

**RENAISSANCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN MALABAR –  
A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
ANANDA SAMAJAM, SIDDHA SAMAJAM  
AND ATMA VIDYA SANGHAM**

Thesis  
Submitted to the University of Calicut  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

**ASOKAN MUNDON**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

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## DECLARATION

I Asokan Mundon, do here by declare that this thesis RENAISSANCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN MALABAR - WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANANDA SAMAJAM, SIDDHA SAMAJAM AND ATMAVIDYA SANGHAM has not been submitted by me for the award of a degree, diploma, title or recognition before.

Calicut University  
March 2003

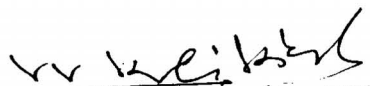
  
Asokan Mundon

Dr. V.V. Kunhikrishnan  
Principal,  
Govt. College Pattambi.

### C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the thesis *Renaissance and Social Change in Malabar – A study with Special Reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atmavidya Sangham* submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by Asokan Mundon under my supervision and that no part of this thesis has been submitted before for the award of any degree .

Pattambi  
March 2003.

  
(Supervising Teacher)

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**Asokan Mundon**

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTERS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Movements: A Historical Perspective	23
III.	Social Practice and the Discourse of the Intellectuals	58
IV.	Contours of the Intellectual Tradition	120
V.	Towards a Progressive Society	165
VI.	Conclusion	201

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# Introduction

Asokan Mundon “Renaissance and social change in malabar - a study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham ” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The thesis tries to address the three prominent Social movements that tried to rephrase the social and cultural ideas prevailing in Malabar. This does not mean that these movements were known to Malabar alone. In fact, it was very active in the other parts of Kerala. But, it had a lasting impact upon the people and culture of Malabar.

These movements were Ananda Samajam founded by Brahmananda Sivayogi, Siddha Samajam founded by Swami Sivananda Paramahansa and Atma Vidya Sangam founded by Vagbhatananda. Most predominant historiography usually interpreted these movements as Renaissance movements that have to be considered as the harbingers of social change in Malabar. There exist a historiographical tendency to characterize these movements as a shadow of the nineteenth century developments in Bengal and other regions of India. Contrary to this the present research identifies these movements as significant that tried to create a particular space in articulating the ideas of social transformation. In the course of the analysis of the ideas and world views of the founders of these movements, it becomes clear that their world views were rooted in Modernity although they had made use of the traditional knowledge to arrive at it. This peculiar imbrications of tradition and modernity could jettison a plethora of ideologi-

cal positions that opened the flood gates of new rationality to attempt a critique of tradition. This tenuous relationship between tradition and modernity and the critique of tradition forms the central concern of the thesis. This achieved through the analysis of the particular discourses of the three thinkers who initiated the three movements viz. Brahmananda Sivayogi, Sivananda Paramahansa and Vagbhatananda. In order to understand their discourses a hermeneutical study of their texts such as Moksha Pradeepam, Ananadadarshan, Complete works of Vagbhatananda, Siddhavedam, Keralanacharam and other texts produced by the thinkers has been undertaken.

Methodological issues that have been identified in the course of the study have been related to understanding of modernity in the colonial context. It is possible to argue that in the Indian colonial context even modernity has to be multiple with respect to the social groups that have been trying to acquire it. It becomes clear when one compares the negotiation of modernity by different caste groups. In the case of most upper and middle castes, particularly in the context of movements for social reform or regeneration the cultural resources of tradition were found as extremely significant and useful. On the contrary, in the case of lower castes, there was an exclusive dependence on elements of modernity to acquire the modern cultural milieu. In the case of the movements studied here, there was an evident analytical engagement with the Sanskritic tradition. Even their critique of tradition evolved out of this. The methodological challenge that evolved out of this peculiar problem was related to the resolution of the existing oppressive social condition.

The nature of the thesis does not warrant an in depth analysis of political economy separately. At the same time an understanding of it is considered essential for the study as changes in the political economy inspire ideological transformations. Hence issues related with political economy are attempted only as a background material. Cultural transformations are studied in accordance with its own logic. Theories of colonial intellectual formation would be of substantial help to highlight the present study. The present writer is making use of post-colonial studies like Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism, Nation and its Fragments and others as the study was organized as exploring the aspects of colonial culture. Statements from the texts are mainly used to study the mentalities and sensibilities. The changes taking place in everyday life is also undertaken as part of the project. On doing this one has to confront the problem of understanding the discursive formations within the text of the thinkers concerned and the non-discursive aspects of the social organization/movement. This creates the situation of simultaneously dealing with the text and social practice of the movement. This demands an intervention from the perspective of social movements and discourse analysis.

### **Discourse Analysis**

The traditional epistemology approached knowledge either as a subjective phenomenon or as an objective phenomenon. In both the Hegelian and the Marxist approach, knowledge was considered as a process along with the linear historical processes. In spite of criticism of these approaches, we seldom get an alternative until Foucault came into the picture.<sup>1</sup> Foucault's criticism of linear

history in his Order of Things is warranted by his own epistemological approach in his Archeology of knowledge. Here Foucault approaches knowledge as a process which often undergoes its own break in history. So he depends upon a synchronic methodology rather than a diachronic approach. In the present context the Foucauldian approach of knowledge seems useful to elicit new understandings in the study.

Foucault prefers discourse to philosophy and History in order to mention the relation between statements, the selection of subjects, whenever, the definition of an other is made possible. He wants to make it clear that a discourse includes not only statements but also the discretion to select certain statement rather than the other and, hence, it includes both subjective and objective aspects of the phenomenon. So the discursive formation includes texts individuals institutions and other cultural practices.

### **The notion of Renaissance**

The integration of the subcontinent to European colonial enterprise had its own implication in Indian society. The colonizer from the very beginning was engaged in a practice of knowledge production which was defined as constructing the other for the west to hegemonize the colonized. It even influenced the self-perception of the colonized. The introduction of a new system of education which was intended primarily to create a colonial solariat was used to propagate the colonial ideology among the literate groups who began to look at Indian social realities through the newly derived knowledge. This led to the beginning of an unprecedented literary activity all over the sub-continent. This intellectual awak-

ening witnessed in different parts of India was generally considered as an appendage of the movement which has taken place in Bengal from the time of Raja Rammohun Roy onwards. This generalization has squeezed much of the specificities of the regional movements. Still a precedent to characterize it as Indian Renaissance has come to stay. Thus, the term 'Indian Renaissance' was attributed to identify the intellectual awakening that came into being as a result of its interaction with the colonial government. R.C. Majumdar, Charles Heimsath and David Kopf were among the prominent historians who believed that the intellectual awakening was the result of contact between India and the modern west. The awakening of the nineteenth century was, thus, directly attributed to the western influences on the Indian mind through the colonial rule..

Recently a tendency has emerged among historians to doubt the feasibility of applying the term 'Indian Renaissance' to denote the intellectual awakening. Barun De<sup>2</sup> was one of the prominent scholars to doubt this practice for the first time. He has suggested that as Indian setting was entirely different from the European and as it has not led to radical changes in Indian society it is improper to characterize it as Indian Renaissance. Following him many scholars have expressed their dislike for the application of this term. They have preferred to say that it was only an attempt at modernization in the colonial context, which is branded as 'colonial modernity'. In this scheme the penetration of alien cultural values and knowledge systems was considered as a threat to the indigenous culture. The modern nation-state was also considered as detrimental cultural diversity. They argue that the logic of the nation state is to impose a

hegemonizing political identity of citizenship on all members. Partha Chatterjee<sup>3</sup> is the most important exponent of this notion of colonial modernity. The threat posed to the Nation-State in the context of globalization is discussed at length in 'Modernity at Large' by Arjun Appadurai<sup>4</sup>. He feels that Nation-States, as units in a complex interactive system are not very likely to be the long-term arbiters of the relationship between globality and modernity..

Modernity involves the rise of modern society (Secular societies with an institutional separation of the state from civil society) a much greater degree of social and technical division of labour, and formation of nation-states unites cultural and political borders, a rationalistic epistemology on an individualistic and objectivistic ontology. The critique of modernity is attempted through the colonial discourse analysis. It is a mode of enquiry that is used to understand both colonialisation and the process of decolonisation. Early modernization theories believed that modern science would generate changes in traditional societies which would help them develop. Similar agendas were projected by the missionaries down to the colonial administrators. As Samuel Matteer observes: "Already some Pulayas, under the operation of Christian teaching and guidance, have become admirable characters-gentle, honourable, devout and loving and probably they will display a very beautiful type of character when fully christianised."<sup>5</sup> The discourse of abstract and desirable qualities of society assumes significance with the process of colonial modernization. Wide range of discussions took place on issues like freedom, progress and reformulation of the self.<sup>6</sup> In the post-colonial critique tradition is sketched as a repository of authentic cultural values. Habermas

says tradition forms part of the life world which is progressively being colonized in modern societies.

Sarah Joseph critiqued this notion in relation to the features of pre-modern societies as was attributed by the post-colonial theorists. She questions the very notion of the pre-modern societies as self-regulating system.<sup>7</sup> She also questioned the notion of a harmonious society that upheld conservationist policies, in the pre modern times. Whatever be the features of the opposing critiques what remains to be stated is that the thinkers, studied here developed certain fundamental doctrines that laid down the parameters of a project of cultural resistance to modernity. At the same time they have not relied unnecessarily on the modern notions and developed their own systems and strategies to counter the cultural penetration of capitalism.

### **Dissent culture**

It is observed that the movements under study, in general, is undertaking a cultural critique, which shows an active participation in a social process. This understanding compelled the present writer to think in terms of evolving a theory that can explain the various manifestations located in the site. A counter cultural perspective is expected to bring out all the ideological dimensions of the movements studied here. Thus the study attempt to look at the three movements primarily from the point of view protest and dissent. This is a methodology used in sociological enquiries. The used of this methodology is very significant to this project. As already shown the existing methodologies in historiography fail to bring out the features of the movement. At the same time, it is expected that the

movements were having more ideological significance than was provided by existing methodologies. That is why a shift in methodology was undertaken in the thesis. It is expected that the approach from the point of view of protest dissent will provide more insights and bring out the submerged meanings of the movements as it attach due regard to the ideational developments. The development of such a consciousness in Malabar society was attributed to its exposure to modernity and new forms of governance with the incorporation of the region to British India.

Every Society has an identity and self- which will be different from the images that it generate in the minds of the others. The Indian society has been understood as one having the attributes of ascription and hierarchy sustained by rigid application of the complex rules of purity and pollution. It has also been characterized as other worldly in the sense that it underplays material considerations and emphasizes spirituality. It was also endowed with a notion of timelessness and the orthodox sections describe it as founded on Sanatana Dharma. But it is also seen that a strong strand of dissent was noticed in tradition. This can be traced from the time of the Buddha who developed a forceful critique of the Brahmanical notions of the day. Ekanath in Maharashtra, although himself a Brahmin, could not see any logic in feeding the Brahmins at the death feast of given in honour of his parents. So he broke with the tradition and invited the untouchable Mahar and the poor who needed food more than the Brahmins<sup>8</sup>. Such strands of dissent and protest are innumerable in Indian History which led to a rereading and reinterpretation of tradition. This approach helps us to develop

the notion of social change instead of 'changelessness'. The 'change' which is thus conceptualized has to be considered as the product of its exposure to external influences and internal imbalances.

Every society creates its own types of protest and the styles of expressing such protests. As it is a non-conformist activity it requires certain agencies to carry out its aims and objectives. Non-conformism was considered as intrinsic to societies as prescriptive values created at the ideational level seldom come up any where near being achieved in actual conduct. Thus, a social movement essentially involve result-oriented collective mobilisation through a formal or informal organization. It is also laid down that certain conditions like 'deprivation' are essential for the emergence of social movements. These movements have succeeded in producing certain structural as well as non-structural changes in society. Yogendra Singh<sup>9</sup> proposed a comprehensive and theoretically consistent theory to cover the changes took place in society. Viewing from this perspective the movements under study get projected as a counter-cultural enterprise. Their project has the strength of visualizing a future society with the help of a vigorous critique of the present. This discursive practice converts their thought into a tool of subversion. This makes it a culturally and theoretically valid project that addressed relevant issues of the day.

### **Relevance of the study**

The study is relevant for various reasons. It tries to attach new meanings to the movement. As already stated such movements were considered as an appendage of the intellectual awakening of the nineteenth century observed in

different parts of the country beginning from Bengal. Such a formulation doesn't fit in the discourse of reform in Kerala as the social formation as well as the growth of political economy proceeded on an entirely different line. This is an injustice to the regional movements which might have developed out of certain entirely different unique situations. The study will show that the movements attracted people all over Kerala and addressed general issues of the people of Kerala. But it failed to generate far reaching impact on the people of Travancore in spite of its popularity. Whereas communitarian movements had wider acceptance in Travancore. This difference can be attributed to the regional specificities. This compels us to have a close look at the movements to give it the due recognition and appreciation that it was entitled to. An intervention from the point of view of ideational developments and studying the texts of the thinkers are expected to render this.

This aspect of the study brings to the forefront another important problem. The existing methodology can provide certain results which will not affect the general fabric of the knowledge. It requires new and radical notions with regard to the methodology itself. This account for the new methodology followed in the study. In this context an inter-disciplinary methodology is adopted in the study. At the same time, no deviation from the current historical methods are undertaken in the study. Other methods and strategies were employed only to elicit new themes and meanings from the texts of the thinkers, which is expected to extend the interest of the study. In this, the Discourse Analysis method is found useful and is used wherever it is found to produce meanings relevant to the

research. Thus, the study becomes a novel venture as no attention to ideational developments in the making of the social movements have not yet been undertaken. A significant contribution is made by K. N. Panikkar<sup>10</sup> in this direction and the present study owes much to his intellectual framework. Attempts in this direction were undertaken in regional languages but the results were not incorporated into the historical narrative. The study is also expected to make a critique of enlightenment as it was revealed to the people of India. The study assumes added significance as it tries to unveil the eternal conflict between human agents and the objective conditions of their actions.<sup>11</sup>

As stated above conventional pattern attempts only a generalized account of the intellectual awakening and there by ignores the specific attributes importance and roles of the regional movements. This study intends to establish the sociopolitical context of the thinkers from an entirely different angle which deviates from the conventional pattern of placing them. The basic ideological formulations that manifest in the works of the three thinkers are similar. Hence, a combined study of them are most relevant. The study will also explain how the spiritual and sociological ideas merged together which led to the social liberation of the specified area.

### **Situating the ideas of the Thinkers.**

The ideas of the thinkers under study has to be located in an interface between tradition and modernity. The biographers have shown that the thinkers were not exposed to higher learning in English even though by that time educational institution were opened in different parts of Malabar.<sup>12</sup> They used Sanskrit

ie.learning to subvert the hegemonic position of the Brahmanical orthodoxy as well as to revitalize traditional culture and society. Sanscritic framework was used by them in the analysis of the systems of knowledge. At the same time they were informed of the economic and cultural aspects of modernity through their contacts with the evangelicals and administrators. These two trends are used to create a modern society and a value system in accordance with it. They have used the traditional knowledge in the context of colonial modernity. These movements emerged at the time when the ideas of colonial modernity was well-entrenched in the Kerala Society through the agency of the British.

The integration of the Malabar region with the colonial political economy begins with the defeat and consequent incorporation of the region to the Bombay Presidency. Slowly they have introduced one by one all the modern systems required for the proper governance of the region.<sup>13</sup>They initiated a systematic assessment of revenue based on land and cultivation. A thorough reorganization of the judiciary was also undertaken which insisted modern judicial concepts in place of administration of justice based on tradition customs and conventions<sup>14</sup>. Selection of personnel for civil and military administration was made on the basis of new rules and regulations. This offered opportunities to the Thiyyas of Malabar who responded positively to English education and most of them became part of the colonial salariat. Panikkar has shown that Nairs were the first to take to western education which gave them an advantage over government employment<sup>15</sup>. The turbulent Nairs of Malabar were disarmed totally and were given proprietary rights over land. Thus the authority of the British was super imposed over the

traditional power structure of Malabar which made Nair domination over the people more permanent<sup>16</sup>.

Malabar under the British witnessed new trends in the economic sphere. The affluence created as a result of trading relations with the British educational facilities and employment opportunities in the governmental establishments coming of money economy and the beginning of Industries<sup>17</sup> created the condition for the growth of the middle classes who were large colonial sabrait<sup>18</sup>. Their new opportunities revealed to the middle classes the European society as it was assumed to be through their interactions with English officials, literature and their own experiences. This led to a comparison between Indian and European society. The presence of multiple options open to the new classes led to the negotiation of the 'modern' differently. This served as the reason for later clash between the Nairs and Thiyyas.<sup>19</sup> The reformulated society, thus, naturally selected diverse mentalities of the emergent classes. This particular social context gave birth to the intellectual classes who were to undertake the process of reformulation. They were qualified to be considered as organic intellectuals though not in the strictest Gramscian sense.<sup>20</sup> The list of the early followers of the movement proves that most of them came from the ranks the government contractors., officials and entrepreneurs.<sup>21</sup>

This material base contributed considerably to the ideological transformation of Malabar. This transformation, in a way, was facilitated by the coming of modern education. The number of persons connected directly with or put face to face with education was limited. Even then, the idea, got disseminated into the

society through the efforts of Evangelicals contacts with the administrative officials etc. The Basel Mission was the principal agency that was engaged in imparting knowledge. Generally modern educational institutions were open to everyone irrespective of caste and creed. But only those with enough resources could send their children to such institutions and schools were set up in cities in the initial stages. This situation denied Vagbhatananda an opportunity to study in the schools.<sup>22</sup> But exposure to Sanskrit at a very early age and the scholarship of his own father made him a great scholar and orator very early in his life. The free atmosphere prevailing in Malabar and their contacts with other religionists led to an imbibing of new norms and ideas. At the same time, they continued in the basic mould of Indian tradition which is against all kinds of segregations and ritualism that fail to consider men as equals. Their exposure to modern ideas helped them to sharpen their critique of tradition. Thus, the ideological transformation of Malabar was serving as a catalyst in moulding the distinctive outlook of the intellectuals.

No less a role is played by other agents of the public sphere. The PaxBritanica and the judicial system introduced under the British offered equal treatment to the people irrespective of their caste and religious status. In place of local notables we have the judges in courts. They disposed of cases in accordance with the British legal practices which protected the rights of individuals. This protection created insecurity of tenure and police atrocities toward the tenants. Eviction from land and peasant risings followed. This new legal discourse disseminated a new ideology capable of reformulating traditional institutions. The

insistence for rent payment in money was also very crucial in this context. The switch over to a money System acted as an important agent that crumbled the caste system.<sup>23</sup>

Simultaneously with this a new notion of equality also got disseminated. Equality was not possible in the hierarchised traditional society. But tradition has its own world-view and logic. Super-imposing of a modern world-view created tensions in the society. An immediate example is that of the gradual disappearance of communitarian overtones existing in the land relations of Malabar. Invoking this basic premise of patron-client relation the communist party volunteers raided the granaries of the nair landlords on charge of violating the norm of protecting the clients in time of dire necessity<sup>24</sup>. This shows that the people were still holding hard to the notions of community while the landlords were drifting away. This egalitarian notion of the west could, thus, freely interact with the Communitarian notions of Malabar as both had common realms. At the level of practice, when the right of the individual intersect the community resisted it. The egalitarian notion was articulated in the teachings of the thinkers under study. Their teachings resembles the concept of equality and ideal society by Basaveswara in Karnataka<sup>25</sup>

The period under review gave birth to a new conception of 'man'. The man in traditional India was different from the man who was being popularized in the colonial context. Evidently the attributes of man differ in space and time. This new conception of man was a direct contribution of European enlightenment. Thus a new 'man' was put afloat with certain inalienable rights. This concept caught the

attention of the thinkers under review and they tried to place him in the existing structure. This kind of a subversion empower the under privileged of the traditional society. This process of subversion, and the free man is discernible in the character of the 'Poor Idiot' in Keralanacaram.<sup>26</sup> At the same time the reference to the 'Hollowman' is a critique of the concept of 'man' itself<sup>27</sup>.

These concepts were capable of carving out an individual identity to the constituents of the community. This led to the break up of the joint family system and the emergence of the nuclear families. The younger members were critical of the activities of the head of the Tharavadu which led to its disintegration. As a continuation of the process the demand for the well-knit nuclear families was raised. Thus family regulation Acts were passed with the help of the state. Such regulations were denied to the depressed communities as they were not 'competent to have such regulation.' To constitute such families legal marriages became necessary which led to the marriage Regulation Acts<sup>28</sup>. All these developments can be traced to the exposure to modernity that can be attributed to the integration to the colonial state structure.

The thinkers developed the notion of a pristine religion which was devoid of all interpretations and evils. They have employed different strategies to have such a religion. They believed that religion got degenerated over the years. All fine aspects were being given up in course of time and the Indians practiced only meaningless rituals. They considered rituals as outer layers of religion which is construed as important by laymen. Salvaging the essence of religion is considered important to destroy the outer layer. It is possible to argue that it was

through this reformist practices that a Hindu religion got constituted. Then, it becomes, here on the one hand to analyse the processes by which such a religion was constituted and on the other certain interpretations of it temporarily. This temporal dimension account for the fact that most of the reformers try to retrieve a period when the religion was not contaminated. Some of them draw the attention of the learned and lay man equally to the period of Upanishad or certain uncorrupted texts rather than the outer layer of rituals and practices. This is an understanding of the necessity of a new religion to create a new society through the alternate vision of a social whole.<sup>29</sup>Through this their aim was to project the newly created reformed religion as a religion of the future, the one that guaranteed salvation (Anandam).

### **Previous Studies**

The study is singularly unique as no study has so far been carried out in an integrated manner done in this area. A model has been created by K.N.Panikkar in his Culture Hegemony Ideology which the awakening of nineteenth century from the point of the intellectuals. The study was thought provoking and emphasized the necessity of carrying out such studies. In Kerala studies were concentrated on Sri Narayana guru whose career as modernizer of Kerala is significant. This created the precedent of considering communitarian movements alone as it was believed that such movements were instrumental in moulding the behavior of modern Kerala. This is not to belittle the significance of the communitarian movements but to state that this attitude has marginalized the movements that flourished in the Malabar region. Some attempts were being made in producing

works on Brahmananda Sivayogi due to the active interest shown by the Siddhsramam, Alathur. Brahmananda Sivayogi by Sri.M S Nair, A passage to the Bliss .Bliss by P.V.Gopala Krishnann are some of them. In addition to the biographies the activists of the Atmavidya Sangam expressed their commitment to the cause by bringing out the 'complete works of Vagbhatananda' in Malayalam. Siddha Samajam of Badagara still remain an unexplored area. This is the relevance of the present study. The study looks at the three movements in an integrated way, as agencies that engaged in social transformation of the Malabar region.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. First chapter is introduction which deals with all the important information regarding the organization of the thesis. It discusses the reason for the employing of a new methodology in the study. The adopting of the inter-disciplinary approach brings out certain methodological issues which were also addressed as part of the research. Reference is also made to the ongoing debate of Renaissance as it is considering the movements as a 'culture of Dissent' is also attempted here. An attempt is also made to locate the origin of new ideas in the material and ideological transformation of Malabar.

The second chapter deals with the history of the three movements studied here. A biographical perspective is followed in understanding the movements. This created a problem with the 'Siddha Samajam' as no biographies are produced. An attempt to that effect was dropped, on understanding that the founder had disagreed with such an attempt . Hence the history of the Siddha Samajam is developed through interviews and out of references from the texts.

The third chapter deals with the textual study of the works produced by

the respective thinkers. Considering the voluminous nature of the works prominent themes found in common in the texts of the thinkers are attempted here. Such themes are put to rigorous critiquing in order to elicit meanings out of the discursive formations within the text. The themes like individuals, family, religion, caste, vegetarianism and the like are selected for an in depth analysis.

The fourth chapter explores the intellectual formation of the thinkers studied here. To distinguish them from the others and also to bring out the significance of their thought, a comparison of their notions and that of the early nineteenth century intellectuals are also attempted here. Their thought was compared in relation to their attitudes towards tradition and modernity and in visualizing a future community. The historicity of the theme of introspection is also examined in this chapter. These has showed that the thought of the thinkers can be listed in the category of the 'culture of Dissent' and were successful in developing a new counter-cultural perspective to modernity. They have developed a self-assertion through a conscious act of selective appropriation.

The fifth chapter deals with the emergent society of Malabar in the context of Modernity. An attempt is made to establish the uniqueness of Malabar in terms of political economy, culture, tenurial system and patterns of production. It also shows that the region was able to transcend caste as a source of hierarchisation of society as we see it in other parts of the country. Positive aspects of modernity was accepted and incorporated into their world-view. These feature helped to develop the notion of uniqueness of Malabar. The Sixth chapter tries to assess the significance of the ideas of the thinkers. It is established that

their notions considerably influenced the people of Malabar and succeeded in developing a counter culture to modernity.

Materials for the study have been collected from different institutions. A variety of sources have been consulted as part of the research. Primary sources like census Reports, Malabar Marriage Commission Report 1891 and The judgement of the Lokanarkavu Kulam(tank) case were consulted from the Regional Archives Kozhikode.

Interviews with the activists of the movements formed an important source material. It was the enlightening experience to talk to some of the activists and contemporaries of movements studied here. They shared their experiences and this enabled the present writer to have a better understanding of the functioning of the three institutions under study. Sri Sreedharan Adiyodyi of Badagare aged 71, Sri Nirmalandnda yogi of Alathur Siddhasramm aged around 80, Sri Krishnan of Eayoor Siddhsramsm Taliparamba aged 75, Sri M.T.Ramakrishnan of Azhikode and Sri Arvindakshan of Eayoor Siddhasramam Taliparamba were willing to discuss the matters related to these organizations. An understanding of the working of these institution could be made by visiting the asrams and staying there.

Some of the contemporary news papers and magazines have been consulted from Appan Thampuran Smaraka Library, Thrissur, Sri Chithira Thirunal Library, Thiruvananthpuram, Mathrubumi of Kozhikode, Centre for development studies Thriuvananthapuram, Kerala University Library Thiruvananthpuram, C.H. Muhammad Koya Library, University of Calicut and Department Libraries of History and Malayalam University of Calicut.

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14. Adrian C Mayer, *Land and Society in Malabar*, Georffrey Cumberlege, 1952, p33.
15. K.N.Panikkar, *Against Lord and the state: Religion and peasant uprising in Malabar*, 1989, p 79.
16. E M S Namboodiripad, *Keralam Malayalikalute Mathrubhumi*, 1964, p 124.
17. Basel Mission Started industries to give employment converts; Jaiprakash, Raghavaiah, Basel Mission, Industries in Malabar, 1986.
18. B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle classes*, 1963, pp 147-209.
19. Adrian.C.Mayer, *Op. Cit*, p 34
20. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Note Books* edited and translated Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Lawrence and Wishart. 1991
21. A list is maintained at Ananda Chadrodaya Yogashala at Kannur which shows the names of founding members.
22. See Chapter II Section III Atnavidya Sangam
23. Genevieve, Lemer Cinier, *Religion and Ideology in Kerala*, 1983, p 210.
24. Making and remaking of different types of communities in the con

text of changing paradigms are attempted by Dilip Menon, Dilip Menon.M, *Caste Nationalism and Communism in India*, Malabar 1900, 1948 Cambridge University Press, 1994.

25. S.A.Palekar, *Concept of Equality and Ideal Society*, 1997, p 53.
26. Paramahansa, Swami, Sivananda, *Keralanacaram*, 1993.
27. See *Complete Works of Vagbhatananda*.
28. See Malabar Marriage Commission Report, 1891.
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# Movements : A historical Perspective

Asokan Mundon “Renaissance and social change in malabar - a study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham ” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter 2

### **Movements : A historical Perspective**

To undertake a meaningful analysis of the Social movements, it is essential to distinguish between a movement and a non-movement and to identify its basic features. A social movement essentially involve sustained collective mobilization through either informal or formal organization<sup>1</sup> It is also oriented towards bringing about partial or total change in the existing system of relationships, values and norms through collective mobilization based on an ideology although there are efforts at resisting change. T.K.Oommen considers social movements as protest oriented purposive collective actions by men committed to a specified set of goals<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the movements, thus, lies in enquiring into the mobilisational and institutional aspects as well as the formulation of the set of goals to be achieved through mobilization.

The definition of the movement has made it clear that building up of an organization or institution is integral to its sustenance. Gains of a movement is consolidated through the instrumentality of an organization. But there exists a tendency to view movements and institutions as mutually antagonistic. The emergence of an organization, which is inevitable for the realization of goals, inevitably sets in motion influences which defeat the very purpose which occasioned it.

This line of thinking considers institutions as degenerate forms of movements. T.K.Oommen rejects this view and states that movements and institutions are fluid and solid state respectively.<sup>3</sup> He feels that any realization of the vision of a movement is possible through the institutionalization of values of the vehicles of which are institutions.

M.S.A Rao considers the relative deprivation theory as more satisfactory explanation for the genesis of social movements as it was pivoted around conflict and cognitive interests and issues.<sup>4</sup> It also offers adaptive mechanisms restoring functional unity and equilibrium. To make it more relevant he has suggested refinements of the theory on two directions. He emphasized the necessity of defining deprivation in terms of collectivities as well as including religion as a sphere where deprivation was practiced. This approach makes social movements mechanisms through which men attempted to move from the periphery of a system to its center. This theory is applicable more in the case of marginalized groups who try to mitigate their deprivation and secure justice by demonstrating their power. But inclusion of attempts at re-vitalization in the category of relative deprivation makes the theory more sound and overarching.

A comparatively different opinion was expressed by T.K.Oommen in relation to the factors that facilitate the origin of a social movement. For him the most critical factor is the political values of a system as enshrined in its constitution and reflected in the route it pursues to socio-economic development.(including social policies) and the competing ideologies.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the theories about the social movements suggests that any meaningful study of the movements should take

into account the historicity, the elements of the present social structure and the future vision of the society as developed by the movements. As many works were produced regarding the mobilisational and institutional aspects of the movements. The present writer is attempting here only a cursory examination to provide an entry point.

### **Introduction to the historical background**

The process of modernization through the agency of the British and the tremendous transformation that followed created an ideal situation for introspection. The inspiration for such an introspection was provided by the presence of the social reform movements which started functioning in other parts of India even earlier. This has influenced greatly the leaders who were working in Kerala<sup>6</sup>. Branches of the organizations working outside of Kerala came to be opened in the later decades of the nineteenth century. A branch of Brahmasamajam was started at Calicut in 1898 by Ayyathan Gopalan. Kallingal Rarichan Kallattu Raghavan were among the others who led the movement in Calicut.<sup>7</sup> The Samajam stood for a rational religion and were against priestly domination. They held that the service of the priests are not necessary to study the Vedas and all have got the right to study it. At the same time they insisted for an evaluation of the religious doctrines. These doctrines were received with much enthusiasm, by those who were dissatisfied with the casteism untouchability superstitious beliefs and idolatry.<sup>8</sup> Vagbhatananda had always been an important guest in all special functions of the Brahma samajam.

Arya Samaj was another reformist organization which started functioning in Kerala very late. Dayanand Saraswathi turned to the more ancient past to discover a pure Hinduism with which to confront the corruption of Hinduism in the present. The Arya samaj came to Calicut only in 1921 on the eve of the Malabar rebellion, to reconvert people who were forcefully converted to islam. They believed in the authenticity of scriptures.<sup>9</sup> The Vedas, for them, contained Hindu beliefs in their most ancient and pure form showing god as formless, changeless, omnipotent, omnipresent and merciful. They saved the individual from the domination of priests. They were opposed to polytheism and casteism. They challenged caste hierarchy by providing the sacred thread to all including the untouchables. But its religious antagonism and the shuddhi movement was unacceptable to the people at large.

Theosophical society also started functioning Malabar.<sup>10</sup> Mrs Annie Besant laid the foundation stone of Sreekandeswar Temple at Calicut in the presence of Sree Narayana Guru. Ramakrishna Mission also began its activities in Kerala from early twentieth century onwards.<sup>11</sup> The Vedantic group organized at Trivandrum was converted into the Head Quarters of the Mission in 1911. Later branches were opened in different parts of Kerala. These organization have failed in making much headway in the reform activities in Kerala. This was undertaken by the intellectuals of Kerala origin who were inspired to a considerable extent by these movements. They were successful in their attempt as they were well-informed of the specific realities of the area and formulated an action plan based upon it.

In the nineteenth century, like other depressed classes, the Ezhavas faced numerous restrictions on their dress, customs and religious practices. They could not attend schools with high-caste Children, denied jobs in government service, enter Hindu temples or had idols of the higher gods in their own temples. Yet they were the largest caste in Kerala accounting for 26% of the population.<sup>12</sup> At this time Sree Narayan Guru entered the scene articulating a doctrine aimed at improving the social position of the Ezhavas. He urged them to give up the traditional occupation of toddy tapping and to enter into trade and commerce and industries. To propagate the social and philosophical ideas of the guru an organization was started in 1903 by the name Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam. Very soon the Yogam developed into the organization of the Ezhavas all over Kerala. He was against caste discrimination and employed pulayas as cooks for the monasteries under his control. He conducted a general condemnation of the Hindu society and challenged the orthodoxy by erecting temples and consecrating idols in it. The SNDP Yogam helped positively the upward mobility of the Ezhavas. Emerging from the position of a depressed caste, they attained social equality through concerted efforts.<sup>13</sup> He introduced a parallel system of worship including priesthood which is similar to the Brahmanical system. This is an appropriation of a desirable norm as well as the questioning the hegemony of the Brahmins.

Another social reform organization which started in 1908 in Travancore was the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogum founded by Ayyankali, the leader of the Depressed castes<sup>14</sup>. Its aim was redressal of the grievances of the Pulayas and

improving the social position of the depressed classes. Ghandhiji called him the King of the Pulayas. Under his leadership the agricultural labourers struck work for the redressal of their grievances. Women also were inspired by him. They conducted agitations for the right to wear upper garments and to throw off the Kallumala which served as an indicator of their caste status. Like Narayan Guru he also constructed temples and consecrated upper caste gods and practised Brahminical forms of worship. Later the Temple entry proclamation of 1936, extended the right to worship in temples to the untouchables. The awareness created by the Yogam served to infuse a new interest to improve their Social position. They have attained social position through education, economic freedom and legislation from their earlier status of the despised untouchable community. It is also to be noted that employment and social standings is alienating them from this community which leads to greater disparity within their ranks.

### **Muslim Aikya Sangham**

The occasional violent rioting by the muslim peasants of Malabar in the late Nineteenth century and its suppression by the British rulers led to the development of hatred in the minds of the muslim masses, towards the English language and the education of English. English and Western education was considered by the muslims as a passport to hell.<sup>15</sup> The British assumed that the solution to 'Mappila problem lay in secular education on western pattern.<sup>16</sup> Thus, concerted efforts to bring the Muslim children to English Schools were initiated with some success. Many religious leaders suspected the whole enterprise warning against the dangers for the faith.

Later, they have realized that the opposition to higher secular education made them economically backward. The call for change came from the 'Aikya Sangham', formed in 1922 at Kodungallur to promote the united uplift of the community and to bring about reforms. A.P.Ibrahim Kunju states that it was originally started as an organization for ending parochial and family quarrels in and around Kodungallur and then transformed itself into an organization for social and religious reformulation of the Muslim community all over Kerala.<sup>17</sup> It was instrumental in establishing several High schools and published a periodical by name 'Aikyam'; but it had its most noteworthy impact as an inspirational force upon young muslims, which gave it a seminal role in Mappila intellectual development.<sup>18</sup> The birth of Farook college (founded in 1948) was generally considered as an important event in the muslim educational progress. The college was primarily meant for the educational advancement of the Mappila Community which was averse to modern education. The Muslim Aikya Sangham later dissolved itself in 'Kerala Muslim Majlis' and transferred its properties to the Farook College.

### **Ananda Samajam**

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi was the founder of Ananda Samajam with its head quarters at Alathur. It propagated the Aanda cult that aim at self-realization of all men beyond the restrictions of caste and creed. His disciples started Ananda Samajas and Yogasalas in different parts of Kerala to propage the teachings of Sivayogi. Later, a central organization, the Ananda Maha Sabha was organized(1918) to co-ordinate the activities of all the Ananda Samajams and Yogasalas.

Govindan Kutty Menon turned Brahmandnda Swami Sivayogi was bon on 26 August 1852 at Kollangode, Palakkad (dt) as the son of Karattu Nani amma and V K R Kunjikrishna Menon. All his biographers unanimously states that he was only an ordinary boy practicing the strictures of a joint family of the day. But one thing he couldn't reconcile, that is untouchability and casteism.

He had his primary education at Kollangode Board Elementary School. Then he studied Sanskrit under Padmanabha Sastri and later under Kutallur Sastri. This was the formative period of his critical approach to tradition.<sup>19</sup> After completing Sanskrit studies at Kootallur, he was sent to Ernakulam for middle school education. The stay at Ernakulam gave him an opportunity to mingle freely with other religionists and to know more about their beliefs. After completing middle School education he went back to his native place.

He became more concerned about Idol worship, casteism untouchability etc. Animal sacrifice at temples were irreconcilable for him. He boycotted the Bhuvanewari Pooja performed at his family after quarrelling with his relatives for employing Brahmins to do the pooja. The secluded austere life led by him at his residence made the others respect him.

The Karattu family has been partitioned by that time. Being the eldest son he had to take care of his family. He found time to continue his studies in Sanskrit in the midst of such pre-occupations. He also engaged himself in imparting Sanskrit education to children at his residence. The statement of his sister Devaki Amma is a testimony of his character.<sup>20</sup> Before long, he entered into married life with Thavu Kutty Amma who later became his disciple and the

president of Ananda Maha Sabha on his demise. He moulded his married life into an ascetic one as practiced by Sri Ramakrishna. He was also compelled to take up the post of 'Menon' which he resigned after some time. He continued the practice of teaching Sanskrit and meditations.

Later, he went to Calicut as Sanskrit teacher at Native High School Calicut. At Calicut he came into contact with many English educated scholars and reformers like C.Krishnan, Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan, Manjeri Ramayyar, Chenkulath Kuhirama menon. Appu Nedungadi, etc. He associated himself with the activities of the Brahma Samaj at Calicut. He has written 'Brahma Sankeerthanam' on the request from the Brahmasamajists, to be read in Brahmasamaj meetings. Afterwards they began to call him reverently 'Brahmananda Swami'.

His stay at Calicut was a turning point in his life. There he was exposed to new ideas. His association with the Brahmasamaj activities helped him to sharpen his views on religion and customs and traditions. Radicalism of C.Krishnan and Ramayyar influenced him considerably. It can be stated that his stay at Calicut has been the formative period of his intellectual life. The inclination towards asceticism now developed into the decision to lead the life of an ascetic. This decision made him desirous of shifting to a serene atmosphere to use the earliest opportunity to leave Calicut. Thus in 1899, he left for Alathur to take up the post of Sanskrit teacher in Alathur Middle School, where he established his ashram towards asceticism now developed into the decision to lead the life of an ascetic after his resignation from school service in 1907.<sup>21</sup>

From early childhood he was used to writing poems. Most of them were praises of gods. These gods were represented as manifestations of the same god. He published Sivayoga Rahasym, which explain the principle of yoga, in the year 1893. He has written Brahma Sankeerthanam on request by the Brahma Samagists which was published by them in the year 1898. He wrote Sthree Vidya Poshini on the request of P.A.Ramaswami an advocate practicing at the Munsif court Palakkad. This work emphasized the necessity of imparting education to women and its first edition was published by Ramaswamy in the year 1899 at his expense. In this he asserts that the happiness of man is conversely related to the education of women. In 1903 he published Siddhanubhothi which systematically criticized and ruled out fasts, pujas casteisms and other observances. It is the product of his meditation, self realization and the attaining of enlightenment!<sup>22</sup> It also contain the germs of his Ananda cult in its crudest form. He categorically asserts it in AnandaKummi.<sup>23</sup>

Moksha Pradeepam, which was first published in the year 1905, was the most discussed of all his works. He propagates Nirgunopasana and Rajayoga through this work. In the preface to Moksha Pradeepam Sivayogi explains his intention in writing it as to enlighten the people on yoga as a means to attain eternal bliss. He states that as all living beings are desirous of attaining happiness, without any destinction of caste or creed all can be considered as followers of the Ananda cult. He published Ananda Vimanam in 1916 which exposed idolatry as a meaningless system. Ananda Vimanam was designed as a reply to the criticism that may come up against the criticism of casteism pilgrimage and

idolatry that appeared in his Mokshapradeepam. He began his intellectual life by writing stotras praising gods. He made it clear in Ananda Vimanam that even without praising gods one can attain self realization and his own experiences proved this. His theoretical formulations reaches its culmination in Anandadarsham which appeared in 1927. In this he formulated in detail the critique of idolatry the significance of Ananda cult and the disciplining of mind and the attainment of eternal bliss. He approves of god in the form of 'Shakthi' in Moksha Pradeepam'. But Anandadarsham talks only about Shakti which replaces god. For him Sakthi is the soul which is 'Mind' . This reductionism in his thought is responsible for treating him as an atheist.<sup>24</sup> He formulated ten arguments to counter the existence of god as laid down in the texts of all religionists.

### **His philosophy**

The socio religious background of his times and the critical attitude developed by him, created an intellectual out of him. He vehemently opposed idolatry, caste distinction untouchability, animal scarifices, tradition that suppress the rights of women and all other religious observances that forbade free thinking and forbade priestly domination and authenticity of the existing rituals and observances,. In the preface to Anandadarsam he states categorically that the determinant of accepting or rejecting a faith should be its feasibility in extending happiness to its adherents<sup>25</sup>. He ruled out the existence of a god who is omni potent, Omnipresent and omni seeing. He is not responsible for creation and destruction, he states in Anandadarsham. He emphasized the necessity of acquiring knowledge and living by hard work. He advocated ahimsa, non stealing and non-lying.

His philosophy is based on mind. His slogan 'Manojaya Eva Mahajaya' attest the preeminence he attaches to the mind. For him soul is not different from the mind. He believed that happiness lies in controlling the mind and stated that mind itself is God that provide prosperity and all capabilities and all activities without controlling it are futile. He advocated disciplining the mind as it will turn out to be inimical to man by developing desires. A lustful mind is the breeding house of all sorts of evils. So befriending the mind through conscious disciplining is essential to make life happy. That is man's happiness is not related with the blessing of a god but to the qualities of mind or to the habits one develop. In short the mental culture determines the greatness of a man.

Vagbhatananda criticized Sivayogi for giving pre-eminence to mind. 'AdhyatamaYuddham' contain a severe critique of the Ananda cult which denied the soul, which is a different entity. This is against scriptural as well as empirical knowledge which leads one to agnosticism.<sup>26</sup> But Sivayogi says that mind is not different from the soul. For him mind, soul and jiva are the different manifestations of the same element 'Shakthi'.

It is possible to argue that Sivayogi was considerably influenced by the various philosophical streams of Indian thought which emphasize reason. His siddhnuvhothi is the documentation of his indebtedness to the tamil Siddha tradition. He was using principles of Buddhism to reject the vedic doctrine of 'Karma'. For his eternal bliss is the enjoyment of happiness in this world itself. This is what Pavanan meant when he states that the philosophical ideas of Sivayogi was considerably influenced by the Sankhya, yoga budhist and the Sidha tradition of Tamil Nadu.

## **Ananda Maha Sabha**

Ananda Maha Sabha is the central organization of all Ananda Samajas that propagate the ananda cult. The Sabha was established in 1918. Even before this Ananda Samajas and yogasalas were organized by his disciples in different parts of Kerala and Ceylon<sup>27</sup>. He asked his followers not to perform religious observances that involve killing. All members were to work for improving the knowledge of their family members. He conducted a virulent attack on all kinds of religious practices and customs. He considered 'Pula' as an unnecessary ritual and asked his followers to do burial rites inexpensive. Pilgrimages, sacrifices and idolatry are ignorance which leads to unhappiness. Pilgrim centers are located within the body itself not with in world outside. Caste distinctions and practices were an absurdity for him. All were to be brought together and showed the way to acquire happiness. He maintained that all living beings have got the right to freedom and happiness. He expected all to practice ahimsa and cultivate good qualities. The Samajas were very active in those days and worked to eradicate superstitious beliefs and practices. His followers worked to stop the practice of killing animals within the temple premises. Pavanan has included a list of press matter from various magazines dealing with the discontinuing of killing animals within the temple premises.

## **Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda**

Vagbhatandada was the most famous of the disciples of Sivayogi. The

name itself was given to him by Sivayogi. Vagbhatananda met him for the first time at Calicut Town Hall on the eve of his speech about yoga on 31 Dec 1910. The speech attracted him as it contained the ideas which remained in his mind in a budding form. Later, he went to Alathur and had discussions with him which soon has developed into a Master-disciple relationship. Vagbhatananda carried out the propagation of the doctrines of Sivayogi<sup>28</sup>. Swami Brahmavrata consider this relationship as a mutually contributory activity. The relationship was similar to the relationship between Sree Ramakrishna and Vivekananda<sup>29</sup>. But in this case the disciple went beyond the the master after killing him in a 'spiritual encounter'.

He started the Rajayoganandakamudi Yogasala at Kallayi near Calicut in 1911 and later at Nadakkavu. He conducted a Gita discourse of three months duration. In this he emphasized the Rajayoga as laid down in Moksha Pradeepam. This was followed by speeches in different parts of Malabar. He started a magazine by name Sivayogivilasam in 1914. In this he contributed articles criticizing idolatry and temple constructions. He continued this even after the formation of his own Atma Vidya Samnghan, his own organization in 1917. He published Moksha Pradeepa Niroopana Vidaranam defending the arguments of Mokshapradeepam in this magazine<sup>30</sup>. Later the name of the magazine was changed into Sivayogavilasam. Sivayogi wanted the magazine to be run by Pandit K.P.Karuppan and Vagbhatananda together, but Vagbhatanda was not in favor of a joint venture. He wrote a letter to Sivayogi stating the marginality of Karuppan. This was objectionable to Sivayogi and asked Vagbhatananda to stop the publish-

ing of 'Sivayogivilasam.' This is the reason for change of name in the words of Nirmalanda Swami.<sup>31</sup> Brahmavvratha has a different story to say. The meeting with a new yogi at Calicut beach was projected by him behind the change of name of the Magazine. Later he made a criticism of Ananda Darshan as spiritual encounter which contained personal remarks against Sivayogi. Even after the publishing of this criticism cordial relations existed between Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda. Atmavidya Kahalam carried an editorial on the demise of Sivayogi.

### **Sidha Samajam**

Sidha Samajam is a monastic order founded by Swami Sivananda Paramahansa at Badagara in the year 1920. The Samajam has branches at Kayanna near Perambra in Kozhikode district and at Mannoorkara near Kattakkada in Thiruvananthapuram district, at Eayoor near Karimbam in Kannur district and at Amman palayam near Alathur in Salem district Tamilnadu. The reason for the foundation of the Samajam is given in the introduction to the Siddhavedam as 'when people irrespective of caste creed and position began to follow him in large numbers being convinced of the teachings and initiated into the noble path, the necessity for a corporate living was felt and Siddha Samaj was founded by his holiness in the year 1920.'<sup>32</sup>

No sources other than the works of the founder is available for the study of the movement. An attempt was made to include the biography of the founder in the third edition of *Living for World Piece*. On expressing dislike by the founder it was removed forth with.<sup>33</sup> Sredharan Adiyodi of Badagara told that the account was prepared by a member of Zamorin's family who was a close associate of the

swamiji.<sup>34</sup> As Swamiji has ordered that account to be deleted from the book, as he does not have a separate existence, the possibility of getting a printed version of his early history is permanently closed. We have to reconstruct it with the help of the description given by the people who knew him Sreedharan Adiyodi of Badagara is one among them. Swami Sivananda believed that the 'Siddhavedam' is the real life history of 'Jeeva', the self-the vital force, known as life. The swamiji says that nothing other than the account of this vital force is essential to understand the life of the founder.

Sivananda Paramahansa was born in an eminent Nair family of Badagara, Kozhikode district. He served the police department for a while and quit it for unknown reasons. After living in cognito for a short while, he came back to Badagara and started his preachings which included a critique of the caste and many of the religious practices existing then. Gradually he could enlist a group of supporters which necessitated a communitarian existence. Thus the Siddha Samaj came into being in the year 1920, which was modelled on an ideal community that could ensure world peace. It was organized as a worldly asceticism as suggested by Max Weber<sup>35</sup>. Swami Sivananda established an austere monastic life as a means for attaining self-realization.

The Samajam was organized on the fundamental principle of equality irrespective of caste creed and sex. All decisions pertaining to the order was taken in accordance with its general interest. All precautions to facilitate the smooth functioning of the order was instituted from the very inception. Democratic principles were adopted in the organization of the order. The Samajam is having an

executive committee to carry out all administrative and organizational matters, headed by the general president. All important offices are elective. They can hold office so long as they enjoy the will of the members of the samajam. The Samajam has laid down rules and regulations meant to be observed by all members who were initially admitted to the order.<sup>36</sup> The Rules of conduct stipulate that the Siddha Vidyarthi should be free from all responsibilities and liabilities. If there is any private property in his name, it has to be transferred to the joint property of the Samajam. The followers of Swami Sivananda were divided into two categories viz. the householders and the members of the Samajam, who enroll themselves into the collective living at the various branches of the Samajam. The important criterion for the enrollment into the Samajam is the satisfactory completion of the period of studentship after acquiring the 'Siddha Vidya' from a competent person.

Once a person enroll himself into the Samajam he is bound to consider the Samajam as the family and all other members as the members of his family.<sup>37</sup> All members of the Samajam are bound to engage in the practice of Siddhavidya from 3 a.m to 5.20 in the morning 12 noon to 2.20 in the AN 1 PM to & PM in the evening and from 7.30 PM to 9.50 AM at night. They were also expected to engage in minor activities like agriculture and preparation of Ayurvedic medicines. Householders are free to live with their family in accordance with the rules of conduct to be followed by the Siddha Vidyarthies. They were to act as the propagators of the Sidha way of life in the rest of the society by revealing to the people the possibilities of an alternate existence that ensure self-realization or

eternal beatitude. In the eventuality of a social gathering, which was approved by code of conduct can only be organized, in the house of a Siddha Vidyarthi, they were to invite all such house holders who live in the neighborhood. There are many such families in north Malabar region who practise the Siddha way of life.<sup>38</sup>The Siddha Vidyarthi can marry only those who were exposed to the Siddha way of life. If it is not possible, the partner has to be introduced to the Siddha way of life before the solemnizing the marriage.

### **Living in the Samajam:**

Living in the Samajam strictly adhere to the rules of conduct introduced and implemented by the founder in 1920. Life in the Samajam was regulated as a means to attain self-realization. Swami Sivananda has suggested the Siddha Vidya as the means to attain Moksha (salvation). The practice of Siddhavidyarthi is conducting of the 'Jeeva within us up and down inwardly and uniting it with iswara, above us, leading to the Jeeveswaroraikyam and absorb oneself at Brumadhyam and attain Moksha' <sup>39</sup>The practice of Siddhavidya is the true worship of god, he says. It is the worship of the life force-vayu- the Jeevashakthi. This worship of the life force is pranayama. That is why in their scheme a new entrant has to be introduced into Pranayama by a guru, or any competent person. The significance of Pranayama in the Siddha practice is expressly stated when they advise it in the ear of a new entrant. Swami Sivananda has developed this as a means to escape from the death pangs that one has to undergo at the time of death. This is clearly stated in the introduction to the 'Siddhavedan' of Swami Sivananda.

As part of disciplining the body, swami Sivananda, has suggested a number of practices. The inmates were permitted to wear only white clothes. All male members were to wear only a white loin cloth around his waist. Women were now permitted to wear sarees and blouses. But at the time of *Japam* (Practice of Siddhavidya) all were to attend it fully naked. This can be considered as a form of reliving the primitive communal existence. We hear him making the advance of civilization the reason for all the sufferings of man. This is a practice of construction of a golden age to escape from the uneasiness provided by the present. At the same time precautions are also taken to avoid a slippage into a sexual anarchy.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, he feels that wearing of dress and ornamentation makes men and women lustful leading to the degeneration and dying out of Jeeva. This resonates the theoretical position of Roland Barthes who stated that it is the gaps in the body that keep us gazing at it.<sup>41</sup> The insistence upon wearing of minimum dress was justified by him on health grounds. He believed that wearing of shirts etc leads to the absorbing of sweat and keeping it close to the body causing a foul smell. Thus wearing of dress leads to the blocking of natural air reaching the body which will lead to skin diseases. He states that healthy living of aged men is due to their non-wearing of shirts and hard work and living in harmony with nature.<sup>42</sup>

There are restrictions on the food that can be taken by the inmates. Intoxicants and stimulants are prohibited. Spices are also kept out of their kitchen. The food prescribed for them is a mixed one of rice and grams. Bare minimum food to maintain the body was only taken by them. They believed that body is the

vessel required to cross over the cosmic world. So utmost care was given to retain the body as 'healthy' and 'energetic'. The samajists were expected to eat together from the same vessel. This is known as *sagdhi sapeethi*. At the time of eating food was kept in an elevated place to show reverence to it as they consider food as the king. Utmost care was taken not to let food fell on the floor. This has to be considered as an attitude of frugality, a caution against wastage of food. But this frugality cannot be equated with the protestant ethic as developed by max Weber. This is a concern about the people and living beings that live around made him develop such a theory. His insistence to feed the guests before they take food is a signifier of this concern.

### **Teachings**

Swami Sivananda do not consider all the hitherto existing religions as real ones. They are all opinions of the great men who formulated it. One and only one religion that exist is the 'Iswaramatham'(Religion of god). This for him is the process of retaining the life force in the body itself and uniting it at Brahmarandhram, the place of origin. The person who show that way is guru, the master. He identifies sleep as the 'nirguna' form of existence, as there is no passion or any other feeling like hatred or love. The state of 'Saguna' is the state when the self is over powered by desire and all worldly passions. As these two are the different state in man, the man himself is identified as 'Iswara' (God). The process of the motion of the life force within man and its ultimate merger at the Brhmanarandha is salvation. Running after worldly pleasures will lead to the loss of life force, instead of its merger at Brahmarandhra. Upadesha,(advice) is

the means whereby the life force is retained within the body. This is done through 'Pranayama', Ultimate knowledge can be achieved if one is successful in burning the feelings of love and hate at the Bhrumadhyam with the help of Pranayama.

He considers caste as unreal. All these castes and caste practice were concoction by the vested interests. In his opinion a chandala (untouchable) is those who did not give up the feelings of love and hatred. These are obstructions that stand in the way of self-realization. He has a strong dislike for ritualistic observances like the practice of pollution, Ettumattu. Pula, ritual marriage, temple ceremonies and animal sacrifices at the temple precincts. He strongly advocated the equal rights of women, widow remarriages and freedom to participate in political activities. Important books of Swami Sivananda are SiddhaVedam, Rules of conduct for the Siddha Vidyarthies, Lokashanthikkulla Jeevitham(Living for world peace) Keralanacaram, Jathi Ennal Enthu? (What is caste?) And Lokakshema Prakashika. Different methods were used for the propagation of the new ideals. One of the most important methods was debate and lectures. The founder used to conduct tours of propagation in different parts of the country. There were different centers which he visited so often as a part of his public contact programme. These centers acted also as recruiting stations of Samajam. Another method employed was house visit programs. Venues of marriages of the Siddha Vidyarthies were also treated as ideal occasion for the propaganda work.<sup>43</sup>No other means were used by them for the propaganda work.

### **Message**

The communitarian life he introduced as well as his teachings had a very

clear message to be imported to the rest of the society. It was basically anti individualistic and anti family in nature. He finds fault with the modern individual who is after the enjoyment of worldly pleasures in the name of improving the standard of living. The move to satisfy all the desires brings him in competition with the others which leads to the degeneration of the essence. The ideal human being was constructed as the one who do not succumb to the desires. The individual and the nuclear families were the products of modern social patterns. The selfish motive of the individual to protect the interest of his family is identified as the driving force of modernity. The alternative proposed is the overcoming of such 'base qualities' to protect the larger interest of the community. Thus, his project becomes the locating of the individual in the modern social structures and resisting the process of dehumanization to which the modern institutions are succumbed to. This is achieved through the 'strategy of subversion' that we will find so often in his text. For eg. He ascribes 'Visheshha budhi'(Common Sense) to the animals like cats and dogs which succeeds in coming back to the actual place with the help of its natural instincts. But human beings if he is kept in unknown circumstances will have to seek the help of others to reach the destination.

He was critical of most of the traditional institutions. His work 'Keralanacaram' contain a severe criticism of the caste practices of the day. Here too, his mission is carried out through the 'Strategy of subversion'. This strategy empowers him to float a new form that will ensure self-realization. The critique of caste dragged the Samajam into legal proceedings against the Lokanarkavu, on

the matter of using temple pond by the inmates.<sup>44</sup>The communitarian life practiced at the Samajam is, thus, visualized as the institutions of tomorrow. The communitarian existence is natural in the sense that living in accordance with the rhythm of nature is practiced at the Samajam. This makes his alternative holistic in essence and futuristic in orientation. This achieved through a practice of disciplining the body. Disciplining the body is achieved the various practices like using of white clothes, insistence for nakedness at the time of 'Japam' and restrictions on developing the paternal and maternal feelings at the Samajam.

### **Athmavidya Sangham**

Vagbhatanda the founder of Atmavidya Sangam was born at Pattiyam near Kuthuparamba in the erstwhile Kottayam taluk (Now in Tellichery taluk of Kannur district) in the year 1885 as the son of Thenankandiyil Vazhavalappil Koran Gurukkal And Vayaleri Cheeruvamma. Koran Grukkaal was a well known Sanskrit scholar and was honored by all in the locality. The child was named Kunhikannan and was initiated to formal Sanskrit learning by his father. It is also stated that he was not exposed to English education at any stage of his life. M.S.Nair finds the interiority of his place of birth as well as financial problems as the reason for this.<sup>45</sup> There is sufficient reason to believe this as English education was available only at Thalassery and Kannur at that time and it was impossible to cover the distance by walk. Moyarath Shankaran also State these problems very graphically in his autobiography.<sup>46</sup> Following the precedent he studied grammar and logic under M K (Korappan) Gurukkal of Thalassery who was a renowned scholar in it. Parumbath Rairu Nair taught him Nirukthan. Under the

guidance of his efficient teachers he became an expert in all the Sanskrit texts. Deep Knowledge in the traditional texts always reflected in his writings and speeches. Very early in his career he came to be known as an expert orator and scholar and became widely known through debates and public speeches. His scholarship and sharp intellect was always expressed in debates. The fame he so earned led the shifting of his sphere of activity from pattiam and surrounding regions to Calicut where he lived for the rest of his life. Brahmavrata records in his biography a statement made by Sri Narayana guru about Vagbhatanada as he was born to recollect what is already learned<sup>47</sup>.

The invitation to deliver a speech at Calicut became a turning point in his life. The persuasion of his wellwishers as well as the significance of Calicut as the cultural center of the day made him continue at Calicut. He started a Sanskrit school at Karapamba near Westhill in 1906 with the name 'Thattwa prakashika'. Within a short period it has grown into a reputed center of higher learning in Sanskrit. P.T.Kuriakose from Pavaratty was inspired to start a similar center at Pavaratty (Sanskrita vidya Peetam Pavaratty) on the model of Thattwa prakashika.<sup>48</sup> His fame as an unchallenged Sanskrit scholar even led to the staging of unsuccessful attempts at killing him<sup>49</sup>. No discrimination was shown at Thattwaprakashika in imparting learning. It was open for all seekers of higher learning. Free education and accommodation was offered for the economically and socially backward sections. It served as the first and last resort of education to many members of the untouchable castes who were interested in Sanskrit learning.<sup>50</sup> It was also served as a center for exchange of ideas. E.Moidu Moulai

has stated that he along with Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib used to visiting Vagbhatananda in almost all mornings and held hours long discussions with him.

Wide reading and inquisitiveness made him sharp and logical. His sensibility was influenced and shaped by the progressive outlook of his father. His father Koran Gurukkal was least conservative and critical of the social practices and institutions of the day. In branding the Theyyam performances as bad and antisocial, we come across the revival of the ideal of his father. But Vagbhatananda goes a step further and says that the Brahmin mode of worship is the only ideal form of worship. Vagbhatananda was attracted to the activities of Sivayogi through Mokshapradeepam which criticized the caste and idolatry existing in Malabar and which gave importance to the doctrine of yoga. His meeting with Sivayogi at Calicut Town Hall on 31 December 1910 at the time of his speech there, led to the beginning of a new student/Teacher relationship between them. After this Vagbhatananda became the most important exponent of the Sivayogi doctrines. The name 'Vagbhatananda' was given to him by Sivayogi to express his gratitude in 'defending him against criticism. A yogasala was started in 1911 at Kallayi (Rajayogananda Kaumudi Yogasala) and later at Nadakkavu in Calicut on his initiative. His discourses on the Gita Ramayana and Mahabharata at these centers made him popular as a critical spiritualist.<sup>51</sup> Brahmavratam remembers that it was Vagbhatananda who attracted many people cutting across the frontiers of caste and religion towards the doctrines of Sivayogi thus making it very popular among the masses.

### **Meeting with Naryanaguru:**

The fame of Vagbhatananda spread to Travancore through his students and well-wishers. This led to the organization of the debate at Trikkunnappuzha in 1914. He intended to meet Sree Narayana guru during his tour of Travancore as he became critical of the consecration of idols in temples by the Guru. Both of them met at Always Advatasram. Vagbhatananda criticized the guru for building temples as it was against the Advaita doctrine. The Guru refuted him by stressing the cleanliness associated with temple worship. Brahmavrata feels that the criticism must have provoked him and that is why he sent a message to his followers discouraging the building of temples.<sup>52</sup>

### **Works**

The Brahma Samaj doctrines like monotheism anti idolatry and the principles contained in MokshaPradeepam of Sivayogi associated himself with the activities of Brahma Samajam and Sivayogi. His first work in prose was 'Atmavidya' published in the year 1925 which was originally designed as a 12 volume Work. But only the first part could be published. It was designed to be the manifesto of the Atma Vidya Sangham. He stressed the necessity of including individual values to make him love his fellow beings. He wanted to make every one a cultural individual in society through spiritual and material means. Another important work was Atmavidya Lekhamala which was published in the year 1934. It contained an analysis of the Advaita doctrine as expressed in Atmavidya. This is a collection of essays contributed by him to Atmavidya kahalam and Mathrubhumi Daily. Prarthananjali is the collection of poems composed by him to be read at the

time of Marriage and death. This was published in the year 1937. Sukumar Azhikode view this as the product Romanticist literature in Malayalam. Sangham followers recite these poems at the time of Marriage, death etc.

### **Ethical base**

The social thought of Vagbhatananda has a strong dharmic base. The welfare of individual and society at large seem to be the aim of his thought and actions. To attain this welfare one should follow a virtuous life based on dharma which is ensured by reasoning. He believed that a virtuous life is essential to ensure social justice along with individual development. He believed that the basic tenet of all religious teachers are love. This seems to be an echoing of the position held by the theosophical society.<sup>53</sup> He considered all the religious teachers as the teachers of the human community. Ethical code is their contribution to humanity which is designed to regulate human life in the world. This ensures the unity of all human beings beyond all restrictions like caste creed or nationality. For him dharma was the ensemble of truth, equality, freedom peace, tranquility unity and compassion.<sup>54</sup> Faith in such values are essential for a successful living. Life is portrayed by him as a perpetual war between good and evil. One should be careful not to succumb to evil. Earnest efforts are to be made for channelising the flow of life towards virtuosity.

Impurities in the mind make man doing evil things. Good deeds are the way to achieves this. He explained good deeds as extending help to others. This was acceptable to all religions. Taming of the mind is essential to desist from evil doings. Right exercises to tame the mind through personal efforts are essential

for purifying mind. That is to attain a perfect and pure mind one should be helpful to others, and concentrate on disciplining the mind. He criticized idolatry and sacrifices and advocated disciplining the mind. He interpreted Atmavidya as a method of knowing the formless god.<sup>55</sup> He is against the practice of realizing god through first assigning a form to it and then concentrating in it through constant practices. He believed that conceiving of a form of god into our mind reduces the capacity to enter into the form less state.

### **Atma Vidya Sangam**

Vagbhatananda acquainted himself with the socio-regious thought of all the movements beginning from the brahmaSamaj. He was disturbed by the injustice shown towards the backward castes. His association with Sivayogi and Brahma Samaj inspired him to develop certain new notions for the reforming of society. He started his career of reform and reformulation as the supporter of Sivayogi. Existing movements are insufficient to transform malabar society.. So he thought of founding a new organization. He considered it essential to popularize his own ideals and to review the spiritual tradition of India bring about the unity of human beings. With such aims in mind he founded the Atmavidya Sangham in 1917. The rallying call of the Sangam has some resemblances with the solgamof Vivekananda which should have been selected from Katopanishad<sup>56</sup>. Anticasteism fight against untouchability and alcoholic drinks and eradication of social evils were included in the social reform agenda of the movement. The Sangam was opposed to alcoholic drinks as it stand against the contemplation of

virtues. He wanted the thiyas to stop the practice of procuring toddy as they were having other opportunities of employment. Eventhough the AtmaVidya Sangham had unique opinions on religion and practices it co-operated with the efforts of BrahmaSamajam as the Sangham shared the ideals of Monotheism, universal religion and human essence and anti caste agitation with Brahmasamajam. Vagbhatananda presided the annual session of Samastha Kerala Brahma Samajam held at Varkala in Dec 1921.

Atmavidya Sangham was first started at Chervannur and Karakkad near Badagara. Later branches of the Sangham were started in different parts of Malabar like Kuthuparamba, Azhikode, Kunnothuparamba, Kuttiadi, Nadapuram and mukkali. The Sangham attracted followers from Savarna and Avarna groups as well as other religions.. The ideals and activities of social reform of the Sangham soon spread to cochin and Travancore. Kallyad Chathukutty Nambiar served as the patron of the Malabar Atma Vidya Sangham. Purakkad Kunhu was a member of Trivandurm Atma Vidya Sangam which was founded in the year 1920. They also tried to organize women as the Sangham believed that their upliftment is essential for the development of the society. Even Vagbhatananda joined them in Munnar and Paravur in the house visit program which was acknowledged by Devayani wife of AV Kunhmbu.

Atma Vidya Sangham suggested changes in the customs and practices. They reformed the customs associated with marriage and death. They gave importance to prayers<sup>57</sup>. Pula and bali were branded as superstitions. Instead they suggested prayer meeting for five days. Marriage rituals were also made very

simple and suggested for reconsiderable reduction of marriage expenses. They have also discontinued the practice of keeping lighted lamps in marriage rituals. Sangham propagated the practice of ahimsa. They have also opposed the practice of sacrifices in temples. The Sangham fought against the puberty ritual and thali kettu kalyanam widely practiced by all sections. By that time all such rituals had reduced into mere show by wealthy families which was blindly practiced by poor people<sup>58</sup>. The Sangham has used interdining and inter marriages as a powerful tool to challenge the caste system. It was also useful in integrating different caste and religious groups in a cosmopolitan society. Thus a philosophy based on the unity of human community was popularised by the Sangam which helped to cross over the feelings of regionalism.

Interdining<sup>59</sup> was started in the year 1913 at Harippad under the auspices of the Sree Ramakrishna Mission. Manjeri Ramayyar along with two Brahmin students for participating in a marriage feast of a thiyya in 1915. After this Brahma Samajam organised interdining regularly at Annie hall in Calicut. Sahodaran Ayyappan conducted this in 1917 at Cherayi – took food along with two untouchable boys. Atmavidya Sangham attempted interding at Azhikode in 1928 which caused untold miseries to many who participated in it.

### **Freedom**

Vagbhatananda fought for freedom and human rights. For him freedom was emancipation and it was spiritual in essence. He believed that it is not a thing to be achieved by force. It is achieving of physical and mental development without disturbing others.<sup>60</sup> This could be achieved by assessing the objects around

us and following the teachings of great man. Vagbhatananda fought against idolatry and supported Vaikom Sathyagraha which are contradictory in nature; as he developed such a notion of freedom. In such fights he always recognized the right of others to enjoy similar rights. This notion of freedom made him popular among the economically and socially marginalized communities of Malabar. By that time he began to appear in the Stages organized by Karshaka Sangham<sup>61</sup>. His speeches revealed to them that it is the caste system and the practice of *Anacaras* (Superstitions) that made them unfree. This awareness of the people helped in bringing about the solidarity of toiling men cutting across the distinctions of caste and religion. He raised his voice against capitalism and state policy in the Feroke Tile factory strike. He stood with the workers in the Calicut Common Wealth Company labour problem of 1932. He contributed an article in its cause in his journal human rights freedom and social justice. He had unique opinion on economic freedom which is grounded in the dharmic philosophy of traditional India. He believed that money should be earned on dharmic lines else it will turn out to be mischievous. He goes a step further and states that money is not to be saved but to be regulated to be lived by all.

Vagbhatananda published four magazines as tool to popularize the doctrines which he believed to be essential for the resurgence of Kerala. Sivayogivilasam later Sivayoga Vilasam which was started publishing in 1914 emphasized Rajayoga while exposing superstitious beliefs and caste. Abhinava Keralam started in 1921 highlighted the dharmic principles of traditional India. 'Yajamanan' concentrated on literary criticism. Where as Atma Vidya Kahalam started in 1929 had

a unique aim as it emphasized national freedom and human rights while continuing its efforts at spiritual resurgence. The Editorials of Kahalam encouraged the constructive programmes introduced by Gandhi – Harijan uplift, Khadi, Anti-untouchability campaign anti liquor campaign – Vagbhatananda made the untouchables Harijan even before Gandhi did it in 1934<sup>62</sup>. He extended his support positively to the freedom struggle by counteracting the criticizing of other magazines through his editorial in Kahalam<sup>63</sup>. The ideals of Vagbhatananda was basically an enquiry about 'self' which has become very prominent by that time. The Sangam created a discourse in the context of colonial enslavement and strictly hierarchised idolatrous and ritualistic society. It created inter active spaces in society which was appropriated by the later progressive movements.

### Notes and References

1. M S A Rao, *Social Movements*, 1978, p 2.
2. T.K.Oommen, *Protest and change*, 1990, p 30.
3. Ibid, p 15.
4. M S A Rao, *Op.cit*, p5.
5. Ibid, p32.
6. The late beginning and successful completion marked the movements that worked in Kerala, D D Namboodiri, *Caste and Social Change in Colonial Kerala* in P J Chrian(Ed) *Persceptives in Kerala History, Kerala Gazetteer Vol II*, 1999.
7. M S Nair, *Vagbhatanandaguruvum Samoohya Navothanavum*, p 61.
8. The Atmavidyasangham and Brahma Samajam had many points in common and both the organizations co-operated to a considerable extent. Brahmavathan, *Maharshi Vagbhatanandagurudevan*, 1971, p 107.
9. Kenneth W Jones. *Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 1999, p 96.
10. R C Majumdar, *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol II, 1965, p 132.

11. The Movement was founded by Swami Vivekananda, in 1897, The illustrious disciple of the great master. See R N Saksena, *Indian Social Thought*, 1981, p 163.
12. M S A Rao, *Social Movements and Social Transformations*, 1987, pp 22-24.
13. N V P Unithiri, *Sree Narayana Guru*, 2000, p 74.
14. Abhimanue, *Ayyankali*, 1990, p 78.
15. S. M. MohammedKoya, *Mappilas of Malabar*, 1983,p 78.
16. Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala A study in Islamic Trends*,1976.
17. A.P.Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, 1989, p 153.
18. Roland E Miller, *Op.cit*, p 206.
19. A K Nair, *Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi*, 1971, p 16.
20. *Ibid*, p23.
21. Pavanan, *Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi*, p 28
22. Similarity is observed in the cases of Brahmananda Sivayogi and Sree Narayana Guru who speaks of *Siddhi*. It has relation with the Siddha tradition of Tamilnadu. It is on their lines that both of them conducted the critique of tradition, idolatory and rituals. See Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Sidhanubhoothi*, 1988, p 106.
23. See Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Ananda Kummi*,1920.
24. A K Nair, *Anandadarshavum Iswaranum*, Saragrahi Silver Jubilee Vol. June 1972.
25. Sivayogi, *Anandadarsham*, Introduction, 1998.
26. Brahmavratha, *Op.cit*, p 74.
27. The steadily increasing number of Samajas necessitated the creation of a central organization to co-ordinate the activities of the various samajas. Thus in 1918 a meeting of the representatives of various samajams all over Kerala and Ceylon was convened at Siddhasramam Palakkad. This meeting decided to organize the Ananda Maha Sabha with Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi as its founder president, Padmadasan of Calicut, Interview at Sidhasram, dt. 23/11/02.
28. *Complete Works of Vagbhatananda*, 1988, p 8.
29. R.N.Suksena, *Op.cit.*,1981, p 165.
30. This was a criticism to the critique of *Moksha Pradeepam*.
31. In an interview with Nirmalanda swami of Sidhasramam Alathur, dt.23/11/02. Swami told the present writer about the incident.
32. Swami Sivananda Paramahamsa, *Siddhavedm*, 1990, p XIV.
33. The reluctance of Swamiji to include his life history in the Sidhavedam can be seen in his letter which is included in the third edition of *Sidhavedam*.

34. Interview with Sreedharan Adiyodi who lives close to Sidhasramam, Vadagara and who has witnessed the development of this rare institutions told this writer about the working of this unit. Interview dt 20-12-97.
35. See Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1976.
36. See for details the Rules of conduct for Siddha Vidyarthies, Sidhasramam, Vadagara, 1990.
37. See eighth and eleventh clauses in the rules of the Siddhasamajam Swami Sivananda Paramhansa, *Lokashanthikkulla Jeevitham*, 1989, p 48,49.
38. The family of the Present Dt.Secretary of CPI(m) of the Kasargod district follow the Siddha way of life.
39. Swami Sivananda, *Rules of conduct for Siddha vidyarthies*, 1990, p III.
40. Item No 2 B to K of the rules of the SidhaSamajists is a clear indication of this concern-see for details Swami Sivananda Paramahansa, *Lokashantikkulla Jeevitham*, 1989, pp 49,50.
41. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1975, p 9.
42. Swami Sivananda Paramahansa, *Rules of conduct for Siddhavidyarthies*, 1990, pp 30,31.
43. Interview with Aravindakshan an inmate of Eayoor Sidhasram Taliparamba, dt. 27/02/03.
44. Proceedings of the subDivisional Magistrate of Calicut dt. 30 July M No 155/31 Unclassified file at Regional Archives Calicut.
45. M.S. Nair, *Op.cit.*, pp 20-21.
46. Moyarath Sankaran, *Ente Jeevitha Katha*, 1965, p 11.
47. Brahmavrata, *Op.cit.*, 1971, p 14.
48. All works of Vagbhatananda including editorials are collected and published as *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, 1988, p VII-VIII.
49. Brahmavratha, *Op.cit.*, p 29.
50. M S Nair, *Op.cit.*, p 24.
51. K.K.Pavithran, *Vagbhatanandan Atmeeya himalayathil*, 1995, p 49.
52. In a message he insisted for concentrating on educational activities Brhamavratha, *Op.cit.*, p 102, 103.
53. R C Majumdar, *Op.cit.*, p 137.
54. *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, 1988, p 320.
55. M S Nair, *Op.cit.*, p 49.
56. "Unaruvin Akhileshane Smarippin.....". See Atmavidya Sangham Publications.
57. Vagbhatananda wrote prayers to be recited in different occasions as a substitute to the existing practices. This distinguished them from the rest of the society.

58. See Moyarath Sankaran, *Op.cit.*, 1965.
59. Interdining was an important tool used by all social activists to challenge the notion of caste. This is the practice of dining together of people belonging to different castes. It was called Preethi Bhojanam.
60. This is the key note of all movements studied here.
61. C.Balan (Ed), Kasargod: Charithravum Samoohavum, 2001, p 370.
62. M S Nair, *Ibid.*, p 105.
63. See Complete works of Vagbhatananda.

# Social Practice and the Discourse of the Intellectuals

Asokan Mundon “Renaissance and social change in malabar - a study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham ” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut, 2003

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Social Practice and the Discourse of the Intellectuals**

The intellectuals under study have produced written texts of their own which paved the way for a better understanding of their intellectual framework. In this regard a textual analysis of their writings is found helpful to evolve new meanings in the sense, in which, the new discourse studies have been proceeding. As undertaken by Foucault and Derrida discourse analysis limits the study to textual analysis and questions the need for going outside the text. For Derrida there is nothing outside the text because within the text itself discourse produces meaning. If we follow the post-structural paradigm the texts written by the intellectuals itself is sufficient to deduce the conclusions for a historical study. At the same time for the present work the text is used only as an additional evidence to authenticate the conclusion. However, the neglect of ideational changes that led to reformulating society created serious problems in historical studies. This lacunae in historical studies has already been pointed out by Tapan Rai Chaudhari. Owing to this neglect the real issues have always been marginalized leading to the flushing in of detracting issues in the canonical texts. Thus, what is missed from history is an intellectualization that would provide insight into the succession of events. The aim of this study is transcend-

ing of this limitation and to attach a prime position to intellectual processes and sensibilities embedded in the texts of the intellectuals.

**Religion:** The discourse of the thinkers under review reveals a preoccupation with religion. All of them addressed primarily the Hindu religious ideas and practices which were essentially brahmanistic. Thus, they have developed a critique of the evils of Hinduism. This trend emerged in India quite earlier. Many examples can be suggested from the time of Raja Rammohun Roy onwards. Some of them draw attention to the learned and laymen alike to the period of Upanishads or certain uncorrupted texts rather than the outer layer of rituals and practices. To salvage the essence of religion it is necessary to destroy the outer layer of rituals. Most of them projected the reformed religion, a pristine religion, which is devoid of all interpretations and evils, as the religion of the future, one that guaranteed salvation/anandam.

Brahmananda Sivayogi started his intellectual career as a reformer of Hindu religious practices.<sup>1</sup> Further probings into the essence of religion made him move away from it and helped to develop a new notion of religion. He believed that religious observances make the mind run after desires which causes sufferings to man<sup>2</sup>. It should not be treated on equal terms with the critique made by other religionists. Because in no scheme of Sivayogi was present an abuse of others, which, he believed, is a hindrance to the attainment of Ananda (eternal Bliss). Religion corrupts everyone, even if, he is pious and gentle, he states. It is the religious belief of Sri Rama that made him kill Sudraka who practiced pen-

ance.<sup>3</sup> He does not approve any religions practice as it resists the realization of bliss. He states that in religion we have only abuse of others as each follower believe that their scheme is great. Sivayogi did not attempted a rallying of humanity on the basis of religion, but assessed all hitherto existing religions in relation to man.

Sivayogi suggested an alternate religion of bliss to the world which Quietens all the religious strifes and assures amity, peace and happiness. Sivayogi says,

*'Bliss is the Supreme thing desired by all. The theists who fight among themselves on account of creedal differences and the atheists who deny god want bliss alike..... This longing for pleasure inherent in every being is sufficient proof of their being followers of the religion of bliss'*<sup>4</sup>

Pleasure seeking being the natural instinct of man, religion should be able to render it to him. That is why he formulated a new method, which he identifies as the Ananda cult. His pleasure principle did not get reduced into the Epicureanism of the west. He suggests the leading of an ethical life for the harmonious living of all including the animals and insects. For Sivayogi Ananda(eternal bliss) is the only natural religion. All the others are artificial and unreal. Mental peace is the prerequisite to attain ananda-which could be achieved with the help of knowledge. (The critique of his organized religion is housed in this principle). This is free from the ritualism and observances of the organized religions. At the same time, it has a basic philosophy and an ethical code that helps the attainment of bliss. Moreover, it can include people of all castes and creed in its fold.<sup>5</sup>

The crusade against religious practices as absurd and that which causes misery and sharing of platforms with rationalists helped to brand him as an agnostic.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, he has not given up his faith in a force that is responsible for the natural phenomena (such references are available from his writings- Anandadarsanam, Ananda Vimanam Moksha pradeepam etc) This is more or less similar to the agnostic position taken by some of the western thinkers like Bertrand Russell who neither accepted organized religion nor blatantly rejected the existence of a super natural force. At the same time Russell rejected all of the organized religions including Christianity he was born and the rituals associated with that. In the case of Russell the purpose was to avoid unnecessary philosophising and keeping away from the worldly affairs. Whereas, Sivayogi wanted active intervention in the realm of religion). He was critical of the theists and the atheists alike as they failed to produce proof to show their followers enjoy bliss. But as his philosophy was more reason oriented, there was more chance for a collaboration between himself and the rationalists. His aim was not to abuse others but to show a new way that help men to realize eternal bliss. His critique was designated to expose the unreasonableness of all the other prevailing schemes. Thus, his intellectual enterprise transforms into an attempt at secularization of worldly existence. It has also to be remembered that the founder of the first secular movement in Kerala, Sahodaran Ayyappan was a disciple of Sivayogi<sup>7</sup>.

Sivayogi states that the craving for pleasure will break up the barriers of religious norms and people will move towards freedom and bliss. His own example is cited to prove this.<sup>8</sup> But it is ironical to see him preaching against religious

conversion. He states that it is not essential to convert to other religions to attain salvation.<sup>9</sup> He must have believed that the financial and religious problems of the lower castes were responsible for conversions. Hence, his all inclusive project that (universal) ensure salvation. This is achieved through a social criticism of religion.

In the intellectual career of Sivayogi we come across the gradual transformation from an attempt at religious reform to its final abandonment. At the same time, he makes the concepts of salvation and Heaven, promised to its followers by all religions after death, an attainable goal which is related with the material world. Sivayogi states that happier would it be to have no religion than to rely on a religion which is not founded on reason.<sup>10</sup> He was attempting a renegotiation of worldly existence through the changed notion of salvation. His critique of religion enables him to treat all religious practices as that which create misery, ignorance and mutual strife.

Sivananda proclaims his notion of religion in the twentieth chapter of Siddhavedam.<sup>11</sup> Sivananda says that the book neither deals with abstract ideas nor are the explanations shrouded in any mysterious intellectual manipulation. It only deals with a technique, a method and therefore it is positive and practical which is explained in simple and unambiguous language with ample similes and illustrations to drive home the meaning to any common man.(Ref Sidhavedam)

Sivananda rules out the existence of a religion. If at all exist, there is only one religion, that is Iswara Matham(Religion of God)<sup>12</sup> he believed. He gives a new interpretation to Hinduism as 'Indu Matham' as establishing the 'Chandra'

the mind in 'Jeeva' the Iswara. Whoever do so is the follower of Indu matham(p 312). Those who fails to do so have no knowledge about religion save boast of as I am Hindu, I am Muslim, I am Budhist etc. He shows great regard for the Buddha and says that he established the right path to contemplate and worship god.(313) But he refuses to give the Buddhist doctrines the status of a religion. He believed that the teacher and preachers of history have established the very same Iswara Matham which came to be known after their name. He affirms, all these great men established that the world is originated from our Sakthi; that Sakthi must be concentrated within the self itself; it must be done in order to merge within ourselves our Sakthi; that alone is correct and the others are wrong.....That path itself is what I have shown you now.(p 315)

This notion of religion of Swami Sivananda is very significant as it enables him to provide a critique of all existing religions as well as to float his own notion of religion. The technique he employs is making the preachers a socially oriented men of action in search of self-realization. This helps him to put himself on par with the great religious preachers of history. He says that they were working out a new methodology for the true worship of god. They were not founders of new religion but those who emphasized the religion of God. As it was revealed to the people by them, the faith came to be known after their name. He was projecting here the universality of the religious essence. Moreover, the interpretation he has given to Hinduism as the union of the mind with Jeeva is also very significant. This makes religion a goal realizable at the level of the individual. This notion cuts off any relation between the personal religion that he propagates and

the ritualism and observances that we find in the existing religion. This distinction offers him space to undertake the critique of religion.

The new interpretation that he gives to Iswaraseva (Service of God) helps him to rule out all existing religious practices as baseless. For him Iswaraseva is the union of mind with jeeva, the life. Pranayama is the method suggested by him to achieve this state Pranayama, thus helps one to control and regulate one's life for its progress and self-realization. But at the same time he forbids his followers not to develop special powers of the body with the help of Pranayama as it will inflict pain to the body.(He also believed that Pranayama helps one to develop special powers of the body which is against his principle). He says that without understanding the real meaning people are doing some other things like constructing of monumental structures and consecrating idols into it.<sup>13</sup> Idol is only a piece of wood cut out to shape by a carpenter who was never revered and was not given permission to bow before it. Thus, Swami Sivananda argues that all external observances like Upavasam, Pranaprathishta, idol worship etc are absurd. His ideas become significant because of the period in which he formulated his teachings. This was the period when other social activists like Chattampi Swamikal Sreenarayana guru spoke about the irrational beliefs and practices but have to borrow certain conservative practices to explain their philosophy. Swami Sivananda was opening up an entirely new path and perception.

By interpreting religion as Jeeveswaroraikyam Union of life with Iswara Sivananda was nullifying the very existence of an organized religion. This helps him to denounce all religious observances and also to project his notion of

Iswaraseva. Religious observances were criticized not because they were superstitions.<sup>14</sup> Sivananda criticised it because they were incapable of doing real Iswaraseva. After defining the terms of Iswaraseva, he declares that there is only one religion which is known as Iswararamatham. He exposes the contradictions in the present day observances and the real religion is, for him, the union of Jeeva with mind. It is an attempt at realizing the self. By establishing the universality of religious essence he makes it clear that he was concerned of religious rivalries and makes fun of the attempt at conversions. His intention is to state on the one hand that conversions are good to acquire material gains and expresses that conversion is not for the sake of religion. Thus, religion, is for him, that which has to be enjoyed at the level of the individual not as collectivity. This metamorphosis of religion in his teachings helps him to liberate religion from tradition and standardized texts of belief. Moreover, he says that traditions are meaningless repetitions of the experiences of learned men. The practitioners does not understand the real meanings. Thus, upavasam which is fasting in common parlance is the state of being in close proximity to god, ie., the process of getting the mind placed at the abode of god. This new meaning attributed to religion nullifies the relationship between the corpus of traditional literature and religious observances. Thus, he affirms that the traditional literature has nothing to do with real religion and it is impossible to achieve moksha in the traditional way.

Swami Sivananda was problematizing the extent of dehumanization that come across in the organized religions of the world. It has ceased to be an agent

of encounter with the ultimate. Instead, it has become an agent of rivalries and repressive hierarchies. A similar notion of religion was developed by liberation theologians who attempted a process of rehumanization.<sup>15</sup>

We see certain common features in the critique of religion developed by the three thinkers. But Vagbhatananda is not ready to rule out totally the significance of organized religions as done by the other two. We see Vagbhatananda saying that it is not necessary to emphasize the invariability of religion as it organized efficiently and continue to organize human community.<sup>16</sup> Religion is for him, the program which make man great and perfect. He projects religion as an ethical code developed by great men who were shocked by the internal and external miseries of man. He also believes in the unity of the religious essence. He does not find fault with religion for the evils and diverse elements which crept in due course and for its ahuman attitude glorification and antipathy. All such things entered due to the unreligiousness of its followers.<sup>17</sup> He was advising not to give up religion for its unreligiousness but to weed out evils to make it useful.

This is a contradictory position when compared to the other two thinkers. Moreover, the above statement can be identified as in favour of the modernity project. But the intention of the project is eradicating the useless things and squeezing out the maximum out of nature for the benefit of man. It is clear from the simile that Vagbhatananda wanted neither to give up nor to criticize religiosity. It is also evident from his writings on religion. He believed that creeping in of evils is a natural process. One should endeavour to get rid of

evils. In short, he identifies what is good and bad in religion for man. The conception of religion in his project develops into an attempt to articulate a universal code for the society as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

Vagbhatananda was opposed to worship at temples. Idolatry was criticized as a practice which has no authenticity.<sup>19</sup> He believed that god resides within man himself and those who are going out in search of gods in temples are bad men. He was a critic of all kinds of religious rituals as a means to the realization of god. For him, temples are breeding houses of Superstitions. That is why he criticized Sree Narayan Guru for constructing temples and consecrating idols into it<sup>20</sup> The theory of 'appropriation' and 'will of the people' failed to create any positive result in his mind. Instead he went to the extent of stating that idolatry was responsible for all the ills that we eschew today. He states that idolatry which was very cleverly covered in the garb of spirituality misled the common man who bow before it and recite lewd songs, in public<sup>21</sup>. He considers all these as elements of unreason- an outer layer of practices which are undesirable for men- crept in the religions of Kerala. He favours only the ethical principles contained in a religion. He considered human body as a temple which is used to cross over the cosmic world. Inflicting of any kind of suffering to the body for self realization was opposed by him. He considered the merger of Jeevatma with Paramatma through Rajayoga as the means for the attainment of salvation. This resonate with the arguments of medieval Bhakti saints who believed that god resides within man himself.<sup>22</sup>

Vagbhatananda ridiculed the institution of Kavus<sup>23</sup> and the theyyattams.<sup>24</sup>

His criticism of the theyyattam as the 'extravaganza of the drunkard' expresses the extent of his dislike of the institution. He considers it an unpardonable crime to follow such practices in the age of modernity. He calls the Kavus the centers of retreat for the robbers and Bhagavathis (female divinities worshipped at such centers) as prostitutes who stayed with them<sup>25</sup>. He suggests that such practices are putting Hinduism in a vulnerable position, which invites criticism from Muslims and Christians as believers in superstition. He expresses relief on noticing Brahmins not sending their women to such centers. In those days, customarily, Brahmin women were not permitted to go to such centers. But he fails to note the denial of basic rights to Brahmin women who were not permitted to go to such centers<sup>26</sup>. It is very easily discernible that Brahmanical mode of life enframe his model of thought.

The lower caste gods are identified with derogatory and obnoxious practices and were not worthy of being worshipped<sup>27</sup>. He has made the lower caste gods very evil persons and feels that it is better to put an end to such practices at the earliest as it is against the morality of Kerala. Thus, Vagbhatananda expresses his displeasure over the folk performances on very categorical terms. We see him lamenting as such performances give the Muslims and Christians an opportunity to criticize Hinduism. This is much akin to the orientalist approach to tradition which brand these as superstitions. He projects Brahmanical Hinduism as the only desirable form of religiosity for an educated man. This exposes the latent complex in the minds of lower caste men.

Vagbhatananda is not prepared to concede the cultural identity of the lower groups who live in a hierarchised society. He does not attribute any divinity to such performances. These cultural traits are obnoxious practices for him. In other words, his attempt was to familiarize the upper caste values to the lower castes. Sree Narayana Guru also did this to a great extent. The discourse of abstract and desirable qualities of society assumes significance with the process of colonial modernization. In his thought lower castes were integrated into Sanskritised mode. His own career can be cited as an example.<sup>28</sup> That is, he endeavored to have an integrated and homogeneous entity. This integrated entity, even though appear to be depended to the hegemonic power is in spirit a resistance to it.<sup>29</sup> Modern Malayalam literature bear witness to this trend. The 'Kilippattu' of Ezhuthachan made available the upper caste values to the lower castes<sup>30</sup>. This was markedly different from the developments in other parts of South India where we come across the growth of movements antagonistic to the great tradition. The Siddha tradition and the Vaikunta Swami<sup>31</sup> movements can be cited as examples. Vagbhatananda was doing here a two fold work. One is challenging the Brahmanical order by putting it responsible for dividing people into various groups with the help of unauthentic notions. The other is the partial appropriation of the western notions in a bid to make the Indian tradition sound enough to face the western challenge. The outcome is an attempted at reformulating the Indian tradition, which keeps it above the reigning culture of the west.

All of them recognize religion as an ethical code that govern the life of man in nature. No external forms of worship is essential to attain Salvation. They

are all superstitions that curtail the possibilities of salvation. To achieve this salvation religious conversions are not necessary. Thus, they were trying to locate the contours of a Universal religion based on love and compassion that any one can practice without any formal conversion or initiation. It is also clear that their project revolve round the Indian belief system. Their dislike of the traditional values can be assumed as the class problem they address. At the same time they did not give up the cause of the common man. Their project fundamentally aim at democratization of knowledge -making knowledge accessible to all. This helps them to a certain extent to transcend the class limit in which they were trapped.

### **The critique of caste**

The intellectuals offered new notions of equality to a society where groups of people were considered to be high and low on account of their birth in the respective groups, in accordance with the dharmic codes. The existence of inequality in the form of caste differences opens up a discussion of the problem of equality. This discussion, in turn, leads to the critique of the system itself in its various manifestations which leads to its systematic subversion. They finds fault with many of the practices which create and sustain caste differences in the society. They undertook this with the help of some basic texts in the tradition. They also makes use of the current theories and institutions which propagate equality of all men, which gained currency as a direct result of the British presence in Malabar. They were successful in making the theme of caste inequality the most important issue of everyday life. At the same time they never went

beyond the critique of inequality other than caste. They conceived that man takes his birth without any symbol of caste distinction.

This notion about caste is present in the writings of Sivayogi. When the disciple asks: "Is not caste amongst men god created?" Sivayogi answers: "caste system is definitely a man created institution and one can't think that it is god created. See Leech is not chameleon, Chameleon is not like squirrel, Squirrel is not like garden lizard, garden lizard is not like goat. Goat is not like elephant, elephant is not like horse, and horse is not like men. Grass is not like paddy. Coconut is not like fire, fire is not like air. Air is not like sky. The power which created everything in the universe, gave form and qualify to it to be recognized even by children and it is a pity to think that power failed only in the case of man in creating distinctive signs to identify each and every caste".<sup>32</sup>

He makes his notion of caste very explicit in the preface to Moksha Pradeepam itself. He considers the elimination of the sense of inequality and discrimination practiced by the Hindus as the second objective in writing the book. He says that casteism is the real cause for degeneration of Hinduism and he expected the rejuvenation through the book. He Believed that casteism stood in the way of progress and the existing hierarchical division of society was artificial and arbitrary. Casteism was abhorrent for the reformers, not only on ethical and moral grounds but also because it fostered social division and deprived people of patriotic feeling.<sup>33</sup> He feels that Hindus will be saved only when such texts which propagate inequality are completely burnt or at a time when all superstitions are given up. The method adopted by Sivayogi to problematize the issue is to

project the unreason in the tradition and self contradictory nature of explanations. For him the desire to have sex with women of all castes for a man is sufficient enough to prove that the hierarchical division is arbitrary. To supplement this theory he adopts examples from the animal world where no possibility of cross sexing- exist<sup>34</sup>. Human beings shows desire in mating and enjoys it irrespective of caste distinction. More over, no physical features are available in human body to distinguish one caste from the other.<sup>35</sup> Thus, Sivayogi explains that god has not created castes with specific duties and responsibilities and one is doing what he is capable of by nature. He affirms that caste privileges and untouchability that the Indians practice has not been sanctioned by the scriptures.

Sivayogi provides a new meaning to the word Brahmin. For him a Brahmin is one who has persistent faith in Brahma (Brahmani nishtavan Brahmana). This helps him to take away 'Brahmatwa' from some members who takes their birth in a Brahmin family. He makes it clear that in a Brahmin family one may come across wicked and unintelligent ones along with very pious and learned brahmins. So in the project of Sivayogi Brahmatwa assumes a new dimension which could be achieved by any one through learning and constant practice.<sup>36</sup> It amounts to the universlisation of a quality which has hitherto been attributed to a social group who wielded authority and access to all material resources. This new definition has undermined the right of those social groups to appropriate authority and resources for themselves by virtue of their birth(Sivayogi explains that god has not created castes with specific duties and responsibilities). How-

ever, the right is not alienated in toto. The right of the virtuous among them is sustained. At the same time, the new interpretation enables new individuals to assume the status of Brahmatwa. This has drained considerably the exclusivity and sacredness claimed by a Brahmin by birth. This has shaken to the roots the foundations of the 'Brahmin Superiority' and the ideology represented by it.

Caste system was the chief institution that was studied and theorized by the modern west. It was represented as an institution that propagate inequality and India was branded as an unequal society<sup>37</sup> Sivayogi attempts to show that Indian tradition has basically emphasized equalitarian concepts. All unequalitarian concepts were incorporations. He proves this with the help of a verse from garudam which says that all those who believe in one's own caste and rituals fails to understand the greatest dharma.<sup>38</sup> The verse from Gita which state chaturvarnyam as god created was taken as the key concept on the Varna and caste system(Chaturvarnyam mayasrashtam). But Sivayogi cites verses from the Gita itself that proclaim equalitarianism. Meaning of the verse from Gita is stated as scholars considers equally a learned and courteous Brahmin, cow, elephant, dog and chandalan.<sup>39</sup>

So, he says that Karmas like sacrifices idolatry etc and discriminations are incorporated into the Gita by ignorant people who failed to follow the essence of Gita. For him the message of the Gita was doing of evil free Karma and those who say that Krishna has asked to follow these customs actually say that Krishna was not a Yogi and favored the dwijas ignorant and antihuman-<sup>40</sup>. This kind of interpretation helps him to identify what is useful for man in tradition.<sup>41</sup> All the others could be branded

as unnecessary and given up. That is all principles (Pramanas) against reason is an arbitrary addition to the corpus of scriptural texts. As Indian tradition was fundamentally oral in nature there is more chance to corrupt it deliberately by vested interests.

With the help of the references from the Gita Sivayogi was trying to establish that the caste system was not a god created institution. He feels that all human beings belong to the single category of 'humans'. Discrimination was not the intention either of Krishna or of any other Gods.

We come across the same kind of re-interpretation in the teachings of Swami Sivananda Paramahansa. In his project the Varna system is represented as the different actions of the person.<sup>42</sup> The main character in his Keralanacharam is the poor Idiot who with his rhetoric, rational and intelligence ridicules the observance of caste Superstitious beliefs and the privileged position claimed by the upper castes.<sup>43</sup> The poor Idiot is represented as a person who points out the unjustifiable practices existing in contemporary India unmindful of the wrath it may invite from the upper castes. He raises the question of the method of distinguishing Sthanis and the mode and ground of respect to be extended to them<sup>44</sup>. These questions are very significant as they are powerful enough to undermine the high caste status and reputation of the 'sthanis'. Instead of the traditional set of answers bound up by hierarchy, he puts forward a new set of answers. He vehemently opposed the existing tradition for making the privileged classes powerful in society. He bluntly states that caste is unreal and if at all it exists, caste and pollution are deliberately created and imposed on society by the uppercastes.<sup>45</sup>

He also attempts a new classification which keeps all members of society in six groups which were considered either as backward or as scheduled castes. Thus, he was emphasizing the equality of all men through a judicious ridiculing of the existing caste norms. He points out that the dynamics of power makes the upper caste hegemony possible. The notion of ritual purity also helps the brahmin to establish social Supremacy. There are various prescriptions through which a Brahmin can establish his ritual purity.<sup>46</sup> But all these ways and means were put to cross examination in the text; which proclaims the impossibility of remaining pure in the physical environments of Kerala. He also cites empirical reasons to house his critique. For eg. In the text he narrates the events related with Malabar Rebellion in which many upper caste ladies left Malabar with the help of untouchables and Muslims.<sup>47</sup> He stressed the idea of functional dependency of high castes upon low castes when he states that it is the washer woman who keeps the Brahmin in the ritually pure position<sup>48</sup> to a person to keep him in a ritually pure position. This is an attempt at inversion both in terms of purity and in terms of existence as high caste. This observation progressively leads to a critique of the dominant Sociological paradigm developed by Louis Dumont.<sup>49</sup>

The debate that is depicted in Keralanacharam makes the 'poor Idiot' the wisest man. This is the kind of wisdom which has to reconstruct the existing society. It also provides the society a new subject who has to undertake the task of transforming society. This new subject represent the renouncer in the Hindu system of thought. The text makes it clear that the life of a renouncer is not total rejection of the worldly existence but its continuation in a new way. The fulfill-

ment of the 'renounced way of life' lies in treating all members of society equally. He is beyond the structures of society. But those who practice literally such a life are ridiculed normally. Where as this limitation seems to be successfully overcome by the poor Idiot as he operates in the colonial context. The mediation of egalitarianism and the existing legal practices prevents any encroachments upon his free movements in society. The life of the renouncer conceptualised in Kernalnacharam is traditionally rooted and is represented as the wisest, most intelligent and educated but never a part of the casteist society. All the caste groups brands him as an untouchable who takes food from anywhere and as lacking in self-esteem.<sup>50</sup> The person who provides the marginalized a ray of hope by armoring them with new weapons to make them feel superior is thus represented as being ridiculed by contemporary society.

The caste critique we come across in Vagbhatananda also proceeds on similar lines. He finds no justification for the continuation of the caste system, as no traces of caste can be seen in the human body<sup>51</sup>. He says that pretensions of the upper castes that they are high born and snubbing at the rest for their low caste and social status are all absurd practices.<sup>52</sup> Thus, we find that Vagbhatananda is also deeply concerned with the caste system and criticizes it as there is no marks of distinction on human body. He echoes the observations made by Brahmananda Sivayogi, but the critique is seemingly half-hearted when compared to Sivananda Paramahansa. He seems to be confused on the priority to be attached to the caste system and other burning issues of the day. Thus, we find him stating as today's problem is not caste system, untouchability or supe-

riority but the feeling of selfishness and jealousy.<sup>53</sup> He fixes the responsibility for all evils and degeneration upon the 'hollow man' who is against tradition and morality. What is unveiled here is the ambivalence in the ideological position of Vagbhatananda.

On the one hand he criticizes strongly the practice of caste system and on the other he finds fault not with the caste system but with those persons who shares the feelings of selfishness and jealousy. This must have been due to the transformational problems that one come across in the personality of Vagbhatananda. Getting educated in the traditional way and having developed a distaste for most of the practices of the times, he started his public career as a disciple of Brahmananda Sivayogi. On certain issues he dissociated with Sivayogi and continued his activities independently.<sup>54</sup> He wanted to identify a domain where he could establish unquestioned supremacy. The whole career of Vagbhatananda makes it clear that debate is his favorite site. He fashioned his activities on the model of Adi Sankara who defeated Sanskrit Scholars in debates. A critique of caste does not provide much scope for debate as it, then, did not confront equality other than birth namely gender, class, status etc. However, the idea of equality does not develop further to undertake a critique of forces that create inequality other than caste. ie. he fails to develop the discussion into a comprehensive idea of equality. Where as religion and morality provides much room for debate. This account for his preference for the discussion of religion and morality. He states it categorically at the time of the beginning of Atma Vidya Sangham.<sup>55</sup> Hence his sudden switching over from the Social realm to the moral realm.

This reveals also for his reformulated tradition. He propagated a philosophical amalgam of tradition and modernity. It seems that he was well aware of the contradictory nature of modernity. He expected that traditional roots would salvage people from the consequences of modernity as it was experienced then. In this scheme Vedantic tradition is unmediated by the Social structure which helps him to project it as the panacea for all ills. This could be achieved only by an individual as identity is the issue of the individual. This explains the prominence attached to the 'individual' marginalizing other issues like caste in his scheme.

He represents a model intellectual who aspires to occupy the highest position in Society. He conceptualizes knowledge as power and utilized the acquired knowledge to show his own competence, which enables him to occupy the hegemonic position. With a rare display of intelligence, humanitarianism and knowledge of tradition he proclaims his superior position. If he destroys the existing structure, he will also become out of context. The strategy employed by him is a judicious appropriation of the tradition through which he establishes his authority.

### **Concept of the body**

The coming of modernity has disseminated a new notion of the body. It declared that the body is unique and private/personal. The person concerned has total rights of disposal over it. The identity of the person is now related to his body. Closely related with this a new notion of society also takes shape which is

composed of powerful individuals. The nature of the society was determined by its components within the society. The twin questions of presenting body in public space and appropriating the dominant caste mode of dressing led to the series of struggles leading to its attainment. R.N.Yesudas has sketched in detail the various stages in the movement for the right to wear upper garments by women.<sup>56</sup>

In the traditional Society no such concept of an individual body existed. The body was social in which no action was individualistic. This notion of Social body is expressed in the observance of pollution. Birth or death makes the whole family polluted because of the operation of this notion. In an individualistic society personal grief or happiness is only there, no familial or social implication of the event. It has no unique functions to perform.<sup>57</sup> Instances of polyandry and polygamy are observed among the Thiyyas of Malabar. Soori Namboodiripad did not find anything wrong in marrying Kalyanikutty instead of Indulekha.<sup>58</sup> The social orientation of the body denied any right to the individual over its body. Whereas, the new concept of the body brought forward by modernity is fundamentally antagonistic to the existing concept. This leads to the unveiling of an imbalance and resultant struggle to redress it. But the liberation potential of the new notions fails to develop further in Indulekha. This may be due to the inorganic nature of the new notions to Indian tradition, as observed by S. Kappan<sup>59</sup>

This consciousness about the body is grounded in the notion that human persons are having rational choice and held responsible for their own actions. This helps them to distinguish between an animal and a human being.<sup>60</sup> Thus the concept of 'rational animal' becomes central to the conceiving of the notions of the body.

This notion of the body was appropriated by the intellectuals under study. They found it powerful enough to challenge the existing society. Hence they have enjoined programmes to establish rights over one's body. New notions of family and domesticity further accelerated this process. Legal marriages were found handy for them in extending the rights of the individual.<sup>61</sup> Protected the rights of the individual against any infringement by tradition. It also ensured the consent of the individuals involved. At the outset legal marriages emphasized insularity from tradition as well as the right of the individual in choosing his partner making it primarily an individual affair with the active involvement of the society at large. The intellectual treated all the other types of marriages as concubinage or prostitution. Most eloquent type of criticism of Sambandham was raised by Swami Sivananda. He declared Thalikettu Kalyanam(pre-puberty ritual marriages) as prostitution<sup>62</sup>. Vegbhatananda finds in it a negation of the 'woman hood' reducing a women to the status of a 'thing' to be appropriated by anybody at will.

The notion of the body had its effects upon many constituents of the Tharavadu (joint family). The rearing of children was made the responsibility of the parents. Nuclear families became prominent. Female education was considered essential for the happiness of men and children. The right to wear dresses of one's choice was made the right of the individual. All these interrogated the traditional notions of the body. These were elements of modernity that sustain capitalism. The availability of new commodities and the disappearance of restrictions upon its use made the individuals a prey to the rising consumerism<sup>63</sup> The colonial administration made impossible the imposing of traditional norms and

systems upon the people. Wearing of new style dresses were made fashionable to a community which was satisfied by minimum and traditionally permitted dresses and gave currency to a new concept of modesty. The developing of desires by individuals and the means for its gratification leads the community towards capitalist integration.

It is true that the body consciousness extended the interest of capitalism.<sup>64</sup> But in the project of the intellectuals it was developed also into an ideology that transcended the exploitation involved in it. In their scheme the ideal man was represented as one who is successful in controlling desires. The ideal man for them is the follower of ascetic ideals in his worldly existence. This is a clubbing of the two asrams of the main stream Indian philosophy into one single unit. This is a reformulation of the asceticism in a bid to resist the evil effects of modernity.<sup>65</sup> In the project of the intellectuals the ideal ascetic is one who roam about in society spreading the message of love and compassion without any selfish motives. So their asceticism is a parallel stream of thought very active in India all through the ages. Max Weber has developed a similar theme when he states that Protestantism brought asceticism to the world.<sup>66</sup> They are proposing a new rational paradigm to negotiate modernity which is rooted in the fundamentals of tradition.

They proposed the practicing of this ideal through the conquest of desires. As desires originate in mind, they attached more importance to the disciplined mind. The main plank of their social practice was the process of disciplining. Half-nakedness of Gandhiji and the rotation of Charkha in the village

houses developed into a big question to the British imperialists. To become immovable by external problems and desires means the developing of a force that will resist colonization. That is why Ghandhiji and the persons who wear dresses made of hand-spun yarn has become a problem to be reckoned with to the imperialists. Even before the application of this ideal by Ghandhiji the intellectuals under study, gauged the efficacy of this doctrine in developing a counter culture to modernity. It signified a body which is reluctant to be carried away by an ideology which is the product of modernity.

**Ahimsa & Vegetarianism:** an analysis of the discourse of the thinkers under study shows their dislike of violence in any form. An important form of violence practised in those days was killing of animals at the centers of worship. The ecological perspective contained in their thought helped them to propagate the notion of Ahimsa as it recognized the right to live of other beings in the animal world. This was a widely prevailing doctrine in India. They believed that the sustenance of man was ensured by vegetables. As such, he need not have to kill animals which is basically an ahuman act. Their idea of non-violence was non-injury to all creatures by thought word or deed. They believed that such traditions were marginalized by orthodoxy to keep the people ignorant and protect their vested interests. This notion helps them to criticize animal sacrifices performed at the centers of worship.

The meaning they ascribe to the word 'Satyam' helps them to extend their notion of Ahimsa. Satyam for Sivayogi is doing what is good to all beings<sup>67</sup>. He justifies even telling a lie to save the life of a man or animal. He developed a

philosophy of Ahimsa that distinguished him from other thinkers who preached it. He says that violence is contradictory to the attainment of bliss; hence, it has to be avoided. The killing justified in the name of god by other religionists was used by him to reject even the existence of such a god. He doesn't connect his doctrine of ahimsa with the attainment of salvation or wrath of god.<sup>68</sup> His Statements on non-violence was made in conjunction with the meaning of truth provided by tradition. He states in Moksha Pradeepam that when one give evidence before a court of law of witnessing a crime, it will be harmful to the convict. But one should act like that as it would save all other living beings from his cruelties<sup>69</sup>. The justification for this argument is that we will not consider god as a criminal for killing or giving any other punishment to a criminal. They believed that non-violence leads to the germinating of unholy and inhuman ideas in the minds of men. Hence, all of them preferred a non-violent way of life.

For Sivayogi killing of animals is a liger like activity. He justified this act of wild animals as they have no other alternative for their sustenance. But practicing it by man whose sustenance was ensured by vegetables and many other things is a great crime, he believed. He observes in Moksha Pradeepam-

*The man who kills animals to eat,  
even though god gave enough materials to eat  
the man with common sense having great philosophies and  
wise men to guide, is a tiger greater than the real  
one. Isn't it absurd to kill animals in scarifices  
(Yagas) to get rid of one's own sins?*<sup>70</sup>

It can be assumed that he was propagating non-violence on moralistic grounds, as his discourse affirms that it is unnecessary to eat flesh and fish for the sustenance of man. Sivayogi makes guilty not only those who kill but those who eat the flesh of animals. He says that if there is nobody to buy and eat flesh people will not resort to killing it<sup>71</sup>. Here Sivayogi was echoing the observation made by Vivekananda who made guilty those who wear ornaments as they have inspired the thief to steal. The only achievement, in his opinion, of animal sacrifices is that it gives an opportunity to the followers of other religions to criticize Hindu gods as worst and cruel as a tiger. This shows that he was conscious of the orientalist constructions which figures India as a backward and superstitions country. Eradication of such evils would change India into a forward and dynamic nation. Here, he shares the conceptions of the nineteenth century reformers. He practiced a vegetarian/fruitarian life till his death and showed his followers that a disease free and virtuous life was ensured by vegetarianism/fruitarianism. Moreover, the ecological perspective recognized the right to live of other living beings around us. This shows his concern for the sustenance of other beings and it makes the sustenance of other beings the responsibility of man. This is an understanding of the 'relatedness' that can be observed in nature. It emphasizes that the world is not meant for man alone. He is only one among the living beings that is entitled to live in this nature. So he has to abide by the rules of nature. This is a call to going back to nature which is opposed to the spirit of modernity.

The discourse of Sivayogi locates another dimension of the doctrine of non-violence. Animal sacrifices were mainly conducted to free man from his sins.

He states that the sacrificed animal is in no way responsible for the sin of man. So, the killing of animals to absolve man from his sin is an absurd practice which has no religious sanction. If sacrifices can satisfy gods why not one cut one's own head and give that to god, which could be done in dense forests without the fear of the British raj. If so they will not be put in jails for violating modern legality and also could ensure the will of god<sup>72</sup>. What is significant here is the working of the middle class mind which identifies free domains where the raj is absent.<sup>73</sup> This is, in reality, an understanding of the impossibility of imposing tight control over the people by an imperialist government foreign or indigenous. Moreover it is an identification of the cultural thread that could be appropriated in an anti imperialist struggle.

Traditional notion of sin makes the sinner, responsible for his action as it has originated in his mind. As attitudinal change should take place in man himself which essentialises a purified mind. Hence he proposes a project to keep the mind in perfect tranquil. With the help of a verse from *vagishtam*<sup>74</sup> he makes it clear that the mind is to be perfected. The three worlds exist when it is active and when it is calmed everything will disappear leading to the attainment of beatitude<sup>75</sup> This means that salvation (beatitude) is a state of mind, which could be attained by the pure actions of the mind. So, he was proposing a methodology for disciplining the mind. This suggests that one need not have to offer worship at temples or do penances or pilgrimages but practice *Rajayoga* which alone will perfect the mind. That is why he does not recognize any god other than mind. Thus, killing or inflicting of torture to any beings to save man from his sins is an

unwarranted act in his project.

Vagbhatananda took a firm stand against animal sacrifices performed at the cult spots in different parts of Kerala. He considers this as a superstition which leads to the further degeneration of lower castes who subscribe to it. Quoting a verse from Isavasyopanisad he maintains that among the living beings nature and god there exist an indestructible bond of unity and no one is expected to engage in such mutually destructible acts. So, he says that to maintain balance in nature, leading a life of mutual understanding and co-operation is expected of all living beings. Thus, to put an end to animal sacrifices, he strikes at the right to live of all living beings, which is similar to the argument of Sivayogi. The strategy he employs is to effect a change of mind in his listeners/readers with the help of his rhetoric. Here he cites the experience of a hunter, who attempts suicide by jumping into the river, on seeing the bird hunted by him trying to escape after giving a pathetic look. This is a typical example of the rhetoric used by Vagbhatananda in his project. The story need not be true. But still it is sufficient to persuade the listeners in order to reformulate the structure. His critique of animal sacrifices is grounded in the right to live of all living beings. The emphasis here is on freedom and equality which is a modern concept and which is not discernible in hierarchised society. Here the agency responsible for violence is identified as the ignorance of the practitioners which saves him from the critique of traditional institutions in the name of superstition. Thus, it can be argued that Ahimsa was expounded in their project on religious and moralistic grounds.

When non-violence was projected as a way of life vegetarianism becomes the only and natural alternative for human sustenance. A possible objection here is whether man is not inflicting violence towards edible herbs and vegetables? He believed that sorrows exist because of mind. God has not given mind to plants and herbs. So no question of violence is involved in its cutting.<sup>76</sup> Killing becomes an evil only if it is done towards a being which has a mind that experiences happiness and sorrows. Hence no faith has considered vegetarianism a sin. He finds fault with a non-vegetarian diet because it generates in men all these base qualities such as selfishness and greed, which is contradictory to the ecological perspective. This makes vegetarianism essential for cultivating piety which alone will help us in building up a new society based on love compassion and a consciousness of ecology. Thus the holistic approach developed by them succeeds in making vegetarianism a way of life. It is an attempt at levelling by making it the essence of human existence. It ceases to be an exclusive privilege of brahmins as it is one of the elements which made him distinct. Two categories are only possible in such an existence. Upper/lower caste distinctions are not possible. Their project converts piety into the essence of human existence not of the particular caste group. In addition, the Brahmins who practice and approve of animal sacrifices were reduced to the status of animals. Sivayogi arrives at vegetarianism through a critique of Brahmanic practices including Sacrifices. The centrality assigned to living organism and violation of life through killing stabilizes the order. This is an attempt at subversion which renegotiate the categories of the traditional society and prescribes new essences to act as the basics of the emer-

gent society. It liberates the society from unnecessary and anti-human notions of the existing society which is made possible through the renegotiation of tradition.<sup>77</sup>

### **Man**

Colonial education and administrative apparatuses introduced an individual orientation. This helped to construct an individual identity out of the corporate existence within the thravadus. As a complimentary development the practice of reform put afloat a new conception of man. The man in traditional India was different from the man who was being popularized in the colonial context by the reformers. The reformers visualized a free liberated man with certain inalienable rights. This is basically a modern attribute of man. The notion of inalienable rights of man is the contribution of enlightenment in Europe. The reformers were trying to place man in the existing structure. But this attempt at placing soon develops into an attempt at subversion in their project. This kind of a subversion empowers the under privileged of the traditional society. This process of subversion and the 'free man' is discernible in the character of the poor Idiot<sup>78</sup> in Keralanacharam of Swami Sivananda Paramahansa. The technique of subversion employed in the text makes the poor idiot the wisest man and the repository of modern wisdom.

Swami Sivananda explains that man is one who distinguish between nithya(eternal) and anithya(ineternal) and accept the eternal. He adds another attribute to man when he says 'mananethi manushya'. i.e. one who thinks is man. He states categorically that it is not claiming and imposing of high caste status over the people that makes one eligible to be a man but proper thinking<sup>79</sup>. It is presumable that

the notion of 'manana' and the binary of 'nithya' and 'anithya' came from the understanding of Upanishads. The Siddhavedam establishes beyond doubt his understanding of the traditional sources. He was playing the role of a critical insider. This role helps him to reformulate tradition to meet the requirements of the present. The ideological world that he represents was created simultaneously by the critical understanding of the present and past.<sup>80</sup> He blames the unintelligent practitioners of the traditional sources for ills that we face today. This can be identified as part of a tradition initiated from the time of the Buddha. This shows that the critique of caste based on the miseries of man was integral to ancient Indian thinking. This cannot be attributed solely to European enlightenment and the construction of the liberated man.

Vagbhatananda Visualizes a free liberated man bounded by certain duties and responsibilities when he states that modern man fails to understand that his duties are larger and greater than the bird which fly near to the aero planes<sup>81</sup>. This metaphor indicates the limits to freedom accessible to man. Flying in the air guided by instincts which is the trait of birds, enjoying freedom and considering itself even greater to aero planes for long may lead to a disaster. So, it becomes invariable to evaluate critically the notion of freedom in relation to a world view. If he succumb to the trait of an animal, he may not be in a position to build up the heaven on earth. Thus, he creates a new consciousness by which man understood himself and get freed. He expected man to use his reason to tide over all vicissitudes that may come up in course of his existence which, he emphasizes as the distinguishing feature of man. In the Scheme of things provided

by Vagbhatananda rationality assumes significance as a deciding factor in the destiny of modern man. But, he laments that barring a few no one tries to understand one's duty.

Vagbhatananda attempts a critique of the practices of modern man whom he identifies as hollow man<sup>82</sup>. He says, the tendency to get everything for me created a situation of mutual bickering and struggles which is a state of human degeneration. The reason is located at the unpreparedness for imbibing and practising of moral values. Imbibing of moral values facilitates one to develop a holistic approach to existence. His project seem to revolve round the scheme of 'chitha vrithi Nirodha', which is basically disciplining the self. Evidently he proposes a scheme of moral values propagated by the ancient seers and saints to salvage the modern man from degeneration. This enables us to say that his project of salvaging modern man in the colonial context was traditionally rooted and it was not one of propagating the ideals of colonial modernity. Thus, when he says the faith in the Buddha and Jesus Christ will save humanity from its degeneration and his insistence upon individual reason to tide over all, he was developing a traditionally rooted counter culture and consciousness. Recent Scholarship has attempted to understand ecological concerns from theological point of view reiterates the centralism of ecology instead of an anthropocentric world view.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to the features specified above Sivayogi emphasized an additional attribute of man. In his opinion appropriation of knowledge is the distinguishing feature of man. This is the only attribute that distinguish man from an animal. This is evident from a sloka of Utharagita which means 'knowledge is an

additional attribute of man. Those who don't have it is equal to an animal.<sup>84</sup> Sivayagi considers knowledge as the only way to attain salvation. All the other earthly goods and practices were things that restrict the scope of salvation. Thus, in his opinion a virtuous man is one who strive for salvation without being destroyed by world by pleasures, which makes him a prey to it. He emphasizes the invariability of leading a virtuous life to make the world livable.

All of them were buying to develop a world view based on holism. It was not based on the conquest of nature for the benefit of man proposed by christianity. This is evidenced from the Bible itself. In genesis it is stated that

*"And to Adam he said, thou hast listened to thy wife's counsel, and has eaten the fruit iforbade thee to eat; and now, through thy act, the ground under a curse. All the days of thy life thou shalt win food from it with toil; thorns and thistles it shall yield them, this ground from which thou dost win they food. Still thou shalt earn thy bread with the sweat of they brow, until thou goest back into the ground from which thou wast taken; dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*<sup>85</sup>

They propagate a 'man' who live in harmony with nature controlling desires and shedding off selfishness. This is not based on any kind of antipathy or domination. They imagine a social world where all could articulate their own ideas enter into discussions and live happily which doesn't curtail such a right of others. This is possible if one is prepared to follow the principles propagated by them. Thus, they conceptualize an imagined community<sup>86</sup> the sustenance of which is facilitated by mutual understanding and mutual dependence.

It is true that their discourse revolve round man and his problems. They believed that the problems of man were to be solved in this world itself. Thus, it is an entirely different position from the tradition of India. Where we come across neither the free man nor the solving of his problems in this world. The mainstream Indian tradition was other worldly in nature. Other worldly in the sense that at least in the discursive realm they usually think in terms of other word. At the same time it also aim at transcending the attempt at dehumanization discernible in modernity. In a world of competition pronounced by modernity, man was squeezed out of his essence. Selfishness generated under capitalist production sees every other man as his enemy which leads to a sense of insecurity and aggressiveness. Hence, it can be assumed that the limitations of man under modernity is the context of their discussion of the qualities of man. This discussion helps them to construct a new notion of humanity which constitute the basic feature of the new society they wished to reconstruct. Their man can be considered as an analogical construction of man in modernity. Their discourse enables man to live in harmony with nature. It conveys that human sustenance is enabled by natural understanding and not by mutual enmity which is the key note of the traditional wisdom.

**Holistic Approach:** The intellectuals under study developed an holistic approach towards living. They believed that earth is the abode of all living beings. It is not meant for man alone. The insects that destroy crops were treated as enemies by modern man. But in this approach these are also treated as part of the life cycle. They proposed to accept earth with all its favorable and unfavorable

elements. The earth is neither given up nor rebuked at for permitting poisonous herbs to grow along with good ones said Vagbhatanada. Sivayogi and Sivananda who propagates vegetarianism and admonish animal killing were emphasizing the right of other living beings to live. He also states that god is definitely not a beggar who demand flesh of animals and also not a 'corpse' eating fox. He confirms the irrelevance of the practice of animal sacrifices by pointing out the contradictions in the supportive statements. He says that the government will not permit stealing and adultery as one had developed a taste for it.

The adoption of new dietary habits are responsible for the loss of harmony with nature. This aspect of our modernity was well documented by many a scholars. Partha Chatterjee in his essay on our modernity has discussed in detail the issues emanating from the adoption of new dietary habits<sup>8</sup>. A criticism of this notion was made by Kanja Elaiyah in a recent study. He has shown that majority of the Indian population were non-vegetarians. The diet of the tribal included the flesh of animals hunted by them. Even the Brahmins of Bengal and Kashmir were non-vegetarians. So there is no point in arguing that physical features of man was meant for a vegetarian way of life.<sup>88</sup>

All these must have been known to them. The question then is why did they argued like this? The answer seems to be their philosophy of life. They viewed everything in its wider context. This makes the sustenance of animals the responsibility of man. Moreover, they believed that man has no right to kill other beings as he is in no way responsible for its origin.

At this point their preference for vegetarianism becomes very meaningful. Vegetarianism is the only alternative for man when he has no right to kill animals. discontinuing of non-vegetarianism require a sustainable reason. This they could find in the dissimilarity in the physical features of man and animals. They suggests that the lack of teeth in men required for killing and eating flesh of animals in itself is a sufficient proof. Another valid question is regarding vegetarianism. Invoking of vegetarianism is considered as homogenization of a Brahmin trait?<sup>89</sup> It is clear from their discourse and social practice that they have never showed any enthusiasm for the propagation of upper caste values. But Vagbhatananda showed a preference for brahmanical virtues. This has been due to the existing belief that the Brahmins were the embodiment of all knowledge and this theory was used in their critique of caste. So, it can be argued that in a bid to dissuade men from killing and eating the flesh of animals, they were proposing vegetarianism as an alternative.

At the eating table they suggested consciously keeping back of food stuffs for the animals and birds which sustain by the spill overs of men<sup>90</sup>. Swami Sivananda asked his followers to keep back a portion of crops. This was meant to be taken by rats. This concept is contrary to the principle of 'profit making' unleashed under capitalism. The individual orientation of modernity was successfully resisted with the notions of collectivity and the rhythm of nature. The concern for the sustenance of other beings, in their thought, develops into a tool to resist the evil effects of modernity. What is unveiled here is a cultural resistance to the individual oriented profit motivated, aggressive and exploitative elements of modernity. This was

basically a recapturing of the traditional notions to resist the invading universal pretensions of modernity.

The holistic perspective, thus, develops into a strategy to transcend the limitations of the existing social values. This helps to overcome the devastating effects of modernity to humanity and nature. The key word of modernity was 'progress' which was, in itself, the product of science and technology. The craze for more and more facilities and improvements in the standard of living always leads to individualism, environmental issues and exploitation of natural resources.<sup>91</sup> Thus, progress orientation leads to disharmony between man and nature.<sup>92</sup> It exploits man as well as nature. It drags man into a race for profit making and a nerves-breaking struggle for existence. This one dimensional aspect of progress and development led to the alienation of man from nature. Contrary to this, the holistic approach tries to reestablish the connection between man and nature. It is an understanding that a harmonious relation with nature is invariable for man to exist.

### **Simple living**

Another important strand in their discourse is their insistence for simple living. They were opposed to all kinds of luxuries and wasteful spending. They were opposed to most of the life cycle rituals. *Thalikettu Kalyanam* (Prepuberty marriage) and *Thirandukuli* (celebration related with the beginning of the monthly periods of a girl) were chief among the expensive and unavoidable celebrations of the day. Non-celebration of such events brought infamy to the Thravadus, which were widely practised in those days, to show their grandeur.<sup>93</sup> One of the methods suggested by them to practice simple living is the control of desires. Indian

tradition suggested 'chitha vruthi Nirodh' as an effective tool in the control of desires. Wilful abstinence has been proposed as the highest virtue in the life of the individual. The role of the sanyasin in society, hence, seems to be the propagation of the virtue of controlling desires. The Sanyasin, thus, becomes the light of the society by lighting or sacrificing oneself. But one thing to be noted here is that the ideal sanyasin so projected is not the Sanyasin of mainstream Indian tradition. It was part of the parallel movement we come across in tradition beginning from the Buddha. They were moving around in Society disseminating parallel notions of Social existence. This parallel stream was always very active in tradition showing potentials of an alternative. The philosophy of the Buddha, of the medieval Bhakti Saints and of the Siddhas of Tamilnadu were part of this protest movement.

As a corollary to this doctrine of controlling desires the attainment of happiness was projected as the enjoyment one get through the living and let living process and not through the gratification of individual desires. This is a bold resistance to the ideas of social organization propagated under modernity and capitalism. It is to be noted that in modernity material needs and its realization are torn from their holistic context and reduced independent of the community of humans. Modernity has given rise to a proliferation of human needs that have been artificial. The vicious circle of the gratification of such needs made humans a victim of it. This victimization become very terrific as there was nobody to console him.

The invariability of leading a simple life is projected by them for the material and spiritual enjoyment as a human being. Being preyed upon by the hegemonizing colonial culture leads to the estrangement of human beings from

nature. This suggests that they were able to foresee the dangers of dominance of commodification well in advance. The notion of simple living develops into a strategy to counteract the pretensions of modernity. As it succeeds in the attempt of challenging modernity, it get projected as the only alternative to modernity- 'the ideology of future'. Even before Gandhiji asceticism and simplicity as a weapon against commodification under modernity was practiced by these thinkers. It is also possible that there must have lived such preachers and doctrines all over India, but were marginalized. Hitherto unknown philosophical articles written by Iyothee Dass Pandithar in Tamilnadu reveals one such prominent instance of marginalisation.<sup>94</sup>

**Attitude towards women:** The attitude of the intellectuals towards women are also worth noting. In the patriarchal society women and their problems were generally marginalized. They were not an active force in history and were assigned a subsidiary role. Even though it approved of the right of the eldest lady of the family the same parameters cannot be applied to the other female members of the family. They were forced to live under many restrictions of the patriarchalised social structure and norms. But gradually the age was giving birth to a new sensibility of feminine identity. The issue was addressed primarily as the right of the individual.

The Sthreividya poshini helps us to locate the attitude of Sivayogi towards women. He has written this work at a time when women folk in Kerala Society were denied any individual or social role. She was virtually tied up in the kitchen and related matters. She was reduced to a passive partner in

procreation and in fulfilling the libidinal requirements of the male. The consciousness about the purity of the group is depended largely upon the chastity of women. The result was the confinement of women within the four walls of the house. From time to time stringent measures were taken to put the system in order. This process was reflected in the field of worship. One time powerful female divinities were assigned a subsidiary role when they were given in marriage to a male god<sup>95</sup>. This was followed by the idealization of the role of women in society. Thus, she was made into a glorified category. Glorification seems to be the technique employed by the patriarchal society to keep the women in subjection. If we look at the issue from the perspective of women it becomes clear that they were denied privacy as well as freedom. The practice of Pulappedi was read as the tool used by the male dominated society to keep women under subjection<sup>96</sup> Sthree vidya poshini is looked at against this background.

Shivayogi begins the poem with a strong criticism of the dominant belief that female education will lead to the loss of chastity. In his opinion, female education will increase the happiness of man. Moreover to perform satisfactorily their duties as wife and mother they require education. This is an expression of the nationalist agenda which confined women to the home.<sup>97</sup> 'The inhuman condition of women in relation to the practise of 'Sati' was studied by Latamony and stated her state had become the index of tradition, her virtues a measure of ancient strength and ignorance a sign of deficiencies'.<sup>98</sup> So the creation of a new society will only be possible if women were given education/freedom. For the

thinkers studied here the notion of women education is equal to giving them equal status in society. Denial of education makes them marginalized in the emerging society. Liberational potential of new education as propagated by modernity is expressed in the discourse of Sivayogi on education. This helped to sketch the existing society as one that proceed towards retrogression. Thus, he made extending of educational facilities to all members of the society one of the objectives of the Ananda Samajam. Sivayogi states that in the group of virtuous, goodness is not the privilege of a few. He cites here the example of Queen Victoria, who ruled the nation, even better than a man. He cites examples also from Indian tradition like those of Saraswathi, being considered as the goddess of education, the case of Gargi Choodala etc. The story of Choodala shows that advises from women/wife will be considered only if she get disguised as a sanyasin.<sup>99</sup>

The above mentioned examples shows that the intention of Sivayogi was not the development of women as a category and its radicalization. He addressed the issue of women primarily as a wife and mother not the agency of women. He treated them as domesticated and subservient to the patriarchal notions of family and good life. His concern about the life of men and children as 'laid waste due to contact with an uneducated lady at home' is a clear expression of the nationalist agenda.<sup>100</sup> It is closely related to the development of society at large. His emphasis on women education is an under standing of the relation between education and power. He did not bothered to bring forward the discussion beyond certain limits. Taking an antagonistic position against the system that denied

them their freedom was not his intention, unlike the present feminist ideology. His intention was to improve the system in general where the well being of human beings in general was the ideal not the empowerment of women as a separate category.<sup>101</sup> (this may be due to his representational nature/his class position). The consciousness itself can be treated as a step to transcend the existing situation.

Swami Sivananda recognize only the biological differences viz male/female. All the other divisions, such as caste and religion are artificially created for him. At the same time he views the two as the attribute of the same entity. Indian tradition has developed such a notion. C.G.Jung also has a similar notion on male and female into a single unit leads to the realization of Supreme happiness. Hence he imposes no restrictions to the free mingling of the two categories in his samajam. At the time of prayer all were to assemble without putting on any dress. For the rest of the time they were to move about in minimum white clothes. This can be treated as an attempt to convert the innate desire for sex into a natural passion for mating. Moreover nudity is not expected to generate sexual passion.<sup>102</sup> It is not a desire suppressed by the social world and to be communicated on ideal time by word look and touch. It is not a thing to be consumed at will but a divine act to be performed on mutual understanding. Mutuality is a restriction, which is unnatural. This has to be treated as a device introduced to make the males recognize the equal status of their woman folk in the society of the siddhas. The thing to be noticed is the absence of idealization of the women folk in the society of the Siddhas.

## Tradition

In the colonial discourse tradition was treated as the other of modernity and the east was represented as the land of base and in human qualities. It became, thus, a stagnant, backward looking unreasonable and superstitious civilization. Whereas the west stood for dynamism development, reason and future orientation. The alternative open to the eastern countries was presented as imbibing the qualities of the west. This characterization was guided by imperialist motivations<sup>103</sup> The experience of the colonies, thus, became a regulated attempt at mimicking the west.<sup>104</sup> This created an interactive space for the articulation of Indian issues. Construction of the otherness thus becomes the device introduced by the west to keep the east under subjection. Otherness is a constructed reality intended to orientalize the orient.<sup>105</sup>

The inter action between tradition and modernity developed a new sensibility which was different from the west, which was identified as new-traditionalism. Rudolph has emphasized the dialecticality between tradition and modernity which in the changed circumstances leads to the activation of marginalized qualities that express potentialities for change.<sup>106</sup> We come across a nostalgic attitude towards tradition as well as a craze for the employment opportunities and modern ideas in those whom the colonial subject formation was complete. However, as the subject passes through various stresses and strains it enters a new phase of crisis. The identity, which was being ridiculed at by his masters, compelled the subject to look at tradition more passionately. Thus, the ontological problems faced by the subject leads to an introspection, a process of

going back to the sources.

The notion of return to source is used in the Indian context taking into account the multiple nature of sources that are available to different social groups. Elite reform movements throughout the Indian subcontinent made use of the dominant brahmanical texts for the cultural regeneration. Middle and some of the lower caste movements also made use of similar sources. For Eg. Sree Narayana Guru in Kerala reinterpreted the sanskritic knowledge to evolve out of it a radical praxis. Whereas the movements of the pulayas made use of elements of modernity to create their social and political movements. In certain groups missionary Christianity itself was transformed into a potential source to fight social oppression which can only be considered as part of modernity. The subject in crisis represents this process of introspection<sup>107</sup>

Such an intervention develops more insights about traditional wisdom. The insights brought forward by an excursion into the tradition makes it capable of developing a new semiotic field to resist the invasion of capitalist cultural symbols. This was far ahead of the process of reform undertaken by the early reformers and the cultural strength it contained helps to transcend the world view represented by modernity. The thinkers under study reformulated tradition through negotiation and the knowledge so derived were made the fundamentals of the emerging society. That is, tradition has transformed into a tool of subversion in their project. An analysis of their discourse conveys that they were undertaking a critique of tradition on the basis of Sruthi(Scripture) reason and experiences.

Early reform practice viewed the Indian tradition as an agglomeration of superstitions, unreasonable, unequal, and inhuman rituals. This attitude was considerably influenced by the orientalist notions developed in the modern west. Whereas, the second generation of the thinkers employed a positive and constructive interaction with tradition. Sivayogi shows such an attitude to tradition. For him Indian tradition was not a storehouse of unreason. Unreason crept in as a result of incorporation of verses into it by vested interests. He makes us believe that true faith must be consistent with reason. In his scheme we fail to find a privileging of faith over reason. More significant is the absence of conflict between the two. To prove this he relied on Yogavasishtam<sup>108</sup> which laid down that irrational explanation should be given up even if it is stated as god given.

Similarly he argues that most of the commentaries on Bhagavad Gita were made consciously to propagate inequality. So he says, 'Hindus will be saved only when such texts which propagate inequality are completely burnt or at a time when all superstitions are given up'.<sup>109</sup> Here it can be argued that he was considerably influenced by modernity.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, it is very significant that he is not prepared to rule out totally the value of tradition. Instead he was trying to find out *Pramanas*(Principles) which emphasize reason or to give a new interpretation to show that the existing comment is a defective one.

Sivayogi examines also the self contradictory nature of the tradition. For him the desire to have sex with women of all castes for a man is sufficient to prove that the hierarchical division of society is arbitrary. To supplement this theory he adopts examples from the animal world. No possibility of cross-sexing

exist in the animal world. Human beings shows desire in mating and enjoys it irrespective of caste distinctions. Moreover, no physical features are available in the human body to distinguish one caste from the other. Here, Sivayogi was trying to keep the people in a general category instead of putting them in a hierarchy. This was expressed by him categorically and states that all such discriminations are concoctions by vested interests and advises us to follow the essence of the Gita. Thus, whatever is bad in tradition is attributed to the practitioners who did it out of selfish motive. He was visualizing a period when the scriptures existed in an uncorrupted form. He seems to share a notion of scholars who says that the brahmanical mode of life attained currency in the period preceding the British raj<sup>111</sup>.

Another important strand in his attitude to tradition is selective appropriation. He says that tradition need not be used totally as it was introduced by our forefathers. It should be put to a weeding out process in accordance with Sruthi Yukti and Anubhava (Scripture, reason and experience). He used here a well metaphor.<sup>112</sup> He says if a well water is salty we will not use it even if it is dug by our predecessors. Likewise, we must be prepared to give up corrupt practices. Thus, Sivayogi was attempting to make tradition socially rooted. i.e. the requirements of the society may change from time to time. So, living in accordance with an unchangeable tradition makes it incompatible and anachronistic. Thus, understanding the essence of tradition and organizing life according to it becomes invariable for mankind. This is in a way identifying the original source through a hermeneutical exercise. Through the well metaphor he brings forth a

strong criticism against eternal and unchanging values attributed to scriptures. This is more or less akin to the Kantian tradition of rational paradigm against traditional concepts which implies that whatever be the tradition, if it is degenerated, it is to be abandoned.

Another feature of his critique of tradition is his notion of it being practiced without understanding its real meaning. That is why *Sagunopasana* entered in Indian tradition he says. The essence of *Sagunopasana* is that god can be pleased by acts like scarifices, idolatry fasting etc. this approach helps him to ascribe new meanings to such acts which facilitate their project. So, in his project 'fasting' is not starving but merging the self with Iswara. He says that starving is an act that weakens the body which is considered as the vessel to cross over the cosmic world. It will also obstruct the acquiring of jnana which is essential for salvation. He shows a positive approach towards tradition. So, it becomes an organic approach which transforms into the parameters of a cultural resistance. His project is building up of a better tomorrow with the help of selective retention of tradition as well as a judicious borrowing of the valuable elements of modernity.

Vagbhatananda stood for the practical application of the traditional wisdom which would qualify man to overcome all kinds of misdeeds. He also hints at the helplessness of modern institutions and the educational system in solving the problems of man. Here we find the synthesis of tradition and modernity in the project of Vagbhatananda. The tradition which he wants to appropriate is not the one which is propagated by the existing system, but which is revealed through the basic

texts. Here he attempts a reformulation of tradition that is desirable to the present. The reference to the incapacity of modern institutions in solving the problems of man is an understanding of the limitations of modernity. He identifies the 'hollow man' who is against tradition and morality as the root cause of all evils and degeneration. He also identifies greed and selfishness as the worst enemies rather than caste system or untouchability. This can be read as the expression of the ambivalence in the ideological position of Vagbhatananda. But his ambivalence permits him to locate the evils of the hegemonic culture viz: selfishness and greed. Thus, he was taking a position against the accumulative aspect of imperialism. This is also the keynote of the existing culture of India, but was identified as the result of western imperialism. An emphasizing of the desirable tradition becomes the only possible alternative. This account for his attempt at reformulating the tradition which, in turn, develops into a resistance culture. He was showing a cultural strength to appropriate the elements of modernity which is useful to us and say that Indian tradition would succeed where modernity fail. This is an awareness of the fact that we have to invent specific technologies of modernity that are appropriate to our circumstances.

### **Reason**

Reason is one of the most important notions used by the intellectuals under study. They emphasized the universality of reason. i.e. they were not prepared to consider it as a western contribution and to acknowledge the notion that India is a land of unreason. Their project is intended as an attempt at reversing this long standing theory. They have established that the ancient people were doing things very reasonably. They were giving new interpretations to old texts and

pramanas(principles) to facilitate their project. Sivayogi cites from the Gita the following verse-

*Na buddhi bhedam janayed ajnanam karma sanginam*

*joshayel sarva karmani vidwan utkta samacharam*

The verse is interpreted as denigrating karmas in the company of the ignorant will bring miseries to the learned. So one should not denigrate Karmas to uphold jnanayoga. Another verse says that one will not be able to protect his body if he did not perform Karma(Sarira yatrapi catena prasidhyed akarmana). The interpretation given by Sivayogi for these verses are that Krishna says this only to protect the learned from the wrath of the ignorant. Not that Krishna was suggesting the way of 'Karma'(like sacrifices pilgrimages and idolatry) for salvation<sup>113</sup> and he adds that he will not take it otherwise even if Krishna comes in person and clarifies it like that. He interprets the second verse as a call to do one's duty to earn bread. Thus Sivayogi was giving a new meaning to Gita which gives it a social orientation. The attempt here is to contextualise the text so as to make it socially oriented and reasonable.

In addition to this they undertake the emphasizing of certain texts that uphold reason like Yogavasishtam marginalized by mainstream tradition. So unreasonable tradition as well as tradition that does not favor jnana was false tradition for Sivayogi. This was intended also to correct the European notion that Indian tradition was fundamentally 'unreasonable'. A positive result of this move is the transformation of the marginalized texts into a part of the mainstream discourse. Moreover, it brands all Karmic activities conscious incorporations into

the traditional knowledge. He employs the technique of desirable and undesirable form of tradition that is essential for modern man and appropriating it selectively for his benefit can be argued as an attempt at traditionalizing the modern. It is here that the observation of Vagbhatananda becomes meaningful. We see him stating that we will not give up the earth for allowing poisonous herbs to grow along with good ones. He makes the process of weeding out undesirable herbs the responsibility of man.

The Karmas like sacrifices and idolatry were criticized by the western intellectuals as superstitions. These were unreasonable and incorporation into tradition by vested interests for sivayogi. This construction of an ideal situation within tradition denies the possibility of rebuking tradition in the name of superstition. Building up the notion of 'Jnana' as the way to salvation and identifying the traditional sources which propagate it helps them to carve out an alternate form of existence acknowledged by traditional wisdom. Modernity projects a man with desires, which finally leads to his fall. They addressed this crisis faced by modern man. That is why Vagbhatananda talks about the 'Hollow man' who is a product of the modern age. Emphasizing of traditional wisdom in accordance with reason is their project develops into a feasible alternative to overcome the problems faced by modern man. The attempt to say eastern reason in different from western reason and it is not possible to achieve it through existing practices is an attempt to delineate the desirable tradition. This approach makes their discourses an active and positive one and projects it into a meaningful ideology.

To emphasize the meaningfulness of traditional wisdom he quotes a verse from Yogavasishtam which means that what is rational should be accepted even if it is stated by a child and irrational explanation should be given up will not approve of what is unreasonable.<sup>114</sup> So for him all unreasonable elements present in tradition was either an incorporation or things which are practised without knowing its essence. He proposes to follow the essence of tradition which is reasonable just as we take only the cane juice to drink not its rind as it was god given. This shows that critical thinking was integral to Indian philosophy and was marginalized by vested interests and what was projected was the tradition which was basically oppressive in nature. This instinctive law of selection operates even in the insect world. An ant selects and picks up only particles of sugar if it is mixed with grains of sand. So, he says, one will get lost if he begins to believe everything present in tradition<sup>115</sup>

They argue that practicing of irrational things were, in a way, an attempt at negating human identity. This resonates with the Cartesian dictum 'I think therefore I am.' Moreover, they argue that rationality is not the sole contribution of the modern west. It prevailed also in India. But it was shrowded in ignorance completely. If ignorance is fought out, reason will present itself ones again. At the same time, their project draws a distinction between eastern and western rationalism. Indian rationalism recognized self-realization as the aim of life whereas western reason approved acquiring of material gains as the aim of life. Hence self-imposed restrictions and approving the rights of others assumed significance in their project. Imbibing and practicing of such ideals help one to attain the

ultimate knowledge that lead to mental peace and tranquility. They emphasize invariability of reason in the western fashion. At the same time, they distinguish eastern reason with a positive twist and establish that eastern reason is essential to save humanity.

### **Moral code**

The thinkers under study emphasized the importance of imbibing and practising of personal virtues. They insisted the adoption of a moral code consisting of non-lying and non-stealing. This is essential for the sustenance of humanity, they believed. It is based on the understanding of the right of others which makes the world livable. The early Nineteenth century intellectuals also advocated this. The protest movements widely prevailing in India as well as the individual renouncers also preached this. Thus, the practicing of personal morality becomes a significant trait of the tradition and the thinkers have brought out the sources that propagate morality. All those who were concerned about society emphasized the necessity of a moral code that ensured the sustenance of society.

This concept is entirely different from and virtually contradictory to modernity. Modernity facilitated the development of new world-views and social theories based on individuals. In modernity we come across only an orientation towards competition and profit-making which is not bound up by any doctrine of ethics. It developed only capitalist frugality to make the capital multiply<sup>116</sup>. Even the doctrine of equality was used to criticize the hierarchised society, not to ensure the equality of individuals. Instead it was creating a new hierarchy based

on capital. This permits the moneyed to marginalize the poor in a bid to increase his profits. Thus, the individual oriented world-view criticized and marginalized tradition as it blocks the free development of modern individual and capitalism. As a literal going back was impossible a negotiation between tradition and modernity become inevitable. This unmediated negotiation is also significant as it brings forth a harmonious society<sup>117</sup>. The preaching of individual morality by the intellectuals has to be considered against this background.

As tradition was more concerned about collectivity it emphasized the ethical code, which alone will make the collectivity sustain. Morality was developed on the main principle that people were basically good. They become corrupt because of their proximity with evils. As they were virtuous by nature, it is easy for the wise men to lead them towards a moralistic existence. But, at times, people were prayed upon by various temptations. Moral code is suggested by great men to make human existence possible. Bhartrihari identified twelve principles as the fundamentals of the code. They are ending of desires, paptience, giving up of pride, not to do sing, truthfulness, not to follow bad men, depend the barned, to be courteous, humble, to help the enemeies and to be merciful.

*Asham Chindi, bhaja kshamam, Jahimadam*

*Pape mathim ma krtha:*

*Satym broohi nayahya Sadhu padavim,*

*Sevaswa Vidwad janam*

*Manyal manaya Vidwisho pyanaya*

*Prakhyapaya prasrayam*

*Keerthim palaya, dudhithe kuru daya*

*Menalsatham cieshtitham.*

*Bratrhri*

Tradition considers pleasure and pain as illusory. Men become desirous as he was carried away by illusion. Hence the insistence upon the project of chitha vrthi Nirodha by the intellectuals. The Buddha identified desire as the cause of misery. This concept of illusion makes invariable an understanding of the self. The consciousness about the self helps one to develop a personality which is immovable by worldly pleasures. Modernity offers pleasures to the individual which, in turn, preys up on him. Thus the ethical code saves man from being a slave of modernity. An essential feature of capitalism is its formlessness. A formless enemy could not be brought into a frontal attack. The only alternative to transcend it is to concentrate in oneself. So the ethical code develops into an ideology that resist the evil effects of modernity and transcends it.

The whole project of the thinkers under study is intended to convince the new individual of the necessity of imbibing personal virtues. It makes him feel that it is tied up with the interest of the society at large. Thus, it reveals itself as a nationalist project that emphasize the necessity of a national identity in the emerging world order. The study reveals that the thinkers were informed of the anti-social nature of modern individual development based on competition. Sivayogi who is conscious about the sustenance of others and the Sidha Samajists who feed the guests before they take food is an indication of this awareness. Hence they propose a new alternative of a socially rooted individual instead of an indi-

vidual who is after the gratification of desires.

### Notes and References

1. It is evident that Hinduism has become degenerate on account of internecine strifes born of communal differences and idolatrous practices; and that the essence of Hinduism lies hidden in the meshes of false scriptures. To eradicate this evil and to resuscitate Hinduism which emphasize non-violence I have expounded the principle of Rajayoga. *Ananda Vimanam*, Introduction-1986
2. *Anandadarsham*, 1998, P.227.
3. He was referring to the puranic story of killing Sudraka on the demand of the Brahmin who complained that he lost his child because of this. Sivayogi cites this as an instance to prove that religious belief breeds ignorance- *Anandadarsham*, p230.
4. Quoted in P.V.Gopalakrishnan, *Ananda cult and the Teachings of Sivayogi*, 2002, p22.
5. The features of the Ananda cult was elaborated by K.T.Kunhikammaran Nambiar in his article on *Anandadarsham* in *Sri Sivayogi Souvenir*, 1.9.52.
6. In many a place he has stated that he was being ridiculed by orthodoxy as an agnostic as he criticized them with the help of Sruthi, reason and experiences. He was critical of the atheists also as they failed to prove that they realize eternal bliss through their denial of god. See Sivayogi, *Anandadarsham*, 1998, p 180.
7. See M.Sahadevan, *Towards Social Justice and Nation Making*, 1993.
8. Himself being the follower of the Karmic way after critiquing it entered the stage of eternal bliss.*Anandadarsam*, Introduction, 1998.
9. *Anandadarsam*, 1998, p 97.
10. *Ibid.*, p90.
11. "Sidhavedam is the book written by Sivananda Paramahansa, the Study of which, for him, will help to understand one's life protect it, attain fulfillment and thereby help to achieve world welfare and peace. It also include the sidhavidya which is projected as the solution for the tortures that people undergo at the time of death out of sympathy for the suffering millions and to initiate them into this noble means of self-realization." *Sidhavedam*, introduction, 1990.
12. *Ibid*, p 311
13. The inference of Sivayogi is also similar. He also criticized the prac

- tice of erecting monumental structures and consecrating idols in it.
14. Early reformers criticized it as Superstitions following the western notion. See R.C. Majumdar, *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance vol II*, 1965.
  15. Liberation theology is a movement initiated by the Christian Church which aimed rehumanization.
  16. *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, 1998, p896.
  17. "The earth is neither blamed nor given up by man as it permitted to grow poisonous herbs and unwanted trees" Ibid, p-897.
  18. All religious preachers discovered the same basic principle. Uniformity in ideals prevails. Differences exist only in ethically unwarranted things that which is responsible for quarrels.....Sincerity foster peace. Atma Vidya Sangham is a community based on human love, Brahmavathan -Biography, 1971, p147.
  19. This was done with the help of a verse from Yoga Vasistam, *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, p346.
  20. Brahmavathan, 1971, p 69.
  21. Reference is to Bharanipattu, Sung by devotees during their pilgrimage to Kodungallur temple.
  22. Ainslie. T. Embraee, (Ed), *Sources of India Tradition*, 1991.
  23. Non-Aryan cult spots widely seen in Malabar, KKN Kurup, *Aryan Dravidian Elements in Malabar Folklore*, 1977, p 14.
  24. Periodic festival conducted at Kavus to honour the deceased hero who got deified. This is a popular, form of worship where redressal of the sorrows are sought by common man. See M.V. Vishnu Namboodiri, *Theyyam*, 1998, p 22.
  25. *Complete Works of Vagbhatananda*, p427.
  26. Such issues are articulated in Yoga Kshema Sabha meetings. VTBhattathiripad, MP Bhattadiripad, EMS Namboodiripad and many others were associated with early Brahmin renaissance whereby the need for women upliftment and freedom was mainly asserted. The drama 'Thozhil Kendrathilekku' (1948) is significant as it deal with the theme of women employment. Yogakshema Sabha was started as a forum of Namboodiri in 1908 at Thrissur. A paper was started in the same name to articulate the issues relating to Namboodiris. See Yogakshemam, Unni Namboodiri, Thrissur.
  27. Vagbhatananda has attempted a taxonomy of divinities. Lower caste gods were characterized as mythical figures leading an immoral life, being punished for that by righteous upper castes. Many like Kuttichathan was represented as womanizers drunkards and cow

- herd boys who were never qualified to be worshipped, MSA Rao, P 80
28. Sanskritisation is a term used by M.N.Srinivas to denote the process of upward mobility to a reference group by an inferior caste expecting higher status in future.
  29. Forcible capturing of Otherwise, unattainable qualities which are upper caste in nature is in itself a resistance to it.
  30. E M S Namboodiripad, *Keralacharithravum Samskaravum: Oru Marxist Veekshnam*, 1995, p 57.
  31. MSS Pandian, *Meanings of Colonialism and Nationalism in studies in History*, 812.n.s.1992.
  32. *Moksha pradeepam*, p 183
  33. K.N.Panikkar quoted in *Culture, Hegemony, Ideology*, 1995, p 104.
  34. *MokshaPradeepam*, p 183.
  35. No Brahman was born with the sacred thread or tuft on his body. At the time of renunciation the Brahma will clear it off. This procedure signifies that it has nothing to do with the brahminhood. *Moksha Pradeepam*, pp 195,196.
  36. Traditionally knowledge is denied to the Sudra because if he could know the essence of the Upanishads or any scriptures they will also rise to the status of Brahmins. Then the Brahmans will lose their privileged status and prosperity. That is why the Brahmins keep the Sudra in darkness. He indicates this position with the help of developments in the colonial world. Without any hesitation the Brahmins explained and taught the upanishadic teachings and Scriptures to the Europeans which was denied to the common man. *Ibid*, pp 192,193)
  37. Louis Dumont, *Homo-Hierarchicus*, 1986.
  38. *Moksha Pradeepam*, p 103.
  39. *Ibid*, p103
  40. *Ibid*, p105
  41. *Ibid*, p109
  42. In his project the Brahmin is one who distinguishes between Nitya and Anitya. He is the master of the Veda which is knowledge. The four varnas originate from the person. They are mind, Chittam, Buddhi and Ahankara. Mind is the Brahmin, as Chittam is the light it is the kshatriya, Buddhi is the Vaisya and Ahankara is the *Sudra-Sidhavedam*. P 300,301.
  43. 'Poor Idiot' (Sadhuvaya viddi) is the central character in 'Keralanacaram' written by Swami Sivananda Paramahansa. He is represented as an out caste in the work. The critique he under

- takes makes him the wisest man.
44. *Keralanacharam* p2.
  45. *Ibid* p.4.
  46. P.Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Nootandile Keralam*, 1988, p 27,28,29
  47. *Keralanacharram*, 1993, p 22.
  48. The Polluting castes undertakes the cleaning activities on the visit of impurities related with birth death and menstruation. The reference is to the practice of Mattu(purificatory cloth) supplied by the washer woman on the terminal day of impurity.
  49. Louis Dumont has developed the theory that India can only be Homo-Hierarchicus, after studying various caste groups and their interrelationships. See Homo-Hierarchius-Louis Deumont. This theory was criticized by C.J.Fuller(caste Today) who emphasized the changing character of caste in a democratic set up.
  50. Swami Sivananda, *Op.cit.* p 2.
  51. All those who fails to see even with the help of spot light, that caste is not visible in bones, marrows, flesh, skin or hair is worth to be kept in museums to be seen to the guests from London. *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, p 283
  52. *Ibid*, pp 821-876.
  53. *Ibid* p 283.
  54. The point of dispute is stated as his contention of existence of 'Soul' as different from 'mind', Another issue was the personality clash between the two disciples, Pandit K P Karuppan and Vagbhatananda Interview with Nirmalanmda Swami dt.26-12-02.
  55. Foreword *Complete works of vagbhatanada*, 1998, p xLVii
  56. See R.N.Yesudas, A People's Revolt in Travancore: 1975. *Col.Munroe in Travancore*, 1977, p
  57. The instances of savage cruelty meted out to the slaves to the South Travancore express the non-recognition of individual bodies to the slaves. See Matteer Samuel, *The Land of Charity* ,1991, pp 43,44.
  58. These are characters in the novel *Indulekha* written by O.Chandu Menon Published in 1889.
  59. S.Kappan,*Tradition-Modernity-Counter-culture*:Visthar, 1994.
  60. Bryan Turner. S, *The body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*, p 81. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1996, p 81.
  61. Marriages were performed as a function where relatives and friends became witnesses. Garlanding and other rituals became the symbol of legal marriages. These were stressed by Sree Narayan Guru,

- Mannath Padmanabhan and others. Even feasts were given a uniform pattern during this period.
62. *Keralanacharam* P 34.
  63. What is proposed is not the consumerism of today. From the status of 'lack of modern amenities' such commodities entered the households. The furniture seen in an average household prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century will prove this. The outcome was making money and spending it for such commodities. That is, manufactured goods flooded a community which was earlier satisfied with traditional amenities.
  64. Gandhiji's preference for Indian industries was also guided by the disastrous effects of modern industry. M.K.Gandhi. *Collected Works, Hindu Swaraj Vol 10*, 1958, p 57.
  65. Traditionally a householder is one who indulges in worldly affairs. Those who fail to reconcile with the social world could move out of it. They are the ascetics who live within the social world but not of it. Veena Das, *Structure and cognition*, 1977, p 45.
  66. Max Weber: *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1976, p 181.
  67. This interpretation is made in accordance with a verse in Yajnavalkya Samhitha. The verse is 'Sathyam Bhoothahitham Proktham' meaning doing good to all beings. *Moksha Pradeepam*, p 233.
  68. Kottakkal P V Krishna Variyar has discussed at length the features of his non-violence and contrasted it with the doctrine of the Buddha-Sivayogi Souvenir 1952.
  69. *Moksha Pradeepam*, p236.
  70. Ibid, p154.
  71. Ibid, p160.
  72. Ibid, p165.
  73. For a different understanding of fear under the raj see Partha Chatterjee *Religion of Urban domesticity* Subaltern Studies vii, 1975.
  74. Citham Caranamarthanam tasmintsat jagatrayam  
Tasmin kshine jagat kshine jagat kshenam tat cikitsyam Prayatnata,  
Yogavasishtam. Ver 25. Translated by Dr. N.Gopala Panikkar, 1985, p343.
  75. *Moksha Pradeepam*, p46.
  76. Ibid, p158
  77. He explains this in accordance with Vasishtam which states that those who satisfy themselves through sacrifices, penances, gifts, pilgrimages and different forms of worship that leads to sorrows, lead their life like animals. Ibid, p.152.
  78. This genre was quite common from late nineteenth century onwards

in propagating new ideas and also attempting a critique of traditional world-views as evidences in the writings of missionaries propagating Christian truths in the 'heathen' Malabar which were published as vernacular tracts in Malayalam- For Eg. Vazhikatti and Keralopakari.

79. Swami Sivananda Parmahamsa, *Lokashanthikkulla Jeevitham*, 1989 p 12.
80. Etinne Balibar, *The Nation Form: History and Ideology*, p229-361 in Review vol. 13 No.3 Summer 1990. Also see Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 1976
81. Complete Works of Vagbhatananda, p 278.
82. Ibid, p 298
83. For details see Nalunnakkal, Goerge Mathew, *Green Liberation-Towards an integral Ecotheology*. ISPCK/NCCI Delhi 1999.
84. *Moksha Pradeepam*, p 288.
85. Holy Bible, Genesis Chapter 3. 17,18,19.
86. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1996.
87. Partha Chatterjee, *Possible India*, 1997, p 256
88. See Kanjah Elaiyah, *Budha as a Political Philosopher*, Culcutta, 2000.
89. Generally speaking vegetarianism is a trait of the Brahmins.P. Bhaskaranunni, Op.cit. p.38.
90. Ref interview with Nirmalananda dt. 26-12-02
91. Progress fails to consider such issues as it was uni dimensional in nature. For eg. Planners never considered seriously the ecological imbalances generated by the construction of big dams. Such anxieties were strongly articulated over the Sardar Sarovar and Tehri projects.
92. The dynamism of the idea of progress in the context of the socio-economic transformation of Kerala has been critically analyzed by recent scholars. For details see K.T.Rammohan unpublished Doctoral thesis submitted to University of Kerala, 1996.
93. Moyarath Shankaran was an eminent political activist of this day who stated his public career as the member of Atma Vidya Sangham. In his autobiography he states wasteful celebration as the root cause for the decline of the nair families of his village. Moyyarath Sankaran, *Ente Jeevitha Katha*, 1965, p11.
94. Alosius(Ed) *The Thoughts of Iyothee Dass Vol I & II*, 1999.
95. S.Kappen, Tradition Modernity counter culture, 1994.
96. P P.Sudhakaran P.P., Kerala Patanangal vol4, *Pulappedi Puthiyoru Anveshanam*, 1994, pp 454-509, January-March 1998.
97. Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments*, 1994.

98. Latamoni, Contentious Traditions in Sangari K & Vaid S (Ed). *Recasting Women: Essays in colonial History*.
99. Moksha Pradeepam, p 205.
100. Rosalind O' Hanlon, *A Comparison Between Women and Men*, 1994.
101. Women empowerment as problematized by the various reformers was addressed in detail by E.K.Swarna Kumari. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis 'Social changes in Malabar.' University of Calicut Sept.2001.
102. Is not the most erotic portion of the body where the garment gapes? See Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1975, p 9.
103. See Stephen Hay (Ed), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol II, 1991.
104. David Kopf , *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, 1969, p 134.
105. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1979.
106. See Rudolf.S.Rusolph: *Op.cit.*, 1999
107. K N Panikkar: *Culture ideology Hegemony*, 1995, p 84.
108. Yogavasishtam is one of the greatest philosophical texts India which is attributed to Valmiki. It has 32000 verses in all divided into six parts. It aim at the spiritual and material development of humanity. It criticized the notion that the spiritual is antagonistic to the material. It was presented in the form of Jnanopadeshm to King Rama by Vasishta in 18 days. See for details Dr.N.Gopal Panikkar:Yogavasishtam(Malayalam)Voll, 1985.
109. *Mokshapradeepam* p 107.
110. The binary of reason/unreason is considered as a problem that emerge within modernity as a result of classification. The construction of binaries such as free/unfree, equality/inequality, tradition/modernity are considered as one of the features of modernity.
111. See Susan Bayly, *Cambridge History of India*, 1999.
112. *Mokshapradeepam*, p 40.
113. Ibid p 86,87.
114. Ibid 107.
115. Ibid p 39.
116. Max Weber, *Protestant ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1976, pp 47, 48.
117. See Andre Beteille , *Inequality And Social Change*, 1977.

# Contours of the intellectual Tradition

Asokan Mundon “Renaissance and social change in malabar - a study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham ” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter IV

### **Contours of the intellectual Tradition**

This chapter attempts to bring out the features of the intellectual activity of the thinkers under study. This is done against the background of the readings of the texts done in the previous chapter. Here intellectual activity is considered as a conscious intervention with a motive of changing society. This enables the development of an individually differentiated thought which will reflect the cultural and intellectual milieu prevailing at that time as well as the stresses and strains experienced by the intellectuals in the given context. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the intellectual activity. It has already been approved that the intellectuals has a significant role to play in bringing about social change. Their action will be directed by the aspirations of class to which they belong. They were expected to play a counter-hegemonic role in society to evolve new patterns. This necessitates an ideological conquest of the traditional intellectuals to establish the hegemony of the group they represent. Such intellectuals were considered as organic intellectuals by Antonio Gramsci, who were the thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class. According to Gramsci everybody is a philosopher. However everyone need not function as philosopher in any society. So, certain organic intellectuals come up and undertake the function of transforming the society. The thinkers under study are approached from this angle.

### **Cultural and Intellectual Milieu of the Nineteenth century:**

One of the limitations of the Indian intellectuals of the nineteenth century was their incomprehension of the fact that European domination was having an intellectual tradition of at least one thousand years to their credit. They noticed only the material development of the modern west thought the agency of England. They formulated their sensibility in the dichotomous relation of inner and outer as observed by Partha Chatterjee. Anticolonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa created its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before its political battle with the imperial power. This is done by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains - the material(outer) and the spiritual (inner). The economy and state craft and Science and Technology belong to the outside where the west had proved its superiority and the east had succumbed. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an inner domain bearing the essential marks of cultural identity.<sup>1</sup> To retain the identity of Indian culture, it is essential to make it powerful enough to be able to overpower the hegemonic authority of the outer world. Hence, the option happened to be that of building up a materially powerful modern India. So they believed that Indian institutions were to be transformed in accordance with the current European ideas. They did not verify the internal processes that gave hegemony to Europe before they venture on reforming Indian institutions and practices. It has also to be admitted that opportunities to understand such processes were also limited. The new education that was introduced in India did not attach importance to imparting such

knowledge. Macaulay has a different perspective which extended the interests of colonialism.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the colonial power assumed an ideological dimension as the representative of progress in their thoughts. Moreover, the features of the educated intelligentsia included a filial dependence upon the British raj considering themselves as part of the establishment and looking up to the British for protection and promotion.<sup>3</sup> Passion for English education and Western knowledge penetrated even the obscure and remote regions of Bengal during this period.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time there were also an understanding of the insufficiencies of such an education. Some of them demanded the inclusion of more scientific and medical subjects in the curriculum. Such constraints and contradiction expressed in the thought of nineteenth century intellectuals were studied thoroughly<sup>5</sup>. It is also to be noted that there were some intellectuals who developed a different perspective on the educational system. But their voice was submerged in the clamour for Europeanisation as it offered opportunities of employment under the British to the newly educated<sup>6</sup>. Personal improvement restricted them from perceiving the true nature of Education and the British Raj-Such a situation emerged as the people who engaged in this activity came from the educated classes who cut themselves off from the traditional intellectual milieu.<sup>7</sup> Those who had the privilege of getting exposed to colonial education were undergoing an intellectual crisis. Kanja Ilaiyah has pointed out the ideological dimension of education itself. He observed that the language of the text book was antipeople (Dalit bahujan) and the culture of the School was different from the culture at home. Knowledge for the Dalit is a knowledge of social functions. But in Hindu

text a knowledgeable man was one who knows the vedas. The content of the text books are the same for a Dalit if it is Kalidasa or Shakespeare <sup>8</sup> The reason for this disenchantment of the traditional intellectuals was their feeling of superiority, that they belong to a mature culture and need not have to study from the west. But some of them developed a balanced notion that knowledge may also come from the west.

In the case of the thinkers studied here, a realization of the positive aspects of the British govt. are available. Sivayogi devoted a whole chapter for the comparison between the Indian and British administration in Moksha Pradeepam. He concludes that the governance under the British were far better from the point of view of the people.<sup>9</sup> Swami Sivananda and Vagbhatananda also shared similar notions in relation to the governance of the nation. The question, then, is why did they failed to persive the true nature of the British raj. Much Before them, the causes of poverty and the unbritish aspect of administration was brought out by Dada Bhai Naoroji through the famous Drain theory.<sup>10</sup> This unbritishness of administration has not attracted their attention. They have developed an undaunted faith in the egalitarian notions that the British represented. In 1896 the backward caste associations altogether thought of sending a delegation to the British parliament to appraise them of the ill-treatment meted out to the backward castes by the State of Travancore.<sup>11</sup> They believed in the instrumentality of the British govt. in liberating the unprivileged classes from their traditional bondage. Their positive and constructive approach to tradition helped them to enter into a healthy dialogue with the western notions. A clear perspective and an

awareness about the tradition has considerably helped them in their effort.

It has already been noted that a defence of the indigenous tradition has marked the project of the early intellectuals. Rammohun projected the corruption in Christianity to counter act the superiority of Christianity. Rammohun's writings never went beyond the point of proving that Hinduism was equal to Christianity.<sup>12</sup> The model of Dayananda Saraswathi did allow western cultural ideas to percolate to the deepest levels of Hindu religious ideas and accepted western cultural theories of political subjugation and economic backwardness. It allowed one to project into history the sense of inferiority vis-à-vis an imperial faith and to see the golden age of Hinduism as an ancient version of the modern west.<sup>13</sup> An analysis of the project of the thinkers under study has proved that they were concerned more about developing an alternate methodology that facilitated the cultural assertion of the colonized. The essential aspect of their methodology was the criticality applied both to the eastern and western notions. They were appropriating it in relation to its use value to the people. When Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda state their critical methodology as based on Sruthi, Yukti and Anubhava (scriptures, reason and experience) they mean the contextualisation of their sources itself. This practice helps them to make the acceptance of new knowledge as part of a natural process. This enables them also to liberate knowledge from its territoriality and to make it a common heritage of whole humanity. Thus, one need not have to behave as a European to acquire European knowledge. This amounts to a critique of the intellectuals position of the early thinkers and English educated classes.<sup>14</sup> What was asserted by the present thinkers was

that are need not be intellectually colonized to acquire European knowledge. The configuration of relations in their project was not based on the colonizer/colonized dichotomy but on equality and specificity.<sup>15</sup> This understanding develops the relation into a discourse between equal partners based on a notion of identity. Such a discursive action will bring about the adaptability of ideas and its organic synthesis which was invariable in the Indian circumstances. The process of change in each cultural tradition may be analysed in the context of 'orthogenetic' and 'heterogenetic' causes. Sanskritization and modernization was considered as major processes of change in the great tradition and little tradition respectively. Modernization in its specific content and form is treated as a historical rather than a universal evolutionary reality.<sup>16</sup> David Kopf considers H.H.Wilson's plan for Indian modernization as the ultimate 'orthogenetic transformation of alien imports through institutional interaction in an atmosphere of free cultural polarity.'<sup>17</sup> The cultural exchanges of the ancient and medieval period can be considered as an example of this kind of process.

There is yet another dimension to this understanding. The thinkers under study emphasized that new ideas were to be adopted only on the basis of 'necessity' and 'possibility'. Similar opinion is expressed by Swami Vivekananda. He believed that material prosperity is the present requirement of the Indian masses and advocated its adoption from the west. The aim of his American tour had been raising of money to help the Indian poor. But he was well-known for his speech at world Religious congress at Chicago, which was only a casual occurrence.<sup>18</sup> The thinkers under study insisted that the parameters of cultural

fusion has to be determined by us. They have expressed their dissatisfaction over the imitational thrust of the English educated new generation. Jyotiba Phule of Maharashtra also suggested the same thing. He was an arch enemy of the filtration theory of the British administrators and advocated educating the masses.<sup>19</sup> This approach is intended to develop self respect among the people. Imposing cultural hegemony over a people having self-respect is practically impossible. So, this attitude can be interpreted as a dislike and resistance to colonial cultural penetration. This is a negotiation between equal partners not a relation between colonial subject and hegemonic power. Indirectly, they were emphasizing a state of equality with the colonial power. As they were emphasizing self-respect, it can be considered as a part of the creation of an anti-colonial consciousness. They have laid down that such a healthy negotiation is invariable to their future community.

They need not be criticized for not developing a political action plan as their agenda was a cultural response to the hegemonising European culture. Infact they have done a commendable work. The presence of egalitarian social concepts in European culture must have influenced their perception of realities. Karl Marx subscribed to this notion. He expressed it in his contributions to NewYork Daily Tribune entitled the "Future Results of British Rule in India."<sup>20</sup> The regenerating role of the British in India raised it to the level of a saviour. Thus, the colonial state assumed ideological dimensions in their perception. It cannot be considered as a limitation in the prevailing Indian context. Their project addressed the people of India cutting across the barriers of caste and creed. Their

project intended the empowerment of the people which will strive to bring about a new community.

It can be argued that their ideals represented a paradigm shift.<sup>21</sup> Their ideas addressed the crisis faced by the amphibian lifestyle followed by the newly rich and was capable of transcending it. This makes invariable the conception of an imagined community.<sup>22</sup> Such a community has to be built on the basis of the encompassing concept of humanity. That community give no weightage to the regional or racial or any other differences but to a principle of universal brotherhood. They rejected outright the caste differences. Religion was only personal like or dislikes for them. It has nothing to do with the organized religions of the day. They make possible the sustenance of their community through a distinction between private/public domains of life. They believed that personal likes or dislikes, which belonged to the private domain, should not interfere with the matters of the public sphere. This is essential for the healthy existence of the public sphere. But at the same time both the spheres should act as complementary areas. Imbibing of personal virtues are essential to create a 'public man'. This alone would bring about a civil society in which parochial priorities are marginalized. In favor of social well-being. Thus, the insistence upon imbibing of personal virtues, acquires the new dimension of facilitating the creation of a healthy civil society. The scheming of the whole life of the individual in relation to the private/public distinction helps them to conceive a new society based on universal brotherhood.<sup>23</sup>

Religion, being related with individual salvation, need not have to inter-

ferre with the social existence of man. Thus, modern religion was devoid of its primary organizing pretensions. This is in a way a reply to the civilizing and organizing pretensions of Christianity. But they were not against the essence of Christianity and rather emphasized the similarity of the essence of all religions. Sivayogi went beyond this and implored the people to give up a religion which is not reasonable. These notions helped them to marginalize religion from the center stage. Religion, for them, is not an invariable social institution. They don't believe in the efficacy of religious conversion for the solving of problems. Vagbhatananda denounces the disparity between word and deed of Ayyathan Gopalan who was a staunch advocate of conversion to Buddhism by the Thiyyas.<sup>24</sup> Sivananda attached importance to solving the problems of man not to religious observances. Sivayogi emphasized mental purity and tranquility and considered it the only god. They stated that religious differences should not act as a hindrance to achieving humanness beyond any parochial feelings. Hence, they suggested certain ideas that help man to become good human beings while remaining a good muslim, hindu or Christian and to live happily by loving each other. Swami Sivananda conceived a society in which only natural divisions exist Male/Female. This is intended also to break the basic unit of family.<sup>25</sup> In this respect, it is a very revolutionary principle. It is an attack on the modern nuclear family system. So, his ideal stand out different when compared to other thinkers. Sivayogi tries to make 'family' itself the basic unit of resistance. Sivayogi believed that one need not have to leave his house to attain salvation. The enlightened individual within the family, while performing his familial responsibilities could

attain it. Moreover, he made it his responsibility to enlighten the other members of the family. Thus his project made the 'family' the basic unit of social transformation<sup>26</sup> In his opinion, the individual in the family who is conscious of his identity is to become the centre of cultural resistance. This enable us to understand their ideals as the tools of cultural resistance to colonialism. In this sense they are fit to be considered as the organic intellectuals of Indian tradition.<sup>2</sup>

**Culture of Dissent:** Impact response theory normally projects the civilizing role of the British.<sup>28</sup> This theory fails to explain the complexities of social and intellectual development in colonial India. It provides only a one-dimensional explanation which consider the Indian civilization as a blotting paper which absorb everything that fell on it. Moreover, it did not recognize the element of dissent and protest contained in the intellectual tradition. It even denied the existence of an intellectual tradition in the pre-colonial period. Where as, it was observed that all the heterodox sects that flourished in India was, in essence, a protest or dissent movement<sup>29</sup> They challenged caste and all kinds of social discriminations and injustices that existed in India.<sup>30</sup> That is, in pre-colonial India there developed many movements that challenged caste, idolatory and all kinds of injustices. But, such groups, in due course, came to be considered also as a caste group. It is possible to argue that the Bhakti movement was also an avarna movement that challenged the Brahmin orthodoxy and all kinds of discriminations.<sup>31</sup> They argued that Varna distinction does not exist in front of god. Varna distinction was only a device to protect the upper caste interest. Their project helped also to universalize upper caste norms. They made such norms accessible

to the lower caste. If we examine the intellectual activity of the thinkers, it becomes easy to argue that they were following the tradition of early intellectuals who initiated protest movements in India. It was not a part of the one-dimensional approach of the evangelicals and colonialists. The acceptable aspects were copied without any inferior/Superior feelings. A case in point is that of Iswarchandra Vidya Sagar and Radhakantha Deb who stood for female education.<sup>32</sup> Radhakantha Deb was branded as an orthodox as he expressed concern over the legal banning of the Sati system. David Kopf consider this as the expression of the freedom in thinking. As he was born in a wealthy family of Bengal he has not developed a feeling of dependency towards the British and mingled freely on equal terms with the British. The reason for the prosperity of Rammohun was his relation with the British agency houses. Being proud of Indian tradition Vidya Sagar asserted equality in his relation with the British. A similar condition is noticed in the case of Kesari Kunhuraman Nayanar and Willian Logar. He stayed in the Vengayil house as guest. But O.Chandu Menon the author of Indulekha failed to assert equality. It is also recently brought to light that Indulekha was written consequent on the expression of a desire by the govenor's wife to introduce the new genre to the regional readers.<sup>33</sup> All these shows that Indian intellectual tradition was part of the long tradition that successfully undertook social criticism from time to time. This was explained also as developing of a strategy to cope with modernity.<sup>34</sup> This helps us to perceive this reform discourse as part of an independent activity that manifested due to an internal dynamics. All other explanations are equal to the reproduction of the colonial ideology.

Universal brotherhood and love formed an important strand of the thought of the thinkers studied here. This may be considered as the product of toleration that was fundamental to the medieval syncretic faiths. This was an important aspect of Indian tradition. Rate of borrowings from the west was very high in nationalism and political ideals during the colonial days. This naturally led to the imbibing of the idea of decay and worthlessness by the nineteenth century intellectuals and activists. Partha Chatterjee has explained this in relation to our attitude towards modernization. As colonialism and modernity was intertwined, they failed to visualize the possibility of a Universal domain of free discourse.<sup>35</sup> Hence the notions of decay and worthlessness was felt attractive to the Indian intellectuals also. These feelings were graphically depicted in the books produced during the nineteenth century. This has to be considered as the product of Orientalism developed by the European scholars working on the orient.<sup>36</sup> Evidences to the contrary which tried to adapt the Indian knowledge to the changed circumstances are also available. The national movement was considered as an emotionally charged reply to the colonial allegation that India never was and could be a nation. The traditional roots were emphasized in political movements by persons like Gandhiji-(the ideas such as Indian religious tradition, Medieval Syncretism, strand of tolerance and impartiality in the policies of Muslim rulers were used by them) Gandhiji either postponed or sacrificed social movements of political or national interests<sup>37</sup>

The thinkers studied here developed certain notions which were contrary to the notion of decay and worthlessness. They imagine the possibility of a Uni-

versal domain of free discourse. This helped them to use freely the notions of tradition and modernity together which can be considered as a strategy of negotiation central to their project. They identified the British period as Krtayuga (age of Virtues). But to blame them on the basis of this is unjustifiable as it did not reflect the ideological transformation that is discernible in the thinkers. Sivayogi pictures the British period as Krtayuga in his Mokshaprdeepam which was published for the first time in 1893. His 'Anandadarsham' was published in 1928 which proclaimed the culmination of tolerance and universalism. This reveals an intellectual transformation in Sivayogi from the praise of the British raj to the elaboration of a universal principle. Such transformation must have taken place due to the developments between these years that increased the sufferings of the people attitude of the state towards the people in the post 1921 years and in the flood relief activities are cases in point. Government was not ready to spare money for relief works.<sup>38</sup> The editorial makes it clear that flood relief measures are the responsibility of government not of the people. It praised the attitude of Japanese government which engaged in relief activities at the time of the earthquake. These should have diminished their faith in the fairplay of the British. Perhaps the infancy of the political agitations in the region should have delayed a political consciousness. An important observation to be made here is about the lack of an attitude of animosity towards any group or individuals. So, they usually cut themselves off from direct actions as that would develop a feeling of ill-will. Ill-will never entered their project.<sup>39</sup> The ideals like Satyagraha non-co-operation abstention etc can be considered as the manifestation of the

ideas of the thinkers. They were consciously developing principles of a cultural assertion as well as ideals to resist the colonial cultural penetration even as living together with the colonial masters.

**Visualizing the future:** The significance of the project of the intellectuals under study was their developing of a vision about the future of India. They have presented the future of India in constituting a new society which is free from all kinds of sectarian feelings such as caste and religion. It can be assumed that their concern about the future of India was influenced by the 'present humiliation'.<sup>40</sup> In the thought of Sivananda we see the development of the notion of a 'renouncer standing outside the larger society constituting an exclusive space for them in an exclusive manner. He acquires nothing other than the 'status symbol' and extended the notion of individual salvation and leads others to the way of salvation. The moral authority of the renouncer rests upon the repudiation of the society and lived according to his own rules and regulations which was antagonistic to the rules of the society. The relation between the renouncer and householder is dialectical. There is no need of an attempt at change as both were distinctive but social change through 'osmosis' was also approved. Renouncer is a source of authority and 'dissent' and occupied an interactive space.<sup>41</sup> They identified the cause of humiliation in Indian tradition which faltered before the material strength of modern west. It is not possible to over power the west by the east. Hence, the insistence for a new social order that could become an alternative to both the materially powerful west and traditional and weak east as they were dissatisfied over both. The new social order was projected as one that could be an alternative

to both modern industrial culture and the inhuman nature of tradition which is not egalitarian.

Swami Sivananda identified the coming of the social norms based on 'individual' and 'family' as one of the most important evils of modernity. Hence his project included the denial of individual and family and the establishment of community that recognized the natural distinction of male/female alone. All the other distinctions were unnatural and arbitrary for him. He has developed a holistic approach and made the sustenance of other beings the responsibility of man. He believed that the welfare of 'my family' and its fulfillment through any means resorted to by modern man will lead to total destruction. Thus, he thought of reinstating the primordial communal living where there is no space for private property and family. The principle of equality is extended to women and the application of democratic norms in sexual relations<sup>42</sup> went against the notions of male dominance and patriarchy developed under modernity. This is a radical devaluing of the notion of male superiority claimed with the help of various notions. (Man is able efficient and strong. He is to be the head of the family. Women is weak and has to be subjected.) Swami Sivananda conceptualized sex as a natural union between a man and woman that lead to sublimation.<sup>43</sup> This is a radical notion that keeps away the principle of 'power' and 'force' in man/woman relations. The presence of a 'regulator' and 'force' in man/woman relations. The presence of a 'regulator' is the only unnatural factor in his community. But this has to be considered as a conscious device introduced to check the reign of anarchy and to keep up order that would have prevailed otherwise in his community. Swami

Sivananda was, thus, projecting a new community based on mutual understanding and thrift as the ideal community of the future.<sup>44</sup>

Sivayogi did not try to develop such a parallel society. He stood for the total transformation of the whole society. This could be achieved by imbibing certain values and norms. Sivayogi has identified the aim of all living beings as obtaining of pleasure.<sup>45</sup> He believed that understanding problems of others leads to the enjoyment of greatest happiness. So he suggested certain values and norms to be followed through which one may be in a position to attain eternal bliss. The attainment of bliss, thus, facilitates the creation of a new social order where there is no high-born and low-born. Perfect egalitarianism will be the keynote of such a society. This notion helps the sustenance of all living beings. This was salvation for him.

In the case of Vagbhatananda we come across a going back to the Vedantic ideology and reaches a kind of religious particularism (He emphasized the essence of all religions as similar. But, in general, he seems to be projecting the principles of Hinduism. He states that the aim of Atma Vidyasangham is the propagation of Vedantic tradition which is closely related with the transformational problem of Vagbhatananda.<sup>46</sup> He started his intellectual career as a disciple of Sivayogi but later fell apart on the question of the unreligiousness of Sivayogi, states Brabmavrathan, his biographer. But this cannot be considered as the reason for his emphasis on Vedantic philosophy. His critique of Sivayogi has to be considered, as an attempt to establish his identity as an independent intellectual.<sup>47</sup> Whereas

the followers of Sivayogi does not count this as a work of Vagbhatananda. They point out the anonymity of the work to prove their stand. Adhyatma Yuddham was first published without the name of the author. So, P.V.K.Nedungadi has written a reply to it with the title Vagbhatanandante peril or Jara Santhathi.(An illegitimate child in the name of Vagbhatananda)<sup>48</sup>

Religion is a category with which people make sense of the external world. A strong strand of Universalism is discernible in the writings of Vagbhatananda. He emphasized the essence of all religions and argued not to be inimical. At the same time he was preaching against religious conversions.<sup>49</sup> Universalism has to be seen as a product of his contact with Brahmasamajam at Calicut and the Social situation prevailing in Malabar<sup>50</sup> at that time. His religious particularism is more inclined to the late nineteenth century religious reform. But he did not try to justify the 'social evils' as it was congruous with vedic tradition. It can be understood as a mode of rationalism. The attempt here is to cleanse the Brahmin tradition of its exclusionary principles and, thus, making it acceptable. The notion of equality is used to rationalize tradition. This reduces religious conversion to an act carried away by economic interests. This gave him an opportunity to denounce religious conversions as unnecessary.

The inclination that Vagbhatananda shows towards vedantic philosophy has to be considered as a hermeneutical exercise. He was always in the look out for producing knowledge in relation to the requirements of the time.<sup>51</sup> He used his scholarship, intelligence and rhetoric and agency to establish his personal hegemony. This was made possible by making 'knowledge' the determining factor

in imposing hegemony.<sup>52</sup> This helps him to establish himself as a hegemonic power. This creates the impression of a rectifier in the personality of Vagbhatananda. But his project aims at creating a new society based on knowledge. This he expected to achieve through the dissemination of knowledge to the masses. He showed the falsity in the claims of orthodoxy which gave him space for the propagation of an alternate project. This was capable enough to break the restrictions imposed upon imparting education which sustained all kinds of marginalisations and privileges. To facilitate this he relied heavily on the Vedanta and scriptural texts as evident from his discourse. At the same time, an unscrupulous usage of knowledge is also seen in his project which extended his personal motivations.

The particularism that is contained in the thought of Vagbhatananda is capable of establishing the merits of Hinduism. This is a limitation of his thought. The other two intellectuals develop a project that could transcend the traditional values. They have developed a philosophy suitable for man who lives in conformity with nature and conceived of a new society congruent with it. At the ideological level the three thinkers developed a mutual interactive space prevails at the ideological level between Vagbhatananda and others. But the personal motivation enshrined in Vagbhatananda's thought facilitated distinction. Moreover the religious particularism of his thought enabled appropriation by vested interests.<sup>53</sup>

**Dissemination of knowledge:** One of the pre-requisites to have such a society is the dissemination of knowledge. The knowledge they wanted to be

disseminated was based on traditional wisdom. But they did not intend a mere reenacting of tradition as it was responsible for present humiliation. In fact, their discourse develops the practice of a reasonable tradition as an age old practice where tradition and reason went together.<sup>54</sup> Instances to the contrary are rejected as concoctions by the vested interests. Materials required for such a reading was collected by the thinkers from the received tradition through a re-interpretation. This shows their dislike of traditional wisdom propagated by orthodoxy based on superstition, casteism and idolatry. Their alternate project aimed at the dissemination of knowledge to the masses. This project was extended by the colonial presence and the more powerful educational system which offered a more attractive location and livelihood for the English educated. This project was designed as an alternative to both the hegemonic practices-education as a colonial ideological apparatus and education as the preserve of the upper castes in the traditional society. Both were rejected as a single possible tool of development. They have suggested a synthesis of both the projects which addressed the individual and his developing on traditional lines. In their project we come across a privileging of certain sources of tradition which makes possible the privileging the unprivileged.<sup>55</sup> Thus, it is evident that they were following a two-way process-the undermining of the colonial ideology as well as projecting the emancipatory potential of tradition. Thus it develops into a resistance culture as it emphasized the free development and emancipation of the individual in society.

The early extreme nationalists such as Balagangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo ghosh<sup>56</sup> appropriated the meta narrative in toto which led to a blending

of the national with the spiritual. For this they used the Bhagvad Gita as a medium which created a precedent of interpreting the Gita to make one strong enough to lead the national movement. An understanding of the Gita was made an inevitability for the political practitioners. The notion of passive resistance was also put afloat. An engagement with the spirituality helped them to dissociate themselves with the intricacies of the material world and finding peace and tranquility in their spiritual existence. This is, in essence a personal domain for them, where the self being perturbed by external realities finds solace. The 'inner'(personal) domain of national culture, which was considered as out of bounds to the colonial state, was conceived as already sovereign. Nationalism launched its most powerful, creative and historically significant project of fashioning a modern national culture which is not western.<sup>57</sup> This is part of their personal existence which is interwoven with their national stature. They being public men, under the maneuvering of colonial administration, people mistook it for communalization, even though, they never intended it. This dichotomous existence helped them to lead a happy life at their asrams, when the nation was burning, delivering their discourse on the Gita. This was also true with Gandhiji, when, at intervals, he led the life of a true Hindu at his asram engaging himself in spinning on his spindles and Harijan uplift programmes. However, reason writings on Gandhiji shown that he has not independently inspired popular attitude. The 'Mahatma' was constructed through aliete manipulation and the controll.<sup>58</sup> This for them had been a 'self' building programme and, have, they could live peacefully within the precincts of their asrams even against scathing criticism.

This creates an aura of mysticism around their personality which keeps them perpetually at an inaccessible limits to the common man. This happens because of the nature of the knowledge system that they celebrate and delve in, which forbade them from realizing its anti-people nature.

The case of the thinkers under study are different. They aim at demystifying the knowledge they have acquired. They wanted to make it accessible to all including the learned and ignorant. Vagbhatananda went to the extent of criticising Narayanaguru for constructing new temples and consecrating idols into it, which, in his opinion, will lead to the non-realizing of the ultimate truth by the devotees.<sup>59</sup> Guru declined to consecrate idols when he was approached by some disciple later. Besides he established his Aluva Ashram and declared in 1916 that he neither belongs to any religion or caste and those disciple who wants to enter the asram should also do the same. This shows that they were against the practice of privileging the learned leading to their occupying an exalted position in society at the expense of the majority.

A more or less similar attitude is seen in the case of Ambedkar who opposed the social deprivation practiced by the upper castes against the lower castes. The dalits as they don't have a tradition to be proud of and going back to, resorted to negotiating modernity vigorously to shake off the burdens put on their shoulders by the Varna ideology. They thought of conversions to other religions to give a blow to the pretensions of the caste Hindu. Even the Ezhavas thought loudly of conversion to Buddhism Christianity and Islam as the caste hindus were not in a mood to stop deprivations. The enthusiasm for conversion even

created considerable tension in Alleppey in 1936.<sup>60</sup> For them conversion was only a symbolic act designed to inflicting a fatal blow to the Varna ideology. The attitude of the new converts to Christianity or any other religion will show this (they practice the pagan culture even after conversion. Marriages otherwise would have considered as inter-religious was practiced by them. In this they consider only the caste loyalties not religious. The case in point is that of Nadars and dalit converts). Even after their conversion they remain to be a dalit in spirit practicing the pagan culture.<sup>61</sup> Early reform movements have influenced considerably the ideas of the thinkers under study would prove beyond doubt by biographers.<sup>62</sup> This helps us to make a distinction between the ideas of the thinkers studied here and early intellectuals like Raja Rammohan Roy. While Rammohan suggested idol worship and polytheistic beliefs useful for the ignorant to conceive the reality of a supreme being<sup>63</sup> they rejected such a notion in toto as it will lead to the non-realization of the supreme reality Beatitude is attained through the union of self with mind. How can one achieve beatitude through idolatry that obstruct the union of self with mind<sup>64</sup> by the ignorant. This is an attempt at demystification of knowledge. This discussion of an esoteric knowledge refused knowledge to be made the exclusive domain of Brahmins by birth. Knowledge of the self, thus, develops into an attainable goal to all those who strive for it, including the ignorant. Ignorance is no more an attribute of a social category but a mental state which can be cleared off through enlightenment.

This brings forward the ignorant/enlightened divide in the scheme of nineteenth century intellectuals who propagated a belief meant for the enlight-

ened. This is part of Hindu tradition that considers the search for the supreme being an uncommon attitude of the commoner. Whereas the intellectuals under study tried to evolve a methodology which can be followed alike by the ignorant and enlightened. They believed that the problem is with mystification which creates an impression of incomprehension to the ignorant. The right way is to give the true knowledge, which can be followed by every one, that leads to the realization of the supreme being. The problem with this approach is the lack of understanding the material realities and sensibilities of people which makes the dominant ideology incomprehensible to him. He is naturally after a god who is accessible to him/her who can be taken in confidence negotiate and solve his problems. Such a god is not available in the scheme of the intellectuals also, and, hence, it becomes unattractive to them who continue to practice the age old customs and traditions. This shows that for the common man whereas both these approaches are the two sides of the same coin one explicit and the other implicit of their respective agendas.<sup>65</sup>

Even though the thinkers under study seemingly propose a middle class agenda, they are sympathetic to the cause of the ignorant. This is expressed positively when they propose an all embracing project of self realization. This need not be considered as a weakness due to their social positioning.<sup>66</sup> Instead it has to be considered as part of a general programme of dissent expressed at intervals in the history of India beginning from the times of Buddha. An immediate example is that of the medieval bhakti ideology which is basically an avarna movement aimed to establish the right to appropriate the upper caste cultural

idioms as a means of liberating strategy for the lower caste. Bhakthi as an ideology could erase certain frontiers, while in the process it can create several real and imaginary spaces which are equally important. It need not lead to absolute liberation. So, Meenakshi has concluded that it was not a protest movement, though, some elements of dissent are noticeable.<sup>67</sup> It was also argued that the bhakti movement was essentially a temple movement seeking to propagate the ideology of upper caste land owners.<sup>68</sup> This helps us to assume that dissent is also operating within the frame work of the dominant ideology which leads to the elaboration and perfection of the existing system. This is achieved through the cultural matrix of scale of forms.<sup>69</sup> This compels us also to state that the rigidities of the caste system was the result of British Imperialism as observed by C.A.Bayly.<sup>70</sup>

Their project emphasized the possibilities of self-realization by all, irrespective of their social and intellectual position. Moreover, they have established that observing of Karmas like pilgrimages, penances etc. will inflict only pain to the body which will obstruct the realization of salvation. They have also suggested salvation/anandam as the aim of life. But their salvation has a different content. In their schemes the attainment of eternal bliss was facilitated by mental peace. A mind which is free from all perturbations can attain eternal bliss. The way to attain this is the practise of Rajayoga. Swami Sivananda suggested Pranayama as the means to attain eternal bliss. Hatayoga Pradeepika<sup>71</sup> has suggested Bhrudhyanam as the method to practise Rajayoga. This was suggested as the simplest method of Rajayoga. Manolayam(beatitude) is a mental state of concentration when one is forced from all worldly pleasures and pains.

The persons who master this quality can deal with issues in a balanced way without being emotional. This helps everyone to deal with issues rationally which extend the interest of 'others.' This is the simplest philosophical way that protect the interests of all living beings and nature. It helps to develop the notion of 'holism' as a way of life. In addition to this, they made the traditionally mystified mental state of Manolayam an accessible attribute of all through constant practise.

In the matters related with mind and its control they have adopted the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Patanjali has explained yoga as the control of mind (Yogas chithavrthi nirodha) This is not easy for those who delve in desires and its gratification. The possible alternative is the control of mind. That would be like suggesting a medicine to cure an illness. The impracticability of such a proposition was well known to them. So they resorted other means. The means they employed was problematising the notion of pleasure itself. This discussion of happiness helps them to devalue the current notion of happiness - gratification of desires.<sup>72</sup> This makes a 'contented state' the ideal form of existence. This has created the condition for the development of a holistic approach. The position of Vagbhatananda against the accumulation of wealth<sup>73</sup> is an expression of this idea. The dietary control and the practice of feeling the visitors before they take food, observed at the Siddha Samajam can also be considered as the expression of the same idea.

The significance of this notion is the identifying of the concept of living in conformity with nature as the desirable form of existence. This makes man con-

cerned about the sustenance of other beings in nature. This helps him to recognize that the world is not meant for him alone and any attempt on the contrary leads to the destruction of the whole system. Thus, it projects a new form of existence which has to become a feasible alternative to the individualistic and competitive life style propagated under capitalism.

The basic idea of this project is demystification of a knowledge and making it accessible to all or the development of a socially rooted knowledge. They have freed knowledge from its traditional ties such as religious and systemic boundedness. When it was religious oriented it was made inaccessible to common man and helped the imposing of the hegemony of a minority. The significance of the Rajayoga concept of Sivayogi in the words of Mekkunnath Kunhikrishnan Nair lies in freeing it from traditional ties.<sup>74</sup> Traditionally knowledge was kept as a preserve of a privileged few and was considered as a mastery over all the Vedic learning. This was used to marginalize the majority of the population. Developing a socially rooted knowledge assigned a new role to knowledge itself. It made knowledge a tool of self-realization and made it accessible to all members of the society. At the same time it helped to debase the traditional power structures that imposed its authority upon the people.

The notion of Rajayoga fundamentally belonged to tradition. But it was not adopted in its entirety. Instead they have made a selective appropriation of tradition and established that such an attitude is invariable in the Indian circumstances. Their texts also reveals that tradition formed an important site of their intervention. This discourse of a reasonable tradition becomes the corner

stone of their project. Tradition, for them, had been value loaded term which has to be used for the regeneration of society.

Tradition is a strong strand in the case of the thinkers studied here. They have relied on tradition to organize and shape the future. This was considered by Eric Hobsbawm as a practice of 'Inventing Tradition'. He says " Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices.....which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past.....In short they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations or which established their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition."<sup>75</sup> This reliance on traditional culture was usually branded as revivalism. But scholars distinguished it in relation to the project to which it was used. If certain new elements are introduced, as a reinterpretation of the earlier form, by a logic of the master which stand at variance with the cardinal features, it may not be considered revivalistic.<sup>76</sup> A branded conservative like RadhaKantha Deb who approved of tradition could argue for women education. (Women education was not a commentable aspect of traditional culture. There are instances in tradition which depict the unacceptance of the words of women just because it came from women.) There were many similar personalities whose role in history was either misunderstood or taken for granted. This points to the inadequacies of the terminology.

This has brought forward the important question of the feasibility of branding the thinkers. Whether a person has to be considered either as a conservative or as progressive on the basis of their attitude towards tradition? RadhaKanta Deb

was branded as a conservative because of the position taken at the time of the sati controversy.<sup>77</sup> The commentators did not consider their justification for taking such a stand. Tapan Rai Chaudhary observes that such an attitude fails to give attention to the stresses and strains experienced by the individuals concerned in the given context. Hence he suggests an alternative methodology of considering the intentions and sensibilities of the persons under study.<sup>78</sup>

K.N.Panikkar consider this as the product of their dual alienation from the people and the colonisers and as an attempt to assert the cultural identity of the conquered. To Amilkar Cabral this was a reply to the historically determined and inescapable contradiction between the coloniser and the colonized.<sup>79</sup> In the case of Amilkar Cabral tradition was not multi-layered, as in India, completely hegemonised by religio-political power of the upper castes. Social stratification in the African case in a significant manner emerges with colonialism (Portuguese Colonisation in the case of Cabral) and not before that. In the Bengal context Brahmin ideological control was an active reality and colonial modernity evolves in this particular social milieu.

An important aspect of the nineteenth century intellectuals had been their fight against backwardness. Under the evangelical and imperial influences most of them considered India as a backward and stagnant nation. Her future consisted in adopting the dynamic notions of the west. Struggle against backwardness is an act contrary to this as its essence is a dislike of certain norms which are identified as elements of backwardness. Thus, the idea of backwardness emerge in a social situation where elements co exist. In nineteenth century

India ideas of forwardness become synonymous with imbibing the western notions and institutions discarding tradition. As expected by the imperialists they were successful in creating a new generation who enthusiastically followed even the behavioral pattern of the west. This was ideologically considered as the result of the attempt at orientalizing the orient as suggested by Edward Said.

The study of the texts of Sivayogi and others studies here presents a different picture. They have used tradition for a new project of their own. They attempted a reinterpretation of tradition. They believed that tradition is not a thing to be observed without any change, like a revealed knowledge. The well known metaphor used by Sivayogi is a proof to this observation.<sup>80</sup> In another place he went to the extent of stating that he is not prepared to accept unreasonable knowledge, even if it is revealed to him by Lord Krishna, that performing superstitious practices are expected to bring material gains. This is an argument in favor of developing a reasonable tradition and all other interpretations are rejected as concoctions by vested interests. It has to be assumed that Sivayogi was emphasizing the 'textuality' of tradition.

The statement of Sivananda against *Apaddharma* (Dharma in evil times) can also be read in accordance with the notion of Sivayogi who advocated giving up of tradition if it is found to be unreasonable.<sup>81</sup> Vagbhatananda also favors such a scheme even though he nurtures a positive attitude towards modernity and its spirit. At the same time he has shown an inclination towards vedantic tradition which was reread in accordance with the existing situations.

In the case of the English educated intelligentsia an alienation from the

traditional culture as well as a disenchantment with modernity was taking place. This was considered as a painful experience by Amilcar Cabral in the case of the Petit bourgeoisie in the African context. But this was not the case with the Indian Petit bourgeoisie. They never were totally alienated from tradition. This was because of their birth in an upper caste who had multiple sources to going back to. Thus they were escaping from their present which is not on par with the western rationalists who selected the present as the site of one's escape from the past. They have clearly hidden their tuft within their hat. Consideration of primordial loyalties such as caste at industrial culture has already been recorded by scholars who studied modern Indian Social processes. Contemporary Indian life provides numerous occasion for the play of status in the factory, in the hospital and in the office.<sup>82</sup> This shows the adaptability of caste in modern conditions. The scene at the zoo in Indulekha is an expression of this mental state of the modern english educated intelligentsia.<sup>83</sup> The formation of the caste associations and staking of higher caste claims by different caste groups were a regular feature of colonial period. M.N.Srinivas considered the formation of caste associations as a modern phenomenon.<sup>84</sup> O.Chandumenon, the author of Indulekha, argued before the Marriage commission for the recognition of 'Sambandham' system as real marriage and its continuation. The problem of legitimacy is involved in this problem if ChanduMenon hesitate to argue like that the nairs as a whole would have become illegitimate off springs. Other caste groups ridiculed them to that effect. In his novel too, he, seems to be arguing like marrying off of a learned lady like Indulekha to a sensible man. All these were to be treated as the various manifes-

tations of the emotions and sensibilities of Indian Petit bourgeoisie. Thus, the Indian Petit bourgeoisie inscribes himself as an acrobat putting on the dress of modernity with a traditional sensibility.

The ideals of the thinkers under study can be considered as an entirely different one. Their project centered round the practice of reformulated tradition. They have made tradition an object that one has to be proud of by making it reasonable. This was facilitated by the rereading of tradition in accordance with present realities. Thus tradition ceased to be a baggage of humiliation, as suggested by the Europeans. Tradition in their project has developed into a successful tool to counter act the attempt at colonial cultural penetration. They have made the reformulated tradition a tool to create a new nation having self-respect and confidence. They have implored the people to cast off their inferiority complex and to be self-confident. They believed that only such a nation would be in a position to develop an alternative to modernity. Winning of political freedom and driving out the British were never their concern. If the people have confidence self-respect and intelligence the rest will come of its own, they believed. But they did not dissuade their followers from participating in the freedom struggle. Most of the followers of Vagbhatananda as well as Bheeman Nair, the follower of Sivayogi participated in the freedom struggle. Whereas sivananda completely kept aloof from the national movement. He concentrated on organizing the new society. He was a staunch critique of the boycott of foreign clothes and burning it. He even blamed Gandhiji for organizing such an agitation of destruction) When he was working as a village officer Sivayogi insisted on an equal treatment with the

Tehsildar not as an inferior officer. The possibility of dismissal did not influence his demanding of equality. The analysis of the nature of the office he holds will explain his attitude. He says.<sup>85</sup> This statement could be made by a person having self-respect. This attitude helps him to shed off the feeling of dependency. Their position against the accumulation of wealth can also be considered as a tool designed to develop self-reliance and confidence.<sup>86</sup> Vagbhatananda was against all kinds of accumulation of wealth. Swami Sivananda was totally against all kinds of private possessions. Such a humble and gentle style of existence is an important strand of our tradition, especially that of the dissent movements.<sup>87</sup> Thus, it can be assumed that the thinkers in general propagated against developing a desire for money which will lead to a reverence for capitalist culture and de-humanisation. This is more than a defense of indigenous culture. This is in spirit a resistance to colonialism. This is the fundamental difference between the thinkers of early nineteenth century and later thinkers. The time gap between Rammohun and Sivayogi explain the efficacy of this assumption. At the time of Rammohun there was faith in the fairness of the British govt. During the time of Sivayogi the anti-people nature of the British raj was being revealed more graphically. The effects of First World War and the various British policies were bringing more sufferings to the people. Moreover, political struggle against the British Government has not attained momentum at that time. In such a context more effective and most wanted development is in the cultural plain. Indigenous cultural activation is a feasible alternative to colonial cultural penetration. The best way to resist dependency is an insistence upon imbibing 'values'. Which will also help to

resist the penetration of new ideas. Branding this as a practice of modernity is an overlooking of the cultural dynamics that has asserted the cultural-identity of a people. This is nothing but a neglect of history.

The call to imbibe 'values' makes the colonized impenetrable as well as culturally effective. Such an understanding gives the ideals of the thinkers the dimension of an anti-colonial struggle. Gandhiji related the idealistic life with political action when he emphasized Harijan uplift and simple living. But his lifestyle made it possible to be a Sanathan Hindu. The ideas of present thinkers were able to transcend successfully these limitations. The attempt to attribute the qualities of God to mind and the reformulation of tradition in accordance with reason denies the possibility of branding Sivayogi as a 'Sanatan Hindu'. The reverence shown to the guru, denial of family and the critique of almost all ideas of Hinduism makes Swami Sivananda also a non-Sanatani.

**Introspection:** The intellectual activity of nineteenth century has already been identified as a product of introspection<sup>88</sup> and emphasizing of the material development of the modern west. But the parameters of the programme was largely laid down by the European intellectuals working on India. Keshab Chandra Sen reorganised the Brahma Samaj on Christian lines and Vaishnava style devotionalism was followed. Jawaharlal Nehru gave primacy to developmentalism even though he retained his infatuation to Indian tradition.<sup>89</sup> This feature is discernible in the thought of a branded orthodox like Radha Kantha Deb. He was branded as an orthodox as he criticized the banning of Sati by the govt. He believed that such an initiative should come from the people themselves as a part of

their awareness. David Kopf has brought out a different picture of Radhadantha Dev, who negotiated on equal terms with the culture of modern west. Taking his birth in a wealthy Bengali family he need not have to depend upon the English for his prosperity. But that was not the case with Raja Rammohun Roy and others who associated themselves with the agency houses of the English East India Company, for their prosperity. This account for the taken for granted nature of such thinkers in relation to the attitude towards the Indian people and their institution. A similar perception is seen in the case of Swami Vivekananda who admired the material growth of modern west had warned the missionaries who were ridiculing Indian practices and presenting India as the abode of barbarians<sup>90</sup>. It can be assumed that O.Chandu Menon also showed similar notion about the modern west and Indian past. (Literary critics have suggested many such instances in Indulekha that can be considered as an expression of this sensibility. Looking at the Malabar coast through the binoculars while traveling in a ship to Calcutta from Bombay was interpreted as an introspection.)

The common feature of this intellectual activity was the emphasizing of western material development and a call for Indian transformation on similar lines even though they retain a nostalgic attitude towards tradition. Most important off all, their notion of tradition was in line with the orientalist perception. This dependency proved detrimental to the growth of a clear perspective of the British presence and was able to change the direction and orientation of thought. Lack of a perspective on Indian/European difference made them more depended on European ideas. This has been a limitation of their thinking.

**Counter Hegemony:** Such a limitation is hardly discernible in the scheme of the present thinkers. They have a clear perspective about tradition and a sound vision of future. They were not nostalgic towards tradition. They were critical of the tradition as was practiced and propagated by the hegemonic classes. They failed to reconcile with the discrimination practiced which was incongruent with the spirit of tradition, in their opinion. They understood that a rootless community cannot assert itself. Identifying the sources or roots, thus, became a matter of utmost importance. The tradition as it exist was unacceptable for them as it was a 'concocted' one in their opinion. Hence their attempt at reformulation of tradition in accordance with the requirements of the times. The reformulated tradition facilitated them to counter the orientalist perceptions of tradition.

Sivayogi was quarrelling with orientalist perspective when he stated that tradition is not a storehouse of unreason. This is not merely an expression of the displeasure on the unbearable European hegemony. Rather it is the declaration of his own notion of tradition. The observations he makes on tradition which is revealed in his works will substantiate this theory.<sup>91</sup> This is not a mechanical transplanting of European rationalism. But emphasizing of the fundamentals of an eastern reason. Sumith Sarkar stated that Tuhfat-UI-Muwahideen which is very rational was written by Ram MohunRoy before his exposure to English.<sup>92</sup> Such an understanding of the traditional wisdom helps us to tide over an existing notion about the traditional thinking that reasoning was unknown to Indian tradition. The orientalist tradition which relate Indian awakening to European influence deny the existence of a rational thinking in pre-colonial India. This is an

ahistorical position as there flourished many heterodox sects which quarreled with the Brahmanical orthodoxy from the Buddhist period onwards. Such sects flourished without an influence from the west. This emphasize the existence of a critical tradition in thinking instead of an archaic form<sup>93</sup> of intellectual tradition. Moreover, a comparison of the intellectual practices of the sect leaders as well as the thinkers studied here reveal certain similarities. The influence of the 'Siddha' tradition of Tamil Nadu in the thought of Sivayogi was emphasized by biographers. An execution into the texts will also prove this, such a similarity in the thought of Sree Narayana guru was revealed by Padmanabha Kurup.<sup>94</sup> This aspect has proved beyond any doubt that the formation influences of these thinkers were fundamentally traditional.

But this emphasis on the reformulated traditionality did not prevent them from understanding and appropriating the positive elements of European ideas. We fail to find any privileging either of India or of European knowledge systems. They were in search of a knowledge which will liberate man from his bondage. At the same time they pronounce a theory of reasoning which is basically eastern in origin.(The possibility of an Indian version of reasoning was emphasized by Ronald B Inden in his work *Imaging India*) when Sivayogi puts forward such a notion, he was emphasizing the possibility of knowledge in non-European territories. He must also have been emphasizing a counter hegemony on a sound footing. Moreover, he does not approve of the regionality of knowledge. 'Knowledge' has to be acquired and used for human benefit. Even as he transform knowledge into a universal category aimed to empower man, he emphasizes the ideological height

of the east. This expresses the willpower of the subject who is not prepared to be subdued totally by the hegemonic power.

The intellectual career of swami Sivananda has also to be understood on similar lines. When he make his character the 'poor idiot' the wisest man and also a Brahmin, he was following the Siddha tradition of TamilNadu. Sreedharan Adiyodi of Badagara has talked about a life incognito in his life.<sup>95</sup> He was also emphasizing an Indian alternative to Indian problems. He carved out society of equals in which there is no private property and family and emphasized the importance of a holistic and value-oriented life. At the same time, strong extra Indian influences are traceable in his project. In short, the European influences act only as catalysts in the intellectual career of the thinkers under study. Being a follower of Sivayogi Vagbhatananda also propagated the same ideas. But later they fell apart and became a severe critic of Sivayogi. Later he seemed to be more interested in propagating the reformed Vedanta philosophy as the base of the intellectual activity of future. Defeating the opponents in debates, as practiced by Sankaracharya, was followed by Vagbhatananda.

An important fall out of such an understanding of the intellectual activity of the present thinkers is that they succeeded where their predecessors in the early nineteenth century failed. They have developed a methodology through which they were able to constitute an independent Indian identity. Perhaps the time factor must have turned useful to the later thinkers. Even Swami Vivekananda who was a proclaimed champion of Hinduism was not reluctant to imbibe western ideas. Infact he stood for a traditionally based material civilization to be devel-

oped for the empowerment of masses.<sup>96</sup> He has a deep concern for the problem of the unprivileged masses. In fact, his Indian agenda was designed on this lines which was comfortably left out to serve vested interests. But this culturally evolved methodology was not felt useful to the intellectuals and activists in the political sphere (An exception is that of Gandhiji who used culturally valid symbols in political agitations). In the case of Nehru an orientation towards Western type of developmentalism was noticed which facilitated the penetration of international capital.<sup>97</sup>

#### Notes and References

1. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*, 1994, p-6. Also see *Nationalist Thought and the colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, 1986.
2. Macaulay had laid down clearly in his minute that the aim of education is to create a new generation who think and behave as English. David Kopf observed that this points out the upper hand enjoyed by the anglicists in policy matters by that time, David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Indian Renaissance*, 1969.
3. See Arabinda poddar, *Renaissance in Bengal*, 1970.
4. Nirad.C.Chaudhuri has narrated the interest shown by the wealthy families of remote eastern Bengal in studying Shakespeare. See N.C.Chaudhuri, *Intellectual in India*, 1967.
5. Asok Sen(ed) , *Rammohun and the process of modernization in India*, 1975 p 61. Also See K.N. Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology ,Hegemony*, 1995, p61.
6. This has been a natural process in Bengal. As observed in the case of Rammohun there were many Bengalees who studied Persian under the Muslims and English under the British.
7. The ordinary Bengalees were not prepared to listen to what the Bhadrals said. See Tapan Rai Choudhuri, *Perceptions Emotions, Sensibilities: Essays on India's Colonialism*, 1999.
8. Kancha Ilaiah, *Why I am Not a Hindu* in Susie Tharu (ed) *Subject to*

*Change*, 1998, pp 98,106.

9. A contrast is developed by K.T.Rammohan in the case of the native state of Travancore where religious observances like Murajapam and Oottuprua were undertaken by the state even under British residency . See unpublished Ph.D.Thesis, *Material Processes and Developmentalism*, University of Kerala, 1996.
10. Dada Bhai Naoroji was an Indian business man residing in London. With his famous theory of Drain of India's wealth to Britain, Naoroji sounded the keynote of Indian economic nationalism. At the same time he endorsed the positive role of British rule in India. He never advocated violent action as a solution to the plight of India. Stephan Hay(ed) *Sources of Indian Tradition vol II*, 1991, pp 87-96.
11. G.P.Pillai was sent to London. -George Mathew *Communal Road to a Secular Kerala*,p54.
12. Rammohun and the Bengal Renaissance, David Kopf in Rammohun Roy and the process of modernization in India. V.C.Joshi (ed)1975.
13. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 1983, p 26.
14. It is worthwhile to remember here that Rammohun maintained two houses in Calcutta. One with modern facilities and the other on traditional lines, meant to be used by his educated and uneducated family members respectively.
15. The project of the thinkers under study emphasized an equal treatment with the colonizer. The reason to give up the office of Village officer by Sivayogi was stated as the servility that it carried, Pavanan, *Op.cit.*, p 14, 1997.
16. Yogendra Sigh, *Modernization of Indian Tradition*,Delhi.1973, p 28-59.
17. David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Indian Renaissance*, 1969, p 288.
18. Tapan Rai Chaudhari, *Op.cit.* p 112.
19. See N.G.Pawar, *Mahatma Jyoti Rao Fule: Father of Indian social Revolution*, 1999.
20. Quoted in R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, 1979, pp 92-96.
21. After Thomas Kuhn each historical period was considered as a 'paradigm' epistemologically. The coming of new paradigms result in a struggle for hegemony. The transition to a new form is known as 'paradigm shift.'
22. Benedict Anderson considers nationalism as cultural artifact of a particular kind created due to the spontaneous distillation of a com

- plex crossings of discrete historical forces. Once created they become 'modular' capable of being transplanted with varying degrees of self-consciousness to a great variety of social terms to merge and be merged with a corresponding by wide variety of political and ideological constellations. Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities*, Verso London, New York 1996, p 4.
23. With regard to the concept of universal brotherhood and love a different observation was made by Tapan Ray Chaudhari. For him it was a ploy to counteract the lack of nationhood in India. Tapan Rai Chaudhuri, *Op.cit.*, p 117.
  24. It has been observed that the invoking of 'Advaita' helped to check the flow lower castes to christianity. G, Religion and Ideology in Kerala, 1983, pp 250,51.
  25. Neither parental nor fraternal relations are entertained in the community of Sivananda. They developed devices to bring up children without developing such relations.
  26. See the code of conduct for Ananda samajists in Pavanan.*Op.cit.* p 117.
  27. Antonio Gramscie, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Edited and translated Hoare & Geoffrey, Nowel Smith Lawrence & Wishart, 1991.
  28. The intellectual awakening in the nineteenth century was identified as the result of a contact with the civilized Europe(England) by the Indian people. The Evangelicals, in general, held this view. See Samuel Mateer, *Op.cit.* 1991, p 43.
  29. Dissent expresses dissatisfaction with the existing situation and registers disagreement. Protest is a formal declaration of dissent and represents a more confirmed state of opposition and conflict – M.S.A.Rao, Themes in the ideology of Protest Movements in S.C.Malik. *Dissent and Protest in Indian Civilization*, 1977, p 57.
  30. See K.Meenakshi: The Siddhas of Tamil Nadu: A voice of Dissent in Tradition Dissent & Ideology in Champaka Lakshmi R and Gopal S.(ed) History in the medieval period, 1996.
  31. There developed a Sant tradition which propagated the doctrine of egalitarianism and classless society.They propagated *NirgunaBakthi* and played an important role in the Social history of north India. The followers of Kabir later developed into seterian groups. See Ainslie T Embree(ed), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol I, Revised (edn), viking

- 1991, pp 371-73.
32. The efforts taken and the problems involved in bringing girls to schools was narrated by K.K.Datta in his *Social History of Modern India*, 1975, p 105-203.
  33. It is argued that the new literary genre was introduced to Telugu after seeing the notice in Bengal Gezette put up by Lord Mayo. It is possible that Chandu Menon also knew this before venturing on Indulekha. See S. Laxma Murthy in Sankaran Ravindram(Ed). *The Early Novels in the South Indian Languages*. University of Calicut 2002, pp 61, 76.
  34. Partha Chatterjea, *Possible India* p 280 .
  35. Ibid, p 275.
  36. See Edward Said, *Op.cit.*, 1979.
  37. Vaikkam Guruvayur Satyagrahas were postponed for this sake of natural objectives, M S A Rao, *Social Movemnts and Social Transpendation*, 1987.
  38. Mathrubumi Daily July 24, 1924.
  39. Pavanan, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, 1997, p 189.
  40. Reference is to the Indian condition of servitude under the British rule which was felt as a source of humiliation by the early nationalist.
  41. Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian social History*, p 62-94.
  42. Co-habiting was permitted only after knowing the interest of the persons involved. Permission of the president was also required. Interview with Krishnan Eyoor Samajam, Thalippapramba, dated 27.02.03.
  43. Ibid
  44. Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1976, p 163.
  45. His principle of life was known as Ananda cult which was his main slogan - Ananda eva vijayathai, Anandadarshan, p 74, 1998.
  46. Brahmavrathan, *Op.cit.*, 1971, p 88.
  47. Adhyatma Yuddham is a critique of Anandadarshan of Sivayogi. Paradoxically he used his scholarship and intelligence to argue in favour of and against the same idea. For eg, he saved Sivayogi in a debate for using the term 'Umasahayam' by developing new arguments- Brahmavrthan, Ibid, p 65-66.
  48. P V K Nedungadi, *Vagbhatanandante Peril Oru jarasanthathi*, 1991.
  49. *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*. pp 486-90.
  50. Brahmavrathan, *Op.cit.*, p.26-55.
  51. He protected sivayogi for using the term 'Umasahayam' in a debate

- at Calicut for which act he was presented with the title 'Vagbhatananda' by Sivayogi. Later he wrote a critique of 'Anandadarsam' with the title Adhyatma yuddham.
52. Traditionally hegemony was determined by high/low caste status. The project of Vagbhatananda fundamentally had been emphasizing of knowledge as a means to hegemony.
  53. The invoking of traditionally tinged ritualism is destined to be mis-carried. Vagbhatananda developed many practices like prayers at death and marriage which can be used as a status symbol. Followers of Vagbhatananda still practice these which make them distinctive. This help them to constitute a community but not in the manner of the Siddha Samajists.
  54. The invoking of traditionally tinged ritualism is destined to be mis carried. Vagbhatananda developed many practices(like prayers)which has appropriational possibilities.
  55. Asokan Mundon, Privileging the unprivileged C U R J Vol I, Issue 1, April 2000.
  56. Ashis Nandy: Intimate Enemy, 1983, p 85.
  57. Partha chatterjee, *Nation and its Fractments*, p6.
  58. Shahid Amin, Gandhi as Mahatma in Ranjit Guha(ed), *Sabaltern Studies vol III*, 1999, p 5.
  59. *Vagbhatanandan Athmeeya Himalayathil*, 1995, p 72.
  60. See Thomas Issac & Michael Tharakan, Sree Narayana Movement in Travancore, Occasional papers No: 214, p 19.
  61. Robert L Hardgrave Jr. *The Nadars of Tamilnadu*, 1969, p 90. Also see M S S Pandian, *Meanings of Colonialism and Nationalism*, an essay on Vaikuntaswami cult, In *Studies in History*, 1992, 812, n.s, p 173.
  62. All Biographers emphasized the relation between the Brahmasamaj unit at Calicut and Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda. The name Brahmananda Swami was given by the Brahmasamajists. Such a close personal contact is not seen in the case of Swami Sivananda.
  63. Veena Naregal, *Op.cit.*, p 100)
  64. Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Anandadarshm*, 1998, p 217.
  65. Organizing people on the basis of primordial loyalties paid high dividend in Travancore society. Communalisation released the process of secularisation there.
  66. Epistemologically this is an attempt at homogenization and there is a practice of branding such movements as the propagators of the

- hegemonic ideology. The intellectual activity of the nineteenth century is now being considered like this.
67. Meenakshi, Siddha of Tamilnadu in Chmpakalakshmi R, Gopal S.(Ed) *Tradition Dissent of Ideology*, 1996, p 123.
  68. Kesavan Veluthat, The Temple Basis of the Bhakti Movement in South India in Krishnamohan Srimali (Ed) *Essays in Indian Art Religion and Society* Indian History congress Golden Jubilee Vol. I Delhi 1987.
  69. See Ronald B Inden - *Imagining India*, 2000.
  70. C A Bayly *Indian Society and Making of British Empire*, 1988, p 157.
  71. 'Hatayoga Pradeepika' is a sanskrit text that deal with the Practices of Hatayoga. It is part of the Yoga. The thinkers objected this as it lead to strains to the body.
  72. 'Jnanappana' of Poonthanam is a literary form that convey this idea. Poonthanam is a bhakthi poet of Kerala who lived in the medieval period
  73. Vagbhatananda argues that where there is accumulation of wealth, there emerge problems. Those who keep back twentyfive paise leads five to suffering. Nobody has got the right to accumulate money.....nature provided everything to be used by all equally. It is the message of the saintly India-Except from the speech of Vagbhatananda on August 1936 at Karaparamba Calicut Quoted in K.K.Pavithran, *Vagbhatanandan Athmeeya Himalayathil* pp 207,208, 1995.
  74. Ananda Rajayogam, Mekkunnath Kunhikrishnan Naii in Brahmananda Sivayogi Navothana Guru Ed. *Sudarshan Kunnathukal*(ed) 2000, p 152,53.
  75. Eirc Hobsbawm *Introduction: Inventing Tradition* 1992, pp 1,2.
  76. S.C.Misra *Dissent Protest and Reform p. 52: A note on Definitions* in SC Malik (Ed) *Dissent Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization* IAS Simla 1977).
  77. A contraversy developed in Bengal over the banning of Sati by the state. Ram Mohun Roy and others supported the move of the govern. ment. But Radha Kantha Deb stood on the other end, who was against official banning. He believed that such an initiative should come from the people.
  78. See Tapan Rai Chaudhary. 1979.
  79. Amilkar Cabral was the architect of African unity and anti-colonal struggle. He emphasized the role of culture in national freedom struggle. This was expressed in his speech at UNESCO 3-7,July,

1972, *Return to Sources*, 1973 .

80. We will not use salty water of the well even if it is dug by our predecessors Moksha Pradeepam, p40.
81. Apaddharma is a notion used by the Brahmins to approve of violation of caste norms in adverse times. Sivananda feels that this is a point that rules out the unchangeability of tradition – Keralanacharam. Sivananda, 1993, p 22.
82. See Andre Beteille, Caste in contemporary India in C.J.Fuller (Ed) *Caste Today*, 1996, pp 172-73.
83. The scene is about the shooting of a tiger by Madhavan dressed in European fashion. In the commotion that followed his hat fell off and could be identified as a Keralite with the help of the tuft. *Indulekha*, O Chandumenon, 1889.
84. M.N.Srinivas, *Social change in Modern India*, 1966, p 94-100.
85. Pavanan, *Op.cit.*, p 15.
86. They were satisfied with minimum requirements when Sivayogi was offered money to publish Mokshapradeepam by two of his followers, he humbly rejected the offer of one of them, Moksha Pradeepam Intro. P III,IV)
87. Vidwan P Kelu Nair, the freedom fighter of Malabar, was greatly influenced by the character Pakkanar one of the members of Parayi Petta Panthirukulam. Pakkanar treated money as Aalekkolli(Killer of man). All the dramas written by Kelunair are rich in such ideals.
88. Introspection is the process of turning towards one self. See K.N.Panikkar, *Op.cit.*, p 84.
89. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, 1962, p 596.
90. David Kopf, *Op.cit.*, 1969.
91. Sivayogi states that it is to save knowledge(jnana) from extinction that Krishna advised Arjuna to do Karmas in the company of ignorant.....That is why he used this words Ajnanam KarmaSanginam in the verse see Moksha Pradeepam pp 82,83.
92. Sumith Sarkar, *Writing of Social History*, 1991, p 171.
93. Archaic form is used here to denote the ancient system of importing knowledge especially Vedic. In that system there was no scope for a critical tradition. Verbal reproduction of the text without any change in pronunciations was emphasized. Academic merit depended on the skill to reproduce the texts without any change in the meaning. This is orientalist perception tradition was assumed to be irrational and unchangeable.

94. A Padmanabha Kurup, *Sreenarayana Guruwinte Sahityavum Darshanavum*, Mathrubhoomy Calicut, 1989, p 56.
95. Interview with Sreedharan Adiyodi. dt. 20. 12. 97.
96. This is a term used by Tapan Rai Chaudhury, See Tapan Rai Chaudhury, *Op.cit.*, 1991, p 121.
97. Amartya Sen as narrated graphically the relation between poverty and developmentalism.

# Towards A Progressive Society

Asokan Mundon “Renaissance and social change in malabar - a study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham ” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut, 2003

## ChapterV

### **Towards A Progressive Society**

This chapter tries to assess the changes that came into existence in Malabar as a result of its exposure to new brands. Sociologists and Anthropologists developed various theories to provide a conceptual frame-work to the changes that set in. The theories of 'Sanskritization' and 'modernization' are proposed to cover the changes in contemporary India. The limitation of these theories are its culturological approach which do not lead to any structural change in society.<sup>1</sup> Yogendra Singh puts forward an integrated approach which locate the causes of social change from within and without of the social system or tradition which is classified as orthogenetic and Heterogenetic changes respectively. He believe that orthogenetic processes will not lead to changes in the social structure as observed in the case of heterogenetic processes. But, he was not ready to reject it as insignificant and considers equally the nature of changes activated by both of these processes. Hence, he developed an integrated approach of social change which has the advantage of being comprehensive as well as theoretically consistent<sup>2</sup> T.K.Oommen also share a similar opinion when he suggests that the notion of change by displacement prevailing in the west and change through gradual accretion prevailing in the east are two routes of social change which can co-exist.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the social movements provide the stage for the confluence between

the old and new values of structures. Progress in this chapter is not attempted in terms of 'development' but in terms of changes that was taking place as a result of an inter action between tradition and modernity.

Malabar has certain cultural characteristics that distinguished it from other parts of Kerala. It is assumed that these features played an important role in moulding the life and culture of Malabar. An exploration into the causes of distinction is expected to be rewarding in this context. So an enquiry is attempted here which is presumed as the foundation of the emerging society.

### **Malabar Specificity:**

The social movements that originated in Malabar had been fundamentally supra-caste in nature. Whereas the native state of Travancore witnessed the operation of many communitarian movements. The Thiyyas of Malabar, who were theoretically a backward community, also staked the claims of an upper caste group like the Nairs. They were not have to suffer any discrimination on caste lines. In the reply given by the Madras Governor to the Thiyya petitioners it was stated that the thiyyas were a fairly advanced group when compared to the other sections of Malabar.<sup>4</sup> Rituals and the forms of Worship practiced by the Thiyyas were not considered as elements of backwardness. Instead learned men like Kumaran was after 'self-realization' by worshipping god within him not in temples.<sup>5</sup> But later Articles relating to the caste fights between Nair and Thiyyas appeared in the columns of swabhimani and Gajakesari<sup>6</sup> Leaders of the fight were K T Chandu Nambiar and Moorkoth Kumaran who were good friends and continued as such. This Shows that the Thiyyas of Malabar were engaged in articulating a status of

equality with the Nairs. The Thiyyas even used the Vannas (Washer man) to keep the upper castes in the status of perpetual pollution on the visit of impurities related with birth death and menstruation<sup>7</sup>. This was possible to them as the Vannas were controlled by the Thiyyas.<sup>8</sup> They considered themselves as a well-knit and organized group as the Nairs under the "Thara system"<sup>9</sup>. Kambil Anandan and Potheri Kuhambu also tries to emphasize the equal or superior status of the Thiyyas. All these helps us to assume that in Malabar there existed an atmosphere in which the claims of an otherwise, backward group could be articulated and substantiated. This situation owed its origin to a certain extent to the wealthy middle class who were partners in the trading activities of the foreigners. The emergence of such a group was facilitated by the nature of agricultural production existed in Malabar.

The Thiyyas of Malabar were comparatively free from the deprivation as belonging to a backward polluting community. The causes for this specific situation has to be traced in ecology, cropping pattern and tenurial system<sup>10</sup>. Malabar has a predominantly hilly terrain which permitted the development of dry land cultivation, especially hill produce like pepper and coconut. In such lands long term leases are only possible. Thus *Kuzhikkanam* lease (lease that stipulated land improvement) leading up to ninety years were practiced in dry land. This form of tenure offered considerable amount of freedom in cultivation. Increase in prices of the hill produce were always beneficial to the cultivators for the rent as stipulated in the lease agreement need be given to the land lord. This reduced considerably the intervention of the landlords in the form of evictions. Nair tharavadus

and Brahmin households had near monopoly over the wetlands of the region which required tied up labour. We find comparatively lesser number of Brahmin households in north Malabar when compared to South Malabar,<sup>11</sup> only half in size. The Nair tharavadus which gradually expanded into the interior regions as the branches of prominent tharavadus came to be established near the patches of the hilly terrain where wetland was also available. They exercised total control over the water resources and forests. This difference in the cropping pattern offered the cultivators different options in tenurial system. Thus, the land tenure of the region ranged from shifting cultivation and tenancy rights to tied up labor in the paddy fields. David Ludden has seen the Malabar area as comprising of independent market-oriented small farmers rather than agrarian dependents under the sway of agrarian magnates.<sup>12</sup> Dependence on the tharavadu ranged from the peripheral (Cash and seed advances) as in the case of the shifting cultivators to the absolute as in the case of the untouchable labourers.<sup>13</sup> Although it was predominantly the nairs and Namboodiris who owned estates and large garden plots, some thiyayas, besides being sub-tenants, also owned plots and rice fields.<sup>14</sup> They have also served as soldiers in the army of the zamorin of Calicut. He bestowed the title of 'cherayi Panikkar' upon the head of the Thiyya family in North Malabar.<sup>15</sup>

Another important feature is the presence of vaidyars (indigenous medical practitioners) among the thiyayas. There were many such famous medical practitioners, who were revered by all communities, which shows, their higher educational status<sup>16</sup> C.H. Kunhappa states that Kannan vaidyar of Kadachira, Karathan

Koran vaidyar of Mavilayi, and Chirukantan Vaidyar were the most famous and efficient of them all. The vocation was not meant for money but treating the patients. The Thiyyas were also well-known for their Sanskrit scholarship. They were employed also as soldiers and retainers by the nair landlords.

Thiyya women had sexual liaison with Europeans.<sup>17</sup> This gave them an exposure to European ways of life. They preferred to train their children in European style and started sending them to English Schools. Emerging middle class families among the Thiyyas responded positively to the English education.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the government order of 1844 that reserved placements in the bureaucracy to the English educated served as an incentive to English education. But the case of chooryayi Kanaran has shown that literacy in English has not been an essential criterion for placement in the bureaucracy. While serving as Deputy collector of Ponnani, he appointed many Thiyyas as village officers, which has hitherto been, a preserve of the Nairs.<sup>19</sup>

The cultural expressions prevailing in Malabar also acknowledge its specificity. This will be clear from the study of myths relating to the *Theyyattams* and rituals and ceremonies associated with the cult spots. Ritual performances always ensures the participation of all caste groups in it. These does not reflect the inferior/Superior status of the various castes involved. Diverse caste specific duties were performed by the various caste groups of the locality. Such responsibilities are not referred as 'duties' but as 'rights.'<sup>20</sup> Whereas the most explicit critique of caste condemned it for its divisiveness, portraying it as a barrier to the gradual unification of the Indian people. Gandhiji saw caste' as a self-governing social

unit performing legislative, executive judicial and other quasi-governmental functions.....As such it reduced and role and power of the state, fostered habits of self-government and nurtured the spirit of democracy'.<sup>21</sup>

The festival at Kottiyoor Siva Temple is a monumental example of the kind of accommodation mentioned above. At the time of the annual festival at Kottiyoor usually to take place in the month of June, the Nairs and Nambudiris take over charge of the temple after giving dakshina(The gift in kind or money is given to the performer of a worship at the temple.). On the last day of the festival the Muthappan, the chief deity of the thiyas, arrived at Kottiyoor and was received by the Namboodiry priest who offered him sandal wood paste.<sup>22</sup> If this is a practice of accommodation festivals at the shrines give a different picture of the community life prevailing in Malabar. All caste groups living in the region has to perform a fixed duty in connection with the shrine festival. Such ritual duties were considered as *Cherujanmavakasham*.(The right of different caste groups in connection with the sustenance of the society as well as celebrations of the shrine festival. These are caste specific roles like providing of 'Mattu' by the washer woman, polishing ornaments by goldsmith and fixing the date of the celebration by the Kanishan.) A significant aspect in this connection is the conspicuous absence of caste groups such as Pulayas from the ceremonies related with the shrines. All other caste groups, except the Pulayas including the forest dwellers were given either a role in the shrines or mentioned in the list of known communities. This helps us to assume that the Pulayas were not part of the Malabar Community life. They must have come late probably as a result of the expansion of agriculture and

non-availability of labour force in agriculture they must have been brought from outside. This observation becomes more pertinent when we understand that slave trade existed in Kerala and Calicut was an important center of slave trade.<sup>23</sup> This theory is vindicated by the Pulaya myth recited at the time of Performing the art form *Chimmanakkali*<sup>24</sup> which refer to the Pulayas as coming from the 'Aryar Nadu'. It is not possible to locate Aryarnadu from the myth but clarifies that they were brought to Malabar from outside.

These circumstances helps us to develop the notion of 'Malabar specificity' sprang up as a result of ecology tenurial system and inter caste relations. Inter Caste relations were not based on superior/inferior status of the caste groups involved in it but on the tacit understanding of the interdependency of all the groups. Rosalind O'Hanlon has brought out similar notions existing in Maharashtra. She states that the community of cultivators represent co-operation, honesty and fair deal which was derived from the simple interdependency of rural communities and the spirit of mutual sympathy created by shared social experiences.<sup>25</sup> This understanding was never influenced by the numerical status but by their invariable use to the community. To these services they were provided for by the community in kind. The house visit programme in the lean months in the form of Kothamoori<sup>26</sup> and Vedan-Padal<sup>27</sup> is an approval that the right of such groups as these were received ritualistically in each houses. Moreover, Kavus predominate in Malabar. The temples financed by the state were also Devi temples in which priests were Pisharodis(an Ambalvasi caste) not the Brabmins.

It is also interesting to note that 'Chrujenmavakasham' is bestowed up on the

concerned groups by the rulers. But its operational rights were bestowed upon the thiyayas which restrict the possibilities of imposing the will of the upper castes upon society. In Travancore the rights of the upper caste land holders were protected by traditional notions as well as modern judicial structures. Where as in Malabar landholder's rights were protected by modern judicial and administrative structures and traditional notions acts as a limiting case and makes impossible the practising of authoritarianism by upper castes. But a manipulation of the existing norms in tune with their desires are possible as we see in the case of united efforts by the Thiyyas and Nairs against the Pulayas.<sup>29</sup> These specific social realities prevailing in malabar had considerably influenced the nature of the social movements that emerged in this region. As stated already this favoured the growth of supra caste movements and the ideas that failed to converse with the people went unnoticed. But it created an intellectual climate that was invariable for a renegotiation of the social realities in the colonial context in Malabar.

### **Empowerment of the Masses**

The reform practice of the intellectuals have developed a methodology that helped the empowerment of the masses. The demystification of the traditional knowledge as well as the emphasis given to the attaining of knowledge, as revealed from their discourse, to facilitate the leading of a virtuous life created on enthusiasm to acquire knowledge. Thus, education of any sort was welcomed to know the present and plan the future. Those who were incapable of buying books and journals were also attracted to this. Periodicals started by the intellectuals under study as well as the missionaries played an important role in this activity.

Herman Gundert and the Basel Evangelical Mission that started functioning from Nettur Thalassery from 1839 onwards played a significant role in this.<sup>29</sup> Herman Gundert started the publication of 'Pashchimodayam' and Rajya Samacharam in 1847. 'Rajyasamacharam' gave importance to mission news and was distributed among the members free of cost<sup>30</sup> where as 'Pashchimodayam' gave importance to general knowledge. Its publication continued up to August 1851.<sup>31</sup> 'Keralopakari' published from Mangalore from 1874 onwards, was one of the popular magazines of Malabar.<sup>32</sup> The activities of Herman Gundert was also praise worthy in this regard.<sup>33</sup> The activities initiated by the Basel Evangelical Mission was continued by the reformist organizations that flourished in the Malabar region in the second half of the Nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Vagbhatananda published 'Sivayogivilasam' from Calicut to popularize the ideas of Sivayogi. Later he edited some other periodicals also after the foundation of a new organization by him.<sup>34</sup> Another important method followed by them in popularizing their ideas was speeches and debates. Their Simple and coherent method of articulating ideas attracted many people and even the laymen were able to follow the fundamental principles propounded in the traditional texts. The inmates of Siddha Samajam explained of the tours and speeches conducted by Swami Sivananda in connection with the propagation of his ideas.<sup>35</sup> There were many places in Malabar regularly visited by the founder which attracted many towards his ideal. Marriages and any other special occasion in the houses of householder followers also acted as the centers of propagating their ideas and critiques of the social practices. The siddha Samajam do not have any periodical to propagate

their ideas. Such activities of the thinkers under study turned out to be more useful to the people as it prompted them to distinguish between desirable and undesirable things. The activities of the Basel missionaries like selecting festivals to propagate their ideas and concentrating on individual conversion had already created a precedent in Malabar.<sup>36</sup> Thus for the ignorant public knowledge about one's own environment as well as the tradition and beliefs one follows came to be considered as important. The attaining of eternal bliss was made possible to the toiling millions who were, hitherto, unconcerned about such intrinsic knowledge.

The interest shown by the common man in knowing such things made inevitable the presence of an agency that could act as a nodal point to impart education to the people on a regular basis. Thus, we come across the origin and growth of numerous reading rooms and libraries in different parts of Malabar during this period. Names of such libraries are also very typical – Vignana Pradayini, Jnanavarthini Grameena Vayanashala and the like. Such reading rooms have developed as the pivots of the intellectual and cultural life in the villages. In the later phases the leaders of the progressive political movements adopted and appropriated these centers to articulate their opinions. This helped considerably to bring the people to the political and cultural mainstream. This is an important legacy of the reformist activities in the Malabar region. This legacy helped the reform discourse to transcend its inherent limitation—ie it did not reach the common man and the issues addressed were primarily middle class in nature and submerged all issues to construct the national.<sup>37</sup> Most of the rituals and

traditions disappeared from Malabar because of the activities of the reformists. Pavanan has provided a list of temples that stopped animal sacrifice as a result of the propagation of the ideas of Sivayogi.<sup>38</sup>

### **Growth of Modern Education**

William Logan provided a sketch of the traditional system of learning existed in Malabar.<sup>39</sup> In Malabar, at that time education was imparted to boys and girls alike. They were given training in writing and later were exposed to Amaram (A collection of verses telling the names of all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth). This will be followed by grammar and reading of Ramayanam and Bhagavatham. Vyagaranam and other Sastrams follow on this. "A pupil who advanced thus far is considered very far advanced in 'learning' and 'the generality of people do not get further than spelling out the Amaram'. Emphasis was given in reciting the works properly. A controversy over the 'reciting' led to the beginning of the intellectual conquest of Travancore by Vagbhatanda. Kathleen Gough approves this when she says that literacy in Kerala was not to investigate the natural world but to conserve custom, to organize and sanction the feudal kingdom and to provide artistic entertainment and religious and philosophical to entertainment to the ruling castes.<sup>40</sup> She also states that lower caste literacy was meant to serve special technical or social purpose and not to open up Sanskrit or Malayalam literary heritage.<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that lower castes were denied higher learning in Sanskrit. On the contrary there were a list of eminent lower caste scholars and Ayurvedic practitioners in Malabar. Oorachery Gurukkanmar (thiyya) taught Sanskrit to Herman Gundert. Bappautty Gurukkal,

Anandan Gurukkal, Kunaran Vaidyar, Koran Vaidyar , Chirukantan Vaidyar were well known as Sanskrit scholars and Ayurvedic physicians. Most of them were taught by upper caste teachers like Kuttiappa Nambiar.<sup>42</sup>Vagbhatananda was taught by M.K.Gurukkal and Rairu Nambiar.

This liberal attitude towards education was attributed to Buddhist influence.<sup>43</sup> Thus, deprivation on caste terms though theoretically, present was practically absent in Malabar. Takeover of the region by the British opened up new avenues of development. The thiyas of the coastal regions especially of Kannur, Thalassery and Kozhikode entered into trading relations with the British. Many became contractors and monopoly traders.<sup>44</sup> Possibilities of appointment in the bureaucracy attracted them towards English education. When Herman Grundert started the first primary school thiyas boys were among the first to attend it. Admission was open to all irrespective of caste or creed most of them came from the Thiyas.<sup>45</sup> The annual report sent by Herman Gundert from the Thalassery station speaks of four schools in the neighborhood of Thalassery- Thalassery, Kadirur, Dharmadam and Weavers village. Total number of student were 121 and most of them were Thiyas.<sup>46</sup> Expenses of education was met from the locally mobilized funds and out of fees collected from students.<sup>47</sup>

A primary school was started in Bernassery near Kannur in 1842. Another school was started in Kallai near Calicut in 1848. The East India company encouraged private initiative in education as it was not prepared to bear the burden of education completely. The educational dispatch of 1854 introduced the grant-in-Aid Scheme.<sup>48</sup> Most of the primary schools in these mission states were later,

upgraded as middle schools and High Schools. In 1907, the BGM high school was upgraded as a second grade college. The school established by the Zamorin was upgraded in 1879 as a second grade college. Victoria college Palghat was established in 1888 and Brennan College in 1891<sup>49</sup>. Thus, higher educational institutions were steadily increasing in Malabar. More affluent groups will send their children to Madras.<sup>50</sup>

These educational institutions offered the people of Malabar exposure to modern education. Most of them were placed in the government establishment-Thus, we have a long list of government employees like choorayi Kanaran Uppottu Kannan(deputy collectors).Panangadan Kannan, Diwan Bahdur E K Krishnan(Sub. Judges) Choorayi Raman, Karayi Govidan Onden Kunhambu (Tahasildars) and also practicing advocates such as C.Krishnan, Kottiyath Ramunni, Cyitti Krishnan, Potheri Kunhmbu. Ayyathan Janaki and Moorkoth Madhavi were the first women graduates of Malabar in modern Medicine.<sup>51</sup> Basel Evangelical mission was the principal agency that was engaged in imparting modern education in Malabar. The study materials were also prepared by them.<sup>52</sup>This had an impact on moulding the character of the newly educated. The Basel Evangelical Mission insisted disciplined and qualitative life, equal status and universal brother hood whereas the British spirit was 'delighted Superiority.'<sup>53</sup> Modern educational institutions provided and opportunity to interact with scholars coming from diverse social background which helped them to shed off many of their parochial feelings.

### **Development of Public Sphere**

An important fall out of the administrative takeover of Malabar by the British

had been its exposure to modern structures of Governance. The most efficient policy that extended the colonial ideology was education. The vernacularization of liberal discourses was conceived as the process of ideological transfer that lead to the restructuring of vernacular sphere as well as the relationship between the high and low languages of the sub-continent<sup>54</sup> Educational enterprise in this region was initiated by the Basel Evangelical Mission and the curriculum plan was decided by them Development of education in this region took place against the background of grant-in-aid scheme of the government. Dissatisfied with the governmental intervention the mission kept out of the system for a short while<sup>55</sup>. The mission found the system of inspection recognition and control' as barriers on the freedom of mission activities. So they withdraw from grant-in-aid scheme in 1860 and rejoined it in 1867<sup>55</sup> Text books were prepared and printed by the mission which meant freedom in selecting the content of the course. During his tenure as Inspector of Schools Gundert attempted to restructure totally the content of education.<sup>56</sup> Basel mission is a protestant mission and as it is not having any imperialist imaginations it never treated the natives as inferior beings. It has already been observed that Basel Evangelical Mission could transcend Caste barrier as it was not having upper caste converts<sup>57</sup>. English educated literati, as already shown mostly came from the backward communities. It set the stage for the processes of articulation, discussion and accommodation, instead of the exclusionist tendencies of subaltern counter discourses from the domain of cultural production.<sup>58</sup> Thus Malabar has seen the articulation of counter discourses like 'Thiyyarute Pournikatha' which is a critique on the notion of

'backwardness and 'otherness' imposed upon the identity of a dominant caste group.<sup>59</sup> Keralanacharam of Swami Sivananda is also an articulation of the rights of the marginalized.

The above critique has showed that the keynote of the public sphere in Malabar was not exclusionary attempts leading to the production of homogeneous discourse with potentially hegemonic dimension as observed elsewhere. It was abounding in the articulation of counter discourses which brought knowledge to the doors of the common man. Malabar created an environment that facilitated the discussion, circulation and accommodation of diverse ideologies. The changes that emerge out of the existing situation fail to be classified either as 'Sanskritisation' or as 'parochialization' because of the nature of processes involved in it. The basic nature of the social processes in Malabar had been its attempt at levelling. It was not based on a one-dimensional approach of reform. Through debates and discussions it created the atmosphere for the adoption of a reformulated tradition which was projected as devoid of all existing ills, that offered self-realization.

The outcome of these processes was the production of laicized literate order in Malabar<sup>60</sup> This created large scale reading public in Malabar. The development of Public sphere was the inevitable consequence of the coming of a new system of education and modern administrative measures. Accordingly a secular cultural space came into existence where by association of various sections of people became possible. The newly created atmosphere helped to transcend the traditional barriers such as untouchability and intermingling was essentialised by the

new institutions. Institutions such as hospitals established by the Basel Mission and new educational institutions and above all the spread of print media helped to create the formation of a public sphere. Unlike south Kerala and other parts of India, exclusionary tendencies were not the feature of Malabar. The order of the District collector that insisted unrestricted entrance to untouchable castes in offices including that of the village officer is a fitting rejoinder.<sup>61</sup> The newly introduced institutions and ideals simply nurtured the existing phenomena of interaction existing in Malabar.

They were instrumental in bringing about social changes. 'Saraswathee vijayam' was a Malayalam novel written by Potheri Kunhambu which proclaimed the possibilities of upward social mobility even to a low born through education.<sup>62</sup> The possibilities of getting employment in government services attracted many towards the new educational institutions. Of the total population of Malabar 112713 were able to read and write in 1871.<sup>63</sup> We are already having a long list of bureaucrats and professionals like Doctors, Advocates and Teachers even among the Thiyyas<sup>64</sup>

Journals and periodicals also played an important role in popularizing new notions. Herman Gundert published two magazines simultaneously from Nettur (Rajya Samacharam and Pashchimodayam) from 1847 onwards.<sup>65</sup> Pashchimodayam gave importance to generate knowledge. In 1874 another publication by name 'Keralopakari' began to be published from Mangalore. Chenkulathe Kunhirama Menon started publishing 'Kerala Patrika' in 1884. Moorkoth Kumaran contributed articles in this journal with the penname Gajakesari.<sup>66</sup> Later Mithavadi, a journal of the thiyyas was started publishing from sept 1907 which was owned by

T.Shivashankaran a wealthy thiyya of Thalassery and edited by Moorkoth Kumaran. Mithavadi was so often ridiculed as a 'Bible of the Thiyyas' , it was in reality a Bible that stood for the upliftment of the depressed.<sup>67</sup>

### **Civil Collectivism**

Another significant feature of Malabar is its inclination towards civil collectivism. Collectivism was conceived as one of the methods that lead to change. T.K.Oommen says that collectivism can be organized on two ways viz Primordial collectivism and civil collectivism<sup>68</sup> Membership in ascriptive organizations such as caste has been classified as primordial collectivism. Such collectivism are easy as it involve structural attributes through a process of socialization . S.Rudolph considers such associations as 'Para communities'<sup>69</sup> whereas civil collectivism cannot be developed easily as it has no special and natural loyalties to linger on Growth of consciousness about structural similarities among individuals and groups are invariable for the development of strong civil collectivism. Thus, civil collectivism is the result of the objective conditions and subjective perceptions of the individuals.<sup>70</sup>

The conditions prevailing in Malabar facilitated the growth of civil collectivism . The control over land and faith did not helped the upper castes impose their ideological hegemony over the rest of the people.Vanjeri grandhavari brings forth the presence of social forces that does not comply with the traditional norms<sup>71</sup>. Instead the respective castes contested the sway over symbolic frontiers. The landed classes were forced to accommodate their notions in relation to the pre-

vailing circumstances. The introduction of modern administrative structures as well as legal systems offered equal treatment to all irrespective of the caste status. The defamy suit filed against the police Ameen, who was a thiyya by birth(Oondan Ambu) by the zamorin of Calicut for not showing proper courtesy is an interesting episode<sup>72</sup>.To this complaint Ambu replied that he was not sending the letter to the Zamorin as a thiyya but as a representative of Her Majesty. In the final judgment it was stated that in no official correspondence caste bound forms of address need not be followed.( The Thalassery Fanjdari cutcherry has decided to deport Ambur nair for a crime of theft. The legal system established by the British did not favored an upper caste in dispensing justice which was unimaginable in Travancore.<sup>73</sup>Caste groups also were operating in an egalitarian way not as conceived by Louis Dumont. Nicholas B Dirks also refute the claim of Loui's Dumont when he argue that caste(as we know it today) is a modern phenomenon that is, specifically the product of an historical encounter between India and Western colonial rule.<sup>74</sup>This 'corporate' atmosphere prevailing in Malabar made the practising of hierarchy and orthodox religiosity impossible. This led to the secularization<sup>75</sup>of social life in Malabar. Initially, mobilization was carried out through a religious vocabulary and later it was transformed in to secular ethics. The notion of religion developed by Brabmananda Sivayogi Validates this observation.<sup>76</sup>

The experience of Travancore has shown that secularization can also be obtained through mobilization on communal terms.<sup>77</sup> The mobilization based on ascriptive terms was justified as deprivation based on ascriptive terms were

prevailing.<sup>78</sup>The problem of such mobilization was also brought out by him. He believed that increased secularization will lead to the exposing of the middle class orientation of demands.<sup>79</sup> The problem with this method is the persistence of primordial ties that was used to mobilize ordinary people as they knew that masses are susceptible to religious sentiments. Thus primordialities remain as ideal tools to be used at will to protect 'interests.' But later, it was realized that one of the most effective methods to combat communalism was to unite the lower strata of different communities in a movement for securing their common economic and other interest.<sup>80</sup> Civil collectivism is free from such dangers. But inculcating a consciousness about structural similarities remain as a Herculean task. Persistence in society of other options that offer high dividends restricts the scope of Civil Collectivism.

**Egalitarianism:** Egalitarianism was the most important doctrine that fanned the fancies of modern man. The existence of inequality in any form opens up a discussion of equality. Prevailing ideologies of all societies consider the existing inequality as natural. The champions of the new social order usually suggests that it only cleared the way for the realisation of greater equality. The notion about 'individuals' carried with it the problem of freedom and rights which naturally lead to a critique of existing forms. In earlier societies the individual had been to a greater or lesser extent subordinated to the group: family, community or church....the new society sought to free individuals from the bondage of groups.<sup>81</sup>

The Basel missionaries were protestant by faith and carried with them the notion of egalitarianism as espoused by protestant groups. This spirit was re-

flected in their evangelical and educational activities. Basel mission converts did not retain their caste identities as conversion was an individual affair in their scheme.<sup>82</sup>

This become more pertinent when we compare the condition of the converts in Travancore. To attain social status they were forced to continue their fight and their synthesis in the Christian community also do not take place. The Basel Mission propagated 'disciplined equality' where as the British spirit was delighted superiority. The mission industries stood out as the haven of those who wanted to escape from caste bound profession. It provided job opportunities for the converts and non-converts alike in their industrial establishments. In 1913 there were altogether 3633 employees in their pay roll of which 954(26%) were non-converts.<sup>83</sup> This shows that the mission was instrumental in bringing about an industrial climate which has transcended the parochial feelings of caste and religion.

The theory of Morton Class on the origin of caste is pertinent in the context of Malabar. This resonate with the theory of Dravidian origin of caste based on the references in the Sangam literature<sup>84</sup> and also with the situation prevailing in Malabar where caste groups shows features of Class. They have retained heredity and rituals in a bid to maintain tribal identity. The professional collectives retained rituals to retain their rights over the profession.<sup>85</sup>

This makes the notion of egalitarianism and mutual dependence organic to Malabar. This is not a negation either of caste or of hierarchy but emphasizing of mutual dependence which is essential for the harmonious existence of a society<sup>86</sup> The consciousness about one's own rights and duties breeds a feeling of

togetherness and any attempt to marginalize was resisted at every point. Hence, the attempt at imposing the hegemony of land owning groups failed in Malabar, on the other hand they were also forced to accommodate to the existing norms. Thus, the Malabar society had developed certain aspects which freely communicated with the modern notions of egalitarianism. British rule of law showed them, even though for a limited extent, the operation of equality before law. Basel Missions notions of equality and denial of priestly domination thrilled them to the core. Above all, lack of a traditional state structure that protected the interests of upper castes made Malabar a free zone where diverse ideologies could be articulated and debated upon.

The critique of untouchability undertaken by the thinkers emerge from this background. The main plank of their project had been an attempt at devaluing the high caste status of the Brahmins and making the untouchable pure through a discursive practice of subversion. The story about Ramanuja as narrated by Vaghatanada is quite revealing. It was believed that he was taken to the river for bathing by Brahmin followers. Whereas Chandala followers take him back to home. The brahmin followers one day asked him about this curious practice and insisted for a reverse order. He told them that the chandalas are pure at heart as they do not nurture the feeling of pure and impure. Even after taking bath the Brahmin permit their mind to cherish base qualities which make them impure in his opinion.<sup>87</sup> The functional dependency of the superior castes over the inferior castes emphasized by Swami Sivananda as well as the nonavailability of Caste marks on the Human body, as we see in different categories of animals, empha-

sized by Sivayogi, were all part of the scheme of subversion attempted by the thinkers in their project.

This consciousness about discrimination reaped a good harvest in the Malabar Society. Reports of ill-treatment and atrocities towards the untouchable communities served as a starting point for a more concerted effort at integrating such section with the society at large<sup>88</sup>.

By this time the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee also made the fight against untouchability an important programme. The Eighteenth annual general body meeting of the Yogakhemasabha passed a resolution asking to expand the right to use public road granted after conversion to the depressed castes, even before their conversion.<sup>89</sup> The anti-untouchability propaganda carried out vigorously in the length and breadth of Malabar helped to create a new consciousness about the similar civic rights of the depressed castes. The attitude of the government was also positive in this case who introduced law to protect their rights and freedom to move.

Inter-dining was an important programme that challenged the sanctity of untouchability. Sahodaran Ayyappan initiated this at Cherayi.<sup>90</sup> This was continued by the Brahmasamajists at Annie Hall Calicut. In connection with the inauguration of the library at Thiruvegappura interdining was conducted (Mathrubumi 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 1924). This invert the notion of ritual purity<sup>91</sup> prevailing in India. The Atma Vidya Sangam conducted an inter-dining at Azhikode which was ridiculed by the conservatives as 'Pulayar Party'. Stern measures were taken against a number of families who co-operated with the inter-dining programme. The meeting of the

Elders of the Thara imposed Mattuvilakku(denial of Mattu) upon all the families and individuals who co-operated with interdining. The first victim at Azhikode was the sister of Cherumanal Pokkan master, an activist of the sangam.<sup>92</sup> She was sent back to her ancestral home by her husband. The sangam boldly resisted all such measures. Intercast marriages and uplift of the harijans was also popularized by the Sangam. They have also run night schools to impart education. Aryabandhu P.K.Bappu of Kannur organized intercaste marriage at Kannur in 1924 at his own expense, which was solemnized by Sadhu Sivaprasad.<sup>93</sup> Dr. P Anandan of Azhikode was popularly known as 'Mobile Dispensary' because of the unselfish services he rendered to the people<sup>94</sup> such conscious activities of the thinkers and their followers helped to popularize new notions of social behavior popular among the people.

### **Disappearance of Life-cycle Rituals**

The thinkers under study were critical of most of the social practices and beliefs prevailed in Malabar. With the foundation of the AtmaVidya Sangam in 1917 the activities against superstition and social evils were vigorously launched. The action plan of the Atmavidya Sangam, which was established even in the interior regions, effectively put an end to many superstitious practices forestalling the efforts of the conservatives.

Ettumattu<sup>95</sup> Purificatory ritual related with death(Pula) was performed by the Kavuthiya by sprinkling specially prepared water with a special kind of grass(Karuka) on the body of the members of the family. At that time they were asked to step on the 'mattu' which was spread on the floor. ('Mattu' is the

purificatory cloth supplied by the washerwoman of the locality.) The impurities related with birth, death and menstruation was believed to be ended only on the using of mattu after the stipulated period of confinement was one of the most important ritual which was severely criticized by the thinkers. Denial of the 'mattu' by the elders of the Thara was equal to social ostracism as such families were not permitted to mingle with the rest of the society. The right to impose this rest with the elders of the Thara of the thiyya community.<sup>96</sup> Those who violated the strictures had to suffer many hardships.<sup>97</sup> Brahmavathan speaks of the successful eradication of the practice of 'Ettumattu' from Kunnothuparmbu. But the thiyya elites who considered this practice invariable to thiyya identity were opposed to this and wanted to seek prior permission from Sree Narayana Guru to which Vagbhatananda replied that 'the guru was born to a mother who suffer from caste deprivation not to a mother who suffer from the 'Ettimattu'.<sup>98</sup> The message of irrationality present in many of the social practices were made popular through the active efforts of the sangam. Such irrationalities were criticized by Swami Sivananda and Brahmananda Sivayogi. Thus, their joint efforts created an intellectual atmosphere in Malabar which made unjustifiable the public practicing of such rituals.

Other rituals which were vehemently opposed by the intellectuals were Thalikkettukalyanam((Which is the prepubescent marriage of girls),Thirandukuli(Which is a ritual related with the beginning of the menstrual period) and Pulikudi (Pulikudi is a pregnancy rituals which is an indispensable ceremony for the rich and poor alike, performed on a particular day in the ninth

month). These rituals were attacked on two ways. On the one hand irrelevance of such practices were exposed and on the other hand it was criticized as a mere squandering of wealth. All these 'rites of passage' were to be celebrated with much splendor. The splendor actually showed the financial position and reputation of the Tharavadu. No tharavadu was ready to cut expenses related with such rituals as they feared it will bring infamy to the Tharavadu. Hence expenses related with such celebrations increased without any restraints which even led to the economic ruin of many Tharavadus.<sup>99</sup> This economic aspect was stressed by the thinkers as financial discipline has become invariable for sustenance in the changed circumstances of Malabar. The extent of economic ruin of Malabar in the post-1921 period was brought out by Mathrubumi in an editorial<sup>100</sup> with the caption "Kshamam'(Famine). Thus the suffering of the people in the second and third decade of the twentieth century can be considered as the economic base of the critique of the 'Rites of passage'.

The intellectuals attempted their critique of Thalikkettukalyanam by treating it as real marriage. No thali tying was practiced in actual marriage. Among the Nairs no ceremony associated with marriage was practised other than pudava koda (Giving dress) by the husband. As Sambandham relation existed only with a person it was stable in Malabar.<sup>101</sup> The thinkers approached Sambandham relations as 'concubinage' as the women were entering into sexual relations with persons other than the one who has tied thali<sup>102</sup>. They have carried out their critique by Sanctifying the practice of 'tying thali'. They have suggested an alternate method in marriage which make it an agreement between two individuals

with the consent of the community which was followed by marriage reforms. Even before this the thiyas of Malabar were having a unique system of marriage legalizing it in front of the community.<sup>103</sup> Vagbhatananda considered 'Thirandukuli' as an open invitation for potential males to enter into sexual relations with that girl<sup>104</sup>. Pulikudi and similar practices were rejected as superstitious practice which has no scientific base. All such rituals were projected by them as a product of the male dominated society which deny any individuality to women. They were treated only as a commodity to be appropriated by men at will. Their vigorous critique has a positive side as it led to the virtual disappearance of such practices<sup>105</sup>. Their critique of such practices changed it into mere superstitions not the index of the reputation of the Tharavadu.

Adopting of new Life-style: The project of the thinkers addressed primarily the individuals. The coming of modernity created the structural conditions required for the emergence of the individuals. Modernity provided the capacity to speak to the various constituents of the Tharavadu.<sup>106</sup> As the thinkers were aware of the deficiencies of the modern individuals, their project tried to incorporate the virtues of tradition to make the modern individual useful to society. The interactive spaces within modernity led to the incorporation of the useful aspects of tradition with modernity. Through a serving of mental and physical practices they have created an new individual who is concerned about the society and who is free from the vices of modernity. The tool suggested by them to construct such an individual is disciplining the mind and body<sup>107</sup>

Disciplining the mind is invariable to their project as they believed that everything originate in the mind and the best way to attain beatitude is developing the capacity to train the mind. They were aware of the fact that the success of modernity and capitalism is based on the creation of desirous individuals. This validates their insistence for restricting the mental activities. When the individual become concerned about his fellow beings and nature he begins to train his mind and become satisfied with minimum requirements which helps him to keep out of the cobweb of modernity. Thus, the Indian version of modernity makes its practitioners believe that their happiness lies in the happiness of others. This could be achieved through the disciplining of our body by conscious imbibing of certain values. So all of them suggested a moral code to be observed by their followers.

They were in general against accumulation of wealth. Vagbhatananda conceived the tendency to Save money as contrary to freedom and one can have money only to get one's meal.<sup>108</sup> This attitude justified all protests and strikes by the workers as they were denied their due share by the factory owners. His notions on wealth and property was similar to the mythical character Pakkanar who considered it as Alekkolli(Slayer of man) <sup>109</sup> No private property exist in the community of Swami Sivananda. Thus, their notion of a society is not based on competition and accumulation but on understanding the problems of others and extending all possible help to solve their problems.

Another important virtue they have propagated was Ahimsa and Vegetarianism. They believed that even the thought of violence is capable of corrupting the

mind. Animal sacrifices in the temples were discontinued as a result of the intervention of the followers of Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda.<sup>110</sup> Swami Sivananda ridiculed eating of flesh as eating of the corpse.' Eating the flesh of animals as well as offering it to god was considered by them all as base qualities. Sivayogi considered this as the quality of wild animals who were having no other options to sustain them<sup>111</sup>. This is an attempt to attract men towards a Vegetarian way of life. The Siddha Somajists and Sivayogi had proved through their own life that a pure vegetarian life is possible. We also come across a good number of people who follow vegetarianism voluntarily and abstain from killing other animals. This led to the impossibility of identifying a person on the basis of his dietary habits. This also suggest the practicality of the 'holistic approach' which is ecological in orientation and invariable for humanity for its sustenance. Thus, Vegetarianism, in their project, get projected as the saviour of humanity.

The thinkers attached utmost importance to cleanliness. They have asked their followers to wear clean dresses and to maintain their surroundings clean. Siddasramam (Althaur) is unique in many ways. It has no formalities that we come across in a modern asram. No chants of mantras or pujas were performed there. Importance is given only to getting up early in the morning, taking bath and doing Rajayoga in the simplest way. Rest of the time is devoted totally to discussion and readings. Life in the asram was expected to give training to the followers. They were specially instructed to engage themselves in educating the other members of the family. Thus, the creating of the literate society, having peace of mind and leading a very chaste and austere life is their motto. Imbibing

personal morality is essential to lead such a life and it begin from one's surroundings. Sivayogi asked his followers to develop the qualities of truthfulness, patience, knowledge, courage and rationality. Frugality also found its way in their doctrines. This is not to be adopted as a capitalist ethic but as a quality that help others also to live. Vagbhatananda and Sidhasamajists emphasized leading a virtuous disciplined life. Cleanliness was suggested as essential for leading a healthy and hygienic life. They have also suggested dietary and physical behavior. These are all certain practices suggested by the thinkers to regulate one's own life. Such a regulated life is essential to the harmonious existence of the society.

The thinkers rejected idolatry polytheistic beliefs and devil worship as unnecessary and irrelevant. Sivayogi asked his followers to abstain from the practice of solemnizing marriages form temples, pilgrimage, sacrifices, penances, idolatry and asceticism.<sup>112</sup> All of them stated that pilgrim centers are located within the human body itself. Pilgrimages and penances inflict torture to the body, which is not good. Body was important to their project as it was conceived as the tool to cross over the cosmic world. They believed that pujas were not to be performed at the temples but to the Gathra Kshetram(Temple of body).They were employing the strategy of substitution which will not lead to a virtual alienation with tradition. Those who were dissatisfied with tradition was found at ease with this reinterpretation as it was based on the attributes of tradition. This also helped them to wean out the undesirable elements of tradition. In addition to this Vagbhatananda composed prayers that praised the singular divinity who is with-

out attributes. Such a worship include all irrespective of caste and religion within its fold. This is in a sense a romanticisation of god and worship.<sup>113</sup> This anti-idolatrous position of the thinkers was acceptable to malabar as such a form of worship was unknown to Malabar and were not particular to get the temples opened for worship to the common man. Dominant mode of worship in Malabar was theyyattams where intimate relation between the devotee and deity existed. The revelations of the theyyams were never taken as the jargon of 'Vannan' or Malayalam' who has to become deities at the shrines. This is the context that facilitated the spread of the doctrine of anti-idolatry in Malabar. Influenced by these doctrines young men of Malabar destroyed shrines in many places.

The scheme of disciplining contained in the project of the thinkers were intended to reconstitute the individuals in the context of modernization. This conscious intervention made the individual an integral part of the society which sustained all the constituents within a society. This had been the Keynote of Pre-colonial society in which people lived in accordance with the rhythm of nature. The elements of appropriation contained in their project helped the individual to retain his links with the rural community. This transformation of the individual was achieved through the exposing of the limitations of the modern individual. Their thought become organic as they were successful in establishing the thread between the individual and society . This aspect helps them to transcend their own representational characteristics.

## Notes and References

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6. C.H. Kunhappa, *Smaranakal Maathram*, 2000, p 83.
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8. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Op.cit.*, p 19.
9. Kumaran finds fault with Logan as he ignored the features of the Thiyya social organization and for arguing that the Nairs were the only caste group of Malabar who developed such a system.
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11. William Logan, *Malabar vol I*, 1995, pp 119, 120.
12. David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, ch 5, OUP, 1989.
13. M. Dilip Menon, *Caste Communism and Nationalism in South India*, 1994.p39.
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15. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India Vol.VII* , 1909 p 94.
16. M S A Rao, *Op.cit.*,p 26.
17. Edgar Thurston, *Op.cit.*, p 36, 1909
18. KKN Kurup, *Aadhunika Keralam*, 1995, p 21.
19. *Mithavadi* August 1913, no.1,b1.
20. Fawcett Speaks of the ceremonies attached with the Pisharikavu of Quilandi which narrates in detail such rights of the different caste/religious groups.Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*,1901, p 255-64.
21. Bhikku Parekh quoted in Nicholas B Dirks *Caste of Mind*, Dirks assumes that the original idea of caste, for Gandhi, was incorporative of the whole Hindu community and was about inter dependence rather than either exclusion or domination.....If in the end Gandhi was hardly a social radical in matters relating to caste, it was in large part because the politics of caste appeared to him as they appeared in different contexts to the British, as divisive and anti-nationalist. And here again, the colonial context conditioned the available op

- tions for any nationalist sociology of India', Dirks, Nicholas, B, *Caste of Mind*, Permanent Black 2002, p 235.
22. See Dilip Menon, *Op.cit.*, p 51.
  23. K.K.Kusuman, *Slavery in Travancore*, 1973.
  24. This is a dance drama of the Pulayas which narrate an episode related with cultivation of a forest tract by a Pulaya and his wife, a suspicion of sexual relation with a muslim merchant and the burning of the hut and the three becoming deities. *Deshabhimani Weekly* issue 37, Book 33, Feb 2002.
  25. Rasalind O' Hanlon, *Caste Conflict and Ideology: Jyotiba Phule and low-caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Western India*, 1985, p 262.
  26. 'Kodamoori' is a ritual dance performed by the members of the Malayan caste after the harvesting of the monsoon crops. The dance is related with the myth of bringing down the celestial cow Kamadhenu to earth. They visit each Houses in the area and the people believed that it bring prosperity to each household.
  27. Vedan-Padal is also one of the ritualistic dances of Kannur district. It is performed twice a year one in the month of Karkitakam(July-August) practiced by the Vannan caste and the other in the month of Chingam(August-September) practiced by the Malayan Caste. Raghavan Payyanad 'The folkarts of Kerala' in H.M.Nayak and B.R.Gopal (Ed) *South Indian studies* , Geetha Book House Mysore, 1990,p 970.
  28. The Pulayas were beaten up for using public roads and coming to the markets-*Mathrubhumi daily*, January 15, 1924.
  29. *A concise History of Basel Mission*: Basel Mission Press Mangalore 1934
  30. The Basel Mission gave importance to publishing mission news meant for its members and publishing of such magazines in different languages were an important aspect of the mission activities.*Malayala Sahithyavaum Kristyanikalum* , 1989, p 529 .
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  32. P J Thomas , *Op.cit.*,1989 p 537.
  33. Gundert prepared the first Malayalam English Dictionary, prepared a book on Malayalam grammar, published a book entitled 'Keralapazhama' which was earlier serialized in Pashchimodayam and Malayala Rajyam was published in 1868.
  34. See Ch II for more details.
  35. Interview with Aravindakshan dt. 27.02.03.
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  38. Pavanan, *Brahmanada Swami Sivayogi*, 1997, pp 57-60.
  39. W Illiam Logan, *Op.cit.*,1989, p 107.
  40. Kathleen Gough, Literacy in Kerala in Jack Goody (Ed) *Literacy in Traditional societies*.1968,p 141 .
  41. Ibid, p 150.
  42. C H Kunhappa, *Op.cit.*, 2000, p 38.
  43. The Siddaroopam to teach Sanskrit was believed to be prepared by the Buddhists. In this scheme first lesson begins with Vrksha Vrksho, Vrkshah: But the brahmanic domination changed it into Rama ,Ramo Ramah: It is said that the 'Vrksha' denoted the Bodhi tree. See Prof.P.O.Purushothaman, *Malayanmayute Vikasa Parinamangal. Bhashaposhini*, February 2003.
  44. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Op.cit.*, p11.
  45. The reports from the mission station councils throws light on the educational activites See Report Basel Mission 1840,41,42.
  46. Ibid, Madras, 1841
  47. Ibid, 1859, Manglore 1860, p 76,77,.
  48. *Educational Papers: A Supplement to the South Indian Missionary conference Report*, Madras 1880, pp 1-29.
  49. K K N Kurup, *Op.cit.*,Trivandrum 1995, p 28.
  50. Ibid p 22.
  51. Ibid p 23.
  52. K P Vareed, *Dr. Herman Gundert'* ,1989, pp 432,433.
  53. Paul David Thottathil. *The socio Religious impact of the Basel Evangelical Mission in Malabar* from 1839 to 1919 unpublished Master of Theology dissertation FFRRC Kottayam Reg. No 10/93, 1993-95, p 120 .
  54. Veena Naregal, Language and power in pre colonial western India quoted in *Figuring the Political as Pedagogy* ,Studies in History 17.1,n.s.(2001), p 20.
  55. See for details Paul David Thottathil. *op.cit.* 1995, p 71.
  56. P.J.Thomas, *Op.cit.*, 1989, P 432,33.
  57. Jaiprakash Raghavaiah, *Basel Mission Industries in Malabar and South Canara* M Phil Dissertation Center for development studies Ulloor Trivandrum 1986, p 72 . Also see Harold A Gould, *Caste adaptation in modernizing Indian Society*, 1988.
  58. Veena Naregal has showed this tendency being enacted in the reformist discourse of Western India.*Op.cit.*,17,1,n.s. 2001.
  59. Numerical strength, economic and political power, ritual status and western education and occupations are the most important elements

of dominance. When a caste enjoys all or most of the elements of dominance it may be said to have decisive dominance-M.N.Srinivas., *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays*, 1987, p 114.

60. The term laicization is used to denote the conditions within modern political structures where by the distribution of knowledge are power and premised not an ideas of exclusivity but rather on the ideas of general circulation- veena Narigal Op.cit, 2001, footnote 2.
61. In the incident of obstructing Pulaya children in the public roads by the local people, the circle inspector warned the village officer of Kalliasseri that he is bound to uphold the government order. Thus, any violation of civil rights were checked then and there by the government agencies.(Mathrubumi 15 Jan 1925.
62. Champadan Vijayan, *Yoganadam* March 16-31, 2000.
63. Census of India 1871.
64. Champadan Vijayan, *Yoganadam*.July 16-31, 1999.
65. G Priyadarshan Malayala Pathra Pravarthanam-*Praramba Swaroopam*,1982, p 18 .
66. Ibid.p 154.
67. Puthuppally Raghavan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthana Charithram*, ,1985, p 173.
68. T.K.Oommen,*Op.cit.*, p 31.
69. Rudolph.S.Rudolph. *Modernity of Tradition.*, 1999,p 29.
70. T.K.Oomman, *Op.cit.*p 31.
71. Cherayan Marakkar who lives near the temple created nuisance for the brahmins. They complained to the local chieftain who hesitated to move against Marakkar. He send two patters(Brahmin from Taminadu) to abuse them. This is an incident that happened in 1635. See MGS Narayanan(Ed) Vanneri grathivari Calicut Unversity His torical Series no 1 1987.
72. Champadan Vijayan, *Op.cit.*, July 16-31, 1999, p 16.
73. T.K.Ravindran, *Malabar under Bombay Presidency*, 1969.
74. Nicholas B Dirks *Op.cit.*, 2002, p 5.
75. Secularization as a process is used to denote a shift from sacred to secular from its traditional religious and metaphysical mornings to a rational ordering of social economic and political institutions.
76. It is better to have no religion at all – Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Moksha Pradeepam* pp 170-171.
77. See for details George Mathew *Communal Road to a Secular Kerala*, 1989.
78. Ibid p 48.
79. Ibid, p 192.

80. A.R.Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, 1976, p 384.
81. Andre Beteille, *Inequality Among Men* , 1977, p 163.
82. Annual reports of the mission station contain stories of persons who came to the stations to know more about gospel. The report of 1840 talks about an upper caste by name Ravunni. The report of 1841 talks about the thiyya teacher. See for more details RBM 1840 p 6 R B M 1841 p 7.
83. Ibid 1913 p 20.
84. Gail Omvedt, *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*,1994, p 36 .
85. K N Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal* ,1997, p 184,187.
86. See Andre Beteille: *Op.cit.*
87. *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, p 832.
88. Beating of the Pulaya who went to the fish market in Payyannur even though it was permitted by the Magistrate. (10th Nov. 1923 Mathrubhumi), complaints on non admitting of pulaya students in Board schools (31<sup>st</sup> July 1924 Mathrubhumi) protest meeting held at Kalliassery on Jan 24, 1929 are among the list of such incidents.
89. Mathrubhumi 4<sup>th</sup> January 1926.
90. M. Sahadevan, *Towards Social Justice and Nation Making: A study of Sahodaran Ayyappan* 1993, pp 62,63.
91. Susan Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India Volume III, Caste Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern age* Cambridge, 1999.
92. Interview with Ramakrishnan at Azhikkode, dt 26-12-02.
93. M.S.Nair, *Vagbhatanadanum Samoohika Navothanavum* ,1998,p 84.
94. Interview: Ramakrishnan 26.12.02.
95. This is a practice connected with the purity of the individual and family which has to be performed by the member of the Kavuthiya caste.
96. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Op.cit.*, p 22.
97. Interview with M T Ramakrishnan at Azhikode dt 26-12-02.
98. Report on the AtmavidyaSangam meeting Kunnothuparamba, Brahmavratham, 1971, p 141.
99. Moyarath Sankaran, *Op.cit.*, 1965, p 11
100. Mathrubumi Daily 10 July 1924.
101. C J Fuller *Nayars Today* , 1976, p 100 .
102. Swami Sivananda *Keralanacharam*, 1990, p
103. Edgar Thurston, *Op.cit.*, 1909, pp 49-62
104. Complete works of Vagbhatananda p 78
105. C J Fuller *Nayars Today* , 1976, p 125.
106. K.P.Kannan, *Of Rural Proletarian Struggles :Mobilization and*

- Organisations of Rural Workers in South West Asia. 1988,P 123.
107. This kind of discipline is observed in the case of Prathyksha Raksha Daiva Sabha founded by Poikayil Yohannan-see P Sanal Mohan. Religion social space and Identity Lucknow January 1998.
  108. M S Nair, *Op.cit.*,p 95.
  109. K. Balakrishnan Nambiar, *Vidwan P Kelunair*, 1992.
  110. Pavanan, *Op.cit.*,p 44
  111. Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Moksha Pradeepam*,1997, p 154.
  112. *Ibid*, p 53.
  113. M S Nair,*Op.cit.*, p 37.

# Towards A Progressive Society

Asokan Mundon “Renaissance and social change in malabar - a study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham ” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut, 2003

## ChapterV

### **Towards A Progressive Society**

This chapter tries to assess the changes that came into existence in Malabar as a result of its exposure to new brands. Sociologists and Anthropologists developed various theories to provide a conceptual frame-work to the changes that set in. The theories of 'Sanskritization' and 'modernization' are proposed to cover the changes in contemporary India. The limitation of these theories are its culturological approach which do not lead to any structural change in society.<sup>1</sup> Yogendra Singh puts forward an integrated approach which locate the causes of social change from within and without of the social system or tradition which is classified as orthogenetic and Heterogenetic changes respectively. He believe that orthogenetic processes will not lead to changes in the social structure as observed in the case of heterogenetic processes. But, he was not ready to reject it as insignificant and considers equally the nature of changes activated by both of these processes. Hence, he developed an integrated approach of social change which has the advantage of being comprehensive as well as theoretically consistent<sup>2</sup> T.K.Oommen also share a similar opinion when he suggests that the notion of change by displacement prevailing in the west and change through gradual accretion prevailing in the east are two routes of social change which can co-exist.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the social movements provide the stage for the confluence between

the old and new values of structures. Progress in this chapter is not attempted in terms of 'development' but in terms of changes that was taking place as a result of an inter action between tradition and modernity.

Malabar has certain cultural characteristics that distinguished it from other parts of Kerala. It is assumed that these features played an important role in moulding the life and culture of Malabar. An exploration into the causes of distinction is expected to be rewarding in this context. So an enquiry is attempted here which is presumed as the foundation of the emerging society.

### **Malabar Specificity:**

The social movements that originated in Malabar had been fundamentally supra-caste in nature. Whereas the native state of Travancore witnessed the operation of many communitarian movements. The Thiyyas of Malabar, who were theoretically a backward community, also staked the claims of an upper caste group like the Nairs. They were not have to suffer any discrimination on caste lines. In the reply given by the Madras Governor to the Thiyya petitioners it was stated that the thiyyas were a fairly advanced group when compared to the other sections of Malabar.<sup>4</sup> Rituals and the forms of Worship practiced by the Thiyyas were not considered as elements of backwardness. Instead learned men like Kumaran was after 'self-realization' by worshipping god within him not in temples.<sup>5</sup> But later Articles relating to the caste fights between Nair and Thiyyas appeared in the columns of swabhimani and Gajakesari<sup>6</sup> Leaders of the fight were K T Chandu Nambiar and Moorkoth Kumaran who were good friends and continued as such. This Shows that the Thiyyas of Malabar were engaged in articulating a status of

equality with the Nairs. The Thiyyas even used the Vannas (Washer man) to keep the upper castes in the status of perpetual pollution on the visit of impurities related with birth death and menstruation<sup>7</sup>. This was possible to them as the Vannas were controlled by the Thiyyas.<sup>8</sup> They considered themselves as a well-knit and organized group as the Nairs under the "Thara system"<sup>9</sup>. Kambil Anandan and Potheri Kuhambu also tries to emphasize the equal or superior status of the Thiyyas. All these helps us to assume that in Malabar there existed an atmosphere in which the claims of an otherwise, backward group could be articulated and substantiated. This situation owed its origin to a certain extent to the wealthy middle class who were partners in the trading activities of the foreigners. The emergence of such a group was facilitated by the nature of agricultural production existed in Malabar.

The Thiyyas of Malabar were comparatively free from the deprivation as belonging to a backward polluting community. The causes for this specific situation has to be traced in ecology, cropping pattern and tenurial system<sup>10</sup>. Malabar has a predominantly hilly terrain which permitted the development of dry land cultivation, especially hill produce like pepper and coconut. In such lands long term leases are only possible. Thus *Kuzhikkanam* lease (lease that stipulated land improvement) leading up to ninety years were practiced in dry land. This form of tenure offered considerable amount of freedom in cultivation. Increase in prices of the hill produce were always beneficial to the cultivators for the rent as stipulated in the lease agreement need be given to the land lord. This reduced considerably the intervention of the landlords in the form of evictions. Nair tharavadus

and Brahmin households had near monopoly over the wetlands of the region which required tied up labour. We find comparatively lesser number of Brahmin households in north Malabar when compared to South Malabar,<sup>11</sup> only half in size. The Nair tharavadus which gradually expanded into the interior regions as the branches of prominent tharavadus came to be established near the patches of the hilly terrain where wetland was also available. They exercised total control over the water resources and forests. This difference in the cropping pattern offered the cultivators different options in tenurial system. Thus, the land tenure of the region ranged from shifting cultivation and tenancy rights to tied up labor in the paddy fields. David Ludden has seen the Malabar area as comprising of independent market-oriented small farmers rather than agrarian dependents under the sway of agrarian magnates.<sup>12</sup> Dependence on the tharavadu ranged from the peripheral (Cash and seed advances) as in the case of the shifting cultivators to the absolute as in the case of the untouchable labourers.<sup>13</sup> Although it was predominantly the nairs and Namboodiris who owned estates and large garden plots, some thiyayas, besides being sub-tenants, also owned plots and rice fields.<sup>14</sup> They have also served as soldiers in the army of the zamorin of Calicut. He bestowed the title of 'cherayi Panikkar' upon the head of the Thiyya family in North Malabar.<sup>15</sup>

Another important feature is the presence of vaidyars (indigenous medical practitioners) among the thiyayas. There were many such famous medical practitioners, who were revered by all communities, which shows, their higher educational status<sup>16</sup> C.H. Kunhappa states that Kannan vaidyar of Kadachira, Karathan

Koran vaidyar of Mavilayi, and Chirukantan Vaidyar were the most famous and efficient of them all. The vocation was not meant for money but treating the patients. The Thiyyas were also well-known for their Sanskrit scholarship. They were employed also as soldiers and retainers by the nair landlords.

Thiyya women had sexual liaison with Europeans.<sup>17</sup> This gave them an exposure to European ways of life. They preferred to train their children in European style and started sending them to English Schools. Emerging middle class families among the Thiyyas responded positively to the English education.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the government order of 1844 that reserved placements in the bureaucracy to the English educated served as an incentive to English education. But the case of chooryayi Kanaran has shown that literacy in English has not been an essential criterion for placement in the bureaucracy. While serving as Deputy collector of Ponnani, he appointed many Thiyyas as village officers, which has hitherto been, a preserve of the Nairs.<sup>19</sup>

The cultural expressions prevailing in Malabar also acknowledge its specificity. This will be clear from the study of myths relating to the *Theyyattams* and rituals and ceremonies associated with the cult spots. Ritual performances always ensures the participation of all caste groups in it. These does not reflect the inferior/Superior status of the various castes involved. Diverse caste specific duties were performed by the various caste groups of the locality. Such responsibilities are not referred as 'duties' but as 'rights.'<sup>20</sup> Whereas the most explicit critique of caste condemned it for its divisiveness, portraying it as a barrier to the gradual unification of the Indian people. Gandhiji saw caste' as a self-governing social

unit performing legislative, executive judicial and other quasi-governmental functions.....As such it reduced and role and power of the state, fostered habits of self-government and nurtured the spirit of democracy'.<sup>21</sup>

The festival at Kottiyoor Siva Temple is a monumental example of the kind of accommodation mentioned above. At the time of the annual festival at Kottiyoor usually to take place in the month of June, the Nairs and Nambudiris take over charge of the temple after giving dakshina(The gift in kind or money is given to the performer of a worship at the temple.). On the last day of the festival the Muthappan, the chief deity of the thiyayas, arrived at Kottiyoor and was received by the Namboodiry priest who offered him sandal wood paste.<sup>22</sup> If this is a practice of accommodation festivals at the shrines give a different picture of the community life prevailing in Malabar. All caste groups living in the region has to perform a fixed duty in connection with the shrine festival. Such ritual duties were considered as *Cherujanmavakasham*.(The right of different caste groups in connection with the sustenance of the society as well as celebrations of the shrine festival. These are caste specific roles like providing of 'Mattu' by the washer woman, polishing ornaments by goldsmith and fixing the date of the celebration by the Kanishan.) A significant aspect in this connection is the conspicuous absence of caste groups such as Pulayas from the ceremonies related with the shrines. All other caste groups, except the Pulayas including the forest dwellers were given either a role in the shrines or mentioned in the list of known communities. This helps us to assume that the Pulayas were not part of the Malabar Community life. They must have come late probably as a result of the expansion of agriculture and

non-availability of labour force in agriculture they must have been brought from outside. This observation becomes more pertinent when we understand that slave trade existed in Kerala and Calicut was an important center of slave trade.<sup>23</sup> This theory is vindicated by the Pulaya myth recited at the time of Performing the art form *Chimmanakkali*<sup>24</sup> which refer to the Pulayas as coming from the 'Aryar Nadu'. It is not possible to locate Aryarnadu from the myth but clarifies that they were brought to Malabar from outside.

These circumstances helps us to develop the notion of 'Malabar specificity' sprang up as a result of ecology tenurial system and inter caste relations. Inter Caste relations were not based on superior/inferior status of the caste groups involved in it but on the tacit understanding of the interdependency of all the groups. Rosalind O'Hanlon has brought out similar notions existing in Maharashtra. She states that the community of cultivators represent co-operation, honesty and fair deal which was derived from the simple interdependency of rural communities and the spirit of mutual sympathy created by shared social experiences.<sup>25</sup> This understanding was never influenced by the numerical status but by their invariable use to the community. To these services they were provided for by the community in kind. The house visit programme in the lean months in the form of Kothamoori<sup>26</sup> and Vedan-Padal<sup>27</sup> is an approval that the right of such groups as these were received ritualistically in each houses. Moreover, Kavus predominate in Malabar. The temples financed by the state were also Devi temples in which priests were Pisharodis(an Ambalvasi caste) not the Brabmins.

It is also interesting to note that 'Chrujenmavakasham' is bestowed up on the

concerned groups by the rulers. But its operational rights were bestowed upon the thiyayas which restrict the possibilities of imposing the will of the upper castes upon society. In Travancore the rights of the upper caste land holders were protected by traditional notions as well as modern judicial structures. Where as in Malabar landholder's rights were protected by modern judicial and administrative structures and traditional notions acts as a limiting case and makes impossible the practising of authoritarianism by upper castes. But a manipulation of the existing norms in tune with their desires are possible as we see in the case of united efforts by the Thiyyas and Nairs against the Pulayas.<sup>29</sup> These specific social realities prevailing in malabar had considerably influenced the nature of the social movements that emerged in this region. As stated already this favoured the growth of supra caste movements and the ideas that failed to converse with the people went unnoticed. But it created an intellectual climate that was invariable for a renegotiation of the social realities in the colonial context in Malabar.

### **Empowerment of the Masses**

The reform practice of the intellectuals have developed a methodology that helped the empowerment of the masses. The demystification of the traditional knowledge as well as the emphasis given to the attaining of knowledge, as revealed from their discourse, to facilitate the leading of a virtuous life created on enthusiasm to acquire knowledge. Thus, education of any sort was welcomed to know the present and plan the future. Those who were incapable of buying books and journals were also attracted to this. Periodicals started by the intellectuals under study as well as the missionaries played an important role in this activity.

Herman Gundert and the Basel Evangelical Mission that started functioning from Nettur Thalassery from 1839 onwards played a significant role in this.<sup>29</sup> Herman Gundert started the publication of 'Pashchimodayam' and Rajya Samacharam in 1847. 'Rajyasamacharam' gave importance to mission news and was distributed among the members free of cost<sup>30</sup> where as 'Pashchimodayam' gave importance to general knowledge. Its publication continued up to August 1851.<sup>31</sup> 'Keralopakari' published from Mangalore from 1874 onwards, was one of the popular magazines of Malabar.<sup>32</sup> The activities of Herman Gundert was also praise worthy in this regard.<sup>33</sup> The activities initiated by the Basel Evangelical Mission was continued by the reformist organizations that flourished in the Malabar region in the second half of the Nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Vagbhatananda published 'Sivayogivilasam' from Calicut to popularize the ideas of Sivayogi. Later he edited some other periodicals also after the foundation of a new organization by him.<sup>34</sup> Another important method followed by them in popularizing their ideas was speeches and debates. Their Simple and coherent method of articulating ideas attracted many people and even the laymen were able to follow the fundamental principles propounded in the traditional texts. The inmates of Siddha Samajam explained of the tours and speeches conducted by Swami Sivananda in connection with the propagation of his ideas.<sup>35</sup> There were many places in Malabar regularly visited by the founder which attracted many towards his ideal. Marriages and any other special occasion in the houses of householder followers also acted as the centers of propagating their ideas and critiques of the social practices. The siddha Samajam do not have any periodical to propagate

their ideas. Such activities of the thinkers under study turned out to be more useful to the people as it prompted them to distinguish between desirable and undesirable things. The activities of the Basel missionaries like selecting festivals to propagate their ideas and concentrating on individual conversion had already created a precedent in Malabar.<sup>36</sup> Thus for the ignorant public knowledge about one's own environment as well as the tradition and beliefs one follows came to be considered as important. The attaining of eternal bliss was made possible to the toiling millions who were, hitherto, unconcerned about such intrinsic knowledge.

The interest shown by the common man in knowing such things made inevitable the presence of an agency that could act as a nodal point to impart education to the people on a regular basis. Thus, we come across the origin and growth of numerous reading rooms and libraries in different parts of Malabar during this period. Names of such libraries are also very typical – Vignana Pradayini, Jnanavarthini Grameena Vayanashala and the like. Such reading rooms have developed as the pivots of the intellectual and cultural life in the villages. In the later phases the leaders of the progressive political movements adopted and appropriated these centers to articulate their opinions. This helped considerably to bring the people to the political and cultural mainstream. This is an important legacy of the reformist activities in the Malabar region. This legacy helped the reform discourse to transcend its inherent limitation—ie it did not reach the common man and the issues addressed were primarily middle class in nature and submerged all issues to construct the national.<sup>37</sup> Most of the rituals and

traditions disappeared from Malabar because of the activities of the reformists. Pavanan has provided a list of temples that stopped animal sacrifice as a result of the propagation of the ideas of Sivayogi.<sup>38</sup>

### **Growth of Modern Education**

William Logan provided a sketch of the traditional system of learning existed in Malabar.<sup>39</sup> In Malabar, at that time education was imparted to boys and girls alike. They were given training in writing and later were exposed to Amaram (A collection of verses telling the names of all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth). This will be followed by grammar and reading of Ramayanam and Bhagavatham. Vyagaranam and other Sastrams follow on this. "A pupil who advanced thus far is considered very far advanced in 'learning' and 'the generality of people do not get further than spelling out the Amaram'. Emphasis was given in reciting the works properly. A controversy over the 'reciting' led to the beginning of the intellectual conquest of Travancore by Vagbhatanda. Kathleen Gough approves this when she says that literacy in Kerala was not to investigate the natural world but to conserve custom, to organize and sanction the feudal kingdom and to provide artistic entertainment and religious and philosophical to entertainment to the ruling castes.<sup>40</sup> She also states that lower caste literacy was meant to serve special technical or social purpose and not to open up Sanskrit or Malayalam literary heritage.<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that lower castes were denied higher learning in Sanskrit. On the contrary there were a list of eminent lower caste scholars and Ayurvedic practitioners in Malabar. Oorachery Gurukkanmar (thiyya) taught Sanskrit to Herman Gundert. Bappautty Gurukkal,

Anandan Gurukkal, Kunaran Vaidyar, Koran Vaidyar , Chirukantan Vaidyar were well known as Sanskrit scholars and Ayurvedic physicians. Most of them were taught by upper caste teachers like Kuttiappa Nambiar.<sup>42</sup>Vagbhatananda was taught by M.K.Gurukkal and Rairu Nambiar.

This liberal attitude towards education was attributed to Buddhist influence.<sup>43</sup> Thus, deprivation on caste terms though theoretically, present was practically absent in Malabar. Takeover of the region by the British opened up new avenues of development. The thiyas of the coastal regions especially of Kannur, Thalassery and Kozhikode entered into trading relations with the British. Many became contractors and monopoly traders.<sup>44</sup> Possibilities of appointment in the bureaucracy attracted them towards English education. When Herman Grundert started the first primary school thiyas boys were among the first to attend it. Admission was open to all irrespective of caste or creed most of them came from the Thiyas.<sup>45</sup> The annual report send by Herman Gundert from the Thalassery station speaks of four schools in the neighborhood of Thalassery- Thalassery, Kadirur, Dharmadam and Weavers village. Total number of student were 121 and most of them were Thiyas.<sup>46</sup> Expenses of education was met from the locally mobilized funds and out of fees collected from students.<sup>47</sup>

A primary school was started in Bernassery near Kannur in 1842. Another school was started in Kallai near Calicut it 1848. the East India company encouraged private initiative in education as it was not prepared to bear the burden of education completely. The educational dispatch of 1854 introduced the grant-in-Aid Scheme.<sup>48</sup> Most of the primary schools in these mission states were later,

upgraded as middle schools and High Schools. In 1907, the BGM high school was upgraded as a second grade college. The school established by the Zamorin was upgraded in 1879 as a second grade college. Victoria college Palghat was established in 1888 and Brennan College in 1891<sup>49</sup>. Thus, higher educational institutions were steadily increasing in Malabar. More affluent groups will send their children to Madras.<sup>50</sup>

These educational institutions offered the people of Malabar exposure to modern education. Most of them were placed in the government establishment-Thus, we have a long list of government employees like choorayi Kanaran Uppottu Kannan(deputy collectors).Panangadan Kannan, Diwan Bahdur E K Krishnan(Sub. Judges) Choorayi Raman, Karayi Govidan Onden Kunhambu (Tahasildars) and also practicing advocates such as C.Krishnan, Kottiyath Ramunni, Cyitti Krishnan, Potheri Kunhmbu. Ayyathan Janaki and Moorkoth Madhavi were the first women graduates of Malabar in modern Medicine.<sup>51</sup> Basel Evangelical mission was the principal agency that was engaged in imparting modern education in Malabar. The study materials were also prepared by them.<sup>52</sup>This had an impact on moulding the character of the newly educated. The Basel Evangelical Mission insisted disciplined and qualitative life, equal status and universal brother hood whereas the British spirit was 'delighted Superiority.'<sup>53</sup> Modern educational institutions provided and opportunity to interact with scholars coming from diverse social background which helped them to shed off many of their parochial feelings.

### **Development of Public Sphere**

An important fall out of the administrative takeover of Malabar by the British

had been its exposure to modern structures of Governance. The most efficient policy that extended the colonial ideology was education. The vernacularization of liberal discourses was conceived as the process of ideological transfer that lead to the restructuring of vernacular sphere as well as the relationship between the high and low languages of the sub-continent<sup>54</sup> Educational enterprise in this region was initiated by the Basel Evangelical Mission and the curriculum plan was decided by them Development of education in this region took place against the background of grant-in-aid scheme of the government. Dissatisfied with the governmental intervention the mission kept out of the system for a short while<sup>55</sup>. The mission found the system of inspection recognition and control' as barriers on the freedom of mission activities. So they withdraw from grant-in-aid scheme in 1860 and rejoined it in 1867<sup>55</sup> Text books were prepared and printed by the mission which meant freedom in selecting the content of the course. During his tenure as Inspector of Schools Gundert attempted to restructure totally the content of education.<sup>56</sup> Basel mission is a protestant mission and as it is not having any imperialist imaginations it never treated the natives as inferior beings. It has already been observed that Basel Evangelical Mission could transcend Caste barrier as it was not having upper caste converts<sup>57</sup>. English educated literati, as already shown mostly came from the backward communities. It set the stage for the processes of articulation, discussion and accommodation, instead of the exclusionist tendencies of subaltern counter discourses from the domain of cultural production.<sup>58</sup> Thus Malabar has seen the articulation of counter discourses like 'Thiyyarute Pournikatha' which is a critique on the notion of

'backwardness and 'otherness' imposed upon the identity of a dominant caste group.<sup>59</sup> Keralanacharam of Swami Sivananda is also an articulation of the rights of the marginalized.

The above critique has showed that the keynote of the public sphere in Malabar was not exclusionary attempts leading to the production of homogeneous discourse with potentially hegemonic dimension as observed elsewhere. It was abounding in the articulation of counter discourses which brought knowledge to the doors of the common man. Malabar created an environment that facilitated the discussion, circulation and accommodation of diverse ideologies. The changes that emerge out of the existing situation fail to be classified either as 'Sanskritisation' or as 'parochialization' because of the nature of processes involved in it. The basic nature of the social processes in Malabar had been its attempt at levelling. It was not based on a one-dimensional approach of reform. Through debates and discussions it created the atmosphere for the adoption of a reformulated tradition which was projected as devoid of all existing ills, that offered self-realization.

The outcome of these processes was the production of laicized literate order in Malabar<sup>60</sup> This created large scale reading public in Malabar. The development of Public sphere was the inevitable consequence of the coming of a new system of education and modern administrative measures. Accordingly a secular cultural space came into existence where by association of various sections of people became possible. The newly created atmosphere helped to transcend the traditional barriers such as untouchability and intermingling was essentialised by the

new institutions. Institutions such as hospitals established by the Basel Mission and new educational institutions and above all the spread of print media helped to create the formation of a public sphere. Unlike south Kerala and other parts of India, exclusionary tendencies were not the feature of Malabar. The order of the District collector that insisted unrestricted entrance to untouchable castes in offices including that of the village officer is a fitting rejoinder.<sup>61</sup> The newly introduced institutions and ideals simply nurtured the existing phenomena of interaction existing in Malabar.

They were instrumental in bringing about social changes. 'Saraswathee vijayam' was a Malayalam novel written by Potheri Kunhambu which proclaimed the possibilities of upward social mobility even to a low born through education.<sup>62</sup> The possibilities of getting employment in government services attracted many towards the new educational institutions. Of the total population of Malabar 112713 were able to read and write in 1871.<sup>63</sup> We are already having a long list of bureaucrats and professionals like Doctors, Advocates and Teachers even among the Thiyyas<sup>64</sup>

Journals and periodicals also played an important role in popularizing new notions. Herman Gundert published two magazines simultaneously from Nettur (Rajya Samacharam and Pashchimodayam) from 1847 onwards.<sup>65</sup> Pashchimodayam gave importance to generate knowledge. In 1874 another publication by name 'Keralopakari' began to be published from Mangalore. Chenkulathe Kunhirama Menon started publishing 'Kerala Patrika' in 1884. Moorkoth Kumaran contributed articles in this journal with the penname Gajakesari.<sup>66</sup> Later Mithavadi, a journal of the Thiyyas was started publishing from Sept 1907 which was owned by

T.Shivashankaran a wealthy thiyya of Thalassery and edited by Moorkoth Kumaran. Mithavadi was so often ridiculed as a 'Bible of the Thiyyas' , it was in reality a Bible that stood for the upliftment of the depressed.<sup>67</sup>

### **Civil Collectivism**

Another significant feature of Malabar is its inclination towards civil collectivism. Collectivism was conceived as one of the methods that lead to change. T.K.Oommen says that collectivism can be organized on two ways viz Primordial collectivism and civil collectivism<sup>68</sup> Membership in ascriptive organizations such as caste has been classified as primordial collectivism. Such collectivism are easy as it involve structural attributes through a process of socialization . S.Rudolph considers such associations as 'Para communities'<sup>69</sup> whereas civil collectivism cannot be developed easily as it has no special and natural loyalties to linger on Growth of consciousness about structural similarities among individuals and groups are invariable for the development of strong civil collectivism. Thus, civil collectivism is the result of the objective conditions and subjective perceptions of the individuals.<sup>70</sup>

The conditions prevailing in Malabar facilitated the growth of civil collectivism . The control over land and faith did not helped the upper castes impose their ideological hegemony over the rest of the people.Vanjeri grandhavari brings forth the presence of social forces that does not comply with the traditional norms<sup>71</sup>. Instead the respective castes contested the sway over symbolic frontiers. The landed classes were forced to accommodate their notions in relation to the pre-

vailing circumstances. The introduction of modern administrative structures as well as legal systems offered equal treatment to all irrespective of the caste status. The defamy suit filed against the police Ameen, who was a thiyya by birth(Oondan Ambu) by the zamorin of Calicut for not showing proper courtesy is an interesting episode<sup>72</sup>.To this complaint Ambu replied that he was not sending the letter to the Zamorin as a thiyya but as a representative of Her Majesty. In the final judgment it was stated that in no official correspondence caste bound forms of address need not be followed.( The Thalassery Fanjdari cutcherry has decided to deport Ambur nair for a crime of theft. The legal system established by the British did not favored an upper caste in dispensing justice which was unimaginable in Travancore.<sup>73</sup>Caste groups also were operating in an egalitarian way not as conceived by Louis Dumont. Nicholas B Dirks also refute the claim of Loui's Dumont when he argue that caste(as we know it today) is a modern phenomenon that is, specifically the product of an historical encounter between India and Western colonial rule.<sup>74</sup>This 'corporate' atmosphere prevailing in Malabar made the practising of hierarchy and orthodox religiosity impossible. This led to the secularization<sup>75</sup>of social life in Malabar. Initially, mobilization was carried out through a religious vocabulary and later it was transformed in to secular ethics. The notion of religion developed by Brabmananda Sivayogi Validates this observation.<sup>76</sup>

The experience of Travancore has shown that secularization can also be obtained through mobilization on communal terms.<sup>77</sup> The mobilization based on ascriptive terms was justified as deprivation based on ascriptive terms were

prevailing.<sup>78</sup>The problem of such mobilization was also brought out by him. He believed that increased secularization will lead to the exposing of the middle class orientation of demands.<sup>79</sup> The problem with this method is the persistence of primordial ties that was used to mobilize ordinary people as they knew that masses are susceptible to religious sentiments. Thus primordialities remain as ideal tools to be used at will to protect 'interests.' But later, it was realized that one of the most effective methods to combat communalism was to unite the lower strata of different communities in a movement for securing their common economic and other interest.<sup>80</sup> Civil collectivism is free from such dangers. But inculcating a consciousness about structural similarities remain as a Herculean task. Persistence in society of other options that offer high dividends restricts the scope of Civil Collectivism.

**Egalitarianism:** Egalitarianism was the most important doctrine that fanned the fancies of modern man. The existence of inequality in any form opens up a discussion of equality. Prevailing ideologies of all societies consider the existing inequality as natural. The champions of the new social order usually suggests that it only cleared the way for the realisation of greater equality. The notion about 'individuals' carried with it the problem of freedom and rights which naturally lead to a critique of existing forms. In earlier societies the individual had been to a greater or lesser extent subordinated to the group: family, community or church....the new society sought to free individuals from the bondage of groups.<sup>81</sup>

The Basel missionaries were protestant by faith and carried with them the notion of egalitarianism as espoused by protestant groups. This spirit was re-

flected in their evangelical and educational activities. Basel mission converts did not retain their caste identities as conversion was an individual affair in their scheme.<sup>82</sup>

This become more pertinent when we compare the condition of the converts in Travancore. To attain social status they were forced to continue their fight and their synthesis in the Christian community also do not take place. The Basel Mission propagated 'disciplined equality' where as the British spirit was delighted superiority. The mission industries stood out as the haven of those who wanted to escape from caste bound profession. It provided job opportunities for the converts and non-converts alike in their industrial establishments. In 1913 there were altogether 3633 employees in their pay roll of which 954(26%) were non-converts.<sup>83</sup> This shows that the mission was instrumental in bringing about an industrial climate which has transcended the parochial feelings of caste and religion.

The theory of Morton Class on the origin of caste is pertinent in the context of Malabar. This resonate with the theory of Dravidian origin of caste based on the references in the Sangam literature<sup>84</sup> and also with the situation prevailing in Malabar where caste groups shows features of Class. They have retained heredity and rituals in a bid to maintain tribal identity. The professional collectives retained rituals to retain their rights over the profession.<sup>85</sup>

This makes the notion of egalitarianism and mutual dependence organic to Malabar. This is not a negation either of caste or of hierarchy but emphasizing of mutual dependence which is essential for the harmonious existence of a society<sup>86</sup> The consciousness about one's own rights and duties breeds a feeling of

togetherness and any attempt to marginalize was resisted at every point. Hence, the attempt at imposing the hegemony of land owning groups failed in Malabar, on the other hand they were also forced to accommodate to the existing norms. Thus, the Malabar society had developed certain aspects which freely communicated with the modern notions of egalitarianism. British rule of law showed them, even though for a limited extent, the operation of equality before law. Basel Missions notions of equality and denial of priestly domination thrilled them to the core. Above all, lack of a traditional state structure that protected the interests of upper castes made Malabar a free zone where diverse ideologies could be articulated and debated upon.

The critique of untouchability undertaken by the thinkers emerge from this background. The main plank of their project had been an attempt at devaluing the high caste status of the Brahmins and making the untouchable pure through a discursive practice of subversion. The story about Ramanuja as narrated by Vaghatanada is quite revealing. It was believed that he was taken to the river for bathing by Brahmin followers. Whereas Chandala followers take him back to home. The brahmin followers one day asked him about this curious practice and insisted for a reverse order. He told them that the chandalas are pure at heart as they do not nurture the feeling of pure and impure. Even after taking bath the Brahmin permit their mind to cherish base qualities which make them impure in his opinion.<sup>87</sup> The functional dependency of the superior castes over the inferior castes emphasized by Swami Sivananda as well as the nonavailability of Caste marks on the Human body, as we see in different categories of animals, empha-

sized by Sivayogi, were all part of the scheme of subversion attempted by the thinkers in their project.

This consciousness about discrimination reaped a good harvest in the Malabar Society. Reports of ill-treatment and atrocities towards the untouchable communities served as a starting point for a more concerted effort at integrating such section with the society at large<sup>88</sup>.

By this time the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee also made the fight against untouchability an important programme. The Eighteenth annual general body meeting of the Yogakhemasabha passed a resolution asking to expand the right to use public road granted after conversion to the depressed castes, even before their conversion.<sup>89</sup> The anti-untouchability propaganda carried out vigorously in the length and breadth of Malabar helped to create a new consciousness about the similar civic rights of the depressed castes. The attitude of the government was also positive in this case who introduced law to protect their rights and freedom to move.

Inter-dining was an important programme that challenged the sanctity of untouchability. Sahodaran Ayyappan initiated this at Cherayi.<sup>90</sup> This was continued by the Brahmasamajists at Annie Hall Calicut. In connection with the inauguration of the library at Thiruvegappura interdining was conducted (Mathrubumi 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 1924). This invert the notion of ritual purity<sup>91</sup> prevailing in India. The Atma Vidya Sangam conducted an inter-dining at Azhikode which was ridiculed by the conservatives as 'Pulayar Party'. Stern measures were taken against a number of families who co-operated with the inter-dining programme. The meeting of the

Elders of the Thara imposed Mattuvilakku(denial of Mattu) upon all the families and individuals who co-operated with interdining. The first victim at Azhikode was the sister of Cherumanal Pokkan master, an activist of the sangam.<sup>92</sup> She was sent back to her ancestral home by her husband. The sangam boldly resisted all such measures. Intercast marriages and uplift of the harijans was also popularized by the Sangam. They have also run night schools to impart education. Aryabandhu P.K.Bappu of Kannur organized intercaste marriage at Kannur in 1924 at his own expense, which was solemnized by Sadhu Sivaprasad.<sup>93</sup> Dr. P Anandan of Azhikode was popularly known as 'Mobile Dispensary' because of the unselfish services he rendered to the people<sup>94</sup> such conscious activities of the thinkers and their followers helped to popularize new notions of social behavior popular among the people.

### **Disappearance of Life-cycle Rituals**

The thinkers under study were critical of most of the social practices and beliefs prevailed in Malabar. With the foundation of the AtmaVidya Sangam in 1917 the activities against superstition and social evils were vigorously launched. The action plan of the Atmavidya Sangam, which was established even in the interior regions, effectively put an end to many superstitious practices forestalling the efforts of the conservatives.

Ettumattu<sup>95</sup> Purificatory ritual related with death(Pula) was performed by the Kavuthiya by sprinkling specially prepared water with a special kind of grass(Karuka) on the body of the members of the family. At that time they were asked to step on the 'mattu' which was spread on the floor. ('Mattu' is the

purificatory cloth supplied by the washerwoman of the locality.) The impurities related with birth, death and menstruation was believed to be ended only on the using of mattu after the stipulated period of confinement was one of the most important ritual which was severely criticized by the thinkers. Denial of the 'mattu' by the elders of the Thara was equal to social ostracism as such families were not permitted to mingle with the rest of the society. The right to impose this rest with the elders of the Thara of the thiyya community.<sup>96</sup> Those who violated the strictures had to suffer many hardships.<sup>97</sup> Brahmavathan speaks of the successful eradication of the practice of 'Ettumattu' from Kunnothuparmbu. But the thiyya elites who considered this practice invariable to thiyya identity were opposed to this and wanted to seek prior permission from Sree Narayana Guru to which Vagbhatananda replied that 'the guru was born to a mother who suffer from caste deprivation not to a mother who suffer from the 'Ettimattu'.<sup>98</sup> The message of irrationality present in many of the social practices were made popular through the active efforts of the sangam. Such irrationalities were criticized by Swami Sivananda and Brahmananda Sivayogi. Thus, their joint efforts created an intellectual atmosphere in Malabar which made unjustifiable the public practicing of such rituals.

Other rituals which were vehemently opposed by the intellectuals were Thalikkettukalyanam((Which is the prepubescent marriage of girls),Thirandukuli(Which is a ritual related with the beginning of the menstrual period) and Pulikudi (Pulikudi is a pregnancy rituals which is an indispensable ceremony for the rich and poor alike, performed on a particular day in the ninth

month). These rituals were attacked on two ways. On the one hand irrelevance of such practices were exposed and on the other hand it was criticized as a mere squandering of wealth. All these 'rites of passage' were to be celebrated with much splendor. The splendor actually showed the financial position and reputation of the Tharavadu. No tharavadu was ready to cut expenses related with such rituals as they feared it will bring infamy to the Tharavadu. Hence expenses related with such celebrations increased without any restraints which even led to the economic ruin of many Tharavadus.<sup>99</sup> This economic aspect was stressed by the thinkers as financial discipline has become invariable for sustenance in the changed circumstances of Malabar. The extent of economic ruin of Malabar in the post-1921 period was brought out by Mathrubumi in an editorial<sup>100</sup> with the caption "Kshamam'(Famine). Thus the suffering of the people in the second and third decade of the twentieth century can be considered as the economic base of the critique of the 'Rites of passage'.

The intellectuals attempted their critique of Thalikkettukalyanam by treating it as real marriage. No thali tying was practiced in actual marriage. Among the Nairs no ceremony associated with marriage was practised other than pudava koda (Giving dress) by the husband. As Sambandham relation existed only with a person it was stable in Malabar.<sup>101</sup> The thinkers approached Sambandham relations as 'concubinage' as the women were entering into sexual relations with persons other than the one who has tied thali<sup>102</sup>. They have carried out their critique by Sanctifying the practice of 'tying thali'. They have suggested an alternate method in marriage which make it an agreement between two individuals

with the consent of the community which was followed by marriage reforms. Even before this the thiyas of Malabar were having a unique system of marriage legalizing it in front of the community.<sup>103</sup> Vagbhatananda considered 'Thirandukuli' as an open invitation for potential males to enter into sexual relations with that girl<sup>104</sup>. Pulikudi and similar practices were rejected as superstitious practice which has no scientific base. All such rituals were projected by them as a product of the male dominated society which deny any individuality to women. They were treated only as a commodity to be appropriated by men at will. Their vigorous critique has a positive side as it led to the virtual disappearance of such practices<sup>105</sup>. Their critique of such practices changed it into mere superstitions not the index of the reputation of the Tharavadu.

Adopting of new Life-style: The project of the thinkers addressed primarily the individuals. The coming of modernity created the structural conditions required for the emergence of the individuals. Modernity provided the capacity to speak to the various constituents of the Tharavadu.<sup>106</sup> As the thinkers were aware of the deficiencies of the modern individuals, their project tried to incorporate the virtues of tradition to make the modern individual useful to society. The interactive spaces within modernity led to the incorporation of the useful aspects of tradition with modernity. Through a serving of mental and physical practices they have created an new individual who is concerned about the society and who is free from the vices of modernity. The tool suggested by them to construct such an individual is disciplining the mind and body<sup>107</sup>

Disciplining the mind is invariable to their project as they believed that everything originate in the mind and the best way to attain beatitude is developing the capacity to train the mind. They were aware of the fact that the success of modernity and capitalism is based on the creation of desirous individuals. This validates their insistence for restricting the mental activities. When the individual become concerned about his fellow beings and nature he begins to train his mind and become satisfied with minimum requirements which helps him to keep out of the cobweb of modernity. Thus, the Indian version of modernity makes its practitioners believe that their happiness lies in the happiness of others. This could be achieved through the disciplining of our body by conscious imbibing of certain values. So all of them suggested a moral code to be observed by their followers.

They were in general against accumulation of wealth. Vagbhatananda conceived the tendency to Save money as contrary to freedom and one can have money only to get one's meal.<sup>108</sup> This attitude justified all protests and strikes by the workers as they were denied their due share by the factory owners. His notions on wealth and property was similar to the mythical character Pakkanar who considered it as Alekkolli(Slayer of man) <sup>109</sup> No private property exist in the community of Swami Sivananda. Thus, their notion of a society is not based on competition and accumulation but on understanding the problems of others and extending all possible help to solve their problems.

Another important virtue they have propagated was Ahimsa and Vegetarianism. They believed that even the thought of violence is capable of corrupting the

mind. Animal sacrifices in the temples were discontinued as a result of the intervention of the followers of Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda.<sup>110</sup> Swami Sivananda ridiculed eating of flesh as eating of the corpse.' Eating the flesh of animals as well as offering it to god was considered by them all as base qualities. Sivayogi considered this as the quality of wild animals who were having no other options to sustain them<sup>111</sup>. This is an attempt to attract men towards a Vegetarian way of life. The Siddha Somajists and Sivayogi had proved through their own life that a pure vegetarian life is possible. We also come across a good number of people who follow vegetarianism voluntarily and abstain from killing other animals. This led to the impossibility of identifying a person on the basis of his dietary habits. This also suggest the practicality of the 'holistic approach' which is ecological in orientation and invariable for humanity for its sustenance. Thus, Vegetarianism, in their project, get projected as the saviour of humanity.

The thinkers attached utmost importance to cleanliness. They have asked their followers to wear clean dresses and to maintain their surroundings clean. Siddasramam (Althaur) is unique in many ways. It has no formalities that we come across in a modern asram. No chants of mantras or pujas were performed there. Importance is given only to getting up early in the morning, taking bath and doing Rajayoga in the simplest way. Rest of the time is devoted totally to discussion and readings. Life in the asram was expected to give training to the followers. They were specially instructed to engage themselves in educating the other members of the family. Thus, the creating of the literate society, having peace of mind and leading a very chaste and austere life is their motto. Imbibing

personal morality is essential to lead such a life and it begin from one's surroundings. Sivayogi asked his followers to develop the qualities of truthfulness, patience, knowledge, courage and rationality. Frugality also found its way in their doctrines. This is not to be adopted as a capitalist ethic but as a quality that help others also to live. Vagbhatananda and Sidhasamajists emphasized leading a virtuous disciplined life. Cleanliness was suggested as essential for leading a healthy and hygienic life. They have also suggested dietary and physical behavior. These are all certain practices suggested by the thinkers to regulate one's own life. Such a regulated life is essential to the harmonious existence of the society.

The thinkers rejected idolatry polytheistic beliefs and devil worship as unnecessary and irrelevant. Sivayogi asked his followers to abstain from the practice of solemnizing marriages form temples, pilgrimage, sacrifices, penances, idolatry and asceticism.<sup>112</sup> All of them stated that pilgrim centers are located within the human body itself. Pilgrimages and penances inflict torture to the body, which is not good. Body was important to their project as it was conceived as the tool to cross over the cosmic world. They believed that pujas were not to be performed at the temples but to the Gathra Kshetram(Temple of body).They were employing the strategy of substitution which will not lead to a virtual alienation with tradition. Those who were dissatisfied with tradition was found at ease with this reinterpretation as it was based on the attributes of tradition. This also helped them to wean out the undesirable elements of tradition. In addition to this Vagbhatananda composed prayers that praised the singular divinity who is with-

out attributes. Such a worship include all irrespective of caste and religion within its fold. This is in a sense a romanticisation of god and worship.<sup>113</sup> This anti-idolatrous position of the thinkers was acceptable to malabar as such a form of worship was unknown to Malabar and were not particular to get the temples opened for worship to the common man. Dominant mode of worship in Malabar was theyyattams where intimate relation between the devotee and deity existed. The revelations of the theyyams were never taken as the jargon of 'Vannan' or Malayalam' who has to become deities at the shrines. This is the context that facilitated the spread of the doctrine of anti-idolatry in Malabar. Influenced by these doctrines young men of Malabar destroyed shrines in many places.

The scheme of disciplining contained in the project of the thinkers were intended to reconstitute the individuals in the context of modernization. This conscious intervention made the individual an integral part of the society which sustained all the constituents within a society. This had been the Keynote of Pre-colonial society in which people lived in accordance with the rhythm of nature. The elements of appropriation contained in their project helped the individual to retain his links with the rural community. This transformation of the individual was achieved through the exposing of the limitations of the modern individual. Their thought become organic as they were successful in establishing the thread between the individual and society . This aspect helps them to transcend their own representational characteristics.

## Notes and References

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2. Yogendra Singh, *Ibid*, 1973, p 27.
3. T.K. Oommen, *Protest and change*, 1990, p 16.
4. *Mithavadi* Nov 1917.
5. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Unfinished Autobiography along with accounts by his sons*, 1950.
6. C.H. Kunhappa, *Smaranakal Maathram*, 2000, p 83.
7. T.K. Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, 1900, p 183.
8. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Op.cit.*, p 19.
9. Kumaran finds fault with Logan as he ignored the features of the Thiyya social organization and for arguing that the Nairs were the only caste group of Malabar who developed such a system.
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11. William Logan, *Malabar vol I*, 1995, pp 119, 120.
12. David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India*, ch 5, OUP, 1989.
13. M. Dilip Menon, *Caste Communism and Nationalism in South India*, 1994.p39.
14. MSA Rao, *Social Movements and Social Transformation*, 1987, p 25.
15. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India Vol.VII* , 1909 p 94.
16. M S A Rao, *Op.cit.*,p 26.
17. Edgar Thurston, *Op.cit.*, p 36, 1909
18. KKN Kurup, *Aadhunika Keralam*, 1995, p 21.
19. *Mithavadi* August 1913, no.1,b1.
20. Fawcett Speaks of the ceremonies attached with the Pisharikavu of Quilandi which narrates in detail such rights of the different caste/religious groups.Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*,1901, p 255-64.
21. Bhikku Parekh quoted in Nicholas B Dirks *Caste of Mind*, Dirks assumes that the original idea of caste, for Gandhi, was incorporative of the whole Hindu community and was about inter dependence rather than either exclusion or domination.....If in the end Gandhi was hardly a social radical in matters relating to caste, it was in large part because the politics of caste appeared to him as they appeared in different contexts to the British, as divisive and anti-nationalist. And here again, the colonial context conditioned the available op

- tions for any nationalist sociology of India', Dirks, Nicholas, B, *Caste of Mind*, Permanent Black 2002, p 235.
22. See Dilip Menon, *Op.cit.*, p 51.
  23. K.K.Kusuman, *Slavery in Travancore*, 1973.
  24. This is a dance drama of the Pulayas which narrate an episode related with cultivation of a forest tract by a Pulaya and his wife, a suspicion of sexual relation with a muslim merchant and the burning of the hut and the three becoming deities. *Deshabhimani Weekly* issue 37, Book 33, Feb 2002.
  25. Rasalind O' Hanlon, *Caste Conflict and Ideology: Jyotiba Phule and low-caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Western India*, 1985, p 262.
  26. 'Kodamoori' is a ritual dance performed by the members of the Malayan caste after the harvesting of the monsoon crops. The dance is related with the myth of bringing down the celestial cow Kamadhenu to earth. They visit each Houses in the area and the people believed that it bring prosperity to each household.
  27. Vedan-Padal is also one of the ritualistic dances of Kannur district. It is performed twice a year one in the month of Karkitakam(July-August) practiced by the Vannan caste and the other in the month of Chingam(August-September) practiced by the Malayan Caste. Raghavan Payyanad 'The folkarts of Kerala' in H.M.Nayak and B.R.Gopal (Ed) *South Indian studies* , Geetha Book House Mysore, 1990,p 970.
  28. The Pulayas were beaten up for using public roads and coming to the markets-*Mathrubhumi daily*, January 15, 1924.
  29. *A concise History of Basel Mission*: Basel Mission Press Mangalore 1934
  30. The Basel Mission gave importance to publishing mission news meant for its members and publishing of such magazines in different languages were an important aspect of the mission activities.*Malayala Sahithyavaum Kristyanikalum* , 1989, p 529 .
  31. Puthuppally Raghavan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthana Charithram*,1985,p41
  32. P J Thomas , *Op.cit.*,1989 p 537.
  33. Gundert prepared the first Malayalam English Dictionary, prepared a book on Malayalam grammar, published a book entitled 'Keralapazhama' which was earlier serialized in Pashchimodayam and Malayala Rajyam was published in 1868.
  34. See Ch II for more details.
  35. Interview with Aravindakshan dt. 27.02.03.
  36. The annual reports sent to the Basel Evangelical Mission headquarters contain numerous such incidents see for details Report to Basel

- Mission(RBM) 1840,41,44.
37. Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its fragments*, 1994, p 132.
  38. Pavanan, *Brahmanada Swami Sivayogi*, 1997, pp 57-60.
  39. W Illiam Logan, *Op.cit.*,1989, p 107.
  40. Kathleen Gough, Literacy in Kerala in Jack Goody (Ed) *Literacy in Traditional societies*.1968,p 141 .
  41. Ibid, p 150.
  42. C H Kunhappa, *Op.cit.*, 2000, p 38.
  43. The Siddaroopam to teach Sanskrit was believed to be prepared by the Buddhists. In this scheme first lesson begins with Vrksha Vrksho, Vrkshah: But the brahmanic domination changed it into Rama ,Ramo Ramah: It is said that the 'Vrksha' denoted the Bodhi tree. See Prof.P.O.Purushothaman, *Malayanmayute Vikasa Parinamangal. Bhashaposhini*, February 2003.
  44. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Op.cit.*, p11.
  45. The reports from the mission station councils throws light on the educational activites See Report Basel Mission 1840,41,42.
  46. Ibid, Madras, 1841
  47. Ibid, 1859, Manglore 1860, p 76,77,.
  48. *Educational Papers: A Supplement to the South Indian Missionary conference Report*, Madras 1880, pp 1-29.
  49. K K N Kurup, *Op.cit.*,Trivandrum 1995, p 28.
  50. Ibid p 22.
  51. Ibid p 23.
  52. K P Vareed, *Dr. Herman Gundert'* ,1989, pp 432,433.
  53. Paul David Thottathil. *The socio Religious impact of the Basel Evangelical Mission in Malabar* from 1839 to 1919 unpublished Master of Theology dissertation FFRRC Kottayam Reg. No 10/93, 1993-95, p 120 .
  54. Veena Naregal, Language and power in pre colonial western India quoted in *Figuring the Political as Pedagogy* ,Studies in History 17.1,n.s.(2001), p 20.
  55. See for details Paul David Thottathil. *op.cit.* 1995, p 71.
  56. P.J.Thomas, *Op.cit.*, 1989, P 432,33.
  57. Jaiprakash Raghavaiah, *Basel Mission Industries in Malabar and South Canara* M Phil Dissertation Center for development studies Ulloor Trivandrum 1986, p 72 . Also see Harold A Gould, *Caste adaptation in modernizing Indian Society*, 1988.
  58. Veena Naregal has showed this tendency being enacted in the reformist discourse of Western India.*Op.cit.*,17,1,n.s. 2001.
  59. Numerical strength, economic and political power, ritual status and western education and occupations are the most important elements

of dominance. When a caste enjoys all or most of the elements of dominance it may be said to have decisive dominance-M.N.Srinivas., *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays*, 1987, p 114.

60. The term laicization is used to denote the conditions within modern political structures where by the distribution of knowledge are power and premised not an ideas of exclusivity but rather on the ideas of general circulation- veena Narigal Op.cit, 2001, footnote 2.
61. In the incident of obstructing Pulaya children in the public roads by the local people, the circle inspector warned the village officer of Kalliasseri that he is bound to uphold the government order. Thus, any violation of civil rights were checked then and there by the government agencies.(Mathrubumi 15 Jan 1925.
62. Champadan Vijayan, *Yoganadam* March 16-31, 2000.
63. Census of India 1871.
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66. Ibid.p 154.
67. Puthuppally Raghavan, *Kerala Pathra Pravarthana Charithram*, ,1985, p 173.
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69. Rudolph.S.Rudolph. *Modernity of Tradition.*, 1999,p 29.
70. T.K.Oomman, *Op.cit.*p 31.
71. Cherayan Marakkar who lives near the temple created nuisance for the brahmins. They complained to the local chieftain who hesitated to move against Marakkar. He send two patters(Brahmin from Taminadu) to abuse them. This is an incident that happened in 1635. See MGS Narayanan(Ed) Vanneri grathivari Calicut Unversity His torical Series no 1 1987.
72. Champadan Vijayan, *Op.cit.*, July 16-31, 1999, p 16.
73. T.K.Ravindran, *Malabar under Bombay Presidency*, 1969.
74. Nicholas B Dirks *Op.cit.*, 2002, p 5.
75. Secularization as a process is used to denote a shift from sacred to secular from its traditional religious and metaphysical mornings to a rational ordering of social economic and political institutions.
76. It is better to have no religion at all – Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Moksha Pradeepam* pp 170-171.
77. See for details George Mathew *Communal Road to a Secular Kerala*, 1989.
78. Ibid p 48.
79. Ibid, p 192.

80. A.R.Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, 1976, p 384.
81. Andre Beteille, *Inequality Among Men* , 1977, p 163.
82. Annual reports of the mission station contain stories of persons who came to the stations to know more about gospel. The report of 1840 talks about an upper caste by name Ravunni. The report of 1841 talks about the thiyya teacher. See for more details RBM 1840 p 6 R B M 1841 p 7.
83. Ibid 1913 p 20.
84. Gail Omvedt, *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*,1994, p 36 .
85. K N Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal* ,1997, p 184,187.
86. See Andre Beteille: *Op.cit.*
87. *Complete works of Vagbhatananda*, p 832.
88. Beating of the Pulaya who went to the fish market in Payyannur even though it was permitted by the Magistrate. (10th Nov. 1923 Mathrubhumi), complaints on non admitting of pulaya students in Board schools (31<sup>st</sup> July 1924 Mathrubhumi) protest meeting held at Kalliassery on Jan 24, 1929 are among the list of such incidents.
89. Mathrubhumi 4<sup>th</sup> January 1926.
90. M. Sahadevan, *Towards Social Justice and Nation Making: A study of Sahodaran Ayyappan* 1993, pp 62,63.
91. Susan Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India Volume III, Caste Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern age* Cambridge, 1999.
92. Interview with Ramakrishnan at Azhikkode, dt 26-12-02.
93. M.S.Nair, *Vagbhatanadanum Samoohika Navoathanavum* ,1998,p 84.
94. Interview: Ramakrishnan 26.12.02.
95. This is a practice connected with the purity of the individual and family which has to be performed by the member of the Kavuthiya caste.
96. Moorkoth Kumaran, *Op.cit.*, p 22.
97. Interview with M T Ramakrishnan at Azhikode dt 26-12-02.
98. Report on the AtmavidyaSangam meeting Kunnothuparamba, Brahmavratham, 1971, p 141.
99. Moyarath Sankaran, *Op.cit.*, 1965, p 11
100. Mathrubumi Daily 10 July 1924.
101. C J Fuller *Nayars Today* , 1976, p 100 .
102. Swami Sivananda *Keralanacharam*, 1990, p
103. Edgar Thurston, *Op.cit.*, 1909, pp 49-62
104. Complete works of Vagbhatananda p 78
105. C J Fuller *Nayars Today* , 1976, p 125.
106. K.P.Kannan, *Of Rural Proletarian Struggles :Mobilization and*

- Organisations of Rural Workers in South West Asia. 1988,P 123.
107. This kind of discipline is observed in the case of Prathyksha Raksha Daiva Sabha founded by Poikayil Yohannan-see P Sanal Mohan. Religion social space and Identity Lucknow January 1998.
  108. M S Nair, *Op.cit.*,p 95.
  109. K. Balakrishnan Nambiar, *Vidwan P Kelunair*, 1992.
  110. Pavanan, *Op.cit.*,p 44
  111. Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Moksha Pradeepam*,1997, p 154.
  112. *Ibid*, p 53.
  113. M S Nair,*Op.cit.*, p 37.

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