital plays a role, the primary cause of their predicament is low-productivity occupations. Seasonal technical

¹⁵⁷ G O NO.2232 dated 6/12/1941, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁵⁸ The Mail, dated 22nd November 1941, Madras.

¹⁵⁹ Letter No. D.O.C/569/41 dated 6th December 1941 from the Malabar Collector's office, Calicut to Deputy Secretary of the government, Development Department, Fort St. George, Madras, D D, R A K.

¹⁶⁰ Letter No. D.O NO.32905-2/41-1 dated 21st January 1941, from the Deputy Secretary of Government Development, Madras to the Editor, The Madras Mail, Madras, D D, R A K.

unemployment, resulting from both the rough sea and the absence of fish, affected their economic situation.¹⁶¹

The fisherfolk had been even more improvident than usual. What had been really needed was propaganda and education to induce the fishermen to take up alternative occupations like cultivation, coolie work, and coir manufacturing, which would have given them something to fall back on when the catch had been poor. This education would also have persuaded them to build boats and nets that could have withstood the monsoon seas, and to look after their families better. The explanation was reported to be that these people live by fishing and coir-making. Since the hurricane, there had been no fish, and demand for coir was nil. The *Tehsildar* and a private citizen were rendering help, but there was no news that the Madras government had done anything about it.¹⁶²

However, the sensation caused by these photographs of Puduponnani forced the government to take certain measures to mitigate the condition of poverty. Many social service organizations like the Servants of India Society, Ceylonese units of the Muslim League, etc. had intervened effectively in bringing relief to the victims.

5.8 Midday Meal Programme - The relief work of providing a free midday meal to the children attending the fisheries schools at Poduponnani, Kadavanad, and Veliangode was undertaken by this department with effect from 15th December 1941. Fisheries schools distress relief and joint Director of Industries agreed that it was necessary to extend the relief to the 3 other fisheries schools viz, Puthenkadapuram, Kundazhiyur, and Talikulam. The relief was sanctioned for 3 months at the rate suggested by the Assistant Director of fisheries (coast). The relief already sanctioned for Puduponnani, Kadavanad, and Veliangode schools continued for another 3 months.¹⁶³ The Inspector of fisheries, chowghat was of opinion that the fishing season and the economic condition of the fishermen in the area which needed similar help by the provision of a midday meal to pupils were Puthenkadapuram, Kundazhiyur, Talikulam, Kottakadapuram, South Nattika, Kaipamangalam, and Vekkode of these 7 schools, the first 3 (Puthekadapuram,

¹⁶¹ P.H. Platteau, J. Murickan, 'Rural Credit Market in a Backward Area: A Kerala Fishing Village', A. Palatty and E. Delbar, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 15, No. 41/43, 1980, pp.1765-67.

¹⁶² *Times of India*, dated 28/11/1941, Mumbai, R A K.

¹⁶³ Endt. No.2825-Fc/41-20 dated 9/4/1942, D D, R A K.

Kundazhiyur, and Talikulam) deserve immediate help the Inspector of fisheries, central section, Calicut recommended that provision should be made for the supply of midday meals to the pupils attending 7 but of the 13 schools in his section.¹⁶⁴

The Provision of midday meals was tried in some labour schools. The government intended to extend it to some more schools in the presidency with a view to making it a normal feature in all labour schools within a period of time. The provision of midday meals was made a normal feature of all fisheries schools at any rate on the West coast, especially Malabar. The fishermen were wholly dependent on fishing only and bad fishing seasons were somehow becoming normal. The children looked better in health and the attendance had been extraordinarily satisfactory.¹⁶⁵ The Joint Director of Fisheries and Commerce agreed with the view that in schools catering to an admittedly poor and backward section of the population, midday meals should be provided at government cost. The government provided free education for them and as physical health is as important as anything else and as the health of the pupils suffers because of malnutrition, it is most desirable to provide free midday meals to the school children.

Scrutiny to know the condition of the pupils present in the Kaipamangalam schools was made. There were about 128 boys and girls, especially in the lower classes from I to V standards who seemed to be starving for want of even a single meal a day, and some of them wore torn bits of clothes. Even though more than 300 children are on the rolls and nearly 270 attends daily on average all of them do not require relief in the shape of a midday meal but only 100 to 120 come from the very poor families' ¹⁶⁶ or, deserved sympathy and relief due to a bad fishing season. The Provision of free midday meals was a boon to the schoolchildren who were starving. The strength and attendance also would improve considerably if such a provision were made.¹⁶⁷ An estimated cost per month for providing free midday meals to the school children in all the 13 schools in this section is furnished below: -¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ G O NO.1264 dated 25/6/1942, D D, R A K.

¹⁶⁵ G O NO.1264.

¹⁶⁶ G O NO.1264.

¹⁶⁷ G O NO.1264.

¹⁶⁸ G O NO.1264.

Name of school	Strength of school	Average number to be fed	Rate per pupil per day	Cost per day	Cost per month
Kadavanad	112	100	4 ½ pies	2-5-6	70-5-0
Puduponnani	208	200	4 ½ pies	4-11-0	140-10-0
Veliangode	129	110	4 ½ pies	2-9-3	77-5-6
Palapatty	248	200	4 ½ pies	4-11-0	140-10-0
Mannalamkunnu	109	100	4 ½ pies	2-5-6	70-5-0
Puthenkadapuram	110	100	4 ½ pies	2-5-6	70-5-0
Blangad	158	120	4 ½ pies	2-13-0	84-6-0
Kundazhiyur	93	75	4 ½ pies	1-12-2	52-13-0
Kottakadapuram	218	150	4 ½ pies	3-8-3	52-13-0
Talikulam	133	120	5 pies	3-2-0	93-12-0
South Nattika	264	150	5 pies	3-14-6	117-3-0
Kaipamangalam	316	120	5 Pies	3-2-0	93-12-0
Vekkode	143	140	5 pies	3-10-4	109-6-0
Total					1226-4-0
Incidental charges, fluctuation of the market for rice etc.,					73-12-0
Grand total					1300-0-0

Feeding children at Puduponnani, Veliangode, and Kadavanad schools for 4 months had shown that this arrangement actually attracted children to the schools, therefore the daily attendance had improved considerably and it is steady and regular and the children look healthy.

On 11th April 1942, the total enrollment in the 12 schools under the Inspector of Fisheries was 1,765 students. A daily allowance of 6 pies per pupil (including holidays) was calculated, with this rate adjusted to account for the rising price of

rice due to World War II conditions.¹⁶⁹ Schools that traditionally required the most assistance were Parapanangadi, Kadalundi, Chaliyam, Naduvattom, Kannankadavu, Azhicode, and Kavayi. The Director recommended extending relief to Palapatty, Mannalamkunnu, Blangad, Kottakadapuram, South Nattika, Kaipamangalam, Vekkode, Chaliyam, Kadalundi, and Parapanangadi from April 11 to August 31, 1942. The government approved relief for all 16 schools.¹⁷⁰

The headmaster of Vellayil Fisheries School reported that owing to the extreme poverty prevailing among the fisher folk, the strength and attendance of pupils were adversely affected. He added that when the monsoon sets in, the poverty would increase considerably, and as a result, the daily attendance of pupils would be affected still more. The inspector of fisheries, Calicut, was of the opinion that the children attending this school too were in urgent need of free mid-day meals. The number of children to be fed was 200. The government sanctioned the supply of a free midday meal to the children attending the fisheries school, Vellayil till 31st August 1942. At the rate of 6 pies per pupil, the cost per month works out to Rupees 187-8-0.¹⁷¹

The midday meal was given to the children in the 12 schools. A statement of expenditure involved is appended.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ “The British compounded this poverty during the war period by subordinating the needs of the Indian population to the war effort. The government could not adequately meet its wartime financial obligations. It bled the country by imposing ever more taxes. It compelled Indians to buy war bonds and contribute to the war fund. When this proved insufficient, it printed money, setting off an inflationary spiral that was devastating to the common man in India. The 90 percent of the population that lived in poverty had no disposable income and no ability to cut back its expenditure”. Quoted in - Srinath Raghavan, *India’s War (World War II and the Making of Modern South Asia)*, New York: Basic Books, 2016, p. 350.

¹⁷⁰ G O NO.1264 dated 25/6/1942, D D, R A K.

¹⁷¹ G O NO.1365 dated 7/7/1942, D D, R A K.

¹⁷² G O NO.1704 dated 20/8/1942, D D, R A K.

s.no.	Name of school	Number of pupils	Provision for 22 days @6 @per head per day
1	Kavvayi	70	48-2-0
2	Azhikode	70	48-2-0
3	Madapalli	235	161-9-0
4	Quilandy	145	99-11-0
5	Kuriyadi	145	99-11-0
6	Kannankadavu	90	61-14-0
7	Korapuzha	110	75-10-0
8	Pudiappa	200	137-8-0
9	Naduvattom	115	79-1-0
10	Meladi (new school)	70	48-2-0
11	Ponnani (new school)	140	96-4-0
12	Pallipuram (new school)	90	61-14-0
	Total		Rs.1017-8-0

The Sanction was accorded to the supply of a free midday meal to the children attending fisheries schools at a cost not exceeding 6 pies per head per day up to 31/8/1942.¹⁷³

The Rev. D Milbank F. Barboza, S. J Vicar, St. Peters Church School Tellicherry, represented the poverty-stricken conditions of the fishing community of Chalil in Tellicherry Municipality. He requested that a free-midday meal be provided for the children of these school fishermen, attending the school. Government sanction was accorded to supply a free midday meal to the children attending the school at a cost not exceeding 6 pies per head on working days up to 31st August 1942.¹⁷⁴

An inspection in November 1942 revealed that children in the Kundazhiyur fisheries school suffered from malnutrition and hunger. This was because their

¹⁷³ G O NO.1704.

¹⁷⁴ G O NO.1705 dated 20/8/1942, (Mis), D D, R A K.

families relied on river fishing, which provided a meager income.¹⁷⁵ Given the “pitiable condition” of the local fishermen, the government approved providing free midday meals to the school children for three months starting January 1st 1943. This programme was later extended to cover May to August 1943.¹⁷⁶ Records showed that meals were previously offered between May and August 1942, and the children's health significantly improved during that time.¹⁷⁷

The cost of providing meals for 95 children over three months (January to March 1943) was estimated at Rs. 180. The fishermen's dependence on prawn fishing, coupled with rising food prices and limited income, created a difficult situation. This lack of food resulted in the children becoming weak and attendance dropping due to the acute famine and distress conditions. The free midday meals were implemented to address this critical situation.¹⁷⁸

The sanction was accorded for the supply of a free midday meal to the children attending the 50 fisheries schools on the West Coast¹⁷⁹ on all working days during the period from 1st May to 31st August every year for the duration of the war. Given the abnormal conditions caused by the cholera outbreak in Malabar, it was recommended that the free midday meal programme be extended until 31st October 1943, for students attending the 29 schools in the district.¹⁸⁰

In 1944, at the instance of the manager of the aided school at Hosdrug Kadapuram, the Director of Industry and Commerce submitted proposals for taking over the management of that school by the fisheries department in the interest of the fisher community. This school was transferred to the fisheries department. The strength of the school was expected to increase because poor fisher children in

¹⁷⁵ G O NO.3132 dated 28/1/1943, D D, R A K.

¹⁷⁶ Letter No.2702-F.C/42-4 dated 12/11/1942, D D, R A K.

¹⁷⁷ G O NO.787 dated 8/4/1942, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁷⁸ G O NO. 3132.

¹⁷⁹ G O NO.2479 dated 30/3/1943, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁸⁰ G O NO.2005 dated 26/8/1943, D D, R A K.

addition to free education, were supplied with books and slates and also midday meals.¹⁸¹

An inspection revealed that about 100 students, especially younger children from grades 1 to 5, came to school hungry and some wore tattered clothes. While over 300 students were enrolled and an average of 270 attended daily, not all needed assistance. Only children from the poorest fishing families, roughly 100 to 120, were identified as needing a midday meal programme.¹⁸²

5.9 Breaking Barriers: Champion Scheme - In the 1930s and 1940s, Malabar's education system was divided. There were separate schools for Hindu boys, Hindu girls, Muslim boys, Muslim girls, and lower castes (Adi-Dravida). This segregation weakened the idea of a unified, secular society in Malabar. The British government, recognizing the problem, tried to address it with the Champion Scheme in the early 1930s. This scheme aimed to end the separate education system for Muslims and create a more integrated system.

The finance department argued that the new teacher for the lower elementary Nattika school should have experience suited to a higher elementary level. They recommended a teacher qualified for higher elementary grades instead of someone with secondary school experience for two reasons: There were not enough students in Standard VI to justify having a separate class. There was a higher elementary school, Nattika East, located just 2.5 miles from the South Nattika Fisheries School.¹⁸³ However, the Development department disagreed with these points.

They argued that the enrollment in Standard VI would reach around 16 by June 1935 as current Standard V students were promoted. Fisheries schools were exempted from the Champion Scheme, which aimed to consolidate and concentrate elementary schools. The Malabar District Educational Council previously refused to

¹⁸¹ G.O NO.1336 dated 30/3/1946, D D, R A K.

¹⁸² G O NO.1264 dated 25/6/1942, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁸³ G O NO.1288 dated 10/9/1934, D D, R A K.

recognize Standard VI in these schools. However, it was later allowed, as evidenced by its existence in the South Nattika School.

The nearby Nattika East Higher Elementary School was a general school and did not cater specifically to the needs of fisher children. Therefore, the Development Department believed that opening Standard VI and hiring a higher elementary qualified teacher for the South Nattika Fisheries school was justified.¹⁸⁴

The government approved funding for opening new fisheries elementary schools in Vekkode¹⁸⁵ and Pallipuram,¹⁸⁶ in Malabar district, in the 1933-34 budget. However, the schools never opened because the education department and the Malabar District Educational Council disagreed with the plan. Their objection stemmed from the Champion Scheme, which likely aimed to consolidate resources in existing schools.

A petition for a fisheries school was submitted on September 16th, 1931, to the Assistant Director (Coast) by a group of 42 residents led by Nediyrrippil Ramankutty. Representing a fishing community of over 1,500 people, including more than 200 school-aged children, the petitioners requested the establishment of a fishery school in Palipuram. Demonstrating their commitment, the community offered to construct a temporary building to house the school.¹⁸⁷

This school was crucial to providing education for the younger generation and would eventually act as a feeder school for the one in Nattika. With no current educational facilities for their children, the fishermen of Pallipuram plead for the opening of a fisheries school to address this long-standing need. Given the department's plans to open new schools, the villagers saw this as an ideal opportunity to finally educate their children.

The 1933-34 scheme proposed several enhancements for fisheries schools: promoting South Nattika school to a higher elementary grade, assigning additional

¹⁸⁴ G O NO.490.

¹⁸⁵ G O NO.374 dated 1/4/1933, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁸⁶ G O NO.396 dated 1/4/1933, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁸⁷ G O NO.396.

teachers to Kavvayi and Kirimanjeshwar schools, and establishing new schools in Pallipuram and Vekkode.¹⁸⁸

The government sanctioned the opening of the fisheries elementary schools at Vekkode and Pallipuram in the Malabar district, as detailed in their orders¹⁸⁹ The Assistant Director (coast) reported on 20th July 1933 that the district educational officer was of the opinion that there was no necessity to have new schools in the localities named. The Assistant Director was asked to depute the headmaster of F T I to investigate the matter and told that as the department's representative on the district education council. The Assistant Director replied that the D E O had furnished facts and figures to show that when the principles regarding amalgamation and concentration of schools were applied, there was no scope for opening fisheries schools at Vekkode and Pallipuram.¹⁹⁰ It was then pointed out to the Assistant Director that the objection of the D E O appeared to have been based on a misapprehension and he was asked to examine the question further and report. Thus, the schools were not opened as the education department and the District Educational Council, Malabar, objected to the proposal on the score of the champion scheme.¹⁹¹

In G O¹⁹² the government exempted fisheries schools from the champion scheme. As the sanction accorded for the opening of the schools lapsed under article 30 G of the Madras Financial and accounts code volume I, renewal of the same was applied for the sanctioned.¹⁹³ The Assistant Director (coast) then moved the collector of Malabar for the acquisition of the site for the Vekkode school. "The publication of the notification under section 4 (1) of the Land Acquisition Act was sanctioned".¹⁹⁴ The D E O in his letter to the Assistant Director (coast) dated 26th September 1935

¹⁸⁸ G O NO.398 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.

¹⁸⁹ G O NO.394 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.

¹⁹⁰ Letter no.4427-F/32 dated 26th September 1933, from the Assistant Director (coast) to the District Education Officer, D D, R A K.

¹⁹¹ G O NO.377 dated 14/2/1939, (Mis), D D, R A K.

¹⁹² G O NO.1288.

¹⁹³ G O NO.475 dated 25/3/1935, D D, R A K.

¹⁹⁴ G O NO.1598 dated 14/11/1935, (Mis), D D, R A K.

again declined the recommendation of the opening of the two schools in question over the favourable consideration of the D E Council.¹⁹⁵

Despite previously rejecting the proposal, the D E O continued to object to the schools in Vekkode and Pallipuram. However, an inspection by the headmaster and fisheries inspector found the D E O's reasons invalid. The Assistant Director (then Dr. Devanesan) further investigated and confirmed the lack of suitable existing schools and the genuine need of the fishing community. He urged the Director of Public Instruction to instruct the D E O to finally approve the schools, originally sanctioned by the government in 1933.¹⁹⁶

A joint inspection in December 1937 finally convinced the educational officer of the need for the schools. While the inspector supported schools in both locations, the Director of Public Instruction approved only the one in Vekkode. This backtracks on his earlier agreement to both schools and raises concerns. Four years after government approval, neither school had opened due to the education department's continued objections. It strengthens the argument against transferring control of these schools to the education department displaying a lack of understanding of the fishing community's needs.

In their memo,¹⁹⁷ the government directed the collector of Malabar to proceed with the acquisition of the land for the opening of the fisheries school at Vekode. The Assistant Director asked the inspector of fisheries, Chowghat to arrange for the opening of the school with effect from 1st September 1938, pending assessment of the rent by the P W D. The sanction for the opening of the school at Vekkode accorded¹⁹⁸ was for a year from 1st June 1935 and it required renewal as it had not been acted on for more than a year.

The Joint inspection report said that Kazhipuram Higher Elementary School is only 4 ½ furlongs from the proposed site of the Pallipuram school and that 56

¹⁹⁵ G O NO.377.

¹⁹⁶ G O NO.377.

¹⁹⁷ Memo No.123-I/37-10 dated 11/4/1938, D D, R A K.

¹⁹⁸ G O NO.475.

fisher children were attending the school. If a separate school for fisher children was established at Pallipuram, these 56 children might be withdrawn from the Kazhipuram school and join the new school. This would adversely affect the interests of an existing school. It was one of the rules of the education department that a new school should not be opened under public management in a locality which was already served by an aided school. This was apparently the reason why the director was not in favour of opening a school at Pallipuram. The proposal for the opening of a fisheries school at Pallipuram in the Malabar district was first sanctioned.¹⁹⁹ After placing the scheme before the finance committee. The sanction was not operated on in view of the objections of the authorities of the educational department. It was considered necessary to open the school in 1939-40 after treating the proposal as a part II Scheme for 1939-40.²⁰⁰

The sanction²⁰¹ was accorded to the opening of a fisheries school at Palipuram. The school was accordingly opened on 15th June 1942. The strength of the school was not less than 140 till February 1943. The Assistant Director of fisheries (coast) reported that there were several aided schools that were engaged in open rivalry with the fisheries school at Pallipuram culminating in an assault on the headmaster in January 1943 as a result of which the local fishermen were afraid of the local Thiyyas and the school children were reluctant to go to the school. Additionally, it was reported that there were two deep channels to the north of the school that had water throughout the year, and the children residing beyond these channels would not attend school regularly without the help of a conductress. In view of these difficulties, the Assistant Director of Fisheries (coast) suggested the employment of a Conductress to improve the condition of the school.²⁰²

5.9.1 A Clash between Fisheries Schools and Traditional Education - In November 1940, representatives of the fishermen community from the West Coast met in deputation with the second adviser. Among other things, they emphasised the

¹⁹⁹ G O NO.396.

²⁰⁰ G O NO.377.

²⁰¹ G O NO.660 dated 26/3/1942, D D, R A K.

²⁰² G O NO.13.

need for opening a fisheries school at Meladi. While the aided school played a positive role in 1895, their argument was that by 1943, it was essential to provide better educational opportunities for fisher children. There were concerns about fisher children attending the regular aided school in Kannankulam. Parents reportedly objected due to:

Fisher children faced multiple challenges in accessing quality education. Discrimination rooted in a historical conflict between the Thiyya community and fisherfolk allegedly pervaded the school management's treatment of these students. Additionally, the financial burden of school supplies, like books and slates, also constituted a formidable obstacle for fisher families, unlike students in fisheries schools. These specialized schools offered distinct advantages, including training in fisheries science by qualified teachers, which directly aligned with the career aspirations of fisher boys. Given the lack of resources and specialized faculty in regular schools, the fisheries school emerged as a crucial alternative. Recognizing the need for specialized education, fishermen from the West Coast petitioned the government to establish a fisheries school in Meladi in 1940. The government approved the request. A new fisheries school opened in Meladi, attracting a significant number of students. While the school initially attracted a significant number of students from nearby areas, enrollment eventually stabilized at 71 students by August 27, 1942.²⁰³

The Director of Public Instruction refused to recognize the school and suggested that it might be closed. The reasons given in support of the suggestion were

- (1) That there were already aided schools in the locality;
- (2) That there were only 13 children of school age belonging to the Mukaya community who were not attending any school;
- (3) That the opening of the fisheries school had adversely affected the strength of the aided schools to a very great extent and

²⁰³ G O NO.1752.

- (4) That the Headmaster of the fisheries school violated rule 22 (b) of the rules regarding the recognition of elementary schools by admitting pupils from other schools without obtaining their records.²⁰⁴

Clashing Views and the Decline of Fisheries Schools: - The situation in Meladi throws light on a long-standing disagreement between the fisheries department and the Department of Public Instruction (D P I) regarding the education of children from fishing communities. This disagreement was one of the reasons behind the decline of fisheries schools. When the D P I opposed new schools and existing ones were struggling with enrollment due to competition, it weakened the overall case for specialized fisheries education.

5.10 Uplifting Fisher Communities: Skill Development and Educational Support

Introducing Coir Crafts in Fisheries Schools - Nine fisheries schools had been chosen to add coir spinning and other coir handicrafts to their curriculum. To train instructors for this new programme, a six-month training programme was conducted at the Beypore Coir School in three batches. A total of nine higher elementary grade teachers participated in this programme. To ensure smooth operations during the training period, substitute teachers were appointed at the fisheries schools.²⁰⁵

5.10.1 Needlework Training and Supplies for Girls' Education -

To boost girls' education, schools with many female students received special attention. This involved training and hiring female teachers at the Fisheries Training Institute. Additionally, twelve schools were provided with supplies for needlework classes. Specifically, Blangad, Puthenkadapuram, Palapetty, and Kizhur schools appointed new female teachers to further empower their girls.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ G O NO.1752.

²⁰⁵ G.O NO.1234 dated 25/6/1943, D D, R A K.

²⁰⁶ G.O NO.2500 dated 10/10/1938, D D, R A K.

5.10.2 Free Meals and Healthcare for Kids: - The Governor of Madras implemented a programme to provide free benefits for underprivileged children attending elementary schools in fishing communities along the West Coast. This programme included the free supply of medical doses of M.G.B shark liver oil and midday meals. The supply was made only for working days of the schools.²⁰⁷

5.10.3 A Helping Hand for Fisherfolk Students: - The Governor of Madras approved funding to purchase books for free distribution to students attending fisheries schools along the West Coast. Additionally, the Director of Industries and Commerce announced a new initiative organized by the Education Department. Once a year, elementary schools within each deputy inspector's zone would host “play days” and “play festivals” to promote a more engaging learning environment.

5.10.4 Educational Magazines Flourish in Malabar District Schools

The government sanctioned the supply of 21 copies of the vernacular Gurukulam Magazine at the rate of one copy each to the Fisheries schools in the Malabar district. ‘Gurukulam’ was a vernacular Magazine published by the teacher of Malabar Mission Training School, Tellicherry. It contained articles written by deputy Inspectors and experienced teachers in subjects like teaching methods, practices, etc. The Cochin and Palghat municipalities also arranged to supply this magazine to all schools under their management.²⁰⁸

With the support of the Deputy Inspector of Schools, the Triprayar Teachers' Association proposed launching a new educational magazine, “The Nattika Educational Bulletin.” Mr. K.R. Gopalan, the headmaster of South Nattika School, was chosen to be its honorary editor, ensuring his duties would not be compromised as confirmed by the regional director. This prompted the Director of Fisheries to request permission for Mr. Gopalan to take on the role, which was subsequently approved.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ G.O NO.4434 dated 31/8/1949, D D, R A K.

²⁰⁸ G O NO.1362 dated 16/9/1925, D D, R A K.

²⁰⁹ G O NO.4389 dated 4/10/1951, D D, R A K.

5.11 Night schools

Post-World War I, colonial powers viewed education as a “trusteeship” duty. They expanded education to meet growing colonial demands.²¹⁰ The 1919 Act, transferred education to provincial legislatures. Night schools, modelled after British Adult Schools, were a primary source of adult education in British India. Established by various groups, these schools played a significant role in promoting adult literacy.

Fishing communities in India have historically faced challenges due to limited access to education. To address this issue, fisheries night schools were established in Malabar during British rule in the Madras Presidency. In the 1920s, to combat illiteracy among fishermen, night schools were established along the coasts. Recognizing the importance of education for improving lives, these schools provided free learning opportunities for both children and adults in fishing villages along the West Coast. Beyond basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, the curriculum included practical subjects like marine biology, fisheries management, and boatbuilding.²¹¹ This knowledge equipped students with the skills they needed to thrive in their traditional way of life.

The Department of Fisheries took over two-night schools, Puthenkadapuram and Azhicode,²¹² Established in 1919 for the benefit of a backward community, the Puthenkadapuram night school was sanctioned by the government.²¹³ The school was retained until December 31, 1926, with a headmaster and assistant on the existing honoraria scale.²¹⁴ Despite concerted efforts by the fisheries inspector and teachers to boost attendance, the lack of community interest in the night school made improvement unattainable. Consequently, the government ordered its closure.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ J. M. Barrington, ‘The Permanent Mandates Commission and Educational Policy in Trust Territories,’ *International Review of Education*, 22, no.1,1976, pp.88–94.

²¹¹ G O NO. 761.

²¹² G O NO.1185 dated 17 /6/ 1919, (Mis), R(special)D, R A K.

²¹³ Letter No.673-F/24 dated 10th October1924, D D, R A K.

²¹⁴ G O NO.132 dated 24/1/1924, D D, R A K.

²¹⁵ G O NO.3 dated 3/1/1927, D D, R A K.

5.11.1 Empowering Adults, Enriching Communities: - The active participation of over 30 adult Pudu Muslims²¹⁶ highlighted the vital role night schools played in providing educational opportunities for those who missed formal schooling in their youth. This dedication underscored the intrinsic value of night schools. Their flexible schedules catered to working adults, parents, or individuals with other commitments, allowing them to pursue academic goals and personal growth. Recognizing this importance, the 1922-23 budget allocated funding to support night schools, ensuring their continued operation and the chance for more adults to benefit from them. Chaliyam served as a shining example of how night schools could empower adults and enrich communities.

Pudiappa Night School - The government sanctioned the opening of a night school at Pudiappa, with effect from 1st April 1930. The strength of the night school was 22 including class first, 10 boys, and second 12 boys.²¹⁷ The night school at Pudiappa, temporarily closed in April 1932 and reopened in October of the same year, struggled to maintain student attendance. Despite having 19 enrolled students by December, none attended classes regularly. The local inspector attributed this poor attendance to a general lack of interest among the villagers, particularly the fishermen. Despite the teacher's efforts, the situation did not improve, leading to a recommendation for the permanent closure of the night school.²¹⁸

Calicut Night School - Calicut Night School was permanently shut down due to dwindling student enrollment and poor academic performance. This closure reflected a common challenge faced by night schools, according to the headmaster of fisheries who, along with the Assistant Director of Fisheries, had advocated for the Calicut school's closure.²¹⁹ The official explained that few adult men were willing to sacrifice their evenings for basic literacy education. Even those who enrolled often dropped out after a short time, leaving night schools without a consistent flow of new students, unlike regular day schools. It was worth noting that

²¹⁶ G.O NO.210.

²¹⁷ G O.NO.966 dated 2/7/1931, D D, R A K.

²¹⁸ G O NO.821 dated 5/7/1933, D D, R A K.

²¹⁹ G.O NO.1256 dated 31/7/1936, D D, R A K.

in response to this issue, many night schools in the Malabar coastal region eventually transitioned into day schools.

There were many reasons for the decline of night schools. Night schools were established for illiterate fishermen. Usually, once the permitted prescribed course was completed, these schools would be relocated from one place to another place. The period of these schools was three to four years. Unfortunately, the fisherman community was not fully aware of the importance of education, and there was no association to sensitize people about its significance.

This lack of awareness was a major reason for the decline of night school. The irregular fishing schedule, with no fixed working hours, posed a significant challenge for fishermen attending night school. Often required to fish from dawn to dusk, they struggled to balance their occupation with their education.

Additionally, in the early twentieth century, electricity was not available in homes or on streets, and people relied on candles and kerosene lamps. However, kerosene was expensive, making it difficult for them to afford. Furthermore, it was challenging for people to reach the school. There was also a lack of strong efforts from officials to encourage people to attend the schools. All these factors contributed to the decline of night school.

Night schools proved to be a crucial tool in educating the fisheries community, which often faced limitations in accessing formal education. By offering literacy, numeracy, and technical skills training, these institutions empowered fishers to adopt modern fishing techniques and practices. Additionally, night schools fostered social and cultural development within the community.²²⁰

²²⁰ Joshiba P. P., 'Night schools for fisherfolk: Adul Education and Empowerment in Colonial Malabar', *Proceedings of the South Indian History Congress*, No.42, 2024.

5.12 Adult Education Scheme

The closure of night schools disrupted adult education. To remedy this, the government took the initiative to implement an adult education programme. This programme was also rolled out in Malabar. The 1930s saw a shift in how adult education was viewed. More organizations joined the effort, and the focus shifted from basic literacy to offering practical skills like job training, health, and even citizenship.²²¹ An official committee formed in 1938 argued that learning to read and write wasn't the end goal, but rather the first step. Adult education should provide opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge that could improve people's lives.²²²

The district educational officer, South Malabar,²²³ suggested to the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Kozhikode that the fishermen on the West Coast should be brought under the beneficent influence of the adult education scheme inaugurated by the governments of India and Madras state. The adult education drive inaugurated by the government of India and the government of Madras state to be effective should touch all classes of people and the fishermen of the West Coast should also be brought under the beneficent influence of the scheme. He, therefore, suggested that the secondary and higher elementary grade teachers of the government fisheries schools should have been deputed for the adult education Training, which was held at Chunangad near Ottapalam in south Malabar.

To ensure the smooth implementation of the training programme, financial and logistical considerations were addressed. Teachers continued to receive their regular pay and allowances. Additionally, to offset training-related expenses, they were provided with a daily stipend of Rs. 22-8-0 along with free lodging throughout the programme. To minimize disruption at schools, the 24 participating teachers (12

²²¹ John Sargent, *Progress of Education in India 1937-1947*, Decennial Review, Vol. I, Publication No.113, Central Bureau of Education Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 1948, p.141.

²²² John Sargent, p.141.

²²³ Letter. NO. R. O. C /72 /D/51 dated 17/9/1951, D D, R A K.

secondary and 12 higher elementary) trained in batches of 3. Substitute teachers were brought in to cover classes while the primary teachers underwent training.²²⁴

In Chunangad near Ottapalam, the government ran a 45-day intensive training programme for adult literacy teachers. This programme attracted teachers from schools under all management categories. The third batch successfully completed the programme on 10th September 1951, and the government approved conducting the fourth and fifth batches as well.²²⁵

The Adult education classes in Madras Presidency, despite limitations, offered crucial learning opportunities for many. These classes provided basic literacy, numeracy, and job skills to improve employment prospects.

5.13 Local Government Support for Adult Literacy Programmes

The Payyanur Panchayat Board in Malabar district proposed opening an adult literacy programme in the Kavvayi region.²²⁶ This programme aimed to benefit illiterate adults, particularly those residing in the fishermen's colony. Recognizing the need, authorities granted permission to the Panchayat Board to utilize the existing fisheries school building in Kavvayi to conduct these adult literacy classes. The fisheries school's central location within the fishermen's colony makes it an ideal venue for the programme. Additionally, scheduling the classes after dusk ensures they would not disrupt the regular operations of the fisheries school. The Panchayat Board sought further assistance from the relevant government department to establish and run this adult literacy programme effectively. These teachers working under local bodies are eligible to receive financial grants from the government to support their work. The amount of these grants was determined by pre-defined scales based on factors like experience and qualifications.²²⁷ The

²²⁴ G O NO.74 dated 5/1/1952, D D, R A K.

²²⁵ G O NO.74.

²²⁶ G.O NO.2204 dated 4/9/1948, E D, R A K.

²²⁷ G.O NO.4259 dated 17/8/49, D D, R A K.

Panchayath Board requested the following facilities from this department in this connection: - ²²⁸

- 1) To lend the services of a teacher of the local fisheries school for conducting the class with permission to receive the remuneration and running expenses which was paid by the panchayat Board.
- 2) To permit the Panchayat Board to utilize the school building for conducting the adult literacy class.

The government permitted teachers at the Kavvayi Fisheries School to lead a night-time adult literacy programme. These teachers could accept payment from the Payyanur Panchayat Board for their additional work, without it affecting their current responsibilities. This approval was considered a key government rule (F R II) and ensured the extra pay is fair compensation for duties outside the teachers' normal workload. Additionally, the Panchayat Board has been granted permission to use the Kavvayi fisheries school building for these classes.²²⁹ The Adult Education Programmes, initially introduced by the British and subsequently adopted and expanded by the Indian government, played a pivotal role in raising literacy rates across India. Kerala's remarkable achievement of becoming the first fully literate state is a testament to the success of these programmes.

5.14 Madapally Fishermen Seek Fisheries School

Chandran Vydier, president of the Madapally Mogeers' Cooperative Society (a local association focused on fishing interests), petitioned for the establishment of a fisheries school in Madapally village. A school was established in Madapally on August 1st, 1920.²³⁰ The authorities officially approved its opening and ensured its long-term operation.²³¹ The school made good progress, in the government,

²²⁸ G O NO.4368 dated 13/10/1952, D D, R A K.

²²⁹ G O NO.4368.

²³⁰ G O NO. 1562.

²³¹ G O NO.883 dated 4/7/1922, (Mis), D D, R A K.

ordered²³² that the school should, as a permanent measure, be raised to the higher elementary grade.

Madapalli School Needs Playground: - Headmaster Proposed Land Purchase. Madapalli School was severely hampered by the lack of a playground, which is essential for a higher elementary school. The headmaster reported to the Assistant Director (Coast) that the previously used playground, located south of the school, was fenced off by a relative (Chettiankandy Kunkan) of the landowner (T. Thirula). To address this issue, the headmaster proposed purchasing this land for the school. He estimates the total cost to be around Rs. 4000. The government approved the Director of Fisheries' plan to use 86 cents of land.

Music instructor at Madapally High School: -The Madapally High School was approved for a music teacher position.²³³ While the Madapally High School recently filled its new music teacher position, the headmaster submitted a separate request for funding to purchase musical instruments.²³⁴

Madras Governor Approves Funding for Coir Craft in Schools: - The Governor of Madras authorized spending up to Rs. 6134 to equip 16 fisheries elementary schools and the Madapalli Technical High School for teaching coir handicrafts. The provided materials included spinning wheels, a willowing machine, tools, and raw coir fiber. This initiative equipped students with valuable skills in this traditional craft.²³⁵

Madapalli's Fisheries Technical School and Scholarships: - The Fisheries Technical High School in Madapalli aimed to help underprivileged children from fishing communities in Malabar. The students were given scholarships to fund their boarding and lodging expenses. But the amount was not enough. Out of the 15 Scholarships granted, five were awarded in 1949-50 and ten in 1950-51. The

²³² G O NO.408 dated 29/3/1926, (Mis), D D, R A K.

²³³ G O NO.2214 dated 25/4/1949, (Mis), D D, R A K.

²³⁴ G O NO.5415 dated 17/12/1952, D D, R A K.

²³⁵ G O NO.5230 dated 28/10/ 1949, D D, R A K.

Government sanctioned ²³⁶the grant of 15 scholarships at the rate of Rupees 8 per month for 9 months in a year for 5 pupils belonging to the fishermen's community. This scholarship was intended to match the expenditure on boarding, books, etc of the deserving pupils from the fishermen's community.

Fee Refund at Madapally School: - A report by the Deputy Director of Fisheries (south) highlights that the collection of full fees from non-fisher girl students at the Madapally Technical High School was incorrect. This follows an inspection by the district educational officer, North Malabar, who found that rule no.92 of the Madras educational rules applies. This rule states that girls students, Muslim boys, and boys from backward classes attending secondary schools were entitled to half-fee concessions. The report specified that 28 girls are studying at the Madapally school, 10 in high school and 18 in middle school, who might have been overcharged. The report recommended that these students be refunded the excess fees collected.²³⁷

Previously, the government allowed the Madapally Fisheries Technical High School (classes 1-6) to charge full fees from students except for those from fishing communities and Scheduled Castes/Other Backward Classes (who received a 50% discount). However, a new report by the Deputy Director of Fisheries (D.D.F.) identified this practice as contradicting Rule 92 of the Madras Educational Rules. This rule stated that girls, Muslim boys, and boys from backward classes attending secondary schools qualified for a half-fee concession.

In 1946, a proposal for Madapally Fisheries Higher Elementary School suggested:

- a. Free classes for standard 1-5
- b. Usual fees for students from non-fishing communities in classes 6-8

²³⁶ G O NO.2190 date 22/4/1949, D D, R A K.

²³⁷ G O NO. 2366.

- c. 50% discount for disadvantaged groups in classes 6-8.²³⁸

Madapalli Fisheries School: Equipping the Next Generation

The Madapalli Technical High School, run by the fisheries department in Malabar district, provided free education to fisher children with a focus on vocational training.²³⁹ The Madapally Technical High School, established to train fisher children in scientific fishing practices, offered a vocational curriculum. To enhance their educational opportunities, a proposal was made to introduce a diversified course of study with two options:

Fisheries Technology Course: - This specialized programme equipped students with the knowledge and skills needed for a successful career in fishing. It focused on subjects like Fisheries Science, the socio-economic aspects of the fishing industry, and Seamanship.

Pre-University Course: - This track provided a more general academic education, preparing students for further studies. It includes core subjects like regional language, a second language (Hindi or English), mathematics, social studies, citizenship training, and physical education.

This proposal aimed to offer both practical vocational training and a strong academic foundation, allowing students to choose a path that best suits their aspirations.²⁴⁰

Grades 4-6 Fisheries Education: Balancing Theory and Practice

The curriculum for fisheries education in these grades integrated classroom learning with hands-on experience. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of fisheries science and its practical applications.

²³⁸ G O NO.2366.

²³⁹ G O NO.6176 dated 15/12/1951, D D, R A K.

²⁴⁰ G O NO.6176.

Time Allocation: - The fisheries curriculum spans a total of 12 periods for Grade 4 and 14 periods for Grades 5 and 6. This allocation included four classroom sessions, four practical/laboratory activities, and four general science periods for Grade 4. For Grades 5 and 6, the curriculum comprises six classroom sessions, four practical/laboratory activities, and four general science periods.

Content by Grade:

Grade 4: students learned the fundamentals of fisheries science, including fish classification as vertebrates, their body structures, and internal anatomy through comparisons of sharks and mullets. Additionally, they explored fish behavior, such as growth patterns, lifespan, domestication, identification of poisonous species, and reproductive processes. The curriculum also covered marine ecosystems, including the distribution of marine life, various fishing techniques, and the ecological significance of organisms like seaweed, sponges, corals, crustaceans (prawns and crabs), mollusks (mussels and oysters), and commercially valuable fish species.

Grade 5: students learned about fishery technology, specifically focusing on fish preservation methods like refrigeration, drying, salting, and smoking. They also understood the drawbacks of using chemical preservatives. Additionally, the curriculum covered the utilization of fish byproducts, including the production of fish oil, meal, and manure.

Grade 6: students delved into oceanography, studying the characteristics of oceans, the distribution of land and water, underwater topography, and the dynamics of tides and currents, with a particular focus on the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. They also explored marine productivity, understanding the significance of plankton in the fisheries ecosystem, especially along the Madras and Malabar coasts. Fishing techniques were covered, including traditional methods like using catamarans and suckerfish, as well as harmful practices such as dynamite and poison fishing. The concept of fishery cooperatives was introduced, examining their types, advantages, and historical development in India since 1904. To complement theoretical knowledge, students engaged in practical learning, including fish identification, observation of fish behaviour, and visits to fish markets and fisheries establishments.

A unique requirement for students in grades 4 to 6 is a mandatory 15-day fishing trip, culminating in a certificate necessary for grade promotion.²⁴¹

Basic Navigation and Seamanship: -

Students were introduced to fundamental principles of navigation and seamanship. This included understanding nautical instruments like the compass, station pointer, sextant, and chronometer. They learned about different types of boats and vessels, as well as essential rules of the road to prevent collisions. Knowledge of maritime signals, particularly distress signals, is crucial. The curriculum also covered severe weather phenomena such as storms, cyclones, hurricanes, and typhoons, including their formation and safe vessel handling during these conditions.

Practical Application: -

Students gained practical skills in navigation, including taking cross-bearings to determine a ship's position on a chart. They learned to plot a ship's course using their knowledge of swimming, boat handling, and sail making techniques.

Higher Studies and Curriculum Evaluation: -

The Director of Industries and Commerce reviewed the syllabus for higher fisheries studies. Any necessary revisions made to ensure compatibility and potential exemptions for students enrolled in fisheries technology courses at polytechnics.²⁴² In addition to practical work in fish curing and byproducts handled by the fishery instructor (Maistry), the Madapally Fisheries Technical School received a visit from a Technical Education Officer on October 31st, 1950. This visit involved discussions with the Assistant Director of Fisheries in Calicut and the school's headmaster.

After the formation of Kerala state, the Madappally Technical School was converted into the government Fisheries School. This school was later divided into

²⁴¹ G O NO.6176.

²⁴² G O NO.6176.

separate girls' and boys' schools. The boys' school was subsequently upgraded to a government Vocational Higher Secondary school, while the girls' school remained unchanged.

5.15 Conclusion

Under the guidance of Sir F A Nicholson, fisheries schools were established in Malabar and South Canara during the colonial period. These schools quickly gained popularity among the fishing community, who sought similar educational opportunities for their children in other coastal regions. However, government intervention from the education department, concerned about potential negative effects on mainstream schools, hindered the expansion of fisheries schools. Ultimately, following Kerala's state reorganization, these specialized schools were integrated into the general education system.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Colonial modernity as a complex process involved the imposition of Western modernity on colonized societies, disrupting their traditional cultures and ways of life. European colonialism profoundly shaped Indian society, leading to an intellectual awakening and a surge in literacy activity. The founders' ideas and worldviews reflect a modern orientation, despite drawing upon traditional knowledge. The exposure of Malabar society to modernity and British governance contributed significantly to this intellectual evolution.

Modernity in the Indian colonial context was not a monolithic concept but rather a multifaceted one, spreading across different social groups in different ways. Upper and middle castes found traditional cultural resources valuable, while lower castes relied on modern elements to navigate the contemporary cultural landscape.

The confluence of rising nationalist sentiment, burgeoning economic forces, expanding educational access, and the pervasive influence of Western ideas and culture intensified awareness of India's relative backwardness and decline. This growing consciousness galvanized a resolve for reform. The stark dissonance between the traditional religious worldview and the emerging socioeconomic realities further fuelled this impetus. This period witnessed the rise of various religious reform movements, each seeking to reconcile faith with the demands of the modern age.

The lower strata of Malabar society were initially excluded from the benefits of the reforms brought about by colonial modernity. This was because they viewed opposing their masters as a sin. Additionally, they clung tightly to their traditions. However, with the continuous interventions of social reformers and others, signs of change began to appear among them. Through the speeches of these reformers, they realized that education was the only way to escape their servitude

and put an end to their suffering. The colonial government also created the necessary atmosphere for this transformation.

The British authorities in Malabar initially introduced education with the dual objectives of enhancing workforce productivity and promoting social upliftment. By cultivating scientific knowledge in conjunction with traditional skills, the aim was to modernize the workforce, thereby stimulating economic growth. Furthermore, education was seen as a means of civilizing the populace and inculcating a sense of hygiene.

The colonial educational system and socio-religious reform movements played a major role in spreading education and changing the existing social system. The first multidimensional attack against traditional institutions came not only from socio-religious leaders but also from people holding administrative positions. The official requirements and challenges faced by English-educated people in navigating traditional society necessitated such reforms.

A chronic dearth of resources for moral and material progress relegated the Malabar fishing community to a state of backwardness, thereby perpetuating ignorance, illiteracy, and superstition. These factors posed significant challenges to the community's progress. Their low caste status and rigid hierarchical system restricted their opportunities and freedoms. Their traditional concepts of dependence on the sea and belief in Kadamma's providence led them to live in the present and not save for the future. This lifestyle became problematic during the monsoon when rough seas halted fishing, resulting in economic hardship. The unpredictable nature of the fishing profession, with its alternating periods of plenty and scarcity, often leaves fisherfolk families vulnerable to near-starvation or half-starvation.

The fishing community in Malabar had faced severe socioeconomic challenges in the early 20th century, primarily due to limited access to education. Colonial exploitation and local oppression had further marginalized this group. The rigid caste system, with its discriminatory practices, relegated the fisherfolk of Malabar to the lowest strata of society, contributing to their socio-economic backwardness and limiting their opportunities for generations. This, in turn, led to

significant physical and mental challenges due to oppressive social norms, economic hardships, and other factors. To address these issues, reform movements had sought to improve educational opportunities to change the fishing community.

Valiya Veettil Govindan, a prominent figure from the marginalized Malabar fisherfolk community, played a crucial role in their socio-economic upliftment during the early 20th century. He was the first member of the fishing community to earn an academic degree and was later appointed Assistant Director of Fisheries. Cognizant of the severe scarcity of educational opportunities within the community, he ardently championed the cause of fisheries education and vocational training. His efforts led to the establishment of fisheries schools along the Malabar coast, providing a pathway for the community's progress. Govindan's contributions extended beyond education, encompassing various aspects of the fishing industry. He advocated for the well-being of fishermen, addressing issues like indebtedness, alcoholism, and poor working conditions. His tireless work and dedication have left a lasting impact on the lives of countless fisherfolk, making him a revered figure in the history of the Malabar fishing community.

Koodakkal Chandran Vydier, another prominent leader from the fisherfolk community in Malabar, significantly contributed to the socio-economic upliftment of marginalized fisherfolk, especially the Mogaya community in North Malabar. He advocated for fisheries schools, submitted petitions to the colonial government, and supported technical and vocational education. As a member and president of the Madapally Society, he worked towards community betterment, emphasizing the importance of education and wage-earning opportunities. He also addressed issues like alcohol addiction and advocated for scheduled caste reservations for his community.

V Govindan and K Chandran Vydier both strove to improve the lives of the fisherfolk community. However, their approaches differed. While Govindan, a British government servant, was constrained by his role, K. Chandran Vydier, a social worker, fearlessly advocated for the rights of the Mogaya community. He consistently advocated for their rights through petitions. Unfortunately, their

numerous complaints were rejected with different excuses as they lacked sufficient support. The fishing community's greatest obstacle was their disunity. Had they been more united, they could have achieved many of their goals. It was during the post-colonial period that they made an attempt to come together as a community.

In order to improve the conditions of their communities, numerous Sabhas and Samajams were formed in different regions. These organizations worked to address societal and religious concerns through public awareness campaigns and the promotion of social responsibility. Furthermore, the formation of caste associations like the Araya Jana Social Service League, Araya Vamsa Paripalana Yogam, and Araya Vamsodharani Sabha mobilized their respective castes and advocated for modernization. These efforts, coupled with colonial policies like the "Communal Rotation" system, which reserved government jobs for specific castes, ultimately contributed to the complex dynamics of social change in the region.

The advent of colonial rule in Malabar significantly disrupted the region's fishing industry. Colonial policies, such as the imposition of taxes on fishing equipment and the implementation of a salt monopoly, destabilized the livelihoods of coastal communities. In 1935, the British Revenue Department further exacerbated the situation by revoking the long-standing right of riverine fisherfolk to fish freely, opting instead for an auction system. This decision, which favoured wealthy individuals threatened the very existence of these communities. In response, fisherfolk leaders like Koottil Unni, Thekke Chettian Kandy Raman, and Thattanta Valappil Kunhiraman tirelessly petitioned colonial authorities, advocating for a free license system and highlighting the detrimental impact of the auction system on their livelihoods.

When their petitions went unanswered, the fisherfolk turned to their organization, Araya Jana Social Service League for help. The organization's leaders met directly with the minister to discuss the issue and also raised questions in the legislative assembly to seek a solution. Recognizing the need for a licensing system to protect their profession from encroachment by other communities, the fisherfolk agreed with the joint decision of the Revenue Department and the Malabar

Collector. This decision necessitated the imposition of a license fee, a measure which the fisherfolk, lacking viable alternatives, were compelled to accept. While this engendered a degree of disenchantment, it was crucial to acknowledge that this sentiment did not escalate to the level of widespread anti-British sentiment within the community. The concerted efforts of community leaders, coupled with the implementation of a robust licensing system, proved instrumental in safeguarding the community's resources from exploitation.

During the colonial era, Malabar's traditional economy underwent a profound transformation. Colonial authorities actively sought to consolidate their economic control, implementing programmes ostensibly designed for mutual benefit. These programmes, including the introduction of modern fishing technologies and the establishment of cooperative societies, were aimed at comprehensively improving the fishing community's lives. While promising economic growth and social welfare, these initiatives ultimately served to strengthen colonial economic dominance.

Sir F A Nicolson wanted the welfare and improvement of the fisherfolk community. As part of this, he initiated many welfare schemes under the Madras presidency. First, he established a fisheries department in the Madras presidency. Even though economic profit was the primary goal, he introduced innovative technologies in the machinery sector. New scientific technologies were brought into the fish curing yard and experiment station. He also established fish curing yards in the coastal belts. The Tanur experimental station and Chaliyam canary were examples of this.

The schemes introduced by the British government to uplift fishermen and introduce new technology into fishing were ultimately exploited by intermediaries. The fisherfolks faced exploitation by moneylenders who charged high interest rates on credits. Monsoon seasons were a time of financial hardship for Malabar fishermen. To survive, they often borrowed money from middlemen, who then forced them to sell their catch at extremely low prices, claiming to waive interest payments. This power imbalance, coupled with pressure from middlemen's

customers, led to disputes and the spoilage of fish as fishermen struggled to break free from the cycle of indebtednesses and exploitation.

Sir F A Nicholson initiated a transformative movement in the fisheries sector by establishing cooperative societies, aiming to uplift the socio-economic conditions of fisherfolk communities along the West Coast. Recognizing the plight of these marginalized groups, F A Nicholson sought to empower fishermen by providing them with the tools and resources they needed to improve their livelihoods.

Fishermen began to form community-based groups and cooperatives to improve their fish sales. These cooperative efforts were a significant step in the overall development of the rural economy. Such organizations helped uplift the economic status of impoverished fishermen. Concurrently, a new trend emerged across many regions: the formation of caste-based associations or societies aimed at improving the overall conditions of their respective castes. This development fostered a strong sense of caste identity and a desire for social advancement.

The cooperative societies, established during the colonial period, played a pivotal role in uplifting the fisherfolk. By providing financial assistance, technological support, and market access, these societies empowered fishermen and improved their economic security, contributing to the overall development of coastal communities.

Similarly, the movement's emphasis on education, temperance, and cooperative activities significantly improved the social and economic conditions of fisherfolk communities on the West Coast. This demonstrated the power of collective action and community-driven development in addressing socioeconomic challenges

These cooperative societies had diverse names, some identified by caste affiliation, such as the Araya Jana and Mogaya societies, and others named after their geographical location, like the Palapatty Fishermen Cooperative Society and Kaipamangalam societies. Despite this variety, the majority of these cooperatives

were controlled by specific castes. For instance, in areas with a significant Mogaya population, the local cooperative was primarily managed by members of that caste.

The societies had a fixed membership fee and elected a president from among their members. Due to the illiteracy of most members, the government appointed an ex-officio secretary to inform them about the society's functions and guidelines. Elections for the presidency sometimes led to factions and arguments, resulting in the liquidation of some societies. Government servants were often made office bearers, such as the ex-officio secretary, who was either a petty curing yard officer or a fisheries school teacher. They received a fixed honorarium for their work. Cooperative inspectors were appointed to ensure the smooth functioning of the societies, examining them and reporting to higher authorities.

Given the direct economic conditions of fishing communities, cooperation was essential for their recovery.¹ They embraced thrift, cooperation, and progress, aiming for social transformation. However, these programmes failed to reach their intended beneficiaries. British policies prioritized the British treasury over the well-being of fisherfolk. Profits went to middlemen, leaving fishers in poverty. The departure of officials such as F. A Nicholson, who had shown a genuine interest in the welfare of the fishermen, marked a shift toward a more profit-driven administrative approach. Subsequent British officials were primarily motivated by economic gain, often overlooking the needs of the fishing communities. Even after colonial rule, successive governments have failed to adequately improve the lives of fishing communities.

The Woods Despatch and subsequent Commissions like the Industrial, Agriculture, and Fisheries advocated for vocational education in India. These commissions recommended that government and local authorities take the lead in providing this education. The 20th century witnessed a remarkable transformation in vocational education in Malabar.

¹ G O NO.1668 dated 15/10/1927, D D, R A K.

In 1920, the Madras Presidency decided to implement a compulsory elementary education act, passing the Madras Elementary Act as part of this initiative. However, the government was unable to bring people from backward communities into this system. To attract these communities into schools, the government decided to implement an education system that appealed to them. Furthermore, the Non-Cooperation Movement led to a decline in government school enrollment as students boycotted government institutions.

To counter these, the British introduced vocational education to attract students, particularly from marginalized groups, and to quell political dissent. This is exemplified by the establishment of several institutions: a vocational agricultural middle school in Thaliparamba, an industrial school in Calicut, and a coir school in Beypore. Additionally, part-time programmes helped workers learn new skills. Vocational education, with its diverse range of courses, catered to the specific needs of different regions. The establishment of fisheries schools and vocational institutions was a pivotal moment for Malabar's fishermen community. This initiative not only provided education but also equipped them with practical skills, fostering economic growth and social progress.

Sir F A Nicholson observed that fishermen, impoverished and lacking education and awareness, were exploited. Their isolation and lack of opportunities made them prone to poverty, intemperance, and a lack of foresight. Relying solely on practical knowledge, they had no concept of formal education. To address their unique needs, a specialized educational system was necessary.

The Fisheries Training Institute was started to train teachers for elementary schools under the management of the fisheries department. This institute had students from not just Kerala, but also from Tamil Nadu, Andhra, and Karnataka coastal areas were taken care of by the directorate of the industrial and commercial department. Three years of intensive training in the methods of teaching and the

methods of fisheries techniques. They were equipped to teach all subjects in lower elementary schools, with a particular emphasis on fisheries curriculum.²

Sir F A Nicholson envisioned a schoolmaster who transcended the traditional role, serving as both a moral guide and a community leader. This individual, esteemed for their knowledge and accomplishments, exerted a significant influence on the village. Nicholson proposed that the schoolmaster should play a multifaceted role, including bolstering cooperative societies, offering guidance on sanitation, and serving as a trusted friend and role model for the villagers. Additionally, the schoolmaster was expected to act as a communication channel between the government and the coastal villages.

Nicholson emphasized the evolving role of the schoolmaster in the context of advancements in deep-sea fishing and new industries. He argued that beyond basic education, schoolmasters should be equipped to serve as “village guides.” The second aim of the scheme was for the fisheries schoolmaster to not only be an elementary school teacher but also a positive influence in the fishing village. While the results of this scheme were difficult to quantify statistically, it was clear that a considerable degree of success had been achieved.

The headmasters of these schools have multifaceted responsibilities in eradicating social disabilities. They served as both guides and mentors in addressing these issues. In many villages, the teachers of fishery schools were actively involved in cooperative work and other social improvement initiatives.³ These teachers were responsible for serving as secretaries and accountants for cooperative credit societies.

The Fisheries Training Institute’s curriculum was primarily designed for male teachers, with practical components like sea fishing, carpentry, and navigation being unsuitable for women. However, subjects like fish processing, hygiene, and net making were relevant to both genders. To address the increasing number of girls

² G O NO.237 dated 20/1/1949, (Mis), D D, R A K.

³ Letter No.604 dated 6/10/1916, D D, R A K.

students in fisheries schools, there was a pressing need to hire more female teachers. Consequently, women were also admitted to the Training Institute.

Students from outside Malabar, including Kanarese, Tamil, and Telugu districts, were admitted to the Calicut Fisheries Training Institute as it was the sole institution of its kind in the Presidency. However, a language barrier hindered their direct access to literary training. Instructors encountered a significant challenge as most students, particularly those in higher-level elementary classes, were deficient in English language skills. Since this language barrier was unforeseen, securing interpreters emerged as the only viable solution. Significant linguistic differences between Malayalam and the languages spoken by South Canara fishermen posed a substantial challenge. This hindered their participation in training programmes despite the institute's location in Calicut. To address these language barriers, the institute implemented various strategies, including hiring interpreters and providing language training to students and staff.

The government provided stipends to students at the Fisheries Training Institute. Stipend rates varied based on educational qualifications, with higher amounts awarded to students with advanced degrees. All students were subject to a three-month probationary period. F A Nicholson approved the hiring of non-Malayalee teachers as trainees. These trainees would undergo initial training at local institutions before specializing at the Calicut Institute. To facilitate the return travel of trainers upon course completion, a travel allowance was provided. This allowance was extended to trainers residing beyond a specified distance from the training venue. Additionally, the government authorized the inter-training of existing teachers at the institute.

Fisheries Training Institute offered not only teacher training but also short-term courses. These courses attracted students from beyond the Malabar region, particularly those interested in practical fishing skills. Individuals from diverse geographical areas, including Bihar, Assam, Cochin, and Travancore, enrolled in these programmes. Upon completion, students aimed to obtain formal certification to validate their acquired expertise.

The government's schemes aimed at improving community conditions, particularly among educated youth, were recognized as inadequate. This prompted the submission of numerous memorials highlighting existing challenges. Fisheries Assistant Teachers from within the fishing communities, who participated in these submissions, emphasized their training's effectiveness in addressing poverty and illiteracy among their peers. They stressed the critical need for a well-coordinated plan to systematically eradicate these issues within the fishing community.

The memorialists contended that, possessing an intimate understanding of the fishermen's socio-economic realities, including poverty and limited access to education, only those teachers who were themselves fishermen, and had undergone specialized training in fisheries, were truly equipped to address these challenges effectively. They further argued that the implementation of their innovative ideas had been significantly hampered by a dearth of coordinated planning and their constrained roles as Assistant Teachers, rather than as Headmasters, severely limiting their capacity to bring about meaningful improvements in the fishermen's condition.⁴ Consequently, the memorialists implored the authorities to permit Assistant Teachers hailing from fishing communities to actively engage in social welfare activities within their respective villages.

Initially, teachers who had undergone training at the fisheries training institute were employed in these schools. However, a subsequent shortage of qualified personnel necessitated the appointment of individuals who had only completed a one-year fisheries technology course. Furthermore, a significant number of these teachers did not originate from the fishing communities themselves, resulting in a notable deficiency in their understanding of the community's unique educational, social, and cultural nuances. This contravened the principles espoused by Sir F A Nicolson, who emphasized the imperative for teachers to serve as community leaders and actively contribute to the upliftment of their respective villages.

⁴ G O NO.4821 dated 10/10/1947, D D, R A K.

The fisheries-trained teachers argued that the specialized training they receive is essential for the successful operation of fisheries elementary schools. These schools were established to provide tailored education to fisher children that aligns with their traditional occupation. The practical technical instructions imparted by these specially trained teachers were crucial for achieving the original goals of the schools.

However, the trained teachers expressed frustration over the staffing practices of the Fisheries schools. There were teachers from the fishing community who, despite being specially trained, did not secure employment in fisheries schools. They claimed that despite their specialized training, they were overlooked for teaching positions in the schools, while teachers with ordinary training were hired. This omission undermined the purpose and objectives of the fisheries schools.

While the Fisheries Training Institute offered special reservations to those from fishing communities, it did not provide age relaxation for teaching positions in fisheries schools. The government service age limit of 25 years applied to all candidates, but there were no age concessions for fisherfolk. While the fisheries schools aimed to uplift the fishermen community, most teachers were not from the fishing community, and these teachers lacked understanding of the fishing community. Many fisherfolk students graduated from the fisheries training institute but failed to secure jobs in fisheries schools, contributing to the decline of these schools due to the absence of teachers from the fishing community. Despite having completed their studies at training schools, a significant portion of the fishing community was unable to secure employment in fisheries schools. Faced with limited alternative employment opportunities, these individuals were compelled to continue their traditional fishing livelihoods.

The fisheries training institute Calicut, was closed in July 1937, as it was considered a financial burden to the government. As a result, students had to depend on institutes like the one in Thoothukudi for teachers' training. The closure of the fisheries training institute on the west coast was a significant setback for fishermen's education. This institution was unique in offering specialized training in fishery

techniques and technology. Its comprehensive curriculum attracted students from a wide geographic area, including both coastal and inland regions. Unfortunately, the institute was shut down due to high training costs.

Sir. F A Nicholson's innovative scheme aimed to integrate fishing education into a child's overall schooling. The curriculum connected academic subjects to the realities of a fishing community, incorporating real-world examples and hands-on experiences. This approach not only maintained students' connection to their ancestral occupation but also equipped them with the skills necessary for the modern fishing industry.

To bridge the educational gap in regions with limited opportunities, the British government established fisheries schools on the West Coast and Malabar coastal belts. These institutions were specifically designed for fishermen's children, aiming to modernize the fishing industry.⁵ By offering specialized training in navigation, weather forecasting, and improved fishing techniques, as well as basic literacy skills, these schools empowered marginalized fishing communities.

fisheries schools were opened to expand educational access for fishermen. These schools challenged traditional caste-based divisions of labor by introducing new technologies, techniques, and scientific knowledge. They fostered a sense of community among fishermen and contributed to the modernization of the fishing industry.

The Conductress system, a British colonial initiative, was designed to improve student attendance. Conductresses visited homes, ensured regular attendance, and assisted teachers in classroom management. This system was later adopted by fisheries schools.

Rural schools often faced challenges such as irregular attendance, late arrivals, and uninformed parents. To address these issues, schools employed attendants, often referred to as "conductors" or "conductresses." These individuals

⁵ G O NO.1688 dated 21/11/1925, D D, R A K.

visited homes, escorted children to school, and motivated families to prioritize education.

The conductress system was particularly important in fisheries schools, where low attendance and parental apathy were prevalent. By engaging with families and ensuring regular attendance, conductresses played a crucial role in improving educational outcomes for children from fishing communities. This system aimed to enhance enrollment, reduce dropout rates, and create a supportive learning environment.

Employing only female conductresses in fisheries schools was a strategic move to improve girls' attendance and provide a supportive learning environment. The conductress system offers valuable insights into innovative approaches for addressing gender disparities in education, particularly in marginalized communities.

The Pu-Islam, a historically marginalized fishing community that embraced Islam, faced significant barriers to education, including low literacy rates. By introducing religious education into educational institutions, they were able to attract more students to schools. Despite potential challenges, such as resistance to girls' education in conservative communities, the implementation of compulsory education ensured that all children, regardless of gender, had access to schooling. By declaring educationally backward areas as compulsory education zones and providing supportive learning environments, often offering both secular and religious education, these initiatives bridged the educational gap for underprivileged children, especially girls, in resource-constrained and conservative settings.

A widely circulated photograph of malnourished children at Puduponnani School sparked public outrage, compelling the British government to implement school mid-day meal programmes. In response, midday meals were subsequently authorized in all fisheries schools. To address the nutritional needs of students from impoverished fishing communities in the Malabar region of the West Coast, fisheries schools initiated a midday meal programme. This initiative was especially crucial during periods of poor fishing seasons when families struggled to provide adequate

sustenance. The programme not only provided a nutritious meal but also incentivized regular school attendance. Recognizing the link between physical health and academic achievement, the government supported the provision of free midday meals to these vulnerable students.

Education empowered young fishermen, cultivating progressive ideas, awareness of their rights, and a desire for self-improvement. The Fisheries department's initiative to enhance the quality of life for fishermen was further strengthened by these schools, which offered practical education tailored to the specific needs of the fishing profession.

The primary goal of fisheries schools was not to impart specialized fishing skills to young learners but to adapt general elementary education to cater to the unique requirements of children from fishing communities. To effectively implement the envisioned fisher education programme and establish fishery elementary schools, dedicated schools staffed exclusively by specialized teachers under departmental control were crucial.

Fee concessions were granted to the children of fishermen, and they were also provided with midday meals and essential study materials like books, slates, and pencils, free of charge. These factors should have encouraged parents to enroll their children in fisheries schools.

There were many reasons for the decline of fisheries schools. One of the reasons was that the district education council was not supportive of fisheries schools, as children of the fishermen community chose to go to fisheries schools. The conflict between the education department and fisheries department was the major reason for the decline of fisheries schools. Fisheries schools functioned under the Fisheries Department. Inspection by the education department was essential for the smooth running of fisheries schools. The education department denied approval to start fisheries schools in areas where there were already board schools and schools under the education department. There were many examples of this.

The district education department obstructed the establishment of fisheries schools in coastal areas due to vested interests. Despite local support and fisheries department approval, the education department rejected proposals for schools in Pallipuram, Vekkode, and Meladi. They claimed that existing management schools were sufficient and that creating fisheries schools would lead to student migration and the closure of these management schools. This opposition effectively prevented land acquisition for the proposed fisheries schools. Essentially, the district education department prioritized the protection of existing private schools over the educational needs of fisherfolk children.

The government sanctioned the opening of fisheries elementary schools at Vekkode and Pallipuram respectively in the Malabar district on 1st, April 1933. Necessary funds were provided in the budget estimates of 1933-34. However, the schools were not opened as the education department and the district educational council, Malabar objected to the proposal on the score of the champion scheme.

Fisherfolk children faced challenges attending regular schools due to the requirement of half fees. Economic constraints prevented many from affording these costs, forcing them to drop out. Subsequent inquiries revealed the situation, prompting the government to authorize fisheries schools in these areas. However, the establishment of these schools took several years, and bureaucratic hurdles contributed to their overall decline.

After the formation of the Kerala State, many fisheries schools were changed into normal schools. There were only three fisheries schools with secondary education in the Malabar area. Kaipamangalam, Beypore, and Madapally were these schools. Madapally and Beypore schools were later converted into technical schools, and Kaipamangalam school was converted to a normal school.

During the Colonial period, the fisheries department sought to increase awareness among fishermen of the importance of education. The people of the fishermen community presented a request to the higher authorities to start one fisheries school in each fisheries hamlet. Later, the lack of such schools regressed their literacy rate. They were relegated to the low background. Even after all these

years of independence, the fisheries community still faces many problems and remains socially and economically backward. While many other backward communities have progressed economically, educationally, and culturally, the fishing community continues to be exploited by middlemen and capitalists.

Fishing communities in India faced significant educational barriers. The British administration in Malabar established fisheries night schools to address this. In the 1920s, these schools spread along the coast, offering free education to adults in coastal villages. However, various factors contributed to their decline. The irregular fishing schedule, coupled with the lack of electricity and affordable lighting, made it difficult for fishermen to attend night classes. Additionally, the transient nature of these schools and the community's limited awareness of their importance hindered their sustainability. Despite these challenges, night schools played a pivotal role in empowering the fishing community. By imparting literacy, numeracy, and technical skills, these institutions enabled fishers to adopt modern fishing techniques and improve their livelihoods. Moreover, they fostered social and cultural development within the community.

The cessation of night schools disrupted the continuity of adult education. In response, the government initiated an adult education programme. In the 1930s, adult education evolved beyond basic literacy. Organizations emphasized practical skills like job training and health. To extend this to fishermen on the West Coast, the district educational officer of South Malabar proposed using government fisheries school teachers for adult education training. This initiative aimed to bring fishermen under the umbrella of the government's adult education scheme.

Despite limitations, adult education classes in the Madras Presidency provided valuable opportunities for acquiring basic literacy, numeracy, and job skills. The Payyanur Panchayat Board proposed an adult literacy programme in Kavvayi to benefit illiterate adults, especially fishermen. The adult education programmes, originally introduced by the British and subsequently adopted and expanded by the Indian government, were instrumental in increasing literacy rates

nationwide. Kerala's remarkable feat of becoming the first fully literate state was evidence of their effectiveness.

Western influence spurred a shift in India's educational priorities, emphasizing practical skills and job training through vocational institutes. The establishment of vocational education in the fisheries industry during the colonial period marked a turning point for the socially and educationally backward fishermen community of Malabar. The Fisheries Training Institute in Calicut, founded during this time, transformed the traditional fishing methods of these communities through training and practical instruction. The institute's holistic curriculum not only improved fishing techniques but also empowered fishermen by integrating essential skills like carpentry and metalworking. This innovative approach attracted many fishermen to the institute, providing them with the opportunity to learn advanced fishing techniques and acquire additional skills. The establishment of fisheries schools and vocational educational institutions played a crucial role in attracting the fishermen community to education and empowering them with knowledge and skills beyond their traditional occupation.

Traditionally, vocational education was seen as a separate path for those who struggled in academics or came from lower social classes. However, a positive aspect of colonial education in India was its tailoring of vocational programmes to local needs and resources, empowering communities. While the colonial-era vocational education system in India faced criticism, its role in uplifting the socio-economic status and livelihoods of fishing communities deserves recognition. This emphasis on vocational training continued in the post-colonial era, with Kerala leading the way by establishing vocational schools at the higher secondary level across the state.

The British colonial education policy in Malabar aimed to make the population literate through primary education, ostensibly to inculcate cleanliness, discipline, and health. However, the primary motive was economic, as they aimed to create a literate workforce to serve their interests. Secondary education was limited

due to high fees, leading most to return to traditional occupations after primary school.

Most fisheries schools only offered education up to the middle school level. As a result, students from fishing communities were often compelled to discontinue their education at this stage due to the absence of secondary schools in their vicinity. To advance their studies, students were forced to transfer to regular schools. This process was fraught with challenges. Firstly, unlike fisheries schools, these institutions did not offer fee concessions. As students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, they were obligated to pay half the fees. Furthermore, these schools were often located far from coastal regions, making it difficult for students to commute. Consequently, many students were forced to abandon their education and return to traditional fishing occupations. The colonial education policy's failure to provide adequate educational opportunities for these students perpetuated social and economic disparities in coastal communities.

The British were wary of higher education, fearing it would empower the populace and threaten colonial rule. Limited resources and economic motivations further hindered the expansion of higher education. Moreover, they feared that higher-educated individuals would demand higher positions. Thus, they discouraged higher education.

Those who sought higher education for their children submitted petitions to the British authorities. A prime example of this was the memorandum of the Mappila Conference. At the 1931 Kerala Muslim Conference held in Tellicherry, the chairman lamented the absence of a single Muslim high school in a district with a ten-lakh Muslim population. Subsequently, in 1936, the 3rd Kerala Muslim Conference thanked the government for approving a Muslim high school in Malabar and requested free education to support the economically disadvantaged community.

It has been argued that colonial education primarily reinforced traditional social structures, with the vast majority of the population remaining within this framework. This perspective was corroborated by an examination of the colonial

educational project.⁶ Despite its limitations, it fostered the emergence of a small, educated elite with the potential to disseminate modern ideas to the wider populace.

The criticisms of colonial education, which had demonstrated significant potential for social reform, led to a degree of upward mobility among the lower castes. However, as had been investigated by administrative officials, the British colonial knowledge system had a more specific goal: to educate natives, not simply to increase their literacy, but to adapt them to colonial needs.

Even after 75 years of independence, the educational progress of the fishing community remains significantly behind. While other marginalized communities, especially those facing educational and social disadvantages, have made substantial progress, the condition of the fishing community persists as a cause for concern.

⁶ Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, London: Verso, 1980, pp.40-42.

RECOMMENDATION

This study aimed to identify and recognize individuals who worked to address the challenges faced by the fisheries community during the colonial period, particularly those who resisted detrimental laws and policies. A significant achievement was the uncovering of individuals previously acknowledged only in British records. The primary focus was on fisheries schools established for vocational education. The study examined how individuals within the fishing community adapted to new British policies, highlighting leaders who confronted these challenges. It analysed the specific contributions of Chandran Vydier and Govindan, exploring the effectiveness of educational tools like fisheries schools in imparting knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the research investigated the resistance of local leaders like Koottil Unni Thekke Chettian Kandy Raman and Thattanta Valappil Kunhiraman against the colonial government's attempts to disrupt traditional fishing practices through the implementation of an auction system.

The legacy of the colonial era continues to significantly impact fishing communities in India, with persistent challenges such as economic inequality, environmental degradation, and inadequate government support. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these communities, it was crucial to implement effective policies, promote sustainable fishing practices, and ensure equitable resource management. Even though there were around 50 fisheries schools in Malabar and South Canara during the colonial period, the fisherfolk community is still educationally and economically much more backward compared to other backward communities in the post-colonial period. Research can be conducted to find out the reasons behind this.

Further research should be conducted to identify and analyse the contributions of other leaders who championed the cause of the fishing community. This research could also be extended to examine other schools established during the colonial period, such as coir schools, labour schools, and industrial schools.

GLOSSARY

<i>Alakkukar</i>	:	Washermen
<i>Amsam</i>	:	A revenue Village
<i>Angadikkar</i>	:	People of the town
<i>Anna</i>	:	Between 1835 and 1957, the Indian rupee was divided into 16 annas, with each anna further divided into 4 paise
<i>Bepukar</i>	:	Book-and-line fishermen
<i>Cadgen</i>	:	Cadjan mats are commonly used as a natural roofing material
<i>Desam</i>	:	A traditional category of Village used for Revenue purpose
<i>Illam</i>	:	Household or dwelling
<i>Janmabhogam</i>	:	Token amount collected by the sirkar or Jenmi for lands newly settled along the coast
<i>Kabarukilakkunnavar</i>	:	Grave diggers
<i>Kadakkodi</i>	:	Sea Courts, as an institution, existed along the coast of Kerala, especially in Malabar
<i>Kadamma</i>	:	Mother sea
<i>Kadappurattakar</i>	:	dwellers of the beach
<i>Karanavar</i>	:	the head of a matrilineal joint family
<i>kulam</i>	:	Clan
<i>Mensem</i>	:	Month
<i>Molla</i>	:	Sunni Muslim clergy or a Muslim Mosque leader
<i>Nadu</i>	:	Land, country or domicile
<i>Naduvazhi</i>	:	Ruler of Nadu-Authority to protect and punish the people
<i>Ossans</i>	:	barbers of the Muslim community
<i>Poosalans</i>	:	fisher folk of the Muslim community
<i>Pucca</i>	:	Permanent dwellings are typically constructed using materials such as brick, stone, and cement
<i>Rajiam</i>	:	Traditional concept of boundary of a fishing hamlet
<i>Sabha</i>	:	council or organized

<i>Samajam</i>	:	Society
<i>Seer</i>	:	The seer was a traditional unit of weight in India and South Asia, typically equivalent to 1.25 kilograms (2.8 pounds)
<i>Smaraka</i>	:	Memorial
<i>Valakkar</i>	:	Fishermen who use the net
<i>vallam</i>	:	Canoe
<i>Velichappadu</i>	:	Oracle
<i>Vilapakavayam</i>	:	Elegy
<i>tarawad</i>	:	Ancestral home

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58. G O NO.106 dated 20/1/1928, D D, R A K.
59. G O NO.131 dated 24/1/1928, D D, R A K.
60. G O NO.425 dated 8/3/1928, D D, R A K.
61. G O NO. 672 dated 3/4/1928, D D, R A K.
62. G O NO.817 dated 3/5/1928, D D, R A K.
63. G O NO. 1095 dated 2/7/1928, D D, R A K.
64. G O NO.1108 dated 7/7/1928, D D, R A K.
65. G O NO.1374 dated 17/8/1928, D D, R A K.
66. G O NO.1455 dated 31/8/1928, D D, R A K.
67. G O NO.1538 dated 13/09/1928 D D, R A K.
68. G O NO.1625 dated 27/9/1928, D D, R A K.
69. G O NO.109 dated 18/1/1929, D D, R A K.
70. G O NO.150 dated 25/1/1929, D D, R A K.
71. G O NO.212 dated 4/2/1929, (Mis), D D, R A K.
72. G O NO.361 dated 2/3/1929, D D, R A K.
73. G O NO.790 dated 1/5/1929, D D, R A K.
74. G O NO.1173 dated 11/7/1929, (Mis), D D, R A K.
75. G O NO.1351 dated 6/8/1929, D D, R A K.
76. G O NO. 1454 dated 23/8/1929, D D, R A K.
77. G O NO.1590 dated 24/9/1929, D D, R A K.
78. G O NO.857 dated 16/4/1930, D D, R A K.

79. G O NO.1164 dated 6/6/1930, (Mis), D D, R A K.
80. G O NO.2050 dated 8/11/1930, (Mis), D D, R A K.
81. G O NO.1678 dated 20/4/1931, D D, R A K.
82. G O NO.657 dated 5/5/1931, D D, R A K.
83. G O NO.702 dated 11/5/1931, D D, R A K.
84. G O NO.966 dated 2/7/1931, D D, R A K.
85. G O NO.1732 dated 5/12/1931, D D, R A K.
86. G O NO.1794 dated 17/12/1931, D D, R A K.
87. G O NO.397 dated 18/3/1932, D D, R A K.
88. G O NO.408 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K.
89. G O NO.420 dated 21/3/1932, D D, R A K.
90. G O NO.481 dated 5/4/1932, D D, R A K.
91. G O NO.800 dated 11/6/1932, D D, R A K.
92. G O NO.992 dated 25/7/1932, D D, R A K.
93. G O NO.1096 dated 11/8/1932, D D, R A K.
94. G O NO.1567 dated 6/12/1932, D D, R A K.
95. G O NO.3 dated 3/1/1933, D D, R A K.
96. G O NO.127 dated 27/1/1933 D D, R A K.
97. G O NO.374 dated 1/4/1933, (Mis), D D, R A K.
98. G O NO.394 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.
99. G O NO.396 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.
100. G O NO.398 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.
101. G O NO.399 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.
102. G O NO.403 dated 1/4/1933, D D, R A K.
103. G O NO.606 dated 23/5/1933, D D, R A K.
104. G O NO.661 dated 2/6/1933, D D, R A K.
105. G O NO. 810 dated 4/7/1933, D D, R A K.
106. G O NO.821 dated 5/7/1933, D D, R A K.
107. G O NO.985 dated 16/8/1933, D D, R A K.

108. G O NO.1296 dated 20/10/1933, D D, R A K.
109. G O NO.714 dated 31/5/1934, D D, R A K.
110. G O NO.990 dated 16/7/1934, D D, R A K.
111. G O NO.1066 dated 28/7/1934, (Mis), D D, R A K.
112. G O NO.1150 dated 11/8/1934, D D, R A K.
113. G O NO.1288 dated 10/9/1934, D D, R A K.
114. G O NO.1356 dated 25/9/1934 D D, R A K.
115. G O NO.1428 dated 11/10/1934, D D, R A K.
116. G O NO.475 dated 25/3/1935, D D, R A K.
117. G O NO.490 dated 25/3/1935, D D, R A K.
118. G O NO.536 dated 30/3/1935, D D, R A K.
119. G O NO.1598 dated 14/11/1935, (Mis), D D, R A K.
120. G O NO.1802 dated 20/12/1935, D D, R A K.
121. G O NO.78 dated 23/01/36, D D, R A K.
122. G O NO.162 dated 4/2/1936, D D, R A K.
123. G O NO.165 dated 4/2/1936, D D, R A K.
124. G O NO.211 dated 12/2/1936, D D, R A K.
125. G O NO.305 dated 26/2/1936, D D, R A K.
126. G O NO.807 dated 20/5/1936, D.D, R A K.
127. G O NO.822 dated 22/5/1936, D D, R A K.
128. G O NO.1256 dated 31/7/1936, D D, R A K.
129. G O NO.1500 dated 31/8/1936, D D, R A K.
130. G O NO.1524 dated 3/9/1936, D D, R A K.
131. G O NO.1565dated 12/9/1936, D D, R A K.
132. G O NO.2249 dated 11/12/1936, D D, R A K.
133. G O NO.17 dated 5/1/1937, D D, R A K.
134. G O NO.633 dated 17/3/1937, D D, R A K.
135. G O NO. 925 dated 23/4/1937, D D, R A K.
136. G O NO.971 dated 28/4/1937, D D, R A K.

137. G O NO.1627 (23-S) dated 12/7/1937, D D, R A K.
138. G O NO.1605 dated 17/7/1937, (Mis), D D, R A K.
139. G O NO.1982 dated 30/8/1937, D D, R A K.
140. G O NO.323 dated 4/2/1938, D D, R A K.
141. G O NO.3041 dated 8/2/1938, (Mis), D D, R A K.
142. G O NO.873 dated 31/3/1938, D D, R A K.
143. G O NO.893 dated 1/4/1938, D D, R A K.
144. G O NO.1041 dated 21/4/1938, D D, R A K.
145. G O NO.1192 dated 7/5/1938, D D, R A K.
146. G O NO.1271 dated 17/5/1938 D D, R A K.
147. G O NO.1505 dated 17/6/1938, D D, R A K.
148. G O NO.1826 dated 28/7/1938, D D, R A K.
149. G O NO.1830 dated 29/7/1938, D D, R A K.
150. G O NO.2045 dated 22/08/1938, D D, R A K.
151. G O NO. 2393 dated 23/9/1938, D D, R A K.
152. G O NO. 2500 dated 10/10/1938, D D, R A K.
153. G O NO.2848 dated 14/11/1938 D D, R A K.
154. G O NO.377 dated 14/2/1939, (Mis), D D, R A K.
155. G O NO.1191 dated 6/5/1939, D D, R A K.
156. G O NO.1316 dated 19/5/1939, D D, R A K.
157. G O NO.1429 dated 1/6/1939, D D, R A K.
158. G O NO.2022 dated 15/8/1939, (Mis), D D, R A K.
159. G O NO.2217 dated 11/9/1939, D D, R A K.
160. G O NO.2392 dated 2/10/1939, D D, R A K.
161. G O NO.2503 dated 13/11/1939, D D, R A K.
162. G O NO.2544 dated 13/10/1939, D D, R A K.
163. G O NO.2562 dated 19/10/1939, D D, R A K.
164. G O NO.2743 dated 9/11/1939, (Mis), D D, R A K.
165. G O NO.145 dated 18/1/1940, D D, R A K.

166. G O NO.1159 dated 20/05/1940, D D, R A K.
167. G O NO.1365 dated 10/06/1940, D D, R A K.
168. G O NO.1692 dated 22/7/1940, D D, R A K.
169. G O NO.1744 dated 29/7/1940, D D, R A K.
170. G O NO. 1973 dated 21/8/1940, D D, R A K.
171. G O NO.316 dated 19/2/1941, D D, R A K.
172. G O NO.317 dated 19/2/1941, D D, R A K.
173. G O NO.426 dated 6/3/1941, D D, R A K.
174. G O NO.547 dated 20/3/1941, D D, R A K.
175. G O NO.996 dated 30/5/1941, D D, R A K.
176. G O NO.1699 dated 15/9/1941, D D, R A K.
177. G O NO.2232 dated 6/12/1941, (Mis), D D, R A K.
178. G O NO.403 dated 1/2/1942 D D, R A K.
179. G O NO.420 dated 26/2/1942, D D, R A K.
180. G O.NO. 544 dated 16/3/1942, D D, R A K.
181. G O NO.660 dated 26/3/1942, D D, R A K.
182. G O NO.787 dated 8/4/1942, (Mis), D D, R A K.
183. G O NO.1264 dated 25/6/1942, D D, R A K.
184. G O NO.1365 dated 7/7/1942, D D, R A K.
185. G O NO.1704 dated 20/8/1942, (Mis), D D, R A K.
186. G O NO.1705 dated 20/8/1942, (Mis), D D, R A K.
187. G O NO.1819 dated 2/9/1942, D D, R A K.
188. G O NO.3132 dated 28/1/1943, D D, R A K.
189. G O NO.3443 dated 20/3/1943, (Mis), D D, R A K.
190. G O NO.360 dated 20/3/1943, (Mis), D D, R A K.
191. G O NO.2479 dated 30/3/1943, (Mis), D D, R A K.
192. G O NO.3484 dated 1/4/1943, D D, R A K.
193. G O NO.1234 dated 25/6/1943, D D, R A K.
194. G O NO.1752 dated 9/8/1943, D D, R A K.

195. G O NO.2005 dated 26/8/1943, D D, R A K.
196. G O NO.2533 dated 8/10/1943, D D, R A K.
197. G O NO.13 dated 3/1/1944, D D, R A K.
198. G O NO.1463 dated 31/3/1944, D D, R A K.
199. G O NO.1465 dated 31/3/1944, D D, R A K.
200. G O NO.3648 dated 24/8/1944, (Mis), D D, R A K.
201. G O NO.4946 dated 18/11/1944, (Mis), D D, R A K.
202. G O NO.5070 dated 24/12/ 1945, (Mis), D D, R A K.
203. G O NO.348 dated 22/01/1946, D D, R A K.
204. G O NO.359 dated 23/01/1946, D D, R A K.
205. G O NO 1312 dated 29/3/1946, D D, R A K.
206. G O NO.1313 dated 29/3/1946, D D, R A K.
207. G O NO.1336 dated 30/3/1946, D D, R A K.
208. G O NO.1337 dated 30/3/1946, D D, R A K.
209. G O NO.1481 dated 9/4/1946, D D, R A K.
210. G O NO.1518 dated 12/4/1946, D D, R A K.
211. G O NO.1520 dated 2/4/1946, D D, R A K.
212. G O NO.1678 dated 25/4/1946, D D, R A K.
213. G O NO.1815 dated 4/5/1946, D D, R A K.
214. G O NO.1963 dated 16/5/1946, D D, R A K.
215. G O NO.4821 dated 10/10/1947, D D, R A K.
216. G O NO.4404 dated 26/8/1948, D D, R A K.
217. G O NO.237 dated 20/1/1949, (Mis), D D, R A K.
218. G O NO.1655 dated 28/3/1949, D D, R A K.
219. G O NO.2190 dated 22/4/1949, D D, R A K.
220. G O NO.2214 dated 25/4/1949, (Mis), D D, R A K.
221. G O NO.2950 dated 1/6/ 1949, D D, R A K.
222. G O NO.3171 dated 14/6/1949, D D, R A K.
223. G O NO.4259 dated 17/8/1949, D D, R A K.

224. G O NO. 4434 dated 31/8/1949, D D, R A K.
225. G O NO.5230 dated 28/10/1949, D D, R A K.
226. G O NO.1468 dated 12/4/1950, D D, R A K.
227. G O NO.1473 dated 12/4/1950, D D, R A K.
228. G O NO.1638 dated 24/4/1950, D D, R A K.
229. G O NO.1760 dated 1/5/1950, D D, R A K.
230. G O NO.2366 dated 12/6/1950, D D, R A K.
231. G O NO.2814 dated 19/7/1950, D D, R A K.
232. G O NO.4622 dated 17/11/1950, (Mis), D D, R A K.
233. G O NO.2699 dated 11/6/1951, D D, R A K.
234. G O NO.3497 dated 28/7/1951, (Mis), D D, R A K.
235. G O NO.4068 dated 12/9/1951, D D, R A K.
236. G O NO.4389 dated 4/10/1951, D D, R A K.
237. G O NO.6176 dated 15/12/1951, D D, R A K.
238. G O NO.74 dated 5/1/1952, D D, R A K.
239. G O NO.1239 dated 24/3/1952, D D, R A K.
240. G O NO.3358 dated 4/8/1952, (Mis), D D, R A K.
241. G O NO.3420 dated 7/8/1952, D D, R A K.
242. G O NO. 3778 dated 29/8/52, D D, R A K.
243. G O NO.4026 dated 17/9/1952, (Mis), D D, R A K.
244. G O NO.4201 dated 4/10/1952, D D, R A K.
245. G O NO.4368 dated 13/10/1952, D D, R A K.
246. G O NO.5415 dated 17/12/1952, D D, R A K.

Government Order Education Department

1. G O NO.2247 dated 19/11/1909, Education Department, State Archives, Tamil Nadu.
2. G O NO.16 dated 3/1/1917, Home (education), Department, Regional Archives Kozhikode.

G O NO.1185 dated 17/6/1919, (Law) Education Department, Regional Archives Kozhikode. (hereafter L E D, R A K)

3. G O NO.354 dated 12/3/1921, L E D, R.A.K.
4. G O NO.250 dated 15/2/1923, L E D, R A K.
5. G O NO.270 dated 20/2/1923, L E D, R A K.
6. G O NO.411 dated 16/3/1923, L E D, R A K.
7. G O NO.1554 dated 5/11/1923, L E D, R A K.
8. G O NO.1594 dated 12/11/1923, L E D, R A K.
9. G O NO.1418 dated 4/9/1924, L E D, R A K.
10. G O NO.1580 dated 11/10/1924, L E D, R A K.
11. G O NO.1875 dated 1/12/1924, L E D, R A K.
12. G O NO.1907 dated 6/12/1924, L E D, R A K.
13. G O NO.1879 dated 14/11/1927, L E D, R A K.
14. G O NO.1131 dated 2/7/1931, L E D, R A K.
15. G O NO. 598 dated 25/4/1932, L E D, R A K.
16. G O NO.1882 dated 3/9/1936, E D, R A K.
17. G. O.NO.1883 dated 8/8/1938, E D, R A K.
18. G. O NO.1903 dated 21/8/1939, E D, R A K.
19. G O NO.2204 dated 4/9/1948, E D, R A K.
20. G. O NO.386 dated 03/03/1947, Education& Public Health Department, R A K.
21. G O NO.2204 dated 4/9/1948, E D, R A K.

Public Service Department

1. G O NO.793 dated 1/8/1931, Public Service Department, R A K. (hereafter P S D)
2. G O NO.1271 dated 15/12/1931, P S D, R A K.
3. G O NO.989 dated 27/11/1933, P D, R A K.

Revenue Department

1. G O NO. 532 dated 8/8/1899, Revenue, Department, R A K. (hereafter R D).
2. G O NO.2267 dated 17/8/1908, R D, R A K.
3. G O NO.1215 dated 4/5/1909, R D, R A K.
4. G O NO.2048 dated 27/5/1918, R D, R A K.
5. G O NO.2049 dated 27/5/1918, R D, R A K.

6. G O NO.406 dated 6/3/1919, R (special) D, R A K.
7. G O NO.1185 dated 17 /6/ 1919,(Mis), R (special) D, R A K.
8. G O NO.407 dated 25/2/1920, R, (special) D, R A K.
9. G O NO. 961 dated 29/4/1919, R D, R A K.
10. G O NO.2067 dated 10/11/1919, R (Special), R A K.
11. G O NO.1561 dated 27/8/1920, (Mis), R(special)D, R A K.
12. G O NO. 1562 dated 27/8/1920, (Mis), R (Special)D, R A K.
13. G O NO.2029 dated 19/11/1920, R (special) D, R A K.
14. G O NO.1533 dated 21/8/1920, R (special) D, R A K.

Legislative Council Questions

1. Madras Legislative Council Question No.1129, dated 22nd September 1920, from C Gopala Menon, D D, R A K.
2. Madras Legislative Assembly Question No.908, dated 25th September 1924, from Rao Bhadhur Narayana Namboothiripad O. M., Law (education) Department, R A K.
3. Legislative Council Question 779, dated 26th March 1926, from Rao Bhadhur Goplan, P. V, D D, R A K.
4. Madras Legislative Assembly Question No.1150, dated 27th November 1977, from P. Madhavan, D D, R A K.
5. Madras Legislative Assembly Question No.589, dated 28th March 1938, from A Karunakara Menon D D, Fort St. George, Madras, R A K.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-1

Fisheries schools in Malabar and South Canara (1919-1950)

Sl.No.	Name of School	Place	Sanction- Government Oder and year
1	Adakathabail	South Canara	G O NO.893 dated 1/4/1938, D D
2	Ajanur	South Canara	G O NO.456 dated 6/3/1940, (Mis), D D
3	Azhikode	Malabar	G O NO.276 dated 21/2/1923, D D.
4	Bangamanjeshwar	South Canara	G O NO.603 dated 27/3/1929, D D.
5	Blangad	Malabar	G O NO.355 dated 3/3/1921, D D.
6	Bekal	South Canara	G O NO.893 dated 1/4/1938, D D,
7	Beypore	Malabar	1926
8	Chaliyam	Malabar	G O NO.407 dated 25/2/1920, R D (special)
9	Cheruvathur	South Canara	1934
10	Hadavinakone	South Canara	1932
11	Hosdurg kadapuram	South Canara	G O NO.1336 dated 30/3/1946, (Mis), D D.
12	Kadalundi	Malabar	G O NO.355 dated 3/3/1921, D D.
13	Kadavanad	Malabar	G O NO. 433 dated 29/3/1927, (Mis), D D.
14	Kaipamangalam	Malabar	G O NO.1185 dated 17/6/1919, (Mis), R D (special)
15	Kanjhangad	South Canara	G O NO.893 dated 1/4/1938, D D,
16	Kannankadavu	Malabar	G O NO.87 dated 15/1/1925, (Mis), D D.
17	Kasargod	South Canara	G O NO.761 dated. 12/4/1924, D D.
18	Kaup	South Canara	G O NO.603 dated 27/3/1929, D D.
19	Kavvayi	Malabar	G O NO.2097 dated 11/12/1924, D D.
20	Kirimanjeshwar	South Canara	1936
21	Kizhur	South Canara	G O NO.1185 dated 17/6/1919,(Mis), R D (special)
22	Korapuzha	Malabar	G O NO.276 dated 21/2/1923, D D.
23	Kottakadappuram	Malabar	G O NO.355 dated 3/3/1921, D D.

24	Kottikulam	South Canara	1926
25	Kumbla	South Canara	G O NO.761 dated.12/4/1924, D D.
26	Kundazhiyur	Malabar	G O NO.107 dated 22/1/1923, D D.
27	Kuriyadi	Malabar	G O NO.87 dated 15/1/1925, (Mis), D D.
28	Madakkara	Malabar	G O NO. 1337 dated 1/4/1946, D D.
29	Malpe	South Canara	G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D.
30	Mannalamkunnu	Malabar	G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D.
31	Madapalli	Malabar	G O NO.1562 dated 27/8/1920, R D(special)
32	Meladi	Malabar	G O NO.660 dated 26/3/1942, (Mis), D D.
33	Naduvattom	Malabar	G O NO.603 dated 27/3/1929, D D.
34	Navanda	South Canara	1932
35	Nileshwar	South Canara	G O NO.660 dated 26/3/1942, (Mis), D D.
36	Palapetty	Malabar	G O NO.433 dated 29/3/1927, (Mis), D D.
37	Pallipuram	Malabar	G O NO.660 dated 26/3/1942, (Mis), D D.
38	Parappanangadi	Malabar	G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D.
39	Peringanam	South Canara	G O NO.433 dated 29/3/1927, D D.
40	Polippu	South Canara	1926
41	Ponnani (Kadapuram)	Malabar	December 1949, (Permanent)-G O NO.3505 dated 11/8/1958, D D.
42	Pudiappa	Malabar	G O NO.433 dated 29/3/1927, (Mis), D D.
43	Puduponnani	Malabar	G O NO.78 dated 23/1/1938, D D.
44	Puthen Kadappuram	Malabar	G O NO.1185 dated 17/6/1919, R(Spl), R A K.
45	Quilandy	Malabar	G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D.
46	Sri Jnanodaya	South Canara	G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D.
47	South Nattika	Malabar	G O NO.430 dated 29/3/1927, (permanent sanction), D D.
48	Talikulam	Malabar	G O NO.430 dated 29/3/1927, D D.
49	Tanur	Malabar	G O NO.170 dated 2/2/1925, D D.
50	Udinoor Kadapuram	South Canara	G O NO.1351 dated 1/4/1946, D D.
51	Vekkode	Malabar	G O NO.394 dated 1/4/1933, D D.
52	Veliangode	Malabar	G O NO.761 dated 12/4/1924, D D.
53	Vellayil (model school)	Malabar	1919 Converted to Model School-Ref. No. 2389-c/26-1 dated 27/10/1926, D D.

Appendix II

The sanction accorded in the G O NO.2159dated 2/9/1938 (Mis), Development for the employment of the conductress in the Palapetty

Std	Sep 38 Str. B	Sep 38 str. G	Sep 38 a.a B	Sep 38 a.a G	Oct. 38 Str. B	Oct. 38 Str. G	Oct. 38 a.a B	Oct. 38 a.a G	Nov 38 Str. B	Nov. 38 Str. G	Nov. 38 a.a B	Nov. 38 a.a G	Dec. 38 Str. B	Dec38 Str. G	Dec 38 a.a B	Dec. 38 a.a G
I	15	15	11	9	16	16	13	12	15	15	9	10	15	13	12	12
II	8	10	11	7	15	8	11	10	17	12	11	9	16	12	12	10
III	15	8	11	7	15	8	11	6	15	8	9	6	15	8	11	5
IV	4	10	116	13	10	10	11	8	13	10	10	6	13	10	10	8
V	8	9	12	6	18	9	11	6	18	9	14	5	17	9	14	5
VI	12	7	8	6	12	7	8	7	12	7	9	6	12	7	9	7
VII	9	2	7	2	9	2	7	2	9	2	9	-	9	2	8	-
Total	101	61	71	44	100	64	72	51	99	63	71	42	97	61	76	47
g.total	162		115		164		123		162		113		158		123	

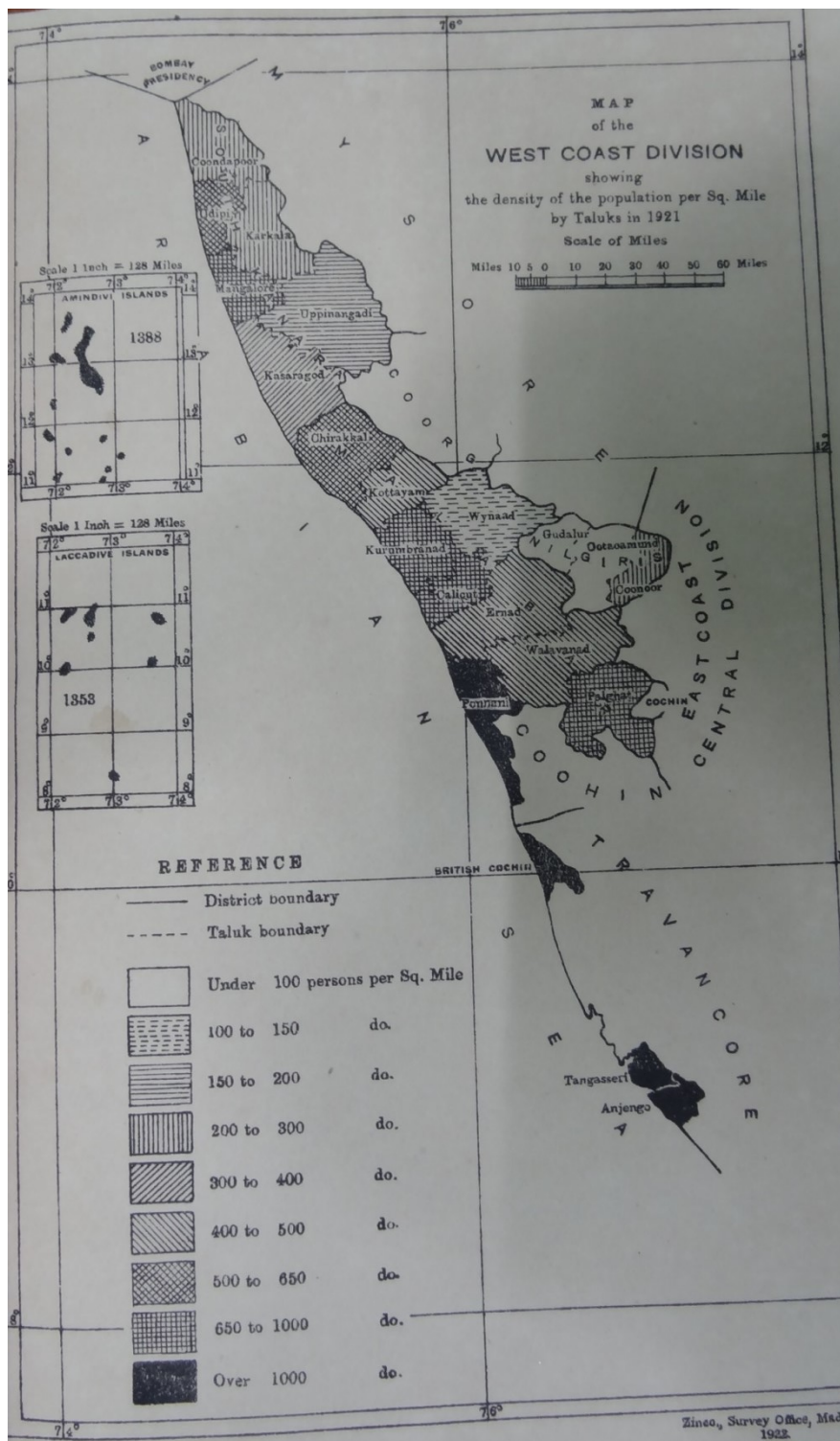
Std	Jan 39 Str. B	Jan 39 str. G	Jan 39 a.a B	Jan 39 a.a G	Feb 39 Str. B	Feb. 39 Str. G	Feb 39 a.a B	Feb. 39 a.a G	Mar 39 Str. B	Mar. 39 Str. G	Mar. 39 a.a B	Mar. 39 a.a G	Apl. 39 Str. B	Apl.39 Str. G	Apl 39 a.a B	Apl. 39 a.a G
I	15	14	11	10	15	14	10	10	15	14	10	10	14	14	11	11
II	17	12	11	8	17	12	12	8	17	12	11	8	15	10	12	8
III	15	8	12	5	15	8	10	5	15	7	9	4	15	7	13	5
IV	13	10	9	5	12	9	11	5	12	9	10	6	12	9	10	7
V	17	7	13	6	17	7	13	4	17	7	11	5	17	7	11	5
VI	12	7	8	6	11	7	7	5	10	7	7	7	10	7	6	5
VII	9	2	8	-	9	2	8	1	9	1	7	1	9	1	7	1
Total	98	60	72	41	96	58	70	39	95	57	65	41	92	55	73	47
g.total	158		113		154		108		152		106		147		113	

Std	May 39 Str. B	Ma 39 str. G	May 39 a.a B	may 39 a.a G	Jun 39 Str. B	Jun 39 Str. G	jun 39 a.a B	june. 39 a.a G
I	14	14	11	13				
II	15	10	11	9	32	40	31	11
III	15	7	12	5	15	14	14	8
IV	17	10	11	10				
V	17	7	14	5	29	14	22	10
VI	10	7	8	6	11	7	7	5
VII	9	2	8	-	9	2	8	1
Total	98	60	72	41	96	58	70	39
GrandTotal	158		113		154		108	

Appendix III



Valiyaveettil Govindan



Map of Malabar and West Coast (Colonial Period)



Koodakkal Chandran Vydier

Mail. 29. 10. 41



Photo of students of fisheries school Puthuponnani taken by attendance committee on 29/10/1941